Monumental Day Planned at Extension
By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

Saturday, November 1 is the grand opening of our successful Market in the Park at Extension. Concurrent with this event, the Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation (FBGF) is sponsoring the opening of the Children’s Trail.

After many years of effort by the FBGF, County Extension Staff, and Master Gardeners the concept of a children’s garden has evolved into a four station Children’s Trail.

The Children’s Trail will officially open at 10:00 am Saturday morning.

Free kids activities are planned and we would like MGs to participate in this grand opening. So, if you love fun events and working with children- don’t miss this opportunity!!

Listed below is a list of duties and who to contact:

- 5 volunteers to help children make butterfly crafts and petting caterpillars at the life cycle Butterfly Station.
- 2 volunteers to interact with the children about the wildlife that they see at the wetland water Wildlife Station and give out coloring books.
- 3 volunteers to help the children plant a small tree seedling to take home at the Trees Station.
- 2 volunteers to help staff a fruit tasting table at the Tropical Fruit Station.
- 3 volunteers to put “Flora” tattoos on the children.

The opening ceremonies start at 10:00am and the Children’s stations need to be staffed until 1:00pm.

Contact Cindy Peacock 727-582-2671 or E-mail me at cascaffidi@juno.com
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 Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation Needs “You” to Help “Our” Gardens Grow

The Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation FBGF, is a 501 (c) (3) corporation. It was established in 2003 to secure funding for future expansion of the Gardens that opened in 2000. As you know, Pinellas County maintains the facility. The FBGF provides project support for the Gardens through memberships, a botanically orientated gift shop, donations, memorials, and proceeds from special events. The FBGF actively promotes awareness of the Gardens to Tampa Bay area residents and visitors. The FBGF values its’ ongoing partnership with the Master Gardeners on mutually beneficial FBG projects. Please consider giving some of your time, or talents, or treasure to the Foundation. Let’s work together to help the gardens grow.

- Join other MGs on the FBGF board that meets the second Monday (use to be the second Wednesday) at Extension from 9:10:30 AM. Visitors always welcome. The next meeting is Monday October 13.
- Join other MGs on a FBGF committee: Projects like the Children’s Trail, Inspiration Nook, and Holiday Garden Lights, Events, Membership, Development, and/or Grounds.
- Join other MGs as members of the FBGF or re-new your annual FBGF Membership at any level from Student ($10) to Garden Stewart ($500) and enjoy the benefits of membership including free admissions to Gardens in the southeast USA. (New Master Gardeners received a free membership to the Foundation).
- Shop in the Botanical Bounty gift shop (members get a 10% discount) for yourself or for a unique gift for family or friends.
- Give a gift of FBGF membership (individual for $30 and family at $50) for a special event or just to say ‘thinking of you’…who needs more stuff.
- Donate as little as $10 to the FBGF Tree Bank* to help us plant more unusual specimens and replace those plants lost by aging and weather extremes.
- Honor a special person or remember a lost loved one with the purchase of an engraved paver* for $100 for placement in the shade garden.
- Memorialize a unique someone with a bronze leaf on the “Botanic Omega” sculpted tree* hanging in the extension lobby for a $1000 or more donation.
- Drop loose change or a few bucks in the DONATION box in the extension lobby on every garden visit as admission is free.

* You will find membership forms, envelopes for Lights donations and donation forms for the Tree Bank, Pavers, and Bronze leaves in the wooden stand outside the gift shop. You can make a credit card donation at the gift shop.

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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ASSISTANT EDITOR: Carrie Shelby, MG

Please send articles to cascaffidi@juno.com or pwbrown@co.pinellas.fl.us

The Green Leaf is available online by clicking on newsletter 2 at: http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/master_gardener/index.shtml
Farewell to Bob Weil, a Fellow Master Gardener, Neighbor and Friend
By DORIS HEITZMANN, Florida Yards & Neighborhoods - Community Outreach Coordinator

More than eight years ago, a few days after my husband and I had moved to a new neighborhood, Bob Weil, one of my new neighbors came over and introduced himself. Not only was he kind enough offering his help and needed tools, but also sharing his gardening knowledge with me. From him I learned about the Extension Service and the Master Gardener Program he had been involved with since 1996. He was raving about the Horticulturists and fellow Master Gardeners he was working with and learning so much from. Growing up on a farm in Pennsylvania he was experienced in vegetable gardening and he was also an excellent carpenter. Bob enjoyed working with Allen Cordell in the herb garden, building wood structures and sharing his farming and gardening expertise. Bob has also worked with Master Gardener James Blackwell in the victory garden in Heritage Village. The last years Bob preferred staying closer to home and started volunteering in the gardens of the Science Center.

Inspired by Bob, a few months after he had told me about the Master Gardener program, I was enrolled in the 2001 Master Gardener class. Shortly thereafter I began volunteering with Bob Weil and Marsha Williams, a Master Gardener from the 1999 class, at the Science Center. Every Tuesday morning the three of us would meet there to plant, prune, weed, fertilize or mulch but also to learn and, last but not least, having fun together. Bob as the senior Master Gardener and the oldest between the three of us, would call me, the new kid on the block, "kiddo". Bob would let us "ladies" pick a chore that we liked such as pruning and planting while he took care of the more physical and technical duties such as irrigation installation and repairs. Mulching was a team effort, Bob was loading and unloading the mulch on and off his truck, Marsha and I were spreading it.

One day, however, Bob was loading logs from a tree he had taken down, onto his truck. Marsha and I, eager to help, were wrestling a heavy log together, trying to throw it on the bed of Bob’s truck. The next thing we heard was the sound of breaking glass. Marsha and I had thrown the log straight through the rear window of his truck. Bob, always a good sport, cleaned up the shards in the truck cabin while cracking a joke about our "unusual loading technique", explaining to us how to properly load a truck and went on with what he was doing. He took care of the broken truck window without complaining. Fair enough, he kept teasing Marsha and me about the "log throwing" whenever there was an opportunity.

Bob was also very much into recycling: He knew how keen I was using oak leaves and pine needles for mulch to build up soil in my sandy back yard. Every time he had raked up oak leaves or pine needles at his or a neighbor’s yard he brought them over to me, wheelbarrow by wheelbarrow, year after year. Like me, he could not discard plants or cuttings. Therefore, we kept exchanging cuttings and plant seedlings over the years.

Early this year Bob was diagnosed with cancer. Undergoing treatment he could not work in his yard or go to the Science Center any longer. When I visited him we talked about gardening, my job at Extension and all the people he knew and appreciated there. He always showed interest in what I was up to in the world of gardening. The last time I saw him was a week before he died. Until then he had not lost his sense of humor and his positive demeanor.

Bob Weil passed away on September 7. He will always be remembered as a caring, warm and helpful friend and neighbor, a skilled and curious Master Gardener and a wonderful teacher with a great sense of humor and a heart of gold.

Without exaggeration I can say that Bob was one of the few people I have met in my life who was a truly happy person and was very satisfied and grateful for his life’s path. His love for his wife and family and his passion for gardening might have been his recipe. Everybody who knew him will miss him dearly. ■
Plant of the Month in our FBG
By JAMES STEVENSON, Public Education Specialist, FBG

Sunshine Mimosa - Mimosa strigillosa

Frequent visitors to the Pinellas County Extension and Florida Botanical Gardens Visitor Center this summer have had the opportunity to see the rapid and lush growth of a new planting of Sunshine Mimosa in the twin beds at the head of the entrance walkway. Summer mornings were the perfect time to admire the pink pom-pom inflorescences held above the delicate ferny foliage. Bumblebees and other native pollinators were busy collecting pollen or nectar from these conical feeding stations.

Sunshine Mimosa is being touted as a drought-resistant, native groundcover and as an alternative or addition to lawn areas. The fast-growing, horizontal stems root as they go, stabilizing the soil and eventually providing a thick, weed-suppressing mat.

As a member of the legume family, Fabaceae, Sunshine Mimosa has the ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen into compounds that are eventually available for plants as nutrient (Nitrates). This ability is facilitated by special bacteria that inhabit nodules in the roots of many legumes. The waste products of the bacteria (Ammonia and Ammonium) are broken-down by other processes in the soil and end up as available nitrogen, which is, of course, a very important plant nutrient.

Meanwhile back on the surface…

Many are familiar with the ability of the mimosa to "move" or close its leaves when touched. This fascinating adaptation may have several benefits for this denizen of hot, dry places in the extreme south-east US. The movement (which is called nyctinasty) is controlled at the intersection of each leaflet with the main leaf vein (rachis.) A swollen area there called the pulvinus (from the Latin for "little pillow) contains the chemistry that allows such a swift movement in response to one or more stimuli. When touched lightly the plant will respond slowly. If strongly stimulated, the leaflets will fold much more quickly. Perhaps it is the stimulus of heat that explains this movement. As the temperature increases, this stimulus has the same effect. Therefore at the heat of the day, the leaflets can close-up, thus preventing sunburn and extreme water loss.

Other members of the legume family also possess leaf movement capabilities. Some fold their leaflets at night, again to prevent water loss at a time when the plant is not actively photosynthesizing.

Whatever the "reason" for this movement, it adds to the interest and beauty of a wonderful Florida native garden plant!

For more information, consult this UF/IFAS Fact Sheet: http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP343

NOTES FROM YOUR MG LIBRARY
Books on the Shelves
By ANGELA STRAIN, MG

With increasing interest in Native Plant species, you just might find yourself in need of a good reference book. You can find these titles in your MG Library.

- A Field Guide to Wildflowers, Peterson, 1968
- An Introduction to Wild flowers, Kieran
- Common Coastal Plants in Florida, Barnett, 1997
- Ecosystems of Florida, Myers, 1990
- Everglades Wildflowers, Hammer, 2002
- Florida Wild Flowers & Roadside Plants, Bell, 1982
- Flatwoods Plant Guide, Austin, 2003
- Florida Native Seed Production Manual, Pfaff, 2002
- Florida Plants for Wildlife, Huegel, 1995
- Florida Wetland Plants, Tobe, 1998
- Florida Wildflowers, Taylor, 1998
- Forest Trees of Florida, Lonnor, 1977
- Guide to Florida Wildflowers, Taylor, 1992
Dedication of the MG Deck Project
By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

The ribbon was cut for the long awaited completion of the MG deck project, conceived by Bob Albanese, on September 4th at Bob’s famous "PIG OUT". This event was in the tradition of the Thursday's group "PIG OUT" and was held on the new deck constructed south of the building near the entrance.

The goal was to have the deck finished by the grand opening of the Market in the Park and the Children’s Trail. After more than a frustrating year we made it!! Great job to everyone involved in this project. Special thanks go to Linda Alcorn’s talented husband Ed who took on this project gratis provided the engineering plans and supervised the construction (featured in the July Green Leaf). Also, special thanks to MGAA for approving the funding for this project and especially to two dedicated hammer and nails MGs that pounded away in the summer heat to get the deck finished on-time, Richard Berube and John Hood.

Above: Ed receiving an award from Bob for his great volunteer effort. Below: Enjoying the deck are Bob, Richard & Ed & Linda

Campus Sustainability Quarterly Update

Greetings! from the Campus Sustainability Committee. On September 4th, the Committee met for our third quarterly of 2008. Over the two years this committee has been in existence, we have heard from volunteers and others who have shown an interest in the projects this committee has been involved with. As a result, we would like to take this opportunity to inform readers of The Green Leaf of the September meeting “doings.”

A great deal of thanks is due to Andy Wilson, who bravely chaired this committee for the past year. Andy has now disappeared beneath an avalanche of paperwork, and has passed the mantle of chair to James Stevenson.

Our first order of business was to reiterate our statement of purpose. This committee exists:

- To evaluate projects and practices at Pinellas County Extension and the Florida Botanical Gardens
- To ensure the highest level of social, environmental and economic responsibility
- To make recommendations or, if requested, guidelines to PCE Administration for the implementation of these projects/practices.

We then discussed various issues that face Extension employees and ways that might make green office practices easier. Energy conservation, waste reduction and recycling and a process to promote green meetings were topics discussed. Those present have various action items to pursue before the next meeting.

The next meeting will be December 4th, 2008 at 3:00PM in the Magnolia Room. We would like to extend a welcome to any of The Green Leaf readers (who are currently active Extension volunteers) to attend. We will be re-visiting the green office topics as well as discussing any project proposals that may arrive before December 4th.

The committee members include: Bob Albanese, Vestina Crayton, Jean Field, Jane Morse and Jeanne Murphy and is chaired by James Stevenson. Absent members on the 4th were: Dale Armstrong, Raylena Cather, Gillian Crippen, Spencer Curtis and Jean Rogalsky.
ECUADOR, THE ROAD SHOW
By JUDE BAGATTI, MG

SCENARIO: In the role of adventurer in my long-running play about world wandering, discovery is the thing. While terrain and climate form the backdrop, and culture, the set, flora, fauna and food are onstage characters in most of my theaters of travel. Dialogue in this summer’s script called for learning lines in Spanish. Exploring Ecuador for a month gave me a good feel for the country’s energy and spirit, due partly to staying in private homes, and largely, to my roaming curiosity. I looked into shifting shamanic eyes, and deep into comic/tragic faces of its hustling actors, and its poor, but giving audiences in the cheap seats.

STAGE & PROPS: Geographically, Ecuador has it all: the Amazon, the Andes, beaches, hot springs, rain forests, deserts and volcanoes, including the active Siera Negro with its seven-mile wide crater, second largest in the world. And, of course, the Galapagos Islands dot the Pacific, 600-plus miles off Ecuador’s west coast. In Quito, the capital, a huge monument marks the “Middle of the World” where the equator divides north and south hemispheres, and where it is obligatory to take a photo straddling that line. But the real/Latitude 00 degrees, 0’ 00" is now calculated by the Global Positioning System to be several hundred yards away at the newer, intriguing site of Inti-Nan Solar Museum. There, I balanced an egg on a nail head, studied an authentic shrunken head, and shed weight due to gravity’s more feeble pull at earth’s equatorial bulge.

FLORA: Gardens, parks and preserves held botanical treats. Familiar bromeliads, hibiscus, heliconia, frangi pangi, ixora, lipstick, shrimp plants, and coconut palms greeted me like old friends. But Ecuador’s flora all seemed more robust in size and color. At a bio-preserve in Pujo, tree trunks were costumed with fabulous, miniscule orchids, invisible without a loop lens. In Guayaquil’s Historic Park, I examined pale greenish, potato-like noni fruits, whose juice is sold expensively in health stores. I snickered at a yellow, pepper-like fruit, called tete de vaca, or cow’s teat, which with its multiple fingers, did resemble udders. I craned my neck at cocoa, rubber and 30-foot cactus trees, and sniffed cinnamon and garlic tree leaves. I was surprised to see perennial peanut, my favorite ground cover, and noticed crow-like birds eating its yellow blossoms.

INTERMISSION: Mid-trip, I joined the 2nd Annual International Biodiversity Conference in Banos, on the banks of Rio Pastaza, a major Amazon tributary. The charming town of 30,000 is named for its natural hot mineral baths. Sponsored in part by Wild Spot Foundation, led by a Nova University professor, the cast spoke of habitat loss, manatees, soil fungus, reptiles, amphibians and reforesting on volcanoes, and much more. I luxuriated, immersed in facts and hot water.

FAUNA: Africa touts its Big Five must-see animals: lion, rhino, leopard, buffalo and elephant. Galapagos has its own Famous Five: tortoise, sea lion, blue-footed booby, marine iguana, and a renowned variety of finches. I got eye-to-eye with 100-year-old tortoises, snorkeled with sea lions, a sting ray and schools of tropical fish, watched skittering black iguanas camouflaged amid black lava fields, and tried filming the startling, blue webbed-feet of boobies. Finches flit everywhere. Even on the mainland, yellow-orange saffron finches cavorted in trees as I walked a dusty street.

Above me at one remote island beach, six frigate birds swooped while I examined a squirting sea worm, urchins, starfish and crabs. Off a dirt road, a red vermilion flycatcher was spotlighted vividly against green foliage. I spied a wimbrel, hummingbirds, canaries, flamingos and many of our Florida water birds. A Birds of Ecuador book helped me identify bananaquits, blue-gray tanagers, swifts, golondrinas, Southern yellow grosbeaks, the Pacific hornero, and gorgeous, long-tailed, mockingbirds. And the fireflies! lots of them, as though the brilliant canopy of twinkling stars had fallen to earth.

FOOD: My friends, former Peace Corps workers, have a small farm in Vilcabamba, in southernmost Ecuador. This funky town, noted for the longevity and quirkiness of its inhabitants, has a serious cadre of organic growers. We harvested coffee beans, (red when ready),
Ecuador, the Road Show - continued.

and picked thimbleberries. Juices, such as watermelon, tangerine, strawberry, tomatillo, or mora (a small, round, red fruit), or a mix of them, are standard at Ecuadorian meals. Fruit is a staple. I devoured bananas, avocados, carambolas, papapas, blackberries, ovilla, and granadilla, whose crunchy edible seeds are sucked out of a white pulp.

Lunch, between noon and 2:00 pm, is the main meal, starting with soup. A soup lover, I relished all, including pumpkin, seafood, veggie/chicken, and cheese/spinach soups. I gobbled bacalao, corn-on-a-stick with grated cheese, yucca bread, lobster tails, yellowtail tuna, and ceviche made with wahoo caught on a fishing boat I was aboard that day. Horchata, a blend of herbs for tea, lent aromatic airs, and a flavorful exotic fruit liqueur, "The Spirit of Ecuador," topped desserts, or was sipped with coffee.

THE REVIEW: Thumbs up! I generally lose a few pounds while traveling, and return pleased with my flatter belly. Not this time. Despite hiking, climbing, horseback riding, snorkeling in the cool Pacific, and soaking in hot springs, the offerings were just too abundant and healthy to pass up. "Pero, ique." (But, so what.) I did have my moment of triumph. On the equator I was a svelte 118!

heyjudebagatti@msn.com for info.

Farewell Party for Extension Staff Personnel
BY CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

This is the first time we used the new deck for a party since the opening on September 4. It was a sad occasion, but an enjoyable one to hold in this new up-lifting area. Thanks to all Staff and MG attendees especially for bringing their favorite dishes (food). Michael Pettay will be heading south October 3 to work for Selby Gardens, lucky them. Jeanne Murphy, as everyone must know by now, will be using her Naturalist talents in a business with her husband, Daniel Archuleta after spending 2 yrs in maintenance at Extension is moving on to maintenance at County Utilities (Bob J will miss him dearly), Patricia Neary was on grant funding for several years and will be working for a Children's Tutoring Co. and Carol Bilbrey who we all know and love for so many years leaves Sept 30 to work for Logan Labs at Utilities. All will be missed.

Following are some shots taken at the party:
**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- MG Advisory Association
- MG Update Meeting
- T-Shirt Sales
- Proposed Field Trip
- Composting Workshop
- Volunteer Hours Sign in
- Update on the Children's Trail
- MG Conference

**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 want to thank all MGAA members for continuing to support all suggestions for liquidating our funds. I still plan to announce a November meeting to review what we have spent to-date. Also, if we have a sufficient balance after all our expenses are paid, then we can decide what other worthy causes to support. Send your suggestions to me and I will create a list for everyone's review.

  Minutes for the September Board meeting were distributed to all.

  **Next Board Meeting November. Date to be announced.**

- **MG Update Wednesday, October 8 at 9:30AM - 3:30PM**
  
  Once again, the update falls on the same date as one of the MG class training dates. We are offering this training day as the update since it involves presentations by three UF/IFAS professors. The schedule of presentations follows:

  9:30 – 11:30 Florida Lawns – Laurie Trenholm, PhD
  11:30 – 12 Lunch on your own
  12 – 1 Turf and Ornamental Insect Pests – Eileen Buss, PhD
  1 – 2 Turf and Ornamental Diseases – Phil Harmon, PhD
  
  There will be some ID specimens with Andy after the lectures. Pam will be out of the office this day for a District Faculty meeting.

- **Proposed Field Trip**
  
  The Education Committee sub-committee for Field trips has been working hard for all of you. After our asking the membership for locations for our next field trip, we were able to investigate all of the suggestions. Our next field trip will be November 18, 2008. We will be leaving at 6:30 A.M. for ECHO and the Edison House. Both are located in the Fort Myers area. Lunch is at your expense. The Education Committee will post a sign up sheet in the volunteer office beginning the second week in October.

- **T-Shirt Sales on Sale Until Noon on October 21**
  
  MGAA is selling T-shirts and polo shirts with the IFAS Master Gardener logo. The order forms plus a display of styles and colors will be in the volunteer office at Extension. Shirts will be delivered back to the office by early November for pick up. All items are prepaid. No orders will be taken without a check, cash or money order. All sales are final. Members of the class of 2008 who have 25 volunteer hours have the approval of the board of a $15.00 discount on their order. Those who do not have the 25 hours may still order shirts but without a discount.

  **Remember deadline for all shirt orders is noon October 21**

- **New Season Brings Change! Greetings from Botanical Bounty!**

  The FBG Foundation would like to welcome the new Master Gardener class! We have all your supplies: shears, gloves, hats, books and more, to keep you comfortably outfitted as you earn your certificate. We'll be changing our schedule for the season which will begin here on November 1: Tuesday thru Saturday. We’ll have more volunteers on board to extend hours as available. Speaking of change, we've got lots of new items: evening bags, jewelry, new books, new tees, as well as many new gifts for children. Stop by and see us!
■ **Volunteer Opportunities & Events**

**For October & November**

- **Native Plant Landscape Tour**
- **Florida Yards & Neighborhood Garden Tours**
- **Compost & Vegetable Beds**

**Update from Children’s Trail Committee Meeting**

The Children’s Trail will officially open on November 1, 2008. The public is invited to a 10AM opening on the new deck, and Vivian Haicken will welcome guests, followed by a butterfly release at 10:15AM. There will be activities for kids at all four stations.

- Children's Trail brochures available.
- Binoculars ready for installation.
- Signs to be installed by November 1. Bob may clear a day and ask for volunteers to help, probably a Monday or Friday.
- Publicity planned using various media: TV, radio and print.

**The next meeting will be Monday, October 6 at 10AM.**

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

■ **28th ANNUAL MG Continued Training Conference**

**Monday, October 20– Wednesday, October 22**

**Coral Springs Marriott Hotel, Golf Club & Convention Center**

This year’s conference is in the Ft. Lauderdale area, at the Marriott Coral Springs Hotel. A great program has been put together. Visit the website to view the agenda and to get registration information.


■ **Help Needed!**

"DIG IT," a new afternoon program offered by Resurrection House, is soon opening for middle- and high-school age students. Seeking Master Gardeners and those who enjoy gardening and working with kids. The goal is to teach organic flower gardening as a tool for improving skills for life. Want to learn more?

- Contact Glen Walker, Program Director, at 727- 822-1460 or (727) 823-4742. Resurrection House is located at 800 Eleventh Street North, St. Petersburg. Its mission is "helping families help themselves."

■ **Volunteers Needed for Garden Tour**

**Saturday, October 18, 9AM –3PM**

Florida Friendly Yards and Neighborhoods is looking for 4 volunteers to register visitors for the mid-county garden tours. Tour participants self-drive to addresses provided at registration sites. The tours are design for participants to meet and speak with homeowners who create and maintain beautiful gardens using sustainable practices.

Contact Wilma Holley at 727-582-2672 or wholley@pinellascounty.org

■ **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!
I am fielding a lot of questions lately about my retirement. Unless something very drastic happens, I will retire sometime in March of 2009. I do not know the exact date as yet. It is not something that I take lightly. I am not retiring because of changes in the budget or other changes here at Extension. Extension has challenges and changes to deal with, and change is always hard. But Extension will survive. My retirement is something that my husband and I have discussed and he is really encouraging me to retire – he has been retired for the last eight years. This job is very time intense and I do not get to spend as much time with Bill as I would like. That being said – this is the best job that I have ever had. I wish that I had found horticulture and Extension earlier in my career life. This is the best group of people and volunteers to work with. And, I can always volunteer with you guys.

Carol needs to have a listing of all of the Master Gardeners who give educational presentations, what topics you speak about and where in the county you are willing to go. We are getting many requests for presentations and many of you are excellent presenters. If you are willing to go out to various locations for presentations, please send the above mentioned information to Carol at csuggs@pinellascounty.org or call her at 582-2124. We really appreciate your participation.

The new Master Gardener Training class is moving along nicely. The students have been spending time at the Lawn & Garden help desk learning lots of diagnostic information about plants and insects. Be sure to make them feel welcome when you see them here at Extension.

Many of you may have heard that Michael Pettay has resigned and will be moving on to work at Selby Gardens. He is excited about this new venture. His last day is October 3. He has been such an asset to Extension and we will certainly miss his expertise and his special sense of humor. If you are here before he leaves, remember to tell him good by. We wish him all the best in this new endeavor.

Remember that we here at Extension appreciate all that you do. Your generous expenditure of time volunteering to further our educational mission is so valuable, especially now that the number of horticulturists is dwindling. Thank you for every minute that you spend on our behalf!

Do you think that it might be getting a tad cooler?
International Master Gardener Conference
"New Frontiers" in Horticulture and Gardening -March 22-26, 2009

Spring in the desert is an incredible time. Native plants, flowering in yellow, orange and red, really put on a show.

Tours to the Master Gardener Orchard and to the exciting, new Springs Preserve where you can see sustainable, low water concepts at work. The University of Nevada Master Gardener Orchard is an outdoor living laboratory testing different types and varieties of fruit and vegetables. It demonstrates how to grow the best fruit possible, with minimal agricultural chemicals, under our harsh desert climate. The orchard today has over 500 trees, wine and table grapes, and vegetable test plots on a little over an acre.

Master Gardener Costa Rica Trip 2009
Costa Rica has some of the most diverse wildlife and natural landscapes in the world, ranging from tidal mangrove swamps to sandy beaches, to tropical rainforests to subalpine mountains. Florida Master Gardeners traveled to Costa Rica in 2004; they had such a wonderful experience, they decided to go back.

Date: April 22 through May 3 (12 days/11 nights)
Itinerary: See the full list of activities here. http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/tours/costa09_2.shtml

2008 October

WEND, OCT 8, 9AM-3:30PM
Involves presentations by three UF/IFAS professors. The schedule of presentations follows:
9:30 – 11:30 Florida Lawns – Laurie Trenholm, PhD
11:30 – 12 Lunch on your own
12 – 1 Turf and Ornamental Insect Pests – Eileen Buss, PhD
1 – 2 Turf and Ornamental Diseases – Phil Harmon, PhD

SAT, OCT 11, 9-10:30AM
- Rain Barrel Workshop at Extension

For details on some of the events listed go to the calendar on the Pinellas County Extension Lawn & Garden website. http://www.pinellascounty.org/scripts/publish/webevent.pl?cmd=opencal&cal=cal6

SAT, OCT 18, 9AM-3PM
- Garden Tours of Florida Friendly Yards in Mid Pinellas County.
- 28th ANNUAL MG Continued Training Conference
Monday, October 20– Wednesday, October 22
Coral Springs Marriott Hotel, Golf Club & Convention Center http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/gardener/index.html
Reminder

MG Update Meeting
Wednesday, October 8, 9:30AM-3:30PM