Parks Staff Assisting the Florida Botanical Gardens

BY MARY CAMPBELL, Extension Director

Happy New Year! I am happy to provide information about the Parks staff that will be working with the Florida Botanical Gardens. The expertise and experience that each of these individuals bring to the overall support of the gardens is really outstanding. I think we will see many improvements to the structures and assets of the gardens due to this additional support. I have already seen many ways in which their expertise has been a great benefit to the gardens. Extension alone could not provide all the necessary supervision for the wide variety of challenges that need to be addressed in a 120-acre botanical gardens. This is really a team effort that will strengthen the level of supervision for the gardens. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about the operating procedures for the gardens. As always, thank you for your time and assistance with the maintenance at the gardens. We really could not do it without you!

**Lyle Fowler** is the Operations Manager responsible for twenty regional park properties south of Ulmerton Road. Lyle is also responsible for the Department’s Roving Trades Crew, which handle repair projects countywide. Included within his role is a partial responsibility for the Pinewood campus, including Florida Botanical Gardens. Generally at FBG his staff handles patrol, car counts, and facility maintenance (not including landscape). Lyle oversees the nationally renowned Fort Desoto Park that has 3 million visitors each year.

Working with Lyle is **Fred Stager**, Group 4 Park Supervisor, for parks including Walsingham, Ridgecrest, Boca Ciega Millennium, Park Blvd. Boat Ramp, and five beach accesses. Fred has a staff of 11, including Rangers and Park Maintenance Workers.

**Kathy Swain** is the Operations Manager responsible for park properties north of Ulmerton Road, including eight regional parks, two stand-alone boat ramps, one beach access, one community park, the Progress Energy Trail, the Pinellas Trail and one marina. These facilities encompass over 1,280 acres with an attendance of over 7,360,000 visitors yearly. In addition, Kathy oversees the landscape and resource management functions for all of Culture, Education and Leisure facilities countywide. Her 21 years of experience in the Parks and Recreation field include 15 years right here in Pinellas County.

Working with Kathy is **Vernon Bryant**, Horticultural Manager. Vernon’s responsibilities include direct supervision of landscape maintenance operations for all county parks and other properties including the Florida Botanical Gardens. He oversees forestry, grounds maintenance, pest management and nursery operations.

Working with Vernon is **Bob Funari**, Crew Chief 3 for Horticulture Operations. He supervises four Spray Techs who take care of the Vegetation Management and insecticide application for all CEL properties, supervises all landscape installation in county parks, manages the landscape maintenance of the Florida Botanical Gardens and manages the nursery at Lake Seminole.
Holiday Lights in the Gardens
BY CHUCK SCAFFIDI, FBG Foundation President

This year’s Holiday Lights have been in wild bloom since November 28, captivating more than a thousand visitors each evening with spectacular displays of almost half a million lights as well as music, entertainers and arts, crafts and food vendors. It has been a joy to watch the delighted faces sharing the festive atmosphere. And thanks to the generous donations of our visitors - many gave more than the suggested $2 - expenses have been recovered for last years and this year's lights event which were funded by the FBG Foundation. And, best of all, profits are being realized! This success means we can consider funding next year’s Holiday Lights event and may even allow for special projects in the gardens.

I am amazed by how this happened and overwhelmed by the volunteer effort. I feel it is very important that everyone knows that each and every worker in the gardens, including all the performers, as well as all the greeters who are asking for donations are VOLUNTEERS. This has been an event totally run by volunteers. The team of Master Gardeners, members of the Board of the Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation, and their loving friends have worked tirelessly without pay, as a gift to the community in the hopes of earning money to put back into the gardens. The Foundation team also worked Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and will be working New Year’s Eve and the night of New Year’s Day. We were especially fortunate to have the commitment of County Commissioner Karen Seel who volunteered for an evening and got the word out to other volunteer groups in the community. Due to Commissioner Seel’s influence we were never short of volunteers.

We also want to thank the County’s Volunteer Services for promoting our event which opened up the search for more motivated, helpful and eager volunteers. The County’s Communications did a fantastic job of promoting our event. They wrote up ads, designed graphics and worked with the local news media to ensure the public was informed. Last but not least many, many thanks to Mary Campbell and Paul Cozzie for their outstanding cooperative effort in providing county park rangers and logistical support.

Furthermore, this event has created a wonderful opportunity to promote our beautiful botanical gardens. It has allowed the community to experience a peaceful and enjoyable family occasion. Hopefully all the nightly visitors who have strolled through the lighted gardens will be encouraged to come back again during daylight hours and enjoy the variety of flora on display. The event also served as an introduction to the public’s awareness of Florida/IFAS and the assistance offered by Extension to local gardeners.

The popularity of this event should give us the confidence to consider more fundraising opportunities that can be offered as community events. In addition to our own Master Gardener group of volunteers we have been honored by the level of commitment and participation from various groups in the community; from those who helped at the donation tables to all the talented groups of entertainers who acted as a draw for the crowds.

Personally, as we worked together each night, I'm reminded of the lyrics, "Getting to know you, getting to know all about you" from the "King and I". It's been a pleasure for myself and Co-Chair Vivian Haicken to get to know and appreciate the many volunteers that participated.

While we're still basking in the glow of our very successful Holiday Lights event, the plan is for the lights team to meet in January to evaluate this fundraiser and discuss ways to enhance future fundraisers. At the next Foundation Board meeting, which will be in February, we’ll be voting on continuing the Holiday Lights. If approved, this will give us a jump on planning for 2010.

Remember, Holiday Lights continues through Sunday, January 3, 2010, and we are looking forward to a special dog parade at 3:30 PM on Saturday, January 2.

Happy New Year!
Nancy Bacinello & Viviane Castoro

Mary Sweeney & Commissioner Karen Seel

Standing Terry Berube, Seated L to R: Terri Ziegler, John Sweeney & Linda Webb
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- MG Update Meetings
- Palm Harbor Class
- MG Garden Tour
- MG Discounts
- FBG Membership
- Extension Classes
- FBG on Facebook

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 coordinator Chuck Scaffidi or assistant, Emma Eshbaugh.

The Neighborhood Gardener is the monthly e-newsletter from the University of Florida Master Gardener and the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods programs. It is available on the Florida Master Gardener Web site http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/newsletter/newsletters.shtml.

Master Gardener Update Schedule - Mark Your Calendar!
- Friday, January 8, 9AM—Dave Palmer, IFAS, presents "Internet Security: Virus Protection", Potluck
- Monday, February 8, 9AM—Loren Westenberger presents "Tree Pruning and Preservation". Tree walk on campus.

Palm Harbor Library MG Plant Propagation
MG Angela Strain will explore techniques of plant propagation including growing from seed, using the layering technique and growing new plants from a stem or leaf cutting on Wednesday, January 13, at 2–3:30PM and 6:15-7:45PM at the Palm Harbor Library, 2330 Nebraska Ave. Admission is free, but space is limited. Register online at www.pinellascountyextension.org with a click on the "Online Class Registration" button or call 727-582-2100.

MG Garden Tour
Vivian Haicken, past president of FBGF and current co-chair of the Holiday Lights will be hosting a garden tour on Tuesday, January 19 at 10AM at 584 Bluff View Dr, Belleair Bluffs 33770. Her home is located north of West Bay Dr. before you head over the Belleair Beach Bridge.

Series of Extension Classes - Mark your Calendar!
The following classes will be offered at Extension for free to MGs, Volunteers and FBGF members that register. When you attend you must show one of the membership cards. All others pay a nominal fee of $15 to attend. Please see Extension's on-line calendar page for details and to register.

Saturday, January 9, 9-10:30AM Common Lawn & Garden Problems
This program presented by Horticulturist Andy Wilson.

Saturday, January 16, 9-10:30AM It Starts with Soil. Join Cindy Peacock, Horticulturist, as you learn that without proper site selection, soil prep and management, plant nutrition it can be frustrating and nonproductive. This class is one of a four part series. On Jan. 23 is Planting, Setting and Growing, Jan 30 is Pests and Harvesting and Feb 6 is Reaping the Rewards.

Tuesday, January 19 & 26, 6-8:30PM Florida Style Gardening. Want to uncover the secrets to gardening the Florida-Friendly way? Attend Tuesdays Jan 19, 26 and Feb 2, 16 and 23 for a gardening series that will help gardeners improve their landscape design and maintenance.

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. The following provide discounts: Art Stone Orchids, Country Club Nursery, Earthscapes Garden Room, Kathy's Korner, Palm Harbor Nursery & Landscaping, Wilcox Nursery, and Willow Tree Nursery.

Florida Botanical Gardens on Facebook
Check out our new Facebook page for the Florida Botanical Gardens. Facebook allows us to share about the garden and keep membership more connected. Become a fan and tell your friends to friend us. Link to the FBG Facebook
Emergency Contact Information
Thanks to MG Marian Cirello for bringing the following tip to our attention.

In an emergency situation could law enforcement personnel contact someone for you? They could if you had entered your information onto the Emergency Contact Information System. The system allows Floridians to voluntarily provide emergency contact information online, giving law enforcement immediate access to this information and making it easier for them to speak with someone quicker in case of emergency. If you have a Florida driver license or identification card, you can click any of the links located throughout this website, and enter your emergency information. Think of your loved ones. To learn more about the history behind this effort: [http://www.flhsmv.gov/EmerContInfoHistory1.html](http://www.flhsmv.gov/EmerContInfoHistory1.html)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Friends of Science for the Pinellas Regional Science Fair
The 2010 regional fair will be held at Seminole Middle School on Saturday, February 6 from 8am until approximately 3pm. Assistance is needed in judging the students’ projects at the science fair. To find out more details and register to be a judge please contact Paul Dickman at the Center for Advanced Technologies, by phone: 727-893-2609 or email dickman@cat.pcsb.org.

Message from JANE MORSE, University of Florida/IFAS Extension Agent, Pinellas County
As always, we are very appreciative of you and all of the hard work you do to "extend" our reach into the Pinellas County Extension, FGB gardens and into the community. Keep up the great work you are doing, because you do make a huge difference. We would be lost, failing and failing without you and what you do.
Looking forward to working with you in the new year 2010!

2010 January

FRI JAN 8, 9AM
- MG Update & Potluck
  *Home, Auto, Personal and Identity Theft*

SAT, JAN 9, 9-10:30AM
- Common Lawn & Garden Problems at Extension

THRU JAN 3, 6-10PM
- Holiday Lights at the Botanical Gardens
  *Family friendly event*
  *Gift Shop open Fri & Sat*
  *Entertainment nightly*
  *Vendors & Refreshments*

TUES, JAN 19 & 26, 6-8:30PM
- Florida-Style Gardening at Extension

Looking Ahead!
MON FEB 8, 9AM
- MG Update
  Loren Westenberger presents "Tree Pruning and Preservation". Tree walk on campus.

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. [http://www.pinellascounty.org/scripts/publish/webevent.pl?cmd=opencal&cal=cal6](http://www.pinellascounty.org/scripts/publish/webevent.pl?cmd=opencal&cal=cal6)
Happy New Year Volunteers!

Reminder—Mark Your Calendar!

- MG Update
  Friday, January 8 at 9AM
  Dave Palmer, from IFAS presents Internet Security
  MG “Potluck”

Jane Morse
Acting Extension Agent II, Environmental Horticulture

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, IFAS, FLORIDA A & M UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM, AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING.

Holiday Lights in the Gardens
at Florida Botanical Gardens
Nov. 28, 2009 - Jan. 3, 2010
6-10pm

HOLIDAY DOG PARADE
At the Florida Botanical Gardens
Saturday January 2, 2010 at 3:30PM
$5.00 registration fee.
All pets must be leashed and under owner’s control at all times.
Assemble in parking lot at Florida Botanical Gardens at 3:30 PM with registration slip. For information call 727-582-2247. Make checks payable to: Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation.