

MG Volunteer in the Spotlight



Class of 1994

GRANT HURST

Note: A veteran Master Gardener will be introduced to our readers with a look at his or her personal background and the contributions made to IFAS programs. Through these articles we will explore the 23-year history of Master Gardener activities and how Extension has been enriched by their efforts.

By JSM, MG

After the family relocated to Durham, North Carolina, Grant, age nine, felt that life doesn't get any better than this. He had finished ninth grade at Durham County School in 1943, a daily trek of two miles, and then attended Durham High in town. Most of his free time was spent at his father's Goodyear store operating the tire-retreading machine. Hey seniors, remember tire retreads?

Grant's mom, an enterprising lady, wishing to aid the war effort proposed a Victory Garden on a vacant adjoining half-acre lot. She hoped to provide veggies and blackberries to feed the family. To overcome the meat and egg shortage she bought two Muscovy ducks.

Grant's tobacco growing neighbor taught him farming basics: grow your veggies from seed and collect and apply horse manure in a timely fashion. In two years his flock of ducks had grown to thirty. This meant wearing

galoshes while working in the garden. "These were unruly critters that were reluctant to move from the watering hole," he recalls. "With red meat in short supply the muscovy ducks were an unpleasant substitute - tough, greasy and stringy. The eggs were larger than chicken eggs but didn't taste like chicken eggs, Yuk!" The flock was soon sold and Grant muses, "I wish we had raised chickens instead of muscovies." *

Grant graduated from Duke University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration. During the Korean War he entered the United States Army attending the Army Financial School. He was stationed in Yokohama Japan as a Service Paymaster. Grant was honorably discharged in 1954.

Grant met Ann at a YMCA mixer in 1957 and wedding bells quickly followed. He added with a whimsical note "Was I the charmer or was it my 1954 two tone blue, white top, Dodge convertible with white sidewalls?"

Grant returned to Duke to complete his Master's Degree in Hospital Administration and quickly entered the health care field as Executive Director of the Birmingham Regional Hospital Council, an eighteen-hospital coalition. Five years later he accepted the position of Director of the South Carolina Hospital Association. Grant was then offered the job of Director of the Planning Council for Charlotte and adjacent counties.

Grant did find time for gardening on weekends and was particularly proud of his bed of about forty tulips, asparagus, raspberries and blackberries. He labored long hours to master the clay soil of the Carolinas. He describes his soil amendments as "Working oak leaves into the clay along with pine needles and a touch of sand. Lots of patience produced a loamy soil." He said,

“It was hard work - no shortcuts, but our plants loved it”.

The Hurst family moved to Florida in 1979 when Grant was appointed Executive Director of the Bay Area Hospital Council, a consortium of thirty hospitals in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties.

Today, Grant is semi- retired and works as a consultant to not for profit hospitals in Pinellas County. He describes his long term career in health care simply as “A passion to make hospitals operate more efficiently and to enhance the group buying concept as their primary component.”

Grant’s arrival In Florida as a Tar Heel with clay between his toes was quickly tempered by his inability to grow tomatoes in our soil. An Extension article in the St. Pete Times brought him to the MG program and the opportunity to amass his required hundred hours. Reflecting fondly on his first project with James Blackwell, “the MG Herb Garden was born”. He says, “ It began with a humble bamboo shade house, primitive albeit, with material taken from the donated Shervis property”. Today it is recognized nationally by leading herbalists.

Reflecting on his ten years as a Master Gardener, he gives credit to a very supportive staff, “Especially Opal who was a remarkable lady. She could take a complicated question and deliver a simple sounding answer to the client. She was the cornerstone of Extension in terms of public perception.” Grant enjoys working at the lobby desk because it provides a continuing education while helping the public. He has become a much better gardener at home.

Grant is also active in the following organizations: Literary Council of Upper Pinellas as a tutor, Central Gulf Coast Archeology Society and the Herb Society.

His advice to new MGs relates to long-term opportunities at Extension. It provides the enrollees with classroom instruction based on the latest scientific material from IFAS, a committed and friendly teaching staff, plus hands-on instruction in a choice of disciplines. Grant ended with “ My ten years have been productive, fun, and a contribution to the community with skills I’ve acquired here”.

*Muscovy Duck also known as Musky duck is highly regarded in gourmet circles as the finest of all duck meats. The flavor is often described as tasting like extra special veal.

Farewell to Betty and Tom Hill



BY CHUCK SCAFFIDI

A farewell lunch was held February 22 for the Hills at Extension. We certainly will miss this most talented couple. At every turn they would offer a smile and a friendly conversation.

They are heading back to Sussex, Wisconsin to spend full time with children and grandchildren and keep actively involved in gardening projects. Tom also will stay involved with computers as he did at extension, which he “Exceled” at.

We all know how time flies, I found *The Green Leaf* dated May, 2002 where we honored the Hills for 11 years of Master Gardener service. I was so impressed by their accomplishments I am repeating a few paragraphs from that article which I feel reflect their generous and humble character.

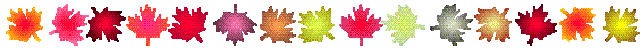
“What do we do with our spare time in Sussex, Wisconsin? We developed an Annual Flower & Vegetable Show, to encourage parents and children the joy of gardening at the local library. The show involved, scheduling, instructing exhibitors, judging the show, and soliciting awards from local merchants. Each show has been bigger and better the past two years, as parents and local citizens appreciate the efforts of the children. It has brought a new dimension to the Village of Sussex, WI.”

“Tom teaches a 2-hour "Introductory to Computers" at the Sussex Senior Center and is a tutor at the Hamilton High School twice a week in the Computer Lab.”

“In conclusion, "Oh Happy Day!!!!" Says Betty. Tom and I have been married 54 years following the advice we received a long time

ago. Tom has his interests, I have my interests, and we have our together interests. We have enjoyed every volunteer hour, the association with all the staff, and the diversity provided by the Extension.”

“We leave you with this thought, "Being a Master Gardener is more than pulling weeds and working the soil. It has been a very rewarding experience for both of us and would not trade this time for anything.””



THINGS ARE LOOKING UP! Indigo Bunting Season

By JOANNE DRAKE, MG



Before sitting down to breakfast at 8:00 a.m., I had to dip into a bag of sunflower seeds (black) and fill the backyard bird feeders. It was a beautiful Florida day ... the last day of January. My husband and I had hopes of viewing a male Indigo Bunting (5½ inches) with its beautiful iridescent blue plumage, as we did last year. We had that pleasure for the first two weeks of March, before it left our area of St. Petersburg.

Things were slow at first ... then a few squirrels jumped onto the wooden feeder, getting their fill of seeds. Squirrels are very entertaining! It wasn't long after they left that we saw a flash of blue in the sun, and it landed on a shaded spot of the wooden privacy fence. Once it was in the shade ... it appeared to be black!

We're fairly new bird watchers ... so we keep a field guide handy, along with a pair of binoculars.

The bird moved to the feeder with the warm morning sun illuminating its colors again. I was a little disappointed because it didn't seem to be the bright blue of the Indigo that I had remembered from the year before. This bird had some brown-tones in his feathers. I looked at the beak, which was conical and light in color. I flipped through the field guide ... thinking maybe we had an Eastern Bluebird visiting our feeder. They also show up in this area around the same time but the beak illustration was more slender and dark. The bird was listed as 7 inches ... too big to be the Indigo. Well, we didn't have a perfect match.

We don't give up easily! Just to read up on the Indigo Bunting ... I looked up the page number in the index and flipped to the page indicated. I was pleasantly surprised when I saw an illustration of the "1st spring" male Indigo Bunting. We had a perfect match this time! I learned that the "Spring" Indigo is more blue than the "1st Spring Indigo Bunting ... having splashes of brown on its feathers. We just had to be patient and wait for this little bird to mature before becoming the beautiful iridescent blue we had remembered.

Watching the beauty of birds in your own backyard can be contagious ... especially when you point them out to a friend, neighbor or grandchild. Before you know it ... they'll be "looking up" too.

Garden Tips



Don't toss those holiday poinsettias!

By Yvonne Swanson, MG

If you've been caring for a holiday poinsettia, it's time to transplant it outdoors. Although it's cold sensitive, the poinsettia can be used as a landscape plant in south and central

Florida. A woody perennial that requires full sun, it adds wonderfully rich hues of red, pink, white, orange and purple to the garden from Thanksgiving to March. Don't plant your poinsettia near a window or outdoor light or it may never flower.

Poinsettias require complete darkness at night during the bud-setting period, which begins in early October.



The University of Florida in Gainesville recommends planting poinsettias in the early spring when danger of frost is past. Dig a hole 1 foot wider and 6 inches deeper than the root ball, then backfill the hole with soil so your plant is at the same depth as it was in its container. Firm the soil to prevent settling, then water thoroughly to remove air pockets. Apply mulch to conserve moisture and control weeds.

Care for your poinsettia in the landscape by keeping the soil moist and fertilizing monthly except when in bloom (about October to March). Prune it each spring after blooming is over by cutting the plant back to about 12 to 18 inches from the ground. If your plant was damaged by freezing temperatures, cut it back to its live wood.

To keep your plant compact and bushy at flowering time, regularly pinch off new growth once branches are about a foot long. Always leave four leaves on each shoot, and stop pinching early in September so you don't hinder final buds that will appear in early October.

The poinsettia is not free from problems. Yellowing of foliage usually means your plant needs magnesium in the form of dolomite (1 to 2 ounces per plant). You should also use magnesium sulfate (Epsom salt) each February and June at the rate of 1 teaspoon per square foot. Aphids, mealybugs, soft scales, whiteflies,

spider mites and hornworm can pose problems, as well as fungus. Check with one of our Extension agents for treatment guidelines.

The poinsettia is named for Joel R. Poinsett, a U.S. ambassador who introduced the plant from Mexico in 1825. It's the No. 1 seller at holiday time, and contrary to popular belief, isn't poisonous or toxic. Some people are allergic to the plant's sap, however, so use caution when handling.

Lubbers, Unusual Grasshoppers

By **JACE PINKARD, MG** and **ANDY WILSON, Horticulturist**

As lubbers will soon be hatching you will be seeing groups of cute little grasshoppers - black with a little orange or yellow striping on them- at different places on your plants. When you first spot them they will be only an inch long. They voraciously eat many plants.



The most effective method of killing lubbers seems to be crushing. If the body parts are severed as well as crushed those pieces seem to be devoured and carried away by something immediately. Otherwise, if left whole the body is likely to remain in view for days. No spray has been devised that will kill them.

By midsummer you will be seeing giant yellow and black grasshoppers. Regular sprays and homemade remedies are often recommended in newspaper articles, but they really do not work on the lubber at any age. The best "policy" is regularly looking thoroughly around your grounds, noticing where the lubbers may have shown at any age and killing them manually.



LONDON GARDENS

The garden tour to England on July 5 is still available at \$2,995 for the two-week journey. Participants will feast their eyes on the world's largest

flower show at Hampton Court and will visit the gardens at: Great Fosters, Runnymede, Leeds Castle & gardens, Kew gardens, Kensington Palace and visit Portsmouth on the way to Southampton where you will embark on the Queen Mary 2.

To have a thrilling vacation and transportation back on the Queen Mary 2, call **VanGuard's Judy Skaggs at (800) 624-7718** or visit the **FLBG Web site**.

Safety Nets

By **PAM BROWN Horticulture Agent**
and **CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG**



What's Wrong with this Picture?



Do you know how many things the gardener in this picture is doing wrong? Send your answers to editor@progardenbiz.com.

Source:

<http://www.progardenbiz.com/issues/v1issue2/What-Wrong-Picture-Garden.html>

Important Announcement!

It's here and working. 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 these hours that are sent in by this method.

Order –



We have enough interest in ordering pruners and other tools from Felco to receive the discounted pricing. If you are interested in ordering, please let Carol Suggs know what you want. She will be collecting the money at the same time. We will need payment up front so that a check can be sent with the order. Carol has the catalog and the price listing. You are not limited to pruners; we do not need a specific number of any one item this time. We would like all orders to be in to Carol by March 31.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Volunteers Needed!!!



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

■ MG Participation in Events

MGs participating in special events should get prior approval and a check voucher from the Advisory committee if they are going to expend money for any event and expect reimbursement.

Please follow this procedure.

See Chuck Scaffidi if you have questions about this procedure. The Advisory account is now managed by MG membership.

■ 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 place the clippings in the basket that is in the **break room**.

Please include the name of the publication and date published.

■ Tour Guides Needed

Tour guide season got underway in September and will continue until May.

Please make your interest known to **Tom Roberts or Sue Richardson**; visit them or call **582-2242** to make an appointment. They will brief you on what is required of a tour guide and sign you up to shadow tours. Also, you may assist during a tour to get experience - **sign up!!**

Tours coming up in March:

March 7 Monday 1:00pm Encore Garden club from Nokomis, FL. 40 to 50 visitors.

March 10 Thursday 11:00am Lake County MGs. 45 visitors

March 15 Tuesday 11:30am PEO club Indian Shores 12-18 visitors.

March 21 Monday 10:00am Woman's Service League of St. Petersburg. 10 visitors.

■ 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.

We are in dire need of the following MG skills: creative writers, editors, reviewers, graphic artists and others willing to help meet the 2005 project deadline. Please see me or call 582-2117 if you are interested or you feel you are working on a project we should consider.



I am very proud to say that we have completed and submitted the UPARC project as a contender in the **International MG Search for Excellence program**. The awards will be presented at the MG conference in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada July 24-27. I have

literature about the conference in our volunteer office for anyone interested in attending

This is a very deserving project!! So for all those volunteers that made building UPARC therapeutic garden an outstanding success and for the clients who have developmental disabilities **please pray for UPARC to be a winner.**

Volunteer Opportunities and Events for March & April

■ Suncoast Home and Garden Show at Tropicana Field

March 4-6, 11:00 to 8:00 p.m. on 3/4&5, 11:00 to 6:00 p.m. on 3/6. The Ultimate One-Stop Showcase for almost everything and anything for your home, patio and garden. **Extension/FY&N** exhibit and **Rain Barrel** demonstration each day.

■ MG Advanced Training March MG Advanced Training

Tuesday March 8 MG Up-date and Meeting with Mr. Spratt

The regularly scheduled MG Up-date will be held at **10 a.m. (Please note the time change)**. The topic will be **“Polynesia – the other Paradise”**.

Immediately after the lecture at **11 a.m.**, Mr. Spratt, County Executive will be here to meet with Master Gardeners regarding the issue of Judy being relieved of duty. If you have any comments or questions regarding this issue, please plan to be present.

MG Advanced Training “Bonus Sheet”

By **BOB ABBEN, MG**

Did you miss an issue, do you need extra copies? We all know attending the “Up-Date” on the 8th of each month is sometimes not convenient. An MG may request any or as many copies (within reason) as needed for your use, family, friends, schools etc. The primary idea is to inform as many people about our world of horticulture and environment as possible. Here's how to get your back issues. There is a clipboard in plain sight in the **MG volunteer office**, just **PRINT** your name and issue or issues desired. We do not require driver ID or proof of age. All previous issues are listed on the clipboard. Your request will be filled ASAP and clipped to your timesheet

Copies of the minutes of the previous advanced training meetings are available in

the Volunteer office near your time sheet notebooks.

Bonus Sheet Commentary

At the February "Update" someone was heard saying, "Why do I need a "sheet" on corn? There could have been more with that same thought. Reading through the "sheets" you would soon get the idea that Florida is a very important state (not just in football) in our nations food supply. Besides the "sheets" that were distributed, Florida is in the top three states that produce, spinach, cabbage, okra, pecans, various melons, beets and many more including carrots.

Florida has so many endangered species of wildlife and native plants; it would also be wise to count farmland as endangered. Much of the land is in some of the fastest growing counties. The "land barons" must be salivating. The disasters of last summer are still very evident; one small but very important part of the many disasters was the tomato crop. The crop was all but wiped out and the price of tomatoes made one think, "at those prices, who needs "em". When the farmland is subdivided into small villages and suburbs, such as "Leeks Village & Links" our honeymoon is over. At present, our dollars buy great veggies at some very good prices. Our tomatoes are always vine ripe and red ... your chances of buying "green" tomatoes, painted oranges and "green tart" celery are getting close.

It isn't just about tomatoes, it's almost our entire fresh food supply and that includes "beef".

■ An HerbFest will introduce attendees to the horticulture and use of herbs in the kitchen Saturday, **March 12, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**, at IFAS/Pinellas County Extension. Allen Cordell will narrate a tour of the herb garden; Master Gardeners will have a large selection of herbs to sell and Nan Jensen, registered dietitian and interim Extension director, will demonstrate the culinary use of herbs.

Extension is at 12175 125th St. N., Largo. Call 582-2100.

■ **Country in the Park - March 19, 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.**, a day of fun, music, exhibits, demonstrations and food sponsored by the City of Pinellas Park and the Pinellas

Park/Mid-County Chamber of Commerce. 5121 80th Ave N. England Brothers Bandshell. **Extension/FY&N exhibit.**

■ Pizza Garden Field trip

The 4-H Department is looking for a few good people to help with the Pizza Garden Field trip on **March 29, 30, and 31**. We need guides for each group of students (8 groups per day) and we need workshop helpers (8 workshops per day). You would need to be at the **Botanical Garden at 10:00 a.m.** for orientation with Coffee and donuts with the students arriving between 10:30 and 10:45 a.m. The program is finished around 12:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

If you can give a couple of hours any of those mornings please contact Betty Lipe at blipe@co.pinellas.fl.us or 582-2528.

✿ Plant Sale

April 2, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Master Gardener Plant Sale. Many jobs - check the schedule on the MG bulletin board to sign up for teams. To help spread the word about our plant sale, flyers are in the volunteer office you can pick up and distribute.



■ Upland Wildlife & Nature Tours



April 2 9:00 to 10:00 A.M. Meet in Palm Pavilion at Florida Botanical Gardens Pre-registration Required @ 582-2673 Adults & Families Welcome; Maximum 25 Guests; No Fee Take a gentle morning

wetlands stroll on a mulched path with our Wildlife Volunteer. Learn marsh, swamp & riverine ecosystems. Experience Florida's wetland wildlife, ecology and overall natural beauty.

May 7 9:00 to 10:00 A.M./Meet in Palm Pavilion (Florida Botanical Gardens)
Pre-registration Required @ 582-2673
Adults & families welcome; Maximum 25 guests; No fee

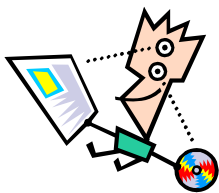
Take a morning walk in a natural pine flatwoods with our Wildlife Volunteer. Experience Florida's upland wildlife, ecology and overall natural beauty.



I will be back to work Monday, February 28. I have been enjoying a two-week vacation in Seattle spending time with our youngest daughter and friends. I enjoyed the break, but not the weather. I will join you soon.

Take care when you are working – each of you is so valuable to us. We appreciate everything that you do for us.

♥ Pam



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 about **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, Editor



The Green Leaf is mailed courtesy of MG Plant Sale funds.

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

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.fdbg.org/>
Click on “**Master Gardener Program**”, click on “**MG Newsletter**”



Pinellas County
12175 125th Street North
Largo, FL 33774-3695
Phone: (727)582-2100
Fax: (727)582-2149

The enclosed material is provided as one of the many services relating to the educational programs offered by this agency. Our statewide network of faculty is prepared to provide current information on food, agriculture, marine and natural resource science, energy, nutrition, family and 4-H youth, and related fields. We will be happy to help you with additional information upon request.

Pamela W. Brown

Pamela W. Brown
Extension Agent II, Environmental Horticulture

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Employment Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin.

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.