

Fall 2012

Communications Audit

UF/IFAS Center for Landscape
Conservation & Ecology

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Center for Public Issues Education
IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
UF|IFAS

PIE2012/13-02B

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Background

The UF/IFAS Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology (CLCE) was created by the Florida Legislature in 2006 to promote the protection and preservation of Florida's natural resources and quality of life through responsible landscape management—the “Florida-Friendly” program. The mission of CLCE has been to protect and conserve Florida's natural resources through research-based sustainable urban landscape practices. The center’s long-term vision is to be the leading source of science-based information on horticulture and the urban environment in Florida.

Florida’s landscape plays an important role in the state’s economy, and Florida’s Green Industry (lawn, landscape, and grounds-related businesses) generates \$10 billion a year. Though tourism is Florida’s largest industry, and the healthy, beautiful landscapes contribute to visitors’ impression and enjoyment of their time in Florida.

However, many areas of the state suffer from water shortages. Poor water quality can be found throughout the state, and exotic invasive species pose significant threats to public lands, natural areas and private properties alike. Many Floridians unintentionally contribute to these issues because they don’t realize that potential impacts of their landscape management practices. CLCE promotes “Florida-Friendly” landscape practices to address the aforementioned threats and protect the state’s economy and environment through addressing individual and commercial landscaping and gardening practices.

CLCE has faculty throughout the state advancing research, Extension, and education efforts in interdisciplinary fields with objectives that include:

- Identify the effects of landscape design and management practices on biological diversity and ecosystem health
- Document and establish standards for lowest levels of fertilizer and irrigation needed to establish and sustain healthy landscape plant materials
- Identify practices for the management of residential landscapes based upon lessons learned from natural systems
- Develop plant establishment principles that support habitat restoration in the urban-rural interface
- Develop plant selection strategies to minimize environmental impacts and enhance environmental quality
- Identify practices to design and manage landscapes with Low Impact Development strategies – from lot size to neighborhood size
- Identify plant selection and landscape design methodologies that minimize environmental impacts of pest management
- Develop best management practices for lot, neighborhood, and watershed stormwater management
- Document the impact of landscape management practices on water quality and quantity, including groundwater, bays, rivers, streams, lakes and ponds.

CLCE is also associated with various landscaping and gardening organizations and programs, which cater to multiple audiences. These programs include: *Florida Master Gardeners*, *Florida Yards and Neighborhoods* (FYN), and *Gardening in a Minute* (Giam). Addressing the commercial/business sector are the *Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Builder and Developer Program*, *Florida-Friendly Landscaping*, and the *Green Industry Best Management Practices programs* (GI-BMPs).

CLCE and its programs have developed many communications efforts and have requested a communications audit of the communications materials with the Center for Public Issues Education (PIE Center). By conducting formative research, CLCE will be able to identify the effectiveness of current branding and communications as well as determine possible new branding and communications strategies for itself and programs.

Methods

A communications audit was conducted on the CLCE website, social media, and print materials. The process of the Audit includes identifying the target audience of all communication materials, analyzing each medium (website, social media, print materials), assessing the consistency of each medium as well as across all communication materials, and evaluating aspects that could be made stronger to better engage the target audience.

The PIE Center requested and received a representative sampling of materials used by the CLCE to communicate with both external and internal audiences. CLCE's website and that of *Gardening in a Minute* was also audited. These materials were reviewed and analyzed for design, consistency, usability, messaging strategies, and effectiveness. The following communications materials were reviewed and analyzed:

Website

1. UF/IFAS Center for Landscape Ecology & Conservation website: <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/clce/>
2. *Gardening in a Minute* website: <http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/giam/>

Social media (linked from UF/IFAS Center for Landscape Ecology & Conservation site)

3. Florida Master Gardeners on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/florida.mastergardeners>
4. Florida Master Gardeners on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/FloridaMGs/>
5. UF Gardening YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/ufgardening>
6. Gardening in a Minute Flickr site: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gardeninginaminute>
7. Florida Master Gardeners Pinterest site: <http://pinterest.com/floridamgs/>
8. Florida Master Gardeners Wordpress blog: <http://flmastergardener.wordpress.com/>

Print materials

9. *Three Year Report*, January 2009
10. CLCE brochure
11. *Gardening in a Minute* promotional pieces (6)
12. *Gardening in a Minute* fact sheets
13. *Solutions for your Yard* Extension promotional pieces (2)

The website changed design mid-stream, and the audit was completed while the original website was active. Thus, the website section of this report will provide a compare-contrast assessment between the two sites, but also focus on the design and layout of the new site. Also, the *Gardening in a Minute* website was assessed, as the program is a production of CLCE. Since the *Florida Master Gardener* program, the *Florida-Friendly Landscaping* program, and the *Florida Yards & Neighborhoods* programs have their own websites and while they are also associated with CLCE, they were not evaluated in this audit. However, recommendations regarding the consistency between the sites have been provided.

Findings

CLCE main organizational website

(<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/clce/>)

For the audit, the organizational website was reviewed generally, and then by individual page. The following is an assessment of the strengths and weakness discovered during the review. However, The CLCE website was redesigned in look and feel, as well as some content during the audit. Overall, the new site has improved layout and design aspects (see Figure 1), making the redesigned site more organized and less cluttered.

Image 1: Screenshot of redesigned CLCE homepage with better design/look/feel and navigation.



Overall strengths

- The color scheme of the redesigned site is more modern with white and various shades of blue adding to a professional look that also lends to a better fit the University of Florida (UF) colors, and therefore the UF Identity Guide.
- The navigation of the redesigned site is easier to use. The six tabs at the top with a distinct “home” option provide the visitor with a simple design that is easy to navigate and find topics quickly.
- The search feature of the page has high visibility and is easy to use.
- The social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) featured on the site are found in icons on the top that provide interactive links for visitors.
- Font of body text is easy to read, as is the CLCE logo at the top of the page.
- Images used throughout the site are high quality, but not all are personally relevant to a target audience.

- The list of partners and resources on the bottom of the page is extensive, but also organized.

Overall weaknesses

- Although the CLCE website changed drastically during the time of the audit, the universal resource locator (URL) did not (<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/clce/>). The URL is long, and does not connect the visitor to CLCE or the other CLCE-related programs (*Gardening in a Minute*, *Master Gardeners*, *FYN* program, *FYN for Builders & Developers* program, *Green Industry Best Management Practices* program, etc.). In addition, most of those audiences would likely go directly to the URL for the program they are interested in not the main organizational site.
- The target audience, as well as the general purpose of the website is unclear. Since homeowners, Master Gardeners, and landscapers, as well as the Green Industry/builders are all potential visitors, the main organizational site does not cater to any specific audience.
- The site inconsistently uses ampersands in titles or headings throughout the site.
- According to analytics provided by CLCE staff, the main organizational site has low traffic, and the current users of the site visit the faculty information most frequently.
- The name of the center may not relate to the activities and programs in which the center involved.
- The logo of the center is directly related to the UF and Institute of Food and Agriculture Science (IFAS) logo, aligning CLCE with the UF Identity Guide, but the logo may not be distinct enough to be identified on its own.
- The main organizational site shows unclear relationships with other programs (*Gardening in a Minute*, *Florida Master Gardeners*, *Florida-Friendly Landscaping*, *Florida Yards & Neighborhood* programs, *Green Industry BMPs*). The site provides only an introduction to the other programs, as well as the links those programs' websites without explaining the interactions between each.

Previous design weaknesses

In addition, the following weaknesses were identified on the former CLCE website design:

- The former homepage was not user friendly due to a busy page with unclear organization.
 - The sidebars were too numerous and confusing, which may lead to a high bounce rate. Many visitors would not know the acronym "FFL" and would therefore not understand the connection or purpose.
- The purpose of the faculty spotlight was unclear as well as the target audience for the content. The language of the spotlight seemed academic, but its location on the homepage of the organizational site made it seem like the public would be the target audience.

CLCE Homepage

Strengths

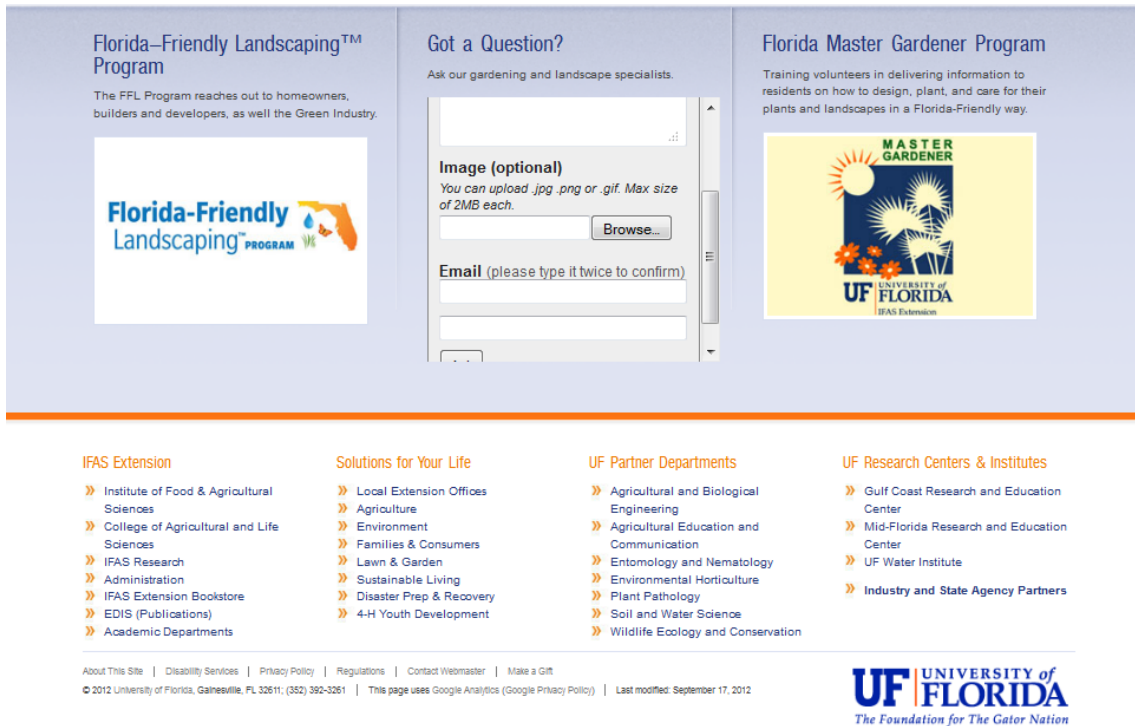
- The design of the new page with a slideshow of clickable images is more interactive than the design of the former homepage. Visitors can learn about CLCE highlights and news featured on the slideshow without moving beyond the homepage.

Weaknesses

- The titles of the tabs on the top of the page make the content held within those tabs unclear.

- Information on how to contact the center is not readily available on the homepage. If a visitor does not see the “Got a Question” submission box, there is no “contact us” or other opportunity to submit comments or questions.
- In the section underneath the rotating slideshow, which is divided into thirds, only the images, not the titles, within each third are clickable. In addition, it is unclear why two programs, which appear unrelated to CLCE, are highlighted on the homepage (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Unclear connection to highlighted programs and long list of partners



About Tab

Strengths

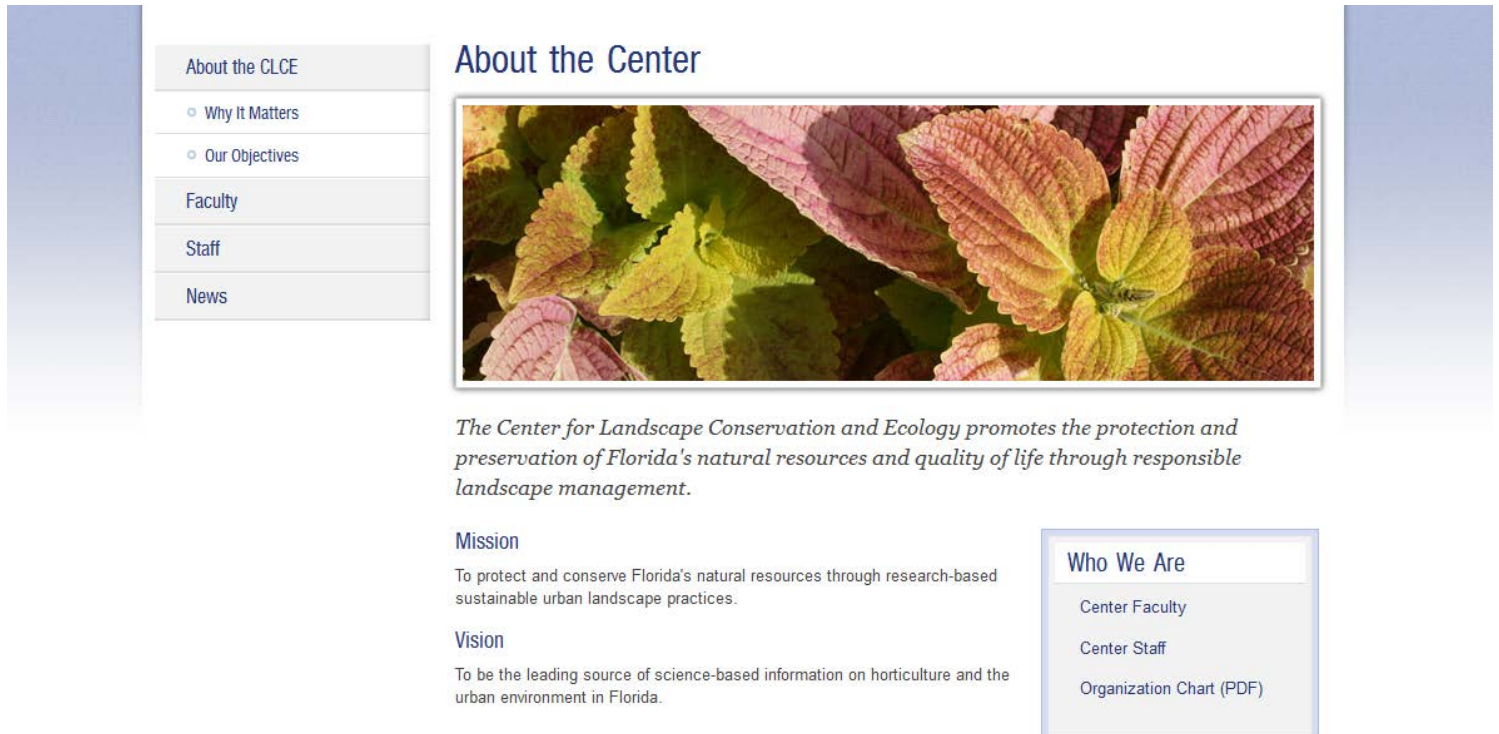
- The landing page of the newly designed “About” tab is concise. However, the mission and vision of the organization do not clearly articulate the day-to-day activities of the center and use technical language that the public may not understand.
- The CLCE organizational chart shows how the center is connected to other entities within the university, which is important for both UF and non-UF site visitors. However, some of the programs within CLCE are not mentioned in the chart.
- The “Why it Matters” section of the “About” tab addresses the bigger picture of the center and issues around Florida, putting CLEC in the appropriate context.

Weaknesses

- “News” as a subheading within the “About” is not highly visible and may not draw visitors due to the multiple clicks necessary to view the page.
- The content of the subheading “Objectives” does not outline the relationship between CLCE and other programs by not mentioning the programs in any of the organizational objectives.

- Some of the subheadings within the “About” tab are listed two to three times in the website, which is redundant. For instance, the content within “Center Faculty” is listed in the drop down menu of the “About” tab, as well as the right and left sidebars of the same tab (see Figure 3).
- Within the faculty directory, all of the faculty members have a uniform look and feel to their biographies, but one. Tom Wichman, whose biography is found on an outside site, looks nothing like the others and is inconsistent.

Figure 3: About page has two sidebars with the same information



For Homeowners Tab

Strengths

- The landing page of the “For Homeowners” tab begins to show the connections between CLCE and other programs with a brief introduction and summary of each program.

Weaknesses

- The “Multimedia Gallery, within “Extension & Outreach” takes several clicks to reach and is not an obvious section of the site to the casual visitor.
- A clear description of the “Multimedia Gallery” page is not given, therefore the purpose and target audience of the content is unknown.
- The landing page of the “For Homeowners” tab is lengthy, involves a lot of scrolling and begins to look cluttered.
- The title of the tab, “For Homeowners,” does not relate to the content within the tab.

- Some of the items within the structure of the tab only have direct links to program sites, which are outside of the CLCE main organizational site, while others items have landing pages with descriptors. This inconsistency can be confusing for visitors.
- Subheadings within the “For Homeowners” tab are listed twice, once in the dropdown and once in the sidebar, which is redundant.
- The “Plant ID Online Resource for 4-H and Master Gardeners” is a heading on the “Outreach & Extension” page that is not clickable, but the rest of the headings on the page are clickable.

For Professionals Tab

Strengths

- The landing page of the “For Professionals” tab addresses CLCE’s relationship to professional programs CLCE offers.

Weaknesses

- Some of the items within the structure of the tab only have direct links to program sites, which are outside of the CLCE main organizational site, while others items have landing pages with descriptors. This inconsistency can be confusing for visitors.
- The “Training Spotlight” on the “Extension & Outreach” describes the purpose of training, but does not give information regarding how or where to receive the training.
- The “Multimedia Gallery” page in the “Extension & Outreach” section of the “For Professionals” page has the same content as the “Multimedia Gallery” page in the “For Homeowners” page. This could confuse the multiple target audience of the site.
- The “Multimedia Gallery” within the “Extension & Outreach” takes several clicks to reach and is not an obvious section of the site to the casual visitor.
- The landing page of the “For Professionals” tab contains a lot of text, involves a lot of scrolling and begins to look cluttered.

Research Tab

Strengths

- The landing page of the “Research” tab explains interdisciplinary nature of CLCE.
- The “Research” tab shows the high number of projects in which CLEC is involved.

Weaknesses

- The landing page of the “Research” tab is too long due to the inclusion of “Featured Projects.”
- “Featured Projects” is not highlighted in the navigation or hierarchy of the website.
- Only one of the headings within the “Featured Projects” section of the website is a link to more information.
- The inclusion of information regarding how the faculty from different departments interact does not fit the content of the Research page.

- The “Irrigation” page, as well as the “Soil and Water” page of the site are too long and detailed for a visitor of the site to comprehend.

Grants Tab

Strengths

- The “Grants” tab shows the high number of projects and diversity of topics in which CLEC is involved.

Weaknesses

- The topics within the “Grants” tab overlap with the topics from the “Research” tab.
- There are a limited amount details about the grant projects included in this tab. Visitors to the site may desire more information than is offered.
- The landing page of the “Grants” tab contains a lot of text, involves a lot of scrolling and begins to look cluttered, which would be overwhelming for the viewer.

IFAS Tab

Strengths

- Alludes to strong relationship between CLCE and IFAS.

Weaknesses

- The “IFAS” tab is only a direct link to the IFAS sites, which is outside of the CLCE main organizational site; this is a disconnection from the rest of the tabs of the site and can be confusing for visitors. Visitors on this site are not likely to have utility for switching to outside IFAS site.

Gardening in a Minute Website

The *Gardening in a Minute* website was also audited. This site experienced a 124% increase in traffic (unique visitors) compared to a 73% increase on the *Master Gardener* site. The *Gardening in a Minute* site had roughly 180,000 visits in January-August of 2012, as compared to 65,562 visits to the *Master Gardener* site.

The bounce rate for *Gardening in a Minute* was 80%, while the *Master Gardener’s* bounce rate was 57%. The percentage of total visitors who are returns is larger for the *Master Gardener* site as well. Both sites have a recognizable pattern of visits: numbers peaking in spring and fall and falling slightly in the middle of summer and the dead of winter. Looking at monthly numbers there is a peak on the day that the newsletter comes out.

Below is a general list of strengths and weaknesses of the site. Overall, the design of the new site is inconsistent with the new CLCE site and suffers from cluttered design, confusing navigation, and an outdated color scheme.

Strengths

- The site contains a wealth of information including backlogs of multimedia resources as well as when and where the shows are aired, what the show is about, and links to local Extension offices.

Weaknesses

- The homepage of *Gardening in a Minute* is not user friendly, cluttered, with unclear organization. The sidebars are too numerous and confusing. The site appears as to have three columns of information, which can be confusing to navigate and overwhelms the viewer (see Figure 4).
- The site gives inconsistent information. The main organizational CLCE site alludes to *Gardening in a Minute* being a CLEC program, but on the *Gardening in a Minute* site, the language says “is a radio show brought to you by the University of Florida Extension Service.”
- There are tabs along the top of the page as well as the left side of the page. These give a viewer a lot to select from and viewers may not be able to cognitively process where the information they are looking for might be found.
- The logo and color scheme of *Gardening in a Minute* is outdated. In addition, the logo does not show any relationship to CLCE, just UF.
- The “Browse by Topic” tab is not user friendly. A viewer may not be able to determine what they are looking for by the appropriate topic as listed alphabetically the site.
- The “Partners” tab is high profile, which may not be necessary.
- The “Local office” tab is a direct links to *Solutions for Your Life*, which is outside of the *Gardening in a Minute* site, this inconsistency can be confusing for visitors and appears as if they have bounced from the site.
- The questions within the “FAQs” tab are basic and descriptive, but do not target a particular audience. In addition, this is a high profile tab, which may not be necessary.
- Within the “About” tab, the link to the CLCE website does not take you to the CLCE website, but an internal *Gardening in a Minute* page. The same is true for the *Florida Yards and Neighbors* tab on the left-hand side.
- The purpose of the “Potpourri” tab is unclear and has little organization.
- The titles of the “Problems,” “Maintenance & Care,” as well as the “Plants & Grasses” tabs do not describe the contents of the page in a way a viewer would understand.

Figure 4: Screenshot of the *Gardening in a Minute* website showing a cluttered design with three columns of content.



Social Media

The social media linked directly from the CLCE website includes Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. However, the Facebook and YouTube sites are branded by the *Master Gardener* program, not CLCE. In addition, the YouTube channel is branded as a “UF Gardening” channel. Also, another social media site came up when Googled, Foursquare. Observations and comments are listed below for each site.

Facebook

- This page appears to be a relatively well-used site, with frequent posts, people talking about it and a high number of ‘likes.’ (1639 likes)

- There are only a handful of pictures and only one event listed on the page, which is outdated.
- The logo of the organization is the profile picture and the cover photo is also logical (see Figure 5).
- The “Newsletter signup” feature is good and is a positive way to increase membership/involvement in *Master Gardeners*. However, it is unclear in which program or center in which the newsletter originates.

Figure 5: Screenshot of the Master Gardener Facebook page.



Twitter

- Though this is a *Master Gardeners* site, one CLCE faculty member is mentioned in many tweets, giving the impression of a connection between the program and the center. However, that connection is not clearly explained in the profile of the account
- There are a very few tweets and followers of this Twitter account (65 tweets since May 2012, 124 followers and following 31).

YouTube

- In the “about” information on the YouTube channel states that the channel is sponsored by IFAS or UF Gardening, therefore, there is no connection to CLCE.
- This channel does not receive a lot of traffic and there has been no activity since July 2012 (three months) and it appears as if new videos have not been uploaded in four years.
- The number of video views ranges from less than 100 to over 11,000.

Flickr

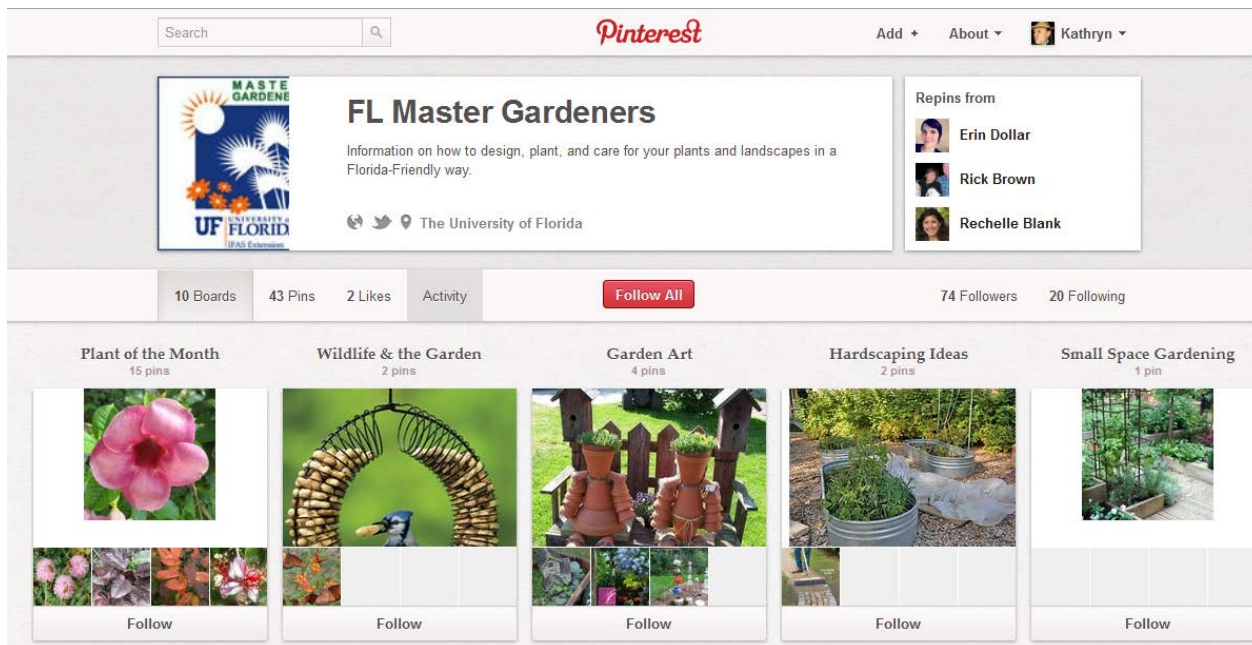
- This site is a *Gardening in a Minute* photo gallery site, and does not mention CLCE directly. In addition, it appears to be utilized by a variety of UF gardening/landscape/Extension services.
- This site is not directly linked to the CLCE website, but is promoted in CLCE’s staff email signatures.

- The Flickr account seems useful internally for archiving photos, but may not be necessary to advertise if used by multiple entities.

Pinterest

- *Master Gardener* also sponsors the Pinterest account and although there are not a huge amount of followers (74), the boards are appropriate for the *Master Gardener* audience.
- The profile picture within the logo of the account is off centered (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Screenshot of the Master Gardener Pinterest account with logo cut off from the profile picture.



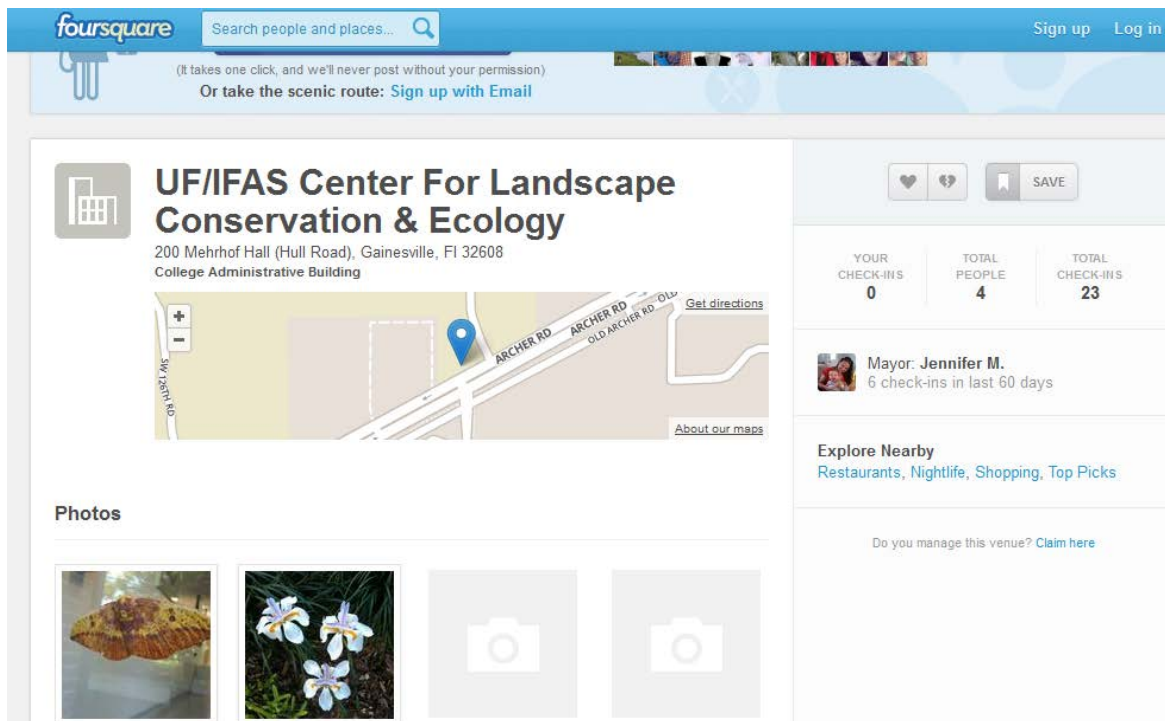
WordPress Blog

- This WordPress blog site is another *Master Gardener* site in which CLCE is never mentioned.
- The purpose of the blog appears to post the *Neighborhood Gardener* newsletter. They are no other types of post in the recent history of the blog. Using a blog for the newsletter alone limits the capabilities of the blog because interested visitors could also simply subscribe to the email newsletter themselves.

Foursquare

- The Foursquare social media platform appears to be the only social media site the clearly identifies CLCE (see Figure 7).
- The purpose of Foursquare account is unclear. It appears that only one person has made posts or checked in and there very little information about the organization.

Figure 7: Screenshot of the CLCE Foursquare account.



Print Materials

The CLCE printed materials that were reviewed included 1) a Three Year Report, 2) the CLCE brochure, 3) *Gardening in Minute* promotional pieces, 4) *Gardening in a Minute* fact sheets, and 5) *Solutions for your Yard* Extension promotional pieces. In general, the print pieces are all different, lack consistency, design, and look across mediums. There is no graphic, logo, or tagline theme that makes CLCE recognizable in these materials.

Three Year Report, January 2009

This four-page report is an overview of CLCE accomplishments between 2006-2008. However, the target audience of the piece is not clear, but it is probably not the public. Information in the report included a brief introduction, mission, extension activities (websites, news stories, curricula, and multimedia), grant-funded research by year, and list of faculty.

The design of the report is plain, but simple and straightforward. The cover is a simple title with a photo of a pink flower and a house in the background. Some of the pages get cluttered, particularly the grants page, as each of the many grants is listed. The report lacks any kind of brand, logo, or recognizable design characteristics that would link it to CLCE.

CLCE brochure

This brochure also has a simple design, as a single folded page brochure with a brief overview of the CLCE purpose and where it's located. An additional graphic to display the center is used on this brochure with an animated graphic featuring a house with flowers in the background, and palm trees, a pond, and a flamingo in the foreground.

The topics covered in the brochure include: what we do, how we do it, what we are trying to accomplish, why it matters, and concerns for Florida's future. The purpose of the brochure is unclear, other than to introduce a broad audience to CLCE. However, once the mission is clear to the reader, the brochure has no further purpose. The design is simple, more relevant (to what the organization does) than the Three Year Report, but still quite generic and too simple to be of use once the brochure is skimmed once.

Gardening in a Minute promotional pieces (6)

The *Gardening in a Minute* promotional pieces include: 1) poster, 2) CD packet, 3) “Bud to Bloom” event program, 4) notepad, 5) business card, and 6) seed packet.

In general, the *Gardening in a Minute* promotional materials are creative and utilize a consistent logo, with the exception of the event program. The colors and graphic in the logo are bold, but seem outdated and not as sharp as they could be.

The seed packet and notepad are useful, and the CD packet provides a disk with a sampling of 10 radio shows. The other materials are more information-focused. The poster highlights photos with just a few words to introduce the radio show. The business card would be useful for handing out to passerby at a fair, conference, or expo. The event program is simply an agenda of the evening’s events and advertising of the sponsors.

The poster is simple but outdated in color, design, and photos. The audience is not clear. The CD packet is readable and attractive, but is a bit busy in design. The CD packet provides an overview of the radio show topics and host. The sample is great for press kits, Master Gardeners, Extension agents, etc.

The seed packet and notepad get the word out about the program while also providing utility. This kind of communication material (CD packet, seed packet, notepad) that is interactive, interesting, and useful for people are better to hand out and pique people’s interest than traditional business cards or print brochures. Lastly, the event program serves its purpose, but lacks the *Gardening in a Minute* logo, likely because the logo does not go with the design and color scheme of the program.

Gardening in a Minute fact sheets

The *Gardening in a Minute* fact sheets include ten informational pieces that fit together by shape and include: 1) About us, 2) Butterfly Gardening, 3) Water Gardens, 4) Palms, 5) Indoor Plants, 6) Container Gardens, 7) Vegetable Gardening, 8) Bedding Plants, 9) Landscaping for Wildlife, and 10) Bulbs. Since the sheets are single-sided and loose-leaf, there is nothing to keep them together without some kind of binding.

While the design is very interesting and the topics are useful, it is not likely that all of the topics would be useful for individual gardeners. They may have an interest in one or two, but not all ten. The fact sheets do not go into enough detail to be too useful for anyone but the casual public with a general interest in gardening. For example, under Butterfly Gardening, the fact sheet tells the reader to “provide a combination of adult nectar sources and larval host plants.” The fact sheet does not provide any examples or specific plants species that would fulfill this directive. Also, the *Gardening in a Minute* logo is on the first page only, not throughout the fact sheets.

Solutions for your Yard Extension promotional pieces (2)

These two publications include the single-sided informational brochure on Extension *Solutions for your Yard* program and the *Your Southern Garden with Walter Reeves* post card. The only relationship between these two documents is the Extension connection.

The *Solutions for your Yard* brochure is a very simple design, one-half page and single-sided. The entire front side of the brochure/flier is green and aside from a small picture of a lawn, flowerbed, and sidewalk and the Extension title, is empty space. The backside features text on the following topics: what do you want to grow, real answers for real life, lawn and garden tips, and now available 24/7. This informational flier provides the public with information about how they could use the Extension services, and might make sense at fairs, conferences, and expos. Overall, the design is overly simple and aside from reading one time to understand the program/services, does not inform the reader what to do or where to go.

The *Your Southern Garden* promotional piece is a large post card, presumably meant to send out to potential viewers (it's a TV show). However, if the recipient was not sure what this was, the post card is not overly helpful, as it does not say it's a TV show, nor does it say when the show is broadcast. The design is cluttered and there is no discernible color scheme.

Recommendations

Recommendations are broken into two categories: top tier (most important), and second tier. The categories are further broken down into general, websites, social media, and print materials. Also see Appendix A for screen shots of the associated websites demonstrating a general lack of consistency.

Top Tier Priorities

General

- **Consider the target audience.** Based on CLCE's mission, the center needs to reach a variety of audiences, however, these audiences are unclear throughout CLCE communication methods and platforms. Therefore, CLCE needs to consider which audience it currently reaches and which audiences it would like to expand its reach. In addition, audience segmentation will be needed to maximize the ability to target effectively. The said target audience should be recognized and established in order to go about preparing materials to be used for promotion.
- **Consider rebranding.** Currently, CLCE uses only the text of its name for branding with the UF identifier. A more developed logo would help lend to consistency internally and externally, and provide CLCE with more recognition. However, before the materials are updated, consider testing them on focus groups or in-depth interviews with the target audience.
 - **Create and umbrella brand.** To deal with the need to brand specific products or programs, many organizations have an "umbrella brand"- which is the overall organization's branding element/logo, and then specific identifiers for sub-brands/programs. Both the organizational and specific program logos are designed to complement each other and often appear together. This concept is called "brand-within-a-brand," which means that the major focus is to make sure that all programs are visually identified as belonging to the overall "umbrella" brand. CLCE could be the umbrella in which *Master Gardeners*, *Florida-Friendly Landscaping*, and *Gardening in a Minute* fall under.
- **Create an identity guide.** An identity guide establishes a protocol when any new communication material is created, including brochure or additional pages to a website. It specifies requirements for logo placement, colors to represent the organization, which fonts to use for headlines and body text, and any other specifications the organization wishes to use to help develop and maintain brand recognition.
- **Describe connections between CLCE and its programs.** CLCE's relationship with its programs is unclear throughout most of the communication materials and platforms used by CLCE. By not identifying the center's role in the programs, the overall brand of CLCE is diluted. By more clearly describing the connections, CLCE will be able to increase the center's visibility and brand recognition. In addition, CLCE should develop and include its mission in all communication materials on the web, in print and social media. This "boilerplate" statement should represent the breadth of the organization in mission, purpose and interaction with its programs.
- **Review materials for consistency.** Review communications materials for consistencies in layout and sentence structure choices. By using a consistent look and feel in all CLCE and CLCE program communications, the brand salience of the center will be increased. In addition, consistency in the use of language is also important for clarity with the audience (i.e. using gardening and landscaping interchangeably when the words have different meanings for different audiences). In addition,

check for uniform linking of headings throughout the websites. Implement a consistent color scheme and use it with all online and printed materials. This, along with the organization logo, will solidify the brand and create a strengthened identity for both internal and external audiences alike.

- **Audit more often.** This will help keep communication materials updated over time. Also, consider sharing results of the audit with other employees and stakeholders to get their impressions and ideas. Often communication materials are generated internally which can lead to confusion from the outside audiences.

CLCE organizational website

- The hierarchy, navigation, as well as the organization of the overall site should be reconsidered to reduce the number of clicks to reach content. For instance, “News,” within the “About the CLCE,” could be its own tab on the homepage if there was enough content while IFAS does not need a tab of its own since the tab is a direct link to a tab outside of the main organizational site. In addition, the “Multimedia Gallery” could be a higher level tab which would increase views.
- The tabs “For Homeowners” and “For Professionals” should be renamed so that can be better understood by visitors to the site. In addition, the redundancies in the navigation for the two tabs should be reduced. For instances, the outreach and education materials for homeowners and professionals should be different.
- Within each section of tabs “For Homeowners” and “For Professionals,” develop landing pages to avoid direct links to outside webpages. The content on the main landing page of each tab could be used for each section of the tab.
- Reduce redundancies between the “Research” and “Grants” pages, or condense the two tabs into one.
- For increased transparency, include the amount of money received, the principal investigator(s) and time period of the grant for transparency, where relevant for research/grant projects.
- To reduce the length and amount of content on the “Research” and “Grants” pages, the title of the projects could be a links project summaries instead of all project summaries listed together.
- Provide a more in-depth explanation of why faculty come from all different departments (interdisciplinary nature of CLCE)

Gardening in a Minute website

- Reduce the amount of clutter on the homepage to allow for easier navigation, by modernizing the site through updated design elements.
- Use one navigation structure. Either the horizontal or vertical navigation system should be removed to develop a clearer, tiered navigation. A clear navigation system will allow users to find focal points and keywords that encourage click through and minimize the bounce rates.

Social Media

- Increase the presence of CLCE on all of the social media platforms currently being used by CLCE and CLCE’s associated programs. On each platform, the partnership between CLEC and *Master Gardeners*, *Gardening in a Minute*, or *Florida-Friendly Landscaping* should be explicit. If CLEC is more present on social media sites, the capacity of the center’s brand will increase.
- Generally, all of social media sites should be updated more frequently and encourage more engagement from social media users. Create content that will generate conversations with members and non-members, which could include more updates,

posts, events, and photos. Be sure to keep track of the metrics to see if improved promotion and activities increases interaction with the page.

- Link all of the social media platforms to each other as well as the websites.
- Review all social media sites to ensure each is a legitimate branch of CLCE communications. The Foursquare account did not appear to be a part of the communications strategy of the center.

Print Materials

- Update the logo and color schemes of the printed materials to reflect more modern design principles.
- Establish a call to action, which supports the center objectives, to be used throughout the communication materials. A call to action will give print materials more of a focus and purpose. In general, the more repetitive a call to action, the more likely it will achieve salience with the consumers.

Second Tier Priorities

General

- In an platforms and mediums, CLCE should focus on using images that are not only of high quality, but personally relevant to the audience.

CLCE organization websites

- The CLCE website URL should be revised to relate to the title of the center with a more direct connection (for example: clce.edu, landscapecenter.edu, landscapeconservation.edu, etc.).
- Add a “contact us” portion of the website so that visitors can identify people within the center.
- It is recommended that CLCE consider conducting an annual usability test on its website to uncover inconsistencies in color, layout or text formatting as well as broken links. Usability testing ensures that documents or websites are straightforward, honest, and easy to understand by the prospective audience.
- Under faculty directory, ensure that all faculty members have a uniform look/feel to their biographies.
- The explanation of faculty from all different departments fits better with the information on the “About” page instead of the “Research” page.

Gardening in a Minute website

- Revise the “Browse by Topic” section of the site to be more user-friendly and searchable instead of browsing only.
- “Partners” does not need a tab of its own; the content could be restructured into a different tab of the site.
- “Local office” does not need a tab of its own since the tab is a direct link to a tab outside of the main program site.
- “FAQs” tab should be moved to the “About” tab where other related information can be found.
- Link the new CLCE website as well as the *Florida Yards and Neighborhoods* website within the “About” page.
- Rename the “Potpourri” tab so that can be better understood by visitors to the site.

Social Media

- CLCE should use all of the social media platforms in which it is involved to promote and feature center research, news, spotlights, and photos.
- Enhance the “about” information on the YouTube channel to encourage a connection between the channel and CLCE. The same connection could be added to the Wordpress blog site.
- Increase activity on YouTube by adding the multimedia material found on the redesigned CLEC website.
- Expand the purpose of the Wordpress site beyond the newsletter. By expanding the purpose, and therefore content of the site, the audience will be inclined to visit the site more frequently.

Print Materials

- Enhance the Gardening in a Minute Fact Sheets to include more detail for a gardener audience. In addition, since the sheets are all loose leaf, it might be beneficial to develop a case, cover, or folder for the materials.
- For future promotional print materials, consider materials that may have a longer shelf life (notepad, seed packet, CD sampler) instead of single use ones that will be read once and discarded (brochures, cards, fliers).