

June 2017

An Equal Opportunity Institution

SOLUTIONS

Garden Thyme

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I Felt like a Wedding Planner by Denise DeBusk

Last year, I wrote an article about the Plant Sale called “It Felt like a Wedding” where I felt like everything just went on around me like clockwork. Since it was my first plant sale, all the responsibility fell on the Master Gardeners to pull off the Plant Sale. This year, I unexpectedly found myself in the role of the Plant Sale Chair and more like the wedding planner. I got to learn about all the little details that go into the Plant Sale and make a lot of decisions.

Despite my steep learning curve, we had a fantastic plant sale. We sold 4,300 plants as well as other homemade products. We had over 1,000 customers and 97 MGs come

in for the sale and netted a higher profit than we ever have in previous years.

I couldn’t do it without all of you. We had fantastic co-chairs – Mario Perez and Florence Cline – that kept me on-track, were cheerleaders of the sale, and were always there when we needed them. We had an excellent team of coordinators who spent countless hours at this office. Then we had all of you that contributed at different points during the Jan-May prep and day of the plant sale. This is successful because everyone worked as a team. Thank you all for another great Plant Sale!

Healing Garden Wins Award by Greg McGann

The Healing Garden at the Gainesville VA Honor Center won a *City of Gainesville Beautification Board* award, which was presented April 26 at the Thomas Center.

This garden has been a MG project since its inception. Leah Diehl, an MG and Landscape Architect, designed the garden and members of the MG class of 2010 including Greg McGann, helped lay the paved

pathways that gave all veterans access to all areas of the garden.

With the inspiration of Alee Karpf, a VA recreational and horticultural therapist who retired earlier this year, the garden provides formerly homeless veterans a lush and beautiful space in which to learn basic gardening skills. They plant, tend and harvest organic vegetables and herbs, and care for the array of or-

namentals that provide shade, color and beauty.

In 2012, the garden was awarded the “Therapeutic Garden Design Award” from the American Horticultural Therapy Association.

If you would like to learn how to volunteer at the Healing Garden, please contact MG Greg McGann.

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Leah Diehl is Honored

“On April 12, 2017, in coordination with UF Campus Earth Day, Elizabeth (Leah) Diehl, the director of the Therapeutic Horticulture Program at the Greenhouse at Wilmot Gardens, was awarded the 2017 Champions for Change Award for the category of Health and Well-Being. The Champions for Change Awards program is an annual collaboration between the Office of Sustainability and Healthy Gators, developed to recognize individuals or groups in the University of Florida community who have made significant contributions or have had notable personal or professional achievements in the areas of health and sustainability. The objective of the Champions for Change Awards program is to honor nominees while also inspiring others to create a healthier and more sustainable community.” Wilmot Gardens Newsletter - Volume 2, Issue 2 - April 28, 2017.

Master Gardeners Share Mini Plot at Newell Hall

by Greg McGann



Built in 1910, Newell Hall, the third oldest building on the UF campus was originally an agricultural experimentation station—old photos show row crops extending from the front of the building outward.

Shuttered since 2012 due to being out of code, the totally revitalized building reopened in April as a 24-hour “Learning Commons” for UF students.

As a piece of the University’s application for LEED® Gold certification, the landscaping includes four small plots at the south entrance. One of the plots is the combined effort between the state Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ office and the Alachua County Master Gardeners. Our plot features FFL-certified plants that can stand up to the many hours of intense direct sunlight. In exchange for participating with the planning and installation, and periodic maintenance, we will have an area to highlight the MG Help Desk, sustainable gardening practices, and to post announcements of upcoming Extension classes, the MG plant sale, and the annual FFL yard tour.

If you would like to take a look, Newell Hall is at the intersection of Union Road and Buckman Drive. Parking is pretty much impossible, so visiting during a school break, or riding your bicycle over would be the easiest.

Wilmot Gardens/Horticultural Therapy Recognize Master Gardeners

Spotlight on John Brunner



“After retiring from 22 years of service in the United States Navy, John Brunner settled in Gainesville where he attended the University of Florida. Brunner’s experiences in the Navy taught him the importance of being part of a community and he quickly became active in his new locale. John has been active in multiple civic groups ranging from Guardian ad Litem to the Fair Housing Board. As part of his continued pursuit of community involvement and love of the outdoors, John decided to join the Florida Master Gardener program in 2013.

John volunteers primarily in the therapeutic horticulture program and has worked with several different participant groups, including those with cancer, depression, and young adults with autism. This semester he worked largely with a group of young adults from Shands Florida Recovery Center that are undergoing treatment for substance or alcohol addictions. John feels that the program offers participants positive mental and social aspects as much or more than physical aspects. “Part of therapeutic horticulture is the interaction of playing with the dirt and soil, cutting things, and communicating with those around you,” said John. “When you make something you can look at it and say I did that. It’s a sense of accomplishment.” Wilmot Gardens Newsletter - Volume 2, Issue 2 - April 28, 2017.

The FireBush Muddle

The Florida native firebush, *Hamelia patens*, which we love for its ease of growth, beauty and ability to attract pollinators, has a close nonnative cousin in the horticulture trade. This nonnative is being sold locally under the name of firebush and looks very similar to the native.

The native firebush is *Hamelia patens* var. *patens* and the nonnative from Central America is *Hamelia patens* var. *glabra*. The leaves of the nonnative are hairless, in whorls of four and the flowers are mostly yellow. The leaves of the native are larger and in whorls of three or four and the flowers are redder. By seeing these plants side by side, the differences are noticeable.

You may be asking, what about the compact version? It seems there are a few versions of this cultivar, some of which originate from one variety and some from another. In reality, these compact versions can reach up to eight feet in height.

Why does any of this matter?
“The non-native *Hamelia patens* var. *glabra* readily escapes from seed around cultivated specimens and may contaminate the gene pool of Florida’s native firebush through hybridization, so it appears to be the plant to watch, especially with its increasing popularity as a landscape plant in Florida.”¹ To prevent this, watch for this look-alike and avoid its purchase.

<http://www.floridanativenurseries.org/info/plants/the-hamelia-mess>

<http://www.gardendebut.com/plant/Lime-Sizzler-Firebush>

http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/GardenPubsAZ/Firebush_Hamelia_patens.pdf

Frank, Marc, email conversations

Calendar of Events

Field trip to Wilmot Gardens/Horticulture Therapy

Sign up on VMS - parking info will be emailed to you.

Wednesday, June 7 from 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Landscaping for Newcomers

2 volunteers needed, arrive ½ hour early to help with registration (earn volunteer time & ceu’s) Sign up on VMS.

Monday, June 12 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Extension Office

Vegetable Gardening in the Summer

2 volunteers needed, arrive ½ hour early to help with registration (earn volunteer time & ceu) Sign up on VMS.

Thursday, June 15 from 6 to 7p.m.

Extension Office

Monthly meeting - Topic Blackberries by MG Kathy Paterson

Friday, June 16 from 11:30a.m. to 1p.m.

Organic Blueberry Farm Tour by MG Jeff Popowski

2 volunteers needed, arrive ½ hour early to help with registration (earn volunteer time & 2 ceu’s) Sign up on VMS.

Cost is \$5.00 if you just want to take the tour <http://tinyurl.com/ktfkd5p>.

Wednesday, June 21 from 9 to 11a.m.

Extension Office Demo Gardens Workday

Join your fellow MG’s in garden/grounds cleanup

Tuesday, June 27 from 9am to noon

Monthly meeting - You are invited to present

Usually this meeting is devoted to sharing our botanical finds as we travel. This year in addition to travel slides please think about sharing you favorite plant in a picture, story or the actual plant. Or share your favorite tool, gadget, solution to a problem and a new found gardening trick.

Please contact Ann Hudson to be included on this program.

Friday, July 21 from 11:30a.m. to 1p.m.



The Tomato

You can count on the appearance of at least one tomato plant in almost every garden in America. But few know what a real miracle a Florida tomato is.

The ancestor of this popular plant, technically a fruit, but labeled a vegetable by the US Supreme Court in 1893, comes from one of the driest places on earth, the Andes Mountains of Peru. But it has relatives that thrive in humid rain forests and on chilly alpine slopes. First domesticated and cross-bred by pre-Columbian Aztecs, the tomato has been cross-bred by almost every “civilized” nation to suit it to various environments, conditions, and tastes. Consider this statement by Roger Chetelat, a renowned tomato expert at the University of California, Davis, “If it wasn’t for the genes of these wild species, you wouldn’t be able to grow tomatoes in a lot of areas.”

“Although you’d never know it from the colorful cornucopia on display at any farmers’ market on a summer Saturday, all modern domestic tomatoes (known botanically as *Solanum lycopersicum*) are remarkably similar. Taken together, they possess no more than 5 percent of the total genetic variation present within the wild species and primitive varieties. The domestic tomato’s progenitor has the other 95 or more percent. Modern tomatoes may taste good and offer eye appeal, but they lack many genes that allow them to fight disease and survive drought.”¹

Fortunately, botanists have worked very hard to cross-breed back into the progenitors to provide us with many varieties of tomatoes suited to gardens through-

out the world. But we in Florida have our own problems, both diseases and pests. If you find yourself stymied by “what’s buggin’ your plant”, take a look at what IFAS has done for us: a whole key devoted to tomato diseases and pests (<http://erec.ifas.ufl.edu/tomato-scouting-guide/id-keys/>).

Further, IFAS gives us a document on successful tomatoes to grow in Florida, broken down by region. Interestingly enough, very few of the tomatoes on the northern Florida chart are easily available, except those classified as heirlooms. Which is pretty much okay with most home gardeners since they find heirlooms to be tastier and more “tomato-like” than many hybrids (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/hs1189>).

Missing from the list is a small tomato called “Everglade,” known to be heat-tolerant even of summer days. There is talk among “tomato folk” that this is a native Florida tomato. Not so, even though it may be a naturalized Florida tomato which grows wild in some areas. It’s hard to get definitive information on the Everglades, even as to what size they are. Answers vary from “currant size” to “cherry tomato size.” We started a few Everglades for a school gardens, so perhaps we’ll get a report back on them.

¹Barry Estabrook, Smithsonian Journeys Quarterly, July 22, 2015.

For a fascinating read about the tomato in Florida, check out Barry Estabrook’s *Tomatoland, How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit*, available at the library.



UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County *presents*

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Highlights: San Jose, Coffee Plantation, Guanacaste, Monteverde Cloud Forest, Hanging Bridges Tour, Arenal Volcano, Lake Arenal Cruise, Cooking Demonstration, Cano Negro Refuge, Zarcero, National Theatre

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For more information, contact Denise DeBusk
at 352.955.2402 or ddebusk@ufl.edu

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Click here for more details <http://tinyurl.com/n7kto3l>

Some of the photos from the Plant Sale



The Cides Have Side Effects

Two issues surrounding the use of herbicides and insecticides have been on the forefront of local news lately.

By far the largest brouhaha was highlighted in the local newspaper and TV stations. This spring organic gardeners started reporting curling and misshapen leaves on their tomatoes and peppers. Some sleuths in the Grow Gainesville organization realized their soil had been purchased from a single local vendor. Continued investigation discovered the soil included manure from the UF dairy which is not organic. The dairy had a weed issue so they sprayed their fields with aminopyralid (GrazonNext HL™) herbicide that is commonly sprayed on pastures and hayfields.

After killing the weeds, where does the chemical go? The livestock eats the grass or the hay baled from the field and passes the herbicide through and out their body into the manure. The manure from the dairy was collected by the local vendor and added to his soil as an amendment. As a herbicide, it acted on the spring vegetable gardens of unsuspecting gardeners in our area tainting their crops.

IFAS has taken responsibility for this issue and is working with local gardeners including some of our MGs to ameliorate the situation. For more information read the fact sheet under publications on the VMS. Included in the fact sheet are questions to ask our manure suppliers before purchasing. The fact sheet does not emphasize that this chemical may be in hay or straw you buy for straw bales, mulch, or other uses such as decoration at Halloween.

The second issue sent to me from the national Garden Club by Lorene Paul involves our beloved monarch butterflies. As you may know there are nationwide efforts to protect the Monarchs whose numbers are dwindling due to loss of habitat and their larval food, milkweed. Our own plant sale sold two types of milkweed to provide food locally for Monarchs.



However, through a large area of the nation in big box stores milkweed is sold with a label stating that the plant had been treated with systemic Neonicotinoids. The label boasts how desirable the plant is for birds and butterflies.

Neonicotinoids are a class of insecticides developed in the 1980s that share a common mode of action that affect the central nervous system of insects, resulting in paralysis and death. They include imidacloprid, acetamiprid, clothianidin, dinotefuran, nithiazine, thiacloprid and thiamethoxam. It has been suggested but not proven that these chemicals are related to honeybee colony collapse, decreased number of native bees and

the decline of Lepidoptera.

As the garden club newsletter says, “This is like giving poison candy to kids at Halloween.” The store answers our request for plants to feed the Monarchs which we take home. The Monarchs eat them and we kill what we trying to help. Watch for these labels and tell the store manager that this is not acceptable.

“Cides” all have side effects. Some are listed and some are not because they simply are not known. IFAS tells us always to read the label on all chemicals. Is reading enough? No! Always ask the vendor if this plant is sprayed, where does this compost come from, why is the chemical needed? Then tell the vendors what you want—be it more information, no chemicals or better labeling. Be informed and inform the public.

For more reading, try a net search of persistent herbicides, or see <http://beyondpesticides.org/> or xercessociety.org/pesticides. Books include *Organic: A Journalist's Quest to Discover the Truth Behind Food Labeling* by P. Laufer or *Exposed: The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Products - Who's at Risk and What's at Stake for American Power* by Mark Schapiro.

FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING FLOYDS – CONTAMINATED SOIL

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