

Some Suggested Presentation Guidelines

1. Know your comfort range as to audience and style of presentation.
2. Presentations can be either full lecture without visuals, lecture interspersed with some visuals including slides, overheads and flip charts, interactive presentation like 'Planting the Container Garden' with visual emphasis on containers and flowers, total visual with power point interspersed with copy slides.
3. Unless in a classroom type environment, presentations should be limited to 45 minutes to under an hour to permit Q and A.
4. **Know the audience** to whom you are presenting. I give a talk on Bugs to many Hort Societies and classroom settings, that will take on a different form when I present to landscape professionals at the Landscape Ontario Congress in January, 2009.
5. **Arrive early and chat** with some audience members while setting up. It will be both an icebreaker and a stress reducer for you.
6. **Wear something that identifies** you as a MG. Many groups have name tags, tee shirts, etc., This is so important as it presents a golden opportunity to promote your group.
7. **Do not be apprehensive to have notes at your fingertips.** While it might not be advisable to totally read from notes in a visual display, their presence keeps you on track and prevents you overlooking something important. Even the most intelligent individuals I know who lecture at Western's medical school have notes at the ready to keep them from too much digressing but still have an expert knowledge of their topic. I have hidden 3 X 5 cards for my television appearances but rarely refer to them other than headings as all shows are live.
8. **Speak clearly and try not to slip into a monotone voice.** Use a microphone whenever possible.
9. It does help to **stand at a podium** and be above the audience as people do strain to see the speaker. This is strongly suggested for any form of presentation as it psychologically proven effective to have the invited presenter above the listeners.
10. **Establish a fee** for your presentations. Much time is spent in preparation, travel and presentation and it would be nice if you could provide some income to the group. There are some organizations that have little money so it is important to be flexible. I was the guest of honor at London's second annual **Tomatofest** and presented outside surrounded by a vegetable garden. The organizing group had no money so it was done free but still provided our group with a lot of visibility.

11. **Say something about the MG organization and your group.** The MGOI video has some slides that can be incorporated into your presentation. These slides have helped us attract many new MGs who were at presentations.

12. **Purchase a remote**(Staples) for your computer and speak from the side of the room rather than sitting in front of your laptop. Audiences want to see the speaker.

13. Power point presentations are a little tricky as they must add an educational component to the slide. On my Bugs presentation I have a slide on a bug called the **Assassin Bug**. The following might suggest the right and wrong way to deal with this slide or any other.

Wrong Way - This is an Assassin Bug, a beneficial one commonly found in gardens.

Suggested Improvement and the way I describe it - ‘The name bespeaks the threat these common beneficial bugs are to pests. They feed on a variety including leafhoppers, mites, and caterpillars. Although only about ½ to 1 inch long with elongated heads and antennae look but don’t touch as they will bite if provoked..’

Factual definitions of your slides are entertaining and show you have done your homework

14. Groups enlisting speakers want a lot of bang for the buck and expect to be entertained. Most speakers are not comfortable with that and it would show in feeble attempts to get out of your element. Factual presentations can be entertaining without having to inject humor. There is plenty of material out there to help you achieve this purpose.

15. **Number of Slides, Overheads, or Power Point Pictures to Use in A Presentation.** This depends on the length of the presentation. At our recent Coordinators Conference, Paul Zammit presented a 50 minute talk with over 120 slides. He was entertaining but the slides may have flashed by too quickly to formulate questions.

My own presentations are adjusted to do a 1 or 2 hour lecture/presentation since I do over 15, 2 hour lectures on my topics every year in addition to a great many one hour presentations. You can fit more than one image on one PP slide reducing the number of slides you will have in your presentation.

You can cut down on slide numbers by not having an introductory slide announcing every different aspect of your topic but incorporate that heading into your first slide.

16. **Script on slides, PP and overheads** should be short and to the point. Use script only if you find it will greatly enhance your presentation. There are varying suggestions on the amount of verbiage on a slide and numbers vary from 16 to 36. I think you could follow that guideline if you have a number of copy slides but can take some liberties if you have only the occasional script slide or overhead. I have a script slide sandwiched between two pictures on dividing iris. It would be hard to compress it without sacrificing its educational integrity. My own suggestion would be to limit script slides to no more than one of every 10 visual.

17. Know your topic or be able to provide information on resource material.

18. **Handouts.** Audiences love handouts and contact addresses to ask future questions. All presentations should have some handout that deals with the topic and also includes your groups name

19. **Never Quit Updating Your Presentation.** There are always new trials, techniques and information on your topic in addition to areas you may feel need further review. Let the presentation sit for a while, collect resource material on the topic and revisit it a few months later. I have bulging files on every topic I present and am forever collecting information.

20. Remember to have you or your Coordinator send a thank you card to the organization who employed you.

Hope this helps a bit. Feel free to contact for any other tips on presenting.

Ron Rossini
London/Middlesex MGs
lon.rossini@imag.net