Of Gardens and Greenhouse: Words from the Great Outdoors  
By Carol Ann Breyer, Master Gardener

As the Plant Fair approaches, Master Gardener Barbara Davis stepped up to help Coordinator Lisa Hickey with the formidable task of organizing and managing the annual fall Plant Fair that is the centerpiece of the Manatee Master Gardener program. “Lisa just had so much to do with the double sessions for the new class this fall that I saw the need to pitch in to get this event up and going,” said Barbara. A veteran Master Gardener, Barbara has a background in retail sales and years of experience with earlier plant fairs. In response to a few questions, she offered the following comments:

Q. What are the best features of the upcoming Plant Fair?
A. The plants are larger and stronger and more attractive than ever because of the favorable weather conditions we had during the summer of sun, rain, and no hurricanes or devastating winds.

Q. What does the Manatee Plant Fair offer that is unique to other plant sales?
A. Despite having competition every year, we have a reputation that brings people back year after year. We offer plants that are not readily available anywhere else such as dotted horsemint and special types of sage. And our prices are reasonable.

Q. How important are the demonstration gardens?
A. These show the types of plants that thrive in various ecological settings. The gardens look nice and should be interesting to those who visit them.

Q. What could be added to the Plant Fair?
A. More Master Gardeners willing to join us in making this happen. It’s our major project and it is important that it be successful.

Q. How do you explain your personal commitment?
A. I want to support the greenhouse project and operating budget. I also work in memory of Chuck White and Janet Spencer, Master Gardeners who pioneered this event.

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Fair Takes on ‘A Crafty Touch’

This year the Master Gardener Annual Fall Plant Fair will include art and craft objects offered exclusively by artisans from the Manatee Cooperative Extension Service who created them. Photographs, paintings and sketches, jewelry, table décor, and other items will be on display adjacent to the available greenery. Participating staff and volunteers include Carol Davis, Bill Darrah, Teri Joslin, Janice Hamlin, Patsy Ugarte, Carol Smith, Nancy Barangó, Lisa Hickey, Mary Zion and Brenda Rogers.

Don’t miss this new show of yet one more talent of staff and volunteers!
Amid shared memories of frangipani cuttings and 4-H events organization, Master Gardeners recalled the contributions of Joyce G. Duckwall who passed away, September 20, in her adopted home County of Manatee.

A native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Joyce was a 30-year resident of Palmetto who enjoyed the distinction of being one of the original Master Gardeners when the program began in Florida in 1979. Together with Larry Bearse, Joyce was honored in 2004 on the 25th anniversary of their active participation in the Master Gardener program.

Several years ago Joyce lost her husband Paul to death, but continued on to lead an active and productive life. “We will be remembering Joyce in the future through her donation of a fledgling mango tree that will be planted on the grounds of the proposed greenhouse,” stated Lisa Hickey, Master Gardener Coordinator who attended the wake and service for Joyce on September 24.

In the meantime, memorial cards reminding us of Joyce are available on the table of announcements in the Extension Office.

…Landscape planning and design series is underway. Two landscape workshops will be held later this month. Check the October Calendar of Events for dates and times.

…Butterfly information is plentiful, but what about dragonflies? See next issue for Master Gardener Teri Joslin’s explanation into the life and behavior of dragonflies.

…Individual yard consultations may be arranged as requested. Call Kurt Rowe, Coordinator of the residential Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program at (941) 722-4524, ext 237 to make an appointment.
Flowering perennials can provide color in your landscape during every season of the year. Once established, these plants require less maintenance than annual flowers, and they have the advantage of being a permanent part of your landscape.

Perennials are plants that grow indefinitely. The shrubs and trees that comprise our landscapes are perennials, but these are referred to as woody perennials. The plants discussed here are herbaceous perennials—plants with little or no woody tissue. However, under the continuous growing conditions of south Florida, some herbaceous perennials become woody shrubs. Likewise, plants that are normally woody shrubs in south Florida behave as herbaceous perennials in north Florida where they are killed to the ground each winter. Care should be taken in selection of plants such as lantana because some varieties are invasive. Check the origin of species of plants before planting. For more information on perennials see the University of Florida’s publication [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG035](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MG035)

**Lantana** - What a useful ground cover. Loves sun, salt and wind. It also attracts butterflies as well as bees and is great for pots. Lantana needs lots of space.

[http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/223](http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/223)

**Schefflera arboricola** – Attractive durable shrub and slow growing. Comes as a green or variegated plant. Can grow to 8’, but is easy to trim. (woody perennial) [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ST586](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ST586)

**Liriope muscari** – One of the toughest plants, it can take extreme variations and has occasional purple spikes. It grows to 2’. Never seems to die. [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FP/FP34800.pdf](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FP/FP34800.pdf)

**Purple Coneflower** – Resembles a daisy, grows 18 to 30 inches tall. Penta is a good companion. It grows for about 10 years. It’s a great butterfly plant.

[http://hort.ufl.edu/shrubs/ECHPURA.PDF](http://hort.ufl.edu/shrubs/ECHPURA.PDF)

**Chrysanthemum** - Known as garden mums, grows well in summer, out of bloom by September, has lots of color, need to feed every 6-8 weeks. It roots very easily.

[http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/gt/chrysan/chrysan.htm](http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/gt/chrysan/chrysan.htm)

**Dahlia** – Has tuberous root, blooms May to August, likes full sun, bulb can be dug up or separated and covered with mulch. If stored, use vermiculite.

[http://hort.ufl.edu/shrubs/DAHSPPA.PDF](http://hort.ufl.edu/shrubs/DAHSPPA.PDF)

**Lathyrus Sweet Pea** – likes sun, needs moist soil. Plant November to following February. It’s a vine-like foliage.

**Crocus** – A pretty spring thing! You can tell the season and it grows to 8” tall. Needs full sun and have many hues of color. Well drained soil works best. Hardiness zone 3-8. [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FP621](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/FP621)

**Sage (salvia)** – It’s drought tolerant and the purple blooms are like velvet. They grow to 30” tall, attracts humming birds. Spikes look exotic, enjoy full sun.

[http://hort.ufl.edu/shrubs/SALSPPA.PDF](http://hort.ufl.edu/shrubs/SALSPPA.PDF)

**Calliandra haematocephala (dwarf powder puff)** - Great accent plant, survives 30˚ or higher. No pest problems and likes medium to full sun. Needs more than average water.

[http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ST108](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ST108)
## October Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>6:00 pm – 9:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Waterwise 101:</strong> A basic introduction to lawn &amp; landscape watering systems and how to increase efficiency for a better lawn with possibly less water. Topic include setting the controller, the best use of sprayers, rotors and micro-irrigation, common problems, repairs, adjustments and eliminating waste in your largest water using appliance. Bring along your sack dinner if you’d like. No fee. MCEO. Register on line at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call Cheryl at ext. 262. (MGs 3 CEUs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>10:00 am – Noon</td>
<td><strong>Home Composting Workshop:</strong> Learn how to turn your kitchen scraps and yard waste into useful soil amendments. $10 fee includes program materials and compost bin. MCEO. Call Linda at 722-4524 or visit our website at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> to register.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>2:00 pm – 4:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Rain Barrel Workshop:</strong> Hands on class for water conservation and rain barrel assembly from a kit. Fee $40. Registration for this workshop is due one week in advance. MCEO. Call Linda at 722-4524 or visit our website at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> to register.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>10:00 am - Noon</td>
<td><strong>Master Gardener Annual Fall Plant Fair -</strong> Great selection of butterfly plants, native plants, herbs, vegetables, and perennials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>8:00 am – 1:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Master Gardener Tour –</strong> Join Master Gardener Mike Corso for a leisurely nature walk through DeSoto National Memorial and Riverview Pointe Preserve. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about Florida’s native and coastal plants. For reservations, please call the Master Gardener Office at 722-4524.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 11</td>
<td>9:00 am – 11:00 am</td>
<td><strong>Audubon Society Birding Tour –</strong> Search the skies for Florida’s fabulous fliers! Master Birder John Ginaven will lead participants on a tour through Manatee County’s newest preserve searching for birds. Check out the “locals” as well as the migratory birds as they move south on their annual journey. Please call volunteer John Ginaven to reserve a spot at 383-5133. Robinson Preserve.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>8:00 am – 11:00 am</td>
<td><strong>Take a Walk on the Wild Side with a Master Gardener</strong> - Free nature tour! Learn more about Florida’s native plants with Master Gardener Larry Barse on a relaxing stroll through Emerson Point Preserve. Call the Master Gardener Office at 722-4524 for reservations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>9:00 am – 11:00 am</td>
<td><strong>Palma Sola Botanical Park Plant and Antique Sales</strong> – Lectures, demonstrations, vendors and more. Call the Gardens at 941-761-2866 for more information. Stop by the Manatee County Extension’s display booth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>8:00 am – 5:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Bucket Brigade Classes:</strong> Learn about container gardening and actually assemble a bucket to use for your gardening needs. Bring two 5-gallon buckets with you. To register and for more information contact Linda at (941) 722-4524 or visit the website at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> . MCEO. No Fee. Registration required as class fills up fast. (MGs 2.5 CEUs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 22</td>
<td>9:00 am – 11:30 am</td>
<td><strong>Landscape Makeover – Ground Covers, Grasses, and Vines:</strong> Landscaping with low-growing ground cover plants has become a popular trend of landscape practices. Site considerations will be discussed. No fee. MCEO. Register on line at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call Elissa 722-4524, ext. 235.</td>
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<td>October 22</td>
<td>6:00 pm – 8:30 pm</td>
<td><strong>Wild Florida 101: Life in a Shell</strong> – Can you tell the difference between a turtle, tortoise, and a terrapin? Florida has an amazing array of wonderful shelled reptiles and in this class we’ll meet some of these terrific turtles. Participants will join naturalist Melissa and several special shelled-bearing guests to learn about these amazing ancient creatures and discover firsthand their amazing adaptations for survival. All participants will take home educational materials too. Reservations required! Call 748-4501, ext. 4605. Emerson Point Preserve.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>5:30 pm – 7:30 pm</td>
<td><strong>Annuals by the Season:</strong> Annuals tend to bloom profusely and give the landscape the opportunity to show different combinations of color throughout the year. Topics include plant selection, maintenance, hand watering, micro-irrigation and more. No fee. MCEO. Register on line at <a href="http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu">http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu</a> or call Elissa at 722-4524, ext. 235.</td>
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<td>October 28</td>
<td>6:00 pm – 8:30 pm</td>
<td><strong>Farm City Week Bus Tour</strong> - Here’s a chance for farm and city neighbors to become acquainted and celebrate the accomplishments of our agricultural community. Tour departs from Mosaic Arena at Manatee County Fairgrounds. Reservations a must! Call Tour Coordinator, Linda, 722-4524, Ext 265.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>Buses Load at 8 AM</td>
<td><strong>Daily Mobile Irrigation Lab</strong> Here’s a valuable opportunity to conserve potable irrigation water use and save money! The Manatee County’s Mobile Irrigation Lab will come to your residence or business to examine your irrigation practices, make specific recommendations to curtail water waste and improve your landscape. Possible rebate for reduced potable water use is available. To schedule an appt., call 742-5986, ext. 235 or 259.</td>
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**MCEO = Manatee County Extension Office**

2303 17th Street West * Palmetto, Florida 34221

[http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu](http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu)