



**MASTER  
GARDENER**  
**UF** UNIVERSITY of  
**FLORIDA**  
IFAS Extension

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Form 23

## FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER COUNTY NEWSLETTER

This award category recognizes Master Gardeners that produce a newsletter distributed to the Master Gardeners in the county. This document can be exclusively for the Master Gardener volunteers, or also distributed to the public.

To be considered for this award, submit the following (along with this form and Form 10). Forms must be **TYPED AND COMPLETED** for consideration by the committee. **Remember to submit Form 10 with your entry.** Entrants are limited to the category they indicate on that form and you must follow the form 10 guidelines.

1. one (1) copy of two complete newsletters published between 07-31-08 and 07-30-09

Also indicate:

- A. How often the newsletter was publishing? Please provide a listing of Master Gardeners who participated in this project.

Please see attachment for all responses.

- B. Indicate the number of newsletters distributed and method of distribution. Also include information about how this publication is funded.

- C. Indicate if this publication is limited only to the Master Gardeners, or is also distributed to the general public. What is the purpose of this document?

Entries in this category will be judged on:

1. Educational content (30 points).
2. Design and creativity in the layout including proper logos and word marks (30 points).
3. Accuracy of information (30 points).
4. Number and method of distribution (10 points).
5. A 150 word (or less) summary of your project so that we can let others know of your accomplishments. Your application will NOT be judged without this summary included.

Please add a few paragraphs describing any problems you encountered or things you might change if you were to do the project again.

**RESPONSES TO FORM 23**  
**FLORIDA MASTER GARDNERS COUNTY NEWSLETTER**

*One (1) copy of two complete newsletters published between 08/11 and 07/12.*

The December 2011 and February 2012 issues of The Master Gardening Bench are enclosed.

*A. How often was the newsletter published? Please provide a listing of Master Gardeners who participated in this project.*

The Master Gardening Bench is published monthly and distributed several days prior to the beginning of each month.

Serving on the newsletter's editorial committee and also contributing writers are Master Gardeners Carol Ann Breyer, John Dawson, Joy Derksen, Norma Kisida, Sherri Reaume, and Amy Stripe. Master Gardener Robert Alexander has also contributed articles, and others have contributed photographs from time to time.

*B. Indicate the number of newsletters distributed and method of distribution. Also include information about how this publication is funded.*

An electronic link to The Master Gardening Bench is e-mailed monthly by the Extension to over 1,500 recipients. In addition to individuals, organizations such as the Manatee County Rare Fruit Council and homeowners associations are on the electronic mailing list; in turn, many of these groups forward the newsletter link to their own membership. For the convenience of people accessing the Manatee County Extension Service's website, issues of the newsletter are permanently posted at [http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn\\_and\\_garden/master-gardener/newsletter.shtml](http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/master-gardener/newsletter.shtml). In 2011, this site had 44,642 download hits.

Paper copies are available at the Master Gardener Plant Clinic desk in the lobby of the Extension Service and at Master Gardener tabling events, as well as all county libraries. 2,400 copies were distributed in 2011.

Monies raised through Master Gardener fundraising activities pay for printing and postage of the newsletter.

*C. Indicate if this publication is limited only to the Master Gardeners, or is also distributed to the general public. What is the purpose of this document?*

The target audience of the newsletter is the general public and as such we gear our articles to educate Manatee County residents. The newsletter is an additional venue to advance horticulture and provide timely gardening information, as well as to promote and inform the public about the Extension's monthly gardening programs.

*A 150 word (or less) summary of your project so that we can let others know of your accomplishments. Your application will NOT be judged without this summary included. Please add a few paragraphs describing any problems you encountered or things you might change if you were to do the project again*

Our goal is to provide informative, accurate articles in a timely, topical and attractive / entertaining manner.

- Editorial: It is challenging to keep important topics (e.g., turfgrass and citrus care) “fresh.” As such, we keep a database of past editorial topics, meet quarterly to decide on the next quarter’s lineup and also solicit original contributions from Extension Agents, Program Assistants and related agencies. Articles vary from cultural practices, to wildlife, to our local preserves. Any topic pertinent to gardening in our county is included.

We frequently include links to applicable UFL EDIS publications and have created a linked index to topics in the newsletter for the convenience of homeowners.

- Layout and graphics: As the bulk of our audience accesses the newsletter electronically, we design to online standards, including full use of color graphics and photographs, and navigation that makes reading easy.

## Quick Guide for Basic Orchid Care

By Robert Alexander, Master Gardener 2010



Orchidaceae, the orchid family, is one of the largest families of flowering plants. Around 26,000 species occur naturally around the world and over 100,000 hybrids and cultivars have been developed. Three of the easiest kinds of orchids to grow are:

**Vandas:** Usually grow in an open basket hanging from a tree (no soil); can grow on anything wood.

**Phalenopsis:** Grows in a clay pot in a medium of pine bark, charcoal, or small wood chips, with very little soil.

**Dendrobium:** Can grow in a pot or on a piece of untreated wood.

If you've bought or been given an orchid and cannot identify it, below are six basic care guidelines to get them to bloom.

1. **Light** - Give orchids bright light but no direct sun, as this will burn the leaves.
2. **Water** - Water them thoroughly once or twice a week -- more when it's warmer, less when it's cooler. Make sure the water drains completely out of the holes at the bottom of the pot. Never leave the plant sitting in water.
3. **Fertilizer** - Fertilize them when they are growing with liquid fertilizer once a week, from March through September.
4. **Air movement** - Provide gentle air circulation for the plant. If using a container (pot), choose one that allows the roots to get good air circulation. Roots need to breathe. Orchids like to be pot bound and are also happy rooted to a tree branch, especially oak and citrus. You cannot move these orchids indoors when it gets cold.
5. **Humidity** - Provide some humidity for the plant. Orchids do much better outdoors for humidity. Many orchids do not perform well in a dry environment.
6. **Proper temperatures** – This area of Florida is perfect for growing most orchids. When the nighttime temperatures drop below 40 degrees, you may see some cold damage. If below 35 degrees, you should cover them with a frost cloth at night, and take it off during the daytime. If you are unsure to whether they will “weather” the weather, bring them into a lanai-like atmosphere.

Most orchids will bloom twice a year. When the bloom spike is done, cut about 2 inches up from the bottom of the stem. In most cases, this will force another bloom or another plant. Sometimes, nothing happens.

Insects are generally not a problem with orchids; occasionally they might develop mold. Never cut off a green leaf on your orchids. Their leaves are perennial and live for several years.

## Mistaken Identities

by Kathy Oliver, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program Assistant

One of the foundations of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is correct identification of the pest which is causing a problem. Armed with this identification, you can then decide on a course of action to remedy the situation. But pests are only a part of the picture. The presence or absence of *beneficial* insects will influence your decisions as well. If the natural enemies of your pest are at work you may need to adjust your strategy from pest control to predator protection!

It is not always easy to tell the good guys from the bad guys. Let's look at a few examples of good predatory insects that resemble harmful pests. It helps to remember that predators tend to be bigger, fiercer, fewer, and faster than their prey.

**Mealybug Destroyer** (*Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*) – With its frilly waxy coating the mealybug destroyer larva could be mistaken for the damaging mealybug except for its larger size. It is a member of the lady beetle family and both adults and larvae feed on mealybugs, aphids and scale insects. The mealybug destroyer was imported to the United States from Australia to control citrus mealybug infestations in California groves in 1891.

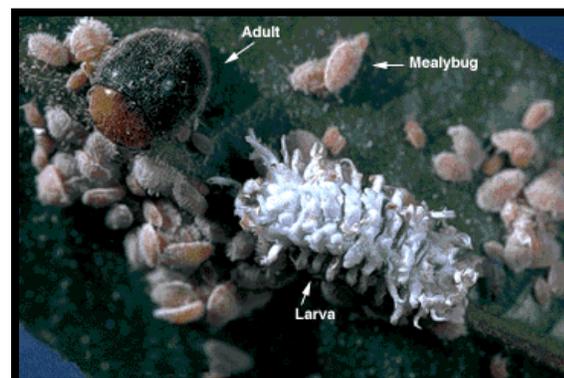
**Predaceous Stink Bugs** (Family Pentatomidae) – Take a look at the fierce spines on the shoulders of this beneficial stink bug, also called a soldier bug. A stink bug that injures plants will have rounded shoulders and long mouthparts. The shorter snout of a predaceous stink bug is just right for slurping the insides of caterpillars, beetle larvae, and even other stink bugs.

**Syrphid Fly** (Family Syrphidae) – With its bright yellow and black bands, the adult syrphid fly may be mistaken for a honeybee or wasp. It feeds on nectar or pollen while the larva goes after meatier meals such as aphids. You'll rarely see more than one fly larva feeding amongst a colony of aphids and at first glance you may think it is a caterpillar. But the maggot's tapered head, lack of legs and opaque skin are dead give-a-ways (not to mention that death grip on the aphid!).

**Predatory Mites** (Family Phytoseiidae) – One of the surest ways to distinguish a predator mite from a spider mite or other piercing/sucking pest is its mobility. It actively searches for prey which tend to be sedentary while feeding. Although its body changes color according to diet, the predator is glossy and pear-shaped with long legs.

What actions are appropriate when beneficial insects are present? You may decide to do nothing, letting the helpful insects continue their work.

(Continued on page 3)



*Mistaken Identities*, continued from page 2

But keep a close eye on the situation to make sure the pest population is not getting out of hand. Some hand-picking, sprays with the water hose, or judicious pruning may be in order. If you need to spray an insecticide, choose one that is soft on beneficials, such as soap or horticultural oil, and spray late in the day when predators are less active.

The Biological Control Information Center at North Carolina State University has a useful Pesticide Compatibility Chart on its website <http://cipm.ncsu.edu/ent/biocontrol/pesticides.htm> . This reference chart lists natural enemies and pesticides which are compatible with them.



## Growing a Pomegranate Tree

by Joy Derksen, Master Gardener 2004



Recently, the Master Gardeners were gifted by the Rare Fruit Council with a series of unusual fruit trees for our educational garden on the grounds of the Extension Service office. One of those trees, a pomegranate, is dressed up for the holidays with a quantity of ornament-like fruits hanging on the edges of the branches. If you are looking for a small ornamental fruit tree for your home, the pomegranate could be a good choice.

Brought to the Americas by the Spanish missionaries in the 1500s, this fruit tree has been grown commercially in both California and Florida. While the tree prefers soil in the pH range 5.5 to 7.0 to produce heavily, it can also live in more alkaline, sandy soil. Our climate agrees with the pomegranate, as it tolerates both our hot summers and thrives in moderately cold weather (above

10 degrees). In colder areas the tree loses its leaves in winter. Closer to the coast the leaves sometimes remain through the cool season. Although the pomegranate is naturally a dense shrub, it is often trained as a single trunk small tree.

Plant a pomegranate tree from late February to March. In spring and summer, bright orange-red flowers show well against the dark green foliage. The resulting fruit ripens from July to November. Depending on the cultivar, the fruit can be golden to deep red in color. The trees are self-pollinating, so a single tree is all that is necessary. The pomegranate tree likes dry weather, but should be watered once every 7 to 10 days if we don't have rain. It will survive some flooding. Much like citrus, too much or too little water can result in the fruit splitting.

The trees need to be fertilized twice a year---once in November and again in March. (This makes the pomegranate a good choice for part-time residents.) Use a fruit/citrus fertilizer according to its label rates. Young trees need about 2-2.5 lbs. each application. Mature trees need 4.5-6.5 lbs. Too much fertilizer delays fruit maturity and reduces the color and quantity of the fruit. Light pruning and removal of dead or damaged wood can be done during the late winter months to encourage production of good quality fruit.

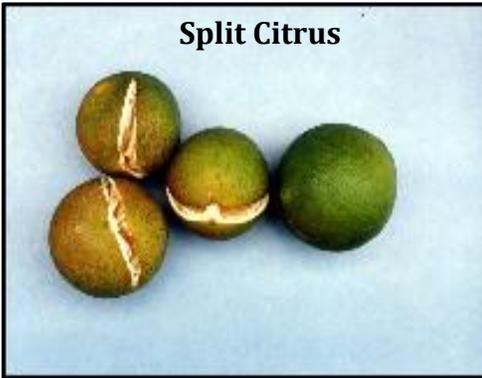
The tree is relatively pest free. Fungus-causing leaf blotch can be controlled with copper fungicide. Scale insects can be controlled by an application of horticultural oil during the winter when leaves are not present. For even more information on cultivars, pruning and general care, read "The Pomegranate" publication:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg056> or call the Master Gardeners at (941) 722-4524.



# Gardening Tips for Part-Time Residents

By Amy L. Stripe, Master Gardener 2008



This is a busy time for Manatee County's Master Gardeners. Our winter residents are arriving in droves and discovering "surprises" in their yards and gardens; happily, they are calling on us to help unravel some of the mysteries.

What to do about that **lantana** (*Lantana camara*) that was so sweet and small when you planted it in the spring and has now taken over the whole bed? Why is the fruit on the **orange tree** splitting? There's a huge patch of dead turf in the **St. Augustinegrass** (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*) – what's going on? That **coconut palm** (*Cocos nucifera*) seemed okay after last winter's cold weather; why has the canopy collapsed? How come these **snapdragons** (*Antirrhinum majus*) are dead? The leaves of the new **gardenia** (*Gardenia jasminoides*) you planted have turned yellow. Why?

Here are some possible answers. **Lantana** can be very aggressive and may be invasive. Remove and replace with a slower growing ground cover. **Orange tree:** Erratic irrigation/rainfall will cause fruit to split. Make sure your irrigation system has a rain gauge to shut off water in the event of rainfall. **St. Augustinegrass:** Check your sprinkler system for broken or malfunctioning heads. Call the Extension Office for a free irrigation evaluation. **Coconut palm:** Freezing temperatures resulted in a fungal infection in its growing point, causing eventual collapse of canopy. Remove and replace with a palm suitable to your zone. **Snapdragons:** Perennials elsewhere, they will not survive our hot, wet summer. **Gardenia:** An iron deficiency, due to lack of fertilization and/or soil that is too alkaline.

You get the picture. But being absent doesn't have to make you a victim of Florida gardening challenges. Here are some tips:

**Know your zone.** Knowing the cold hardiness zone of your Florida home is key. Manatee County is encompassed by zones 9a, 9b, and 10 (zones go from low – cold hardy – to high – less cold hardy.) Knowing your zone will help prevent or resolve the coconut palm and snapdragon problems.

**Plant (your zone's) annuals and perennials.** If you want the color you have when you leave the state to be there when you return, plant perennials that will comply. Our hot, wet summer is lethal to many traditional northern perennials. The same goes for northern annuals. Now is the time to plant northern spring annuals like petunias, pansies, violas and geraniums. Expect these to die in the summer heat.

**Reduce turfgrass.** Replace water-greedy turf with slow-growing groundcover. Turfgrass has its place in your landscape, but the desire for a lush, expansive green lawn may be difficult if you are away during the summer. That's peak season for chinch bugs and several fungal diseases. And it'll drive up your water bill in the dry months. In any case, keep in touch with your yard service to ensure a proper maintenance schedule is being kept.

**Mulch.** Before leaving for the summer, apply a heavy (2 to 3 inch) layer of mulch to your beds. This will keep down weeds, help retain moisture in the dry months leading up to rainy season, and keep mulch intact during heavy rains.

(Continued on page 5)

*Gardening Tips for Part-Time Residents*, continued from page 4

**Don't forget cultural practices.** Before departure and upon arrival, test the irrigation system, fertilize if appropriate and prune as needed. Early spring and late fall are great times to do all three for most landscapes.

**Right plant, right place.** Get your soil's pH tested so you know if it's acidic, neutral or alkaline, and plant accordingly. Follow the movement of sun and shade in your landscape throughout the year. A plant tolerant of winter sun may wither in summer's blaze. Or a shade-loving plant you thought was safe from the sun in its location is actually exposed to the sun the other part of the year.

**Choose slow growers.** If you are doing your own yard maintenance and/or don't have a yard service looking after your property while you are away, pick plants that are compact and slow growing. You probably don't want to face a jungle upon your return, no matter how much you love the "tropical" look.

**Don't overplant.** As much as you may desire an "instant landscape," resist the temptation to install too many plants. Remember, our growing season is longer here so plants can easily get out of hand.

**Good practices.** Before you leave for the summer, clean and lubricate your yard tools. Seal all chemicals tightly, including granular or powdered products, to ward off moisture and prevent leakage. Take a neighbor who is a year-round resident out to dinner and ask them to keep an eye on your landscape. And perhaps the best tip of all:

**Consider Becoming a Manatee County Master Gardener Volunteer!** The Master Gardener training program for 2012 starts February 15<sup>th</sup> and ends in early May. The time of our program is intended to accommodate the many part-time residents of our county who have expressed a desire to learn more about gardening and volunteer in a hobby they love. To inquire about enrolling, call Lisa Hickey at (941) 722-4524.

## Announcing Wetlands Garden and Tour

By Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent

Did you know that less than 3% of the water on earth is freshwater, and a percentage of that freshwater is in our wetlands? The recent graduates of the Florida Master Naturalist Freshwater/Wetlands Habitat module learned this and much more about our local wetlands. Eighteen participants attended the 40-hour Master Naturalist training program and studied the importance of the ecology of freshwater and wetland habitats and the need to protect our valuable plant and wildlife communities.

All modules of the Master Naturalist training program require students to complete a project to educate the community on the habitat studied. The graduates of the wetlands module planned and designed a model replica of functional wetlands. The next step will be to install the model in the Manatee County Agriculture and Extension Service's new educational gardens. A group of graduates will volunteer their time to purchase wetland plants and construct and install the garden by the time the Manatee County Fair kicks off in January.



Students learn about the plant and wildlife inhabitants of a wetlands habitat.

The model will highlight the important roles of wetland habitats to improve water quality, offer flood control and prevention, protect delicate shorelines, and provide recreational and educational opportunities. Economically, wetlands are a primary source of peat and fossil fuels like coal and crude oil. Many waterfowl, wading birds, amphibians, and vertebrate animals would not exist if wetland habitats were plowed under. This critical habitat provides food and shelter needed for their survival.

Starting in January, we will launch new wetland tours, thanks to a partnership with the Southwest Florida Water Management District. A monthly tour will be offered at Flatford Swamp, located in the eastern part of Manatee County.

Call (941) 722-4524 for more details or watch our Web site for the first tour date:

[http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn\\_and\\_garden/FMNP/index.shtml](http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/FMNP/index.shtml)

# December Calendar of Events



Date	Time	Event
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Saturday	10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	<b>Ask an Extension Master Gardener</b> – Ridgewood Plaza (Ace Hardware is located in the Plaza) – 7016 US Highway 301 N., Ellenton – Visit the Extension Master Gardener information table and get answers to your gardening questions.
<b>Deadline November 28</b>		<b>Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Training Recruitment</b> The Manatee County Extension Master Gardeners are accepting applications for the volunteer program. If you would like to become a professional volunteer in an urban horticulture program and gain horticultural knowledge to share with homeowners who visit our Plant Diagnostic Clinic, send in a completed application. For more information, call Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent, at (941) 722-4524. Application available online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> . Training classes start February 15, 2012. <div style="text-align: right;">  </div>
November 30	10:00 a.m.-Noon	<b>Bromeliads: A Gardener's Guide to the Selection and Care</b> – Learn about the different types of bromeliads, their bloom appearance, and how to care for them. Presented by David Johnson, Master Gardener/President of the local bromeliad society and Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent. <i>This workshop will be presented at the Island Branch Library, 5701 Marina Dr., Holmes Beach.</i> Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call the Master Gardeners at 722-4524.
December 10	9:00-11:00 a.m.	<b>Extension Master Gardener Plant ID Tour</b> – Stroll through <b>DeSoto National Memorial and Riverview Pointe Preserve</b> with a Master Gardener volunteer to learn about Florida's native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Suitable for all ages. Call the Extension Master Gardeners at 722-4524 to register.
December 11	9:00-11:00 a.m.	<b>Extension Master Gardener Plant ID Tour</b> – Stroll through <b>Robinson Preserve's</b> salt marshes to learn more about Florida's native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Suitable for all ages. Call the Master Gardeners at 722-4524 to register.
December 17	9:00-11:00 a.m.	<b>Extension Master Gardener Plant ID Tour</b> – Stroll through <b>Emerson Point Preserve</b> to learn more about Florida's native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Suitable for all ages. Call the Master Gardeners at 722-4524 to register.
December 23 & 26	County Offices Closed	<b>In observance of the Christmas Holiday</b>
January 2, 2012	County Offices Closed	<b>In observance of the New Year Holiday</b>

**Agriculture and Extension Service**  
**Manatee County Community Services Department**  
**Located at 1303 17<sup>th</sup> St. W., Palmetto, FL 34221 Telephone: 941-722-4524**  
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# The Master Gardening Bench



The Manatee County Master Gardener Newsletter  
February 2012 - Volume 11 – Issue 2

## The Pomelo

by Joy Derksen, Master Gardener 2004

Since we just celebrated Chinese New Year (Happy Year of the Dragon!), let me introduce one of the Master Gardeners' new educational garden's trees, the pomelo, which is native to the Far East. The tree grows naturally in Malaysia, Thailand, and southern China. During the New Year, Chinese like to have at least one or two pomelos in the home to signify that the home will have everything it needs for the coming year. The pomelo (also known as a Pummelo) is the largest citrus fruit, earning the botanical name *Citrus maxima*, and is thought to be an ancestor of the grapefruit. The fruit resembles a very large grapefruit with a very thick and bitter rind although the fruit itself can be very sweet.

Dr. Fairchild of Miami's Fairchild Gardens introduced the fruit to all of the United States in the early 1900's. It has been most successful in Florida because this is a fruit that likes hot, rainy weather and can also tolerate brackish water. In Asia the pomelo can flower 2 to 4 times a year. In Florida the fruits ripen from November to February and there may be an additional crop in the spring. The fruit, once picked, keeps for long periods because of the thick rind.

The flowers are highly aromatic and are even used to make perfume in some Asian countries.

Pomelo can be grown from seed as they are not hybridized. If you grow a pomelo from seed, be prepared for an eight year wait for fruit. The

plant can be air layered or can be grafted onto a citrus rootstock.

Care of the pomelo is like that for all other citrus trees. Provide good drainage for the tree, but make sure it receives water once a week. Keep the area around the tree free from grass, weeds, and

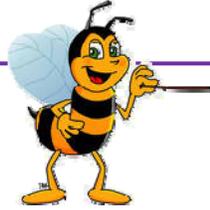
mulch as citrus is susceptible to fungus and root rots. Fertilize with special citrus fertilizers. If you have alkaline soil, your citrus tree may need a foliar spray of minor elements. Most home trees have few pest

issues, so a regular pesticide spray schedule is not needed. Fruit may end up with some outside blemishes which will not affect the taste. If you need more information on Citrus Culture in the Home Landscape use this website:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/hs132>.



© Ian Maguire



## Manatee County Extension

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Master Gardeners Amy Stripe & Joy Derksen, Co-editors

Contents reviewed & edited by Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent.

Send a photo or gardening problem via e-mail to the Master Gardeners at [ManateeMG@gmail.com](mailto:ManateeMG@gmail.com) or visit them at the County Extension Office

Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; closed on Wednesday.



# Bee There - A Workshop on Beekeeping

by Carol Ann Breyer, Master Gardener 2003

By popular demand, an introduction to the exciting world of beekeeping will be offered once again on February 11, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. by Lisa Hickey and Bethany Allen-Ford, expert representatives of the Master Gardener program. The class will provide tips on starting backyard beekeeping, observing safety concerns, and creating an awareness of Africanized honey bees (*Apis mellifera scutellata*). The importance of honey bees as pollinators will be stressed in light of the 80% pollination of plants that bees regularly provide.

A few years ago, Master Gardener Deborah Coupland-Porter developed guidelines for what one should know about bees in Florida that bears repeating. Below are her suggestions:

- Most honey bees in Florida are very docile and will not attempt to sting you unless provoked.
- When stung by an insect, many people believe it was a bee, but most of the time the offending insect is actually a wasp, hornet, or biting fly.
- If a bee stings you, do not attempt to pull out the stinger, which will only release more toxins under your skin. Use your fingernail to scrape out the stinger.
- March and April are the common months that honey bees swarm. Swarms are not aggressive since they do not have a hive to defend. You may see swarms of bees in trees or hollow spaces in your yard.
- Swarming occurs when the colony decides that there is not enough room in the colony. About half the colony and the old queen leave the hive and take the honey with them.
- About 1/3 of your diet is derived from insect-pollinated plants. Some plants, such as almond trees, are totally dependent upon bees for pollination.
- In Florida, we need to be on the lookout for the Africanized honey bees – the only problem is that it is impossible for a layperson to tell the difference between the docile, European honey bee (*Apis mellifera mellifera*) and their more aggressive relative. The only way to know for sure the type of bee is to examine it microscopically.
- Do not swat or make sudden movements around bees. If you are being chased (unlikely with European honeybees), cover your face and run in a straight direction into a home or vehicle. Do not try to swim under water to escape bees.

Registration for the beekeeping class may be made on line or by calling the Extension Office at 941-722-4524. This class is not an opportunity to be missed.



## What to do if you have a bee “problem”

*The state of Florida recommends removal of any wild bee colony that has established itself within your close proximity. By removal, they mean extermination. Lest you fret about this, you should know the following:*

- *Even if your local hive has been calm in the past, this does not ensure it will not or cannot become Africanized and therefore become a safety issue.*
- *A queen lives only 6 months to one year. When the new queen leaves the colony she mates with drones from nearby (not her own) colonies. If one of these drones is Africanized, the subsequent offspring can sport the same aggressive tendencies of Africanized bees.*
- *Eradication of wild bees has nothing to do with Colony Collapse Disorder, an affliction suffered by domesticated honeybees resulting in the disappearance of entire colonies.*

*Keep in mind, the county will not remove your bees for you. You will need to call a certified Pest Control Operator. Consult your yellow pages or call the Master Gardeners at 941-722-4524 for CPO's in our area.*

# Movies for Gardeners

by Amy L. Stripe, Master Gardener 2008

Too cold or rainy to do any gardening of your own? Rent or download a movie and snuggle in! Here are my favorite movies about gardeners of all kinds (and not necessarily endorsed by the University of Florida!)

**Greenfingers (2001, British/U.S.) R** : Funny film based on a true story of a group of prison inmates who take up gardening for rehabilitative purposes and with no money or tools end up competing in a top British garden show. Directed by Joel Hirshman and stars Clive Owen, Helen Mirren and David Kelly.

**Saving Grace (2000, British) R**: This wickedly funny film features an avid gardener, recently widowed, who desperately tries to save her home from foreclosure by growing – upon the advice of her hired man – marijuana. Directed by Nigel Cole and stars Brenda Blethyn and Craig Ferguson. Not-to-miss scene: local pub-goers admiring the distant blinding glow from the grow lamps in her ganja greenhouse.

**Wallace & Gromit in the Curse of the Were-Rabbit (2005, British/U.S.) G**: This third clay-animated production in the Wallace & Gromit series features Wallace and his patient dog, Gromit, as gentle pest-control operators who are challenged by a gigantic rabbit wreaking havoc in neighborhood gardens. Directed by Nick Park and voices of Helena Bonham-Carter, Ralph Fiennes and Peter Sallis.

**The Secret Garden (1949, U.S.) NR**: This charming movie portrays the restorative power of a garden and the gritty determination of the young girl who makes it happen. A classic story, it has been re-made time and again (even on Broadway), but I love the original B&W film with its color sequences (all in the garden, of course!) Directed by Fred

M. Wilcox and stars Margaret O'Brien, Herbert Marshall and Dean Stockwell.

**A Tree Grows in Brooklyn (1945, U.S.) NR**: A 4-star classic B&W film centered around a metaphorical tree, the story portrays the hopes and ambitions of a young girl who is trying to realize the great American dream of superseding her roots. Directed by legendary Elia Kazan and stars Dorothy McGuire, Joan Blondell and James Dunn.

**The Little Shop of Horrors (1960, U.S.) NR**: This cult classic from B movie director Roger Corman follows a hapless flower shop worker who develops a very special plant. Turns out it feeds on human blood and he has to kill in order to feed it! Black comedy starring Jonathan Haze, Jackie Joseph and featuring Jack Nicholson in a hilarious bit role.

**A Man Named Pearl (2006, U.S.) G**: Documentary about Pearl Fryar, a self-taught topiary artist in Bishopville, S.C. whose 3 ½ acre garden developed from discarded plants is now a tourist attraction. In the process, Fryar unites the townsfolk and proves a point about judging people. Directed by Scott Galloway and Brent Pierson.

**Rosemary & Thyme (2003-2007, British T.V.)**: Rosemary Boxer and Laura Thyme, both suffering from traumatic life changes, form a partnership to consult on horticultural problems. Each new assignment, however, brings more sinister mysteries and they wind up as amateur detectives. Its 22 episodes are set among beautiful European gardens. Ostensibly, Brian Eastman created this show for his wife, Christabel Albery, who is herself a keen gardener. Stars Felicity Kendal and Pam Ferris.



## Florida-Friendly Family Festival

The Florida-Friendly Family Festival to be held at the Manatee County Fairgrounds on March 3rd will feature a variety of fun activities, eco-workshops and entertainment that appeals to children of all ages. The Festival will offer a wide array of interactive demonstrations, ideas, workshops and exhibits to highlight our environment and show ways that families can conserve in and around their homes. The Master Gardeners demonstrate recycling with a "Trash to Treasures" sale and will be selling plants as well. Admission is free. The Manatee County Utilities Department will be hosting a shower head exchange. Bring your old shower head to be exchanged for a new water conserving model.

# Giant Snails in Miami

by Andrew Derksen, FDACS Scientist



The “Giant East African Land Snail,” *Achatina fulica*, has long been considered a significant threat to North American plant communities. The brown-striped snail feeds readily on over 500 documented species of plants, including several rare and endangered native plants. Their conical shell can grow to 6 inches in length, and even a few hungry snails can devour whole plants overnight to fuel their rapid growth. Under optimal conditions, these snails can achieve sexual maturity in 6 months. That prodigious growth rate and voracious appetite feeds a high rate of reproduction, with the hermaphroditic snails laying as many as six clutches of 100 or more eggs a year.

There are also public health concerns regarding the snail. The World Health Organization (WHO) has shown a direct relationship between the spread of the snail, and cases of eosinophilic meningitis. This sickness is caused when people eating raw snails or unwashed vegetables also consume the “Rat Lungworm,” *Angiostrongylus cantonensis*. Symptoms include fever, an excruciating headache, and in extreme cases paralysis. Severe cases can result in death or permanent brain and nerve damage. (Note the handler of the snail in the photo has on gloves to protect against disease.)

Beginning in September 2011, 14 separate populations of Giant African Snail have been identified across the City of Miami. All infestations were brought to the attention of

The Department of Agriculture scientists by concerned homeowners using the helpline (1-888-397-1517). Only one new infestation has been detected in the last two months, but scientists suspect that the snails will be easier to find when warmer and wetter weather returns in the spring.

All properties within a half-mile from known infestations have been surveyed for the snail, and the Florida and federal departments of agriculture have begun a control program designed to eradicate the pest. Thus far, over 33,000 snails have been manually collected and removed from infested properties. All properties within 200 meters of infested sites have been treated with the organic, pet-safe molluscicide, iron phosphate. (This is the same pesticide used for ordinary garden snails and slugs.) USDA, FDACS, and University of Florida scientists have initiated research projects further exploring the mollusk’s biology, responsiveness to pesticides, and are developing improved trapping and detection mechanisms.

In spite of this progress, all agencies involved remain concerned that small populations may have gone missed, or that some snails may have made it outside of the control zone. Snails could have traveled on plant material taken out of the area, or hitched a ride on vehicles parked overnight near an infestation. It is also possible that someone might carry the snail away as an exotic pet. Possession, transport, and sale of the snail can be punished by fines as great as \$2,000 per violation.

You can help prevent infestations in your area by being aware! Look for ragged snail-feeding damage on fleshy leaves, or unusually abundant populations of snails that you do not recognize. Call the Florida Division of Plant Industry’s helpline to report suspect snails: 1-888-397-1517. Consult the Florida Division of Plant Industry’s website to learn more about the snail:

<http://www.freshfromflorida.com/pi/plantinsp/gals.html>

*Editor’s note: The typical temperature range for this pest is 48° - 90°F, but it can survive at both lower and higher temperatures, which is why it is a potential threat in Central and Northern Florida. Eeewww!*



# Bonsai Trees

By Robert Alexander and Joy Derksen, Master Gardeners



**What is a Bonsai?** Bonsai is a Japanese word meaning “plantings in a low-sided pot”. Real trees are stunted into miniature trees to replicate large trees in nature. The original art was developed by Chinese monks around 900 AD. The Japanese tradition dates back over a thousand years, and has developed its own aesthetic rules and terminology. In Japan, bonsai are connected to religious experience. One Japanese tradition is that a bonsai tree should never be planted in the center of a pot, because God is at the center of everything.

**Why Bonsai?** The purposes of bonsai are primarily contemplation of nature for the viewer of the tiny trees. For the grower, it is the pleasant exercise of effort and ingenuity to successfully develop a healthy, miniature tree over the years.

**Are there different types of Bonsai?** The Japanese have developed several styles of bonsai which replicate trees in nature. Formal upright trees, informal upright trees with curved trunks and branches, windblown that look like trees bent vertical from exposure to a strong wind, and the cascade modeled after trees that grow down over water or the side of a mountain.



**How do you take care of a Bonsai?** Anybody who takes good care of potted plants can manage a bonsai. Watering and fertilization must be regular and done consistently at the same time intervals. Because these trees are growing in shallow pots and have trimmed roots, they need to be watered and fertilized frequently; some need water twice a day. Some need liquid fertilizer on their leaves to gather up enough nutrients for healthy growth. Most prefer to be outside in partial shade. All bonsai need regular pruning of branches and roots. You can expect to repot your bonsai every two years; changing out the soil and trimming the roots before returning it to the same pot. Special bonsai soil made of shale, small pebbles and bark chips is available in specialty nurseries.



**Can I make my own Bonsai?** First borrow a few good books from the library or use the internet to get more information. Many hobbyists start with a small potted tree from a nursery. Creeping Juniper, ficus, or bougainvillea make good starter trees. Remove the plant from its plastic pot. Have your soil and new bonsai pot at hand. Take off the dirt and cut the roots back to the top one-third. Cut off the tap root, leaving as much fibrous root as you can. Look at the plant and decide what style of tree would best fit this plant. Remove excess branches to make a trunk. If your tree is cascade style, use a tall pot so the bonsai can hang down. Use bonsai soil and pack the tree in tightly so there are no air pockets. Water well. While the soil soaks, wrap a copper wire around a branch if you want to make the branch go in a different direction. Make sure the wire is anchored into the soil before you bend it in the direction you want the branch to go. The wiring should come off in 3 to 6 months. Keep the tree pruned no larger than 24 - 30 inches tall. Keep taking care of your tree and in several years you will have a bonsai.



On the 200th Birthday of the USA, Japan gifted the United States with some special bonsai that are dated back to 1776. These trees, now nearly 250 years old, can be visited in the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.

Check out the photo gallery at the National Arboretum by clicking on this link: [www.usna.usda.gov/PhotoGallery/BonsaiGallery/index.html](http://www.usna.usda.gov/PhotoGallery/BonsaiGallery/index.html).





# February Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Event
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Saturday	10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	<b>Ask a Master Gardener</b> – Rocky Bluff Library – 6750 US Highway 301 N., Ellenton (formerly the Roaring 20's Pizza). Visit the Extension Master Gardener information table and get answers to your gardening questions.
February 4	9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.	<b>Growing Herbs in Your Garden</b> – Learn which herbs grow well in our County, how to dry them or prepare them for various uses. Presented by Master Gardeners Amy Stripe and Becky Moreland. <b>Location:</b> Art Center Manatee, 209 9 <sup>th</sup> Street West, Bradenton. Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call the Extension Master Gardeners at (941) 722-4524 to register.
	11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	<b>Cooking with Herbs</b> – Learn about different kinds of herbs and how to use them to spice up your life. Topics include selecting, drying, storing, and meal preparation. Presented by Samantha Kennedy, Extension Agent. <b>Location:</b> Art Center Manatee, 209 9 <sup>th</sup> Street West, Bradenton. Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call the Extension Master Gardeners at (941) 722-4524 to register.
February 7	1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.	<b>Lowdown on Lawn Irrigation</b> – This class satisfies the irrigation education portion of the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program. Tune up your sprinkler system, learn how to adjust the timer and sprinklers, improve uniformity, eliminate water waste, and cut costs. Presented by Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent. <b>Location: Braden River Library, 4915 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue East, Bradenton.</b> Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call Joann at (941) 722-4524 to register.
February 8	1:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.	<b>Ground Covers, Grasses &amp; Vines</b> – Landscaping with low-growing ground cover plants, grasses and vines has become a popular trend of landscape practices because once established, these plants need little or no water. Learn noteworthy plants, site considerations, and management of these three diverse plant groups. Presented by Elissa Mirabelli, Horticulture Program Assistant. Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call Elissa at (941) 722-4524 to register.
February 11	9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	<b>Beekeeping</b> – Learn tips on how to start backyard beekeeping, safety concerns and awareness of Africanized honey bees, and the importance of the pollinators. Presented by Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent and Bethany Allen-Ford, Master Gardener. Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call the Extension Master Gardeners at (941) 722-4524 to register.
February 11	9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	<b>Extension Master Gardener Plant ID Tour</b> – Stroll through <b>DeSoto National Memorial and Riverview Pointe Preserve</b> to learn more about Florida's native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Call the Master Gardeners at (941) 722-4524 to register.
February 18	9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	<b>Extension Master Gardener Plant ID Tour</b> – Stroll through <b>Emerson Point Preserve</b> to learn more about Florida's native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Call the Master Gardeners at (941) 722-4524 to register.
February 19	9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	<b>Extension Master Gardener Plant ID Tour</b> – Stroll through <b>Robinson Preserve's</b> salt marshes to learn more about Florida's native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Call the Master Gardeners at (941) 722-4524 to register.
February 20		<b>County Offices closed in observance of President's Day.</b>
February 22	10:00 a.m.-Noon	<b>Compost Happens – Home Composting Workshop</b> – Learn how to turn your kitchen scraps and yard waste into useful amendments, along with details about how to set up a home compost bin. Presented by Michelle Atkinson, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Coordinator. Register at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call Michelle at (941) 722-4524.
February 23	2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.	<b>Recycle the Rain – Rain Barrel Workshop</b> – Let us provide you with great water conservation tips. Learn how to install, paint, and maintain your own rain barrel. Presented by Michelle Atkinson, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Coordinator. Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call Michelle at (941) 722-4524.
February 25	9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	<b>Manatee County's Certified Master Naturalist Habitat Tour</b> – Be adventurous and slog through a wetland habitat slough with Lisa Hickey, Manatee County's Certified Master Naturalist instructor. Be prepared to get wet. Wetlands and freshwater habitats are vital natural systems that filter pollutants before it reaches our surface and groundwater supply, support many wildlife species, and are diminishing quickly every year. Find out more intriguing facts while walking on the fringe of the Flatford Swamp in eastern Manatee County. Location: 39450 Taylor Road, Myakka City. Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call the Master Gardeners at (941) 722-4524.
February 27	6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.	<b>Cooking with Herbs</b> – Throw that salt shaker away! Learn about different kinds of herbs and how to use them to spice up your life. Topics include selecting, drying, storing, and meal preparation. Presented by Samantha Kennedy, Extension Agent. Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call Samantha at (941) 722-4524.
February 28	1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.	<b>Smart Landscape – Planning and Care</b> – This class satisfies the landscape portion of the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program. Learn practical design tips, landscape pitfalls, garden chores, hardscape choices, texture combinations and remedies for difficult areas. Should you need an ID of a plant, arrive early to class and bring a branch with leaves (ideally with flower or seed). Presented by Elissa Mirabelli, Horticulture Program Assistant. Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call Elissa at (941) 722-4524.
February 29	9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.	<b>Bucket Brigade</b> – Learn about container gardening and how to assemble a bucket to use for your gardening needs. Bring two round 5-gallon buckets with you. Presented by Ervin Shannon, Vegetable Program Assistant. Register online at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call Millie at (941) 722-4524.
March 3	9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	<b>Florida-Friendly Family Festival</b> – Festival features a variety of fun activities, learning programs and entertainment for children of all ages on environmental awareness and water conservation. Come join us to hear topics on conservation, visit local exhibitors and enjoy local entertainment. Location: Manatee County Fairgrounds.

**Agriculture and Extension Service - Manatee County Community Services Department**

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