

Federally-Recognized Tribes Extension Program
2008 HIGHLIGHTS

FRTEP UNIT: Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Cherokee, North Carolina

PROGRAM AREA Agriculture, Horticulture, Community Service,
Adult Education, Natural Resources, Beekeeping,
Entrepreneurism, Volunteerism

PROGRAM TITLE: Community Education Programs – Smoky Mountain
Beekeepers, Tsa La Gi Master Gardeners and the
Cherokee Native Plant Study Group

ISSUE(S) ADDRESSED:

Opportunities for adults to participate in informal education are few in the remote Appalachian Mountains. Education can lead to a better quality of life from increased efficiency, improved decision-making and entrepreneurship.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Cooperative Extension on the Cherokee Reservation addresses the need for adult education in the areas of agriculture and natural resources by fostering the Smoky Mountain Beekeepers, the Cherokee Native Plant Study Group and Tsa La Gi Master Gardeners.

In the case of the Master Gardener program, the Agent provided 40 hours of educational classes on a variety of regional gardening subjects. In turn the participants have provided at least 40 hours of community volunteer service.

The Agent serves as an Advisor for the Cherokee Native Plant Study Group and the Smoky Mountain Beekeepers assisting with planning their monthly educational programs, grant writing and other activities.

PROGRAM IMPACTS:

Tsa La Gi Master Gardeners have extended Cooperative Extension's outreach through educational projects such as the Center for Cherokee Plants, the Cherokee Native Plant Study Group, the Cherokee Farmers Market, the Oconoluftee Indian Village Historic Garden, lectures, workshops and other activities. They have given over 3000 hours of volunteer service to the Cherokee community. One couple has established a seed house and sells their heirloom seeds on the internet.

The Smoky Mountain Beekeepers hold monthly educational meetings that attract an average of 25 people from the area. Additionally, the group holds

a beginning beekeeper workshop every spring that aids 65+ new beekeepers in the success of their bees. The group is the source of local information on alternatives to the use of pesticides in bee hives, the latest research and field-proven methods of beekeeping. Most of the beekeepers sell their honey locally.

The Cherokee Native Plant Study Group holds monthly educational meetings with at least 20 regular participants. They have successfully secured grant funding to aid in the development of their programs. Four members of the group have created home businesses making products with native plants and teaching. One couple sells their products on the internet.

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New beekeepers benefit from hands-on workshops.



Tsa la Gi Master Gardeners learning Cherokee gardening terms from Linguist Garfield Long, Jr.



Hands-on activities are popular with the Cherokee Native Plant Study Group.