

Iowa Increases Public's Knowledge about Biomass

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CenUSA outreach and extension educators are making the public aware of the value of biochar through demonstration plots. Participants who attended four home demonstration field days in Iowa were surveyed to see how much their knowledge about biochar increased as a result of the educational programs that were presented.

Approximately 350 people attended one of the four 2013 Iowa Home Demonstration Garden Field Days showcasing the biochar test plots. Field days were hosted at Muscatine, Armstrong, and the Horticulture Station (2 field days) from mid-July to early August. There were 115 biochar surveys completed (33% response rate).

Before attending the field days,

- at least 77% of respondents had **low or no understanding** of biochar as a byproduct, its difference from charcoal, or the benefits and the economic value of biochar as a soil amendment;
- at least 76% had **low to no likeliness** of finding out more about biochar, using it, or telling others about biochar.

After the field day presentations,

- at least 80% had a **moderate to high understanding of biochar as a byproduct**, its difference from charcoal and its benefits as a soil amendment
- 72% of respondents had a **moderate to high understanding of the economic value**;
- at least 68% had a **moderate to high likeliness** of finding out more about biochar, using it, or telling others about biochar.

Sixty-eight percent of participants were over age 60, 65% were female, and 58% drove 11-50 miles to attend one of the field days.

Through demonstrations such as these, CenUSA Outreach and Extension is able to reach the public and increase their awareness and knowledge about biochar and its potential benefits in the home garden.

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