What’s Happening at Florida Botanical Gardens
By MARY CAMPBELL, Extension Director

- Campus Sustainability Program
  This month the committee reviewed sustainability issues at Florida Botanical Gardens (FBG) such as water use, plant introductions, and recycling. A water meter will be installed on the irrigation system to understand the amount of water being used for the gardens. A location for community recycling containers has been identified on the northeast corner of the property with Public Utilities. This would also model what we teach. An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy is being developed by staff and the chemical inventory has been reduced. A form was developed to assist with reviewing plant introductions to the gardens and to add them to the database.

  The Bushnell Center for Sustainability has been working on several new initiatives:
  - Check Your Green Commitment – Take the Pledge!
  - Earthfest and Pinellas Living Green Expo Kick-off
  - Green Building Technical Committee and the Education Technical Committee
  - Strategic Focus Areas for Sustainability in Pinellas County

- Florida Garden, Native Garden and Butterfly Garden
  The new boardwalk designed for the Florida Garden and Arbor for the Native Garden has been reviewed and we are waiting for cost estimates. The Florida Garden will model Florida Friendly practices and there will be a new butterfly garden.

  A dedicated team of 3 volunteers have established themselves as the Wildflower Collections Team for the Native Garden, and provide a friendly interface with the visitors. In addition this team is beginning to catalog the collections in the Native Garden. Jean Field has been working on an interpretive sign for the area. A new gazebo is planned for the Native Garden and a boardwalk through a portion of the Florida Garden.

  Continued on page 2
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 for the County Master Gardeners and depends on submission of articles from Master Gardeners, Extension Staff and other authors.

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The Green Leaf is available online by clicking on newsletter at http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/master_gardener/index.shtml

■ Boardwalk
  ▪ The wetland boardwalk from the north bridge will begin construction by June, 2007. (HUD grant - $89,000).

■ Educational Programs

MARCH - Master Gardener College in March was very well attended. Capacity crowd at Dale Armstrong’s Rain Barrel Workshop; barrels were given free to participants as a result of a SWFMD grant. Jean Field’s first Snowbird landscaping class was a great success and she feels there is great scope in developing this program. The FBG has been added to the list of Extension opportunities for County Summer Camps. A short tour and “waste-free lunch” will introduce camp groups to concepts of global environmental responsibility, as well as at-home sustainable practices.

March 9 - School group tour of the Aquatic habitat Demonstration Area along with an educational activity.

March 17 - Saturday Children’s Program - Flowers in Your Shoes

March 23 - Florida Master Naturalist Program – Freshwater Module had an hour tour of FBG as a part of their first day of the 40-hour class.

■ Bus Tours

A pilot was conducted for the new multi-facility bus tour with Heritage Village and Gulf Coast Museum of Art. The tour was very well received and staff will continue to pilot and refine the program. The charge per customer is under review.

■ Events

Saturday, March 31 - Spring Master Gardener Plant Sale. All plants offered for sale were propagated by MG volunteers, either from landscape plants at the Extension and FBG, or from their private collections.

Sunday, April 15 - American Cancer Society’s Cancer Survivor Celebration

Saturday, April 21 - Earthfest

■ Website

The new FBG web site is in development. The Foundation will have a page with membership information and other information from the Foundation. Vernon will be working in the immediate future with the FBGF PR & Marketing committee to develop the Foundation’s web pages that will be part of the site.

■ Roof Construction

Roof and a/c replacement to begin April 9. Magnolia Room will not be available during May and part of June.

■ Grants

▪ P2000 PCEF grant will begin in April with addition of new trees and interpretive signs ($18,000).
▪ TBEP and SWFMUD grants for pond native plants will be completed this spring/summer ($12,500).
▪ USDA grant filed for the Green Market will know about award in October ($60,000).
Major Changes to P2000 Property
By PAT DIETERICH, MG

We are frequently told that "Change is good", and we are about to witness significant changes to the Preservation 2000 lands adjacent to the Florida Botanical Gardens. Part of the original grant to preserve this land is set aside for stewardship, and an ambitious project is beginning.

Thursday Landscape Crew MG's recently toured the P2000 project with Bob Albanese. He explained that this tract of land, to the east and south of the Botanical Gardens, was originally pine flatwoods. With the absence of fire, which naturally kills vegetation and then initiates a cycle of new growth, the pines are being crowded by oaks and other less desirable trees. In addition, even the palmettos have gained size they would never attain in a truly natural setting. Working with other staff from Extension and the County, an elaborate plan has been devised to mimic a "controlled burn" and attempt to restore the pine flatwoods ecosystem.

The first phase is already underway. Staff has thoroughly explored the site and sprayed many trees to begin their demise. These are noted by blue dye around the trunk. We were able to watch as a worker using an amazing bulldozer/shredder tackled unwanted foliage, including grapevines, and even razed a 30-foot-high pine tree. He also cleared palmettos, which will be reintroduced later. The resulting landscape along Old Walsingham Road was suddenly "scalped", with few trees and lots of mulch remaining. Only one section will be cleared at a time, to spare wildlife. Don't be surprised to have a very different visual in effect. Personnel at the Gulf Coast Museum of Art are thrilled to have their facility now visible from the street!

After the clearing is complete, a temporary irrigation system will be installed. And then the fun begins! Nearly 10,000 plants, natives and desirables, have been ordered, and will be located in a staging area north of the Gulf Coast Museum of Art. From there, an army of volunteers, including Eagle Scouts, Staff, and hopefully many Master Gardeners, will begin to re-vegetate the area. This is a terrific opportunity to learn more about native plants and the pine flatwoods ecosystem, and it is hoped that many will participate.
Volunteer Recognition

County Extension Winners of the 2007 Pinellas County Partners in Public Service Awards

Group Awards
- Marcel & Pat’s Team
- Thursday Green Team
- Florida Friendly Landscape Design Duo

Individual Award
- Brandy Spillman

Thursday Green Team, L to R – Bessie Morse, Mike the Ranger, Lillian Wolfinger, Shay Blough, Dorothy Whitley, Pat Mann, Irma Porterfield, Pat Dieterich, Marcel Pincince, Helen Gould, Donna Zacharczyk, Bob J., Carol Pilsbury, Richard Berube, Jim Wolfinger, Jo Kliesh, and Bill Mielke Not Pictured: Linda Alcorne, Cheryl Korschek, Gail Robertson, Bruce Robertson, John Hood and Holly Waters
Palms, an Overview

As you might imagine, many of our visitors to the Florida Botanical Gardens are tourists or part-year residents from colder parts of the world who come to enjoy the sunshine. Here they can encounter some unfamiliar plants and animals which must seem "exotic" and "tropical."

One group of plants associated with Florida and the tropics is the palms. Here at the Gardens we have a healthy collection of approximately 50 different species in 30 Genera. All palms (true palms) belong to the same Family, the Arecaceae. That family name is derived from the Genus Areca, or the Betelnut palm.

There are other plants with a common name of "palm" that are in fact only distant relatives, and share only a superficial resemblance to the true palms. These include some of the cycads such as the cardboard palm (Zamia furfuracea) and sago palm (Cycas revoluta) which are in fact ancient, non-flowering plants more closely related to conifers. The cycads actually produce cones. Just take a peek into the foliage of the coontie (Zamia floridana) sometime and notice the small upright cones produced within. Other non-palms include the Traveler's Palm (Ravenala madagascarensis) a giant Bird of Paradise relative, and the Ponytail Palm (Nolina recurvata) which is essentially a dracaena which has steeled itself for life in the desert.

So what makes a palm a palm? It is actually a combination of characteristics, all of which must be met that qualifies any plant for inclusion in a particular grouping. The 211 Genera and nearly 3,000 different species of palm make the palm family among the most diverse. All of the palms, however share a set of characteristics. As with all flowering plants it is the flowers themselves that are key to identifying a particular species.

All palms bear many small, 3-parted flowers on a branched inflorescence. The fruit always develops into some sort of berry (yes, friends, a coconut is technically a berry!). The leaves are tough and are borne on a leaf-stem or petiole.

These conditions being met, palms have diversified into a variety of forms; from semi-aquatics, to desert denizens; from short stubby shrubs to tall, majestic trees. With only one exception the trunk-forming types do not naturally branch. Palm leaves are of two types: palm-shaped (like the palm of your hand) and feather-shaped or pinnate.

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Palms are the second most economically important group of plants in the world; just behind the grasses (grain, sugar, rice, turf, fiber, pasture, building materials, and many more). For many people palms are the source for Life's necessities: food, clothing and shelter. Palm oil, palm sugar, coconut products, dates, landscape value, the list goes on! 

My Personal Paradise

By JUDE BAGATTI, MG

When you live in rental apartments as I have since flying the parental abode, you might crave a patch of land to muck about in and get down and dirty. At Safari Apartments in Coconut Grove I commandeered a bare area just outside my first floor efficiency, and planted a Snow Queen Hibiscus. A cutting my father gave me from his Hollywood, FL yard, it grew into a queenly bush still thriving some 30 years later. When I’m on the east coast I pay it my respects. I left my night-blooming Cereus Cactus there, too. Its roots had cracked their clay pot and sunk into the ground. The giant, ghostly-white blooms intrigued even besotted tenants during late hour partying around our pool patio.

My top-floor, third-story Palm Plaza apartment in South Miami overlooked coconut palms and tall umbrella trees, the latter flattened in 1992 by Hurricane Andrew. Overnight the wall of greenery shielding my balcony was gone, and so were the birds and bees that flitted among the red Schefflera spikes.
MY PERSONAL PARADISE (continued)

Hanging staghorn ferns, spider plants, burro tails and, occasionally, an orchid helped shade, but did not remedy the sudden full exposure to sun and street. It wasn’t long, though, before those fast-growing trees were back. My legacy to that building is a yellow-flowering Frangipani, which outgrew its pot, and was planted at a parking lot entrance. It has become a much admired, sturdy tree to which I also pay homage when in town. Plants left behind are like offspring who have come of age. A doting parent must hope for the best and ultimately let them go.

As an apartment dweller, becoming a volunteer at Miami’s Fairchild Tropical Gardens was my way of scratching that itch to dig the earth.

Some mornings instead of heading home after a run along Red Road canal, I detoured across a footbridge to emerge at Old Cutler Rd. and jogged into the Garden before it opened to the public. At the equipment shed near the Rain Forest Café, I donned protective gloves and glasses, grabbed clippers, rake and weed hoe, and hauled them to the Arid Plot. That was my adopted area for garden therapy. For a few quiet hours whenever I chose, this renowned tropical oasis became my own personal paradise. I could wander and explore the grounds, the ponds, discover the odd green blooms of the jade vine, and wonder at the awesome specimens from around the world. Who could want a more lush, extensive back yard? It was all mine, free, except for a few cactus needle pricks and blisters not even gloves could prevent.

My five years at Fairchild ended when I moved to Gulfport in 2002. I’ve planted grasses at Brooker Creek and volunteered at Weedon, but who knew I would roam yet another personal paradise, our own Florida Botanical Gardens! It’s not within jogging distance, but then again I now, finally, have my own little house and patch of earth. The yard is by no means a garden, still I marvel at my ancient laurel oak, the fuchsia and lavender azaleas and the huge, red, double hibiscus I inherited, in which mocking birds make nests. Ironically, a Snow Queen Hibiscus holds court at my bedroom window, a legacy from the previous homeowners. No longer restricted to pots, I’m impressed and pleased by the vigor of my own plantings: the lantana, passionflower vine, beautyberry, bromeliads, Black-eyed susan, and, of course, my many beloved Frangipanis of all hues. Gulf Fritillary butterflies, never absent, have made themselves at home in my yard, and Yellow Sulphurs have explored the gold blossoms on my Cassia ligustrina sapling. My corner lot (my literal corner of the world) is my most modest, but most personal paradise.
WHAT'S COOKING IN YOUR GARDEN?

Recipe for Papaya Fruit Smoothie
Perfect for that Spring Bikini Diet!

1 papaya, cut in half and seeded
2 6 oz. containers banana yogurt
1 cup orange juice
1 cup ice
2 scoops vanilla flavored protein powder*

Scoop the papaya flesh into a blender. Add yogurt, orange juice and ice. While blender is running, slowly pour in protein powder. If mixture is too thick thin it out with more orange juice.

Serves 2

* protein powder is available at some supermarkets and health food stores. A measuring scoop comes with the powder

PAPAYA
Carica papaya

The papaya, also known as Paw Paw, Mamao and Tree Melon is commonly referred to as a tree when in fact it is actually a very large herb growing to heights of thirty feet or more. It is native to Central America and Southern Mexico but is now grown throughout the tropics worldwide. Even Florida has a small commercial industry.

Papaya fruit is a berry that ranges in size from that of a large avocado to as big as a football. It has smooth, juicy flesh, a slight cantaloupe flavor and is high in potassium and vitamin C.

To start plants of your own purchase a nice, ripe fruit from the market. Cut it in half and scoop out the dark seeds. Pick 5-10 seeds that have the darkest color and place in a colander. Press the seeds against the side of the colander to break the sarcotesta (sac) surrounding the seed as this inhibits germination. Rinse thoroughly and place on a paper towel to dry. Plant 2-4 seeds in 1 gallon containers filled with a clean, sterile artificial media. Water thoroughly and place in a warm, sunny location. Germination may take 2-3 weeks.

Once seedlings emerge, select the most vigorous ones and snip the others off at the soil line. Fertilize with a dilute complete fertilizer solution every two weeks. Once the plants have reached 6-12 inches plant in a free-draining soil in a sunny location. Well cared for plants will produce fruit in 7-11 months.

Recipe for Papaya Fruit Smoothie
Perfect for that Spring Bikini Diet!

1 pkg. cheese stuffed tortellini, cooked
2 small jars mushrooms, drained
1 can artichokes, drained & chopped
1 small jar capers, drained
1 small jar green olives, drained
1 can black olives, drained
1 small jar roasted peppers, drained and cut into strips
1 half jar greek peppers, drained
1 can garbanzo beans, drained
1 small red onion, sliced
1 cucumber, diced
1/2 pint cherry tomatoes
1 pkg. feta cheese, crumbled
1 bottle Ken's Greek Salad Dressing

Toss all ingredients in a big bowl with the dressing!
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ MG Update
Tuesday, May 8, 9-10:30am

■ MGAA
Next Meeting Follows the MG Update

■ Florida Botanical Gardens Membership
Sign Up!
FBG membership is a lovely Mother’s Day gift. Get more information at the Botanical Bounty Gift Shop.

■ Plant Sale
Under Linda Culhane’s tutelage over the past year and a half we exceeded all our plant sale expectations.

■ Volunteer at the Botanical Bounty Gift Shop

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MG UPDATE-Tuesday., May 8, 9-10:30am
by Andy Wilson, Departmental Training Specialist

Palms: Selection, Care and Palm Problems. Palms are one of the most distinctive of all plant forms. Come learn about this interesting plant group that is so much a part of the popular image of our state.

MG Advisory Association, Chuck Scaffidi, Chair
The MGAA documents are available for all MGAA members on request. They detail how MGAA operates and is organized, as well as the duties of committees.

We have two new leaders for the plant sale. Linda Alcorne has accepted the Chair position and Elizabeth (Bessie) Morse will be the Vice Chair. Both were exceedingly energetic and productive in their contributions to our record-breaking spring plant sale. I cannot say enough about the whole plant sale effort by all the volunteers that make it happen. This is the major reason MGAA functions and is able to make the many contributions we do as a non-profit organization. I know you will give Linda and Bessie the same support you gave the others who ran the plant sales over the past 9 years. With the new location and all the new ideas, I’m confident we will continue to achieve new and greater growth.

Left over bread from the plant sale! It is stored and it’s ready to be thawed and sliced. So, following our MGAA meeting Tuesday May 8 bring some goodies that will fill this delicious bread for lunch.

The next MGAA meeting will be Tuesday, May 8 following the monthly MG Update. An agenda will be sent out via email prior to the meeting.

PLANT SALE UPDATE, Linda Culhane
We had such an outstanding and successful sale in March due to the diligence and hard work of many people. Essentially the plants were sold out by 10 AM Saturday, which tells me we should have had more to offer. But where do you store all the plants prior to the sale? Yet, to have such problems is minor. We were able to see proceeds of $14,070. A record breaker.

This April marks the end of my chairmanship. I decided when I took the job that I would do it for one year, but extended to 18 months. I have enjoyed the time and mostly working with the best group of people in the world. (Much better even than when I got paid for the job). Thank you for all your support. It would have been impossible to accomplish all that we did without your help.

Anyone interested in volunteering at the Botanical Bounty gift shop should speak to Stacey Zidi, Manager. The shop is open Tuesdays-through Saturdays from 10am-5pm. Each day is split into two 3 ½ hour shifts, mornings (from 10-1:30pm) or afternoons (from 1:30-5pm). She’s looking for a minimum commitment of one shift a week. No previous retail experience is necessary. Call 582-2251 or szidi@pinellascounty.org.
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

For May and June

- P –2000 Restoration
- FBG Children’s Trail
- Butterfly Garden
- Pinellas Living Green Expo
- Habitat for Humanity

Stepping Stone Workshop Schedule

- Friday May 18, 10am
  Design & Create your stone

- Friday May 25, 1-2:30 pm
  Grout the stone (optional)

Boy Scout and Extension Staff Seek Volunteers for P-2000 Restoration Project

An exciting opportunity to help restore a natural habitat at the FBG!

Zack Smaridge, a Boy Scout, will be coordinating teams of volunteers for the various activities. Zack will take the lead on restoring native plants as part of his Eagle Scout Project in the Southeastern portion of FBG. The 10 acre plot will be restored to natural Pine Flatwoods and Sand Hill environments. Volunteers are needed for the first planting on Friday, May 4th beginning at 9:00 AM. Volunteers should bring their own gloves and meet at the parking lot entrance to the FBG on Walsingham Road.

If you have any questions contact Zack Smaridge at 727-320-0235 or email at Saxman9575@AOL.com. You may also contact one of the members of the Natural Area Working Team: Vernon Bryant, Bob Albanese, Jeanne Murphy or James Stevenson at (727) 582-2100.

The FBG Foundation is planning a Children’s Trail in the gardens and is organizing a committee to make this happen. They would like a MG to be one of the members of this planning committee. This is a great children’s project and we should be represented in the planning process. Chuck Scaffidi is the MGAA liaison to the FBG foundation so please let him or Pam know if you are interested and they will select one person to represent MGAA. The first meeting is early June.

Butterfly Garden Stepping Stone Workshops

All stones will be displayed in the new butterfly garden coming to FBG.

Here’s a chance to be creative in a beautiful landscape while making a long lasting contribution to FBG.

See you at Linda Alcorn’s Garden, 293 Orange St, Ozona
$10 covers all materials and refreshments
Registration required. Call Linda Alcorn (727) 647-1296 or email alcornele@juno.com

Habitat for Humanity

The Pinellas County MGs have agreed to take on the project of landscaping a house for Habitat for Humanity. We have chosen as our first project the woman’s build that is scheduled to begin in May. I am planning a meeting for the first of June (no exact date yet). If you are interested in joining us, please contact me. Linda Culhane at lbculhane@verizon.net or call 530-1250.

The plan is to design the landscaping, compile a list of needed plants, solicit for the plants from surrounding nurseries, and install the plants just prior to the dedication.

On June 16 and 17, the Pinellas Living Green Expo will be held at the Coliseum in St. Petersburg. Pinellas County is a sponsor and Extension will be providing several programs. The Extension Sustainability Program Area will have a booth – Check Your Green Commitment!

We need about 20 volunteers (2 hours each from 9 am – 5 pm) to talk to visitors, and ask them to fill out a pledge. We will hand out a magnet prompt. We will be asking visitors for e-mail addresses to do some follow-up surveys. T-shirts and an orientation will be provided to the volunteers. Hopefully a few volunteers may want to continue to work with us on sustainability and do some follow up for the pledge.

Sign up sheet posted on MG hallway bulletin board.

http://www.pinellaslivinggreenexpo.org/
According to the National Gardening Association, two out of three American households take part in some gardening activity each year. Chores vary regionally but include: raking leaves, transplanting trees and shrubs, planting spring-flowering bulbs and perennials, removing dead branches from trees, controlling troublesome weeds, and lawn mowing. Whether you’re a master gardener or budding amateur, keep these safety tips in mind.

Avoid overexposure to sun. Limit the time you spend working in direct sunlight by gardening during early-morning or late-afternoon hours. This way, you’ll avoid the 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. time period when the sun’s rays are strongest. Protect your skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, pants instead of shorts, and a wide-brimmed hat. When skin is exposed, apply sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Heat stress can also be a risk; thus keep water by your side to remain hydrated. Remember to take frequent breaks by going indoors and relaxing in front of a fan.

Source: http://www.lifeessentialsbyzee.com/zee/safety/zLifeE_safety_fmpshm_016.html
Great thanks to all the volunteers who supported Earthfest Saturday April 21 and Green Thumb this last weekend of April. Both events were heavily attended and the volunteers survived the onslaught of visitors. So, thanks and many thanks for volunteering and giving your full and energetic assistance. Here are a few pictures from Earthfest 2007.

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### May 2007

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>FRIDAY, MAY 4, 9AM</td>
<td>P-2000 Restoration Project</td>
<td>At the Pinellas County Extension Lawn &amp; Garden</td>
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<tr>
<td>SATURDAY, MAY 5, 10:00-11:30AM</td>
<td>Barrel Workshop</td>
<td>At the Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUESDAY, MAY 8, 9:00-10:30AM</td>
<td>MG Update—Palms</td>
<td>Magnolia Room</td>
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<td>TUESDAY, MAY 15</td>
<td>MG Field Trip</td>
<td>Bok Towers &amp; Hollis Gardens</td>
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<td>Lawn Insects &amp; Weeds Workshops</td>
<td>At the Extension-10 am &amp; 6:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2PM</td>
<td>Intro to Florida - Friendly Landscape</td>
<td>At the Palm Harbor Library</td>
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<td>FRIDAY MAY 18, 10AM</td>
<td>Stepping Stones Workshop</td>
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<td>SATURDAY MAY 19, 10AM</td>
<td>Compost Happens Workshop</td>
<td>At the Dunedin Community Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>SATURDAY MAY 19, 10-11AM</td>
<td>Fancy Fruit for Your Yard</td>
<td>At the Extension</td>
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<td>FRIDAY, MAY 11, WEDNESDAY MAY 16, THURSDAY MAY 24</td>
<td>Epcot Flower &amp; Garden Show</td>
<td>6:45 AM bus boarding begins</td>
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For more details on some of the events listed go to the calendar on the Pinellas County Extension Lawn & Garden website. [http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/calendar_hort.shtml](http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/calendar_hort.shtml)
Good Work Volunteers!

**REMINDERS**

- **MG Update**
  Tuesday, May 8th, 9:30—10:30am Magnolia Room

- **MGAA Meeting**
  Following MG Update