Holiday Lights Wrap Up With a Bang

CHUCK SCAFFIDI, FBG Foundation President

We did it! The Foundation's 2010 Holiday Lights in the Gardens goals were to bring more joy to our community with bigger and better light displays and more exciting entertainment and, while we were at it, to put more into the kitty for future Garden projects. Thanks to the many hard-working lights team members, Foundation members and volunteers, we exceeded all expectations!

According to Erhan Ozey, our new Foundation treasurer and keeper of statistics par excellence, during the 38 days of the Holiday Lights there were 42,158 generous and appreciative visitors who made an average nightly donation of $1,812.60, for a total of $68,878.62! That's $11,000 more than we took in last year. All I can say is "WOW!"

While the unseasonably cold weather (for Florida) kept our numbers down on a few evenings - only 44 braved the elements on Dec. 13, our lowest attendance - we bounced back up to 3005 on Dec. 23, our highest attendance. Some "snowbirds" actually thought the dip in the mercury added a "touch of home."

Along with several team members, I was on hand most nights and had a chance to chat with many of our visitors. Trust me, all our hard work was most appreciated. Many were especially grateful to have a memory-making holiday experience to share with their families for such a small donation. Or no donation at all, if they couldn't afford it.

One of the keys to this year's success was the great publicity we got from Bright House, the St. Pete Times and local newspapers. The Foundation is also grateful for the support we received from the County Commissioners, the County Parks and Communications Department and Pinellas County Extension.

We won't be resting on our laurels, however. The lights team debriefing is set for Jan. 12 and already ideas are flowing for how we can top ourselves in 2011. Anyone wishing to get on the ground floor for the next Holiday Lights in the Gardens is encouraged to attend. We’ll be getting down to business at 9 a.m. in Mary Campbell’s conference room - after a few well-deserved minutes of patting ourselves on the back!

Thanks again to all.
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.

MANAGING EDITOR: Chuck Scaffidi, MG

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Kathleen Jamison, Volunteer

Please submit articles to c scaffidi@co.pinellas.fl.us

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

Doggies On Parade

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, FBGF Chair

The Dog Parade, one of the Holiday Lights special events, attracted 40 or so diehard pet lovers despite the awful weather on the morning of Dec. 26. All (both pets and their people) seemed to have a good time.

Judges Tyson Youts and Chuck Beyea, Pinellas County Animal Services employees, awarded prizes for the smallest, largest, best behaved, best dressed and cutest dogs. Every dog went home with a gift box of treats.

You can watch the parade at http://largo.patch.com/articles/dog-parade-2010#video-4188698
Orchids, Air Plants and Bromeliads, Oh My

By TERRY BERUBE, FBGF MEMBER

In spite of the weather (rain, wind and cold), the Dec. 12 Holiday Lights Gift and Plant Sale went very well. We made $1,075 in vendor fees and $69 in donations. Within the first hour more than 300 people came through the gates, and then the deluge. If the weather had been a normal Florida sunny day I think we would have come close to 2,000 people. Twenty-seven of the 41 paid vendors attended, all of whom asked about coming back next year. Looks like we had a winner.

I would like to especially thank Emma and David Eshbaugh for being there from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. helping the vendors load and unload and also dumping trash.

Other fabulous people were Pat Dieterich and Mary and John Sweeney who took care of the gate sets up and everything else I asked them to do. Thank you, Vivian, for the delicious Panera coffee and danish in the morning. Mary and John treated us all to pizza in the afternoon.

Another thanks to Vivian for working with me throughout the year on this project. She was a faithful believer and made all the tough calls to vendors.

Barbara Goss and Sue Hamill were great overall and got us a membership. (I think Barbara has formed quite a bond with my spouse, Richard, as she is in all of the pictures he took. Hmmm.)

Alicia Chivers, thanks for hanging in there and convincing George that the bridge was not the right place to be.

All in all, it was a wonderful day and I was very proud of what we did as a team of volunteers. Not to mention that we were all very good shoppers!

I look forward to next year.
What our Visitors Had to Say

This year’s Holiday Lights attracted visitors from Sarasota to Nova Scotia, Myrtle Beach to just down the street in Largo. Many took the time to make comments and suggestions. Thanks to Terry Berube for deciphering and compiling – in between all her other Holiday Lights duties!

“Love the Gardens. I’m a gardener who would rather garden than eat when I’m hungry.” Sally, Plant City

“It was just beautiful. I’ve never seen anything like it.” Clearwater.

“Five stars. Excellent.” Bob Wiedemer, Hanover County

“We feel more Christmasy now!” Mary, Sarasota.

“The Wedding Garden is especially beautiful and rivals the area at the Missouri Botanical Garden.”

“This is a highlight of the season. We came from North County to see the display of lights. I’ll be back with friends many times before the end of Christmas.”

“The light display is awesome. Well worth the visit,” Terry, Louise, Mew and Joyce, Nova Scotia

“Far above my expectations. Tranquil and beautiful – holiday mood making! Been to huge and small Christmas lighted gardens and this is one of the tops,” Ruth, Myrtle Beach, SC.

“What a great way to start the holiday season. Beautiful gardens. “ Hudson, FL

“What a pleasant way to experience the holiday season. Kudos to all the hardworking people who made this beautiful display possible. We will be returning to enjoy the gardens during the day,” Julie, Syracuse

“Awestruck!” Largo

“It’s absolutely beautiful.”

“Best year ever, the lights were beautiful.”

“First visit. Awesome!! Beyond words!”

“Thank you for a wonderful special memory. God bless you all.”

“The place looks spectacular. You are great!”

“We had a wonderful time so we came back. What a wonderful evening event to share with our holiday guests! Thank you,” Linda, St. Pete

“We are coming back in the daylight, soon,” Denise, Gulfport

“I’ll be back in the spring,” Jill, Jacksonville

“Naturally beautiful! The lights were spectacular.”

“Beautiful job. Enjoyed it,” Lew and Catherine, Delaware

“Each year is more beautiful than the year before.

This really puts us in the holiday spirit. The lights are beautiful. Great entertainment.”

“Better than awesome.”

“The garden is even prettier during the daylight than it is at night, as you can see all the natural flowers and trees.”

“Always a wonderful time. I come every year. Awesome. Keep up the great work,” Vicki Indian Rocks Beach.

“This is the most beautiful lights this year and so elegant.”

“Thanks for volunteering. You’ve got a great little thing here.”

“Very beautiful. Like an enchanted forest.”

“The Botanical Garden Lights display gets lovelier every year and this year is the most diverse and elegant yet. Keep up the good work.”

“This was my daughter’s first Christmas. Thank you for making it such a wonderful experience. It was beautiful.”

“We were married here in 2003. Big improvement. Fell in love all over again.”

“This is the best display of all the years I have been coming here. I am 80. Happy to see the Gardens revived.”

“It just keeps getting better every year. Thank you.”
The St. Petersburg Water Resource Department Yard Tour

By Chuck Scaffidi, MG
Photos by Jean Barnes

Chris Claus, a long-time and well-respected Pinellas County Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FY&N) agent who is now a water conservation coordinator for the St. Petersburg Water Resources Department Administration, was the host of our Dec. 8 Yard Tour. Twenty or so FBGF members carpooled to St. Pete to check out the Florida Friendly demonstration garden that Chris helped create around the building and also to admire the 100 plant signs that were provided by the Foundation and engraved, each and every one, by our Master Gardener board member Emma Eshbaugh. Money received for this project was donated to the Foundation to help maintain the sign-making equipment.

The morning was capped off with lunch and more plant talk with Chris at the highly recommended Savannah's (former owner of Saffron's). What a nice social gathering and a delicious lunch we had while being entertained by the most gregarious waiter.

Check out the “yard tourers” below and the Department’s Florida Friendly Landscaping brochure on the next page. Notice how everyone is dressed on this chilly morn.

The next Yard Tour will be on Jan. 18 at the Pinellas County Solid Waste Facility.
Applying Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Concepts

- Select plants to match the unique requirements of each planting site; then group plants according to their water needs.
- Consider using drip or micro-irrigation in landscape beds.
- Use iron (found as ferrous sulfate or chelated iron) instead of nitrogen to green-up your lawn during the summer.
- Attract wildlife to your yard by installing a variety of plants in different sizes and heights.
- Maintain organic mulch in landscape beds at 2"-3" depth.
- Use non-chemical approaches to pest control, such as carefully removing insects by hand and pruning affected areas.
- Capture and hold stormwater temporarily on your property by creating rain gardens or swales.
- Pick up after pets to help reduce bacteria and nutrients entering local water bodies and the Bay.
- Create self-mulching beds under trees by reusing fallen tree leaves and needles as mulch.

Learn more about Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Florida-Friendly Living:
http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/FFL/index.html

The Nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Principles:
http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/Nine_principles/player.html

Florida-Friendly Plant List:
http://floridayards.org

SWFWMD
http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/yards/

St. Petersburg
Water Resources Department

Florida-Friendly Demonstration Garden

Sponsored by the
Pinellas-Anclote River Basin Board of the
Southwest Florida Water Management District

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Water Resources Department
1650 Third Avenue North
St. Petersburg, Florida 33713
Phone: 727-893-7261
E-mail: water@stpete.org
Website: www.stpete.org/water

07/01/2010
Fan Photos from Florida Botanical Gardens

Thanks to all our Facebook fans for capturing the beauty of our Holiday Lights. Among images posted by Julie de Leseleuc are a long-legged wading bird overlooking a fountain in one of the garden ponds and a closeup of a few of the thousands of environmentally-friendly lights entwining branches and leaves. Gregory Urbano, aka Citrus Lens, posted an algae-bedecked alligator. To help celebrate the holidays, the Florida Botanical Garden Bluegrass Band performed to an enthusiastic, hand-clappin’, foot-stompin’ crowd one Sunday night. One couple just couldn't sit down and had to dance. Eeeeha!! Go to our Facebook link and click on the video to watch the performance.

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
A Sneak Peak

Artist Heather Anderson poses with the first corner of the glass mosaic that will soon fill the empty pools of the Wedding Garden with swirling water, gold fish and lily pads. She and her glass-cutting and glass-gluing volunteers have been working for several months on the colorful design. There’s plenty more to do and all volunteers are welcome. No special artistic talent required. Call volunteer coordinator Chuck Scaffidi at 727-582-2117 for details.

Photos by FBGB volunteer photographer Chuck Rennick.

The above photo with Heather Anderson was taken recently by volunteer Chuck Rennick

Close-up of a section of the mosaic

The first mosaic section of the wedding garden’s former fountain areas was completed and displayed, but not installed. Heather Anderson is pictured there and has been receiving much publicity about her work. She has many thanks for the volunteers who have been working several months to achieve completing the first corner of the wedding garden.

There is much more work to be accomplished so let Heather know your interest in helping at studio@andersonart.com

The following links describe this beautiful mosaic project in detail:


http://www.tbnweekly.com/pinellas_county/content_articles/120810_pco-01.txt

The above photo with Heather Anderson

Close-up of a section of the mosaic

The CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW and ENGLISH GARDENS
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.
**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Nursery Discounts
- Extension Classes
- Volunteer Hours & VMS
- MG Update
- Garden Tour
- Rainbow Village
- Weeden Plant Clinic
- East Lake Library

**EDUCATION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- MG CEU Credits
- Palm Harbor Class
- St. Pete Library Class
- Planting Pinellas Blog
- Speaker Needed
- Search for Excellence

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**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
- Wilcox Nursery
  12501 Indian Rocks Road, Largo
- Earthscapes Garden Room
  816 Alt. 19 N, Palm Harbor
- Willow Tree Nursery
  4401 49th St. N, St. Petersburg
- Kathy’s Korner (trees)
  Nursery Inc. & Tree Farm
  6095 Haines Road North, St. Petersburg
- Palm Harbor Class
- St. Pete Library Class
- Planting Pinellas Blog
- Speaker Needed
- Search for Excellence

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**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.

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**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](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 the side-bar at left.

This month we will begin to transfer your volunteer hours from VSP to VMS.
MG Update, Jan 7, Friday 9am-noon

The January MG Update will be the New Year kick-off. We will have a review of the VMS and how to report hours and contacts. We will also be doing an activity and having some fun. Andy will present a diagnostic session to get the new year going- and this is a potluck meeting. You don't want miss it!

Garden Tour, Jan 18

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.

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. Please let me know if you want to be an MG pioneer in this project!

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 to showcase the Master Gardener program.

Common Ground Community Garden in Safety Harbor

Needs someone to be hands-on at the corporate level to coordinate. Busy job to begin with, but very rewarding, The current coordinator is moving out of state and wants to leave the garden in capable hands, If any of you has experience with project management/coordination efforts you may be the right person for the job. It would also present an excellent opportunity to inject the gardens with Master Gardener educational programs.

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.pinellascountymextextension.org, click on the “Online Class Registration” button and then the “Extension Service” button ” You may also call (727) 582-2100.

St. Petersburg Community Library MG Class Series

Classes are offered free at the West St. Petersburg Community Library, 6605 5 Ave. N. To register, go to www.pinellascountymextextension.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/
Speaker Needed

A local senior group has requested a speaker to talk about tree selection and planting for Pinellas County. The event is on Jan. 27th at 9am and the presentation should last about an hour. Its a small group- only about 10-12 and they are offering coffee and snacks. The group meets at St. Justin's Church at 10851 Ridge Rd., Seminole, FL. Please let me know if you would like to talk to this fun group! They are open to other horticultural topics if you have another interest you would like to share with them.

Search for Excellence

Applications are due on Feb 1, 2011. The International Master Gardener Search for Excellence is the recognition program of Master Gardener volunteer work throughout the United States and Canada. Search for Excellence has seven categories in which Master Gardeners can demonstrate their outstanding contributions to their communities. Awards will be given out at the International Master Gardener Conference in Charleston, West Virginia October 11-14, 2011. For information on past winners and the application procedure go to: http://www.extension.org/pages/International_Master_Gardener_Search_for_Excellence

If anyone is interested in submitting please see me for assistance!
Contact Theresa Badurek at 727-582-2109 or tbadurek@pinellascounty.org to follow up on any of the items in the newsletter.

My Thoughts

By THERESA BADUREK, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent

It’s 2011 and I am so excited about the New Year! You are a wonderful group and it has been a pleasure working with you. I know this year will be even better than last year. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication.

There are a lot of exciting things on the horizon for the coming year so please stay tuned to your weekly “MG Digest” emails!

Also, be on the lookout for new faces: we are training a new class of Master Gardeners in February, so be sure to say hello and welcome them to Extension.

Thank you- let’s have a Great New Year!
Theresa

2010 January Thank You, Volunteers!

- MG up-date Friday, Jan.7, 9pm-noon. Activity & Diagnostic session. Pot Luck
- Garden Tour Jan 18 Pinellas Solid Waste Facility

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.

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?