MGAA Donates to Horticulture Department Budget
By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MGAA Chair

To help support the Pinellas County Extension during this time of budget austerity, MGAA agreed to supplement the Horticulture Department budget with a donation of $10,000 towards their FY 09/10 operating budget. A donation agreement was executed with the County Administrator and is available in the volunteer office for your perusal along with the policy that governs donated funds with the County.

The members of MGAA should feel proud that the contribution you made will help alleviate the current critical money situation at Extension. Hopefully it will be resolved in future years, as we can continue to be proud of our participation as volunteers in the exceptional MG educational programs and projects in the Horticulture Department.

Dear Master Gardeners,

I really appreciate your willingness to donate $10,000 of the money you earned from plant sales to the Horticulture Department operating budget for Fiscal Year 2009 that begins October 1, 2008. I recognize the hard work and sweat equity that went into the propagation and care of the plants, along with the tremendous amount of time and energy expended leading up to and during the plant sales. Your generosity helps keep the Horticulture Department viable in these difficult budget times.

Thank you so much for this donation and the continued contribution of so much of your time and energy as volunteers. We could not do it without you.

Sincerely,

Pam Brown
UF/IFAS Pinellas County Master Gardener Coordinator
Natural Resources Program Leader

Pictured left to right - Chuck Scaffidi, MGAA Chair, Pam Brown, County Extension Agent, and Linda Barnette, MGAA Treasurer presenting check to Pam.
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

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_A A Fond Farewell to Allen Cordell_

On Thursday August 21, Allen’s friends gathered together to honor his retirement from Pinellas County Extension. Co-workers past and present, Master Gardeners and other volunteers were present to say farewell to the "king of herbs and vegetables". Allen’s wife Esther attended, and shared in the warmth and fun of the Extension camaraderie.

Jean Field and Cindy Peacock did a superb job of coordinating the event. Live music played softly in the background while guests took turns at the microphone sharing their happy memories of working with Allen. Many mentioned Allen’s gift for providing richly, detailed responses where the listeners would learn more than ever anticipated. An assortment of stories was shared, offering a fine tribute to Allen’s skills as an educator and horticulturist: a man who cares about people and truly wants to help by enriching their lives through gardening, whether it is for the crop that can be harvested, the beauty in the garden that can be enjoyed or the serenity that nature can provide.

Best wishes to Allen!

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_Above - Cindy Peacock, Allen Cordell & Jean Field_

_To the left- Allen_

_Below - Cindy & Jean present the group’s gift that will support Allen’s future projects- a digital camera with accessories._
Esther & Allen Cordell

The Herb Garden Gang - Ruth, Cheryl, Allen, Dave and Marian

Mary Campbell & the "King of Herbs & Vegetables"

Stan DeFreitas

Esther & Allen Cordell

Ruth Davies
Five Native Beauties for Late Summer Color

Florida native wildflowers are in perfect synch with the seasonal changes unique to our state. Mid-late summer heat, humidity, and afternoon storms (often torrential) can lay waste to plants from other, more stable climates. This is one reason we advocate using Florida native plants in the landscape. They are pre-adapted to our weather. For color in the summer landscape, consider the following; five (of many) selected for ease of cultivation and high beauty-quotient.

**HORSEMINT - Monarda punctata**

This tall perennial (returning every year from persistent roots) produces lovely tiers of pale pink bracts (showy leaves often associated with flowers) beneath the spotted, tubular flowers. Once established, you will have enough stems to create a fascinating flower arrangement—this plant has already done all the work, producing intricate details on each spike. This plant is found naturally in seasonally moist areas. A garden receiving average irrigation should suit this plant just fine. Slowly spreading to form a clump, you may wish to plant this one so you can brush past the leaves; being a relative of mint, though not a true mint, the leaves produce a spicy aroma when handled.

**STARRY ROSINWEED - Silphium asteriscus**

Unfortunately, when many wildflowers are bestowed a “common” name, that name might often be misleading or downright insulting! Rosinweed certainly does not deserve the “weed” part of its common name. This stately perennial produces thick, drought-resistant foliage close to the ground, then in summer long, slender two-foot stems support large (to 3”) buttery-yellow sunflowers, beloved of butterflies and other native pollinators alike. Adapted to the Pine Flatwoods habitat, this native is found along the entire west coast of Florida (except for counties south of Lee) and into the panhandle.

**BEACH SUNFLOWER - Helianthus debilis**

Visitors to some of Pinellas County’s restored dune habitats may be familiar with this tough plant. Growing in pure sand is testimony to the drought tolerance which belies this perennial’s refined beauty. Throughout the summer and well into fall, hundreds of 2” black-eyed sunflowers are produced in a glowing shade of deep, orange-yellow. It will rest through the dry season (winter), but returns every year after producing a seed crop advantaged by migrating songbirds.
**SCORPIONS TAIL - *Heliotropium angiospermum***

Another unfortunate common name, fear not! this evergreen perennial will not sting you! The interesting clusters of bright white flowers are produced on a coiled stem, resembling (to someone, anyway) the coiled tail of the spider's kin. This plant attracts an endless parade of fascinating insects, including one of Florida's smallest butterfly species, the gorgeous Ceraunus Blue (*Hemiargus ceraunus*).

**FLORIDA GREENEYES - *Berlandiera subacaulis***

For smaller gardens, this low-growing perennial delights us with pale yellow flowers on slender stalks only growing to 10” tall. Each creamy-yellow flower cluster included a greenish center, giving it its common name greeneyes. Another denizen of Flatwoods, this plant is drought tolerant and takes the winter off to avoid the dry season.

For more information on these plants and their uses in the landscape, refer to the following University of Florida Fact Sheets:

- HORSEMINT - [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FP413](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FP413)
- STARRY ROSINWEED - [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW057](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW057)
- BEACH SUNFLOWER - [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FP245](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FP245)
- SCORPIONS TAIL - [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG035](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG035)

**Master Gardener in the News**

Great publicity for Florida Botanical Gardens and Master Gardener Jessica Foster. Jessica was featured in the Sunday, August 24 edition of the St Petersburg Times in, “5 questions with Artist and Master Gardener Jessica Foster”. Jessica has completed the 200 square foot mural in the tropical fruit garden. The mural is on the northwest corner of the property, directly behind the Pinellas County Extension.

Way to go—Jessica!

Link to Article:

Featured photo from the St. Petersburg Times of Jessica Foster, MG, in front of her mural in the tropical fruit garden.
**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.

**Next Board Meeting, Monday, September 15 at noon**, brown bag lunch. Agenda item—vote to approve funding for MG field trip.

**September MG Update**

**Monday, Sept 15 at 9:30AM -3:30PM**

**Citrus 101.** Steve Futch, PhD UF Citrus Specialist, will be presenting citrus culture, variety and diseases in the Magnolia Room. Get hands on training with assorted specimens. This is part of this year's MG training and all MGs are invited. This takes the place of the September 8 update.

**Don't forget - bring in your plants for the Plant Exchange!** These exchanges have been very successful and we plan to continue them.

**Proposed Field Trip**

This trip is pending board approval. The Education Committee has proposed a tentative field trip by bus to the Fort Myers area to visit Echo Farms and the Edison House. The proposed date is **Monday, November 17, 2008**. There will be a tentative sign up sheet in the office. The first sign up sheet is for MGAA members. The second sheet is a reserve sheet which will be used for the new class of 2008. New class members are invited to attend but only after all regular members have signed up. Any left over seats will be available to those on the reserve list selected by lottery method. The sign up sheets will be available in the office after September 10, and remain there until the board meeting in early November.

**T-Shirt Sales**

MGAA is selling T-shirts and polo shirts with the IFAS Master Gardener logo. T-shirts run $7-10 and polo shirts are $15-20. The order forms plus a display of styles and colors will be in the volunteer office at Extension after September 10. Shirts will be delivered back to the office by November 10 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.

**An Invitation from Bob Albanese**

**Thursday, September 4- GRAND OPENING/COMPLETION PIG OUT** for the new deck near the entrance. Stop by for a bit and bring a dish or dessert to share (or not). Sign up sheet is in the employee lounge to the right of the candy machine. **Starts around 11:30ish and continues till we cannot eat any more.** There will be a charcoal BBQ available if you want to bring something to cook on the grill. Hope to see you there! This is a rain or shine event! (Magnolia Room reserved in case of rain.)

**Free Composting Class**

Come learn from MG John Kingsbury in this free *Composting Happens Workshop.* On **Saturday, September 27 at 10AM**, at the Crystal Beach Community Hall, 517 Crystal Beach Ave., located in Crystal Beach. Parking is available in front of the Community Hall and also across the street. Admission is free, but space is limited. Call (727) 582-2673 to reserve a seat.
Volunteer Opportunities & Events

For September & October

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

Update from Children’s Trail Committee Meeting
Great progress has been made in a number of areas. Plans are underway for a Grand Opening to coincide with the opening of Market in the Park on November 1st. Stay tuned for more details!

Next meeting: Monday, September 8, 10:30-12pm 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.

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.

http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/gardener/index.html

Volunteers Needed for Second Annual Native Plant Landscape Tour
Pam has approved this for MG volunteer hours. The Florida Native Plant Society – Pinellas Chapter is looking for MGs to help with the native plant landscape tour. This year there will be two tours.

- The south county tour will have 8 yards and will be on Saturday, September 20th from 8 am – 12:30 pm.
- The north county tour will have 6 yards and will be on Sunday, September 21st. from 1 – 4 pm.

MGs can help at one of these half-day tours (or both). Help needed for answering questions about native plants, the particular landscape that you are assigned, and to educate tour participants about the benefits of using Florida native plants in home landscapes. If you are interested in helping with the tour or would like more information, please contact Jim McGinity at 727 733-2928.

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!
SAFETY NET

By PAM BROWN, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent

It is wonderful to get kids interested in gardening. Give them a packet of seeds and a little spot of their own, show them what to do and watch the magic happen. Spending time in the landscape with children, especially young ones, requires adults to pay careful attention, though.

- Never leave a toddler or young child outdoors unattended.
- Teach your children never to eat any plant unless an adult is supervising.
- Make sure that poison ivy is not allowed to grow in your landscape.
- Do not allow children to eat soil from the garden.
- Check for plants with spiny leaves or thorns – such as cactuses, roses, yucca, hollies or pyracantha.
- Be careful with sharp tools and discuss with your children which tools are safe for them to use.
- Purchase tools specially made for children and properly sized for them to use.
- Be cautious with garden pesticides, be sure to store them in locked cabinets in their original containers.
- Always wash hands after gardening and use antiseptics on cuts or scrapes.

Source: http://lsuagcenter.com/

SAFETY NET

By PAM BROWN, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent

As you read this – I will probably be in Alaska enjoying the scenery and cool weather. I will return to work on September 8th renewed and revived.

Please remember – the September Master Gardener Update will be held on September 15th this month so that we can take advantage of having Steve Futch, PhD presenting to the MG training class. He is a Citrus Specialist with the University of Florida. He will be presenting all things Citrus. He plans to bring lots of hands on examples of citrus insect, disease and nutritional problems. This is a great opportunity to hear him in person.

We are coming to the end of summer this month – but not an end to hurricane season or the heat and humidity. The Extension office follows the Pinellas County schools with regards to closings for hurricanes. If you do not hear from us and the schools are closed for a storm – we will be closed also. We rescheduled the MG training class that was scheduled for Wednesday Aug 20th since Tropical Storm Fay was so unpredictable. It is great that it ended up a non-event for us.

We continue to be so appreciative of all the many hours that each of you put in volunteering for our Extension mission. Some very visible items to note from recently – The deck by the front entrance is completed. I believe I saw John Hood and Dick Berube, along with Linda Alcorne's husband Ed out there every day for a month or more. Ed was our volunteer contractor. It is so nice to walk out on the deck – it gives you a whole different perspective of that whole area. Thank each of you who were involved and MGAA for the money that funded the deck. Another project completed is the mural that our very talented Jessica Foster created on the wall at the back of the Tropical Fruit Garden. If you have not seen it, you must. It is truly a wonderful work of art. Thank you Jessica for the time you spent and your talent in creating this for the garden. We really do appreciate all of you who are spending time in the heat and humidity out in the gardens weeding and pruning and planting. The gardens have never looked better. Those who have been on educational missions are also appreciated. As our staff shrinks, those presenting educational programs and learning to identify and diagnose at the help desk or providing office support are becoming more and more important. Thank you from the bottoms of our hearts!

♥ Pam

Master Gardeners Advisory Association is registered on GoodSearch. MGAA receives a direct donation every time supporters use GoodSearch to search the Internet! Please go to www.goodsearch.com. At about 1 cent a hit, GoodSearch is earning MGAA money. We have earned $21 since inception. Come on, join in and try this search engine. Most of you probably use Google. Yahoo's search engine also seems to be adequate. The first time you use it you need to sign in as “Master Gardener Advisory Association”. If you need help call Chuck at 727-582-2117.
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.

You can register on line. Please visit the website for more information: www.unce.unr.edu/imgc

2008 September

**TUES, SEPT 9 & 23, 6:30-9PM**
- Florida Style Gardening Series at Extension

**MON, SEPT 15, 9AM-3:30PM**
- MG Update Citrus 101 at Extension

Hands on training. Part of this year’s MG training and all MGs are invited. This takes the place of the September 8 update.

**SAT, SEPT 27, 10AM**
- Composting Class at Crystal Beach Community Hall

**Looking Ahead!**

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

**SAT, OCT 18, 9AM-3PM**
- Garden Tours of Florida Friendly Yards in Mid Pinellas County

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

Reminder

- MG Update Meeting
  Monday, September 15, 9:30AM-3:30PM

Citrus 101—a special opportunity for all MGs to get hands on, all day training with the current MG class.

Steve Futch, PhD UF Citrus Specialist, will be presenting citrus culture, variety and diseases.