Holiday Lights Sparkle

Article and Photos by KATHLEEN JAMISON, assistant editor

On Nov. 23, friends of the Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation were treated to a sneak preview of this year’s Holiday Lights, complete with live music, an elegant spread, flowing wine, words of welcome from Foundation President Chuck Scaffidi, Parks landscape manager Vernon Bryant, and one of our “friends in high places,” Pinellas County Commissioner Karen Seel, as well as the official lighting of the Wedding Garden tree.

The annual festivities opened to the public the day after Thanksgiving and will run until Jan. 2. This year is extra special because we are also celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Gardens.

Among the 150 or so enjoying the beautiful evening—the balmy weather as well as the 500,000 environmentally-friendly lights—were Foundation members, Master Gardeners and other garden volunteers, Holiday Lights volunteers, and members of the FBG staff who work closely with the Foundation to make our Gardens a year-round delight. Collecting the evening’s most hugs was Judy Yates, who was extension director back in the day and was instrumental in getting the political support that allowed the creation of the Florida Botanical Gardens in 2001. (See photos on following pages.)

The party planners-in-chief were Terri Zeigler, Chuck Scaffidi and Alicia Chivers. Long-time Garden supporter Dan Shannon gave the invocation. Keyboardist Mark Techler and bass player Richard Jimenez contributed the beautiful background music. The tables of goodies were provided at a nice discount by Orange Blossom, the County’s catering contractor, and thanks go to Total Wine for a discount on the liquid refreshments.

Turning on the Holiday Lights takes a village, as they say. At the very least, many of our hard-working FBGF members. For many months. Kudos to Terry and Richard Berube, our detail-oriented renaissance couple who did everything from repairing the welcome sign at the eleventh hour to coordinating the Gift and Plant Sale. Vivian Haicken, Chuck’s co-chair, found donors and sponsors. Barbara Goss put together an amazing lineup of entertainers, including musicians, singers, dancers, accordion players, church choirs, and the 4-H Ballroom Bicycle Brigade. Scheduler Jean Barnes and her spreadsheets kept track of who was working when. Pat Dieterich worked her magic with the signs and banners. Emma Eshbaugh and Sue Hamill decorated the Extension Building lobby. The trains set up for opening weekend by the Tampa Division of the Florida Garden Railway Society were a hit with the children and maybe more so with the adults.

OFF TO A GREAT START

Thanks to great publicity, good weather despite afternoon showers, and the generosity of hundreds of visitors, Foundation treasurer Mary Sweeney reports donations of $3,100 for the opening day on Friday and the same for Saturday. Wow! The crowds slowed a little on Sunday but we still did $1,700. These figures don’t even include the gift shop and food concession percentage.

Chuck was doing virtual cartwheels. "I remember two years ago when Mary and I did the money counting and we were so happy that we made $600 in one night! Most of the time it was around $300. We've come a long way in a short time and it's all due to the commitment of our members and volunteers."

The dazzling lights will be illuminating the Gardens from 5:30 to 9:30 each night through Jan. 2 with a variety of vendors and entertainers adding to the festivities. The Plant and Gift Sale will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Dec. 12. The popular Dog Parade is Sunday, Dec. 26. New this year, the Botanical Bounty Gift Shop will be open every night. Greeters are still needed for some evenings; contact Chuck at cascaffidi@juno.com.
We are especially appreciative of staff, MGs, and others who contribute articles, events and other items of interest to *The Green Leaf* each month. Please submit your input by the 20th of each month. This will help us assemble and publish the newsletter in a timely manner. 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 at (727) 582-2117.

Chuck Scaffidi
MG Editor

*The Green Leaf* is published by Pinellas County Extension for the County Master Gardeners and others. The newsletter depends on submission of articles from Master Gardeners, Extension staff and other authors.

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*The Green Leaf* and archives are available on-line by clicking on [newsletter](mailto:escaffidi@co.pinellas.fl.us).
The Florida Friendly, Certified Deluxe Garden of Master Gardener Terri Ziegler

By PAMELA DeLONG, MG
Photos by Jean Barnes

Just over the Belleair Beach Causeway bridge and after taking a right turn at Harborview Road my plant-lovin' adrenaline fired up in anticipation of a really fun garden tour. As a "native plant hound", I was tickled to be visiting an unexplored neighborhood whose entrance I pass every day!

Turning onto Orangewood Lane, I saw the cars and an oasis of lush green followed by a swaying row of my favorite Muhly grass. Bingo! I heard laughter and excited chatter as I made my way into fellow Master Gardener Terri Ziegler's yard and was soon "oohing" and "aahing" over the neatly laid, shimmering mosaic tiles expertly crafted by Terri herself. At the same time, I was lulled by a serene water fountain ornament inviting wildlife to the party!

Terri's welcoming front yard beckons one to travel both the brick pavers and tidy pine needle paths. I found myself murmuring greetings to familiar plants such as the sweet little sunshine mimosa that was intermingled with perennial peanut. (Rabbits had eaten the latter down to the ground so she added the mimosa and voila! - the peanuts came back!)

This yard is a dreamy foliage paradise. Plumbago and shrimp plant catch the eye. There's gorgeous rosemary as tall as I am that Terri can snap any time it is needed for a recipe. Asiatic jasmine fills in areas. Porterweed is beautiful in blue, while a tall powder puff Calliandra buzzes with bees and some lovely silver saw palmettos mark a corner leading to the backyard. There's also a stately silver buttonwood tree that the Zeiglers can view from their front window and an abundance of snowbush and crown of thorns.

The front garden was started 18 years ago and worked in sections. Azaleas were allowed to die and ilex were planted in their place. The pines were already there. According to Terri, everything was done on a trial and error basis. At first she would mow the grass each week and add chemicals. Turns out, however, that her husband Lane was allergic so they put in a soaker hose sprinkler system and Asiatic jasmine ground cover. Depending on rainfall, they now have to water only once a week. No chemicals needed.

It's impossible for a plant buff to choose just one favorite area. As I walked around the house to the south side of the yard, healthy fishtail palms and cross vines demand attention. Benches offer a tempting place to enjoy this sanctuary of peace. Near a majestic live oak is a beautiful little pond. (Terri says keeping the raccoons out of the pond has been the biggest challenge in the entire garden.) A cherry laurel provides welcome shade for a circle of plumbago, bromeliads and hearty cardboard palms which were started in pots. An orange tree keeps Terri and Lane supplied with juice.

Another interesting element to the landscape is the bamboo fencing which they built themselves from uncooperative plants they removed. Triangle palms separate the swimming pool and hot tub and graced the entire backyard. The agave Terri planted to keep her dogs out of the east side of the yard don't work that well with the dogs, she says, but did with me. I was accidentally goosed by one while saying goodbye to someone!

As we were leaving, we passed a pretty magnolia tree and more silver saw palmettos plus beauty berries, more colorful mosaic tiles made by Terri, and smart rain barrels. It was such a pleasure to spend the morning in a native plant garden. Such a difference from the formal hedges of neighboring yards, but I did smile when I noted a clump of beauty berry.

Thanks so much, Terri. It was the best prelude to some hospice training which I was headed to after the respite in your blissful yard.

Hostess Terri Ziegler, Chuck Scaffidi and Suzanne Girves

Yard Tour guests enjoy backyard pool patio.
Marcel Pincince’s Yard Tour … What A Treat

Article and Photos By JOANNE DRAKE, MG

Marcel Pincince, Master Gardener, Viet Nam veteran and host of our Nov. 16 yard tour, has been gardening since the age of four, when he began following his grandpa around his garden in Blackstone, Massachusetts. What a thrill it must have been for little Marcel to pull a carrot from that garden, wash it off and take a bite from that fresh vegetable! He really got a taste for tomatoes, too, because he still grows them in his Pinellas Park backyard.

Before ever entering the backyard it must have taken Donna Zacharaczyk and myself 30 minutes to view and absorb the beauty of his front and side yard from the sidewalk. Marcel has a wonderful eye for color combinations and almost every plant is labeled with common and botanical names, which is most helpful, not only for us but also for neighborhood foot traffic. It encourages people walking their dogs or jogging by to slow their pace and take in the beauty of his yard.

We had the chance to meet Marcel’s lovely wife Mary, an artist who enjoys painting birds and plants. She also enjoys seeing all the beautiful colors in their own yard. She says they make good subjects for her paintings. Master Gardeners enjoyed strolling the backyard while talking with Marcel and others … exchanging ideas and information. The background classical music was a nice touch, too. Mary and Marcel surely have a relaxing atmosphere! Everything was beautiful, even the weather… around 76 degrees.

Since becoming Master Gardeners Pat Mann and Marcel have become close gardening buddies … helping each other with their home gardens besides working together as volunteers at Pinellas County Extension Center.

We Master Gardeners at Extension are so lucky to have Marcel as a friend and volunteer who works many hours in the Gardens. He has been so dedicated and helpful … a great inspiration to all. He is also very generous in sharing plants, cuttings and bulbs as he did on the tour.

Thanks, Marcel and Mary! We greatly enjoyed visiting with you and touring your lovely yard.
Pruning Now Can Harm Your Plants

by JANE MORSE, University of Florida/IFAS Pinellas County Extension Agent

Trees and shrubs may be looking shabby, but don’t prune just yet. Although light pruning can be done any time of the year, pruning at the wrong time can cause cold damage to your plants. Pruning in the late fall or early winter stimulates new growth, especially if we have a mild winter. This new growth is very tender and easily damaged, even by a light frost. It is much better to wait until spring bud-break before pruning. This will reduce the risk of cold damage.

But wait, there is even more to know before you start pruning in late February or early March. Plants that set their buds on old wood must be pruned AFTER they bloom. These plants set their flower buds on the previous year’s growth, the buds overwinter and then they flower in the spring. Plants that bloom on old wood include azalea, magnolia, Indian hawthorn and some hydrangea. To get the most flowering from these plants, wait until after their spring bloom to prune. Begin pinching the new shoots as they grow. This pinching will give the plant lots of lateral branches which can then develop flower buds for a spectacular bloom next year. Buds will start to form in July, so stop pruning after June.

Plants that produce flowers on this year’s growth are usually pruned while dormant (January/February) or just before the spring growth flush. These plants include crape myrtle, hibiscus, allamanda, plumbago, frangipani and rose. To encourage the most plant growth, prune just prior to the first spring growth flush. To slow growth and keep plants smaller, prune just after each growth flush. Again, pinching of new growth will encourage lateral branching, and thus produce more flowers.

Most evergreens such as podocarpus, holly, ligustrum, juniper and wax myrtle can be pruned anytime. Terminal growth of pines can be controlled by removing one-half of the candle (new shoot) in the spring just prior to needle expansion. This encourages new bud formation at the pinch, slows growth on the pinched branch and creates a more compact plant. New buds will not form behind pruning cuts made into older wood.

Pruning wounds callus (scab) the best when cuts are made just before, or immediately following, the spring growth flush. Quick wound closure is important for keeping insects, diseases and decay organisms from entering the plant, and it also looks better. The smaller the diameter of the branch that is cut the better it is for wound closure. Aim to trim only those branches that are about the thickness of a finger or less. When large branches are removed there is a higher likelihood that disease rotting organisms or other pests will enter the wood and cause problems as time progresses. Another good rule to follow is to only remove one-third of a plant’s entire mass when pruning.

The first step in pruning a shrub is to remove all dead, diseased or injured branches. Also, remove branches that cross or touch each other, or those growing haphazardly. Cut each branch separately to different lengths with hand pruners. Cut back long branches to a bud or lateral branch six to 12 inches below the desired plant height. When cutting back terminal shoots, make the cut on a sight slant a quarter inch above a healthy bud. The bud should be facing the direction you want the branch to grow. Pruning in this manner creates a beautiful shrub that does not show any pruning cuts.

When pruning for a formal hedge, pruning should be done while the new growth is green and tender. Always prune so that the base of the hedge is wider than the top. Think of a Christmas tree shape – wider at the base than at the top. It’s best to cut each branch separately rather than using hedge shears.

To keep from spreading disease, always clean pruning equipment with a disinfectant before using on a new plant. If pruning diseased branches, clean equipment before moving to the next branch. A good disinfectant to use is a 70%-100% alcohol solution.

For more information, Google “Pruning Landscape Trees and Shrubs IFAS” or “Disinfection of Horticultural Tools IFAS”.

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Foundation's Facebook Finding Friends

People are discovering our Facebook page and some excellent photographers are posting beautiful pictures. Many are generating their own fans.

One recent posting is by Barb Derusha, who took some fabulous photos of the Holiday Lights in the Garden. “Great work on getting everyone in the Christmas spirit!” she wrote. One of our favorites is of the poinsettia tree at the end of the bridge to the Wedding Garden.

Another fan is Stephanie Chad Haifley, who captured a few visitors crossing the lights-draped bridge. “Spectacular Holiday Lights!” she commented.

If you haven't signed up, it's easy to do. Use the link below and click on the green signup button at the top of the page. Become a fan today so that you can view visitor photos and comments. If you have photos of the gardens you would like to share on our Facebook page, we'd love to have them. You can also share your experience at the gardens on the “Wall.”

Become a fan, check out our on-line gallery of Garden photos, and invite your friends to become fans as well! [Link to the FBG Facebook]

The Legend of the Poinsettia

Looking around our gardens one would think this is the season of the poinsettia. Their lovely red and green color brightens up the landscape. They are actually native to Mexico, called *Flor de nochebuena*, or *Euphorbia pulcherrima* botanically. William Prescott named the plant after the ambassador to Mexico, Joel Poinsett, in 1828. It was actually Ambassador Poinsett who brought the flowers to the United States.

It was during the 18th century in Mexico that it was thought the plants were symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem and the flower became associated with the Christmas season.

According to the Mexican legend, a child knelt before the altar at his village's church on Christmas Eve. Since he had no money, he could not get a gift of offer to the Christ Child on his birthday. His prayers were sincere, and through a miracle, the first "Flower of the Holy Night" bloomed at his feet. This was the birth of the Poinsettia.

Of course, there are more legends making the rounds. Another story goes that a poor Mexican child on her way to church on Christmas Eve wept because she had no gift to offer the Christ Child. Through her tears, an angel suddenly appeared and instructed her to gather weeds from the roadside. When the child arrived at the altar with her wilted offerings, starry crimson blossoms burst forth from every stem.

Colored bracts surrounding the real flowers, which appear as a cluster of yellow berries called cyanthia, produce the brilliant display of the poinsettia. The petal-like bracts are modified leaves located at the junction of the flower stalks and main stem. The actual flowers are tiny and yellow, but are surrounded by large and colorful leaves often mistaken for petals.
Hand-Picked Gifts for Garden Lovers

Looking for gardening gift ideas for the garden lover in your family or circle of friends? You’re in luck. The Holiday Lights Gift and Plant Sale and the Foundation’s Botanical Bounty Gift Shop promise selections that are guaranteed to delight anyone on your shopping list.

Shop manager and buyer Stacey Zidi has stocked her shelves with a truly wonderful and unique array of decorative accessories.

The gift shop will be open each night during Holiday Lights from 5:30-9:30 p.m. (weather permitting). Regular hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Proceeds benefit the Gardens and its programs.

The Gift and Plant Sale is Sunday, Dec. 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with free admission and more than 35 vendors. It will feature everything from tropical plants to books, ceramics and jewelry, according to the event coordinator Terry Berube.


*Please support us as you shop for your holiday gifts! All proceeds benefit the Gardens.*

Another Way to Volunteer

By KATHLEEN JAMISON, Assistant Editor
Photo by Jean Barnes

Master Gardener Terry Berube wears several different Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation hats – nurturing plants, tending to membership business and, as of this summer, she can be found every other Friday afternoon working in the Foundation’s Botanical Bounty Gift Shop in the Pinellas County Extension Building.

“After years of weeding, watering, planting and generally mucking around in the various gardens, working in the gift shop is a whole new way to contribute,” she says. “I’m loving it. Especially the opportunity it gives me to meet and talk to visitors in between ringing up bottles of water and the fabulous gift items that we sell.”

Other MGs might enjoy the experience, Terry says. At present she’s the only MG volunteering in the small and charming gift shop. “If you decide being in the air conditioning is more your cup of tea, working in the gift shop is a very satisfying way to contribute. Proceeds benefit Foundation programs and the Gardens.”

Stacey Zidi is always on the lookout for more help. Contact her at 727 582-2251 for volunteer opportunities.
The Great American Teach-in

BY CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG Editor

In the fall of each year, Progress Energy sponsors the Great American Teach-in. The purpose of the Teach-in is to have people from all walks of life talk to students in school about their careers and personal experiences.

Extension has been a participant for many years. Staff and volunteers have graciously offered a day to these students to tell them about the varied careers within our own ranks.

I have been participating in this educational learning program for the past six years and only wish I had started sooner. It’s an honor to be able to tell our youth what your work life was all about and to see in their eyes the interest generated by the stories we tell.

You can tell how excited I am about this experience, so much that I want to keep writing about it, but I better end my story now with a little advice: Do it! Teach-in is rewarding for both you and the students.

A Fond Farewell

FBG horticultural staff and Master Gardeners gathered at popular watering hole Jimmy Guana’s in Indian Rocks Beach on Oct. 29 to bid adieu to friends and colleagues caught up in the recent Pinellas County cutbacks. Guests of honor were Cindy Peacock and Jean Field, horticulturists; Wilma Holley, who worked in the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program; and Paula Jensen from the administration side. Together they served Pinellas County for well over 50 years. They will be missed. (Photos by Chuck Scaffidi)
The CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW and ENGLISH GARDENS

Next May 21—28

If you’ve always yearned to visit some of England’s grandest gardens in the springtime, the Travel Unlimited agency is offering a week-long tour for $2,799 that includes a day at the Chelsea Flower Show, one of the world’s pre-eminent horticultural events; a day at the award-winning Borde Hill Gardens on the grounds of a 16th century Tudor mansion in the Sussex High Weald; afternoon high tea at a private estate; and a $50 American Express gift card for Florida Botanical Gardens Master Gardeners, FBG Foundation members and volunteers. For more information, call the travel agency at 800-645-6969. FBGF will receive a percentage that will benefit our Gardens.

Join Foundation President Chuck Scaffidi and his wife Joan on this garden lover’s dream trip. He has brochures in the volunteer office if you want to learn more.

Walk of Hope

While walking 60 miles across Pinellas County, beginning at Sand Key Park in Clearwater on Oct. 22 and ending at Spa Beach Park in St. Pete, the hundreds of participants in this year’s Tampa Bay Susan G. Komen Three-Day Walk for the Cure had a chance to enjoy—at least briefly—our Florida Botanical Gardens. One of the way stations, including first aid, was set up at the Walsingham entrance.

Survivors and supporters walk to raise money for breast cancer research. (Photos by Chuck Scaffidi)
**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Nursery Discounts
- Extensions Classes
- Volunteer Hours & VMS
- MG Update
- Garden Tours
- Rainbow Village
- Pinellas Village
- Weedon Plant Clinic
- East Lake Library

**EDUCATION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- MG CEU Credits
- Palm Harbor Class
- St. Pete Library Class
- Planting Pinellas Blog

**A Great Benefit for FBGF Members, MGs**

One of the benefits of Foundation membership is getting 10% discounts 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.

- Art Stone Orchids
  3611 Tyrone Blvd, St. Petersburg
- Palm Harbor Nursery & Landscaping (cash and carry items)
  450 Riviere Rd, Palm Harbor
- Summerwood Gardens, Inc
  11711 Tarpon Springs Rd., Odessa
- Carroll Brothers Nursery
  4950 38th Ave N, St. Petersburg
- Twigs and Leaves
  1013 MLK St. S (9th St), St. Petersburg
- Country Club Nursery
  9850 Starkey Road, Largo
- Earthscapes Garden Room
  816 Alt. 19 N, Palm Harbor
- Wilcox Nursery
  12501 Indian Rocks Road, Largo
- Kathy’s Korner (trees)
  Nursery Inc. & Tree Farm
  6095 Haines Road North, St. Petersburg
- Willow Tree Nursery
  4401 49th St. N, St. Petersburg

**Record Your Volunteer Hours**

Please Remember to Sign Out!

The computer program for logging volunteer hours is outside the volunteer office, near the Help Desk. Make this your first stop and last stop. You must sign in and sign out when you are at Extension. When the computer is not functioning you can still log your time in the book. For those who volunteer at other facilities, e-mail your hours after your visit. With more than 200 volunteers at Extension, it becomes a considerable burden on the volunteer coordinators to manually enter your hours. When not at Extension, please e-mail your hours to: cscaffidi@co.pinellas.fl.us Direct questions to volunteer coordinator Chuck Scaffidi or assistant Emma Eshbaugh.

This system and procedures applies only to non-MG volunteers.

**Extension Classes**

Visit Extension’s on-line calendar page for a list of classes that are being offered free to MGs, volunteers and FBGF members. (Must show membership card.) All others pay a nominal fee of $15. You can register on-line.

**Volunteer Hours for Master Gardeners**

The on-line Master Gardener VMS system is up and running and you can now check news updates, e-mail, and input your volunteer hours through an exclusive Pinellas County MG website. Personal e-mail addresses are required for access, so if you currently share one with a spouse or other MG, you’ll have to set up a free personal account.

We will all benefit from this new system and we will continue to everyone updated as we move forward. The system is web-based, secure and user-friendly - you can even jump on from your web-enabled cell-phone if you like. Go to https://florida.volunteersystem.org and click on the New User tab to get started.

For those who are unable to input hours, we will still provide a log book and a volunteer to input your hours.

Volunteers, other than MGs, will continue to use the same County VSP system and log book outside the volunteer office. Please adhere to the policy described in box at left.

The transition may take time to get use to, but we will do everything possible to ensure that your volunteer hours will not be lost.
MG Update, Dec. 8

Chris Claus, water conservation coordinator for the City of St. Pete, will lead a tour of St. Pete’s Florida Friendly Demonstration Garden at the Water Resources Department administration building, 1650 Third Avenue North. We will have lunch after the tour at Savannah’s Restaurant. If you are attending, please sign up on the VMS calendar or by calling Theresa Badurek at 727 582-2109. She needs a head count for the restaurant. This will serve as our December Garden Tour.

Garden Tour, Looking Ahead

The Jan. 18 Garden Tour will be at the Pinellas Solid Waste Facility. This demonstration of how Pinellas County handles solid waste and recycling will get started at 9:45 a.m. and is limited to 20 people on a first-come, first-served basis. Call Phyl Lawson at 363-0067 or e-mail her at pjlawson@tampabay.rr.com. If more people want to attend, she will schedule another tour. The plant is located at 3095 114th Ave N in St. Petersburg. We’ll see how all that yard waste is transformed into our free mulch.

Rainbow Village Community Garden

This neighborhood, which is just across Ulmerton from the Botanical Gardens, is planning a community garden and needs a Master Gardener or two or three. This would be a great group to work with. They have plenty of space and kids who could really benefit from this kind of learning and community experience.

Contact Theresa Badurek at 727-582-2109 or tbadurek@pinellascounty.org to follow up on any of the items below.

Pinellas Village in Largo is having a problem with invasive exotics. Do we have any Master Gardeners or other volunteers who can identify plants and mark them for removal? They are looking for help within the next two weeks. Please let me know ASAP.

New Plant Clinic for Weedon Island. Saturdays are preferred, but the preserve is open to the public on Thursdays and Fridays as well. It could be monthly or once or twice a month. The schedule will depend on MG availability. Those who work at the Help Desk or the Palm Harbor Library know what is involved, but we can train others who are interested.

East Lake Community Library has requested an MG to help with designing, planting and maintaining a small raised garden, about 8’x14’. They want to replace existing plants with Florida Friendly species and add signage to educate the public. This would be a great opportunity show showcase the Master Gardener program.

Education

Earn Continuing Education Credits

Master Gardeners can earn up to four continuing education credits by completing Plant ID Modules at 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 to 3:30 p.m. and from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m. at the Palm Harbor Library, 2330 Nebraska Avenue. To register, go to www.pinellascountyextension.org, click on the “Online Class Registration” button and then the “Lawn & Garden” tab. You may also call (727) 582-2100. There will be no classes in December.

St. Petersburg Community Library MG Class Series

Classes offered free at the West St. Petersburg Community Library, 6605 5 Ave. N. To register, go to www.pinellascountyextension.org, click on the “Online Class Registration” button and then the “Lawn & Garden” tab. You may also call (727) 582-2100.

New “Planting Pinellas” blog

Check it out at http://plantingpinellas.blogspot.com/
My Thoughts
By THERESA BADUREK, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent

I don’t know about everyone, but most of us would love to find simple, creative ways to save money during the holiday season. One great way to do this is to use your Master Gardener talents for holiday gift-giving. Here are a few ideas:

- Share your time with a neighbor who is unable (or short on time) to tend his or her garden or landscape.
- Create beautiful potted gardens as gifts for friends and family—complete with care guides for those without a green thumb!
- If you are growing your own edibles, make gift baskets that put fresh seasonal selections on someone’s holiday table. Who knows, sharing your bounty may even peak the interest of a new gardener.
- Encourage the kids on your holiday list by putting together a children’s garden kit complete with child-sized tools and seeds in a cute little bucket. The quality time they spend with you or other family members will last well after the wrapping paper has been recycled.

A Master Gardener has many talents to share, and what a fun way to save money and be creative this holiday season!

Thanks for everything all you Master Gardeners and volunteers give to the Gardens all year-round. Yours are truly the gifts that keep on giving.

Happy holidays to all of you and your families!

Theresa
727-582-2109
tbadurek@pinellascounty.org

2010 December Thank You, Volunteers!

- **Monday, Dec. 8**
  Master Gardener Update
  Tour of St. Pete’s Water Resources Department’s Florida Friendly Demonstration Garden. Dutch treat lunch at Savannah’s Restaurant.

- **See you at Holiday Lights in the Gardens, 5:30-9:30 each evening through Jan. 2**

- **Gift and Plant Sale**
  Dec. 12, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

- **Dog Parade**
  Dec. 26, 3 p.m.

MG Plant Clinic at the Palm Harbor Library—Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Master Gardeners offer diagnostic services along with information about identifying plants, treatment for insects and ideas for Florida-friendly landscaping. **Clinic closed in December.**

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)