



## Florida Master Gardener Awards of Excellence Entry Form

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY AUGUST 1, 2015.

County	Manatee	Project Name	Manatee County Master Gardeners' Educational Gardens and Greenhouse
Project Start Date	2009	Project End Date	Ongoing
Project Master Gardener(s)	Key drivers: Barbara Davis (head of vegetable and children's gardens); Patsy Ugarte (head of fruit tree and wetlands gardens); Sharon Krueger (head of greenhouse and plant propagation); Linda Lestock (head of butterfly garden). For a complete list of participants see Summary.		

**CATEGORY:** Indicate only one category per entry form. You must assign your entry to a specific category to be considered for an award in that category. Entries are limited to the categories indicated below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Beautification	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal Communications
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstration Garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Service to 4-H and Other Youth
<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational Materials Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity
<input type="checkbox"/>	County Displays/Exhibits	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communications
<input type="checkbox"/>	Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outstanding Master Gardener Team
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outstanding Master Gardener**	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Review the applicable category entry form for exceptions to the general submittal rules above.

**Below completed by the County Master Gardener**

I approve the submittal of this project: Manatee County Master Gardeners' Educational Gardens and Greenhouse		
Lisa Hickey		7-24-2015
Master Gardener Coordinator Printed Name	Master Gardener Coordinator Signature	Date

Please complete and return this entry form in PDF form by **August 1, 2015** to Wendy Wilber.

## Florida Master Gardener Awards: Demonstration Garden

- **Summary (5 points)**

*A descriptive summary of your project. Your application will NOT be judged without this summary included.*

The Manatee County Master Gardeners' Educational Gardens and Greenhouse officially opened to the public on January 31st, 2012. This was the fruition of years of Master Gardener plant sales and other fundraising activity. Construction of the greenhouse and gardens began in 2009; apart from the greenhouse, cistern and irrigation system, all of the installation of this garden has been carried out by Master Gardeners.

*Provide a list of all Master Gardeners who participated in this project and their roles.*

Please refer to the spreadsheet attached for a list of participants. The key roles are detailed on the entry form. Master Gardener Barbara Davis has played the lead role in developing and designing the gardens, as well as managing them on an ongoing basis.

- **Scope of Demonstration Garden (30 points)**

*Describe the educational components (signage, handouts, website, etc.). Include the timeline and purpose of the garden. Who were the target audiences who might benefit from this project? List community partners if applicable. Provide the budget for the project.*

The purpose of the gardens is to teach Manatee County residents about Florida-friendly gardening principles by giving them practical ideas they can implement in their own gardens at home, be it right plant/right place, micro irrigation, recycling, attracting wildlife, and so on. School groups, families, children with disabilities, homeowners, and members of various clubs all find something useful and entertaining in our gardens.

Constructed on Extension office grounds, the gardens occupy only about 20,000 square feet (less than a half of an acre) and yet include a state-of-the art greenhouse; nursery / shade cloth area with storage sheds; vegetable garden; butterfly garden; children's garden; sensory garden; goldfish pond; kids' maze and teaching area; fruit tree orchard; life-size sundial; and, wetlands garden, which was designed by the Florida Master Naturalist class of 2011.

A fountain in the center of the garden features annuals and surrounding it are donor bricks. To the north is a section devoted to wildflowers while on the south side is a stylized wheelbarrow with small succulents. Recycling is demonstrated by rain barrels equipped with gutters and sail cloth to collect rainwater; many different types of composting bins; an old fountain re-purposed as a herb garden; and, garden ornaments made wine bottles, clay pots and discarded rubber kiddies boots.

We feel we have incorporated more thoughtful, educational, and Florida-appropriate details within each square foot of our gardens than any preserve, park, community garden

or even home landscape in our county.

All perennial plants and trees are labeled: white signs for native, beige for non-native. In the fruit tree orchard, signs display photos of what each tree looks like with fruit along with a QR code for downloading more information from EDIS publications. In the sensory garden, signs were made by students in the Junior Master Gardener program at Anna Maria Elementary School, and the children's "A to Z" garden sports large colorful letters of the alphabet.

The gardens, including greenhouse, fencing, ornaments, sundial, signage, cistern and plant materials cost approximately \$145,000. Major contributors include Mosaic, Kiwanis Club of Bradenton, Manatee Rare Fruit Council, Manatee County Government and individual Master Gardeners. The yearly maintenance costs including mulch and plants is from \$5,000 to \$6,000.

- **Horticultural Accuracy (25 points)**

*Explain the correct choice of plants and materials for the area; the right plant for the right place. Please provide a plant list.*

In the vegetable garden, various types of beds and containers are used, including buckets, Earth Boxes, salad tables, teepees, and trellises. Vegetables are in full swing in time for the county fair in January and include greens, potatoes, beans, carrots, radishes, squash and herbs. Crops in beds are rotated to prevent and discourage diseases and pests, while raised beds and containers are solarized in the summer to control pests.

In the butterfly garden, many types of butterflies and bees enjoy wild lime, yellow cassia, blue pea vine, milkweed, Dutchman's pipe vine, passion vine, and others. A bat house is also located in this area, although no bats have moved in as yet!

In the sensory garden, plants that encourage visitors to *touch* (e.g., lamb's ear), *see* (e.g., heirloom roses), *smell* (e.g., mints), *taste* (e.g., nasturtium), and *listen* (e.g., ornamental grasses that swish in the breeze) create a fun, educational experience for kids and adults.

Among the fruit trees are pumelo, jaboticaba, lychee, pomegranate, Barbados cherry and mangos. Some of these trees were once grown commercially in our county, and all are suited to our growing conditions.

A 1,300-gallon aboveground cistern provides water for the wetlands garden. Plants include coral bean, giant bulrush, pickerelweed, golden canna, yellow necklacepod and highbush blueberry. Some of these plants offer ideas for spots in home landscapes that may be low lying or poorly drained.

The children's A to Z garden showcases plants with animal names from A to Z. Examples include Ant plant, Dotted horsemint, Gopher apple, Kangaroo paw, Lion's tail, Octopus hugs, Rabbit's foot fern, Tiger grass, Wormwood, and Zebra grass.

Other garden features include an area for annuals featuring plants that are in bloom for the current season, an extensive bromeliad collection, and a wildflower bed with starry rosinweed, green-eyes, spiderwort, blue-eyed grass and perennial peanut.

- **Maintenance (15 points)**

*Explain ease and the method(s) for ongoing maintenance including long-range plans with names of those responsible.*

The gardens are maintained by Master Gardeners under the direction of an MG who leads these efforts in specific areas of the garden (see "key drivers" listed on the entry form.) A regular schedule of planned maintenance is carried out in each garden area weekly except for some summer months when it is too hot. In addition to these monthly gardening days, protocols for frequent scouting, irrigation system checks and plant health have been implemented.

Well over half of active Manatee County Master Gardeners participate in maintenance activities in our gardens. For Master Gardener interns (students who have completed coursework and are on their way to fulfilling their voluntary hour requirement), work in the demonstration gardens is mandatory in the year following their training.

- **Outcome (15 points)**

*Provide a written account with pictures (optional) of the site or area before and after completion of the project. Describe the publicity received. What was the potential impact on the Extension audience as the result of these efforts?*

The gardens are located on the site of the former Extension office building that was torn down in 2007. The site is owned by Manatee County and adjacent to county fairgrounds, and new Extension office. Many scheduled events and classes take place in the gardens.

Over 6,600 people have toured the gardens between August 2013 and July 2015. We experience very heavy traffic during the county fair, but people frequently call in advance to schedule a tour. And, Master Gardeners regularly use the gardens to demonstrate a horticultural principle or show a particular plant to customers who come into the Plant Clinic with gardening questions or problems.

The gardens have won two awards from Keep Manatee Beautiful: in 2013, the recycling award; and, in 2014 the Landscaping award.

- **Learnings (10 points)**

*Describe any challenges you encountered or things you might change if you were to do the project again.*

We are learning every year. But, most recent tweaks are the customization of the greenhouse irrigation system (each bench's watering timings have been reset to fit the needs of the plants on each, rather than a "one-size-fits-all") and a PVC-grid system for keeping containerized plants upright in our shade-cloth area during high winds.

**Master Gardeners Participating in Demonstration Garden:**

Bondur, Kathy	Hammer, Nancy	Nicholson, Bob
Boos, Roger	Henslick, Adria	Oroukin, Paulette
Bradicich, Steve	Keene, Cindy	Pausenwein, Helen
Callahan, Christine	Keene, Jean	Porter, Nancy
Cantrell, Rebecca	Knoedler, Jo	Price, Betty Ann
Charvat, Dan	Komyati, Beth	Smith, Janet
Cowdright, Bill	Korniluk, E. Lee	Snyder, Melissa
Cuthbert, Betty	Krueger, Sharon	Stripe, Amy
Davis, Barbara	Lansing, Debbie	Tate, Jo
Davis, Carol	Lestock, Linda	Todd, Geoffrey
Dawson, John	Lowry-Nation, Carolyn	Tonge-Martin, Jenny
Day, Catherine	McVoy, Pat	Ugarte, Patsy
DeFraties, Mark	Melanson, Susan	West, Dana
Derksen, Joy	Melton, John	Wilder, Norma
Garvin, Dee	Miller, Monty	Wrentmore, Mairyann
Gould, Liz	Mitchell, Margie	Wyatt, George
Grasso, Florence	Moreland, Rebecca	



**B**









HIGHBUSH BLUEBERRY  
*Vaccinium corymbosum*  
Florida Native





