



What is AnswerLink?

- A way for customers to access Cooperative Extension information directly when they need it—online 24 hours a day, seven days a week—and when staff are unavailable, after hours and on weekends.
- An automated system to help handle the ever-increasing load of frequently-asked and routine questions from citizens.
- A handy, searchable, ready-reference of educational information for county staff.
- One-agent counties and others can use AnswerLink as a working resource to get questions answered that are beyond their immediate expertise; the system can be used to pose questions to specific specialists in an organized way and to avoid phone tag.
- A new way to serve Extension's current customer base and expand service to include new audiences not familiar with Cooperative Extension resources.
- A way for clients to self-search Extension's wide variety of expanding Web resources through "key questions" that are linked to answers of Fact Sheets, Plant *Talk* scripts, columns, news features, Web sites and in the AnswerLink database.

How does it work?

- AnswerLink currently has 2,500 questions with answers; more are added weekly.
- If a standard answer is not available, a user is able to compose and submit a question, and provide an e-mail address for a response.
- AnswerLink has a built-in routing system that forwards the question to a predetermined agent, advanced Master Gardener or specialist for an answer; when the answer is created and available in the system, it is sent on to the customer by e-mail.
- Appropriate questions & answers will be reviewed and placed in the AnswerLink database.
- Extension offices can decide how, when and how much to incorporate the use of AnswerLink in local customer-responses.

Using AnswerLink

- Customers or Extension staff can access AnswerLink from the Cooperative Extension Web page OR by its easy-to-remember address: **answerlink.info**
- The state AnswerLink Web site can be highlighted and linked from county Web sites.
- The AnswerLink Web address & promo can be used along with Cooperative Extension's Web address in printed materials, newsletters, workshop announcements, media work, etc.
- Information about AnswerLink with its easy-to-remember Web address can be promoted on after-hours, away-from-the-office, or on-hold recorded messages when staff is unavailable.
- Promotion is a key to the success of this resource to help people think of AnswerLink as "Information for the speed of life"...a place to go for information 24-7; information when they need it.

AnswerLink...information for the speed of life
answerlink.info