MG Volunteer in the Spotlight

Class of 1994    Richard Klimpel

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

The Village of Hempstead, Long Island holds sweet memories for Dick. The vacant lot next door and a quarter acre plot across the street from the family’s rental bungalow proved to be his introduction to vegetable gardening.

He remembers his father as a ‘gardener extraordinaire’ Dick learned the fundamentals at the age of ten while helping his Dad prepare the quarter acre as a Victory Garden. “We cultivated the highly regarded Long Island Potato” Dick recalls, “planting fifteen rows of potato bulbs, each row approximately seventy feet long that produced three to four bushels of potatoes a week during season.” His father then followed through on a plan to provide most of the crop to the neighborhood.

Dick soon became familiar with ‘Cow Flop’ and it became his fertilizer of choice. A neighbor with six cows provided the manure by the pail and Dick would dry it, break it up with the pitchfork and spread it evenly among the plant rows.

He excelled academically, winning Valedictorian honors at the Hempstead Elementary School System. Attending Hempstead High, he played varsity softball - fast pitch. (This is sandlot baseball to you southern sports fans.) Dick was on the Varsity bowling team and active on the school newspaper as advertising manager. He stayed busy during the summers working at the local A&P four days a week and hanging out at Jones Beach.

Hofstra University was Dick’s choice in pursuing his career goals. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree in 1953, was active in the Hofstra Chronicle as Business Manager and served as president of Kappa Rho fraternity. Dick was featured in the directory of ‘Who’s Who in American Colleges and Universities’ in 1953. Following graduation, Dick briefly entered the marketplace chauffeuring a two-ton truck hauling castings and construction material.

Dick entered the army in 1953 and went through advanced infantry training at Fort Dix, NJ. While en route to Korea, he was suddenly transferred to the 35AAA Brigade at Fort Meade, MD because of the need for a non commissioned officer with his specialization Dick reported to the commanding general as administrative assistant.

Alice entered Dick’s life at a non-commissioned officers’ dance in 1955. After a scintillating twelve-month courtship, Alice responded to Dick’s proposal with an enthusiastic “yes, yes!”

Honorably discharged in 1955, Dick joined Sperry Gyroscope as a cost analyst. He advanced through the ranks of procurement over a period of 22 years to become manager of Procurement and Major-Sub Contracts. In 1978 Dick was transferred to the new Sperry Microwave facility
in Clearwater with the title of Director of Contracts. He retired in 1989.

Dick is a happy gardener and enjoys pier fishing and surf casting. On the literary side he considers himself a devotee of the modern fiction novel.

Alice and Dick have been involved as volunteers for the past 10 years in elder care charities, including Meals on Wheels and the Helping Hands program.

Dick became acquainted with a long time Master Gardener at the Largo Medical Center and decided to visit Extension. He describes his meeting with Opal Schalmo as “a fascinating experience. She was very informative but unpretentious and had a friendly touch of humor.” Dick joined the 1994 MG class and elected to work with the ‘lonesome twosome’ Jean Field and Donna Zacharczyk Thursday afternoons maintaining the Environmental Learning Center.

Dick, now marking his ten years at Extension, describes it as a wonderful way to spend retirement. He is with people that are fun to be around and who share a common interest in horticulture. He finds the staff to be highly dedicated and committed to the Master Gardener volunteers. He says with a grin “It’s all about learning, laughter and landscaping, a great trio!”

His compatriots regard Dick as the Thursday humorist. His latest drollery: Johnny comes home from Sunday school after studying the bible. Leafing through the family bible, a pressed leaf falls out. His mother says: “Johnny, what are you doing?” Johnny replies: “I’m looking at the bible and I think I found Adam’s underwear.”

Mother’s Day: Second Sunday in May

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

Contrary to popular belief, Mother's Day was not instigated by the greeting card industry or the florists' union. The first celebrations honoring mothers, held in ancient Greece during the spring, paid tribute to Rhea, the Mother of the Gods. The 17th century English celebrated "Mothering Sunday" on the fourth Sunday of Lent; servants had the day off and were encouraged to visit their mothers.

In 1907, an American named Anna Jarvis pushed to establish a national Mother's Day, persuading her church to celebrate it on the second Sunday in May (the anniversary of her mother's death). In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson officially proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. Though Jarvis was bitter about the subsequent commercialization of the holiday, it became an international phenomenon; many other countries now celebrate Mother's Day on the same day as the United States.

Garden Tips

Preventing Plant Theft at Home

By YVONNE SWANSON, MG

Reports of plant thefts have been surfacing around the country, including Florida, where botanical gardens have been robbed of valuable cycads, palms and orchids. During the evacuation for Hurricane Frances last fall, more than 30 cycads alone were stolen from Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables.

Home gardens are vulnerable, too. In Dallas, flowers and shrubs are being stolen from front yards. In California, rare exotics are taken from private homes and sold on the international black market. Thieves have been known to literally rip plants from the ground, with roots and leaves torn or ripped from plants. The problem has gotten so bad that homeowners are chaining up their valuable plants and installing security cameras!
The most popular target appears to be cycads, a group of about 300 palm-like plants that have, in some varieties, been around since prehistoric times. The most common cycads grown in Florida are the sagos, which are not expensive and readily available at garden centers.

If you’re going to place an expensive plant in your front yard, purchase as large a plant as you can, suggests Michael Lenas, owner of Exotica, a St. Petersburg nursery and landscape design firm. Larger plants are more difficult to dig up and haul away. If that’s not possible, consider putting your prized valuable plants in a fenced area of your yard.

Potted urns or plants on the front porch can also be targets. Although lightweight containers are more convenient, it’s better to choose heavy pots for use in the front yard. To add extra weight and help promote drainage, the bottom few inches of pots can be filled with small landscape rocks.

An orchid collection hanging from tree branches is a lovely sight, but could be at risk in the front yard. It’s easy to add some extra wire or twine to hooks to secure in place. The same is true for hanging plants, which can be wired to porch hooks or shepherd’s hooks in the landscape.

Safety Nets

By PAM BROWN
Horticulture Agent

The International Chiropractors Association (ICA) recommends a list of 10 “Do’s and Don’ts of Gardening” These guidelines are designed to help garden safely. The ICA’s Do’s and Don’ts of Gardening:

- Warm up with light movement or a brisk walk to loosen your muscles and increase your flexibility. The smooth coordination of your muscles and ligaments is an important part of safe exertion in gardening and other activities.
- Know your strengths and limitations. Do not overexert, vary your activities, and take regular rest breaks.
- Avoid bending over repeatedly while standing upright when performing ground-level work like weeding. Get down closer to the task by kneeling or sitting on the ground or a gardening bench, rather than bending and twisting from the waist.
- Keep your back protected when you stand up from a sitting or crouched position. Rise up by straightening your legs at the knees, not by lifting your torso at the waist.
- Lift soil and plants by letting your arms, legs and thighs carry the load: bend and straighten at the knees instead of the back and hips. Lift the load close to the body’s torso and center of gravity, and handle smaller, more manageable loads at a time.
- Use long-handled tools to give you leverage and help you avoid having to stoop while raking, digging, pushing or mowing.
- Switch hands frequently when doing prolonged raking, hoeing or digging actions. Repetitive motion on one side can bring on progressively serious joint imbalances and may produce postural misalignments and pain, including muscle spasms in the neck, shoulder and lower back.
- Don’t work too long in one position, especially one that is awkward or unusual. This can reduce circulation, restrict mobility, and promote strain injuries.
- Carry objects close to your body. Keeping the load close to your center of gravity reduces the risk of straining your neck and back.
- Don’t overexpose yourself to long periods in the sun. Utilize protective measures for your head and skin, drink plenty of fluids, and take frequent breaks.
**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.

**Volunteers Needed!!!**

**For Volunteer Opportunities:**

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

**School Help**

St. Josephs Church 2101 22nd Ave.
South, St. Petersburg - Wacky Wednesday After School Program. Wednesdays while school is in session between 3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. They would like someone to help with one after school program to teach how to plant, and care for tomatoes. Their plan is to encourage good eating habits by planting seeds with the children, eventually eating the "fruits of their labor". Please call Deborah Schechner at 488-4796.


74th Street Elementary School is seeking a Master Gardener to advise them about three planting beds that they have. They would like to plant butterfly plants or other flowers to spruce up the area. Children will be helping to care for the areas. If you are interested in helping, please let Pam (582-2112) know. You can contact Susan Shirk, media specialist at the school for additional information at 893-2120. The school is at 3801 74th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33709. They would like to do this project in the next school year, but would like some advice before this school year ends about amending the soil and getting ready.

**MG Participation in Events**

MGs participating in special events should get prior approval and a check voucher from the MG Advisory committee if they are going to expend money for any event and expect reimbursement. Please follow this procedure. See Chuck Scaffidi (582-2117) if you have questions about this procedure. The advisory account is now managed by MG members.

**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 May:**

May 3-First Christian church of Dunedin
May 21-Tour Travel writers

**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 disappointed to say that UPARC was not a winner 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.

Seven states in the USA were winners including an entry from Florida.

Volunteer Opportunities and Events for May

**MG Advanced Training**
May 9, Monday, MG Up-date 12:00 pm.

**Penny Khaled of Florida Herb Society**

Penny comes from a family of Herbalists and has long used Herbal Remedies. She took courses at the School of Natural Healing founded by the great Dr. Christopher and from Dr. Richard Schulze. Furthering studies at home and researching local herbs led to starting an Herbal Products Company. Her daughter now runs the successful company Organic Nutrition (http://www.organicnutrition.co.uk/). Leaving Penny free to indulge in her favorite hobby - researching and teaching others about the use of Herbs.

Last year, Penny became the President of the Florida Herb Society.

For those that attend, there will be a drawing for 10 very nice door prizes around noontime.

**MG Plant Sale Meetings**

Wow!! Did you see all the varieties of plants you propagated? As we looked around, we saw MG volunteers in 90° heat, wind, rain and even cold winter days. You do cuttings, plant seeds, up-grade, weed, and fertilize. After six months, we have all the many plants ready for our semi-annual plant sale.

Thanks, everyone, for all the hard work, you make our jobs a lot easier, because you don’t need any prodding to do anything. We’re very glad to have the MG teams who make it a pleasure to work with. You should be very proud of all the hard work you do. That’s a lot of plants sold to make that kind of profit. Looking forward to the fall sale. Thanks for making us look good.

Patsy Schamber, Joyce Giesigh, and Michael Pettay, too.

A reminder to all, the plant sale meetings are the last Friday of the month and all are welcome to attend. Next mtg May 27 10:00 am in aud A.

The Plant Sales require an extraordinary amount of MG hours to make this a special and successful event. Your continued support is encouraged and we would like a goal of having the most MGs involved. This is a very rewarding learning experience personally. Knowing that plant sale profits benefit Master Gardener programs from education to supporting charitable organizations is an added bonus.

Get involved!!! Start by coming to our plant sale meetings and/or talk to the plant sale team leaders.

**Upland Wildlife & Nature Tours**

May 7 from 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.
LONDON GARDENS

The garden tour to England on July 5 is still available at $2,995 for the two-week journey and is even more attractive now.

One of the highlights of the garden tour in England will be the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show.

Do the math! The cost of gas could even double from the time we offered the trip to when we sail. The Millennium Hotel Gloucester will be our home for the six days we are touring and the Queen Mary 2 will be our floating hotel as she steams to New York.

For the cost of this trip you can leave NY for London Tuesday July 5 and return home on Sunday July 17 while capturing wonderful memories and garden ideas.

Pick up a flyer in the volunteer room or visit cruisevanguard.com, click on Europe and then on gardens and Hampton court.

Here it is May already. Most of our winter MGs have returned to the north for the summer. I am missing them already.

We had several things to celebrate in April. We had two winners of Pinellas County Partners in Public Service Awards on April 14th; the group headed by Linda Culhane that built the therapeutic garden at UPARC received a group award and Chuck Scaffidi received an individual award.

Linda and her group researched plants so that none that were used in the garden were toxic if eaten or cause skin rashes if touched; secured donations of cash, plants and garden features; and advertised for and managed volunteers from the Master Gardener program and the community. Months of planning were crucial to obtain funds, volunteer workers, donated
materials and to design the project. Donations solicited by the group included, cash, top soil, mulch, plants, paving stones, and garden fixtures (trellises, planters and a large fountain), as well as food and snacks for building day. Donations of cash and materials came to nearly $10,000. Building and planting was scheduled for May 1 and 2, 2004. All of the construction and planting was completed on May 1st while May 2nd was used to install micro-irrigation and clean up. In all, 40 volunteers worked on May 1st to build the garden. The UPARC clients have been using this garden for relaxation and recreation and one group there has even planted a pizza garden as an educational activity. This project has also been entered into competition for recognition at the International Master Gardener Conference in Canada in July.

Chuck was recognized for his continuing work publishing “The Green Leaf”, his help computerizing the records for hours volunteered, his willingness to do what ever needs to be done inside to help get the job done and his leadership in the computer work area directing the other volunteers in projects as they come up.

Congratulations to all of you who received this honor this year!

If you were not able to attend the Volunteer Recognition Luncheon on April 20th – we had a great time – and we surely missed you being there. The food cooked by our Horticulture staff lead by Jim Schanz and Bob Albanese was outstanding – if I do say so myself.

We honored two Master Gardener for their service. Sam Skemp was awarded our new Master Gardener Emeritus award and a Presidential Lifetime Volunteer Achievement Award (photo1). We also honored James Blackwell (photo 2) for his years of service and dedication to the Master Gardener program. He will be retiring from the program and returning to his native Tennessee near the end of the summer.

Also honored with key pins were those MGs who have volunteered 2000 hours; Al Baker, Ruth Davies, Grant Hurst, Chuck Scaffidi and Peggy Vincent (not pictured) (photo 3). Those who have achieved the 1000 hour mark have their names added to the 1000 hour plaque; John Kingsbury, Marcel Pincince, Patsy Shamber, Lois Weber and Marilyn Wilt. And, there were 7 MGs who crossed the 500 hour milestone and have been added to the 500 hour plaque; Natalie Oliver, Bruce Robertson, Gail Robertson, Angela Strain, Holly Waters, Margaret Wernet, and Gail Yohe.

The 2004 first year mentors were presented an acorn pin engraved with “Mentors plant the seeds of success” to Noel Bell, Linda Barnett, Patsy Schamber, and Karen Ruff (not pictured) (photo 4).

We provided a 2 lb bag of Florican 13-13-13 (same fertilizer sold as Dynamite in tubes) slow release fertilizer for each Master Gardener. I have the bags for those of you who did not attend in my office. I will hold them until May 30th – after that they will be returned to FBG for use in the landscape. If you are already in the north and want me to hold your fertilizer until you return, you must let me know.

As I said more than once at the luncheon – Wow, you all are great! Thank you for all that you do for us.

♥ Pam

Pinellas County Partners in Public Service Awards

UPARC group award –LtoR- County Commissioner Karen Williams Seel, UPARC client Grovie Dalzel, MG Linda Culhane, MG Cathy Wallace, UPARC Director Sheldon Hersman, and County Commissioner Robert B. Stewart
Individual Award-L-R- County Commissioner Karen Williams Seel, MG Chuck Scaffidi, and County Commissioner Robert B. Stewart

Award recipients and Pam Brown

We are especially appreciative of staff, MGs, and others who contribute articles, events, and other items of interest to the Green Leaf each month.

Please submit your input by the 20th of each month. This will help us assemble and publish the newsletter in a timely manner. Also, to save mailing costs, please limit your articles to 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

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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

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