

Master Gardener Clippings

A Newsletter for Columbia County Master Gardeners

May 2009



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Upcoming Events & Volunteer Opportunities

May 14—Fruit & Nut Twilight Field Day @ NFREC

May 16—1 pm @ the Library, Rain Gardens Presentation—by Betsy & Vicki

May 16—Alachua County Plant Sale

May 19—Columbia County Extension presenting a **Butterfly Gardening Class**— 6:00-7:30 pm

May 21—MG Alumni Meeting—Welcome to new MGs—POTLUCK! 9:00 am

May 27—MG Kanapaha Field Trip with Suwannee County MGs & Linda Landrum

May 28—Columbia County Extension presenting **Rain Barrel Make-&-Take Workshop** @ Extension Office— 6:00-7:30 pm

June 2—MG Advisory Meeting @ 3:00 pm

June 18—MG Alumni Meeting 9:00 am

Master Gardener Annual Plant Sale

A most sincere thanks for all your support before, during, and after our plant sale on May 2nd.



Your donations of hundreds of plants.....the hours spent in setting up and tearing down....the time and friendly manner you showed in helping the public..... your willingness to pitch in and do whateverall affirmed so strongly what we are as Master Gardeners....here to help each other and to help teach and inspire the public.

Your response on all levels was overwhelming!!

Thanks and talk with you soon.....Judee



Wildflower Walk at Ichetucknee Springs State Park

By Betsy Martin

It was much more than a wildflower walk at Ichetucknee Springs on May 6th. Sam Cole took us on a wonderful walk by the floodplain, hammock and sandhill areas of the park, 3 of the 7 major ecosystems in Florida. There were wildflower ID, shrub ID and tree ID. The most interesting part was learning that in order to identify our native plants, it is helpful to know whether the area is in the floodplain, or was a hammock area, or whether it is a sandhill area. There was an abrupt change of species of trees, flower and shrubs in each area.

One difference was the Hickory trees, there is the Pignut and the Mockernut. The Pignut will most likely be found in the hammock areas, and the leaves are smooth. The Mockernut Hickory has rougher, fuzzier leaves and you will most likely find them in the sandhill areas. Turkey Oaks will also be found in the sandhill areas and if you watch during the day, the leaves actually follow the sun. The other great thing I learned is that there is more than the usual dogwood that everyone buys in the store that brings beautiful white blooms to early spring. There is a rough leaf dogwood that has a beautiful bloom on it now, clusters of very small flowers, and it is found in the floodplain areas.

There were also an interesting number of different and beautiful flowers blooming, or about to bloom in the sandhill area. We saw a native croton, partridge berry, small skullcap, Carolina false vervain, bushy wild indigo, rabbit bells, and a beautiful pineland ginseng or squarehead and a very rare vining milkweed.

It was a wonderful walk, and since they did a controlled burn at the south end, the promise of an even more beautiful show of flowers in the fall for a fall walk, hope you can join in then.

A Message from Betsy

August Master Gardener Advanced Training

The August Advanced Training is coming up. Every year we alternate hosting the event with Alachua County. This year it is our turn to host. It will be a one-day event on August 19th. We have chosen a location that is convenient for both counties, Berea Baptist Church. They have a large room with kitchen area, tables and chairs and lots of bathrooms, on Hwy 47, not far from the interstate so it is convenient for us and Alachua MG's.



Nichelle is going to be getting the speakers for the event. During the Advisory Committee meeting we discussed the suggestions for topics that were brought to Nichelle. One of the topics was soils, another on fertilizers and nutrient deficiencies and how to recognize them, another on trees, or to have someone from TIPP come and talk on a relevant topic of concern today like stormwater management and what we can do to minimize it. Also we discussed the propagation talk that Carolyn Saft and Linda Landrum gave for the new MG class. Nichelle is going to see what speakers she can get that have an opening on the day of our training.

Now all we have to do is to discuss setting up the room for the training, decorating the tables and room, and what we are going to do to provide morning coffee, break snacks, and lunch for the event. Last year Alachua county had Heavenly Ham cater the lunch (we do charge for this event so it will cover the cost of purchasing food). At the Advisory Committee meeting we discussed the possibility of ordering either platters of small sandwiches or a couple of those 3' long subs cut to smaller sizes and having people bring in sides or ordering the sides. It will all be up to the committee who organizes the food. Shirley Bellows, Judee Swihart, and Martha Ann Ronsonet have volunteered to help with the decorating.

So think about if you would like to help with this event, let us know at the Alumni meeting in May. We will have a short discussion, sign ups and arrange for a meeting to discuss this event and work out the details.

Betsy Martin

Gardening Tips for May

By Diana McDonnell

Vegetables to plant in North Florida

1. Beans, lima
2. Eggplant
3. Mustard Greens
4. Okra
5. Peas, Southern
6. Potatoes, Sweet



Ways to control or reduce insect population. Some practices that can be used are:

1. Rotate the individual crops or families of crops within the garden so that the same vegetable is not grown in the same location more than once every three years.
2. This can slow or prevent the incidence of soil borne diseases.
3. Keep a record of your garden plan each year as it will make rotation of your crops much easier.

Happy Veggie Gardening

A Trip Back in Time

By Nichelle Demorest

Ten MGs took a field trip to Dudley Farms on May 8th. We met at the park at noon, viewed the exhibits in the visitors' center, picnicked, and did some weed identification. We met our tour guide at 2 pm. She was a real treasure of information and we learned many things about the life on the Dudley farm.

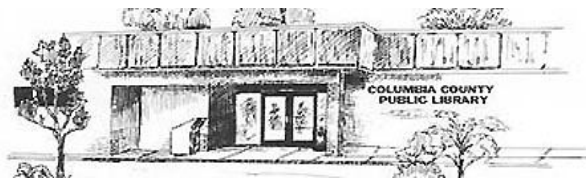


The last resident Dudley actually lived in the homestead nearly 20 years after bequeathing the estate to the State of Florida. She lived to be 96 years old and passed only a few years ago. She left detailed accounts of early life on the farm and her video-taped interviews are in storage in Tallahassee.

Nothing was ever thrown away by this woman and much of her belongings are also stored for future research. Things like sales receipts from the earliest farm records are intact. Big chunks of the last lye soap made on the farm were even saved! The furnishings are original in the main house and all of the outbuildings. The displays you see of everyday chores are very authentic, down to the very pans used to raise cream, cook dinner, and do laundry. We were treated to accounts of all aspects of early farm life, and it was easy to visualize that life in the actual setting.

Many original plants were still alive and well. One that particularly captivated us was the lovely regal crape myrtle growing by the side garden. If it could only speak! The trunk was the most elegant, weathered specimen that you could imagine. It appeared so strong that you felt its timelessness in protecting the homestead from ravishes of time.

MG Library Series



On May 18, Marjorie Anderson presented a program on lawn care which included soil preparation, fertilization, mowing and watering. She had made large poster boards which covered the main points of her presentation.

"Professor" Tony Kurtz described the various types of grasses and gave the advantages and disadvantages of each. He then showed various types of herbicides and insecticides and answered questions from the very interested audience!

There were 12 people attending and the overall rating score was 10. Attendees liked the use of story boards and Q&A.

Future topics suggested: Butterfly gardening, landscaping, spring and fall vegetable gardening, and conserving water.

By Carolyn Drawdy