

Spring Garden Packet Well Received

In early March of 1982 we conducted a mail survey of newspaper editors and others in Connecticut to determine whether they would like to receive a spring packet of lawn and garden feature stories and a few pages of garden fillers.

A page showing the title of each of the 13 stories in the 54-page packet and a return self-addressed, postage paid postal card were used to query the editors who were in charge of using gardening stories for their papers.

Within three week's time we received 69 replies from editors who wanted to get the packet. Eight additional editors said that they did not wish to have the packet. Here is a breakdown on who wanted to receive the 1982 packet.

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| 1. Editors of Daily Newspapers | 13 | (roughly half the total daily papers in Connecticut) |
| 2. Editors of Weekly Newspapers and Shopping Guides | 27 | |
| 3. Individuals and Organizations | 27 | |
| 4. Radio Stations | 2 | |

This represents about a 38 percent response of the 201 names which are on our mailing list to receive our gardening articles. We might have increased our response with a second mailing, but we opted not to do it.

The packet was sent only to those who requested it. This resulted in substantial savings in paper, postage, envelopes and professional time over the cost it would require to send the packet to the 201 names on the list which had been compiled over several years.

We used several of the releases that appeared in the Lawn and Garden section in *The Hartford Courant* last year in the 1982 Spring Garden Packet. These "recycled" stories are checked with authors and are updated by them. The name and job title of the specialist or agent who wrote the article are put in the text of the material being presented.

The copy that was typed by our secretary last year for the *Courant* is used as the "original" copy for the Spring 1982 Lawn and Garden packet. The necessary changes were typed and placed on last year's original copy. The 69 packets were printed at the copy center in the university's print shop. As a result, we did not need to cut stencils,

thereby saving our secretary's time, not to mention the editor's time in hours of proofreading the stencils.

Although we don't subscribe to a newspaper clipping service; nevertheless, we did see articles from the 1982 packet in advertising garden supplements of three daily newspapers, a chain of nine weeklies that circulate in central Connecticut and a Windham County weekly newspaper.

Stories appearing in the special advertising garden supplements were as follows:

1. *The Hartford Courant*, "Outdoor Living" supplement, Sunday, April 25 (circulation 223,000), contained an article on building a fireplace, utility or storage shed and picnic table at home.

2. *The Middletown Press*, "Spring Gardening," Tuesday, April 13, (circulation 23,000), ran 4 features and 4 filler items.

3. *Journal Inquirer*, "Home and Garden," Friday, April 23, (circulation 36,000) ran 10 features and 1 filler item.

4. *West Hartford News* and eight other weekly newspapers which are owned by the same publishing company used five stories in their "House and Garden" supplement April 29 (circulation 30,000).

5. Another weekly newspaper, *Observer-Patriot*, that circulates in Windham County used two features and two fillers in their "1982 Home Improvement and Gardening Guide" on Saturday, March 18 (circulation 3,000).

What kind of response did we get from offering plans for building various structures at home in *The Hartford Courant's* "Outdoor Living" advertising supplement? (This was the only supplement that received this story.) The response is as follows:

133 requests for Build-Your-Own Fireplace; 140 requests for Building-Your-Own Picnic Table; and 255 requests for Building-Your-Own Utility or Storage Shed. Additionally, about 100 readers requested the Plan Index offered at no charge.

In retrospect, we believe that we have improved public recognition among editors and readers for nonbiased information on various lawn and garden subjects supplied by our Cooperative Extension Service.

We expect to supply these editors and authors with our 1983 Spring Garden Packet. We hope that more editors will launch advertising supplements featuring our gardening stories in 1983.

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