

Demonstration Garden



Guided Garden Tour Saturday, April 23 2005

On Saturday, April 23, from 9 a. m. to noon , the University of Florida IFAS Extension will have an Open House where Master Gardeners will give tours of the demonstration garden on its grounds at 615 Paul Russell Road .

Just a few years ago these grounds were bare, thinly planted with grass and were something of an embarrassment to those of us who were attending the Master Gardener's course. Now, five years on, they are a showplace and an example of how to plant, irrigate and maintain a garden. In 2003, the garden was awarded the Award of Excellence for Demonstration Gardens at the annual Master Gardener Continuing Education Conference in Gainesville .

The garden is a series of beds full of shrubs, groundcovers, annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses and trees which bloom in sequence from spring through fall with a few hardy plants blooming in winter. The purpose of the gardens is to teach principles of environmental horticulture including proper plant selection, planting, mulching, pruning and the use of micro-irrigation. It also demonstrates the benefits of grouping like minded plants together, and illustrates the use of colors, shapes and textures.

There is quite a show this year, along with the perennial spring bloomers we have a colorful array of poppies, larkspur, and bachelor buttons which were planted from seed in November or, delightfully, self-seeded from last years plants. Seeds are an inexpensive way to achieve great impact at little cost but we did splurge on a few flats of annuals, even we get impatient for spring.

Though the garden is open to the public all the time, on Saturday Master Gardeners will give tours every fifteen minutes from 9:15 to 10:30 a. m. or you may conduct a self-directed tour. Master Gardeners will be located in the various gardens and will be available to answer questions on specific plants. As the garden has been planted and maintained by Master Gardeners this is a chance to ask all those horticultural questions you have been saving up. The office will open for further questions.

Come join us. We will point out our favorite plants, show you how to mulch and extol the joys of a micro watering system and you may even win a plant in a door prize drawing that will be held at 11 a. m.