Suncoast Botanical Garden Remnants Still Offer 60 Acres of Tranquility

By WAYNE AYERS, FBGF Heritage Advisor

Tucked away in a quiet corner of Walsingham Park are the remnants of what was once this area’s only public botanical garden and perhaps the only subtropical gardens in the continental USA.

The Suncoast Botanical Gardens opened in 1962 in the southeast corner of what is now Walsingham Park, just off 102nd Avenue in Largo. Its 60 acres surround Lake Mildred, named for the botanical gardens founder Mildred Palmer, who worked with horticulturists to create “a setting in which many varieties of plants, trees, and flowers can flourish where once only scrub pine stood,” according to a St. Pete Times article.

A 100-foot black tupelo tree, which bees reportedly use in their tupelo honey-making process, a eucalyptus collection grown from Austrian seeds, more than 13 varieties of magnolias, an extensive collection of palms, and the largest holly trail in the area are described by a writer for the Evening Independent. Others mention bromeliads, ginger plants, philodendrons, a monkey puzzle tree, and a giant bird of paradise.

The Suncoast Botanical Garden was a life work of Mildred Palmer, who took great pride in its unique “subtropical” character. That means, she once explained, that “plants native to temperate climes such as Georgia, and truly tropical climates such as that found in southern Florida, both can flourish with proper care and supervision.”

Under Mrs. Palmer’s direction, the gardens and community support did flourish. At one point, the Suncoast Botanical Society could claim more than 250 members. The group’s famous yearly plant sales helped keep the funds flowing.

By the mid-’80s, however, membership had declined to 60, most of them aging along with Mildred Palmer. In 1987, after 25 years, the Suncoast Botanical Garden shut down as a formal operation.

Today, however, the remnants of the old botanical garden still live up to their boast of “60 acres of gorgeous tranquility.” My wife Nancy and I were attracted to the site while walking the Walsingham Park main trail in April. There was a blaze of color from azaleas reflecting off the lake’s surface. We walked the path surrounding the water, not knowing of the area’s past, but realizing we were someplace exotic and special.

The “gorgeous tranquility” Mildred Palmer and her associates worked to create years before was profoundly present.
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 Master Gardeners and others. The newsletter depends on submission of articles from Master Gardeners, Extension Staff and other authors.

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Please send articles to cscaffidi@co.pinellas.fl.us.
The Green Leaf and archives are available on-line by clicking on “newsletter” at: http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/home_landscape/mg/

Stormproofing Our Trees
By PAT DIETERICH, MG

The award for “Most Creative Use of Vertical Space for a Presentation” surely must go to Guy Meillur, a Better Tree Care Associates master arborist, who spoke to MGs about all aspects of trees at the June 8 Update. After meeting inside for a brief introduction to his services, we all trooped outdoors and clustered on the deck while Guy scaled a mahogany tree just outside the front entrance to Extension. He spoke about the tree’s prospects for survival in a hurricane and the potential benefits of additional pruning—all while dangling from a harness 30 feet above us. Horticultural advice does not get much more dramatic! Proper safety gear was employed, of course.

Guy also enlarged our vocabularies while dispensing useful tidbits. He defined stem-girdling roots as “the tree training to strangle itself.” The verb “to guy” refers to a practice similar to staking a new tree, and can be a form of support for an established tree. “Raising” means removing downward growing sprouts on a branch, while “reduction” means making the branch shorter, and “thinning” means making the sprouts less dense. “Included” bark at a branch site curls in and has a high risk of failure, as opposed to “excluded” bark. In their habitat, trees can be considered dominant, emergent, suppressed or depressed.

Guy urged us to refrain from “volcano” mulch practices around all trees, and stressed that a tree’s root buttress be free to develop. Sometimes it is necessary to use a physical barrier like a rock to inhibit re-suckering. Laurel oaks die sooner, and are less strong than live oaks, thereby less desirable. We visited several trees in the time allotted, and enjoyed his candid assessments. He also provided handouts with helpful explanations and information. And, should you desire a free three-minute consultation, you can e-mail pictures to him at info@bettertreecare.com.
If We Plant It, They Will Come

By JANE MORSE, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Pinellas County

Have you ever thought of your landscape as a wildlife community development center with high rise apartments and homes, grocery stores, nurseries for babies, a waste management facility, bathhouses and water supply storage? In truth, that is exactly what a landscape is and what it provides for wildlife.

In our urban landscapes these wildlife communities are sparse and therefore in great demand. Each piece of land that has been cleared for our development has been a demolition of their development. It is up to us to rebuild their habitats and I believe it is also our obligation to do so. Building a community development for wildlife is easy and fun to do. It will also add value to our properties while enriching our lives.

We all enjoy seeing butterflies flit and flutter across the landscape; birds swoop and soar in the air, splash and drink in a bath of water, see dragonflies pose on a branch and then fly like an acrobat. As you look closer at wildlife it all becomes so amazing and beautiful. The tiny, almost microscopic wasp that feeds on a dainty flower is thrilling to watch. The unusual insects that come to drink nectar from the flowers and then become food for the birds have a beauty too. Even the black snake that searches for lizards and such to eat brings excitement to the heart. We need to be surrounded by wildlife more than we realize.

In building a development for wildlife we have to remember what they need: water, food, cover and space. Just like us! If we build (plant) it, they will come.

In your wildlife development, you should provide some type of water source such as a bird bath, pond or fountain. Keep the water fresh by hosing it out every few days. Scrub with a textured sponge to remove algae, and never use any chemicals. Food can be provided in a number of ways. First, select plants that provide fruit, seeds or nectar for the birds. Some of my favorite plants to use are firebush, beautyberry, myrsine, wild coffee, Florida privet and Yaupon holly. Firebush is a favorite plant for hummingbirds, the zebra longwing butterfly, mockingbirds and blue jays. Florida privet is a great plant for birds that love to eat insects or fruit. When privet flowers, it attracts all kinds of small insects which then hover around the plant. No need to be afraid of these insects, they do no harm to you or the landscape but are a wonderful source of food for birds. Critters that eat meat will prey on snakes, lizards, other birds, rats, etc. that are also living in the wildlife development. Choosing plants that will fill in all the spaces vertically (from high to low) provides cover for wildlife and places to raise their young. Wildlife’s last need is space. The amount of space needed for their life varies with the critter. The Florida panther needs several square miles in which to hunt and live, whereas an earthworm may only need a few square feet.

Plan your wildlife development. Choose your plants according to your site conditions (shade/sun, wet/dry, salt tolerance, soil pH). Native plants usually provide a better habitat because the animals have evolved with them. Water until well established. Then sit back and enjoy the beauty and bounty of nature. Give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done and realize that nature and wildlife thank you for giving them a home.

The more people who plant habitat for wildlife the better. These small, individual developments start to coalesce and link together, providing safer travel and more connections for wildlife. Get your neighbors involved and try to join your wildlife developments together. The more yards that join together the better.

After building your wildlife development it is also important not to poison it. Insecticides are rarely needed in a habitat that is in balance and where plants are properly chosen, placed, managed and healthy. When choosing pesticides, choose those that are less toxic or non-toxic to wildlife. Always dispose of chemicals properly.

Remember that pets can have a devastating effect on wildlife. Cats are especially good hunters and scientists estimate that they are responsible for killing hundreds of millions of birds and possibly more than a billion small mammals in the U.S. each year. Dogs will also chase and kill wildlife. Please keep pets under control.

For more information on creating a wildlife habitat check out this University of Florida publication online at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw175
Get To Know the Brown Recluse

From the IFAS web site [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in576](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in576)

What does a brown recluse spider look like?

Named for its habit of hiding in dark corners, the brown recluse spider (*Loxosceles reclusa*) is also known as the violin spider or fiddleback spider because of a violin-shaped marking. It is about a half-inch long (including legs) and is a solid light brown color. The violin marking is configured with the base beginning at the eyes and the neck of the violin pointing toward the "waist," but it is often difficult to see clearly. Two other features can help identify the brown recluse: it has six eyes rather than the typical eight and the tail-end segment has no markings. If you see a brown spider with markings on the tail end, it cannot be a brown recluse spider. Any markings, patterns or spots on the tail end of a spider immediately eliminates the possibility that it is a brown recluse spider. It is, instead, one of dozens of brown spiders that live in houses and yards. They may bite, but they are not dangerous.

What are the symptoms of a brown recluse spider bite?

A bite usually causes some pain or burning in the first 10 minutes, accompanied by itching. The wound takes on a bull's-eye appearance, with a center blister surrounded by an angry-looking red ring and then a blanched (white) ring. The blister breaks open, leaving an ulcer that scabs over. The ulcer can enlarge and involve underlying skin and muscle tissue. Pain may be severe. A generalized red, itchy rash usually appears in the first 24-48 hours. Other symptoms include fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, muscle aches and hemolytic anemia (a condition where the red blood cells are destroyed). People bitten by an unseen spider sometimes blame the brown recluse; however, there are a number of other spiders and insects, as well as other medical conditions, that are capable of producing tissue wounds of similar appearance, but are usually of a lesser severity.

What is the treatment for a brown recluse spider bite?

Treatment consists of washing the wound and applying an antibiotic ointment. The victim should seek medical attention if there are signs of an infection, an ulcer that does not heal, a bite accompanied by nausea, vomiting, fever or a rash. There is no special treatment or medication used to treat a brown recluse spider bite. If infection develops, antibiotics are used. If a wound becomes deep and infected, occasionally surgery is needed. Anytime there is a bite or a wound that is not healing and getting worse, see a physician for evaluation.

Bites may vary in severity from no symptoms at all to severe reactions such as kidney failure and ultimately death. Unfortunately, there is currently no effective therapy for brown recluse bites. Luckily, brown recluse spiders are more peaceful than most people believe.

Up to 50 percent of all diagnoses of brown recluse spider bites are in geographic regions of the U.S. where there aren't any brown recluse spiders. Many believe there are none in Florida. However, with all of the items that ship across the states as well as the world, creatures of all types could be accidentally re-located.

Make Your Own Sticky Spider Traps

Most spiders stay close to their webs, lying in wait for prey. Some spiders, however, wander in search of prey or mates at certain times of the year. Male hobo spiders (in fall) and brown recluse spiders are of this hunting/wandering type. Since wandering species move from place to place they are more likely to be found indoors. The number of spiders found indoors can be greatly reduced using simple sticky traps without the use of insecticide sprays.

Sticky traps are made of cardboard with a sticky material coating on one surface. They are placed along baseboards where wandering spiders tend to move. Spiders are trapped when they walk into the trap and try to cross the sticky surface. No insecticides or attractants (pheromones) are needed.

The simplest homemade trap is a piece of cardboard folded into a triangular tube about four inches long and three inches high. Coat the bottom inside surface with Tangle-Trap Insect Trap Coating.

Sticky board traps are a safe and effective method for eliminating a variety of crawling insects and spiders.

- Jack DeAngelis, PhD OSU Ext. Entomologist (ret.)
Those Terrible Ticks

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

The thought of ticks makes me shudder. Having to pull them off of your skin is just so disgusting. The fact that ticks can also spread Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tularemia and other diseases is even more reason to be unnerved. Fortunately, ticks must feed for several hours before disease organisms can be spread. Removing them as early as possible is important.

Luckily for humans, ticks prefer to attack dogs and other animals. The brown dog tick and the American dog tick are the most troublesome. The brown dog tick is usually found in homes, kennels, runs. The adult female lays between 1,000-3,000 eggs, usually in cracks on the roof of kennels, high on walls or ceilings of buildings, around baseboards, window and door casings, or on curtains, furniture and rug edges. The brown dog tick does not spread disease to humans. Outdoors ticks hide near foundations of buildings, in siding crevices or under porches.

The American dog tick is a common pest of pets and humans in Florida and may carry Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tularemia and other diseases from animals to people. This is an outdoor tick and is usually found along roads, paths and trails, on grass and other ground covers. When an animal walks by, it grabs on and starts feeding. In its early stages of life, it feeds on rodents. The adults search for larger prey, such as dogs or humans. This tick can lay between 4,000-6,500 eggs! Environmental conditions and weather can determine the number of eggs that hatch.

Controlling ticks may be difficult, especially well-established brown dog tick infestations. It is necessary to treat pets, home and yard all at the same time. Inspect the pet regularly and remove the ticks by grasping them where their mouthparts enter the skin and pulling straight out. A small amount of flesh should be seen attached to the mouthparts after the tick is removed. Pets should be treated with dusts, dips or sprays. See your veterinarian for products and recommendations on pet treatment.

It is important to apply insecticides inside the house very carefully. See this website for a list of pesticides: http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IG088. Apply light, spot treatments to areas where ticks are known to be hiding (crack, crevice or surface treatments). Vacuum around the pet’s sleeping area and use a crevice tool for cracks and crevices. Outdoors, treat infested areas by applying a broadcast insecticide. It may be necessary to repeat applications at 2-4 week intervals. Keep pets and people off treated areas until dry. Always follow label directions exactly.

Find How To For a Florida Friendly Yard

Creating a low-impact, Florida-friendly yard and landscape can be fun and rewarding. Start with the Interactive Yard which can be accessed at www.floridayards.org. This online tool will take you through the steps needed to transform a yard dominated by lawn into one featuring beautiful beds with Florida-friendly plants and Florida native plants that require little or no fertilizer or irrigation.

You'll also learn about features like micro-irrigation, compost bins, and rain barrels that make a yard environmentally friendly.

Take what you learn with the Interactive Yard and apply it to your own yard.
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- MG Update Cancelled
- Plant Propagation
- Extension Classes
- Pest Update
- Planting Pinellas
- Plant ID Modules
- Palm Harbor Library
- St. Pete Community Library

Volunteers - 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.

- There is no Master Gardener Update for July!
  Our regularly scheduled programming returns on Monday, Aug. 9. This update will be a potluck, so think about what you would like to bring!

- In place of our monthly update, Extension horticulturist Bob Albanese will present a plant propagation class on July 16 beginning at 9 a.m. and lasting about two hours. We will meet in the Magnolia Room. You can earn GEUs while helping supply our beautiful gardens with new growth!

- During July, Extension classes will still be offered at Extension for free to MGs, volunteers and FBGF members who register. When you attend you must show one of the membership cards. All others pay a nominal fee of $15. Please see Extension’s on-line calendar page for details and to register.

- The sixth Pest Update via Polycom for our statewide extension faculty, Master Gardeners and DPI inspectors is scheduled from 3 to 5 p.m. on July 7. It is sponsored by The Florida Plant Diagnostic Network, UF Plant Pathology and FDACS-Division of Plant Industry. Forty connections are available; locations will dial into the UF Bridge. This is a great opportunity for you to take advantage of the expertise in both UF IFAS and FDACS-DPI. Pre-registration is required at http://cbc.at.ufl.edu. Participants should select the location they will attend when registering; multiple locations are available to make the training convenient to attend for a wider audience. Topics include Florida disease happenings, citrus black spot, turfgrass diseases, Mikania micrantha, Drosophila suzukii, cotton seed bug, and Lebbeck mealybug.

- Check out the new “Planting Pinellas” blog at http://plantingpinellas.blogspot.com/

- Master Gardeners can earn continuing education credits by completing Plant ID Modules accessed at http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/outreach/plant_id/index.shtml. Earn 1 CEU per module by studying the plants and earning a passing score of 80% on the “Test Yourself” feature. Once a score of 80% has been reached, simply print the page and submit it to the Volunteer Office. This is an option Master Gardeners can use for a maximum of four CEUs.

- Palm Harbor Library MG Class Series
  Classes are on Wednesdays 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 for these classes, go to www.pinellascountyextension.org, click on the “Online Class Registration” button, then the “Lawn & Garden” tab. Call (727) 582-2100 to register.

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

Gardening Rule

When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant!
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTINUED

- Interviews
- Master Gardeners at Work
- Wellness and Living Fair
- Focus on Finance Class

Urgent!!

This is an important reminder to all volunteers to update your volunteer hours. During this critical budget crisis, these hours show the support from the community for the valuable resources and the amount of time that volunteers are willing to provide to support the gardens and Extension. The County Administrator is hoping for a continuance of this support, and even more if possible, to fulfill the needs of many of the County departments. Knowing how many volunteers we have and the number of hours they are contributing will help define expectations for assisting during the shortfall of County resources.

The County will be here to photograph, interview and videotape our volunteers in the garden and at Extension (date to be determined). If you would like to be videotaped and/or interviewed, please let us know. You can talk to Chuck Scaffidi or Bob Albanese and they will get that information to the communications department.

The “Master Gardeners at Work” program is officially underway! Each of the established, organized and easily located work groups has been identified. Visitors to the Gardens are invited to watch and learn from MGs at work. The purpose of this program is to highlight the educational impact of the dedication and hard work of the Master Gardeners. A map showing the location of work sites is available in the Extension lobby. The schedule is:

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<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>8:30-11 a.m.</td>
<td>shade/green house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>8:30 -11 a.m.</td>
<td>herb garden</td>
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<td>8 -10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>tropical fruit garden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9-11 a.m.</td>
<td>native plants / parking lot pond</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>10 a.m.- noon</td>
<td>wildlife demonstration pond</td>
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North County YMCA will hold a Wellness and Living Green Fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Aug. 14. They are looking for someone to staff a booth and they also need a speaker to talk about native plants or vegetable gardening. For more information or to sign up, contact Theresa Badurkey at (727) 582-2109 or by e-mail at tbadurek@pinellascounty.org

Extension Workshop will Focus on Finances

In these tough economic times, it’s more important than ever that individuals gain an understanding of how to establish and meet financial goals that will see them into the future.

To help out, Pinellas Extension is offering a three-part seminar, “Focus on Finances,” beginning Tuesday, July 13, with subsequent sessions on July 20 and July 27. Classes will be from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Extension Office, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo. The cost is $15 for the series, but that is waived for volunteers. (Bring your volunteer ID.) Those who attend all three sessions will be eligible for free, one-on-one financial counseling from a member of the Financial Planners Association of Tampa Bay.

To register online, go to www.pinellascountyextension.org, click on Online Class Registration, and look for the Families & Consumers tab. You may also call (727) 582-2100.

Pinellas County Extension is a partnership between Pinellas County government and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Science as part of a nationwide network of land grant universities.

Group Hug for Greg Charles

Join your FBG friends on Saturday, July 17 for a fund raising “Group Hug” for Greg Charles at the famous Fergs Sports Bar in St. Pete.

Last July we had a fabulous get together to support Greg. Please plan to attend again this year. Greg has been a great supporter of Extension and CEL. Even if you don’t know him, you’ll have a great time. Ferg’s is on Central next to the Tropicana.
Calling All Volunteers!

Your skills and expertise are needed in various ways throughout the gardens. Among other Extension opportunities there are specific requests for the following:

- Installation of micro-irrigation
- Hand watering
- Thursday morning landscape crew

If you are interested in contributing your time and earning volunteers hours, contact Bob Albanese at (727) 582-2081 or ralbanese@co.pinellas.fl.us

MGs Urged to Attend Annual Conference

Pinellas Master Gardeners still have time to sign up for the 30th annual Florida Master Gardener Continued Training Conference which will be Oct. 25-27 at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort and Spa in Destin. This is an excellent opportunity to get the latest horticultural information from the specialists and, hopefully, see two of our projects, The Greenleaf and the Holiday Lights, win awards.

The resort is offering participants a special rate of $114 a night (plus state and local taxes) for up to four people per room. This rate will be honored three days prior and three days following, based on availability. If you enjoy golf, tennis, swimming in the indoor and two outdoor pools, this could make a great family vacation. Learn more at http://www.conference.ifas.ifl.edu/gardener/acation.

Heritage Village Is Collecting Items for Flea Market/Book Sale

The 2010 Heritage Village Flea Market & Book Sale will be held in conjunction with the annual Country Jubilee on Saturday, Oct. 23. Items will be accepted at the office any time that Heritage Village is open between now and the sale date. Heritage Village is open Wednesday through Saturday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. and Sundays from 1 - 4 p.m.

Special drop-offs can be made at the Heritage Village Flea Market storage trailer located at Gate 3 from 10 a.m. to noon on the first and third Fridays of each month. An attendant will be there to help unload at that time.

Please save books, tools, dishes, silverware, sports equipment, craft items, toys, jewelry, furniture, decorative items, seasonal decorations and all types of house wares for this sale. No clothing or shoes can be accepted.
Are You a Facebook Fan Yet?

Our fans continue to add beautiful photos of the gardens to our FBG Facebook page. It’s wonderful to see the fan base grow. We are up to more than 200 fans and the number keeps going up.

If you haven’t signed up, it’s easy! Link to the FBG Facebook and click on the green sign up 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, please visit the site and add your photos. You also can share your experience at the gardens on the “Wall”.

Become a fan, check out all the wonderful photos and invite your friends to become fans as well!

Foundation Update

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, FBG FOUNDATION CHAIR

Believe it or not, planning is already underway for Holiday Lights in the Gardens! Because this is the tenth anniversary of the Gardens, we are hoping to make this annual event bigger and better than ever. There will be two new special events: an anniversary celebration on opening night and a holiday gift extravaganza on Saturday, Dec. 11 at which you will be able to purchase fabulous holiday gifts from a variety of vendors. On Sunday, Dec. 26, the very successful dog parade will be repeated.

MGs and other volunteers are essential to this ambitious undertaking. As always, there is more to do than people to do it, so please help us by recruiting your friends and neighbors as well. Tell them that there are lots of fun and exciting opportunities with Holiday Lights and throughout the Gardens no matter what their age or interests, their skills or schedule. Training will be provided. After the extraordinarily cold winter, there is also plenty of gardening work to be done as we refurbish, add and replace plants.

Vivian Haicken and Chuck Scaffidi are once again co-chairing Holiday Lights, which this year will be from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. each evening from Friday, Nov. 26 through Sunday, Jan. 2.

Opportunities:

■ Volunteer in the Florida Friendly Footprint gardens
■ Organize volunteers for projects
■ Help with advertising and sponsorship campaigning
■ Assist in newsletter publications, FBGF website and manage accounts i.e., Facebook, gmail, etc
■ Work in the FBGF gift shop

Contact me at your earliest convenience at (727) 582-2117 or cscaffidi@co.pinellas.fl.us for specific job descriptions.

©
SAFETY NET

Dress to protect.

Gear up to protect yourself from lawn and garden chemicals, equipment, insects, and the sun.

- Wear safety goggles, sturdy shoes, and long pants when using lawn mowers and other machinery.
- Protect your hearing when using machinery. If you have to raise your voice to talk to someone who is an arm's length away, the noise can be potentially harmful to your hearing.
- Wear gloves to lower the risk for skin irritations, cuts, and certain contaminants.
- Protect yourself from diseases caused by mosquitoes and ticks. Use insect repellent containing DEET.

Master Gardeners at Work

By CHUCK SCAFFICI, MG and KATHLEEN JAMISON, volunteer

The Florida Botanical Gardens is initiating an exciting new program - Master Gardeners at Work - that will give visitors an opportunity to interact with MGs while they are working their magic among the garden’s native plants, herbs and fruit trees. Not to mention giving MGs a chance to share their expertise and enthusiasm.

According to Theresa Badurek, the urban horticulture extension agent who is spearheading this unique effort, the first phase of the project includes all Master Gardeners who work at the shade garden/green house; herb garden; tropical fruit garden; native plants/ parking lot pond; and wildlife demonstration pond.

Along with planting, pruning, watering and other garden maintenance activities, MGs will be conversing with curious onlookers, answering questions, describing such things as choosing appropriate Florida friendly plants for an area and proper use of pesticides and fertilizers, and, hopefully inspiring their interest in creating their own gardens and landscapes.

“Educating the public is one of an MGs highest priorities,” Theresa notes. “Master Gardeners are passionate about plants and love to share their knowledge.” She is encouraging participants to “be creative and take this to a new level.”

Master Gardener programs throughout the U.S. are continually expanding their horizons. In addition to educating the public, MGs make many other important contributions:

- saving time, water, money, and the environment.
- empowering people with knowledge for life.
- creating a more beautiful environment with street trees, flowers, and green space in urban and suburban public areas.
- increasing green space that reduces runoff into storm sewers, thus protecting environmental resources.
- educating homeowners in sustainable yard care practices thus reducing yard waste in landfills or public waste sites.
- conducting programs to control and eradicate invasive plants thus restoring native ecosystems.
- teaching people to be healthier through increased exercise from gardening and better diets from eating more fruits and vegetables they are growing.
- teaching creative and nurturing skills through gardening. These therapeutic skills are healing and restorative in today’s high tech society.
- developing a network within a community to connect Cooperative Extension and community resources to develop programs that meet community needs.
- Master Gardeners are important social capital – a necessary and vital part of strong communities.

Another FBG Foundation Membership Benefit

BOK Tower Gardens has agreed to a free reciprocal agreement with FBGF. Terry Berube has the letter of agreement. You may obtain a copy if you are planning a visit to be sure they honor your foundation membership.

BOK Towers friendship passes are available in the volunteer office. Call Chuck at 582-2117 if you are interested.

Florida’s Master Gardener Program Hits 5 Million Hour Mark

While hitting its 30th anniversary mark this year, Florida’s Master Gardener program has another reason to celebrate: Its volunteers recently reached a
Heat, Hurricanes and Horticulture

BY THERESA BADUREK, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent

Summer is definitely here! The heat and humidity are high, so please be careful when working outside. Remember to drink lots of water and try to work only in the coolest parts of the day. (Is there such a thing?) During this time of year we must also turn our attention to the tropics, as hurricane season is now in full swing. If you and your family do not already have a hurricane/disaster plan, I urge you to create one now. Please don’t forget to make arrangements for your pets. It is also a good time to assess the trees on your property and consider having them pruned, if necessary, to increase their wind resistance.

Here at Extension we are working on replenishing the gardens and expanding some of the planted areas. This means plant propagation! Extension horticulturist Bob Albanese and many Master Gardeners and volunteers are working hard to grow and install several things, and you can help. On July 16, Bob will be teaching a plant propagation class in the Magnolia Room. The class will begin at 9 a.m. and last about two hours. Please join us and earn some GEUs!

Have a wonderful Fourth of July!

2010 July Thank You, Volunteers!

Calendar Highlights

- Wednesday, July 7 - Polycom Pest Update
- Friday, July 16 - Plant Propagation
- Saturday, July 17 - Group Hug for Greg Charles at Fergs Sports Bar
- Tuesday, July 13, July 20 & July 27 - Focus on Finances. At Extension 6 to 8 p.m.

Looking Ahead

- Monday, Aug 9 - Update resumes
- Saturday, Aug 14 - YMCA Wellness and Living Green Fair, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

MG Plant Clinic at the Palm Harbor Library –Wednesdays from 10 a.m. o 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