Corn Advisor, Hort Plants Apps Available Through iTunes

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

Arkansas corn producers and home gardeners now have two more reasons to turn to their iPhones or iPads with two apps, "Corn Advisor," and "Hort Plants" now available through the iTunes store.

Dharmendra Saraswat, extension engineer for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, developed the two in partnership with colleagues. He offered sneak previews of the apps at the Aug. 2 Arkansas Rice Expo.

Hort Plants – Created with Jim Robbins, an extension horticulturist with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, this app is an encyclopedia covering 268 landscape plants including trees, shrubs, groundcovers, vines, annuals and perennials for the mid-South with 931 high-quality images.

"Our challenge with this app was making 1.49 gig's worth of high resolution images usable on a mobile device," said Saraswat. "Someone with a 1 gig of data plan per month would not be able to download it at all. Using a special compression technique, the size of the app has been reduced to a comfortable 167 MB without compromising the image quality."

Robbins, whose images were used in the app, said he was amazed at the clarity and detail retained by the compressed images.

"'Hort Plants' will prove useful to home gardeners as well as landscape professionals," Robbins said. 'This comprehensive photographic encyclopedia will make a useful tool when making landscape plant decisions. Gardeners will be impressed with how quickly the high quality plant photographs are accessed on their Apple platform."

Saraswat said the app and images and associated database download as a single package, so no additional data is required to access the information once downloaded.

Corn Advisor – Created in collaboration with Jason Kelley, extension wheat and feed grains agronomist and Extension Soil Scientist Leo Espinoza, this a pocket expert for Arkansas' growing number of corn producers.

Corn Advisor consists of six different interactive features that give producers quick access to production information. The app allows users to search for:
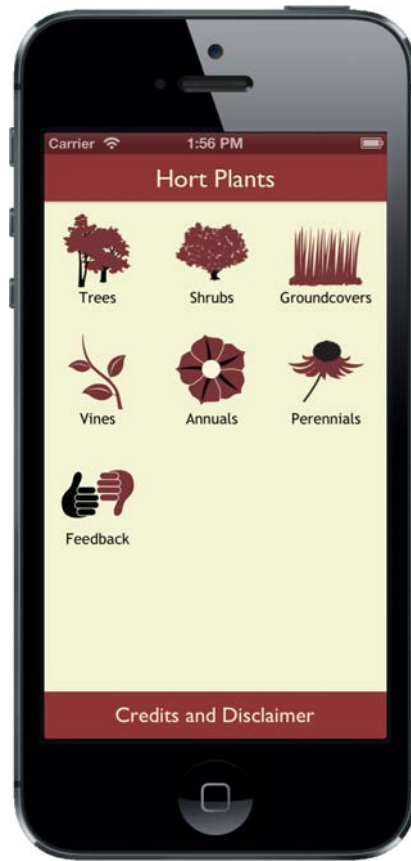
• Recommendations on application of lime, plus nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, and sulfur;

• Becoming familiar with the symptoms of nutrient deficiency, plus information about corn diseases, pests and their control practices.

App users will also be able to access the "Corn Production Handbook," MP437, a mainstay for corn growers published by the Cooperative Extension Service.

Corn Advisor is also available at no cost through Google's Play store, or http://alturl.com/buh5d. Once installed on the Android smartphone or tablet powered by Android 2.2 operating system or higher, the app does not require user to be connected to the Internet in order to access any of the features.

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A sneak peek at the Hort Plants app developed by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.
U of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture image Dharmendra Saraswat