A Note of Appreciation
By MARY CAMPBELL, Extension director

I want to give a big thank you to all our Master Gardener’s. It has been a challenging few months after budget reductions and the reorganization of the Florida Botanical Gardens maintenance operations. Through the support and hard work of so many dedicated Master Gardener’s, the gardens are really looking great. I am always amazed by the support that we receive from so many faithful volunteers. Without the help of the Master Gardener’s, we certainly could not maintain the gardens in the beautiful way they are today. It is critical to have volunteers that really understand our mission of outreach education and proper horticultural practices. We are the model for our community in how we maintain our property. To exemplify the principles we teach is not always easy. The Master Gardener’s are supporting us in this effort to create a learning environment for our community and a beautiful place for visitors to get close to nature.

With great appreciation for the incredible job! Thank you so much.

Master Gardeners Sell Herbs at Market in the Park
By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

On Saturday March 22 shoppers could see, smell and buy herb plants that ranged from ordinary culinary to extra-extraordinary, Florida heat and humidity tolerant. All the plants were hand selected by MGs from the herb garden at Florida Botanical Gardens; each plant lovingly cultivated from seeds and cuttings from the gardens. It was like taking home a piece of Pinellas' venerated Florida Botanical Gardens. Dressed baskets offered a beautiful presentation to give or keep.

Master Gardeners willingly offered advice on how to "spice up" the gardens with herbs. The event sales didn’t fully meet expectations due to competing events at Heritage Village but there were herb enthusiasts who made the time spent worthwhile.

MGs helping at the event- Marian Cirello, Tom Carrell, Ruth Davies, Cheryl Korshek and Ann Brown.
We are especially appreciative of staff, MGs, and others who contribute articles, events, and other items of interest to *The Green Leaf* each month. Please submit your input by the 20th of each month. This will help us assemble and publish the newsletter in a timely manner. Also, to save mailing costs, please limit your articles to 700-800 words or less. Limited newsletter space does not allow for full photograph viewing. If you would like a copy of any photograph presented in the newsletters, please contact me @ 727-582-2117.

**Chuck Scaffidi**
MG Editor

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*Cindy Peacock, a skilled first class driver, who also provided luscious snacks, hauled MGs Chuck Scaffidi, Marcel Pincince, Pat Mann and Marian Cirello (pictured below) to Orlando to staff the IFAS/MG Information Booth at EPCOT International Flower and Garden Festival. This was opening day of the festival and the first of 5 planned trips. The Booth was indoors at the front entrance to a new location called Garden Town. Daily events included gardening themes, Horticulture speakers, demonstrations, and even shops with gardening memorabilia. The van carried more than passengers home. We all participated in a topiary talk and a make your own design. Supplies were a tea cup and saucer, soil and a small twig of rosemary. My tea-cup project became a present for my wife.*

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*We greeted visitors from here and abroad including a few MGs from other states and answered questions as best we could while enjoying the conversations.*

*Concluding our "stressful" day we attended a Medley Flower Power concert that strikes a lively, nostalgic chord daily at America Gardens Theatre. Paul Revere and the Raiders with singer Darrin Medley son of Righteous Brothers' Bill Medley were Featured. Finally, we capped the day off with a Living with the Land boat ride. We were awed by the purity and lushness of all the edible plants surrounding us and did you know they supply the Disney restaurants. On display was farming in the future including Hydroponics, Aeroponics and Aquaculture.*

*We headed home ready to brag to our fellow MGs about our experiences and what to look forward to. ■*
Triostar
*Stromanthe sanguinea*

Let’s take a look at a beautiful plant whose activity may be missed by the passive on-looker: *Stromanthe*. This colorful member of the prayer plant family (*Marantaceae*) is a popular house plant in cooler parts of the planet—here in Florida it can be successfully grown outdoors (with certain caveats).

The majority of ‘prayer plants’ come from the American tropics. These fascinating plants get their common name from their action of folding their leaves in the evening, as though their leaves appear to fold themselves together, as in prayer. The genus *Stromanthe* has ten to thirteen species scattered through Central and South America; the most popular and colorful of the lot, *Stromanthe sanguinea*, comes from the moist tropical forests of Brazil.

In its native habitat, the leaves of *S. sanguinea* are deep rich green on top and red on the underside. In cultivation, the plant has produced several remarkable variegations; these have been propagated and given cultivar names. ‘Triostar’ (often sold under the name ‘Tricolor’) is perhaps the most popular.

*Stromanthe* is occasionally added to Florida landscapes, but its need for a constantly moist soil makes it a bit difficult to maintain in our dry, sandy, coastal gardens.

It will, however make a fantastic container plant or house plant. In the house it is possible to watch the fascinating motions it goes through during the day and evening.

*Stromanthe* has both nyctinastic (night) and heliotropic (sun) movements. The movements are controlled at a pulvinus, (pl. pulvini) a swollen area near the base of the leaf blade. Potassium is pumped into and out of the pulvini causing the leaf to move as the leaf effectively “wilts” at each pulvinus during the day. A similar effect can be observed in many species in the bean family (*Fabaceae*); perhaps most astonishing (and quickest) in the turf alternative, *Mimosa* or sensitive plant.

In the early morning, the leaf blades of *Stromanthe* move perpendicular (face-on) to the incoming sunlight. This movement is diaheliotropism; it maximizes the amount of light for photosynthesis.

As the tropical sun climbs in the sky, its radiation becomes too strong. The plant cannot use the extra radiation; it only causes water loss and possibly cellular damage. The plant responds by folding the blade and moving it edge-on to the incoming solar radiation. This position shelters the stomatas (leaf pores) from losing too much water and minimizes solar radiation on the surface.

As the sun moves down toward the western horizon, the leaf blades once again move face-on to the incoming light. Heliotropism works because ions like potassium (K+) are pumped into and out of cells. Water crosses the membrane attempting to equalize the ion concentration. This creates the turgor pressures in various parts of the pulvinus that moves the leaf blade.

When the sun sets, the ion pumping ceases. The leaf blades move vertically, but are not folded—the leaf blades facing each other create the ‘praying hands’ appearance. The unfolded leaf blades can freely exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide with the atmosphere and since humidity is higher at night, the plant does not lose as much water during the exchange. Through all these movements, only the leaf blades change positions, the petioles (the leaf stems) do not move.

Add this plant to a high-light room as a house plant, but give some protection from afternoon sun if planted outdoors. Remember to provide plenty of moisture; an outdoor container of *Stromanthe* may do best to sit in a saucer of (regularly changed) water.
Quick! Guess where the Caladium Capital of the World is? I didn’t know either. But it’s right here in Florida’s Highland County, in the sleepy ol’ town of Lake Placid!

I once visited the gorgeous Adirondack lake of the same name and wondered if there was a connection. There is. Mel Dewey, inventor of the library Dewey Decimal system, hailed from Lake Placid, NY. He fell in love with the Florida community of Lake Stearns, and in 1927, championed the name change to Lake Placid.

In February I traveled by bus with a St. Pete College group on a day trip to this central Florida town, 136 feet above sea level. Not exactly nosebleed altitude, but loftier than Pinellas. Its Chamber of Commerce hosts fishing tournaments on one of 29 lakes (some with tongue-twisting names like Istokpoga), nestled in its hills. But we weren’t there for bass fishing. We came to see the Murals of Lake Placid, more than 40 paintings by various artists, which not only beautify blank building walls, but also depict the area’s history and color (pun intended). With map and a guide, who pointed out hidden images or flaws in some of them, we rode slowly past the murals, though one could as easily walk the route. Small renditions of them hang in the Chamber gallery where a video describes the mural program, which began in 1993.

Along with murals, four-dozen painted circular panels of native birds adorn walls in the town’s business section. It’s a challenge to find them all, unlike the artsy trash containers, which you can’t miss. Unhappy with normal trash bins, the Mural Society decided on whimsical ones, which double as public art sculptures. I counted 15 or more, ranging in shape from a merry-go-round, a car, and a jail, to a train, a turpentine bottle (an early local industry), and a bank safe (a nod to a foiled bank robbery). Some bins, like some murals, sport light and sound effects. I thought of our Garden’s Children’s Trail. This whole quirky town seems like storybook land.

The citrus industry originated here when Spaniards shared orange seeds with Seminoles, who with white settlers planted them. Some trees still producing are over 100 years old. A cracker cattle trail (as in whip-cracking) passed nearby on the way to market or a port from where Florida herds were shipped to Cuba. In addition to citrus and cattle, another Lake Placid “C” is Toby’s Clown Museum and School. You might sit on the lap of a metal hobo incorporated into a bench or lean on a fence with one of the tramp figures scattered about town. But the “C” of most interest to a gardener is Caladium.

Caladiums are shade-loving plants from the Amazon rain forests. Mr. Bates started his Caladium business with one bushel of bulbs in the early 1940s. Before Caladium became king in Lake Placid, Easter Lilies were grown. Disease wiped them out. Bates’ children expanded the growing acreage from 65 to their current 150 acres. According to his son, Don, 45 growers initially tended about 100 acres. Now, just 14 growers work 1,500 acres. Caladiums have no pests, and require no insecticide or fertilization. Their leaves are odor free. Weather, not disease, can be problematic. Consistent production depends on summer rains. They fare better with twenty half-inch rains in a month than with two 5-inch rains. The plant goes dormant in winter.

Leaving Caladium Arts & Crafts Co-op where many artifacts had (you guessed it) Caladium motifs, we drove a few miles to Henscratch Farms & Winery.
muscadine and scuppernong (don’t you love saying that word?) grapes grown in their vineyard are transformed to wines onsite. We had a tour, a tasting and lunch, and picked strawberries while 101 free-range hens roamed the grounds with us.

I hoped to buy just-gathered eggs laid by Rhode Island Reds or Barred Plymouth Rock hens, but their country store was sold out. The gentleman farmer pouring wine samples suggested I check the chicken coops myself to see if anymore eggs had been laid. Off I went down the lane, past the duck pond, searching coops in vain till I opened a latched gate to look in one more. There, waiting for me on a bed of straw lay a fragile gift, a single pale aqua egg! Nature’s Easter egg, I mused. Delighted, I picked it up gently and took it to the store.

“That egg is from an Araucana chicken, a Chilean breed,” the man told me. “The only kind of hen here that lays those green eggs. They’re lower in cholesterol than most eggs and tend to have double yolks.”

I paid a mere dime for my prize egg and managed to get it home intact. The next day after showing it off to neighbors, I fried it. The yolk rose tall in the pan, but was not double. I relished every low-cholesterol bite.

Lake Placid and Henscratch Farms would make a fun Master Gardeners’ trip. Caladiums tubers are in leaf until late summer/fall. The colorful fields are said to rival tulip season in Holland. This year the 18th annual Caladium Festival is August 22-24. Go see why Lake Placid was twice recognized as Florida’s Outstanding Rural Community. You might go home with a bulb, a bass or a green egg.

Innovative Turf Alternatives on Display at the Florida Botanical Gardens

By MARY CAMPBELL, Director and BOB ALBANESE, Horticulture Educator

The Florida Botanical Garden continues to develop as a teaching tool for the citizens of Pinellas County and the world! Our recent visitor’s survey has shown that the number of international guests has increased steadily over the years. Recently, a visitor from Switzerland stopped to ask about the artificial turf recently installed in the Wedding Garden. He thought it was a great idea, given that during his last visit a year ago the grass seemed to be suffering. He was interested to know the cost of installing this turf alternative, and how soon it would pay for itself. Here are the answers to those questions:

The Wedding Garden turf had been irrigated by hand for the past seven years. Irrigation 3 days a week, year-round, cost $20.00 a week in hourly wage. This translates to $1040.00 annually just to water the grass! Mowing and other maintenance cost $780.00 annually in labor. Over the life of the artificial turf (20 years) this would mean $36,400 in labor to maintain the living turf. Pesticide application (which includes insect control, fungus control and fertilization, plus scouting time), cost $1,300 annually, or $26,000 over 20 years. One of our goals at the Florida Botanical Gardens is to reduce chemical applications to near-zero. Eliminating this small patch of high-input turf takes us one step closer.

Specialized gasoline-powered mowing and vacuuming equipment was originally purchased at a combined total of $1380.00; each machine with a five year life expectancy. With repairs, replacements and maintenance it would cost approximately $7,000.00 to operate if they were used over the lifetime of the turf alternative.

The living turf was replaced three times in seven years at a cost of $275 not including labor. This translates to seven replacements over the life of the turf alternative or $1925.

Adding it all up, the $71,325 in savings over 20 years (not adjusted for inflation or other variables) and the per annum savings means the artificial turf will have paid for itself in five years’ time.

In addition to saving money, this surface is permeable, allowing rain to return to the groundwater, recharging the aquifer. With so much of Pinellas County paved, every little helps. The soft texture of the surface is due to the rubber content of the turf. This is made of recycled tires.

These are the sorts of solutions we are investigating and promoting here at Extension. In a changing climate, both natural and economic, we must adapt, and we must help others adapt by offering University of Florida, research-based ideas and suggestions. The artificial turf is one example of alternatives that are appropriate in certain circumstances.
MG Advisory Association, Chuck Scaffidi, Chair

The articles of incorporation is approved and filed with the State of Florida as of December 12, 2007. The current bylaws are in effect until the changes to the bylaws are complete. The bylaws are being modified to comply with both Incorporation and UF/IFAS requirements. Even though the board gave their approval to modify these documents for incorporation, the recent need to change them to comply with UF/IFAS requires the board and members to re-approve. The 2008 budget was approved on March 8, 2008. Visit IFAS/Extension website [http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/master_gardener/index.shtml](http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/master_gardener/index.shtml) for MGAA documents.

### Important Change for Signing Out

**Recording Your Volunteer Hours**

Please Remember to Sign Out!

The computer program for logging volunteer hours is in the volunteer office.
- You must sign in and sign out when you are at Extension.
- You can still log your time in the book or use e-mail, but it is preferred that you use the computer sign-in sign-out method.
- With over 200 volunteers at Extension it becomes a considerable burden on the volunteer coordinators to manually enter your hours.

If you have been sending your hours by e-mail, use the form in the log book as a guide and send to: [MGEDU@co.pinellas.fl.us](mailto:MGEDU@co.pinellas.fl.us). Please direct your questions to coordinator Chuck Scaffidi or an assistant, Carrie Shelby, or Mary Crowe.

Special thanks to Donna Zacharczyk for obtaining a $25 donation to MGAA from the Garden Club of St. Petersburg.

### April MG Update

**Tuesday, April 8** at the EMS building. James Stevenson will give an update on sustainability in the Florida Botanical Garden, along with a tour to look at new initiatives in the garden.

**Don’t forget - bring in your plants for the Plant Exchange!**

### Looking Ahead - May MG Update

**Thursday, May 8th, 10AM.**

Charles Boning, will talk about tropical fruit, and will sell his book, "Florida's Best Fruiting Plants".

### Free Gardens Class Helps Landscape 'Pop' In Summer

Get help with selecting plants that give landscapes a colorful view during the summer by attending a free *Summer Gardens Class* sponsored by Pinellas County MGs.

Twice on **Wednesday, April 9**, MG Denys Walk will share information on the many plants that can bring color to the garden during Florida’s hottest months. The *Summer Gardens Class* is the fourth in the 2008 Garden Series. Join Denys to learn what can be added to the landscape to make it “pop” in the summer. **Participants may attend either the 2 PM or 6:30 PM session on April 9.** Remember that both sessions will be held at the Crystal Beach Community Hall, 517 Crystal Beach Ave., located in Crystal Beach.

Admission is free, but space is limited. Call Pinellas County Extension at 582-2673 to reserve a seat in either session.

### Update on the Children's Trail

At the March 4 meeting the committee approved the suggestions to change the fruit that will be discussed at the Tropical Garden, move the Water site to the retention pond south of the Tropical pavilion and move the Tree site to the new board walk at the end of the north bridge. Agreement was reached on the type of sign boards to display. Pam Brown will review the educational wording and report back at the April 1st meeting.

**Committee Members:**

Dianne Wheatley-Giolotti, Mary Campbell, Vivian Haicken, Betty Lipe, Cindy Peacock, Chuck Scaffidi, Pat Dieterich, Bob Albanese, Andy Bergeron and Bobbie Jones.

**MGAA approved $2,000 for the Children’s Trail MG Project.**
Plant Sale Update by Linda Alcorne

Plant Sale - Saturday, May 10th

Hey Y'all. Greetings from the greenhouse. Just a few quick updates. It looks like we have the lunch situation covered. Jessica will be hard to replace but we have a team lined up to make sure all our hard working sales team are able to make it through the day. The Friday crew cleaned up lots of plants and the cracker roses are looking especially nice. Thanks for the supports. Linda C has been getting some lovely hanging pots ready with a little help from Don and others. They are looking good. Remember as you do your spring cleaning of sheds and garages that we will have second thyme for used hand tools, hard-scape items and decorative garden items. We can also start to bring in any garden magazines or books you don't have room for. We will miss them at the main sale but the opportunity to reach more visitors is good. We need someone to do some small signs we can place in the gardens in April directing people that this particular type of plant will be available at the sale. If you would like to work on this, let me know. I need to know who will be doing education booths so we can plan the space. If you have something special like a handcrafted item contact Joann Drake to include in the silent auction. Brenda Payne will do cuttings and would like your donation of 1/2 gallon milk containers. We have everything needed so if this is a booth you would like to man let me know soon. Bessie has Marilyn and Gay lined up for a preliminary inventory but we need a few people to go through and help select which plants will be good looking enough to sell. That way the labeling process can begin mid April. Let Bessie know if you can help in this and she can go over details. We will use the red and blue sticks again so if you start seeing them those plants have been reviewed. Look for the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. See you soon Linda A.

A Night at the Theatre

Dick Davis recently helped ease the voting process for the new MGAA board by serenading the Master Gardeners with his feature song from his role as Carpenter in the "H.M.S. Pinafore" at the Tarpon Springs Performing Arts Center. His enthusiastic impromptu performance inspired a group of MGs to go see the real McCoy. Pictured are Suzanne Girves, Denys Walk, Janice Crawford with her grandson Benjamin, Dick Davis and Cheryl Korschek. Also present were Bessie Morse and Nancy Bevilacqua. The performance was entertaining with Dick's antics with his cane as much fun as the singing.

Southern Region Master Gardener Conference

A Garden of Dreams in Native America coming up June 18-21,

A lot of exciting activities and speakers planned for the conference and this is one you will not want to miss. There are 12 tours that will be offered at the conference – six pre- and post-conference tours and six as breakout sessions. Public and private gardens are included on the tours. For detailed descriptions about each tour visit the conference web site: 

The conference site will be at the Clarion Meridian Hotel and Convention Center in Oklahoma City. You can now reserve your rooms at the hotel for a price of $64.00 per night by calling 405-942-8511. Remember to mention that you are coming for the Southern Region Master Gardener Conference to get the conference rate. The Hotel and Convention Center is nestled in the hub of Oklahoma City's restaurant and entertainment district. There are over 30 sit-down and fast-food restaurants within 2 miles of the hotel. They are conveniently located off I-40 and just minutes from the Airport and other areas of interest. In addition, they provide complimentary shuttle service to and from Will Rogers World Airport and local businesses for fly-in guests. Remember – bookmark http://www.mastergardener2008.com/ as the official web site for the 2008 Southern Region Master Gardener Conference and visit often.
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

For April & May

- Green Spring Festival
- Earth-day Celebration
- Green Thumb Fest
- Living Green Expo
- Historic Northeast Spring Garden Stroll
- Compost & Raised Beds
- Clam Bayou Coastal Restoration Project
- MG Plant Sale

Help Needed in Composting and Raised Vegetable Bed Areas!

Volunteers are needed to work in the composting and raised vegetable bed demo areas on Tuesday and Friday mornings.
Contact John Kingsbury 727-569-6409, Pam 727-582-2112 or Carol 727-582-2124 to let them know if you are interested in this volunteer activity. You might get to take home some wonderful compost!

Please check your schedules and see if you can help with any of these events - they are all fun. We appreciate all that you do to help us with our outreach activities.

Thanks a bunch for your consideration, Pam

- Green Spring Festival - Palms of Largo
  Sunday, April 6, 11AM to 3PM Would need to set up and stay with a FY&N booth with handouts. MG needed to head up this event display.

- Looking for a Fun Learning Experience with Kids?
  Earth-day Celebration is Saturday, April 19 from 8AM to 1PM at Extension. There will be a tent set-up with Earth type activities for kids to do; in conjunction with the Market in the Park. Cindy Peacock would love to have some fun loving volunteers to work with kids. Contact her at 727-582-2671.

- Green Thumb Festival at Walter Fuller Park, St Petersburg
  Saturday & Sunday, April 26 & 27, 1 to 5PM shift on Saturday and 9AM - 1 PM shift on Sunday.

- Living Green Expo at Harborview Center in Clearwater
  Saturday & Sunday, May 3 & 4, 9AM - 5PM - we still need volunteers for all shifts.

- HISTORIC OLD NORTHEAST SPRING GARDEN STROLL
  "Enchanted Gardens" Sunday, May 4, 2008, 12-4PM

  A much-loved rite of spring, the Historic Old Northeast Neighborhood Association Garden Stroll returns to St. Petersburg. Visitors will have a rare opportunity to wander through a diverse selection of private gardens featuring lush landscape designs, native and exotic plants, creative patio designs, and unique water features and garden accessories.

  Ticket prices are: $10 advance, $15 day-of.

  This year the ticket price includes admission to Sunken Gardens on the day of the stroll. Sunken Gardens, a 4-acre botanical garden is located in the neighborhood at 1825 4th Street North. Bill O’Grady, Supervisor of Educational Programming at Sunken Gardens will be at one of the private gardens to answer all of your Florida gardening questions.

  Tickets can be purchased in advance for $10 either by mail, (check should be made out to HONNA and sent with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to HONNA Garden Stroll, c/o Peebles, 136 19th Avenue NE) or beginning on March 28th at the following outlets:

  - Dolins Garden Center, 801 62nd Avenue N
  - Bloom, 3005 S. MacDill Avenue, Tampa
  - Jene’s Tropical Fruit Trees, 6831 Central Avenue
  - Marions, 1301 4th Street N
  - Savannahs Nursery, 2601 34th Street S

  Advance tickets will be redeemed at the Westminster Presbyterian Church at 126 11th Avenue NE. Day-of-event tickets can be purchased for $15 at Westminster as well. For further information see www.honna.org or call 727-825-0479.
Plant Sale Day Sign Up

We need the help of all Master Gardeners if we are to make this plant sale a success. Please come to the plant sale meeting the last Friday of this month to finalize your role in the plant sale. Here’s a list of the teams:

- **Set Up** - we need volunteer MGs to work the days leading up to the sale.
- **Organization/Schematic/Plant Prep** - Team leader Linda Alcorne
- **Security**
- **MG Information** - Team leader Donna Z.
- **Cashiers** - Team leader Pat Dieterich - 4 teams in the AM, 2 teams in the PM: 2 member teams:
- **Expeditors** - Team leader Dani Carroll
- **Customer Assistance** (loading cars) - Team leader Rogers Davidson
- **Public Information/Ask Me** - Team leader Chuck Scaffidi
- **Customer Assistance** (on selling floor) - 12 openings-
- **Displays** - Invasives, compost, vermiculture, cuttings, and good bugs/bad bugs
- **Holding Area** - Team leader Barb Orr
- **Seeds** - Team leader Bob Abben

Plant Sale Gift Certificates

Don’t forget to tell your family, friends and neighbors that plant sale gift certificate are available for purchase in the volunteer office.

The gift shop, managed by Stacey Zidi, has continually changed the items offered and has just stocked many new appealing items. So make a visit and don’t forget to show your FBG membership card to receive a discount on your purchase.

We need your membership in The Florida Botanical Gardens. You can get into other gardens free or at discounted prices, and that alone pays for your FBG membership. Discounts are offered at most gift shops. Membership offers prior notice and invitations to special FBG events. FBG membership makes a good gift for friends or family. FBG membership allows early admittance to the MG plant sales. Individual membership is $30; Family is $50; a supporting garden friend is $250. If you’d like a leaf on the tree with your name on it, $1,000 will help grow the gardens a $100 will buy a memorial brick. Please see MARY ELLEN WARNER, Membership Chair, MG Mary Crowe or stop in at the Botanical Bounty gift shop.

Anyone interested in volunteering at the Botanical Bounty gift shop should speak to Stacey Zidi, Manager. The shop is open Tuesdays-through Saturdays from 10am-5pm. Each day is split into two 3 ½ hour shifts, mornings (from 10-1:30pm) or afternoons (from 1:30 -5pm). She's looking for a minimum commitment of one shift a week. No previous retail experience is necessary.

Call 582-2251 or szidi@pinellascounty.org

Plant Sale Gift Certificates

Worth $_______ dollars
For May 10, 2008 Plant Sale

Pinellas County Master Gardener Plant Sale Gift Certificate

Good for Plant Sale Purchases Only
Non Cash Redeemable
SAFETY NET

By PAM BROWN
Urban Horticulture Extension Agent

Information source:

Spring is upon us — Time to Select Safe Hand Garden Tools

For most homeowners, gardening is a pleasurable experience. They want to be down on their hands and knees in the garden or on the lawn, working in a hands-on manner. Therefore, most garden tools are small and simple. Instead of the bulky power saws and drills that you might find in an indoor workshop, you get simple and quaint hand tools like shears, spades, hoes and watering cans. There isn’t really any danger when using these tools, so you should feel free to encourage your children to get involved with whatever gardening project you have on the go. You may even want to think about buying some special kids’ garden tools.

By PAM BROWN,
Urban Horticulture Extension Agent

Spring is upon us and the weather is wonderful. I love this time of year. With spring comes lots more work in the Gardens — they are looking great due to all of the volunteer hours many of you put into maintenance activities and to the leadership of Bob and the other horticulturists. We are all very appreciative of the work that you do. Thank you!

You may have heard of the budget impacts that are proposed for Extension. All of them are still proposals. It may be several months before we know the final outcome of these proposals. Please try to keep a positive attitude. We must remember that the overall economy is not the best and this along with tax cuts results in less money to go around. Extension will survive, but it may not look quite the same as in the past. I appreciate the many kind words that I have gotten in the past month about the job that we are doing. If you hear rumors or have any questions, please bring them to me. I should have the whole story as it stands at that time. Negative rumors and comments poison thinking and actually create a negative image of Extension and/or the Master Gardener program in the eyes of our county superiors. We need to maintain a positive image, and I know that I can count on each of you to present a positive attitude.

I am still looking for a few good men/women to train to work doing diagnostic work at our Lawn & Garden Help Desk. You will always have a horticulturist or agent to back you up. If you really want to learn about plants, diseases, and insects — the front desk is the place to be. You will see the problems as they come in and learn to identify them. You will also learn to research problems and provide the proper UF/IFAS fact sheets to go with your diagnosis. Talk with Bob Abben, Susan Girves, Denys Walk or Dick Davis. They are all doing a great job diagnosing at the front desk. Please let me know if you would like to try your hand at this important job.

We still have a few slots to fill for volunteers at the Green Thumb Festival at Walter Fuller Park on April 26 and 27 and the Living Green Expo at the Harborview Center in Clearwater on May 3 and 4. Please check your schedule and sign-up on the sheets on the bulletin board in the back hall. I have one more day for EPCOT on May 27th. Three of the slots have been filled, but we still need one more name and an alternate. First come, first served for this day.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of the many things that you do as volunteers. Your assistance helps us to be great at what we do — you make us look sooooo good!

♥ Pam

Master Gardeners Advisory Association is registered on GoodSearch. MGAA receives a direct donation every time supporters use GoodSearch to search the Internet!

Please go to www.goodsearch.com. At about 1 cent a hit, GoodSearch is earning MGAA money. We have earned since inception $17.50. Come on, join in and try this search engine. Most of you probably use Google. Yahoo’s search engine also seems to be adequate. The first time you use it you need to sign in as “Master Gardener Advisory Association”. If you need help call Chuck at 727-582-2117.
Attention!! Attention!!

During this time of serious cost cutting, reducing the Green Leaf mailing costs is very important. In this effort to be more sustainable, we need your cooperation to fill out the form below so we can reduce the mailing significantly. Our goal is for the majority of our Master Gardeners to access the newsletter on our website – an e-mail notice will go out to you if we have your address when the newest edition is posted.

This form is urgently needed, so we can remove volunteers from the current Postal mailing list. Please provide your current e-mail address to Chuck Scaffidi or Carol Suggs or access the Green Leaf on the web at: http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/master_gardener/green_leaf.shtml

If you do not have electronic access, remember, a copy can be picked up at Extension in the basket in front of Carol Sugg's office.

Please continue mailing the Green Leaf to my home address:

Name: __________________________________________  Date _________________
Address________________________________________________________________

Please return this form to Chuck Scaffidi or Carol Suggs by April 15, 2008.

For details on some of the events listed go to the calendar on the Pinellas County Extension Lawn & Garden website.

Good Work Volunteers!

Reminders

- **April MG Update Meeting**
  Tuesday, April 8 at 10AM

- **MG Plant Sale**
  Saturday, May 10