

LaSalle Parish Home Grounds and Gardening Council Meeting
Minutes
Extension Meeting room
November 25, 2008

The LaSalle Parish Home Grounds and Gardening Advisory Council Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Jim Summers, county agent. Summers welcomed all the members present and thanked them for coming to the meeting. He explained he was presiding since Chairman, Cindy Powell, was unable to attend the meeting due to a conflict. He explained the purpose of the meeting was to give direction and identify needs and issues concerning horticulture in LaSalle Parish.

Present for the meeting were Robert Day, Murl Snody, Janis Bennett, Marilyn Neely, Elaine Grimm, Clay White, Robert Taylor and Karen Creel.

Summers gave a brief situational statement related to home grounds and gardening based on 2007 information as follows: The 2007 gross farm value of home vegetable gardens in Louisiana was estimated to be \$99.9 million. Parish reports indicated 332,978 home gardens statewide, suggesting that garden interest was up 10% from last year. Vegetable gardening is a way of extending the family food budget or freeing up some limited funds. Every parish reported home gardens. LaSalle Parish was estimated to have 750 in 2007. These were gardens of all types consisting of plants grown in containers to a large garden. Producer inquiries were concerning diseases, insects and weed control in all areas.

Homeowners continue to have problems with diseases and insects effecting lawns, shrubs in the landscape and trees. Diseases appear to be worse in tomatoes, cucurbits and lawns.

Members were then asked to identify any problems or issues related to home grounds and gardening that might be addressed through educational programs. Issues brought up were disease identification and control, control of poisonous vines such as poison ivy and oak, safe and proper uses of pesticides and fertilizer.

It was also expressed several families were interested in growing citrus for home use and information was not readily available.

It was determined that a program needed to be presented on the basics of producing lawns, gardens and landscapes, basically from the beginning to establishment.

It was decided that the county agent and local Master Gardeners would present a program on basic gardening. The program would include such things as soil testing, site selection, and establishment procedures and will be presented in late winter or early spring of 2009.

Prior to adjournment, Marilyn Neely was elected to serve and chairman of the committee for 2009.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.