Seeds are at the beginning and the end of a plant's life; they are the very cores of most life on earth. All humans and most animals and insects depend on seed-grown plants for their food and life.

Think of the loaf of bread in your breadbox. The wheat was grown from a seed that is traced back centuries, some seeds were harvested, some saved for next year's crop. So it continues, as there is no substitute or high tech way to restart the crop. Think about the number of hands that have been involved in this process over the centuries. Think about the native plants in their habitat, if annuals, how many years have they reseeded. If a perennial, how large is the patch? How long are they going to be allowed to live and reproduce?

Each seed has its own identity, just as looking at the blooms can identify each flower. If you look closely at the seed (each species is different from any other species), if you identify the plant by the flower, you can learn to do the same by looking at the seed. The biggest seed is the coconut; the smallest is the begonia, although there is always room for discussion on the smallest seed. The size of the seed does not determine the size of the plant to be grown. The Redwood seed is not as large as a bean seed, while the results of the coconut seed are much different than that of the Redwood.

“Know The Seed” will be continued in future issues of The Green Leaf. We will talk about the many ways that plants “distribute” their seed. We all know that it takes sun, soil and water to start seed; in many instances all three are not available. We will learn of the many ways that the miracle of the seed gets around some of the obstacles to continue the life of the species.

Get some classroom hours without leaving home. A series of short articles entitled “KNOW THE SEED” will be published monthly in The Green Leaf beginning in this issue. The series will run possibly into March. We all understand nothing is free. With the final article will be a quiz. Take the quiz, submit your answers and enter your hours. A generous average guideline will be available. Be amazed at one of the many wonders of nature. Seeds are truly a miracle learn about them.
By JOANNE DRAKE, MG

It’s a must see at this time of the year. The banana plants are in full bloom! The long, bisexual flower stalks have large oval, tapered buds (terminal bud) consisting of purple/maroon bracts. These will open upward in a series over several weeks. They extend from the tip of the stem and are very interesting to photograph. No two seemed to be alike! I couldn’t help myself before I knew it … I’d quickly gone through three rolls of film.

Not only are the flowers and bracts beautiful … the leaves are tropical beauties, too. Wind can sometimes tear up the leaves on outdoor plants, so you may want to select a protected area to keep your plant looking beautiful. They can also make wonderful houseplants giving your home that tropical look. Container plants should be watched closely. Some of the plants in the Tropical Fruit Garden were entirely green while others were green, streaked or blotched with maroon. The wide leaves provided me with shade while walking through the garden. The female flowers above the purple-clad buds had formed into a plump bunch or hand of bananas but they were still green. They can be cut from the stalk at this stage and hung in a cool, dark area until they ripen.

Rodents can be a problem if bananas are left on the stalk to ripen. Rodents are very sly critters. A daily check of your banana stalk is necessary. From ground level, looking up at the stalk it could look like a lovely bunch of bananas. What appears to be a healthy, ripe hand (also called tier) of bananas may surprise you when you try to cut them down. You may notice the bunch has no weight. After examining, you discover something has eaten the insides of every banana from above. Not a pretty sight.

Banana plants are big feeders with rapid growth. They have a thirst for water on a regular basis during warm weather. Do not let your plants dry out. Spread a thick layer of mulch on the soil to conserve moisture. Shredded newspapers used around the soil are also a good way to recycle and protect the shallow roots. During cool weather over-watering and allowing your plant to sit in water will cause root rot. The plants in our Tropical Fruit Garden look well fed. The ‘Banana Boys’ Charles Kohnken, Wayne Huneke, and Charles Sechen, look after this garden and have tended the plants with loving care. The plants prefer an acid soil with a pH of 5.5 and 6.5. The ‘Banana Boys’ have planted in raised beds and enriched the soil by adding mulch, compost, and other recyclable cuttings, and discarded fruit. Spreading 8:10:8 fertilizer, 1½ - 2 pounds each month, around a mature plant will make the plants thrive. Don’t allow fertilizer to come in contact with the trunk. Container plants can be on the same schedule, but use half as much fertilizer.

Cold weather may pose a threat to your banana plant. Cold weather protection is very important as the plants can tolerate only short periods below 30 degrees. Cover small plants with blankets or wrap the trunks of larger plants.

Bananas are very easy to grow. To see for yourself just how beautiful they really are, stop by our Tropical Fruit Garden and meet our ‘Banana Boys’. I think you’ll be inspired to give it a try. About a year after planting, you should be enjoying the excellent flavor of your own homegrown bananas.

Good luck!!

Garden Tips
Rosemary Tea
Make a pleasant-tasting tea using one teaspoon of crushed, dried leaves in a cup of boiling water and steep for ten minutes. You may even want to experiment and add other herbs. How about rosemary and mint?

Culinary Uses
Rosemary and lamb...good combination! Slit the lamb for roasting and tuck in sprigs of rosemary. Larger sprigs can also be placed over chops for grilling. Chopped leaves used sparingly in soups and stews give good flavor.

Other Uses for Rosemary
Use dried leaves in potpourri and in sachets to scent clothes and linen. Rosemary also deters moths.

Rosemary Heart Wreath
Symbol of Remembrance and Friendship
Makes a Wonderful Gift!
Twist a heavy gage wire into a circle about 8 to 10 inches in diameter, then pinch at the base and top to form a heart shape. Wrap slender sprays of rosemary to the form with florist wire. Decorate the rosemary heart with dried flowers and herbs. Ribbon can also be added.

Recycle your old shoulder pads
Put them in flowerpots to prevent soil from escaping. I place a shoulder pad inside the flowerpot at each drainage hole. You may want to hold it in place by adding a few stones. A couple plastic mesh onion bags, tied in a loose knot or two, may be added before filling the pot with your favorite potting mix. This will help to keep plant roots from sitting in water during rainy season. This method will also keep your patio looking great! No messy soil clean-ups. Coffee filters are also great for keeping the soil contained in the flowerpots.

Safety Nets
By PAM BROWN
Horticulture Agent
Please remember to keep your Tetanus vaccinations up to date. Adults should have a booster shot every 10 years. The bacterium that causes Tetanus (Clostridium tetani) forms spores that are relatively resistant to autoclaving for 10 - 15 minutes and to phenol and other antiseptic agents. These spores are widely distributed in soil and in the intestine and feces of horses, sheep, cattle, dogs, cats, rats, guinea pigs, and chickens. Manure treated soil may contain large numbers of spores. So, you can see that it is important to keep this vaccination current if we are digging in the soil. It only takes a small open wound to become infected. Tetanus is not a disease that you want to get. Especially when it is so easy to prevent. Please review your vaccination status and consider keeping this important vaccination up to date.

A Few Words of Farewell
By DON FRAGNOLI, MG
My wife, Joan, and I are buying a new home in Brazoria County, Texas, to be close to my oldest daughter and a niece and nephew. We have been going back and forth for some time and when a good buy became available and we signed on. This move is an exciting and challenging one but it is also painful to leave behind 41 years in this wonderful place. My experience at the gardens has allowed me to be in the presence of wonderful people doing marvelous thing with plants. I wish the Pinellas County Master Gardener program the best and I hope our paths will cross some time in the future.
Important Announcements!

**It’s here and working**

You now have the ability to send your volunteer hours by e-mail. The e-mail addresses: 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. I appreciate those that are using this method to report your hours and hope you will continue to do so.

**Pinellas County Extension & Florida Botanical Gardens**

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

Please include the name of the publication and date published.

**MG Advisory Association**

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

The Articles of Incorporation for our MGAA account was completed and notarized. We have applied to the IRS for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Members of the bylaws committee (Linda Culhane, Angela Strain, Noel Bell, Gayle Robertson and me) are feverishly reviewing a companion By-Laws document and hope to complete it soon. Any questions about either documents or how and why MGAA was organized, please see me.

We held our first board meeting on Friday Oct 28 to allocate monies to specific horticulture areas. I was pleased with the attendance and remember, board meetings are open to all MGs in good standing.

We hope to have a general meeting of MGAA in January to elect new board members. So, **start thinking about becoming a board member.**

A budget committee (Donna Zacharczyk and Patsy Schaumber) was also established to identify budgets for the coming year. They will be contacting Staff and MGs to determine yearly needs.

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.

**Cottage Garden Refurbished**

By RUTH DAVIES

Take a look at the cottage garden (inside the wedding garden). Thanks to Linda Culhane and her persuasive manner, Lowe's and Beckett Lake donated some of the plants that are now planted. Lola Dial, Linda and I added a few also. Thanks to the crew on Tuesdays, we've been able to keep it weeded and pruned.

There's a colorful surprise in the works, so keep watch on the cottage garden.

**The FBG Grows**

By RUTH DAVIES

As a phoenix, The Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation Board of Directors has had a transfusion of new volunteer members and is on an uphill path.

On Sept. 14, the board elected the following new officers Debra Roman, chair; Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti, vice chair; Ruth Davies, secretary; and Ray Bradshaw, treasurer. Also serving on the board are Noel Bell, Andy Bergeron, Barbara Cohen, Loraine Faust, Barbara Goss, Vivian Haicken, Barbara Jones, Bruce McManus, Monique Noujaim, Mary Ellen Warner and Commissioner Ronnie Duncan.
Sooner than later, we want The Florida Botanical Gardens to stand with the best in the world. With hard work and communication with all interested parties, that goal can be reached. More and more people are visiting and spreading the news about our beautiful gardens. The new entrance off Ulmerton Road and signage also will help people find us.

The gift shop, Botanical Bounty has a new manager, will have new stock and more help for the faithful volunteers who have greeted the many visitors to the gardens. If you can help four hours a week in the gift shop, call Barbara Goss, gift shop chair, at 442-0537.

If your membership expired, see Mary Ellen Warner, membership chair, for renewal.

With help from the people who love our Botanical Gardens, who share the desire to make it grow can make it become one of the best. Talk to the board members, share ideas and suggestions and help us climb higher. If you would care to attend a board meeting, you are welcome. If you have an issue to discuss and want it on the agenda, please see Debra Roman or one of the members.

On the evening of Dec. 3, the board will sponsor a wine and cheese event, Fantasy of Light, for members of The Florida Botanical Gardens in the wedding garden. Your invitation will come in the mail. Hope to see you there.

Special Thanks by Cindy Peacock

Above and beyond weeding, to the painting and weather sealing crews the fake trees look just wonderful. Thank you so very much for such a special effort!!

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.

Help needed for Pam Brown
Pam needs some assistance filing some old fact sheets and cleaning out the rest in the back storage area. This area is very dusty, so if you are sensitive to dust, this may not be the place for you to volunteer. There are also some file cabinets to purge as well. If you can help with this, please let Pam know at 582-2112 or pwbrown@pinellascounty.org. She will be forever grateful!

Tour Guides Needed
Tour guide season is between September and 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!!

Help Needed

Jim Brown, the past president of the Palm Harbor Historical Society is looking for an individual or a group to assist with and improve the gardens at the Hartley House Museum. It is located at 2043 Curlew Rd in Palm Harbor. Jim said they had a garden group helping but they stopped coming one by one. If anyone is interested, contact Wynona Jones, the museum director, tell her Jim Brown sent you. Phone: 724 3054. The museum is open Tues, Thurs, and Sat. This is not an approved Master Gardener activity, but if you are interested in helping out please contact them.

School Gardening Help Needed:

McMullen Booth Elementary, Clearwater
Carrol Steakley, a first grade teacher.

In 2000 we established a very large outdoor classroom (OC) for students. There are many different gardens and lots to maintain. I am looking for a Master Gardener to help train teachers, students and volunteers how to take care of this large outdoor classroom. We need help identifying the good plants from the bad plants. If you would like to help with this project, please contact Carol at carrols@verizon.net or give Pam a call at 582-2112.

Pinellas Park High School
6305 118th Ave. N.
Teacher would like to establish a vegetable garden with science class students. Requesting a Master Gardener to give technical advice. Contact Diane Stevens at 538-7410 ext. 186

IFAS Award of Excellence for Master Gardener Projects

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG
Pam Brown has approved a proposal from the MG project advisory committee (MGPAC) for the “MG Grand Herb Garden TourFest”

We feel there is a remarkable growth of interest in herbal outreach as evidenced by the HerbFest and GardenFest interest. Also, we have been in discussion with Penny Khaled, President of the Herb Society, and she has offered many suggestions for this project. She is very enthusiastic about continuing to advise and assist us. The Herb Garden TourFest will consist of three parts: a MG guided tour of the herb garden, food preparation by an accredited chef and a keynote speaker on an announced herbal subject.

Please contact Pam Brown, Chuck Scaffidi, Jack Moss or Sam Skemp to contribute to this exciting project. We will be in need of a leader for this event, herb garden tour guides, and many helpers to make this a successful award-winning
project. We also respectfully welcome suggestions for this event.

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

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

We are very proud that we received a state award for the Plant Sale project submitted this year. Here are pictures at the MG reception on the University of Florida Campus Reitz Union Hall. Thirteen MGs attended with Pam Brown our IFAS coordinator and Jean Field. We all had a great time—learned a lot and also had time to have lots of fun.

Pictured below: pondering over filling out the evaluation form on the last day are: clockwise Pam Brown, Suzanne Girves, Mindy Bickey, Noel Bell, Joanne Drake, John Kingsbury and Jean Field.

In 2006 the Conference will be in a different location—rumor says it may be Jacksonville. Wherever, please join us next year!!

Volunteer Opportunities and Events for November/December

Fall 2005 Wildlife Programs

- November 5, Saturday
  Wetland Wildlife & Nature Tours
  - 9:00 to 10:00 A.M./Meet in Palm Pavilion at Florida Botanical Gardens
  - Pre-registration Requested @ 582-2673; Maximum 25 Guests
  - Adults & Families Welcome; 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.

- MG Advanced Training for November
  Tuesday, November 8th from noon to 4 P.M., in the Pinellas Room, Heritage Village
  A Safety and CPR Class will be offered by Risk Management to the first 40 MGs to sign up in the MG volunteer office – Limited Seating
  Sign up NOW!
**Advanced Training for December**

**Bus Trip to Sarasota Area – Thursday December 8th**

Take note now and mark your calendars!! Arrangements are being made to visit several Sarasota area gardens.

Check in the Volunteer Room for information and the sign-up sheet.

**Great American Teach-in November 16th**

Do you have an interesting story about your job or volunteer work? Volunteers are needed to take part in this important one-day program designed to introduce students to a wide variety of occupations and interests. It only entails a few hours, or as much of the day as you can offer. Please call Cindy Peacock 582-2671 if you can help, or call Marsha Cruz at 547-4526 to speak to students at Morgan Fitzgerald Middle School at 66th Street and 118th Ave. North. This school has made a formal request, noting how difficult it is to get volunteers for this one-day program in Middle Schools.

**Volunteers Needed as Garden Angels**

Join Joan Bacon at Bon Secours Maria Manor On Friday November 18, 2005 from 9 - 10 am, to help spruce up the Residents’ garden area. Bring your rake, hoe, clippings and any outside plants to contribute. The residents love being part of the fun. For additional information and to let her know you will be joining, call Joan Bacon @ 727-573-5816.

**SAVE THE DATE - GardenFest**

*GardenFest* is set for Saturday, November 19th, 2005!

Only a month to go for GardenFest. Nearly all the details are coming together.

Just a few biggies need handling:

Friday afternoon the vendors arrive with tons of plants to get moved into their area from the parking lot. We need four more people who can skip the gym and the treadmill and walk with a wagon over the bridge or through the garden. It’s good exercise! And, the vendors sure appreciate the help.

On Saturday, those who are not teaching are needed to be ambassadors for Extension and The Florida Botanical Gardens to answer questions and give direction. Yes, most want to know where the restrooms are. See how easy this is!

A botanical treasure hunt will lead participants to various parts of the gardens to their treasure chest, a marigold plant donated by the Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA). Volunteers to check the answers and give out the “gold” are needed.

Please stop by the bulletin board and sign up to help in the areas that interest you.

**The next meeting will be on Tuesday, Nov. 11, at noon, and you are personally invited!**

If you are interested, please contact Ruth Davies at sunflower1368@juno.com or phone 399-0352.

Ruth Davies and Cathy Nelson

**MG Plant Sale Meetings**

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

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.

Seasonal Sensation’s Holiday Lights

Have you been looking for that special opportunity for a pleasant evening under the stars, with a few hundred of your new friends? If so, Seasonal Sensation’s Holiday Lights may be for you. Since Lake Seminole Park cancelled the Lights under the Stars show, we are the sole Pinellas County promoted holiday light event. While you will see some changes, Holiday Lights will maintain the lighted wonderland theme that made our location so popular as a family-stroll through the month of December.

We have selected 9 evenings during which we will greet and count the Holiday Lights visitors from 6-9 p.m. We plan to have 4 ambassadors around the Garden entrances each evening, so please consider bringing friends and colleagues to assist. Non-MG.s and non-Pinellas County Volunteers are certainly welcome. At press time, we had openings for all the evenings. Available December dates are: Saturday, 3rd.; Sunday, 4th; Saturday, 10th; Friday, 16th; Saturday, 17th; Sunday, 18th; Wednesday, 21st; Thursday, 22nd; and Friday, 23rd. Please contact me ASAP, as the spaces are limited. For questions or to sign-up, please call Tom Roberts (727) 582-2016

Mark Your Calendars Now!

In June of 2006, Chattanooga will host the 2006 Southeast Regional Master Gardener Conference. We are expecting between 500--1,000 Master Gardeners from 16 states for the 4-day event. (June 8th-----11th). I would personally like to invite all your Master Gardeners to attend what we think will be one of the best Regional conferences that will be held in the southeast. We will have a very special project for all Masters Gardeners to get their hands a little dirty while they are attending the Conference. The project will be located between the two Tennessee Aquarium buildings along the banks of the Tennessee River. Once the project is completed it will be used as an educational tool for the schools and aquarium groups. Once completed, we feel the project will be one that all Master Gardeners can be proud to have been a participant.

We will also be hosting an open Informational Day to the public. On Saturday the 10th, we will have national and regional speakers starting at 10:00am till 5:00pm in the evening, and a large vendor area open to everyone to view and buy products and crafts for the lawn and garden.

Below is a link to the Conference Webpage: The Southern Region Master Gardener Conference, A Blending of the Waters, June

Times are getting busier as we get closer to the holiday season. At least it is a bit cooler and maybe we are finished with this record breaking hurricane season. We now have a few of our winter Master Gardeners back. It is good to see each of you - I trust you had productive and interesting summers.

Those of us who attended the state Master Gardener Conference in October had a wonderful time. The Master Gardener Plant Sale won the State Award for Extension Awareness! Congratulations to all of the many MGs who work on all the aspects of making these sales a success. A big thank you too to Chuck Scaffidi, Angela Strain, Linda Culhane and the rest who worked to put together the submission packet for this award.

While we are on the subject of the Plant Sale – the October1st sale was the best ever. Total
sales amounted to $8294.50. What an accomplishment!
Remember the Great American Teach-in on November 16th. Many of you have wonderful stories to tell and schools are in need of volunteers for this day or part of the day. Contact Cindy Peacock (582-2671) if you can help. It is really a rewarding experience.
The Master Gardener Recognition for 2005 is going to be held on February 15, 2006. Mark your calendars now. By returning the recognition to an earlier date we should be able to include the part-year MGs before they start to return north.
Take care if you are out working in the gardens. The construction is causing hazards in several places. Remember, you are very important to us and we appreciate all that you do.
♥ Pam

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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.flbg.org/](http://www.flbg.org/)
Click on “Master Gardener Program”, click on “MG Newsletter”

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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.

**Amelia W. Brown**
Extension Agent II, Environmental Horticulture

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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, MG Editor