Reader's Forum

Reviewing Nonprint Media for Use in Horticulture

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Film, slides, slide/tape sets, videotapes, videodiscs, and computer programs are all nonprint media used to improve comprehension and learning in classroom or extension presentations. Nonprint media are also used for teaching plant identification and practicing mathematical computations (e.g., computing greenhouse dimensions or fertilizer problems) and as visual examples of technical principles. In research, these media can be used to demonstrate a technique or explain a lengthy procedure. In extension, nonprint media can be used to introduce products or research findings to the audience, present information from other parts of the country or world, and assist in educating clientele. Nonprint media can involve an audience and keep them attentive, providing the chosen medium has the right qualities.

The ASHS Educational Media Committee has compiled a list of 900–1000 nonprint media, excluding computer programs. Each medium is

listed by type (slide set, videotape, etc.), title, and subject matter. The source for each medium is also included. Some of the topics covered may appear to be repetitive, but each medium focuses on different audiences and has a different presentation style. Variable production quality and content are also evident.

So how does one pick the “right” videotape or slide set? Should a separate list with information describing characteristics of these nonprint media be available? Would a simple rating be adequate? Would individuals access this list and use it for purchasing decisions? With these questions in mind, the committee developed a three-page evaluation form, based, in part, on

evaluation forms from the International Television Assn. (McMillen, 1985) and the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Extension Service (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1987). The committee thought that evaluations by reviewers with expertise in particular subject areas should provide potential buyers with pertinent information regarding the educational quality of programs.

The evaluation form (Fig. 1) is divided into three parts. The first section is designed to help in purchasing decisions; it asks reviewers to rate the quality, content, and suitability of the medium. The second part of the form asks for the reviewer's perception of the medium. In particular, reviewers are asked if the medium merits listing in a Recommended Media List compiled by ASHS. The final part of the form asks for an overall rating of the program, ranging from excellent to poor. Ideally, two to three experts would be asked to evaluate a single videotape or videodisc, preferably in conjunction with three to five related programs.

The evaluation form has the advantage of standardizing the ratings of various types of nonprint media. The form also provides a basis for a reviewer to write a review article (similar to a book review) for publication in an ASHS publication (e.g., *HortTech*).

NON-PRINT MEDIA EVALUATION FORM

Program title & time _____ (:)

Type of medium (circle one) (1) videotape (2) videodisc (3) slide set
(4) slide/tape set (5) film

Producer _____

Contact name/phone _____

Evaluator name & title _____
phone _____

Date you viewed program _____

Instructions: Please provide your impressions of this educational program by answering the following questions. Be frank and specific, especially in explaining negative comments. Your candid review will help potential buyers evaluate this program for their applications. Your review will be confidential.

I. Rating Quality, Content and Suitability

Place an X in the appropriate box for the rating that most clearly reflects your opinion on each topic. Feel free to add comments where desired.

A. Quality

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
1. Audio					
2. Video/Slides					
3. Script					
4. Performance					
5. Narration					
6. Editing					
7. Graphics					

(Fig. 1 continued on next page)

Fig. 1. Evaluation form for nonprint media such as slide/tape sets, videotapes or videodiscs.

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(Fig. 1, continued)

B. Content

	Excel- lent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
1. Clarity					
2. Creativity					
3. Instructional design					
4. Subject matter accuracy					
5. Stimulates interest					
6. Logically organized					
7. Helpfulness of information					

C. Suitability for

	Excel- lent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
1. University teaching/extension					
2. University research/current literature					
3. Vocational teaching					
4. General public					

D. Miscellaneous Topics

- Program length ☐ adequate ☐ too long ☐ too short
- Lifespan of subject matter in the program ☐ over 7 years ☐ 2 to 7 years ☐ less than 2 years
- Did the program meet its objectives? ☐ yes ☐ no
- Will the program improve teaching productivity? ☐ yes ☐ no
- Can you use the program's information in your work? ☐ yes ☐ no

II. Open-ended Questions

- Who do you think is the intended audience for this program?
- Was the subject matter effectively presented in the program?
- What do you think is the program's greatest benefit?
- Describe any strengths or weaknesses you saw in the program.
- Describe how you would improve this program.
- Do you think this medium will provide cost and/or time savings for teaching its subject matter?
- Do you think this program should be listed in a Recommended Media List by ASHS?
☐ Yes ☐ No
 If yes, under which category would the program fit?
☐ University teaching/extension ☐ University research ☐ Vocational teaching ☐ General public
- Additional comments or specific reactions.

III. Overall Rating (check one)

- ☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Signature: _____ Date: _____

bcl/rtt dlat/vidval

nology's Resources Available section). Finally, since more than one reviewer would evaluate the medium, potential buyers should find a rated listing of nonprint media fair and reliable.

If this evaluation form is adopted, even in modified form, by journals that review nonprint media, ASHS reviewers can begin evaluating various media. While the Educational Media Committee advocates that each piece of nonprint media be evaluated critically, a number of concerns or problems stand in the way of reviewing and rating nonprint media: 1) obtaining or borrowing current nonprint media; 2) coordinating and categorizing topics for simultaneous review; 3) recruiting reviewers who would complete the evaluations and write a review article(s) for *HortTechnology* or other journals; 4) keeping updated lists of new and reviewed nonprint media, and 5) justifying costs involved in shipping nonprint media to and from reviewers.

The Educational Media Committee hopes that this paper and the evaluation form will initiate reaction, response, and subsequent action by individuals and editors in ASHS and other societies. We are at your service and look forward to hearing from you. ■

Literature Cited

- McMillen, M. 1985. 1985 Handbook of forms. Intl. Television Assn., Irving, Texas.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. 1987. Cooperative extension videotape evaluation form. U.S. Dept. Agr. Ext. Serv., Washington, D.C.

People-Plant Council: Linking Horticulture with Human Well-being

The People-Plant Council (PPC) was formed as a direct result of the national interdisciplinary symposium, "The Role of Horticulture in Human Well-being and Social Development," held in Apr. 1990. The mis-

sion of this Council, to document and communicate the effect that plants and flowers have on human well-being and improved life-quality, is carried out through a five-part strategy focusing on the psychological, sociological, physiological, economic, and environmental effects of plants on people:

- Communication—maintaining an interdisciplinary network between researchers, funders, users, and Council affiliates.
- Research—encouraging cooperative efforts in identifying research priorities and establishing interdisciplinary research methodologies.
- Funding—establishing a network to link researchers to funding sources.
- Implementation—encouraging the use of horticulture for enhanced life-quality based on research findings.
- Education—encouraging curriculum development to include people-plant interaction as an essential subject.

The PPC is not a membership organization, but rather a link or affiliation between organizations. Affiliation is open to all organizations within the horticulture and social science community and allied or interested organizations to include, but not limited to: academic and professional associations; trade and commercial associations; and volunteer, civic, amateur, and concerned groups. Affiliation with the PPC is established through funding to maintain its operational expenses.

PPC also accepts contributions to support its goals. Contributors include commercial horticulture businesses; public relations and consulting firms; and foundations, endowments, and individuals who have a commitment to the vision of the Council and seek to support its goals and fund its operational strategies.

Researchers, educators, and others use the services of the People-Plant Council, including a biannual newsletter, periodic update reports, access to a computerized information and conference/educational program registration with a cost-of-service fee. As this is not a membership organization, individuals can receive the PPC information by submitting their name to the mailing list. There is no charge for being maintained on the mailing list at this time.

Current Affiliates and Contributors include the American Society for Horticultural Science, Associated Landscape Contractors of America, Wholesale Florists and Florist Suppliers of America, American Horticultural Therapy Association, Society of American Florists, Horticulture Research Institute, Florida Nurserymen and Growers Association, Bailey Nurseries, Inc., and many individuals. The immediate focus of the People-Plant Council is the development of comprehensive bibliographies of research and other articles related to people-plant interaction. Through funding from various horticultural associations (including ASHS, ALCA, SAF, WF&FSA and HRI), the People-Plant Council has developed two computerized bibliographies: one in the area of People-Plant Interaction and a second one specifically for the area of horticultural therapy. The combined PPI and HT bibliographies contain about 2000 citations, 40% of which include an abstract. Due to the size and length of each bibliography (>450 pages of hard copy), they are available on diskette in WordPerfect 5.0 for IBM and require a 286/386 processor and at least 1 MB RAM for correct operation. The electronic format facilitates searching for keywords or specific articles and allows users to rearrange the material as needed. This project is already proving valuable in stimulating research and serving as a reference for individuals conducting further research. As funds allow, we anticipate increasing its value by collecting, abstracting, and key-wording all citations. (See Resources Available section for further details.)

For additional information, contact: Dr. Diane Relf, Coordinator, People-Plant Council, Dept. of Horticulture, VPI&SU, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0327 (phone: 703/231-6254; fax: 703/231-3083). ■

In Search of the "Buried Reports"

Doug Sanders

The first two issues of *HortTechnology* have now crossed your desk. Generally, response has been favorable and we hope that the posi-

tive response will grow with time. Several suggestions have come to light, and your editorial committee is working on developing these changes, such as

- more photos
- less "journal" appearance
- more practical approach
- better take-home messages
- more timely articles
- additional "jazzy" layouts

With some criticisms, we Associate Editors have more difficulty changing such things as

- "no or limited extension authors"
- "too many research reports"
- "limited practical value of papers"

In response to these criticisms I say "Look around you!"

- How many people in extension have good articles buried in files? Most!
- Do these articles from extension people have practical value? Most!
- Would more extension-authored articles add balance of report-type articles? Yes!

My suggestion as a solution to our dilemma is to develop a *HortTechnology* mentoring system. The system would work as follows:

- Someone volunteer from each department or administrative unit or, in lieu of a volunteer, someone is "volunteered";
- The volunteer encourages all colleagues to contribute reports that are specific to an issue theme, where appropriate;
- The volunteer solicits, encourages, and contributes reports of interest before they are buried, or oversees the resurrection of said reports.

Thus, we would like each of you to mentor this new publication into a major outreach organ of our science and art and make it the premier publication of our industry. If we do our jobs as mentors, it will be reality. To formalize the mentor system, please contact me by August 1, 1992. After this date, I will be contacting many of you. [Contact: Doug Sanders, Dept. of Horticulture, North Carolina State Univ., Raleigh, NC 27695.] ■