For Love of Birds

By Jane Morse, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Pinellas County

Did you know that many of our most popular wading birds – the little blue heron, roseate spoonbill, snowy egret, tri-colored heron, reddish egret and white ibis, plus four types of saltmarsh songbirds and the osprey in Monroe County - are all imperiled? It will be a very sad day indeed if any of these birds go extinct. The good news is that the situation is not hopeless. Property owners who are concerned about our feathered friends can fairly easily turn their yards into a bird oasis.

The basics for all life are food, water, space and shelter. Food and shelter can both be provided by plants. If you are sprucing up your yard for spring, choose native plants that were once part of the ecosystem in which you live. Before areas were cleared for development, they were often “wildlife cities,” full of places for birds to nest, find food and water, and raise a family. The cumulative impact of so much land clearing is that native wildlife species are experiencing severe reductions in numbers and even potential extinctions at neighborhood, county, regional, state and national levels.

We can easily provide wildlife habitat in our yard just by planting native plants. Because native plants evolved with the animals that use them, they tend to be much better at providing the right habitat and food at the right time of year. Use as many different heights of plants as possible and pick a variety of plants that flower or fruit at different times of the year. A good list of plants for around a pond includes buttonbush, wax myrtle, red maple, tupelo, bald cypress, duck potato, pickerel weed, iris, bulrush, and fragrant water lily. Giving up just 3 feet of mowed grass for native habitat will also help to improve water quality and provide for wildlife.

The seven major ecosystems that occur in Florida are the coastal strand, sand scrub, sandhills, hardwood hammocks, flatwoods, swamp and freshwater marsh. If you don’t know which habitat fits your area, you can check with a local native plant nursery, join the Native Plant Society, visit a nearby park nature center, visit the UF/IFAS Extension Service for help, or order a helpful book at http://ifasbooks.ifas.ufl.edu/p-180-landscaping-for-floridas-wildlife.aspx.

“The Florida-Friendly™ Landscaping Guide to Plant Selection & Landscape Design” is another excellent free book that shows sample landscapes as well as many plants and their specific requirements. It can be found under publications at http://watermatters.org. Favorite plants for my Pinellas County yard, which is like a flatwoods and goes from sopping wet to bone dry, include beautyberry, myrsine, firebush, Simpson’s stopper, Florida privet, wild coffee, blue-eyed grass, yaupon holly, fakahatchee grass and sabal palm. A simple bird bath is an easy way to provide birds with fresh water (keep mosquitoes from breeding by flushing out the water every 3 days). Whenever practical, we should all forgo pesticides. Pesticide use in North America has grown to more than 1.1 billion pounds annually and about 8% of that is applied to yards and gardens. One lawn-care pesticide was implicated in more than 150 mass bird die-offs. Pesticides can also cause longer-term, potentially lethal effects such as eggshell thinning and neurological damage. Always try cultural, mechanical and biological control methods first (the Extension Service can give you suggestions) and use insecticidal soap, horticultural oil or Bt products instead of toxins. Another thing we can do to protect the birds is to keep cats indoors. A new report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Smithsonian’s Migratory Bird Center estimates that this country’s 150 million outdoor cats are killing up to 3.7 billion birds a year, with our pet cats averaging one kill every 17 hours. Shocking!

Bird lovers can also help by adopting a species and becoming an advocate for that species by working to protect and restore its habitat. Teach your community and school kids, or volunteer at a nature center or preserve.

For more information about gardening for birds the Pinellas County Extension Service is just a phone call or visit away. We are located at 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, next to the Florida Botanical Gardens and are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To speak with a horticulturist, you can call 727-582-2110 on Mondays, Tuesdays or Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 and 4 p.m. You can also visit our website at www.pinellascountyextension.org
**The Green Leaf** is published by Pinellas County Extension for Master Gardeners and others. The monthly newsletter depends on submission of articles from Master Gardeners, Extension staff and other authors.

Please submit articles and photographs to cscaffidi@co.pinellas.fl.us

*The Green Leaf* and archives are available on-line by clicking on newsletter

MANAGING EDITOR: Chuck Scaffidi, MG Volunteer

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 by the 20th of each month. This will help us assemble and publish the newsletter in a timely manner. Articles should be 700-800 words or less. If you would like a copy of any photograph printed in the newsletter, contact MG Editor Chuck Scaffidi at 727 582-2117.

cscaffidi@co.pinellas.fl.us

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**Butterfly Plant of the Month at FBG**

**Unique Host Plant: Unique Butterfly**

By Ellen Mahany, MG

Unusual, exotic, sometimes the victim and sometimes the victor, elegant Dutchman’s pipeline or calico flower vine (*Aristolochia littoralis* Parodi) can be defoliated by Polydamus Swallowtail butterflies (*Battus polydamus*) or can invade the space of neighboring plants.

Two of these evergreen vines have been planted in the new vinery and a third one is well-established but under control at butterfly station. In contrast, at my home, elegant Dutchman’s pipe has traveled at least twenty feet along a six-foot-high chain-link fence. Nearby thryallis and plumbago bushes routinely must be rescued from its strangle-hold, and Carolina and confederate jasmine vines saved from being smothered.

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**Credits: Floridata**

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**Credits: Donald Hall, UF**

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**Credits: Polydamus Swallowtail Upper Wing: Edith Smith  Lower Wing: Jerry F. Butler, UF**

A close-up of the large, mottled-red flower, centered by a pipe-like cavity, and a view of this flower against a backdrop of the heart-shaped leaves.
This vine is the main host plant for the Gold-rimmed or Polydamus Swallowtail butterfly. A powerful, energetic flyer, with a wing span from 3½ to 5 inches, this species shares the black coloring of other swallowtail butterfly species but lacks its relatives’ hind wing tails. Its yellow band markings also make it unique.

The yellow eggs hatch into dark orange-brown caterpillars that eat large holes through nutritional leaves and flowers, sometimes defoliating a smaller vine. Unique to the swallowtail family, the osmeterium, a brightly-colored, V-shaped gland located on the neck behind the pupa head, springs out when the larva is disturbed, secreting a foul-smelling liquid, a defense mechanism to ward off wasps or flies that can lay their eggs inside the caterpillar.

By the way, calico pipevine itself has an unpleasant odor from the aristolochic acids it contains. It is believed that these chemicals make the Polydamus butterfly distasteful to vertebrae predators.

This species also protects itself at the pupa stage. To camouflage itself, larva pupating near green leaves molts into a green chrysalis while larva pupating near dead leaves transforms into a brown chrysalis. After going through four instar stages between moltings, the caterpillar weaves a silken strand to anchor its body to a resting place before its final molting into a chrysalis.

From spring through fall elegant Dutchman’s pipe vine can become a Polydamus paradise where a colony of tailless swallowtails lay eggs, caterpillars feast, and pupae camouflage themselves. What a wonderful way to keep a runaway vine under control.
MGs Enjoy Annual Outing at Shady Oak Farm
By Ellen Mahany, MG

On the most beautiful March day ever, Master Gardeners, members of Safety Harbor Garden Club, and other nature lovers attending Bill and Sandy Huff’s annual bonfire and weenie roast devoured delicious food, soaked up the sun, admired a diversity of plants and chatted with friends and friendly strangers. Even the attractive chickens in Bill’s Hen House were friendly. We roasted wieners and marshmallows and wandered from one garden to another, oohing and aahing, asking for plant identifications, and gathering cuttings and free potted plants. Plants were everywhere--on the ground, in trees, on fences, and in a variety of containers, including flatboats. I can say with conviction that all of us went home relaxed and happy with our treasured plants, hoping to transfer some of the charm and warmth of Sandy’s garden to our own gardens. We’ll be back!
April Opportunities for Pinellas County Gardeners

April 2
Florida-Friendly Garden Tours
Enjoy a stroll through our garden of Florida-native and Florida-friendly plants. Learn how to incorporate some of these plants in home landscapes and observe how the same plants can survive under different light and water conditions. Tours are limited to groups of four to 10 adults. Tours are from 9 to 11 a.m. Free; advance registration required. Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo. (727) 582-2109; www.eventbrite.com/event/53903795749.

April 3
Botany Hike: Join a Brooker Creek naturalist to explore the fascinating plants found on the preserve while identifying wildflowers, ferns, epiphytes, trees and more. The ecology of various plant communities will also be examined. Best suited for adults. Come prepared with your cameras and questions. 10 to 11:30 a.m. Free; advance registration required. Brooker Creek Preserve, 3950 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs. (727) 453-6800; www.brookercreekpreserve.org. On a trial basis, Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday in April 2013, in addition to Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

April 3
Community Garden Forum: Join urban horticulture Extension agent Theresa Badunek in this workshop about the steps in starting a community garden. Resourceful provides this. This is an ideal workshop for those interested in starting a community garden or those wishing to expand or improve their existing community garden. 6 to 7 p.m. Free, advance registration required. Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo. (727) 582-2109; www.eventbrite.com/event/53747499776.

April 6
Garden like a Floridian: Want a Florida yard but don’t know where to start? Horticultural experts with Pinellas County Extension and the Go Florida! Campaign will demonstrate how to design and maintain a water-thrifty, low-maintenance yard that will save time and money. The sessions include, Retain the Rain: Rain Retention Stormwater Basins; Lawn Care the Easy, Florida-Friendly Way: Essentials of Florida-Friendly Landscape Design and Extreme Yard Makeover. 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Registration fee of $10 includes lunch, free plants, take-home materials and door prizes. Rain barrels available for $5. Email hort@goflorida.org or call (727) 965-3795 with questions. Weedon Island Preserve, 1900 Weedon Drive NE, St. Petersburg. (727) 453-6500; www.weedonislandpreserve.org.

April 11
Vegetable, Herb and Tropical Fruit Garden Tours at Florida Botanical Gardens: Learn about growing food and marvelling at the eye-catching array of culinary, medicinal and aromatic herbs, trees and flowers. Wander the brick paths between the Egyptian, Mediterranean, Asian and beverage plantings with experts showing how the plants can be used in the home. Discover the tropical fruits that do well in our Florida climate and view a diversity of plantings, including ground cover and trees that can be used when designing lawn landscapes. Tours limited to four to 10 adults 9 a.m. to noon. Free; advance registration required. Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo. (727) 582-2109; http://www.eventbrite.com/event/53904961696.

April 11
Easy Yard Maintenance for the Lazy Gardener: Learn easy steps to achieve a low-maintenance yard that is attractive, healthy and a money-saver. Topics include plant selection and establishment, appropriate fertilizing use and pest control, recycling and proper pruning techniques. Adopt these Florida-friendly maintenance practices can make the landscape less dependent on water and reduce pollution of our waterways. Two classes are available. 2 to 3:30 p.m. and 6 to 8:15 p.m. Fee. Registration required. Palm Harbor Library, 3300 Nebraska Ave., Palm Harbor. (727) 582-2903; http://www.eventbrite.com/event/44400966643.

April 16
Florida-Friendly Garden Tours: Enjoy a stroll through our garden of Florida-native and Florida-friendly plants. Learn how to incorporate some of these plants in home landscapes and observe how the same plants can survive under different light and water conditions. Tours are limited to groups of four to 10 adults. Tours are from 9 to 11 a.m. Free; advance registration required. Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo. (727) 582-2109; www.eventbrite.com/event/53903795749.

April 18
Introduction to Florida-Friendly Landscaping – The Basics of Landscape Design and Rainwater Harvesting and Composting: Educators from University of Florida/IFAS Extension in Pinellas County will teach attendees how to create and maintain an attractive and low-maintenance yard that conserves water, is-friendly to the environment and can save time and money. 6 to 8:15 p.m. Fee; advance registration required. Halse Activity Center, 330 Douglas Ave., Dunedin. (727) 582-2109; http://gardenbase-eventbrite.com.

April 20
Rain Harvesting: Learn how to save rainwater in a recycled plastic barrel. The collected water may be used for plant beds, potted plants and vegetable and herb gardens. 9 to 10:30 a.m. In this free class you learn how to make and set up a rain barrel. With advance registration there is the opportunity to purchase rain barrel for $25 with advance registration. Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo. (727) 582-2106; www.eventbrite.com/event/53903795749.

April 25
Vegetable, Herb and Tropical Fruit Garden Tours at Florida Botanical Gardens: Learn about growing food and marvelling at the eye-catching array of culinary, medicinal and aromatic herbs, trees and flowers. Wander the brick paths between the Egyptian, Mediterranean, Asian and beverage plantings with experts showing how the plants can be used in the home. Discover the tropical fruits that do well in our Florida climate and view a diversity of plantings, including ground cover and trees that can be used when designing lawn landscapes. Tours limited to adult groups of four to 10 people. 9 a.m. to noon. Free; advance registration required. Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo. (727) 582-2109; www.eventbrite.com/event/53904961696.

April 27
Wildflower Garden Club: Join the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve to get those gardening hands dirty in this wildflower garden. Bring your garden gloves and hat and meet outside of the Auditorium at the Center. Morning snacks are usually provided. 6 to 10 a.m.; Free; advance registration required. Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center, 3840 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs. (727) 453-6099; www.brookercreekpreserve.org.

April 27
Explore the Fruits of Brooker Creek Preserve: The preserve is home to many of Florida’s fabulous fruits. Explore the fascinating history of these ancient plants during a classroom activity then take a stroll to meet the plants including the preserve identification tips, interesting facts and more. Adult participants. 10:30 a.m. to noon. Free; advance registration required. Brooker Creek Preserve, 3840 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs. (727) 453-6099; www.brookercreekpreserve.org.

April 29
Florida-Friendly Garden Tours: Enjoy a stroll through our garden of Florida native and Florida-friendly plants. Learn how to incorporate some of these plants in home landscapes and observe how the same plants can survive under different light and water conditions. Tours are limited to adult groups of four to 10. Tours are from 9 to 11 a.m. Free; advance registration required. Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo. (727) 582-2109; www.eventbrite.com/event/53903795749.

For more information on Pinellas County services and programs, visit www.pinellascounty.org, now with LiveChat, or create a shortcut to www.pinellascounty.org/mobile on any smartphone. Pinellas County government is on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Pinellas County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
Mangrove Memories

By Jude Bagatti, MG Volunteer

I don’t get there often enough, so I was glad that the March Master Gardeners’ Update was to be at Weedon Island, one of Pinellas County’s natural gems. It had been awhile since my last volunteer service at the preserve, though since then I had helped build oyster domes in nearby Riviera Bay with Tampa Bay Watch folks. One hot day I’d hiked the Weedon trails: Boy Scout Loop, the Upland Trail, and climbed the Observation Tower. That time, Mayan textile designs were exhibited in the Visitor Center, and a Guatemalan woman demonstrated weaving techniques. It was a relief to come in from the heat to the cool auditorium.

This latest Update would focus on Mangrove trees: red, black and white. Despite studying these saltwater trees before, I could never remember which was which. Sea Grant Agent, Libby Carnahan, made deciphering them easier, with illustrations of the kinds of roots, leaves and seeds, or propagules, each possessed. One thing I didn’t know before was how differently each of these trees handles salt. Red Mangroves are Salt “Excluders,” meaning salt is stopped at the level of the dropped, gangly roots from rising into the tree. Black and White Mangroves are Salt “Extruders” which means salt does rise up the tree structure. In the Black Mangrove, whose roots lay horizontally, the salt is then emitted as a film of fine crystals on the leaves. In the White Mangrove, with its varied roots, the salt gathers in tiny glands at the base of its leaves.

Outside, we walked a path where we could see and touch the leaves of each species, and were given rhymes to help identify them: “Red, Red, Pointy Head; Black, Black, Salty Back; White, White, Sugar Delight. Pointy Head indicates the Red Mangrove’s peaked leaf. Salty Back refers to the layer of fine salt crystals usually on the underside of Black Mangrove leaves, while Sugar Delight refers to the less salty leaf-base glands on the White Mangrove.

All this Mangrove talk reminded me of a closer-than-desired encounter I had with mangroves some years ago while living in Miami. I was on a friend’s boat for an overnight sail in Biscayne Bay. We anchored off Elliot Key for the night. Early the next morning while my friend still slept, I decided to swim the short distance from the boat to the island. Ours was the sole boat there. The morning was quiet, the tepid water calm as I lowered myself into it for my wakeup swim.

As I neared the shore thick with mangroves, I noticed something making a churning commotion in the shallow water ahead. I thought it might be the flapping of a ray, but as I swam closer I saw with horror that it was a shark, possibly a nurse shark, busily probing the mangrove roots. I didn’t much care what kind it was; a shark is a shark, especially a hungry one. I quickly changed direction and swam down shore about 25 yards, to hide deep into a maze of submerged mangrove roots, hoping not to be sniffed out. There I crouched, cowering in the water and mud watching the aggressive hunter work its way toward me along the shore. Its odd vertical position, snout down, as it roughly nosed the crevices between roots for prey, was a frightening but fascinating sight.

Should I become its prey, who could explain my disappearance? Hoping it would just swim off, I shrank back silent and still, watching the shark jerk past me following the shoreline. When I thought it had progressed far enough away, I untangled myself from the mangrove roots and struck out for the boat, imagining the shark at my heels. Surely, my swim speed record was broken that day. By then my friend was awake and saw my own churning commotion. I was hauled aboard, breathless, as I related my personal tale of Jaws!

Contact Jude at 727-322-6211 or heyjudebagatti@msn.com
Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation Update

By Chuck Scaffidi, FBG Foundation President

The next Foundation board meeting is on April 19 and visitors are welcome, especially anyone who may be interested in joining the board. By attending a meeting, you will get a better understanding of our organization and goals, and hopefully you will choose to become a board member.

What are we working on now? “Diggin the Arts” on May 5, a repeat of last year’s highly attended successful event. Not too late to join the Diggin team. This is another event conceived and chaired by Barbara Goss, so give her a call at 727-442-0537. Following are the highlights of this event and you can also click to keep informed as this event evolves. Highlights follow:

DIGGIN’ THE ARTS

May 5, 2013, 10 am to 4 pm
FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDENS
12520 Ulmerton Road, LARGO, FL 33774

Florida Botanical Gardens in collaboration with Museum of Fine Arts of St. Petersburg, the Morean Center for Clay, the Florida Craftsmen, the Dunedin Fine Arts Center, the Dali Museum, The Suntan Arts Center and the Beach Arts Center. Enjoy museum-developed activities for the entire family.

Plein Air Competition. Local artists are invited to compete in a Plein Air Competition with Registration starting at 10AM and judging at 3PM. Prizes awarded as follows: 1st prize $200, 2nd prize $150 and 3rd prize $100.

Rain Barrel Raffle. Each museum will decorate a rain barrel for a drawing, as well as the Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation. Participants will purchase raffle tickets from a roving volunteer and deposit tickets with their name and address in the vase at each Museum’s table. Winners will be drawn during the show by the MC.

Garden Tours, Demonstrations, Vendors, Refreshments

For more information, Phone: 727-582-2247
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 FBG news between Green Leaufs.

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.)

And Share Your 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. If you haven’t signed up, it’s easy to do. Use the link above and click on the f 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.”

Thanks to our Facebook friends
New Begonia Garden

By Terry Berube.
The gardens were invaded by the Tampa Begonia Society and we now have our very own Begonia Garden. Thanks to Dale Sena, past president of the society and a hard working group of society members, we were able to re-landscape the area surrounding the Tiki Hut on the Tropical Walk and plant a large number of beautiful begonias. All costs were covered by the Society and I am eternally grateful for their work. Dale provided me with a list of botanical names and I will get a sign request out to Kathy and Emma this week.
Tampa Begonia Society hopes you all have a chance to check it out.

Extension’s is on Facebook!!

It's fun, and a great way to keep up with Pinellas County Extension 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.
Also, come see us and get more information about gardening the Pinellas County Extension is just a phone call or visit away. We are located at 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, in the Florida Botanical Gardens and are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To speak with a horticulturist, you can call 727-582-2110 on Mondays, Tuesdays or Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. You can also visit our website at www.pinellascountyextension.org

And Share Your Gorgeous Garden Photos

When you visit the Gardens open 7 days 7 am until dusk 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. If you haven't signed up, it’s easy to do. Use the link above and click on the f 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.”

Special Announcements

Garden Maintenance volunteer opportunities are now available on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. The current teams work throughout the FBG. Duties include mulching, weeding, trimming, and adding new plants to the landscape. This is a great opportunity to learn while doing. If you are interested, contact Terry Berube at tberube@tampabay.rr.com or 727-501-3787.
Special Announcements

FREE
Food Growers
Classes!

Want to grow your own fruit and vegetables? Walk out into your yard and graze? Eat what you’ve grown yourself? Meet with other home gardeners and Pinellas County Master Gardeners to share tips and how-tos?

Come visit our informal food growers club. No reservation necessary

Meetings are held
Mondays, 7 pm

Suncoast Mission of Rest
5625 Park Blvd
Pinellas Park, FL 33781
(Entrance in the back)

For information, call 727 391-9590 or 727 420-6184

Volunteer Incentive Limitations: One (1) annual permit per individual volunteer for one hundred (100) documented volunteer hours contributed in the Department of Parks and Conservation Resources during the fiscal year of October 1 to September 30. Family members may not combine hours to qualify. Additional permits may be purchased.

Hibiscus lovers might want to check out the Hibiscus Show on May 26th. Free admission!
For more info: http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/3367802/308720934/name/2013%20Big%20Flyer%20Rev%203Color.pdf

April 29, 2013, GCREC in Balm, FL, UF/IFAS Florida Friendly/Florida Yards and Neighborhoods.
In-Service Training, Agenda:

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<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>Registration &amp; opening (snacks provided)</td>
<td>Administration</td>
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<td>9:00 -10:30</td>
<td>Implementation of irrigation survey &amp; Water Savings Table</td>
<td>Michael Dukes</td>
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<td>10:30-12:30</td>
<td>How are your social marketing tools helpful for water savings?</td>
<td>Paul Monaghan</td>
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<td>12:30-1:00</td>
<td>Sharing ideas &amp; lunch (provided)</td>
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<td>1:30-3:30</td>
<td>FFL Landscape Design Strategies (Hands on)</td>
<td>Gail Hansen</td>
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<td>3:30-4:00</td>
<td>Evaluation &amp; Adjourn</td>
<td>FFL team</td>
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Fee for Master Gardeners is only $10! Registration info to come
The Spirit of Pinellas Shines Through our Volunteers!

Armed Forces History Museum • 4:00 to 6:30 P.M.
Save the Date • April 25, 2013
Please plan to celebrate with us as we honor our volunteers.

Pinellas County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To obtain accessible formats of this document, please call (727) 464-4600/TDD (727) 464-4062.
Education

**MG Update**—April 5 is our MG Update field trip to Sweetwater Organic Community Farm. Please remember to bring $15 (cash or check only). Wear close-toed shoes and clothes. Tour begins at **10 am.** Salads will be harvested and provided. Please bring any other food you would like to eat for a picnic lunch.

**Community Garden Forum**—April 3, 6-7 pm, hosted by Bob and Theresa for those interested in starting a community garden. Free class but registration required at: [http://www.eventbrite.com/event/5741749728/eorg](http://www.eventbrite.com/event/5741749728/eorg)

**Yard Maintenance for the Lazy Gardener**—April 11 at 2 pm and 6:15 pm at the Palm Harbor Library presented by Doris Heitzmann. This class will teach simple Florida-Friendly landscape maintenance practices. Learn easy steps to achieve a low maintenance yard that is attractive, healthy and can save money. Topics include plant selection and establishment, appropriate fertilizer use and pest control, recycling, mulching and proper pruning techniques. Adopting these Florida-Friendly maintenance practices can make the landscape less dependent on water and reduces pollution of our waterways. Free, to register visit: [http://www.eventbrite.com/event/5440059364/eorg](http://www.eventbrite.com/event/5440059364/eorg)

**Education Credits**—Extension classes:

* 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)

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**—Free classes every second Thursday of the month from 2:00-3:30 PM and 6:15-7:45 pm at the Palm Harbor Library, 2330 Nebraska Ave. To register [http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu](http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu), click the **“Registration”** tab and then click **“Extension Service.”**

**St Petersburg MG Speaker Series**—now being held at the Garden Club of St. Petersburg. (It was formerly held at the library). The address for the Garden Club of St. Petersburg is:

500 Sunset Dr S, St Petersburg, FL 33707 [http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu](http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu). Click the **“Registration”** tab and then click **“Extension Service.”**

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

**Extension Classes and Tours**—Visit Lawn & Garden - Pinellas County Extension on-line calendar for a list of classes where most are being **offered free or at a discount** to MGs, volunteers and FBGF members with a membership card. Also, sign up for a garden tour. Register on-line. [http://pce-lawnandgarden.eventbrite.com](http://pce-lawnandgarden.eventbrite.com)

Special discount offer for **Rain Harvesting Workshop**

Volunteer Opportunities and Announcements

**Help Desk**—Please look at the VMS help desk calendar and see if there is a time that works for you. If you are a regular at the help desk please be sure you are signing up to avoid scheduling confusion.

**MGs needed**—MG Sally Ervin is looking for help at Lowes: MGs that would like to volunteer at the Clearwater Lowe's outreach Extension table on Saturdays anytime from 10-2 (can be 1 hr to 4 hrs) should e-mail Sally at servin307@hotmail.com. Lowe's is located on Gulf to Bay near US19

**McMullen Booth Elementary School** is hosting an Earth Day event on **Friday, May 3 from 8am-12pm**. There will be food and plenty of kids to talk to about plants, what Extension does, etc. Please let me know if you want to staff a table at this fun event!
This month I would like to spotlight our involvement with school gardens. Several Master Gardeners work in school gardens all over the county. From butterfly gardens to vegetable gardens, herb gardens and native plant gardens - MGs cover them all. Some MGs work directly with the kids teaching them math, science, reading, nutrition and more, all while getting their hands dirty. Others simply consult with teachers, parents, and other volunteers when questions arise or when a new garden is being designed and installed.

The impacts of this service are enormous. Children who have no idea where their food comes from not only learn that, but learn to love and eat them too. Children who have no access to safe outdoor spaces have nurturing natural environments to learn in. And it’s not only the children who benefit from this kind of volunteer work; the MGs who work in the schools report a sort of joy and excitement that’s difficult to come by in other aspects of life. They report a sort of joyful energy they gather from the enthusiasm of the kids they help.

As this school year is winding down I would ask you to consider getting involved in a school or schools next year. The summer is a great time for planning and preparing and meeting with teachers and parents. Extension has a host of resources from garden and plant information to specific curriculum materials that can be used in school projects. Extension Horticulture Specialist Bob Albanese is now our new School Garden Coordinator and he is ready to guide you in any new school project you are interested in or help support existing school projects. Please contact Bob or myself to see how you can get involved.

We are not the only entity recognizing the need for this kind of work in our schools. The University of Florida has recently hired a Farm to School Coordinator for the South Central District to help deliver grant money and other support to school gardens. His name is Zach Glorioso and he is working very closely with us to see how many schools we can help. His position also comes with the backing of grant money for every school that has or wants to have a garden. With the completion of a simple one-page application your school project will receive a $250 grant for the garden. The only requirements are that the garden grows some edible plants and that some kind of curriculum is used with the kids in the garden. Even more money may be available to schools with a detailed project plan that shows the need for more funds. Please email Bob Albanese at ralbanese@pinellascounty.org if you’d like to apply for this grant. It’s simple to get started and there is great need for your help. You will enjoy it more than I can express with words on this page- and the children will love your contribution.

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

“A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust.” -Gertrude Jekyll

"If a child is to keep his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.” - Rachel Carson

Volunteer Opportunities and Announcements Continued

- **Allendale United Methodist Church** in St. Petersburg is planning to host a community event for "Earth Day" on Saturday, April 20, from 10 am-2 pm. They are seeking speakers and displays related to sharing information about adopting practices for more sustainable living and preserving the health and beauty of our state ecosystem. They are requesting a MG to either give a talk or staff a booth about composting. They also have a community garden, and if you are interested, they would love to have someone build a compost area near the garden with the help of the event attendees. Basically they want to learn all about compost and would love your involvement at any level you would like to offer. If you are interested I will put you in touch with their event coordinator right away!

- **55+ community in Largo** is looking for a speaker on citrus care and disease. They need someone on April 24 at 10:30 am. They would just like a short 20 minute talk to give them some guidance and they usually get a pretty good turnout that time of year- about 50. Like many Pinellas County residents they are having trouble with citrus and need our help.

- **Compost demonstration area** at the Extension Office needs a new volunteer caretaker! Please let me know if you would like to help us with this important display. In the meantime please do not leave large debris in this area; instead use one of the two debris piles on the property.
### 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 many 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:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<th>Links</th>
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<tr>
<td>Art Stone Orchids</td>
<td>3611 Tyrone Blvd, St. Petersburg</td>
<td>727-345-6733</td>
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<td>Country Club Nursery</td>
<td>9850 Starkey Road, Largo,</td>
<td>727-397-4438</td>
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<td>DragonFly Garden</td>
<td>730 Broadway, Dunedin</td>
<td>727-734-4900</td>
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<td>Earthscapes Garden Room</td>
<td>816 Alt. 19 N, Palm Harbor</td>
<td>727-786-4859</td>
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<td>Esperanza’s Garden Center</td>
<td>6001 Haines Road, St. Petersburg</td>
<td>727-742-8499</td>
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<td>Hawaiian Orchid Connection Note:*</td>
<td>6260 Seminole Blvd, Seminole,</td>
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<td>Hours: Tues thru Sat 10:00AM to 5:00PM</td>
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<td>Kathy’s Korner Nursery Inc.</td>
<td>6095 Haines Road North, St. Petersburg</td>
<td>727-525-9640</td>
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<td>Jene’s Tropicals</td>
<td>6831 Central Ave., St. Petersburg</td>
<td>727-344-1668</td>
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<td>Palm Harbor Nursery &amp; Landscaping</td>
<td>450 Riviere Road, Palm Harbor</td>
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<td>(10% off cash and carry)</td>
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<td>Seminole Nurseries</td>
<td>6230 102nd Ave. N, Pinellas Park</td>
<td>727 545-9619</td>
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<td>Summerwood Gardens , Inc.</td>
<td>1171 Tarpon Springs Rd, Odessa</td>
<td>813-920-2153</td>
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<td>Twigs and Leaves</td>
<td>2131 Central Ave., St. Petersburg</td>
<td>727-822-5400</td>
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<td>4401 49th St. N, St. Petersburg</td>
<td>727-522-2594</td>
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<td>Wilcox Nursery</td>
<td>12501 Indian Rocks Road, Largo</td>
<td>727-595-2073</td>
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<td>Hazel’s Garden &amp; Nursery</td>
<td>5063 Dartmouth Ave, St. Petersburg</td>
<td>727-321-4599</td>
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<td>Sunscape Plant &amp; Tree Nursery</td>
<td>4730 CR 16 St. Petersburg, FL 33709</td>
<td>727-347-2915</td>
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Note:* Only FBG Foundation membership applies
For details on some of the events listed go to the calendar on the Pinellas County Extension Lawn & Garden website:  http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/calendar.shtml?cmd=opencal&cal=cal6