Garden Tips
Finding New Plants

The following story was provided by Bob Abben, MG. I (Chuck Scaffidi) was looking at the new 2006 FNGLA plants selected this year and thought it was appropriate to tie Bob’s article with this years winners shown above. So in the new world enjoy the picks, and for an old world story enjoy Bob’s article. Also, food for thought for the Fall plant sale.

Almost every hour of every day of the year there are “Plant Hunters” scouring the Earth for new plants. They are in the jungles, scrub-land, sea shore but not the Antarctic. These plant hunters are dispatched from botanical gardens, specialty growers, universities and grants from governments and foundations. Modern day adventurers looking for new delights, or new ways of enrichment. Let’s follow one such plant, the Lizzianthus. A Japanese foundation sent a group of “Plant Hunters” into a foreign land to look for new plant material. These adventurers did find a dark blue, very open flower, similar to a tulip. They gathered what material they could find, plants, roots and seed and along with probably other material; left this foreign land and went home. The botanists went to work and produced the Lizzianthus which they shipped to other countries, including our country. Many of us placed this new plant in our gardens. In a couple of years the hybridizers had some

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Green Thumb Festival

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI

Extension Master Gardeners were active at Saturday, April 26, annual Green Thumb Festival. We supported several booths; Extension, FY&N, Butterflies and Composting.

The Lizzsianthus was found in Arizona, USA by the Japanese “Plant Hunters”.

Gardening Safety Tips

By PAM BROWN, Horticulture Agent

The rewards of gardening are plentiful. We see the results of our hard work in the plants, flowers, and vegetables we so carefully nurture.

As we go about our gardening, we must remember that the most important gardening tool we have is our body. The aches and pains we feel from time to time take us away from the hobby we so enjoy. Proper body positioning, well designed gardening gloves and tools, and frequent rest breaks are the keys to being a healthy gardener.

Listed below is a few tips to save your back that will help you garden safely and comfortably.

Back

- Bend at the knees and hips to lift and hold objects. Keep one arm under the object while carrying.

- Use an erect body posture when working at ground level or when using long-handed gardening tools such as hoes, spades and rakes.

- With existing back problems, consider raised beds to minimize bending and lifting. For more visit: http://www.indianahandcenter.com/erg_garden.html

Pat Dieterich showing Larva, at the well attended festival.

Under the Extension tent: MGs Ruth Reid & Wilma Coffey, John Kingsbury and Dale Armstrong, Staff.
Important Announcements!

You now have the ability to send your volunteer hours by e-mail. The e-mail address is:

MGEDU@co.pinellas.fl.us

Please be specific when doing this – include individual dates and hours worked just like you would in the logbook. MG Jan Curtin will be recording the hours that are sent in by this method. I appreciate those that are using this method to report their hours and hope you will continue to do so.

Note the article that follows:

Wilma Holley, FY&N staff teaches the butterfly cycle under the tent to a well attended crowd.

Mary Ellen Warner was the volunteer of the year winner and received a plaque honoring her at the April Green Thumb Festival. She received this honor for her many volunteer hours with the Garden Club of St. Petersburg. In addition, she gives her time unselfishly as a Master Gardener and a board member of the FBG foundation. So far this year she has volunteered over 200 hours lecturing at church groups and civic organization and for Extension where she is very active assisting the FY&N staff yard certification program.

Way to go Mary Ellen! Very deserving.

Donna Zacharczyk, presenting below:

The Wolflingers

James and Lillian Wolfinger celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a party hosted by their daughter, Karen Williams, and a trip to the Virgin Islands. They were married April 28, 1956, in Lancaster, Ohio, and moved to Seminole from Columbus, Ohio, in 1968.

Mr. and Mrs. Wolfinger own Discount Boat Tops Custom in Largo. They are master and botanical gardeners. They are members of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Largo, and have two children and six grandchildren.

Congratulations Jim and Lillian! As we know and appreciate, they are one of our husband and wife MG volunteer teams that donate many hours each year. When I did this article I thought of all those wonderful years gone by and it reminded me of Joan and my (Chuck) 50th anniversary which occurred on May 5, a week after theirs. I am always looking for interesting celebrations about MGs and staff, so don't be shy let me know so we can all share in it.

Chuck
Extension has agreed to switch to the automated volunteer hour system by July 1. After that date, the books you are now using will be replaced by entering hours directly into a computer designated for that purpose. It will be located in the volunteer office room 108.

The county volunteer office agreed to a familiarization period and provided a test data base to us for that purpose.

I plan to do individual and or small group training, so I thought as starters that you reserve at least 30 minutes when you normally are here at extension. For others, you can schedule a time with me by E-mail or call 582-2117.

It is not a difficult system to learn. In the design of this system we tried to simplify it, but because of reporting requirements there will be information that must be filled out, i.e. what your volunteer assignments are. We are volunteers for “Natural Resources” and Pam Brown has authorized a list of work duties that we all should be able to select from.

Also, I will note any suggestions you may find by using the system. The administrators assigned to enter volunteer hours or add updated information are myself, Jan Curtin, and Carol Suggs.

It is important to make the July 1 date so please make an extra effort to get the training.

Chuck Scaffidi

CC: Pam Brown, Tom Roberts, Joe Legath Carol Suggs, Jean Murphy, Jan Curtin, Horticulture staff

Pinellas County Extension & Florida Botanical Gardens

We need help in collecting all publicity related to the Extension and FBG Gardens. Please clip any articles you see that mention us in any way, including weddings and outside events. Please bring the clippings to the volunteer office.

Please remember to include the name of the publication and date published.

Palm Education

Pam Brown has a CD produced by Dr’s. Monica Elliott and Tim Brochat of the University of Florida containing PowerPoint presentations on Palm Diseases, Palm Fertilization, Physiological Disorders of Palms, Palm Nutrient Deficiencies, and Palm Transplanting and Pruning. There are scripts to go with each presentation. Three of these CDs are available for MGs to check out and use for study. If you go through all five of the presentations it will equal 7 hours of continuing education units.

New Mentors Needed

I am looking for some experienced Master Gardeners to serve as Mentors for the next MG training class which starts on August 2 and goes through November 8. Mentors help guide MG students during the training and through that first year until they have their 100 volunteer hours. The Mentors also serve as my Master Gardener Advisory group, helping shape the Master Gardener program to the needs of Pinellas County.

If you think you might be interested, please plan on attending one of the Mentor Training Sessions (attending a training does not automatically obligate you to being a Mentor). Let Carol know which date that you wish to attend.

June 2 at 10 a.m. in the Gardenia Room
June 5 at 10 a.m. in the Gardenia Room
June 14 at 10 a.m. in the Magnolia Room

Attention Current Mentors – You are also required to attend one of the training dates as a refresher.

MG Advisory Association

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

I prepared notebooks containing all the Association documents for Board members. They were distributed to board members at the last meeting. Please review the Policy and Procedures since they are not the final version. I will collect the comments for a subsequent meeting with the Chairman's Committee to finalize them. The documents are available for all MGAA members on request. We have detailed how MGAA operates and is organized, and defined the duties of committees.

The following Grant letter applies to Staff and MGs:

The Master Gardener Advisory Association (MGAA) Policy and Procedures describes the procedure for applying for grants from the association. Quoting from The Articles of Association of Master Gardeners: “The purpose for which the Association is organized is to receive, manage, account for, and expend revenues received from activities of the Master Gardeners of the Pinellas County Extension. The funds will be used for the support and enhancement of the Florida Botanical Gardens (a Pinellas County, Florida public botanical garden), for dissemination of plant and horticultural information and for the general public welfare.”
of environmental and horticultural information and for various educational activities.”

With this purpose in mind, and to fairly expedite the grant process, the Association created a Grant form to be submitted to the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee then processes the grant applications. Their recommendations are then submitted to the Board to obtain a quorum board member vote.

Every January and June the Budget Committee will prepare a report listing all requests in priority order and with their recommendations. The Budget Committee working with the Finance Committee will submit the availability of funds for the grants in the report.

The Grant form challenges the applicant to exhaust all avenues of funding before requesting money from MGAA. Recognizing the competition for funding, the justification for a project becomes critical. Keep in mind, grants will only be considered if they fit into our Association purpose.

The association members will work with you and your supervisor to assist you in determining your funding needs to supplement or add to your department budget.

Please contact me or Pam Brown to discuss this Grant approach or availability of the MGAA documents.

Chuck Scaffidi, MGAA chair
Pam Brown, IFAS Extension Agent, MGAA Advisor

I have scheduled a general meeting of MGAA on Thursday June 8 at 11:00 am in the Magnolia room to conduct association business. Please!! This is your association, try to attend.

IFAS Award of Excellence for Master Gardener Projects

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

The advisory committee will continue to assist MG startup projects and identify projects that have state award potential.

For award submissions we are in dire need of the following MG skills: creative writers, editors, reviewers, graphic artists and others willing to help. Please see me or call 582-2117 if you are interested or you feel you are working on a project deserving of an award.

Volunteer Opportunities and Events for June

For Volunteer Opportunities:
Please see or call Carol Suggs to volunteer for events (582-2124) or the contact person in the help wanted ad.

Up-coming Master Gardener Update Training Topics
June 8 (Thursday)—10:00-11:00am—Magnolia Room. MGAA Board meeting to follow.
Brown Bag Lunch
“RETRO FITTING YOUR LANDSCAPE”
By Robert J. Albanese Horticulturist II
I will be showing the difference in a landscape from 25 years ago to present day; at the same time discussing in-ground irrigation systems and how not to have to change them as the landscape matures, as well as some landscape design issues and problems.

The presentation is a demonstration of what to do and more importantly what not to do, many of my first hand yard experiences learned the hard way.

MG Plant Sale
By LINDA CULHANE, MG

Plant Sale Update May 2006

For our last plant sale we had a session that came up with many good ideas, and many areas in which we can improve. I felt it was a very successful meeting and thank all those who attended and participated. Following is the list of the areas where we do a fantastic job:

- Early advertising in signs posted and written ads in magazines and newspaper
- Attitude of all workers before, during and after the sale. This is so important to our public, they want to be treated well, and we do a great job in this area.
- Using a separate area for drop off and pick up in the holding area
- Offering a selection of old garden magazines and books
- Low prices, even the specialty plants which were higher priced, were purchased with eagerness
- Location of the MG/ FBG membership locations worked well
Better schematic of the sale areas. We had wider aisles, and used more of the extension grounds.

Extra fertilizer prior to sale, this encourages better growth, resulting in better plants to offer

The variety of topics for the display groups and the use of the computer for the Ask Me team

Selection of lunch for the workers was very well received.

For the areas where the new ideas and improvements came forward from our participants:

Adverting: use of Tampa sources, use of additional banners and signs, use of “award winning” in our publicity (since we are an “award winning” activity). Using email to other garden friendly organizations: garden clubs for example.

Training session for Ask Me team, and earlier setup of that area, use of written handouts about plants.

Schematic/Setup: clearer definition of locations of various areas, example holding and checkout, clearer identification of MG staff, improve the expeditor process, during the setup use experienced MGs in front and in the Greenhouse area to make this a smoother process. It can get confusing to know which plants are to be sent out for sale.

Customer assistance: have additional MGs available to “sell” plants and offer advice. Look to outside assistance for checkout/take you to the car process.

Increased availability of water to workers in the field area.

Use an expeditor in the holding area to speed up this process.

Labeling: improve the process to label plants and insure they are accurate.

Pricing: Streamline the pricing, especially the herbs, This is sometimes confusing to the expeditors.

Improve our signage for location of specialty areas. Let our customers know where the plants are located.

Parking/security: encourage the use of area between sale and EMT is used totally for customers, Insure all areas of entrance are covered for customers coming in and leaving.

Specialty areas: look into expanding this area, one suggestion was to have ladybugs for sale.

We only looked at areas that need improvement, and did not discuss the method to improve. That is our task in the coming months. Also I had the privilege of attending a MG plant sale in Cincinnati. While I was there I looked over their process of set up and delivery for a sale that brings in $60,000 in 2 ½ days. We will be discussing some of these ideas at the next meeting on June 30.

I was able to add this note from the plant sale meeting today (Friday 26 May) before the newsletter went to press. After the presentation on Cincinnati Plant Sale we decided to institute one booth now. That is the “Used Garden Items” (we’ll have to think up a good title for it). Basically, a booth that offers your garden items you no longer want or need. That would include tools, pots, trellis, basically anything garden related that is still usable. We will begin collecting these items now, so look thru your garage, shed or backyard and give me a call if you can’t hold them until Sept. This booth is so good because it is 100% profit. One item that went like hotcakes at the Cincinnati sale was large bamboo (6’) tied in a bundle of 5. Everyone wanted them…. Anyone out there have a sharp machete? So we can start collecting for this booth now with your assistance. Also look for stores/nurseries that are going out of business that are willing to donate items.

The Monday shade house and green house crew is busy preparing for the October plant sale. We need and welcome everyone who enjoys propagating and maintaining plants.

Also, the crews desperately need one gallon pots. The plant sale meetings are the last Friday of the month at 10am in Auditorium C. All MGs are invited to come and participate.

Thanks for you hard work,
Linda

I Need Your Help to Keep Our Gardens Growing

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 $25; Family is $35; 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

See me or stop in at Botanical Bounty.
Mary Ellen Warner, Membership Chair
Here it is June again with summer just around the corner. If you are working in the landscape now that the temperatures are rising, please be sure to take water with you and wear a hat and sunscreen. If you forget sunscreen or insect spray, I have a variety of products in my office on the top shelf just inside my door for your use. Please help yourselves if you need anything. Remember, also to watch out for fire ants. If you see a mound, please let us know the location so that it can be treated right away. Remember also to take breaks in the shade. You are all so precious to us and we do not want anything to happen to you.

The Preview classes for the 2006 Master Gardener training are all complete and the applications are due in by June 2. Hopefully, we will have another great class.

Speaking of training – The Master Gardener Mentors and I have decided on something different for 2007. Instead of training new MGs, we are going to plan a Master Gardener College for you that are already faithful volunteers. It will be similar to the MG training, several weeks long (don’t know how long yet), one day per week, and will be advanced training in a variety of subjects from specialists at the Research Centers or Gainesville. I have already spoken with a number of the specialists and they have agreed to participate. If you have a topic you would like to see included, please let me know. We may not be able to cover them all, but it will give us a starting point. I will most likely send out a survey in the next couple of months to get some ideas from all of you.

I understand that all of the MGs that went to EPCOT to man the information booth had a great time. I appreciate your willingness to participate in the activity that showcases the Master Gardeners in Florida.

As always, we appreciate everything that you do for Extension!

♥ Pam

Plant Sale funds contribute to The Green Leaf mailing. Urgent!! To save mailing costs please tell Carol or me to remove your name from the mailing list if you can consistently and reliably access the internet version or if you choose to pick your copy up at Extension.

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

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

Managing Editor: Pam Brown, Extension Agent II
Production Editor: Chuck Scaffidi, Master Gardener
727-582-2117
Please send articles to Pam Brown or e-mail directly to Chuck cascaffidi@juno.com or Pam at pwbrown@co.pinellas.fl.us

The newsletter is available on the Internet at http://www.flbg.org/
Click on “Master Gardener Program”, click on “MG Newsletter”
Chef Of The Day

MG’s, show your composting skill. Direct MGs to chop, grind, mix, water and stir. Take home mature compost and a compost bin.

Assistant Chefs

MG’s wanting better composting skills and hands-in. Help make a batch and take home a compost bin.

Both available Wednesdays, 9 to 12 am adjacent the Herb Garden weather permitting. Call Extension to schedule. MG reservation line at 582-2247

John Kingsbury’s compost seminar
At Extension May 26. A few pictures below of a well attended lecture.

Some last minute notes:

I plan to order Master Gardener Florida license plates, with MGAA approval. We have had several requests for them. I would like to get an estimate of how many to order. Price should be around $8. So please let me know at: cascaffidi@juno.com or 582-2117 or Carol Suggs at 582-2124.
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