Appointment Brings Expertise to Master Gardener Effort
by Carol Ann Breyer

A hearty welcome to Lisa Hickey of Palmetto who comes to coordinate the Master Gardener Program at the Extension Office. She fills the vacancy created last July by Jane Morse who resigned her position to join the staff of the Pinellas County Extension Office.

Lisa brings to the new assignment a wealth of background including a Bachelor’s degree in Environmental Studies from Florida International University and a Project Manager position at the Miami International Airport, where she coordinated the removal of runway and general property contamination. In her earlier years while in the U.S. Army, Lisa functioned as a Veterinarian Specialist working out of Walter Reed Hospital for four years. In both employment situations, she developed strong managerial skills and opportunities to preserve the natural habitat. In her function as an in-service trainer, she offered workshops to staff and to the public.

A native of Pennsylvania, Lisa was assigned early in her military career to Washington. Her residence in the suburban Maryland area enabled her to continue her education at the University of Maryland. Her marital situation at that time took her later to Miami where she attended and graduated from Miami-Dade Community College.

In her new position which represents a return to world of work after five years as an “at-home” mom. An interest in gardening has always been her “passion,” as she describes it. In her present role, she hopes to educate the public to plant wisely in order to reduce water usage and accommodate wildlife with landscaping techniques. “We would like to promote Florida-Friendly landscaping and preservation of our precious natural resources through programs like FYN and Integrated Pest Management,” she states.

With Lisa’s appointment, the Master Gardeners who just elected new leadership feel that that their future is on the right track and like the plants themselves, in the right space.
YOUR APRIL GARDEN

Warm season annuals can be planted now.

For color in a shaded area, try caladiums. Plant tubers about two inches deep and 15 inches apart in soil amended with organic matter.

Plant bulbs such as canna, dahlia, daylily, gloriosa, lily, and lycoris. Continue planting gladiolus every two weeks.

When spring bulbs begin to bloom, fertilize with a bulb fertilizer.

Divide chrysanthemums if necessary and pinch out the tips to encourage bushing. Root the tips.

Monitor daylilies for aphids. Check between new leaves and use a soap spray if necessary.

Add a few butterfly nectar plants to the garden. Try zinnias, firespike, gomphrena, salvias, and butterfly bush.

Information from IFAS

Of Interest

A single urban tree can provide up to $273 a year in air conditioning, pollution fighting, erosion and storm water control, and wildlife shelter benefits. Source: American Forests.

The United States is blessed with a wealth of tree species—more than twice as many as all of Europe.

Beehives destroyed in Boca Raton and Cooper City contained the purest strains of Africanized honeybees yet found on Florida's east coast, indicating an increased threat from the aggressive, stinging insects. The bees were found in a nest provided for owls.
COOKING WITH HERBS
BY P.J. CRIDER

It’s just a short walk from the parking lot to go “back in time” at the Manatee County Agricultural Museum in Palmetto’s Historic Park*. Walking in brought back memories of when I moved to this area in 1957, long before all the massive growth. I was there to learn about “Cooking with Herbs,” but instantly knew I wanted to come back and explore this little piece of “Old Florida.”

The meeting room was filled to capacity with women and yes, men, who wanted to learn about “Cooking with Herbs.” Samantha Kennedy, Family and Consumer Services Agent, was the speaker. She gave us information on cleaning, cooking, buying, storing, health tips, making her one hour class fly by.

First on the food agenda was her “Strawberry Smoothie” using fresh mint she whipped up in a blender. There were mixed reviews on the taste, some people liked the mint, others would delete it.

Next, Samantha instructed us on making a “Mixed Herb Seasoning” that can be used in place of salt. She put the herbs into a bowl with cream cheese and stirred well. Spread it on a large tortilla, rolled up, and then sliced it into little pinwheels. That tray of tidbits disappeared quickly and made a nice little mid-morning snack.

The lecture ended with a question and answer session. Numerous questions on herbs came from the participants. We were given printed materials and the recipes she had prepared.

I did learn a few tips and thought it was a nice class to attend. I plan to go back (even if there is no food) to see what I missed in the five rooms off the main lobby.

*Find out more about Manatee County History at: www.discoverourtown.com
Do You Know Daylilies?

By Teri Joslin

Daylilies are among the most popular herbaceous perennials grown in Florida. These hardy, fleshy-rooted plants are relatively free from serious pests, have a long blooming period and adapt well to home landscape plantings. Plants are available in a wide variety of flower colors, color patterns and growth habits. The present flower color selection includes shades of yellow, orange, red, pink, purple and near-white.

Daylilies are members of the lily family, in the genus *Hemerocallis*; "Hemero" is Greek for "day" and "callis" for "beauty," i.e. beauty for a day. The modern varieties of daylilies have been developed from native Chinese species. Early settlers from Asia and Europe brought many of the original species with them to America. During the last 75 years, hybridizers in the United States and England have made great improvements in daylily varieties.

**Selection:** Most nurseries do not sell daylilies by varieties. If you are looking for specific varieties, you will probably have to go to a daylily nursery. When selecting a daylily variety, it is important to remember that daylilies have three types of foliage growth. They are: Dormant - The foliage dies back after frost and new foliage grows in the spring. Evergreen - The foliage remains green throughout the year. Semi-Evergreen - Part of the foliage dies back during the coldest months and grows back in the spring.

**Planting Site:** In Florida, the daylily is considered a cosmopolitan plant, since it thrives in the muck of the Everglades, the limestone rock of Miami-Dade County, the light sands of central Florida and the red clay hills of the northern part of the state. While daylilies will grow under many conditions, it is important to try to select a favorable location.

Daylilies will grow in full sun or filtered shade. The darker colored varieties (reds and purples) grow best in partial shade, while light colored varieties (yellows, pinks and pastels) need full sun to bring out their lovely colors. Heavy shade should be avoided because it will cause thin, spindly growth and poor flowering. The light level under pine trees is ideal for growing daylilies.

Soil for a daylily bed should be tilled and amended by incorporating a 3- to 4-inch layer of organic matter, such as peat, compost or well-rotted manure, and 3/4 to 1-1/2 pounds of 12-4-8 or 15-5-15, or an equivalent amount of other complete fertilizers, per 100 square feet of bed. The amended soil should be leveled and moistened. Treating beds with a soil sterilant is highly desirable prior to planting. However, most sterilants are restricted-use pesticides and must be applied by a professional pesticide applicator.

Planting: Daylilies can be planted throughout the year in Florida; however, spring or fall plantings are ideal. Fall planting allows the plants time to develop new roots and
become established before the next blooming season. Prepare daylilies for planting by removing foliage 6 to 8 inches (15.2 to 20.3 cm) from the crown, the point where foliage and roots join. Examine the root system closely and remove any damaged roots.

Daylilies are planted 18 to 24 inches (0.5 to 0.6 m) apart, since some varieties multiply quickly and become so crowded that flower production is affected. Under Florida conditions, when planted like this, daylilies can usually grow in one location for 3 to 5 years before division is necessary.

To plant daylilies, dig holes larger than the root masses. Make a mound of soil in the center of the hole and set the center of the daylily on top of the mound, spreading roots out to the sides of the mound. Fill in the hole with loose soil, making sure the crown is at ground level. Daylilies should be planted at the same depth they were originally grown. Water newly planted daylilies and keep the soil moist until plants are well established.

**General Care:** Pine needles, leaves or shredded bark are among the most desirable mulches and should be applied in a 2-inch (5.1 cm) layer.

Daylilies can survive temporary dry conditions very well, due to their extensive root systems. However, the plants' bloom size, number of blooms, plant growth and overall vigor can be adversely affected by prolonged drought. A spectacular display of blooms can be achieved by the weekly application of enough water to soak the soil 8 to 12 inches deep. However, overhead watering during the heat of the day will cause open blooms to spot and/or wilt.

Daylilies should be fertilized in the fall, early spring and mid-summer with 3/4 to 1-1/2 pounds of 12-4-8 or 15-5-15 per 100 square feet of bed or an equivalent amount of another complete fertilizer. Fertilizer should be evenly applied between plants, kept off the foliage and watered into the soil after application.

**Pests:** Most daylily plantings in Florida are virtually free from attack by insects or disease and rarely need a pesticide application. However, they occasionally may be attacked by aphids, thrips, spider mites or grasshoppers, which will damage the foliage and flower buds.

Refer to IFAS publication Circular 620 *Daylilies for Florida* for detailed information.
Leu Gardens – A Destination Worth Visiting

The month of April is a grand time to explore the attractions and treasures of Florida. Among the most beautiful sites is Leu Gardens in Orlando which features three miles of walkways through fifty acres of plants and flora viable in Florida.

The property includes the largest camellia collection in the state along with the largest formal rose garden. In addition, visitors can view a Tropical Stream Garden, a Butterfly Garden, and other gardens featuring vegetables, herbs, palm, bamboo, and cycad.

A new feature is a three-acre Home Demonstration Garden with ten residentially-scaled “idea gardens” for specific purposes like fragrance, wildflowers, shade, and special settings such as courtyards.

One of the nicest features of Leu Gardens is their policy which permits visitors to take sample cuttings as long as they are careful to take plant clippings sparingly.

The idea for a fragrance garden that enables persons with limited visibility and mobility to enjoy the odiferous air and accessible pathways will be replicated in Palmetto on the campus of the Southeastern Guide Dog School for the visually impaired. Manatee Master Gardeners are currently working on this project and will be visiting the Leu Garden site on April 23. Exact directions to Leu Gardens can be obtained by calling 407-246-2620. It is open daily from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. General admission cost is $5:00 for adults and $1.00 for children. Admission is free on Monday morning from a.m. to noon. CAB

A great opportunity to buy plants is offered by the Master Gardener Annual Plant Fair on March 31 at the Manatee County Extension Service (at the Fairgrounds in Palmetto). Don’t miss it!
New Effort Expands Master Gardener Services

A program initiated and promoted by Florida Yards and Neighborhoods is the Landscape Assistance Program for homeowners wanting help or advice in planning and planting their Florida-Friendly landscapes. Consultations at no cost to residents are arranged with Master Gardener advisors on the first Wednesday in the afternoon and third Monday of each month in the morning.

Homeowners prepare for each visit with a drawing or sketch of their property, photos of their yards and plants, and their ideas for landscape development. Yard advisors meet with the homeowners for 90-minute sessions geared to assist homeowners in creating landscapes that incorporate as much as possible the nine principles of Florida-Friendly yards.

Those attending the consultations receive handbooks, workbooks, and a checklist for Yard Recognition which can be awarded upon evaluation of their property at a later date. Yard consultations are scheduled for April 4 and April 16 and May 2 and May 21. To date eight consultations have been offered since January. Usually, two Master Gardeners work with the homeowner on each consultation.

Master Gardeners who have participated in the program to date are as follows: Carol Smith, Bob Egolf, Deborah Coupland-Porter, Carol Ann Breyer, Patsy Ugarte, Judy Lemanski. Ann Hall, P.J. Crider, Su Pontius, Jan Watson, and Suanne Funk.

“I am deeply grateful to all those who have participated in this program that I believe is one of the best things that we do because of the dialogue that we initiate with the homeowners who have made a real effort to improve their yards,” commented FYN Program Manager, Kurt Rowe.

CAB
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>10:00 - Noon</td>
<td><strong>Home Composting</strong> -- Manatee County Extension. $10 for program material and Compost Bin, call Cheryl, 722-4524 to register. <em>(MGs – 2 CEUs)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>6:00-8:30pm</td>
<td><strong>Landscape Makeover</strong> Lecture – “Shrubs” presented by Elissa Mirabelli – Manatee County Extension. NO COST. Call Cheryl 722-4524 to register. <em>(MGs 2.5 CEUs)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>9:00 – 11:00</td>
<td><strong>Emerson Point Park Tour</strong> with Master Gardener Diane Alvarez, topic: Florida Native Grasses. <em>(MGs – 2 CEUs)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>8:00 – 1:00</td>
<td><strong>Downtown Farmers’ Market</strong> - MG/FYN Display. Come and support the businesses/vendors who sell fruits/veggies, food, crafts, clothing. This is the last Saturday for the Downtown Market until the fall. Contact PJ Crider (741-8576)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>1:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><strong>Creating and Maintaining Your Florida Yard</strong>, Jack Tichenor. NO COST - Call Cheryl at 722-4524 to register. <em>(MGs – 3 CEUs)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>10:00 – 12:00</td>
<td><strong>Rain Barrels</strong> – how to use and make them, $40 includes rain barrel kit. To register call Cheryl at 722-4524. <em>(MGs – 2 CEUs)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>9:00 -10:30</td>
<td><strong>National DeSoto Monument Nature Tour</strong> with Master Gardener Mike Corso. Walks are handicapped accessible. Call 722-4524 to sign up for a tour. PLEASE NOTE: change to Saturday this month only. <em>(MGs – 2 CEUs)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>Event 9:00 – 3:00</td>
<td><strong>Plant Clinic/FYN Table Earth Day 2007 Celebration</strong> - Felts Audubon Preserve. Located at the corner of 24th Ave. E. &amp; Experimental Farm Rd, Palmetto. Sign up sheet in Extension Office for MGs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14 – 15</td>
<td>Saturday 10:00 – 4:00, Sunday 10:00 – 3:00</td>
<td><strong>USF Botanical Garden Spring Plant Festival</strong> over 70 vendors - local plant clubs and societies and commercial growers - selling plants and plant related items. 4202 E Fowler Ave, Tampa, 813-974-2329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>8:00 – 12:15pm</td>
<td><strong>Tree Seminar</strong> -- 4- Hour Seminar at Selby Botanical Gardens. Sponsored by Manatee &amp; Sarasota IFAS Extension/Commercial Horticulture. Cost to MGs only $10. <em>(MGs - 4 CEUS)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:00</td>
<td><strong>Potting &amp; Mounting Orchids</strong> – Learn the method that works best for your orchid species and give your treasured plants a new home in a pot, on a wood or cork mount, or in a tree. Selby Gardens. Members, $15; Non-members, $25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>6:00 – 8:30pm</td>
<td><strong>Landscape Makeover Lecture</strong> – “Groundcovers and Vines,” presented by Elissa Mirabelli. NO COST. Call Cheryl, 722-4524 to register. <em>(MGs – 2.5 CEUs)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20 – 22</td>
<td>10:00 – 4:00</td>
<td><strong>26th Annual Sarasota Bromeliad Society Show &amp; Sale</strong>, Selby Gardens, admission $12. 941-955-7553 (rare plant auction Saturday night)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 21 – 29</td>
<td></td>
<td>National Wildlife Week <a href="http://www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek">www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>NATIONAL EARTH DAY!</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*MGs*: Master Gardener. CEUs: Continuing Education Units.