

MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION FOR THE MASTER GARDENERS OF LEON COUNTY

Editor: Jim King

2002 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
THU DEC 5	HOLIDAY PARTY This is our annual winter holiday party. (See Newsletter for details).	10 TO 1
MON DEC 16	DEMONSTRATION GARDEN WORKDAY December provides us with another of our cool weather work days, so remember to bring your tools and brown bag lunch and come on out.	9 TO 12

JANUARY

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>TIME</u>
THU JAN 2	M G ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING	10 TO 12
THU JAN 9	M G MONTHLY MEETING	9 TO 12
	(TO BE ANNOUNCED)	
MON JAN 13	DEMONSTRATION GARDEN WORKDAY This may be a real cool month to work in the garden – bring your jacket along with your	9 TO 12

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tools and brown bag lunch!

(All events are held at the Extension Office unless otherwise stated).

WELCOME to the second of the “new” Master Gardener newsletters. If you did not receive the first one, read on!

DISTRIBUTION of our first newsletter was a bit problematic. Unfortunately it appears we will not have all the bugs worked out for the December newsletter either.

This is what we did for November, and what we will have to do for December as well:

1. A “postcard” to notify everyone by mail of the *calendar of events only*.
 2. A complete copy of the Newsletter for everyone with an e-mail address. (We do note however, that the format might be out of whack for some of you. This is caused by technical stuff I really don’t understand, so ask our Webmaster Ed Schroeder if you REALLY need to know!)
 3. A complete copy of the Newsletter on our Web page.
 4. A “hard copy” of the Newsletter in the Master Gardener office, so you can read it there if all else fails.
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HOLIDAY PARTY for the Master Gardeners.

In December of each year, it has been customary to celebrate our winter holidays with a feast along with our monthly educational program.

This year Stan Rosenthal has agreed to discuss the trees frequently used in holiday decorations. After the program, we will all be able to sample the goodies each Master Gardener brings as a covered dish. I have never known anyone to go away hungry!

Also in the past, each of us has brought a canned good or two, or similar non-perishable food item, to prepare a food basket to give to a local charity. So bring your covered dish, something for the food basket if you wish to participate, and a hardy appetite!

THE CONFERENCE was in Gainesville.

The 22nd Annual Florida Master Gardener Conference was held in October this year. It was the planners’ effort to take advantage of cooler weather. Although it wasn’t quite as cool as they had hoped, it was better than mid-summer’s heat! (The conference has been held in August the past few years.)

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For those of you who have not had the opportunity to go to a conference, I have found each of the three I've attended to be well worth the time and effort. Many of the speakers are professors at the University. Getting the chance to listen to these experts and ask them questions has certainly been very beneficial, and the quality of their presentations has been excellent.

Of course not everyone likes every presentation and the choices of programs may not be way up there on your "most liked" list, but overall, the conference is quite well done. Just ask those who have gone to any of them, and I'm sure you will hear them say they not only learned something, they had a good time as well!

When I went to my first conference in 1998, there were only 3 Master Gardeners from Leon County. This year we had a 14! The program was varied enough that most of us could easily find more than one interesting topic. This is a common problem, however, that is, there are more presentations of interest than time available, and even a Master Gardener cannot be in two places at the same time! (See the program guide and summary of presentations available in the Master Gardener office for more details).

You will note from the agenda that we also had time for socializing. And for those of you who have been to past MG conferences, you know this is really a fun part of the event, the time when you can relax and just have a good time. It is also a great time to get to know your fellow Master Gardeners a lot better!

While the conference is usually held annually in Gainesville, each year a questionnaire is used to seek input as to when and where you prefer to have the event. So stay tuned to "your" newsletter and we will let you know the dates and location of next year's conference as soon as that information is released.

AN INTERNATIONAL Master Gardener conference.

And speaking of conferences, information was received recently about the International Master Gardener Conference to be held June 18 to 21, 2003. This event takes place at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. It is being co-sponsored by The Ohio State University and the University of Kentucky.

AN INTERNATIONAL MG conference (continued).

The International Conference is held every other year. In 2001 it was in Orlando and was hosted by the University of Florida. Several of our Leon County Master Gardeners attended this program and were thoroughly impressed – me among them. I prepared a scrapbook, and although it is personalized, it might be of interest to anyone who would like to see what went on there. It will be in the Master Gardener office for the next few months if you would like to look at it.

Of some import is the cost of this conference. Early registration is available for \$300.00 if submitted prior to December 31, 2002. Hotels are in the "big city" category and rates are commensurate with that location. Further details for this event are available in the Master Gardener office.

THE BOARD of Directors met on November 7.

Our primary goal for this meeting was almost achieved. We formed two of the three work groups to address the various ideas, events, etc., which had been identified earlier, and most importantly got the volunteers necessary to make these workgroups function effectively. We are, however, still very much in the formative stage and will need some time to work out details.

The workgroups and their leaders are:

- COMMUNICATIONS Ed Schroeder
- MEMBER SERVICES Sherry Butler
- ASSOCIATION EVENTS Doris Storey

Next month we will take some space in the newsletter to elaborate on each of these.

EDITOR SEEKING INPUT from each of you.

A quality newsletter has something about it that just makes you want to read it all the way through when you receive it. I believe input from the Master Gardeners would add to the quality and I seek your comments. For example, a “Letters to the Editor” section is often a popular column. One recommendation discussed during the Board meeting was to have a “Plant of the Month” column, a plant especially for our area. That sounded like such a good idea that Cheryl Naylor volunteered to write one for December.

I’m open to other suggestions. Remember: If we don’t get any other input, you’ll be stuck with the editor’s ramblings!

PLANT OF THE MONTH FOR DECEMBER

PAPERWHITES

(By Cheryl Naylor)

Paperwhites (*Narcissus tazetta*) are a multi-faceted plant in our region. One of the few plants blooming in our area in December and January, it bears strongly fragrant, multiple white blooms and are most attractive when planted in masses or drifts. Paperwhites perform well as a container plant and are also a good, long lasting cut flower that keeps well in shallow water. (When initially cut, they ooze a sticky sap; placing them in lukewarm water for about an hour should give the stems time to stop oozing.) Additionally, Paperwhites are often used for forcing indoors. Because they reproduce offsets, they are a good pass-along plant as well.

Paperwhites are easy to grow. The bulbs should not be refrigerated as many other bulbs require prior to planting. Full sun or light shade is necessary for them to multiply and come back year after year. They should be planted as early in the Fall as they are available, about 4 inches deep, and 8 inches apart. When planted in well-drained soil, Paperwhites will naturalize in the landscape.

This year’s foliage provides the wherewithal for bulb growth and next year’s flowers. Therefore, cutting the

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foliage should be postponed until it starts to naturally yellow and wither. Because paperwhite foliage takes weeks to wither after the bulbs finish blooming, many people over-plant the area with shallow rooted deciduous perennials, or with annuals, so that the yellowing foliage of the bulbs will be hidden.

Paperwhites are a great choice for the winter landscape, requiring little care while reaping grand rewards.

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