



MAKING THE MOST OF A HOOPHOUSE

Created by Global Gardens, Boise ID

Summary

This presentation was developed for a non-refugee audience but the content can be adapted. The main objective of the presentation is for growers to understand that some crops are better suited to hoop-houses than others, based on seasonality and spacing. Growers will think about which crops to put inside the hoop-house, which I like to call the “high rent district,” and which to plant outdoors, for the greatest sales potential over the course of the season. Farmers will understand the concept of degree days and that both temperature and day length affect plant growth. Finally, an overview of marketing options is presented, so that farmers can begin to think about this before learning more in-depth marketing information in future presentations.

Who made this guide?

This teaching resource was developed by Global Gardens and enhanced in collaboration with the Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED). From 2015-2017, ISED partnered with refugee farmer training programs throughout the country to support the design of new and shareable teaching resources for culturally and linguistically diverse farmers. To access the whole list of newly developed teaching resources for refugee farmer training program, follow this link to the [‘New American Resource Library’](#). For more in-depth explanations of the teaching approaches and activities used in these materials, you can refer to this [Refugee Farmer Teaching Handbook](#).

Audience (TA or Tot)	TA (This is designed for farmers but for a higher literacy audience.)
Language and Literacy Level	Literate in English
Farmer Experience	No experience
Pre-Requisites	None
Region or Climate	Cold high-desert climate. There are some climate specifics which should be adapted for the site.
Program Structure	At the time of this presentation, we were doing monthly visits to the reservation to present on topics that they requested, with occasional field visits.
Season	Any
Time	Maybe 1 hour to present
Staff and Interpreters	One staff, probably an interpreter
Additional Supplies Needed	None
Background Material	None

TEACHING MATERIALS INCLUDED

1. Hoophouse Power Point

Making the most of a hoophouse
KATIE PAINTER
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GLOBAL GARDENS
USDA
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Why use a hoophouse?

- Long Season
- Start earlier

How Cold is it here?

- For Owyhee, NV, average last frost is June 1-10
- Average first frost is September 11-20
- Your frost-free growing season is between 90 and 120 days.
- Most warm-season crops require at least 75 frost-free days to begin producing.

CORE SKILLS IN THIS LESSON

- Understand which crops are best suited to a hoop-house.
- Understand that both heat and day length affect plant growth.
- Understand basic marketing options for small scale vegetable growers.

SUGGESTED TEACHING METHODS

Sorting, categorizing, & matching

- An activity that we did with this was to give each participant a couple of veggie card pictures and ask them to place them on either the “cold season” or “warm season” piece of flip-chart paper. Sometimes I do this as an icebreaker and sometimes later in the lesson, depending on experience of the group. Farmers could then use the same pictures to make a list of crops they plan to grow in the hoop-house and crops they plan to grow outside. For this group, their tendency was to try and fit their whole garden in the hoop-house, when many things are perfectly suited to grow outside in their climate. You can use veggie flashcards to have farmers demonstrate their planting plan for the hoop-house or show their understanding about what to start inside, what to grow inside, etc.

Reflection questions

- You can ask farmers: “Have you planted in a hoop house or used other extension methods before?” “How did it go?” “Tell me about why you would want to use this”, “what is your plan for using this, what will you plant in the hoop-house, and what do you need help with?”

Ordering and sequencing

- Using frost dates and the calendar, have farmers order vegetable cards to show what can be started before first frost free date inside vs. outside, and what should be out of the ground by first frost day inside the hoop-house vs. outside.

Structured dialogue

- This is essentially a vocabulary activity. You could point to a few different extension pictures (hoop-house, high / low tunnel / greenhouse / cold-frame / row cover / quick hoops, basically anything you have on the farmers or that farmers might use) and have farmers name them verbally to make sure they will be able to communicate with staff and extension etc. about these options in the future.

TEACHING TIPS

- Adapt this to your program! It will need to be adapted to your climate in slide 3, but also can be adapted based on what season extension methods are available to farmers in your program.
 - Incorporate farmers' experience working with hoop houses or any other forms of season extension, if they have it, through reflection question or peer teaching.
 - Adapt or remove text from the ppt depending on the literacy levels of the farmers in your program.
 - Slide 1: Intro
 - Slide 2: Why use a hoop-house?
 - Slide 3: How cold it is here? (This will need to be adapted to your region)
 - Slide 4: Hoop-house vs. outdoor garden
 - Slide 5-7: Cold Season Crops
 - Slide 8: Planting schedule for cool season crops
 - Slide 9: Other ways to protect crops
 - Slide 10-12: Warm Season Crops
 - Slide 13: Soil Test!
 - Slide 14: Soil Quality
 - Slide 15: Plant Spacing
 - A lot of the info and some of the photos came from Eliot Coleman's The Winter Harvest Handbook and could be credited.
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