Market in the Park Closes for the Summer!!
By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

Not the stock market, but our very successful Market in the Park at Extension closes for the summer. This was a new venture for Extension and thanks to all the key people; Extension Director Mary Campbell, Market Coordinator Betty Lipe, Market Manager Richard Kendler, and their helpers, the market was well received by the public and is considered to be a continuing success. The market will reopen in early November 2008.

Several surveys were conducted to gain insight into making beneficial changes at future markets. Many visitors were so pleased they asked if we would consider being open all year. Mary Campbell and Betty Lipe feel strongly about having an Extension educational booth available on all market days and we will provide this when we re-open. The Master Gardeners had several educational sessions about local fruits and herbs and were pleased to sell some of their products. Their opinion is that we should plan to have specialized education where the featured plant is also available for purchase. I may also add that the set-up is easy with tent, tables, and chairs available, and with the other vendors willing to be helpful. So let’s start thinking about what we can do in November.

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

Saturday, April 19 was the last day of the Market for this season and an Earth Day Event, led by Cindy Peacock, also took place this day. The event centered on educating and celebrating with our children the importance of Earth day. The activities included a nature quiz, a nature and recycling game, story telling, and making a paper hat. Prizes, donated by staff and MGAA, were earth bouncing balls, and undecorated natural canvas bags. The children were challenged to color earth day themes on the canvas bags they won.

Cindy would like to thank all the volunteers, who participated, pictured below, and especially Loren Westenberger, Certified Arborist of Westenberg Tree Service for his donation of over a hundred potted bald cypress. Pictured below is Pam Brown, Extension agent, passing out free trees at the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods rain barrel booth. Also participating at earth day was Pinellas County Environmental Management, Utilities and the Native Plant Society.
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 on line by clicking on newsletter at: http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/master_gardener/index.shtml

Made in the Shade
By EMILY LAURENTI, Landscape Volunteer

Wednesday, January 9th marked the first day of construction, but this was far from the beginning of the project. Over a year ago the idea to build a pergola in the native area at the Florida Botanical Garden was proposed. After many hours of debating which pergola design was best, Brad Lewis and Mindy Bickey submitted their decision to Bob Kay. Then plans had to be drawn up and agreed upon, presented to the Master Gardener Association Board in order to receive funding, and details of its construction had to be approved.

A pergola is defined by Webster’s dictionary as “an arbor with an open roof of cross rafters or latticework supported on posts” dating back to ancient Egypt where it was designed to shelter its occupants from the heat of the sun. The pergola will replace the old, dilapidated bridge that was built over 15 years ago in an area of the garden that used to flood. Besides its aesthetic value, the new pergola will function as a shaded area for visitors to rest, read and enjoy the view of the garden and will house pamphlets designed to educate the public on the importance of utilizing native plants in our yards. The pergola will also provide a structure to facilitate the growth of a native climbing vine.

The construction crew was made up entirely of volunteers. The drawing up of blueprints and building of the pergola was overseen by Bob Kay, a retired electrical engineer, who has worked on several other projects at the garden. The other master gardener volunteers have backgrounds in areas ranging from real estate to sales to law enforcement, but all were enthusiastic to finally begin the last stage of their project. Their good natured humor gave the construction site a cheerful atmosphere. The volunteers considered this project to be a good learning experience in the planning and organization required to build an outdoor structure, knowledge that they could use in the future at their own homes.

The group of volunteers led by Jean Field, a horticulturist for the Pinellas County Extension, was determined to minimize the impacts of construction by employing sustainable practices. For example, old newspapers were used as drop cloths for staining and about 40% of the wood from the previous structure was reused to line the walkways in the native garden. The pavers used for the base of the new pergola were left over from a previous project in the garden. This not only cut down on material waste, but also saved money.

Because the group met only once a week, the project was projected to take several months to complete. The first day of construction the wood posts were cut, sanded and stained. The old structure was also removed, taking a team of two volunteers only 30 minutes to deconstruct.

The plan for the second week was to begin assembling the pergola. However, unforeseen problems caused a delay in their progress. The countersink holes Bob Kay drilled in the finished posts earlier in the week were too small for the washers, so all the posts had to be re-drilled with the assistance of half of the volunteers. Meanwhile, the rest of the volunteers led by Mindy Bickey, the owner of a construction company, worked on leveling the building site for the new pergola with dirt collected from the parks department brush site. These setbacks, expected to extend the project by a week or two, taught the volunteers an important lesson in construction: as carefully as you plan a project, there are bound to be set backs. The only thing they could do was be patient and learn to adapt.

Bob Kay, Mindy Bickey, and Brad Lewis assembled the four side pieces of the pergola during week three after carefully measuring and re-measuring the posts to make sure the distances matched up with those on the blueprints. This made for a sometimes slow, tedious process, but the quality of the finished project
would be well worth the extra time and effort they exerted.

The fourth week a handful of volunteers worked on staining the wood that would be used to make the roof and benches for the pergola while the rest of the group was drilling the four side pieces together and setting the structure in the ground. The assembly of the pergola required a lot of measuring and a great deal of precision due to the fact that the posts being drilled had four degrees of freedom, meaning that the post had to be properly centered in four dimensions. By the end of the day the main structure of the pergola was complete. It was a momentous occasion and all of the volunteers were in high spirits.

Early in the fifth week Bob Kay spent over 10 hours cutting notches in the posts used for the roof. On Wednesday the group was again split in two, simultaneously staining the newly cut wood posts and constructing the pergola. The staining was finished, but the construction team did not get as far as they had planned because they were rained out by 10 am.

During the sixth week of construction Bob Kay and David DeLamarter worked on bolting in the two by fours for the roof with the assistance of Mindy Bickey and Brad Lewis. The next week, the wood for the benches that Bob had measured, cut and sanded was stained, Bob and Brad finished bolting in the two by fours on the roof of the pergola, and the benches were attached.

In the eighth week of construction, Bob and Brad built the frames for the lattice behind the benches while the lattice itself was sanded and stained. Bob spent three hours finishing the staining by himself on Monday and he and Brad attached both pieces of lattice to the frames on Wednesday morning. They also attached the corner braces during the ninth week. The volunteers could not come to an agreement on the height of the lattice on the sides of the benches so they put it up for a vote among the Extension employees.

During the tenth week of construction a consensus was finally reached. It was decided to bring the lattice on the sides all the way to the top for both aesthetic and functional reasons. This decision will help the vines planted around the pergola climb all the way to the roof. The lattice was measured and cut to fit the openings on the sides of the pergola before being sanded and stained. Bob and David also started to build the frames for the side lattice pieces. Over the next week Bob and David came in on their own to finish staining the lattice, complete the framing and attach two pieces of lattice to the pergola.

In the eleventh week of construction Bob and David attached the last two pieces of lattice to the pergola, put in support braces for the benches and attached several more corner braces for added stability. Bob attached the last of the corner braces himself the next week. All that was left to do was finish paving the floor and plant the native vines around the pergola.

Although the project took longer to complete than originally expected, it came in several hundred dollars under budget. This was largely due to Bob’s suggestion to buy many of the construction materials online at a considerable discount. This project was a labor of love for all the volunteers and will leave a lasting imprint of their hard work and dedication. The new pergola is a focal point in the native garden that has already begun attracting more visitors.

Jean Field would like to extend her sincere thanks to the team of volunteers who provided leadership, creativity and manpower to this project. Thanks to: Linda Barnette, Mindy Bickey, Tom Carey, David DeLamarter, Bob Kay, Emily Laurenti, Brad Lewis, MaryEllen Phillips, Mary Putnam, Michael Stewart, and Evelyn Tumber.

*The Pinellas County Extension also promotes sustainability on their website, which includes the familiar mantra: reduce, reuse, recycle. The website contains a list of businesses that collect recyclable items and how to properly dispose of hazardous materials. To find out how you can become more sustainable, visit their website at http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/sustainability/sustain_living.shtml*
NOTES FROM YOUR MG LIBRARY

Books on the Shelves
By ANGELA STRAIN, MG

Jean Field is the staff liaison for the Library team and we asked her to contribute to this edition of Notes from your MG Library. We decided to call this "Guidance From Jean"

A “must have” book for most gardeners is called “Your Florida Guide to Perennials” by Sydney Park Brown. Sydney was the Hillsborough County Urban Horticulturist for many years. What I like most about this small colorful book is the fact it lists many of the newer plants available in local nurseries and box stores. The photography is quite good and the Perennials for Special Uses and Conditions lists in the back of the book are especially helpful for professional gardeners.

The book can be found in the “red dot” section of the horticulture reference materials. Perhaps after the merits of this book are enjoyed by all, a copy will be added to the MG reference library. I will be happy to point the book out to perennial enthusiasts. Come take a look!

Another interesting happening worth a mention is that two fellow MGs submitted photos to The Night Flyer, the newsletter of the Florida Bat Conservancy. Donna Zacharczyk and Bessie Morse took some amazing photos while in Costa Rica and you can see these particular ones at www.floridabats.org.

Bromeliads Galore!
By LUIS REY, MG

What follows are some of the most frequently asked questions about bromeliads during last October’s sale. Perhaps, some may be of interest to you.

Where should we place a bromeliad?
They should be placed according to the instructions appearing on the picture on the stake in front. It could be full sun, (i.e. ananas - comosus var. bracteatus), full shade (i.e. bilbergias - pyramidalis), partial sun to shade (i.e. aechmea - J. C. Superstar), sun (i.e. neorogelia - tigrina), any light (quesnelia - quesneliana). However, I recommended to begin by planting them in a shady location, to help with the transition to their new home, and depending on the results observed, to move them to the location recommended on the picture in front.

How sensitive are bromeliads?
The original habitat of these plants range from altitudes of 12,000 feet to deserts or rain forests. If you have a "black" thumb, you have to be very bad in order to kill a bromeliad. Even if you forgot to water, or fertilize, or have it in the wrong light exposure, if you check it periodically, you can correct these conditions without affecting their life, perhaps just affecting their proper development.

Is it true that bromeliads do breed mosquitoes?
No. Although, the center of the plant should be kept with water, most of the time mosquitoes are not a problem. It is a "jungle" in each of the plants with all kind of good and bad insects, lizards, frogs, etc. that tend to balance any infestation from mosquitoes. Usually, they are bred elsewhere; however, there is a genus of mosquitoes (Wyeomyia) that breed. You can use Horticultural Spray Oil for insect management.

What is the most important consideration in developing bromeliads?
I emphasized the need to provide room between plants for the air to flow among their leaves. Do not let them grow on clusters with no space for air flow. This practice would attract undesirable vermin ("tenants") in those clusters. The cell of the leaves require fresh air (most essential nutrient for a plant ) to continue developing and blooming accordingly.

What suggestions do you have for a newcomer to establish a yard or garden in Florida?
Obtain ASAP from the County Extension of University of Florida: The Florida Yardstick Workbook, which includes a chapter on Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and to follow its Nine Principles carefully.

I really enjoyed answering their questions (with the help of Bob Albanese, Horticulturist), and hope they bring us more satisfied customers for our next Master Gardener plant sale on Saturday, May 10.

Guzmania bromeliad
Silver Buttonwood
Family: *Combretaceae* (white mangrove Family)

Is it a tree or a shrub? Sometimes Nature does not fit into the neat pigeonholes we’ve created to help understand her complexity. An example is the Silver Buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus var. sericeus*).

This fascinating plant could best be considered a small tree or a large shrub. One of the toughest landscape plants around, this species has an incredibly wide natural distribution. Buttonwood is naturally found in proximity to mangrove swamps, and, like mangroves, it has a floating fruit which has allowed the species to colonize a wide swathe of the Caribbean. Amazingly this species has found its way to the west coast of Africa!

Considered the “fourth” mangrove along with red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), black (*Avicennia germinans*) and white (*Laguncularia Racemosa*), buttonwood grows the furthest inland along the edges of mangrove swamps. It is extremely salt tolerant as a result making it perfect for waterfront plantings. Buttonwood is not, however, salt-dependant, and will grow in a wide range of soils and conditions.

What is amazing about the buttonwood is that it seems to thrive in almost any situation; from wet soils to bone-dry, in sun or in shade. It can be allowed to grow into a small tree or kept clipped into an evergreen hedge. We have a clone of the US National Champion silver buttonwood tree ([http://www.championtrees.org/champions/buttonwoodsilver.htm](http://www.championtrees.org/champions/buttonwoodsilver.htm)) which was 45 feet tall before it was lost in a hurricane.

Early Florida residents used the buttonwood to produce long-burning charcoal. The wood was also used to smoke fish.

The silver buttonwood is especially attractive in the landscape owing to the fact that the typically dark olive-green leaves of the species are, in the silver variety, covered in hairs that give the plant a silvery appearance.

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**The Plant Relocation Program**

By BESSIE MORSE, MG

Master gardeners have been slowly transforming the Patio Garden to showcase hidden jewels in the Florida Botanical Garden collection. One recent Thursday found Brenda Payne, Shay Blough, Richard Berube, Janice Crawford, Joanne Kliesh and Bessie Morse redefining the space, (all are shown in the photo to the left). They moved a row of copper plants that had been languishing in deep shade to form a hedge thus embracing the garden with matching copper hedges. Ti Plants, too leggy in their old age to take center stage, were broken apart and now wave where the coppers once stood. The project will be completed in late summer as crotons only settle well into new homes when the weather is hot and rainy.
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- MG Advisory Association
- MG Update Meetings
- Volunteer Hours Sign in
- Update on the Children's Trail
- Palm Harbor Library Garden Series
- Subscribe to Extension blogs
- 4-H Fundraiser
- Plant Sale Update
- Mentor Meeting

Important Change for Signing Out
Recording Your Volunteer Hours

Please Remember to Sign Out!
The computer program for logging volunteer hours is in the volunteer office.
- You must sign in and sign out when you are at Extension.
- You can still log your time in the book or use e-mail, but it is preferred that you use the computer sign-in sign-out method.
- With over 200 volunteers at Extension it becomes a considerable burden on the volunteer coordinators to manually enter your hours.

If you have been sending your hours by e-mail, use the form in the log book as a guide and send to: MGEDU@co.pinellas.fl.us. Please direct your questions to coordinator Chuck Scaffidi or an assistant, Carrie Shelby, or Mary Crowe.

MG Advisory Association, Chuck Scaffidi, Chair

I am notifying all members that Thursday May 22, 2008; MGAA will hold a Board and membership meeting from 9:00am to 11:30am. However, because of the importance of this meeting, the planned second part to approve the Bylaws may be delayed to a later date. I will notify everyone if this happens.

The importance of the meeting is to achieve Board approval of the budget. At the March 8 meeting the budget was approved with the stipulation that we would ask for it to be re-approved after the May 10th plant sale which then would include proceeds from the sale and any other income. Only the Board can vote on the budget.

The second, and also very important part of the meeting, is to ask the Board and membership present to vote on a new set of Bylaws that incorporates the current MGAA organization. A copy of the new Bylaws was made available to all members of MGAA for their review and comments. The deadline for comments was April 21, 2008. The pertinent comments will be compiled and distributed prior to the meeting to all members to expedite the approval process at the May 22 meeting, if it occurs on this date. Also, a MGAA Board, Officer, and Chairmanship transition plan will be presented for approval along with the Bylaws.

Remember, all MGs certified and in good standing can vote on the Bylaws if present at the meeting. Article XIV titled "Amendment of Bylaws" of the current Bylaws states "These Bylaws may be amended or repealed by a majority vote of the voting members present at the annual meeting or by proxy". I am including a proxy form for those that can not attend.

Your participation is encouraged, welcome and important to the continued successful operation of our Master Gardener organization.

![Proxy Form]

Please return this form to MGAA office 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo FL 33774-3602
Attention: Chuck Scaffidi, MGAA Chair or E-mail your vote to cascaffidi@juno.com.

Bylaws Version Rev 5 040308 that was made available to all members.
Yes___ No___ Check one.
Appointed proxy member____________________


May MG Update

Thursday, May 8th, 10AM. Charles Boning, will talk about tropical fruit, and will sell his book, "Florida's Best Fruiting Plants". Don't forget - bring in your plants for the Plant Exchange! These exchanges have been very successful and we plan to continue them.

Looking Ahead - June MG Update

Monday, June 9 at 10-11:30AM Cyndie Marks, from Florida Bat Center, will share an educational presentation about bats and how to preserve the bat populations in the local community.

Looking Ahead - July MG Update

Pam Brown to present "Advanced Propagation of Plants", Tuesday, July 8.
Update from the April 9th Children’s Trail Committee Meeting

- Signage for four stations ready by June 15th. All the site markers will include flora.
- Brochure design in final stages; close to print. Photos selected for the brochure.
- Sign stands design approved. Vendor selected for production and weatherproofing.
- Next meeting Monday, May 5 at 9AM in the Orchid Room.

Committee Members:
Dianne Wheatley-Giolotti, Mary Campbell, Vivian Haicken, Betty Lipe, Cindy Peacock, Chuck Scaffidi, Pat Dieterich, Bob Albanese, Andy Bergeron and Bobbie Jones.

Free Class on Bulb Gardening
Dick Davis, MG, will share information about the various bulbous plants that can bring added interest to the garden. He will help gardeners meet their goal to have color and texture in their yard all year long. Both sessions will be held at the Crystal Beach Community Hall, 517 Crystal Beach Ave. Parking is available in front of the Community Hall and also across the street. Admission is free, but space is limited. Call Pinellas County Extension at 582-2673 to reserve a seat in either session.

The path is greener on the other side…if you subscribe!
Want to save 50 percent? Looking for a way to be cutting edge? Pinellas County Extension invites you to find the answers to these and more questions via subscription to *Timely Topics*, *Thinking Green*, and planting Pinellas blogs. Learn how to save money, produce less waste and beautify you, your home and the environment. It is easy to subscribe; simply follow the links below to "Subscribe via Email."

Subscribers receive new information as it becomes available and there’s even an option to leave comments for the blog.

- Timely Topics  [http://pcetimelytopics.blogspot.com](http://pcetimelytopics.blogspot.com)
- Planting Pinellas  [http://plantingpinellas.blogspot.com](http://plantingpinellas.blogspot.com)
- Thinking Green  [http://pcethinkinggreen.blogspot.com](http://pcethinkinggreen.blogspot.com)

4-H Fundraiser
Lisa McBride requested a place for her 4-H Extension club to raise funds by selling caladium bulbs at the plant sale. Please show your support; the bulbs will be available near the ‘Ask Me’ station.

Greetings from the Greenhouse by Bessie Morse, Co-Chair
The plant sale is almost here and the plants are really looking good. Special thanks go to Phil Lawson and Lois Archer for working long days to make sure that plants are labeled, watered and weeded. Our labeler extraordinaire, Pat McClendon, came through for us again in record time while battling with her ten wild cats over flea baths. Thanks to all of you who gave the extra hour to hang the labels and help us make sure the plants were in their proper sized pots. Luis Rey has added magician to his title since little piles of labeled bromeliads have mysteriously appeared all over the field and greenhouses.

We need help Tues. May 6 thru Thurs. May 8 setting up the tents and getting the plants out to the field. We work from 9am to 1pm. The plants will need to be watered and weeded so there is plenty to do if you can't do the heavy lifting. Starting at 9am on Fri. May 9 we will spend the morning fine tuning the layout, putting up the signs, assembling the boxes for the holding area and 1,000 other little last minute details. Many hands make these tasks go quickly. After a lunch break the real fun begins, shopping! That is from 1-3pm and then the grounds need one last tune up to be ready for Saturday.

There are still job openings in customer assistance, security, loading, expediting and holding. We also have a sign up sheet if you just want to help out and don't know what you want to do. We will be happy to place you, just be sure to let us know if you have any special needs like you can't lift or stand too long.

Unlike previous years, we are catering lunch so you need to sign up by emailing casscaffidi@juno.com or calling Chuck 582-2117 so you will get something to eat.

Linda Alcorne has broken her ankle so we may not see her. She did a terrific job as plant sale chair and we will certainly miss her.

The plant sale works because you all do. Thank you so much!

Attention Mentors and Mentors to be! - A Message from Pam Brown
A brief Mentor Meeting is scheduled directly after the May 8 Master Gardener Update. If you are a current mentor, please plan on attending. If you think you might like to be a mentor – please also plan to attend. I know that this is a Plant Sale set-up day, but I will not take too much of your time. If you would like to be a mentor, but cannot attend, please let me know: pwbrown@pinellascounty.org or 582-2112.
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS

For May & June

- Green Thumb Festival
- Living Green Expo
- Compost & Raised Beds
- FL Native Plant Society Annual Conference
- Botanical Bounty
- MG Plant Sale

Help Needed in Composting and Raised Vegetable Bed Areas!
Volunteers are needed to work in the composting and raised vegetable bed demo areas on Tuesday and Friday mornings.
Contact John Kingsbury 727-569-6409, Pam 727-582-2112 or Carol 727-582-2124 to let them know if you are interested in this volunteer activity. You might get to take home some wonderful compost!

The Green Thumb Festival
By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG
The Green Thumb Festival was held this past weekend April 26 & 27 and as usual every year many Master Gardeners participated.
Pictured below left, is Dale Armstrong presenting Rain Barrels-Another Alternative for Saving Water. Pictured below right is Mary Crowe who had several large displays one for "Invasive Plants" and also a large display about Bauder Elementary and its gardening efforts.
The public turnout every year is just extraordinary, so if you want to find parking go early. The number of vendors who set-up shop at the festival is amazing. Wilma Holley and I did a quick walk around the booths and you will have to ask Wilma what she bought. You will see “signs ” of her purchases in her office.
If you would like to participate in the future you can sign up at Extension. Green Thumb is always the last weekend in April.

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If you would like to participate in the future you can sign up at Extension. Green Thumb is always the last weekend in April.

Living Green Expo at Harborview Center
At 300 Cleveland Street in Clearwater http://pinellaslivinggreenexpo.org/

Saturday & Sunday, May 3 & 4, 9AM - 5PM - We need additional help. We have 3 booths at the event BUT they are not located together. In the past 2 years, the attendance at this event has been very high. So we need help to cover all booths. Wilma Holley needs help at the last time slot on Sunday to help carry out materials, and etc.
Saturday - May 3
9AM to 11AM -- 3 volunteers needed.
11AM to 1PM -- 2 volunteers needed.
1PM to 3PM -- 1 volunteer needed.
3PM to 5PM -- 1 volunteer needed.
Sunday - May 4
10AM to 12PM -- 3 volunteers needed.
12PM to 2PM -- 2 volunteers needed.
2PM to 4PM -- 2 volunteers needed.
3PM to 5PM -- 3 volunteers needed.
If you can help, email Dale Armstrong at darmstrong@pinellascounty.org. Or, sign up on the bulletin board in the back hallway.
** Florida Yards & Neighborhoods will have a booth at the annual Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) conference. The Pinellas County chapter of FNPS is one of the host chapters. The event is held in Palmetto (just across the Skyway Bridge) at the Manatee Convention Center. The Manatee County Extension has their master gardeners volunteering to staff the booth, but we still have some open slots that we hope you may have an interest in filling. Here is the link to information about the May 14-18 conference: [http://www.fnps.org/pages/programs/programpg_no_pic.php?keyword=Conference](http://www.fnps.org/pages/programs/programpg_no_pic.php?keyword=Conference)

Here are the time slots we have open:

- **Friday May 16**
  - 1 person for 7-10am
  - 1 person for 1pm-3:30pm
  - 1 person for 10am-1pm
  - 2 persons for 3:30-6pm

- **Saturday May 17th**
  - 1 person 7-10am
  - 1 person 1-3:30pm
  - 2 persons 3:30-6pm

Please reply to Dale Armstrong at darmstrong@pinellascounty.org with date and time you want to volunteer at the event.

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**Botanical Bounty Gift Shop**

Did you know that Botanical Bounty, the FBG Foundation gift shop, is becoming a destination for shoppers looking for unique, interesting gifts at affordable prices? Gift Shop Manager, Stacey Zidi says there are lots of new gardening books, different toys for kids, lots of new jewelry like the flower lariats - (light and easy to wear) and wonderful hand-painted and batik sarongs. For the special person who has everything, think about our engraved pavers to honor a birthday or an anniversary. All sales benefit the Florida Botanical Gardens and everybody wins! Mother’s Day (May 11), Children’s Day (June 8), Father’s Day (June 15), and graduations are on the horizon for gift giving. Perhaps you can select a plant at the MG sale on May 10 and buy a FBGF gift membership for a year of giving.

And, you can earn MG hours by volunteering at the Botanical Bounty Gift Shop. If you like chatting with interesting people in a pleasant setting, consider becoming a volunteer at the Gift Shop with one 3-1/2 hour shift per week. You will see all the new gift items first, enjoy the visitors and help the Florida Botanical Gardens. 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). Stacey is looking for a minimum commitment of one shift a week. No previous retail experience is necessary. Call 582-2251 or szidi@pinellascounty.org.

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**Plant Sale Gift Certificates**

Don’t forget to tell your family, friends and neighbors that plant sale gift certificate are available for purchase in the volunteer office.

See Chuck Scaffidi in the volunteer office or call 582-2117.

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Smart shopper Joan Scaffidi uses her FBG membership card to receive a foundation discount on her purchase. Remember - you can do the same!
By PAM BROWN, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent

It is getting warmer and the sun is beating down. The UV index is quite high most days. If you are going to be outside working in the garden, remember that sunscreen. Wear a hat and long sleeves, if you can stand them, this will also protect your skin from the damage of the sun.

Many of our winter MGs have returned to their homes in the north. We miss you when you are gone, and we hope you have a lovely summer.

How about some great news? This is the official word from Pinellas County Volunteer Services:

"There are presently 164 active long term MGs. Overall Extension has the largest number of long term volunteers in the county (402 of 1,030) but that includes 4-H, Nutrition, Admin, etc volunteers, as well as MGs.

Annual hours for the MGs (CY 2007): MGs contributed 33,290 hrs of direct labor* for 2007. That equates to 16 full time staff positions. This means they averaged about 4 hours per week. (*Direct Labor does not include things such as travel and association meetings.) This makes their contribution even more impressive. The value of volunteer hours: In 2007 a volunteer hour was valued at $19.55/hr. The value of MG time therefore was valued at $650,819.50".

So, once again, let me say, you are all the best – we really appreciate all of the time that you so generously spend volunteering on our behalf.

The county and UF budget processes are still moving forward. We are not directly impacted too adversely by the UF budget, but Extension overall is losing 6% of their previous budget. We are still waiting to see the full impact of the county reductions. Here in Natural Resources we are experiencing some reductions. Ken Jones has left to follow another dream since his job was one of those that would be impacted. Michael Pettay will be moving full time to our new Distance Education/Technology program area on August 1st. Cindy Peacock will be moving her expertise to our Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program. She may still be handling some children’s programming as well. It will be a challenging time for all of us. I hope that we can count on each of you to help us keep a positive attitude during these changes.

We will be holding a Master Gardener training in August – October this year. I need additional Mentors to help these new trainees through the training and the first year of their volunteering. There will be mentor training soon, most likely in June, so please watch for the announcement. If you think that you would like to be a Mentor, please talk with me or attend the training before you decide not to do it. It is a very important job and I know that there a quite a few of you out there that would make wonderful mentors.

You are all such great volunteers. Thank you for all that you do to make us look good.

♥ Pam

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Ergonomic gardening tools might make your garden chores less stressful on your body. The word ergonomic is basically Greek, ergo means work and nomos means natural laws. So, ergonomic tools are redesigned to optimize its use by humans with the natural working of body muscles and joints in mind.

Choosing proper gardening tools involves making sure that your tools have the right size grip, depressions in the handles for your thumb, tools with extra long handles so there is less need to bend over. Padding on the grip of tools also protects and is easier to hold on to.

Many tools are labeled as ergonomic, and by trying them out before you buy them, you will know if they fit your needs. Remember, tools are not one size fits all!

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New UF/IFAS Resource Goes Out on a Limb for Power Lines

GAINESVILLE, Fla. – Trees and power lines can often be a disastrous combination, so University of Florida researchers have developed a list of small trees that have shown to be well-suited for planting below power lines. This list is now available at http://treesandpowerlines.ifas.ufl.edu.

The research was conducted by Ed Gilman, professor of environmental horticulture, and included more than 70 small trees like crape myrtle, bottlebrush, holly and others that were thought to be compatible with urban structures such as overhead power lines, streetlights and sidewalks. The study was co-sponsored by the Florida Department of Agriculture Division of Forestry.

"There really aren't many small trees, other than crape myrtle, that are readily available from growers," Gilman said. "Our goal was to learn the growth habits of a range of different small trees so that more of them could be grown in a nursery setting in the future."

The research was spurred in part by legislation enacted in 2007 (Statute 163.3209) that limited the mature height of trees that municipalities could recommend for planting beneath power lines.

Trees were evaluated for their growth habits and adaptation, nursery production requirements, and maintenance needs. The trees were planted in Gainesville, though many of the tree species are also suitable for other regions of Florida, as listed in the regional plant lists on the Trees and Power Lines Web site.

Homeowners, property management companies, municipalities and utility companies can benefit from the results published on the Web site by taking steps to recommend and plant the right trees under power lines and thereby minimize the need for pruning and the chances of tree limbs causing power outages.

Thanks to all of you who will access The Green Leaf newsletter via the internet or E-mail. We are still trying to reduce the mailing list even further, so if you have not responded please make an effort to do so. We appreciate your support in reducing our postage cost, as well as the time to assemble the mailing. If you do not have electronic access, remember, a copy can be picked up at Extension in the basket in front of Carol Sugg's office.

2008

May

SAT & SUN, MAY 3 & 4, 9AM-5PM
- Living Green Expo at Harborview Center, Clearwater

THURS, MAY 8, 10AM
- MG Update Florida's Best Fruiting Plants
- Mentor Meeting to follow

SAT, MAY 10, 8AM-NOON
- MG Plant Sale

SAT, MAY 17, 10:30AM-NOON
- Compost Happens Workshop at Dunedin Community Center

THURS, MAY 22, 9 - 11:30AM
- MGAA Meeting

SAT, MAY 31, 10AM-NOON
- Compost Happens Workshop at Pinellas County Extension

Looking Ahead!

SAT, JUNE 7, 9AM-10:30AM
- Rain Barrel Workshop at Pinellas County Extension

SAT, JUNE 14, 11:30AM-12:30PM
- Rain Barrel Workshop at Sunken Gardens, St Petersburg

For details on some of the events listed go to the calendar on the Pinellas County Extension Lawn & Garden website.
Reminders

- **May MG Update Meeting**
  Thursday, May 8 at 10AM
  Mentor Meeting to follow

- **MG Plant Sale**
  Saturday, May 10

- **May MGAA Meeting - Important!!!**
  Thursday, May 22 9-11:30AM
  See details on page 6.

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