A Peace Garden at Happy Workers Children’s Center

Part of the United Way Day of Caring

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, CARRIE SHELBY, and SANDY HERON (PHOTOS)

The Master Gardener Advisory Association (MGAA) recently donated $200 to purchase garden materials, plus supplied a variety of kid-friendly plants from the Fall Plant Sale to the Peace Garden at Happy Workers Children’s Center. This was a United Way of Tampa Bay Day of Caring project manned by Pinellas County employees.

Happy Workers Children’s Center is a non-profit preschool serving children ages 2 months to 5 years and their families in South St. Petersburg. Happy Workers mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, learning environment teaching basic concepts of peace and justice, by emphasizing core values of caring, sharing, giving, helping, respecting, and making friends.

The Master Gardener Association collaborated with Vernon Bryant, Florida Botanical Gardens Manager, in this community outreach effort. Mr. Bryant led the gardening project that involved several Pinellas County Departments including personnel from Extension, Parks, Highway and Human Resources. With the help of volunteers, the Peace Garden was spruced up and enhanced with new plantings that created an attractive safe garden environment for the children, their families and the staff at Happy Workers Children’s Center.
You might say James Fletcher Blackwell (Master Gardener Class of 1994) was an outdoor man, loved nature and began gardening at an early age of four with his grandparents in Cleveland, Tennessee. Back then, he enjoyed growing vegetables most of all because he enjoyed seeing things grow and he knew it would help his family and others during the midst of the depression. James loved to share! Break time... “There was nothing like pulling up a mature carrot, rinsing it off, and eating it right then and there!” I can almost hear the snap, visualizing James as a young boy, biting into that bright orange carrot and enjoying its sweetness.

James carried that same love of gardening to Florida in the 90s, when he moved to Florida and eventually took the Master Gardener class. He also carried that same caring about people and wanted to share his garden knowledge. Boy, did he ever have the chance … on Tuesdays especially! At Heritage Village, Tuesdays were set aside for 45 to 100 school children to tour the Heritage Garden. The children were always wide-eyed with excitement, learning how corn, carrots, beans, etc. are grown and harvested. They learned how compost was made and returned to the soil to enrich the garden. The children had so much interest and many-questions. James always had a good explanation to give them on those days. They were even more amazed as a live butterfly glided right before their eyes. What a thrill that was! James had the perfect opportunity to explain to the children how important it is not to use pesticides and harsh chemicals in our gardens. We don’t want to ruin our food supply or harm nature. Many of our Master Gardeners have worked at the Heritage Garden under James’s leadership and expertise. Knowing James was a great experience. I’ll bet he’s still playing in the dirt!

James would welcome hearing from Extension & Heritage Village friends. Anyone that would like to contact him … his address is:

3500 Keith Street N.W. #106
Cleveland, TN 37312
1-423-559-5603

Farewell Party

Judy Yates was here and talked about James and how the Heritage Garden came about. Sam then told his side of the story. Elna Bozarth, Mary Campbell, Marva Perry, Vernon Bryant, and Pam Brown also spoke.
What’s Cooking in Your Garden?

Zingiber officinale

A series of recipes

By JESSICA FOSTER, MG

There are hundreds of different types of ginger found throughout Asia, Australia and Africa. The one we are familiar with in cooking is Zingiber officinale, which is native to tropical China. This rhizome is also easily cultivated in the climates of central and south Florida.

To start a plant of your own, purchase fresh ginger root from any grocery store. Look for shiny, hard rhizomes with an abundance of buds or “eyes” like on a potato. Soak overnight in warm water then lay the root just under the surface of a well-drained fertile soil (try amending with compost) in a container roughly 3-4 times the size of the root. Water lightly. When growth appears you can increase moisture. Once good growth is achieved the plant can either be left in the pot as a patio specimen or moved into the garden where it will thrive in lightly shaded conditions and rich, moist soil. The plant will reach a height of 2-3 feet when mature usually in about 10 months to a year. Rhizomes can then be harvested from new growth formed in front of the original planting. These tender young shoots will have formed new tubers ready for use in the kitchen or more propagation.

Recipe for Gingered Butternut Squash Soup

A perfect Thanksgiving starter

2 inch piece ginger, peeled and sliced thin
6 oz. white wine
2-3 tbl. olive oil
1 onion, diced
2 ribs celery, diced
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 large butternut squash, cooked
6 cups chicken stock
1 cup heavy cream
salt and pepper, to taste

To cook squash, slice in half length-wise and scoop out seeds. Brush with olive oil and season with salt and pepper and freshly grated nutmeg. Place on roasting pan and cook in a 350 degree oven for 1 hour. After squash is done cooking, heat ginger slices and wine together until nearly boiling. Remove from heat and steep until room temperature. Strain, reserving wine. In a stockpot heat oil over medium low and sweat the onion, celery and garlic until soft. Scoop out the flesh of the squash into the pot along with the infused wine and chicken stock. Simmer 20-30 minutes. Puree in batches in a blender and return to pot. Add the cream and return soup to just below a simmer. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Makes 8 servings

A New Native Plant Nursery in Pinellas

By ANGELA STRAIN, MG

There is nothing more irresistible for a Master Gardener than a new place to shop for plants. Twigs and Leaves, a Florida Garden Center specializing in Florida Native Plants and Organics opened last May. They are located at 1013 Dr. Martin Luther King St. South in St. Petersburg.

Owner, Philippe Piquet, is knowledgeable, friendly, and willing to spend time with his customers.

If you go, please register your email address and join the Native Club and receive one point for every $25 spent. Redeem 10 points for a free one gallon plant. To sweeten the pot, Master Gardeners, with proof of certification, will receive a 20% discount on your total purchase. Did I mention they have Melaleuca mulch for $2.55/bag.

Happy planting!
Notes From Your MG Library ....

By Angela Strain, MG

Book Titles on the Shelves

BUTTERFLY GARDENS/HUMMINGBIRDS/WILDLIFE
Directory of Zoological Taxonomists of the World; Blackwelder; 1989
Florida Guide to Butterfly Gardening; Daniels; 2000
Gardening for Florida Butterflies; Trass
Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Birds; 1980
The Butterfly Garden; Sedenko, 1991
The Great Barrier Reef; Mann; 1974
The Orchard Mason Bee; Griffin; 1999

CACTI/SUCCULENTS/EPIPHYTES
A Golden Guide to Cacti; Venning; 1974
Cacti; Borg; 1976
Cacti & Other Succulents; Kramer; 1977
Cacti & Succulents; Anderson; 1982
Cacti & Succulents; Perl; 1978
Cacti & Succulents; Mulligan; 1975
Cacti & Succulents; Subik; 1972
Cacti & Succulents for Modern Living; 1976
Cacti & Succulents Indoors & Out; VanNess; 1971
Cacti & Their Cultivation; Martin; 1971
Cacti of the Southwest, Revised; Earle; 1963
Cactus & Succulents; Brandt; 1978
Cactus & Succulents; Atkinson; 1970
Colorful Cacti of the Am. Deserts; Lamb; 1974
Desert Gardening; Sunset Books; 1974
Growing Cacti & Succulents; Bartrum; 1973
Handbook of Succulent Plants; Teuscher; 1977

If you visit the library and cannot locate a book within the main library, try looking in the Horticulture Quick Reference section just outside the library door. These books will have a RED spine label. Just be sure to return the book to the proper section.

Welcome to Cheryl Korschek who has joined the Library Team. Cheryl is a new MG and brings Fresh enthusiasm to our efforts.

Thank you, Cheryl.

SURVEY of the Master Gardener Class of 2006:
WE ASKED, and THEY ANSWERED: HOW does your COMPOST GO?

By MICHAEL E ADAMS, MG class

As part of our class project about composting, Bill Shaw, Gail Horner and myself wondered if other Master Gardener trainees composted. If they didn't, why not; and if they did, how did they do it and did they feel successful at it? We made up a survey and many (27) Master Gardener trainees responded.

The results are in: 18 said they have indeed composted before.

However, only 15 (out of 27 total surveyed) stated that they do compost at home NOW. 12 said they do not now compost.

The #1 reason given for NOT composting today was lack of space in their yard. However, there were many other reasons given: indecision, laziness, no support to make a compost bin, fear of attracting rats, or their civic/condo association rules made it difficult. Two people did admit that they did not know enough about it to do it.

Master Gardener trainees who do compost now identified MANY reasons for doing it. The #1 reason stated was for soil enrichment (10 votes). The second most popular reason given was to reduce garbage going into the system (6 votes). Many other reasons were stated: to stabilize the soil, to help soil retain water, to use the compost for mulch, to help the environment, to reduce what was going into the water system, to create 'free' soil, to specifically make fertilizer for a veggie garden, and to express their belief in reusing and recycling.

Of the 15 active composters, 9 compost both yard waste (leaves, branches, shrub trimmings, weeds etc) and kitchen waste (veggie & fruit peelings). Six did only yard waste and did not do kitchen waste. There were only a few problems or issues relating to using yard waste: having too much all at once, or having too much brown to use. Otherwise there seemed to be no specific problems.

Interestingly, those compostors who did use kitchen waste noted MANY positive aspects to using this resource. Many recognized the value of adding 'green' into the mostly 'brown' of the yard waste, making the process speed up and heat up. Several noted environmental reasons like reducing the amount of organic matter going down garbage disposals, burden-
ing the water systems. Several others expressed an eco-consciousness: a desire to be pro-active in dealing with the waste created in their own household, by dealing with it themselves. Many stated the kitchen waste added elements not found in other sources of yard waste, thereby raising the overall nutritive value of the finished compost. Some noted specific positive uses, for example, just hanging banana peels on their stag horn ferns for the minerals transferred.

By reading the description of how these Master Gardener trainees do their composting, we can conclude that these are very creative folks: more than half used their own home-made compost bins, and/or some made bins from garbage cans or extra-large pots. Several stated they used a system of multiple bins to start, turn and allow compost to finish off. Several composters used the pile method, and one said they turned their pile by roto-tilling it. Some used commercial bins while a few said they used tumblers.

This group rated their success with composting on a 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) scale in the survey. Surprisingly, only 4 rated their efforts as excellent, and 1 said they were pretty successful. Looks like many think they still need continuing education: 4 said they only did OK, 4 said they were only somewhat successful and one said they were not successful at all. Hopefully, after MG Dr. John presents to our class, we will be able to resolve difficulties and aim for higher participation and success. After all, we do know that the bags of finished compost made here at the Extension sold like hotcakes at the Plant Sale.

Great American Teach-in
November 15th

All the schools in Pinellas County have speakers that come in to educate the students in the classroom. It is a fun day and the children learn a lot about occupations, gardening, insects, butterfly gardening, water conservation and what ever you would like to share with the children (educational). You can even read and discuss a book with them.

I have a few schools that need speakers. 30 to 40 minutes per class. One or two classes if you would like. I have props if you need them on insects, butterfly posters, caterpillars, water conservation, give-aways, activity sheets and books (if you want to read them a story).

We have schools who still need speakers. Please let Cindy know if you would like to be a speaker.

If you are already scheduled to speak at a school for the Great American Teach-in, we need to know for reporting. Please give Pam a report with the name of the school and the number of students in each class where you speak. Extension funding depends on this type of interaction, so these reports are very important.

Chef Of The Day
MG’s, show your composting skill. Direct MGs to chop, grind, mix, water and stir. Take home mature compost and a compost bin.

Assistant Chefs
MG’s wanting better composting skills and hands-in. Help make a batch and take home a compost bin.

Both available Wednesdays, 9 to 12 noon adjacent to the Herb Garden weather permitting. Call Extension to schedule. MG reservation line at 582-2247

Thank you
Cindy Peacock and Pam Brown
26th Annual
FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER
CONTINUED TRAINING
CONFERENCE
October 23-25, 2006
Wyndham Jacksonville Riverwalk
Jacksonville, Florida

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

The conference turned out to be more than expected, with a broad selection of higher education top- ics. My favorite, and one also shared by all, was “New and Under Utilized Plants for the Florida Land- scape” presented by Robert Bowden, Director, Harry P. Leu Gardens. A great speaker, he enticed everyone to visit Leu Gardens and bring shears as he has an open policy to take cuttings. Also, for those that attended the conference, admission was free when presenting their conference badge. The conference pro- ceedings book lists his favorite plants at Leu, and also contains all the presenter’s papers. Stop by the volunteer office to browse through the book.

Lynn Barber, Compost Happens Program Coor- dinator at Hillsborough Extension, presented “You Can’t Compost your Cat (and other recycling Tips). Dr. John Kingsbury will especially appreciate this paper because of the composting effort he leads at Ex- tension.

A disappointment for our group was that we had only 7 attendees from Pinellas Extension. Someone told me there were about 400 people at the confer- ence. I will propose a plan at the next MGAA meeting to encourage more MGs to attend next year. Not only did you miss a great conference, but we did have time to enjoy the area. Many extra curricular activities were offered. Believe me you will have a good time: Note our enjoyment below: Sunrise on the East Coast and cold. Not pictured: Charlie Iserman-taking photo.
Lawn Mower & Children Safety Tips

By PAM BROWN, Horticulture Agent

Each year about 9,400 children receive lawn mower related injuries in the USA. For this reason the following tips should be kept in mind:

Lawn mowers can propel objects such as nails and broken glass at very high speeds. Flying objects can seriously injure a nearby child. Therefore always be aware of children when mowing the lawn. As a matter of fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends to keep children under the age of 6 indoors during mowing.

Children should not be allowed to ride on lawnmowers nor be towed behind mowers in carts, wagons or trailers.

Keep lawnmowers locked up and out of the reach of children at all times. The same goes for fuel, oil and other chemicals or potentially toxic substances.

Children should be at least 16 years of age in order to operate "ride on" mowers and be at least 12 years old for push lawn mower.

Source: http://www.drpaul.com/factsheets/lawnsafe.html


If you notice the white blooming Kalanchoe plant on our table it was available to us and vanished so there is a funny story about who took it-so just ask Charlie or me.

To top off a wonderful conference, on the last day was the Awards Program at which we were honored as the State winner for our UPARC entry in the Special Audiences award category. This effort has been in my heart for several years and it was hard to keep my emotions intact. This is what the award was about as noted by Pam Brown to all:

“Our Master Gardeners are back from the state MG conference. Once again, they have brought home a state award - the therapeutic garden that was constructed at UPARC won the award for Special Audiences. This project was organized and led by Linda Culhane. They created a garden with the help of many volunteers and donations. Clients of UPARC helped with this garden also. It has been used the last year or so as a great place for those with Alzheimer’s to take walks. Other clients enjoy the butterfly garden. Some clients and their teacher planted their own pizza garden as a teaching tool. We are very proud of this accomplishment and are pleased that the state MG program awarded them for this effort”.

I encourage you to attend the U of F IFAS conference in Gainesville next year, for education & fun.

FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING FOR COMMUNITIES

By Doris Heitzmann

Most Master Gardeners probably know me from volunteering in the shadehouse/greenhouse and at the MG plant sales when I started out as a Master Gardener here at Pinellas County Extension nearly six years ago. And most of you probably also know that I began working with Dale Armstrong and Wilma Holley within Florida Yards & Neighborhoods last January when I started a new Community Association Outreach Program funded by Southwest Florida Water Management District.

The reason I decided to write this article in the Greenleaf is that I would like to encourage Master Gardeners who live in communities that need landscape advice for their common areas to take advantage of my services. Bringing in someone from outside the community may be more effective than you trying to implement change on your own. And here is how it works:

I offer a free on-site landscape evaluation upon request of the association officers, board of directors or property manager. I am also available to present the site report at a board of directors’ meeting.

Landscape elements that will be evaluated include:

* Overall design, selection and placements of plants
* Pruning practices
* Problem plants, such as diseased trees and invasive, non-native plants
* Pest and disease issues; pesticide use on the property
* Nutritional deficiencies and the application of fertilizers
* Mulch-type, quantity and application
* Irrigation (in-ground sprinkler) system operation and time clock settings.

If you need more information or flyers about my program, please stop by and see me anytime. I am in the office behind the MG volunteer office. If you know any association that would benefit from my program, please refer them to my services at dheitzmann@pinellascounty.org, (727) 582-2422 or give me their information and I will contact them directly. I am looking forward to assisting you.
MG Advisory Association

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

The MGAA documents are available for all MGAA members on request. We have detailed how MGAA operates and is organized, as well as defines the duties of committees.

The next MGAA meeting is Friday December 8, after the plant sale meeting. Bring your lunch. I will be sending out an agenda to the members soon. High on my list is to discuss granting money to various charities and other needs at the FBG. Please mark this date on your calendar. Even though these actions will require Board approval your opinions and suggestions from all members are always welcome.

I stumbled upon this wonderful website and thought it would be very helpful for anyone that would like to start a journal. It also has a lot of other useful info.

During the winter months ...

A Great Time To Start A Garden Journal

Website suggested by Joanne Drake
http://www.thriftyfun.com/tf55654434.tip.html

Another interesting site provided by John Hood are events for the local Audubon Society:
http://www.Stpeteaudubon.org

Volunteer Opportunities and Events for November/December

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

Up-coming Master Gardener Update Training Topics

The Importance of Wetlands & Ponds for Florida's Ecology

A Master Gardener Update
Thursday, Nov. 9, 2006
In auditorium C

Three experts will tell us what it takes to sustain Florida's ecology. One non-expert will explain how Mother Nature gets even when she's ignored.


10:30 am Wetlands as a pre-condition for local, convection-fed showers. Bill Edmonds

10:45 am The importance of ponds and wetlands for the survival of migratory and local birds. Bill Edmonds

11.30 - 12:15 pm POT LUCK LUNCH (break room)

12.30 pm Keeping ponds & wetlands active, healthy, and balanced: The importance of utility animals - fish, frogs, snails & other helpful critters. Michael Pettay

1.30 pm The importance of native aquatic plants in wild and recreated wetlands. Andy Wilson

2.30 pm Wild applause!! (we must vacate the room on time).
As I write this, I am working from home using my laptop. I am sitting out on our deck wearing a light, long-sleeve shirt and enjoying the crystal clear sky, slight breeze and wonderful (no humidity) day. This is why I live in Florida – days like this and I was just lucky enough to be at home to enjoy it today.

Can you believe that it is November again and Thanksgiving and the Christmas holidays are just around the corner? Where did this year go? Time certainly does fly by.

I have now been working for Extension for six years. It has been a great six years, by the way! Each of you has helped make this the best job I have ever had and certainly the most enjoyable.

Remember that the MG update this month is on November 9th – the last day of Master Gardener training for this year is on the 8th, causing a slight conflict. Yvonne has scheduled quite an extravaganza for this month’s update. There will be lots of information about wetlands, their importance and trails. There are several speakers, with a break for a Pot Luck lunch, and then continuing into the afternoon. It should be a very informative program.

This year’s MG class is nearly over. We have a great group of new volunteers. You have seen them out and about volunteering – please make them feel welcome and needed so that they will develop into dedicated volunteers, just like each of you that are our veterans.

One of our MGs that turned volunteering into a job at Florida Botanical Gardens has retired from that job. Chuck Beard was a faithful volunteer before the gardens scooped him up as one of the maintenance employees. You may have seen him on most Mondays riding the big mower over the grassy areas. We wish him well in his well-deserved retirement – his second he was a fire chief first! Maybe he will return to our volunteer ranks.

We will be placing an order for Felco pruners and other tools during November. Please see Carol for the catalogue and to place your order. We only need to order $50 of tools to get the wholesale pricing – which is a substantial discount from retail.

Our part year MGs are returning from the north...
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.

Managing Editor: Pam Brown,
Extension Agent II
Production Editor: Chuck Scaffidi, Master Gardener
727-582-2117
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/
Click on “Master Gardener Program”, click on “MG Newsletter”

New MG Class
Welcome!!!
Start earning your hours now!!
Need immediate help in the following work areas:

♦ Join the Plant Sale team. Need help in all phases of getting plants ready and many jobs during the sale. Earn and learn!!

♦ Also, would like someone to help our plant sale Chair Linda Culhane as a Co-Chair. A great learning and rewarding position.

♦ Besides all the gardening needs outside, for those who have computer skills can volunteer in our MG volunteer office. Work on our MG newsletter, IFAS award projects (4-H Ochs garden is a candidate for 2007), and many other computer and graphics tasks.

♦ Also, become a tour guide!

Or buy a cookbook. When you become an MG put a MG license plate on your front bumper.

Pam

now that the weather is cooling. Welcome back - we do miss you when you are gone!

Mark your calendars now – the volunteer recognition luncheon date has been set for February 8th. You are each so important to us and this is our chance to give you a bit of recognition for all that you do.

♥ Pam
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| **No Plant Sale**  
**Meeting in November** | | | **1**  
MG Training  
9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Magnolia Room  
Student Presentations | | **2** | | **4**  
Citrus Care  
10 a.m. at the Ochs Park  
Cindy Peacock presents |
| **5** | **6** | **7** | **8**  
Last Day of MG Training  
Pot Luck at 12 N | | **9**  
MG Update & Pot Luck  
10-2:30pm  
Conf. Rm. C | | **10** |
| **12** | **13** | **14** | **15** | | **16** | **17**  
**18** |
| **19** | **20** | **21** | **22**  
Thanksgiving Extension Closed | | **23** | **24**  
Holiday Extension Closed |
| **26** | **27** | **28** | **29** | | **30** |
Good Work Pinellas County Master Gardener Volunteers !!!

ATTENTION!

Master Gardener Update Training
The Importance of Wetlands & Ponds for Florida’s Ecology
Thursday, Nov. 9, 2006 10:00am – 2:30pm
Conference room C
Pot Luck Lunch-Break Room