Garden Open House Saturday, April 21

Jim Melton is a Master Gardener volunteer with the University of Florida IFAS Leon County Extension in Leon County, http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/ Photos by David W. Marshall, UF-IFAS Leon County Extension: The demonstration garden features many well-suited but not-so-well known plants such as Argentine trumpet vine (Clytostoma callistegioides) and orange justicia (Justicia Leonardii).

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If you have questions about the care of your home landscape, plan on coming out and spending some time with Leon County Master Gardeners this Saturday morning, April 21. From 9 a.m. until noon the Master Gardeners will be giving tours of the UF-IFAS Leon County Extension demonstration garden at 615 Paul Russell Road.

The garden is a demonstration of the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods (FYN) principles that you can use to maintain your landscape in a more environmentally friendly manner. The FYN principles are:

1. Right plant, right place
2. Water efficiently
3. Fertilize appropriately
4. Mulch
5. Attract wildlife
6. Manage yard pests responsibly
7. Recycle yard waste
8. Reduce stormwater runoff
9. Protect the waterfront

Saturday morning you will see these principles in practice in the demonstration garden. You will also meet some very special volunteers. For example, Bill Dority is the Master Gardener rose expert. He can show you how to grow landscape roses without all the pesticide sprays that you may think are necessary to grow roses.

Howard Rhodes will be on hand to answer any questions you might have on camellias. Howard and his wife, Mary, won a recent “Best in Show” at the 54th annual Camellia Show in Tallahassee. A recent stand of overgrown camellias in the demonstration garden
have been pruned to show those of you with similarly overgrown, large camellias how to prune them into a tree form.

Glenn Mayne will be roaming the gardens, discussing the importance of mulch in the landscape, and offering advice to homeowners with yard problems that might defy diagnosis over the phone. Glenn is also an expert on vegetable gardening. We all have enjoyed the extra produce he produces on his “back forty.” Make sure you talk to him about the right fertilizer for most of your needs, phosphorus-free 15-0-15 with 7.5 percent slow-release nitrogen. Glenn uses this in his vegetable garden with great success.

In total, over seventy Master Gardener volunteers assist with the open house. Each has completed the comprehensive Master Gardener training program and provides extensive volunteer service maintaining the demonstration garden.

The Master Gardener program is led by Extension Agent, David Marshall, who will be on hand to lead a tour and answer your questions. David has recently led us in developing an area of the garden that features tropical plants, well suited for the heat and humidity of our summers.

The open house hours are from 9 a.m until noon. Tours will be conducted every twenty minutes and highlight the six unique areas of the landscape garden. The last tour begins at 11:35. After the tour, take a leisure tour on your own of the beds and discuss any questions you might have with Master Gardeners who are stationed at each bed. Each plant in the garden is identified by a sign. There will be plant propagation demonstrations as well as a micro-irrigation system demonstration.

Convenient parking on the site is provided. Turn into Zillah Street off Paul Russell Road and you will see the entrance on the right. Enjoy refreshments and take a plant home, provided by Master Gardeners.

We hope that you will join us on Saturday and take away a few tips on how you can improve and better enjoy your home landscape.

For more information about Florida Yards & Neighborhoods, visit www.FloridaYards.org/

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