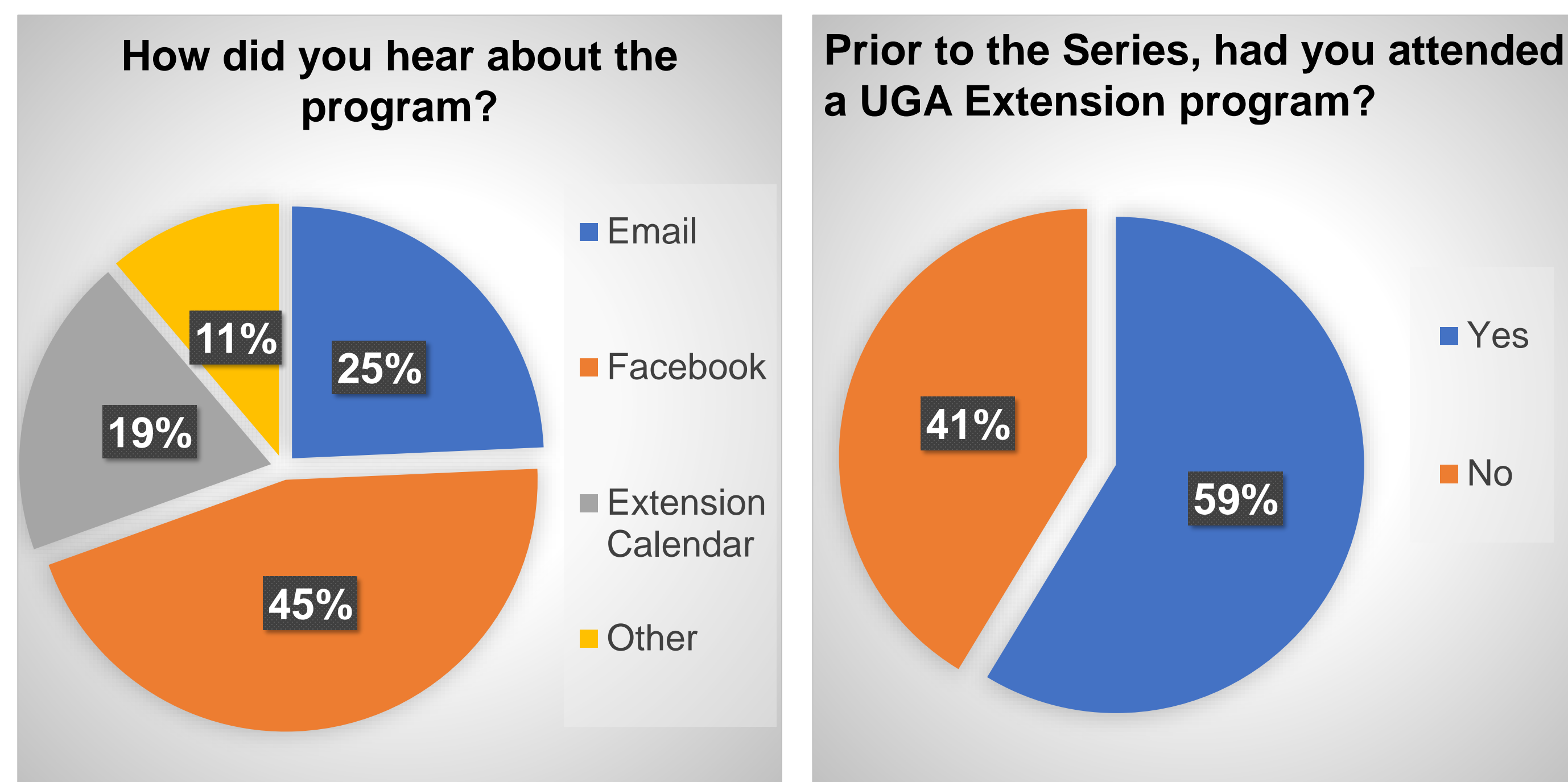


Backyard Fruit Webinar Series Connects Public to Extension Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Hoppers,* A.¹, Brantley, A.², Fuder, J.³, Holland, R.⁴, Spiers, J.⁵, Polozola, M.⁶, Parker, M.⁷, and Lockwood, D.⁸



Backyard Fruit: Blackberries
365 views · May 27, 2020



Situation & Response

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, food security was a concern. Resources on vegetable production were abundant but information on growing fruits was scarce.

Backyard Fruits Webinar Series:

- 4-week, online program covering various small fruits and tree fruits that can be grown across the Southeastern U.S.
- Offered on Zoom, and ran twice a week from May 13 to June 5, 2020.
- Each session included 1-hour of instruction coupled with a Q&A session at the end
- Session featured different fruits and involved speakers from UGA Extension, LSU Extension, NC State Extension, UT Extension, and Auburn University.

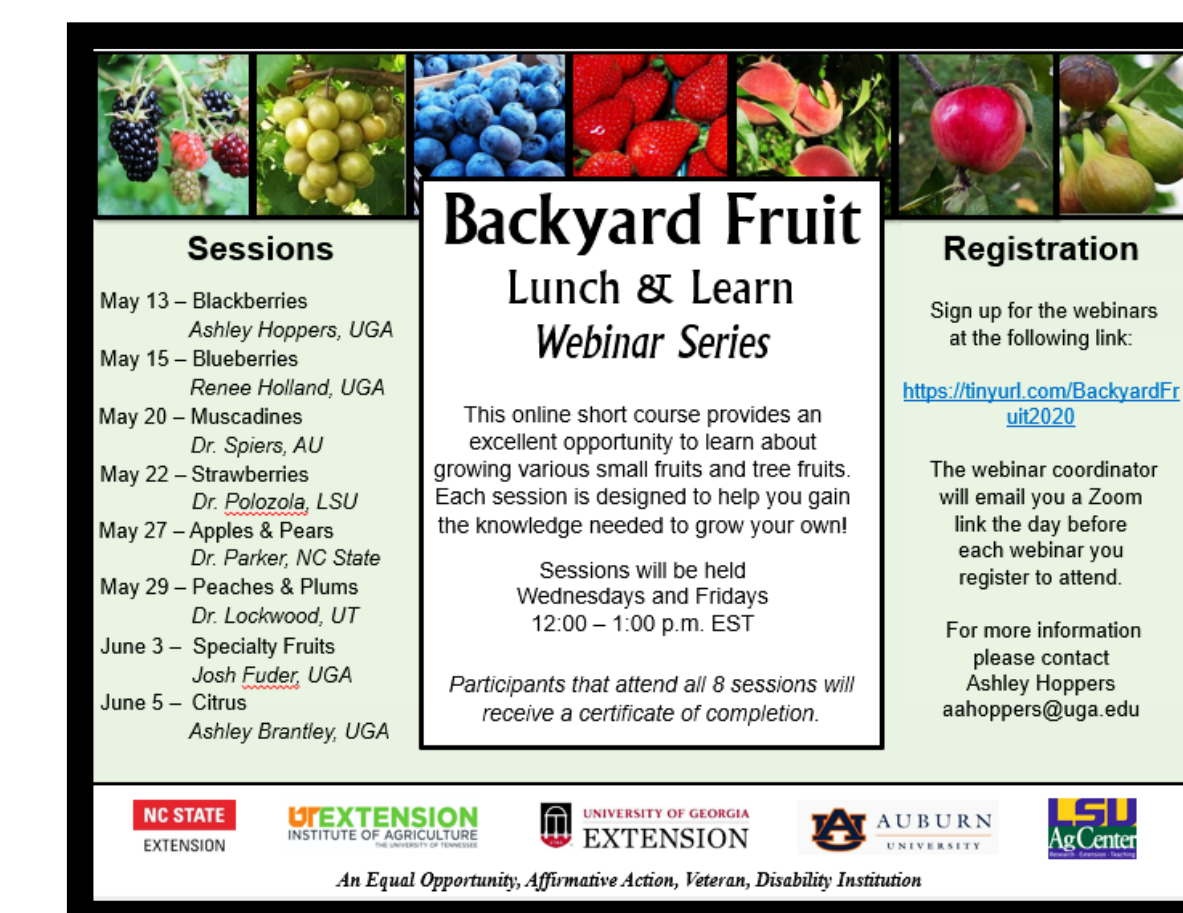
Webinar format and accessibility

The Series featured crops, including but not limited to: brambles, grapes, strawberries, stone fruits, pome fruits, citrus, and specialty fruits.

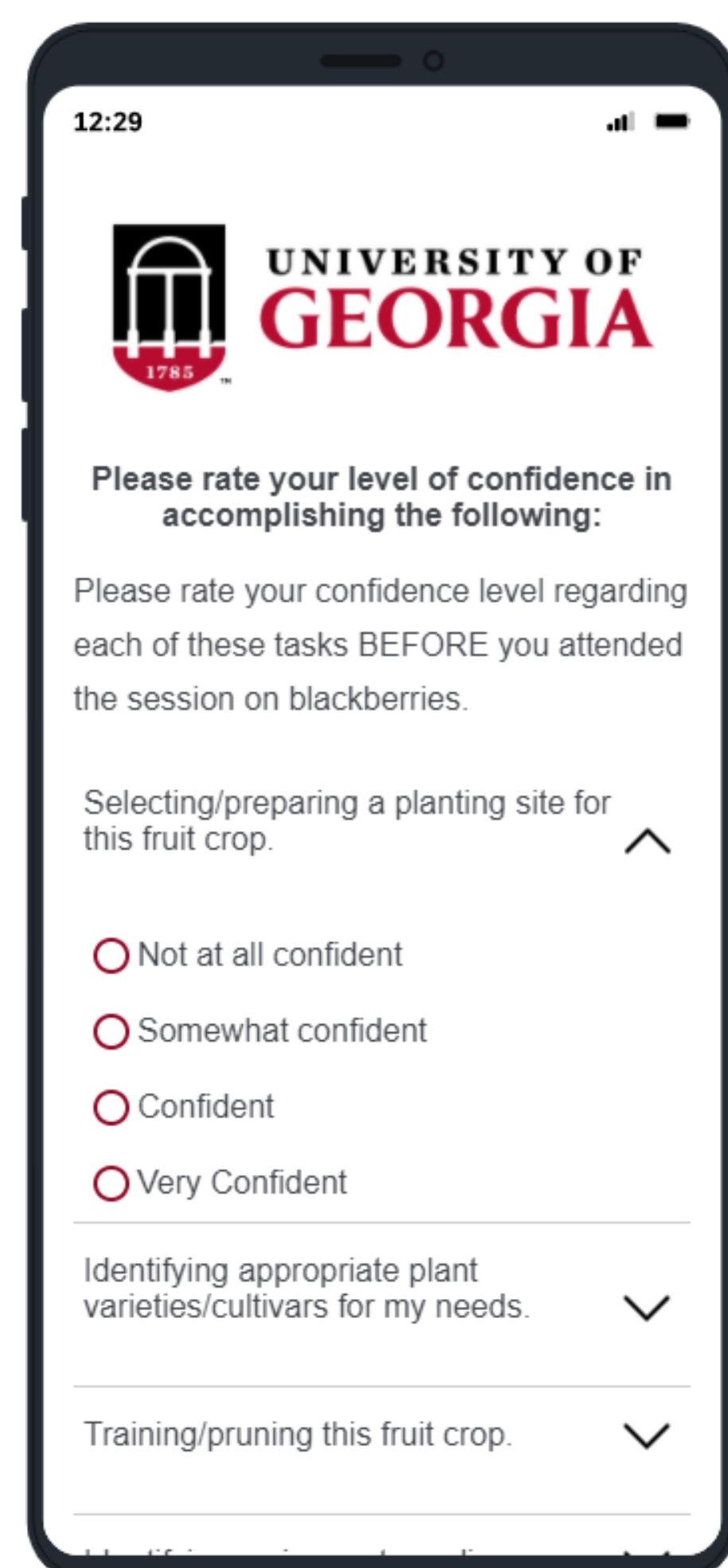
Sessions broadcasted live from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm EDT. Participants could register for any of the sessions at no cost.

Recordings were captioned and uploaded onto the UGA Extension YouTube Channel, where the public could view and share the videos.

Certificates of Completion were issued to participants who attended all 8 sessions, equivalent to 8 hours of online learning.



Attendance and evaluation results from participants



Measurable Outcomes during the Series (May 13–June 5, 2020):

- 2,152 client contacts were made
- 28 states were reached
- Attendance was 74-85% (~ 269 participants) per session
- 43 Certificates of Completion issued
- As of November 2020, recorded sessions on YouTube have been viewed 1,528 times.

Evaluation Highlights:

- 100% of participants reported they were satisfied with the overall management and delivery of the program.
- 84% of participants cited online learning as preferred over in-person.
- 100% of participants who attended all 8 sessions reported a better understanding of the major factors that impact successful backyard fruit production, and planned on using the information presented.

Approximately 50% of participants indicated their attendance in the Series was related to COVID-19:

- *"I was furloughed due to the virus and was looking to gain knowledge for enjoyment and purpose."*
- *"Was not working so I could make it to all of them."*
- *"It was very convenient and I was able to attend without concern."*
- *"I was not able to attend any in person programs so this webinar was very helpful."*
- *"We are practicing social distancing due to COVID-19 so attending an online class was very useful to us."*

The figures represent an example of the sample size and data retrieved in the Series' post-session surveys. Question 1: Rate your confidence selecting and preparing a planting site BEFORE (left) and AFTER (right) the session.

