Strategies for Helping your Plants Through A Dry spell
by Jane Morse, U of F/IFAS Pinellas County Extension Agent

High temperatures along with drying winds and lack of rainfall are combining to make this a very tough spring for vegetation. We are currently in a La Niña weather pattern, which usually means drier-than-average conditions are more likely across the southern tier of the U.S. Unfortunately, this suggests the drought is likely to continue and we may not see good rains until May. Here are some things you can do to help your plants cope.

**Don’t mow.** Turf already under drought-stress will be even more stressed if mowed. The leaves of the grass support the root system. The shorter the grass is mowed, the shorter the root system. If you must mow, use the highest setting and make sure the blades are very sharp. A clean cut will cause less loss of water than a ragged cut.

**Don’t fertilize.** Fertilizing increases plants need for water. It also promotes new growth which is tender and cannot withstand drought.

**Do water deeply.** Apply ½ to ¾ inch of water to the landscape. This amount of water will penetrate 8-12 inches into the soil. When plants are watered deeply they develop a deep root system that is better able to withstand drought. Look for signs of wilt before watering again.

**Do use mulch.** Mulch helps to prevent water loss from the soil, decreases runoff, and moderates the soil temperature, thus keeping the ground cooler. Using organic mulch (such as pine bark or oak leaves) will improve the water- and nutrient-holding capacity of the soil and will even add nutrients to the soil as it breaks down. Keep mulch away from the trunks of plants and don’t cover the root ball with mulch. With large particle mulch, like pine bark, use enough to have about three inches deep after settling. Mulches that form a mat and don’t allow water to percolate through as easily, such as oak leaves, should be put down about one inch thick.

**Remove weeds.** Weeds compete with plants for water and nutrients. Hand pull weeds if possible. Herbicides don’t work as well when plants are under drought stress and are not actively growing. Mulching is a great way to suppress weeds and also makes it easier to pull out the weeds that do grow.

**Use plants that can tolerate our wet to dry weather extremes.** Replace plants that require lots of water with those that are drought tolerant. Try using native plants that have evolved with Florida’s weather extremes. Many are drought and flood tolerant. If water use becomes so restricted that landscape plant survival is in question, here are some drastic measures that can be done to save plants:

- Water only when plants start to wilt.
- Use mulch.
- Prune plants severely to reduce leaf area.
- Remove weak plants.
- Thin dense beds of plants to reduce competition among plants, pull out weeds.
- For Bahiagrass lawns, stop watering and allow the grass to go dormant. It will turn brown, but will recover well once the rains resume.

For more information about plants, contact your local University of Florida Extension. Our Lawn and Garden Help Desk is located at 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo and is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. We also have a Lawn and Garden Help Line which can be contacted at 727 582-2110 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. You can also visit our websites at www.AskExtension.org or www.PinellasCountyExtension.org.
BUDDING TREES MOON
March 21 - April 19

By Jude Bagatti, MG

In 1984, I set out from my Coconut Grove apartment, on what turned out to be a 13,000-mile, three month camping odyssey, roughly around the north, west and south circumference of our United States. It was a blue highway, open road trip with no time schedule or destination itinerary and with off-the-beaten-track jaunts into the interior on any whim. One anticipated stop was The Bear Tribe, 40 miles NW of Spokane, WA. Some time prior, Sun Bear, a Chippewa Indian teacher and the Tribe’s founder, had come to Miami accompanied by his wife and medicine helper, Wabun. I heard him talk and read their book, The Medicine Wheel.

Long before then, my abiding interest and affinity for Native American lore had moved me to participate in sweat lodges, medicine wheel and other ceremonies with various Florida groups. So it was, after extraordinary encounters, Indian and otherwise, in Montana, South Dakota and Idaho, I aimed west toward The Bear Tribe ranch in my trusty green, standard-shift, ’72 Tradesman 100 Dodge van, with “Intrepid Traveler” airbrushed on its hood. Just before reaching it, my mind quieted when I paused to study delicate Indian rock paintings protected with a fence put up by the state on land considered sacred.

A metal figure of a bear with the sun’s rays encircling its neck indicated I had found the tribal ranch. Sun Bear, who travels often, was not on the premises, but four dogs, three cats, kids and eight or ten adults were. My visit lasted the day. Accompanied by two large dogs, I explored the grounds with its sweat lodge, vegetable plots and variety of farm animals. Opting to be of service, I spent the afternoon sweeping and organizing the upper floor of the main structure with Mosha, Sun Bear’s longtime follower. After showering, we ate spaghetti and nut/fruit cake with the residents who cook and work the ranch and who hailed from various states and countries, including one girl from Germany.

Besides memories, what I came away with was a Medicine Wheel, a revolving chart, sort of an Indian version of astrology based not on the stars and far planets but on our own earth, moon and seasons. These earth astrology traditions I’d like to share as our year and moons progress, starting appropriately with the new beginnings of spring. Our current moon, the Budding Trees Moon, is one of the three moons of the East. I quote the Wheel:

“The Spirit Keeper for the Moons of the East is Wabun. The bird is the Eagle. The season is Spring. The time of day is the Dawn, and the colors are Red and Gold. The powers of the East are Illumination and Wisdom.

“The time we choose to be born determines the traits we begin with on our personal circle. It determines our elemental clan, those two-leggeds we complement, those with whom we are compatible and our special relations in the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms.

“Those born between March 21 and April 19 are the Red Hawk people. Their plant is Dandelion, their color is Yellow, their stone is the Fire Opal, and their elemental clan is the Thunderbird. Like the Hawk, these folks are quick to fly into things, or out of them. They can see clearly, but their comments, like talons, sometimes sting. They are far-seeing, energetic, independent, strong-willed, sincere and optimistic. Hawk people need to learn to have patience and to be more stable.

“Life goes in a circle, a medicine wheel. We humans are one part of the circle, but not the only part. The minerals, the plants, the people of the water, the winged ones, the four-leggeds, the spirit keepers, the powers of the directions, the times and the seasons are also parts of this great circle. We are their relatives and they are ours. Together we have been placed on our common Earth Mother to learn harmony with the Great Spirit, the Creator.”

AHO MITAKUYE OYASIN = WE ARE ALL RELATED

Comments/questions: heyjudebagatti@msn.com or 727-322-5211
Special Times as a Master Gardener Volunteer
A call for volunteers!

By Sally, Irvin MG

My name is Sally Ervin and I have been a certified Master Gardener for six years. I am also an LNS, which is short for Live Nursery Specialist, at Lowe’s. I have been with them for three years this coming March. I have had many experiences as a Master Gardener and Live Nursery Specialist.

One of the more fun things I do is on Saturdays at 10am I put on a plant clinic of some sort at least twice a month. It may be on lawn care, pests on your plants, or frost proofing your plants. Other times it may consist of growing fruit and citrus in Florida with recipes and how-to sheets. It’s all for the public and free. I send out e-mails to those who have signed up and let them know the times and subjects for the clinics and the MG’s visiting times.

At least twice a month on Saturdays, I have Master Gardeners Pam Delong and Sue Hamill come in and run an MG/IFAS Extension help table right out in my garden center in front of the fountains. They usually come from 10-12 or 10-2. I even have the customers now asking me when they will be in next. They have become a fixture in my garden center on Saturdays and we really appreciate them coming. They even get 10% off garden center purchases on the day they volunteer! News about the gardens and Extension also gets out to the public this way. It’s a win-win situation for the Extension and Lowes and especially the customers.

A few other perks I have as an LNS is that I get invited to the Great American Teach-In at schools once a year. This past November I went to an elementary school and talked about Poinsettias and the care of. The students and I also repotted a small poinsettia from the store pot to a larger pot which they took home and were proud to report to their parents that they repotted all by themselves! I also give 1/2 hour tours of the garden center to schools and preschools with a question and answer time and they all go home with a free plant!

This past May I was on channel 8 news being interviewed for the nitrogen ban during the summer months. Their goal was to get the knowledge out to the public and finding out that I was a Master Gardener was a plus in them choosing me for the spot on the news!

I also volunteer on Tuesdays in the Tropical Fruit Garden and occasionally in the herb garden. This past November and December I volunteered for the first time at Holiday Lights, which was amazing in itself.

Some of the more important parts of my professional job are ordering the correct amounts of plants and keeping a good variety on hand. I check for pests and disease almost daily and make sure they are protected from the cold when necessary. I help customers pick out the right plants for the right place in their yards so they will flourish. It is amazing how many people do not know to take the plant out of the pot before planting into their gardens and that just pruning or dead-heading can make all the difference for them. I have so many customers that say thank you to me and they are so grateful for what I tell them or help them with- this job is one of the best jobs I have ever had. To help others make their life more enjoyable with plants is what it’s all about. I talk to many of my customers about volunteering at the gardens and a lot of them come back in and tell me they went to walk the gardens and how beautiful it is there. Many a customer also went to see the lights and gave the event rave reviews. Since becoming a MG volunteer I have become more patient and knowledgeable about plants and gardening and I am in awe of all my MG friends who have continued to do it for many years, overcoming sickness and obstacles that would have kept most people away.

My Lowe’s is on Gulf to Bay by 19.

Please e-mail me at servin307@hotmail.com

Thanks, Sally
Urban Community Vegetable Garden Project is “Off the Ground”

By Ellen Mahany, MG

Plans for the urban community demonstration vegetable garden that began in the fall are now literally “off the ground” with harvests in some of the nine raised garden beds, each tended by a MG. This garden will serve as a demonstration garden for visitors as well as an educational component for community gardening training workshops.

This project began with the laborious transportation of 16 raised beds, formerly located along McKay Creek, to the site of the proposed vegetable garden at the west end of the Extension building. Next, these beds were prepped, irrigated, and filled with soil.

Several volunteers were indispensable in providing much-needed labor: John Best, John Hood, John Kingsbury, Ray Marshall, Ed McKenna, Dusty Purcell, and Frances Trahan. Bob Albanese was in charge of this project.

Some of the beds are being used for color display along the fence; the rest are reserved for vegetables. Despite the lateness of the season, well into November, a group of master gardeners volunteered and were each assigned one bed: Lois Archer, Rocio Bailey, Linda Barnette, Mary Chernesky, Pamela Delong, Ed McKenna, Ronna Rogers, Patsy Schamber, and Caterina Stillwagon.

A problem they soon discovered was that the soil was low in nitrogen. Two of the most successful gardens are those of Lois and Mary, who used “blue water,” a scoop of Miracle Grow in a bucket of water as a light application of fertilizer. Their tomatoes, red cabbage, green cabbage, lettuce, carrots, endive, onions, broccoli, banana and green peppers are thriving. Other gardeners hope to have more success next year when they plan to experiment with either organic fertilizer or Ed McKenna’s worm castings.

The best feature of this new garden is the raised beds. Rocio “Rosy” Bailey, who plans to coordinate the community garden goals for the demonstration garden, says that the several advantages of raised-bed gardening include the opportunity to choose soil conditions, to plant intensively without injuring plants by inadvertently trampling them, to amend particular plants, and to weed with more ease. Added to those benefits are inaccessibility to rabbits and some other hungry wildlife and the opportunity for physically challenged people to enjoy gardening.

The urban community vegetable garden is a project that will be in process for some time, according to Rocio. She lists as the purposes of the urban community garden these goals:

- Define rules for the community garden,
- Identify people for specific tasks with a different role for each participant,
- Decide how to use the produce for charity,
- Provide a couple of beds for employees at Florida Botanical gardens to harvest, possibly for healthy lunches/wellness programs.

Rocio says the eventual, ultimate goal is to share knowledge with the public by providing Master Gardeners as consultants for other community gardens.

There is much to anticipate. Meanwhile, a long hot summer will delay any plans for the coming hoped-for bountiful harvest.
Annual IFAS/Extension Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

The 2012 County awards for years of service were presented at the March 8 MG update. County Certificates and pins were awarded for those that did not attend the County Celebration. Awarded for years of service from 1 to 5 years, 5 to 10 years, 10 to 15 years, 15 to 20 years. MG, Donna Zacharczyk qualified for 20 – 25 years, and Sam Skemp for over 25 years. For those that missed both celebrations the certificates and pins are available in the volunteer office. Volunteer coordinator Chuck Scaffidi and MG volunteer coordinator agent Theresa Badurek presented the awards.

County 1 to 5 years

County 10 to 15 years

County 15 to 20

County 5 to 10 years

IFAS awards not Pictured:
- Jackie Anderson 10 years
- Ann Brown 10 years

IFAS 15 years
- Linda Barnette

IFAS 20 years
- Lillian Wolfinger

IFAS awards not Pictured:
- Pamela Carter 10 years
- Bernadette Christian 10 years

County 20-25 years
- Donna Zacharczyk

Continued next page
The luncheon followed the awards ceremony held outside in the Herb Garden. The luncheon was in a perfect setting for the surprise baby shower and appreciation luncheon for Theresa Badurek who is taking leave for having her baby due next month.

Photos Follow:

Pinellas County government is rolling out the RED CARPET to honor our STARS, all the volunteers who have graciously donated their time and talent.

You are invited to join this high-spirited event

April 17th, 2012
5 - 7pm
Pinellas County Extension * Magnolia Room
12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo

Join the Fun...
Optional to dress as your favorite olde-tyme character!
Hors d'oeuvres and refreshments served.

Seating is limited, so please RSVP
to (727) 464-VIPS (8477)
or mkvam@pinellascounty.org
by April 5, 2012

Remember to RSVP
Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation Update

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, FBG Foundation President

The next Foundation Board meeting is Wednesday April 11. You may attend a board meeting as a guest to get a better understanding of our organization and goals, hopefully you will choose to become a board member.

We are a month away from our May 6 Diggin’ the Arts event with a feeling of excitement. So, I would like to get you excited about volunteering that day, or attending and telling your friends and neighbors about it. Following is an article that briefly describes the plans for the participating arts organizations.

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, I am always happy to have a visit in the Volunteer Office or chat via email (escaffidi@co.pinellas.fl.us) or at 727-582-2117.

DIGGIN’ THE ARTS—A SHOWCASE AND CELEBRATION

By Pat Dieterich, MG

Our Gardens in spring glory—Pinellas County art entities sharing their expertise—an Opportunity Drawing for a decorated Rain Barrel—activities for children and adults—artists creating in the splendor of the Botanical Gardens—music—refreshments—vendors—WOW! Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 6, from 10 am to 4 pm, the premier of the Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation’s spring event, “Diggin’ the Arts”. We have always wanted to host an event that features the Gardens by daylight in a different season than the popular Holiday Lights, and here it is at last.

Barbara Goss reports the concept of “art in the Gardens” has been well-received. The Morean Arts Center, which includes the Center for Clay and the Chihuly Collection, will hold a class on how to make Botanical Sun Catchers, and demonstrate pottery making with artists from the Center for Clay. The Dunedin Fine Art Center will invite water color artists and potters. Florida Craftsman will bring the Crochet Coral Reef and participants will crochet new sections of the Reef. Leepa-Ratner Museum of Art has an Andy Warhol exhibition and will demonstrate “Warholizing” visitors. There will be a Plein Air Exhibit, inviting artists to come and paint in the open air. The artists are invited to bring their own equipment and paint any where in the Gardens, with first, second and third prizes with the Museums judging the works.

What a unique opportunity to “sample” the Pinellas County art scene! There will be music throughout the event, and refreshments will be available. Fine vendors will be present as well. So take a break from your hectic life, stroll through the gardens and be enriched by the art—you owe it to yourself and your loved ones.

New Incentive for Volunteers Working for the Parks and Conservation Resources Department!

Volunteers who work **100 hours** in the department starting from October 1, 2011, may earn an annual parking pass usable at the three beach parks where the County collects a parking fee – Sand Key Park, Howard Park and Fort De Soto Park. The pass is registered to one vehicle license number and must be on display when parked at the beach parking. The annual pass normally costs $75 or for seniors $55.

The volunteer must be registered with the county, report their hours worked for Parks and Conservation Resources and request the VSP report of their hours from their Volunteer Coordinator. That report will be used as a voucher for the pass. The pass is good for one year from the issue date. One pass per year per person may be earned.

**Nancy Brown**, Volunteer Program Coordinator, 582-2460

Chuck Scaffidi, FBG Volunteer Coordinator, 582-2117. For FBG VSP users I will run the report for you.

**Update!!**

Master Gardener Volunteers (and other Parks volunteers) are now eligible for a Seasonal Beach Parking Permit after completing **40 hours** of volunteering this fiscal year (starting October 1st) within Parks and Conservation Resources- which includes your Master Gardener hours. This came about as a response to requests made by some of our snowbird volunteers who have a hard time accruing the 100 hours for the annual pass in the shorter time that they are here. If you are interested in more information about this please let me know!
A Wish List

By Debra Kramer, FBG Volunteer

A common belief among volunteers is to keep your suggestions to yourself. After all, if you make a suggestion you will either be assigned the job (“Great idea! When can you start?”) or viewed as over-stepping your boundaries as a volunteer.

I say Balderdash! A much better approach is to generate a list of ideas and then… leave town. Here are a few items from my garden wish list for you to ponder:

- At the intersection of the Pinellas Trail and Walsingham Road, place a small, attractive sign (landscaped with eco-friendly plants, of course) directing trail users to the garden/village/fishing complex. Visitors biking or walking on the trail often have no idea how close they are to this wonderland.
- Set up a Master Gardener or volunteer station in the garden to answer questions and help visitors navigate around the area. Perhaps the Tropical Pavilion would be a good location.
- Offer a docent-led tour of the garden based on the concept of a museum docent program. A volunteer would lead a group of visitors and focus on several garden highlights. Think of it as showing off a few select pieces of our natural art work.

Many ideas have been tried… and often fail for a variety of reasons. New projects may be impractical and short-lived. However, just like plants in the garden, with time and effort the strongest ideas just might survive.

Your Membership Working for You!

The USF Botanical Gardens is holding their 2012 Spring Plant Sale on April 14 and 15, Saturday 10:00AM to 4:00PM and Sunday 10:00AM to 3:00AM.

General admission is $5.00.

However, as a member of the FBG Foundation you fall under the American Horticultural Society Reciprocal Agreement and you may enter free. You membership also allows early entry at 9:30 on Saturday.

Make sure that you bring your membership card with you for identification.

The sale is located at 12210 USF Pine Drive, Tampa, FL 33612 and parking is free.
The **CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW** and **ENGLISH GARDENS** Tour!

**May 19 – May 26, 2012**

1st Day: Board plane for your transatlantic flight to England.

2nd Day: Arriving in London we meet our tour escort and transfer to your hotel in the English countryside, where we have accommodations for the next 3 evenings. Our scenic drive gives us a preview of the incredible colors and beauty that await us. After checking in and freshness up a bit, we are treated to a welcome cocktail reception, where we have a chance to get acquainted with our traveling companions. A delicious dinner follows. (Dinner)

3rd Day: A drive through the lovely English countryside takes us to today’s destination – Wakehurst Place. We take a tour of the 465 acre country estate, with its ornamental gardens and temperate woodlands. While seeing the walled gardens, Asian Heath Garden, Water Garden, Loder Valley Nature Reserve and, of course, the magnificent Mansion, we’ll be amazed by the fantastic kaleidoscope of colors of the rhododendrons and azaleas that are in full bloom. What a wonderful introduction to the world of English gardens and a great way to begin our tour. (Breakfast)

4th Day: A delightful visit to one of the world’s most celebrated gardens and the pride of England’s National Trust – Sissinghurst Gardens & Castle – is the highlight of today’s touring. Using the property’s brick structures and walls, together with the hedges of rose, yew and hornbeam, a series of “outdoor rooms” with long walking links was created. Some of the sights you will see are the Elizabethan Tower, Yew Walk, Moot Walk, Cottage Garden and the White Gardens. It’s such a pleasure meandering through the intimate Rose Garden, visiting the working vegetable garden or just strolling on the magnificent grounds at Sissinghurst. (B)

5th Day: After checking out of our hotel we drive to Hever Castle for a delightful tour. One of the most celebrated areas of Hever’s gardens is the Italian Garden, which was designed to display William Waldorf Astor’s collection of Italian sculptures. A delightful stroll can be taken along Rhododendron Walk and Anne Boleyn’s Walk (Hever Castle was, in fact, the childhood home of Anne Boleyn). We next visit a private English country home where we are treated to “Afternoon Tea,” with scones and homemade cakes, while overlooking its magnificent gardens. This is always one of our tour’s most memorable highlights. Then it’s on to London, where we have accommodations for the next 3 nights and enjoy another fine dinner. (B, D)

6th Day: We spend the day at the 2012 Chelsea Flower Show. The most famous garden event in the world, the Show, which is sponsored by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), has been held in London since 1888. Extensively covered in the media, the show has become an important venue for watching trends in all aspects of gardening and design. Words can’t describe it; you have to see it for yourself. (B)

7th Day: A short drive brings us to the RHS Gardens at Wisley. Considered the flagship garden of the RHS. Wisley captures the imagination with richly planted borders, lush gardens and the new state-of-the-art Glasshouse. A wonderful farewell dinner is prepared for us tonight. (B, D)

8th Day: We transfer to the airport for our flight home. (B)

*Tour package includes round trip airfare, accommodations for 6 evenings, breakfast each morning, 3 dinners, gratuities for the meals, sightseeing, all admissions, the services of a professional tour escort, taxes, transfers and baggage handling in England.*

**Price reduction: now $2,989 per person, double occupancy.**

Includes air fare from New York.

Optional 9th Day: We take a tour of London today seeing, among other things, Big Ben, the Parliament Buildings, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, Hyde Park, Kensington Park, Piccadilly Circus and the Tower of London. The afternoon is free to enjoy London at your leisure; perhaps to take in a West End theatre production. Additional day includes accommodations, city tour, breakfast, meal gratuities, taxes. Price for additional day: $245 per person, double occupancy; $350 per person, single.

**TRAVEL UNLIMITED**

**(800)645-6969**
We're Tweeting Up a Storm

To see what our followers are saying, click on the Twitter icon and follow a couple of simple steps. It's fun, and a great way to keep up with Gardens news between *Green Leaves*.

Maybe we can even get a botanical conversation going. Share gardening tips. Ask gardening questions. Tell us how wonderful the Gardens are looking. (All “attaboys” gratefully accepted.)

Facebook Fans Share Their Gorgeous Garden Photos

When you visit the Gardens and take fabulous photos of our trees, flowers, herbs, tropical fruits, butterflies, birds and maybe even an alligator, please share them on our Facebook page. We’re getting more and more fans all the time and if you haven’t signed up, it’s easy to do. Use the link above and click on the *connect* symbol. Become a fan today so that you can view visitor photos and comments. You can also share your experience at the gardens on the “Wall.”

"FACES In PLACES"

An Exhibit by Photographer Jude Bagatti

33 Images of the People and Locales of 16 Countries

Throughout All of March and April, 2012

Safety Harbor Public Library
101 2nd St. North
Safety Harbor, FL 34695

727-724-1525

Open Daily (Call for Hours)

Easels in Lobby area and Wall Hangings In Foyer
Volunteer Opportunities and Announcements

- **Help Desk Urgent!** Spring is a busy time. Please take a look at the help desk calendar on VMS and see if there is a time that works for you. Also, if you are a regular at the help desk already, please be sure you are signing up in the calendar to avoid scheduling confusion.

- **FFGC/UF Garden and Design Seminar** - June 19-21 in Gainesville, FL. This event is open only to Master Gardeners and members of the FL Federation of Garden Clubs.

- **MGs needed** - MG Sally Ervin is looking for help at Loews: MGs that would like to volunteer at the Clearwater Loews outreach Extension table on Saturdays anytime from 10-2 (can be 1 hr to 4 hrs). Loews is on Gulf to Bay by I-95. E-mail Sally at servin307@hotmail.com.

**Education**

- **MG Update** - Monday, April 9th from 9am-12pm. SKYWARN Weather Tracker Training with Mike Gittinger from NOAA. Learn about threatening weather and learn how to be a SKYWARN Weather Tracker for NOAA. Andy Wilson will follow with a diagnostic desk update.

- **Promo video all about Pinellas County Extension** - A short promo accessed through the MG VMS system in the Newsletters/Documents section. If you are giving a presentation you can play this as an opening to showcase all what the Extension offers the community.

- **Earn Continuing Education Credits** - For more upcoming Extension classes please register at: [http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/calendar.shtml](http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/calendar.shtml) — MGs can earn up to four continuing education credits. Modules at: [http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/outreach/plant_id/index.shtml](http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/outreach/plant_id/index.shtml)

  For instance, one CEU can be earned by studying the plants and earning a passing score of 80% on the “Test Yourself” feature. Once a score of 80% has been reached, print the page and submit it to the Volunteer Office.

- **Palm Harbor Library MG Class Series** - Classes are offered on the second Thursday of the month from 2-3:30 p.m. and from 6:15-7:45 p.m. at the Palm Harbor Library, 2330 Nebraska Avenue. To register, go to [http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/](http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/) and then click on the Take Action “Register for a program tab” extension service. You may also call 727 582-2100.

- **St Petersburg Community Library MG Class Series** - Classes offered free at the main branch of the St. Pete Library located at 3745 Ninth Avenue N. To register, go to [http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/](http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/) and then click on the Take Action “Register for a program tab” and then click “Extension Service.” You may also call 727 582-2100.

- **Extension Classes**: Visit Extension’s on-line calendar for a list of classes that are being offered free to MGs, volunteers and FBGF members with a membership card. All others pay a nominal fee. You can register on-line.

- “Planting Pinellas” visit blog [http://plantingpinellas.blogspot.com/](http://plantingpinellas.blogspot.com/)

See Theresa for more details: 727-582-2109, tbadurek@pinellascounty.org
This month I would like to share with you a grant project that is currently under development. Last summer I applied for a grant from the University of Florida to put QR codes on the botanical signs in the gardens and the grant submission was chosen! QR codes are like special barcodes that can be scanned with a smartphone or tablet. Each code can be linked to a website, which in this case will be a UF/IFAS factsheet. Here is a prototype of how the signs will look with the codes applied:

Garden visitors will be able to learn all about the plant and even email the factsheet to themselves right on the spot! We can also track how many times each code has been scanned so we know if people are using them and which ones are the most popular. Eventually we will also have signs with QR codes that link to short video clips to create a self-guided tour of the gardens.

A hard-working group of Master Gardeners has helped me get this project going and together we have accomplished a LOT! The team walked the gardens and made a list of botanical signs that we could use- which means that they are reachable by visitors and have a corresponding UF/IFAS factsheet. Next they created a database of information and created a QR code for each applicable sign. This was no small feat and I am so grateful for their time, attention to detail, and willingness to learn several new technologies in some cases. Thank you to the team: Emma Eshbaugh, Ellen Mahany, Pat McClendon, Katy Prats, and Ronna Rogers! Keep an eye out for the codes and signage that tells visitors how to use them- they will be coming soon!

Please don't forget that the Help Desk is extra busy for spring! I would like to remind all of you to please consider working more time at the Help Desk. Andy and Bob are swamped at times, and the more Master Gardeners at the desk, the better. (We don’t want to burn them out!) Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays are phone days and we could use extra help on those days especially. Even if you are less experienced at the Help Desk you can learn while helping us provide great customer service. This applies now and throughout my leave as well. All of us here at Extension appreciate your time and help- thank you!

Theresa Badurek, 727-582-2109, tbadurek@pinellascounty.org

Volunteer Opportunities and Education Continued

- "Growing Orchids" presented by Master Gardeners, Palm Harbor Library, April 12 at 2:30pm and again at 6:15 pm. Michael Polen, owner of Art Stone Orchids, will discuss how to select the best orchids for your situation and keep them happy &healthy. Registration is at: http://www.eventbrite.com/event/2890045203/eorg
- You can now sign up to volunteer for the Green Thumb Festival in St. Pete on April 28 and 29. The sign-ups are available on the MG VMS so choose your times/days. For more information go to: http://www.stpete.org/parks/greenthumb.
- Woodlawn Elementary school needs your native plant knowledge. Help renovate an existing native plant garden. The school is located at 1600 16th St. N. in St. Pete. Teacher is available Tues. mornings or Wed. afternoons.
- 2012 Honey Bee Seminar, hosted by the Tampa Bay Beekeepers Association to be held on Sat. April 28th from 9am-3:30pm. For more info and to sign up visit www.tampabaybeekeepers.com.
  - Topics include hive construction, starting a hive, honey extraction, bee transport, queen bees, nectar sources, wax rendering, looking inside the hive, and more! Cost is $15/person if you register before April 20th.
- The Clearwater East Library is looking for a MG speaker or two to present gardening programs in May- either the 5 or the 26. Start times can range from 1pm-3pm to suit your schedule. There are also Saturdays available in September and October if you like to really plan ahead! Some of the topics they are interested in are: herb gardening, composting, and natural pest and disease control.
- A new assisted living facility in the Clearwater/Dunedin area is looking for help in getting a garden club started. This project could be as involved as you like and they are even interested in doing some therapeutic gardening with some of the residents.
- Gibbs High School in St. Petersburg has a small garden run by special education students. The garden has been very successful and they supply food for their classroom. They are in need of more experienced gardening help.
- MG to help design and maintain a display in the Extension lobby. The display will be housed in a tall glass cabinet in the main lobby and can showcase wildlife, plant, ecosystem, etc. educational information that pertains to the natural world. The display would need to be updated/rotated seasonally.
Thanks to Local Nurseries, FBGF Members and MGs Can Save $$ When Beautifying Yards

One of the benefits of Foundation membership and being a certified Master Gardener is getting a 10 percent discount at several local nurseries. Just present your FBGF membership or MG card. We will continue to contact nurseries in the area to secure additional participants. Support our friends at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art Stone Orchids</th>
<th>Country Club Nursery</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3611 Tyrone Blvd, St. Petersburg</td>
<td>9850 Starkey Road, Largo,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>727-345-6733</td>
<td>727-397-4438</td>
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<tr>
<th>DragonFly Garden</th>
<th>Earthscapes Garden Room</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>730 Broadway, Dunedin</td>
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<tr>
<td>727-734-4900</td>
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<tr>
<th>Esperanza’s Garden Center</th>
<th>Hawaiian Orchid Connection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6001 Haines Road, St. Petersburg</td>
<td>Note:* (10% off all purchases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>727-742-8499</td>
<td>6260 Seminole Blvd, Seminole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hours: Tues thru Sat 10:00AM to 5:00PM</td>
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<tr>
<th>Kathy's Korner Nursery &amp; Tree Farm</th>
<th>Jene’s Tropicals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(10% off trees)</td>
<td>6831 Central Ave., St. Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6095 Haines Road North, St. Petersburg</td>
<td>727-344-1668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>727-525-9640</td>
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<tr>
<th>Palm Harbor Nursery &amp; Landscaping</th>
<th>Seminole Nurseries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(10% off cash and carry)</td>
<td>6230 102nd Ave. N, Pinellas Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450 Riviere Road, Palm Harbor</td>
<td>727 545-9619</td>
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<tr>
<th>Summerwood Gardens, Inc.</th>
<th>Twigs and Leaves</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1171 Tarpon Springs Rd, Odessa</td>
<td>2131 Central Ave., St. Petersburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>813-920-2153</td>
<td>727-822-5400</td>
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<tr>
<th>Willow Tree Nursery</th>
<th>Wilcox Nursery</th>
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<tr>
<td>4401 49th St. N, St. Petersburg</td>
<td>12501 Indian Rocks Road, Largo</td>
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<tr>
<td>727-522-2594</td>
<td>727-595-2073</td>
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Note:* Only FBG Foundation membership applies

Click on to get map directions and hours of operation.
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](http://www.pinellascounty.org/scripts/publish/webevent.pl)