Yard Visits Are Another Success Story
By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, Editor

Thanks to Phyl Lawson the “visit a home garden” program continues to be well received. Phyl has been scheduling these visits for over a year and to date nine gardeners have opened their yards and homes to our Extension MGs and volunteers. This has provided the opportunity to "look-see" how others have used their horticulture education and training around their homes. Again, thank you Phyl for scheduling these yard visits. MGs and volunteers should keep in mind that we are anxious to have you sign up to host a visit. Please contact Phyl if you are interested, pjlawson@tampabay.rr.com.

January MG Garden Tour
By TERRY BERUBE

Vivian Haicken, past president of the FBG Foundation, graciously opened her home and gardens to the Master Gardeners on Jan. 19. Many of us thought she was courageous for hosting a garden tour during the winter, especially after the long cold spell we recently experienced. Regardless, the MGs were thrilled to have the opportunity to get together and enjoy Vivian’s oasis on Clearwater Harbor.

Strolling down the front entrance to Vivian’s home, you can feel the love that the Haicken family has invested in their landscape. It’s a family affair and Vivian shared several stories about how she and her family planned and planted (and replanted) a wide range of plants and created an eclectic array of flora with a relaxed and comfortable feel.

The driveway is flanked by several large live oak trees planted over 15 years ago and dressed in pothos winding up and about the trunks. They were saplings when she and her sons Jeremy and Matt planted them - how time flies! Several potted tricolor dracaena were placed between the oaks by her husband Barry, who came up with the idea after several guests tripped over the ones planted directly in the ground.

The entrance to the front door is graced with Vivian’s collection of begonias. Her favorite is an angel wing given to her by a close friend many years ago. She has shared over 75 cuttings away and made sure our MGs got their cuttings on the way out. Other plants include anthurium, impatiens, cast
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. 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 at (727) 582-2117.

Chuck Scaffidi
MG Editor

The Green Leaf is published by Pinellas County Extension for the County Master Gardeners and depends on submission of articles from Master Gardeners, Extension Staff and other authors.

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Please send articles to cascaffidi@juno.com The Green Leaf is available on-line by clicking on “newsletter” at:

http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/home_landscape/mg/intro.shtml

iron, liriope and a large ligustrum that was transplanted from her previous residence. To the right is a magnificent schefflera, as tall as the oaks, and a large pot of bamboo.

She recently re-landscape a large area adjacent to the garage by pruning back her plumbago and planting new bromeliads and annuals. The new design really pops and it was nice to see the colors. Vivian explained that the new landscape was saved from the cold by covering them with “every piece of linen I had, including the pillow cases.”

Upon arrival we were treated to hot coffee, bagels and a living room full of beautiful orchids which she grows in a small green house on the side of her home.

Stepping out to the lanai we were greeted by Maggie, the family bull mastiff, a lovely view of Clearwater Harbor and a swimming pool with an island. The island, designed by her family, is connected by a wooden bridge. Vivian said she originally wanted it to have grass and lounge chairs, but finally agreed to plant a La France hibiscus, African iris and firecracker plants. It is quite a unique design for a pool.

Towering Royal Palms from Wilcox Nursery flank the side of the yard, along with Chinese fan palms, a reclinata palm and a Paurotis palm. Heading toward the water are several necklace pea pods, muhly grass, sunshine mimosa, birds of paradise and Heliconia. Patrick Mann was impressed (as we all were) with her beautiful potted roses.

One important teaching moment came when someone noticed some Brazilian pepper and carrot wood. Vivian was very thankful to learn more about these invasive plants and will take care of them quickly.

Several years ago, son Jeremy kayaked out to the harbor and brought back mangrove cuttings, which have flourished over the years and are a nice addition to the landscape.

As we sat by the pool enjoying the warmth of the sun, all agreed Vivian’s yard was a great place to relax and enjoy friends. However, our time was up and we headed to our cars, stopping briefly to get pictures of MG faces in the giant elephant ear plant. When will we ever grow up!
Leopard Plant
Farfugium japonicum
By ROBERT MARX

In the raised bed near the main entrance to our building are four large-leafed plants with beautiful yellow flowers. Many people have expressed an interest in these plants, whose common name is Leopard Plant. They are a member of the Asteraceae, the aster (daisy) family, formerly Compositae. In scientific terms, the genus is Farfugium (pronounced far-FEW-gee um) and the species is japonicum.

Farfugium is the name given by Pliny the Elder, a Roman military commander who spent most of his spare time studying natural phenomena in the field. Interestingly, he died while attempting to rescue a friend and his family from the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius that destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum.

"Japonicum" indicates the plant comes from the coastal cliffs of Japan, but also from Korea and Taiwan. Most cultivars have irregular cream or yellow markings, hence the name Leopard Plant, although it does have totally green leaf forms. All thrive in partial to full shade in moist humus-enriched soil and grow 36 to 48" tall. Parts of the perennial are poisonous if ingested. Although mainly grown for foliage, they bloom from late summer into winter but need protection from cold, drying winter winds. Plants do not set seed; the flowers are sterile. Propagation is by dividing the root ball or by dividing rhizomes, tubers or bulbs.

Farfugium is a favorite for borders or containers to show its bold and attractive foliage but must have moist, well-drained, humus-enriched soil and should never be allowed to dry out. They should be sheltered from winter’s cold drying winds. They thrive in Florida.

A bit of trivia: For many years the Leopard Plant had been classified in the genus Ligularia and had been known under many names including Ligularia tussilaginea, L. kaempferi, L. japonica, Senecio kaempferi, Tussilago japonicum, and Farfugium grande. There are just two species classified in the genus Farfugium.

Fennel Isn't Fickle!
Foeniculum vulgare
By JOANNE DRAKE, MG

We are so pleased to see some green in our yard! With most of the plants that we took special care to cover now looking very brown, we were surprised to see our fennel still standing tall (5’) and very green with its graceful wispy foliage. It looks so nice in one corner of the rose garden. There was no change in this plant and it wasn’t even covered! The roses even look good! I guess they’re good companions for each other. Both are in full sun and organically enriched soil.

Fennel is a graceful perennial herb that develops small yellow flowers. Seeds form in clusters after the flowers die off. Chewing on a few seeds will sweeten anyone’s breath and also serve as a digestive aid. We add the delicate anise flavor leaves or seeds to spaghetti sauce. The seeds are also used to add a distinctive flavor to Italian sausage.

At the base of the fennel stalk is a tender bulb that can be enjoyed raw, sliced like carrot sticks. It can also be diced raw and added to potato salad for extra crunch, a good substitute for celery. The slightly sweet flavor can add a fresh new taste to a garden salad or add to the soup pot.

To serve as a side dish, slice the fresh fennel bulb lengthwise, cover it with a small amount of boiling water and cook on medium heat until tender, about 8 to 10 minutes. In Europe most cooks serve it this way with fish.

Fennel has so many more benefits:

■ Easily grown in zones 6 – 9
■ Attracts pollinators
■ Larval food for the Eastern Black Swallowtail (Papilio polyxens)
■ A great addition to any garden. Looks great as a background plant but needs lots of room.

This winter season has taught me that fennel isn’t fickle or finicky. It’s fantastic! Just ask Jack Moss, MG. He’s a firm believer in this wonderful herb.
Weed Control Starts In February
By Jane Morse, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Pinellas County

The first step in controlling any weed is to have it properly identified. Knowing if it is a broadleaf, sedge or grass is paramount to knowing how to control it.

Broadleaf plants generally have net-like veins in their leaves and many have showy flowers. Some examples are dollarweed, creeping beggarweed and Florida pusley. Grasses have hollow, rounded stems and nodes (joints) that are closed and hard. The leaf blades have parallel veins and are much longer than they are wide. The leaf blades also alternate on each side of the stem. Some examples are crabgrass, torpedograss and sandbur. Sedges are “grass-like” weeds, but they are not true grasses. Sedges have a solid, triangular-shaped stem with leaves that extend in three directions. Examples include yellow nutsedge and purple nutsedge.

There are two basic methods of weed control -- physical control and chemical control. Usually the best control is achieved using a combination of these two methods.

Physical weed control includes mowing, hand pulling, hoeing and mulching. Many weeds in turf can be controlled by proper mowing. In general, Bahia and St. Augustine grass should be mowed at a height of 4 inches and mowed frequently enough so that only 1/3 of the leaf blade is removed each time. Hand pulling can be used if there are a small number of weeds. Mulching is a good weed control method for flowerbeds, footpaths and other areas where there is no grass. Mulch works by smothering out weeds by excluding light. Mulch should be applied about 2 inches thick and kept away from the bases of plants.

Chemical weed control is the use of herbicide. Selective herbicides control certain plant types without seriously harming other plant types. A selective herbicide might kill broadleaf plants while not seriously harming grass plants, or vice versa. Non-selective herbicides kill most plants regardless of type. Roundup® (Glyphosate) is probably the most widely known and used non-selective herbicide. Then there are pre-emergent herbicides (before sprouting) that prevent seedlings from growing and post-emergent herbicides (after sprouting) that are applied to existing weeds when they are small and actively growing.

Annual weeds (those which sprout, grow and produce flowers and seed in one year and then die) are the most easily controlled with a pre-emergent. Some annual weeds sprout in early spring and others sprout in the fall. Timing the pre-emergent for the season when seeds sprout is most important.

Crabgrass is a perfect example of a summer annual grass weed that is well controlled by using a pre-emergent herbicide in early spring (before the seeds sprout). If crabgrass has taken over your lawn, early February is the time to put out a pre-emergent herbicide. Pendimethalin (sold as Pendulum, Pre-M, Turf Weedgrass Control, or Halts Crabgrass Preventer) provides excellent control of crabgrass and is safe at the recommended rate on mature, actively growing grass (Bahia, Bermuda, St. Augustine and Zoysia). Apply herbicide when daytime temperatures reach 65 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit for 4-5 days in a row, or usually about the same time that azalea plants start blooming in the spring. Plan to reapply herbicide about two months later for season-long control.

For weed control in plant beds there are several pre-emergent herbicides to choose from to control your particular weed. For help identifying weeds and for more information about which herbicide will work the best to control a particular weed, bring a sample of the weed (preferably with a flower or seed head) to the Pinellas County Extension Office located at 12520 Ulmerton Road in Largo. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also see this publication “Pre-emergence Herbicides for Use In Ornamentals” at this link: http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wg058 Be sure to click on the blue links within the publication. This is also a very helpful publication entitled “Response of Turfgrass and Turfgrass Weeds to Herbicides” : http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wg071
Green to Brown!
Plants That Were Affected by the Freeze
By JOANNE DRAKE, MG

Everything was looking so nice and green! Then the freeze came, leaving behind various shades of “earth-toned” plants. We knew it was coming and rushed like crazy to cover our precious plants, only to learn rain was expected the next day. My husband Davis uncovered the plants so we wouldn’t have a big mess of soggy blankets to contend with, but we did make another attempt to cover plants after the rain. We had more plants than blankets, so we also used wash baskets turned upside down. Large flower pots were used in the same way and seemed to help with protecting some small bell pepper plants.

Don’t be discouraged with the way your yard looks right now. I think we’re all in the same wheel-barrel! It is tempting to oil the pruners and get “pruner happy.” Those brown leaves hanging will help protect your plants if we have another freeze, so hold off.

Our papaya trees are loaded with green fruit but that’s the only thing green on them. Their long-stemmed leaves are hanging down and ready to drop. They will be gathered and work nicely in our compost barrel. The banana plants have turned a light tan color but one has a green hand of bananas. We hope they will ripen and have good texture. Wait and see, that’s all we can do. The leaves have turned a rust color on our dwarf Julia mango. I think we’re going to have a lot of browns to add to our compost. We’ll just have to look around and hope for some green to add in the next couple of weeks. My favorite little Christmas Palm looks very brown and I was warned that they don’t take too kindly to a freeze. It was wrapped in a small quilt but that didn’t help much. This is another “Wait and See!” Hibiscus and crotons also suffered. We’ll keep our fingers crossed and hope for the best.

From past experiences with the freezes, things do start to look very green and happy in February. Just think! We’ll really be able to get “pruner happy” then! Happy Gardening!
The Great Florida Freeze of 2010
By JUDE BAGATTI, MG

My first winter on Florida's west coast in 2002-03 was a cold one. "Fine," I thought, "a chance to wear seldom-used coats, sweaters, boots, hats, pantyhose!" Those body insulators ordinarily got pulled out just for hiking in the mountains or travel to foreign climes. After relocating to Gulfport from Miami I hoped summers would be at least slightly more bearable. A few colder winter days would be a small price to pay for less oppressive dog days. What was I thinking! Since that first one, winters here have been mostly pleasant and mild, BUT west coast summers seem as scorching to me as South Florida's. Two degrees latitude farther north have made no difference. I get to don woolens and fleece more, but there's no trade off.

And now this: The Year of the Tiger, a longer lasting, colder season than any of my lifetime of Florida winters. Snowbirds from north of the Sun Belt have landed, bringing with them the snow they thought they left behind. Yes, snow. Yes, in Florida. Yes, all the way down south as far as Miami! The rest of the world seems to think all of Florida bakes in tropical heat all the time. Tokiko, my Japanese friend, emailed astonishment when she learned freezing temperatures had descended upon our Sunshine State.

At hotels and offices, public buildings and gated communities, even at gasoline stations, I noted efforts to protect shrubs, flowerbeds and urns of potted posies from frost. Squint a little at layers of bleached shells masquerading as mulch, and it's easy to imagine those whitewashed expanses as snow-covered. I shivered driving past landscaped roadways. The foliage on the medians, covered with white plastic sheeting, could almost be mistaken for banks of snow, if you get my drift. (Sorry)

I've been congratulating myself for my good sense in choosing Pinellas County as my home. Why? Because every TV weather reporter, forecasting freezing or below temperatures for Tampa Bay and adjacent counties, has consistently advised "with the exception of Pinellas." We have the tepid waters surrounding our blessed peninsula to thank for that. Yet finally, even our balmy South Pinellas has succumbed. This morning I found hard ice in my birdbath. I am smug no more.

Areas west of US 19 were said to be safe from freezing, so I neglected to cover any plants, unmindful of the havoc mere frost can wreak. A frangi pani (Plumeria) in my yard, more sheltered than the others which had already dropped their leaves, had its still abundant, green heads turn, overnight, into mops of limp, brown dreadlocks. Of greater concern is my baby Madagascar Palm planted late last spring, which, at all of two feet, had been thriving. This morning, while its bristles are prickly as ever, all its leaves are heart-breakingly dark and drooping. The three-foot Ponytail Palm I rescued from a too-small pot and planted in the ground last September also looks like it will shed most of its "tails."

Birds have been silent, though my tightly closed windows may account for the loss of song. Like me, butterflies are immobile, our wings and arms folded, huddling and hibernating. Fur-coated squirrels go about their regular business, but my crowd of outdoor lizard squatters has not been seen in normal bustling mode. In the past, translucent-skinned, web-footed gecko or newt-like creatures have entered my house from time to time. (Haven't succeeded in identifying them; can somebody help?) Today, one of them took refuge in my living room. Contrary to their usual lightning speed, this one moved lethargically at my approach and was easily caught. Attempts to revive it in the warmth of my hand and sunlight failed.

Despite the pinched look on every living thing outdoors, including people, I'm optimistic about a rebound for all, an elastic snap-back from this stretched-out cold spell. I'm anxious to trot back to the Pinellas Trail, jog up a sweat and work off some of that holiday cheer…. but maybe not until there's a high 60s morning. I can wait until this tiger of a winter shows some pussycat tendencies. Where are those darn dog days when you need 'em?

PS: If you know what the above-mentioned critter is, let me know.
**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- MG Hours
- MG Update Meetings
- Landscape Meeting
- MG Garden Tours
- Green Thumb Challenge
- County Benefits
- MG Discounts
- Extension Classes
- MG & FYN Newsletter
- Recycling at Extension

**Recording Your Volunteer Hours**

*Please Remember to Sign Out!*

The computer program for logging volunteer hours is outside the volunteer office, near the help desk.

- 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.

When not at Extension email your hours to: cascaffidi@juno.com

Please direct your questions to volunteer coordinator Chuck Scaffidi or assistant, Emma Eshbaugh.

**Message from Mary Campbell, Extension Director**

**Can MGs earn their hours in the formal gardens? YES** – all hours worked on the FBG campus – all areas of the gardens and Heritage Village – can be counted for your MG hours. This was a policy set when Pam was here and we are maintaining the same policy. All the volunteer opportunities that we offer through Extension are approved for MG volunteer hours. If you already volunteer in the formal gardens on the east side of the creek, we are requesting that you give your name, day of the week you are on site and area where you volunteer to Chuck Scaffidi, so that you can meet Vernon Bryant or Bob Funari when they get a chance. Chuck has created a database for Parks and will keep it updated. It is just so that they know you are there and when. We do not have new assignments for volunteers in the formal gardens right now, but will be working with our existing volunteer teams. It is still transitioning and we hope to have more volunteer opportunities this spring. Thanks very much.

**Master Gardener Update Schedule - Mark Your Calendar!**

- **Monday, Feb. 8, 9 a.m.** - Loren Westenberger presents "Tree Pruning and Preservation." Tree walk on campus.
- **Monday, March 8, 9 a.m.** - Gary Vallad, IFAS, Plant Pathologist, Gulf Coast Research & Education Center, will discuss "Vegetable Diseases."

*Volunteer Appreciation potluck with an award ceremony scheduled after the March Update.*

**Landscape Update Meeting with Bob Albanese**

You are welcome to attend either session at Extension: **Monday, Feb. 8 at 1 p.m.** or **Wednesday, Feb. 10 at 2 p.m.** All landscape volunteers are welcome to this “meet and greet,” which is a great opportunity to learn about future landscape projects throughout the gardens where volunteer efforts will be greatly needed and appreciated. If you are attending earlier events at Extension on these dates, please remember to pack a lunch.

**MG Garden Tours**

Feb. 25 is the date for the next garden tour. This one will be a little different. We’ll be visiting a certified organic farm right here in Pinellas County. This commercial garden grew out of the vision of two very dedicated people. Hank and Pam Sindlinger's farm is a little sliver of agriculture wedged between a mobile home park and apartments. They originally were herb growers but now raise vegetables and greens as well. Their main customers are restaurants but they've agreed to open up their garden to us. The tour will be from **10 to 12.** The address is **6000 150th Ave N in Clearwater.**

**Directions from Extension:** Take Ulmerton east to 58th Street. Take a left on 58th. Go to traffic signal at 150th Ave. Turn left. Farm will be on the left. There is a sign, but it is easy to miss.

To learn more: [http://www.gatewayorganicfarm.com/index.html](http://www.gatewayorganicfarm.com/index.html)

MG **Jason Beck** has agreed to show his garden on **March 25.** Jason is a strong advocate for native plants so it should be very interesting to see his yard. Hope to see you at each tour. ~Phyl Lawson
- **Green Thumb Challenge—Funds for Schools**
  Find information at the following link about the Green Thumb Challenge. There may be some funding to help MGs working with schools. [http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/]  

- **County Benefits Available to Volunteers**
  Just a reminder that the County Wellness Center is open for to all county volunteers. Wellness link: [http://ups.co.pinellas.fl.us/benefits/wellness/wellness.htm] Also, any training the County offers its employees is available to volunteers. Training information: [http://ups.co.pinellas.fl.us/develop/training/catalog/default.htm]. To access either of these web sites you must be signed on to a county computer.

- **Benefits to FBGF Membership and Master Gardener Certification**
  We have identified nursery owners in our communities who are willing to offer a 10% discount to members of the FBG and to Master Gardeners. When you make a purchase at these businesses, please present your membership card for the discount.
  - Art Stone Orchids
  - Carroll Brothers Nursery
  - Country Club Nursery
  - Earthscapes Garden Room in Palm Harbor
  - Kathy’s Korner
  - Palm Harbor Nursery & Landscaping
  - Twigs & Leaves
  - Wilcox Nursery
  - Willow Tree Nursery

- **Series of Extension Classes - Mark your Calendar!**
  The following classes will be offered at Extension for free to MGs, Volunteers and FBGF members who register. When you attend you must show one of the membership cards. All others pay a nominal fee of $15. Please see Extension's [on-line calendar page] for details and to register.
  - **Tuesday, Feb. 16, 23, 6-8:30 p.m. Florida Style Gardening.** Want to uncover the secrets to gardening the Florida-Friendly way? This is a gardening series that will help gardeners improve their landscape design and maintenance.
  - **Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2-3:30 p.m. or 6:15-7:45 p.m. Rain Harvesting Workshop.** Have you ever thought "What a waste!" when you see the rain water pouring out of your down spout and then down the street? Learn how to save that water for use on your potted plants, vegetable and herb gardens.

- **Master Gardeners and the FYN Newsletter**
  "The Neighborhood Gardener," the monthly e-newsletter from the University of Florida Master Gardener and the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods programs, shares information on state happenings and useful resources. It is available on the Florida Master Gardener Web site [http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/newsletter/newsletters.shtml].

- **Recycling Magazines and Books at Extension**
  Just a friendly reminder, per County staff: do not drop off magazines and books in the Extension break rooms. Unfortunately these items can become a mess and attract pests. Please consider recycling these items by donating them to your local library where they can be resold through their friends bookstores.
EARN CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

Master Gardeners can earn continuing education credits by completing Plant ID Modules.
http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/outreach/plant_id/index.shtml

MGs can earn 1 CEU per module by studying the plants and earning a passing score of 80% on the "Test Yourself" feature. Once a score of 80% has been reached, MGs simply print the page and submit it to the Volunteer Office. This is an option Master Gardeners can use for a maximum of four CEUs.

Palm Harbor Library MG Class Series

These classes are offered on Wednesdays from 2 to 3:30 p.m. and from 6:15 to 7:45 PM at the Palm Harbor Library located at 2330 Nebraska Avenue. To register for these classes, visit www.pinellascountyextension.org, click on the "Online Class Registration" button and then the "Lawn & Garden" tab. You may also call (727) 582-2100 to register.

Rain Harvesting Workshop-Wednesday, Feb. 10
Learn how to save rain water in a recycled plastic barrel for later use. The collected water is safe for use on your potted plants, vegetable and herb gardens, and special plant collections. All attendees will receive set-up instructions and a reference booklet with free registration. Registration required by Tuesday, Feb. 9.

You Can Have a Happy Healthy Florida-Friendly Lawn-Wednesday, March 10
Learn how to care for your Florida lawn. Pam Brown, Extension Agent Emeritus, will share tips on when and how to water, fertilize and mow your lawn. She will also discuss some of the challenges of caring for a lawn in Florida and what to do to overcome these challenges. Free. Registration required by Tuesday, March 9.

St Petersburg MG Class Series

Garden Design-Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2-3 p.m. Join Jason Beck, MG, to learn how to choose the right Florida native plants for your yard by considering light requirements, water needs and soil type. This class is offered at the West St. Petersburg Community Library, 6605 5 Ave. N.
To register for this class, visit www.pinellascountyextension.org, click on the "Online Class Registration" button and then the "Lawn & Garden" tab. You may also call (727) 582-2100 to register.

Weedon Island Class

Florida-Friendly Landscaping with Native Plants– Saturday, Feb. 27, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Learn to landscape the Florida-Friendly way with native plants. Everything from ground covers, vines, shrubs, and trees will be discussed, with colorful photos illustrating featured plants. Come learn more about just how exciting a native landscape can be. This class is offered at the Weedon Island Environmental Education Center, 1800 Weedon Drive NE, St.Petersburg.
Please call (727) 453-6500 to reserve a place.

Statewide Master Gardener Training Spring 2010
Polycom classes for MG continuing education are scheduled at Extension for Wednesdays in February and March. The classes start Feb. 10 and continue through March 24. Topics are those covered in the MG certification classes, and this program can be considered refresher courses. CEU credits will be offered. Details are posted in the Volunteer Office.
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

For February & March

■ Touching Hearts at Largo Library
Largo Public Library is having a community services expo on Saturday, Feb. 20 from 11 a.m.- 3 p.m. **Touching Hearts** will offer a chance to learn about the many organizations in our community that can lend a helping hand when it’s needed the most. If you are unable to stay for the whole event, it’s fine to leave your literature at your table. If you would like to reserve a table for Pinellas County Extension, please RSVP to Tammy Winkler at (727) 587-6715 x 2529.

■ Heritage Village Landscaping Project to Bloom at Heritage Village
Heritage Village is initiating another phase of its master plan by launching a landscaping project that will assemble a living collection of plants grown by early Florida residents to provide historic context for many of its restored buildings.

The first phase is to create a garden of ornamental Victorian era plants around the perimeter of Seven Gables, a gingerbread style house moved to the Village from the bluffs of Clearwater Harbor in 1976. These flower beds will contain an assortment of hardy perennial, drought tolerant, semi-tropical flora typical of the ones planted in the early 1900s by affluent winter residents.

Recreating an authentic landscape setting here is being done for the same reason the house was furnished with antiques of the period: to enable visitors to catch a glimpse of a lost world. Reassembling details of our ancestors’ "cultural baggage" can help us grasp the big picture of the past. And plants play a huge role in the story of how immigrants to Florida changed the state for better and worse – an important lesson for today.

Florida horticulture has a rich and complex past that has barely been explored and few historic sites here have recreated period gardens to interpret it. The discipline of historic garden studies has flourished in the U.S. since the 1970s and many gardeners have rescued heirloom plants, especially roses and fruits, from near extinction. This project is aimed at doing the same for the flora of our region. Cuttings and seeds of plants from old local gardens will be used in this project.

Volunteer support is essential for its success. Donations of labor, time, and materials is the only way to ensure the success of this project. Both novice and experienced gardeners are welcome; the sole qualification is a desire to dig in the dirt. **Contact Ellen Babb, Heritage Village Operations Manager, at (727) 582-2127 if you would like to participate.**

■ Circle of Life Mentoring
**Wednesday, March 10 through Friday, March 12**, the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs and UF IFAS are sponsoring a course in Ocala called "The Circle of Life: Mentoring." For more information: [http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/pdfs/events/mentoring_course.pdf](http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/pdfs/events/mentoring_course.pdf)

Mark the Dates!

**Green Thumb Festival**
Volunteers are needed to represent UF IFAS, and the Master Gardener program.

**Saturday, April 24** and **Sunday April 25** at Walter Fuller Park in St Petersburg. Sign up in the volunteer office for either **8:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m.** or **12:30 p.m. -4:30 p.m.** shifts.
Holiday Lights in the Gardens
BY CHUCK SCAFFIDI, FBG Foundation President

As you know by now, the Holiday Lights event was an astounding success. I am still amazed by the number of volunteers who so generously participated. All who contributed truly made this a public/private partnership. Now it’s time to go back to the drawing board and start early planning for the 2010 Holiday Light show. As a team we learned a lot, which we documented and reviewed at a Jan. 13 team meeting and are included in the minutes that have been distributed. My opening remarks reflect my feelings about this team effort.

“Wow! What an incredible job you've done! You've managed to pull off a spectacular Holiday Lights event, raising more than $70,000 for our foundation, and you ran a full marathon to do it! You are such an impressive team, and not only for the amazing things you managed to pull off. You are an inspiration to me and I'm so glad to be a member of this team and hope we can always be friends.”

It was too late to cover the dog parade in the January newsletter so I’m happy to report it was an overwhelming success. Check out the photos at right and please note that MG Anne Brown's Dog, “Tippy,” was a first place winner and Tippy thanked us for the many gifts and treats.

The Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation is committed to working with the County to continue the enhancement and preservation of the Florida Botanical Gardens.

The next Board meeting is Wednesday, Feb. 10.

Foundation on Facebook

Have you checked out our new Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation page on Facebook?

Facebook lets us create an on-line community of fans of the gardens. We launched the page with the Holiday Light events and asked our fans to post photographs they had taken of the beautifully lit gardens. We were overwhelmed with fantastic photos and a growing fan base.

Going forward we plan to use Facebook as another way to communicate about the gardens.

Become a fan, check out all the wonderful photos and invite your friends to become a fan as well!

Link to the FBG Facebook

The dogs enjoyed showing off for the crowd.
Remember that our March 8 Update will be followed by a Volunteer Appreciation potluck lunch and the Master Gardener Awards Ceremony.

We have three dates scheduled for the annual EPCOT International Flower and Garden Festival to which we will be taking 16 volunteers. Since this is such a highly desirable event to attend we needed to develop a selection criterion to allow those volunteers who have given the most to be rewarded for their efforts. The selection process will include MGs who have volunteered 500 hours, plus those who gave the most hours this past year, and those who do help desk duty. We appreciate all that you do. Even if you don’t make the cut this year, there’s always next year.

On a very bright note, we are in the process of selecting candidates to be interviewed for the Urban Horticulture Agent/Master Gardener Coordinator position. Once the top three are selected, interviews will be scheduled with the higher-ups in Gainesville. Hopefully, we will have a new agent in about three months. Yipee!! I know you all will be very happy to have an agent to call your own. Your dedication during this transitional time has been tremendous and much appreciated.

Jane V. Morse
Extension Agent II
Commercial Horticulture

Worried about Cold Damage?

Here is a link to an article that Pam Brown wrote on the Extension blog:  http://plantingpinellas.blogspot.com/2009/01/what-to-do-after-freeze.html

A recent article on cold damage - FYI provided by Vernon Bryant, CEL - is at http://www.garden.org/regional/report/arch/inmygarden/3354

2010 February

MONDAY, FEB. 8, 9 AM
- MG Update
  Loren Westenberger presents “Tree Pruning and Preservation”. Tree walk on campus.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 10, 2-3:30 PM & 6:15-7:45 PM
- Rain Harvest Workshop at Palm Harbor Library

TUESDAY, FEB. 2,16 & 23, 6-8:30 PM
- Florida-Style Gardening at Extension

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 24, 2-3 PM
- Garden Design Class at West St. Petersburg Library

MONDAY MARCH 8, 9 AM
- MG Update & Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

Looking Ahead!

MONDAY MARCH 8, 9 AM
- MG Update & Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 6-8:30 PM
- Garden Design Class at Extension

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 9-10:30 AM
- Rain Harvest Workshop at Palm Harbor Library

MG Plant Clinic at the Palm Harbor Library –Wednesdays from 10AM to 2PM
Master Gardeners offer diagnostic services along with information about identifying plants, treatment for insects and ideas for Florida-friendly landscaping.

For details on some of the events listed go to the calendar on the Pinellas County Extension Lawn & Garden website.
Thank You, Volunteers!

Mark Your Calendar!

- MG Update
  
  Monday, Feb. 8, 9 a.m. Loren Westenberger presents "Tree Pruning and Preservation." Tree walk on campus.

  Monday, March 8

  Volunteer appreciation potluck with an award ceremony scheduled after the 9 a.m. March update.
  All volunteers are invited.

Remember Valentine's Day—Sunday, Feb. 14

New gift items and gardening books available in the Botanical Bounty Gift Shop.

Your sweetheart gardener would certainly enjoy receiving a gift as a token of love and affection.

For the first two weeks in February: MGs receive an additional 10% discount, staff and volunteers will also receive a 20% discount.