

Master Gardener

Newsletter

What's inside:

Open house update:

What's happening.
Page 2.

Progress continues:

Board election results.
Page 3.

Guess who's coming?

State MG coordinator to visit.
Page 4.

Garden forensics:

Site visitations start.
Page 5.

Prepare for summer:

June in the garden.
Page 6.

For romantics only:

Demo garden review.
Page 7.

Looking ahead:

Calendar.
Page 7.



Bill and Mary Maud Sharpe are as gracious as they are expert rosarians.

The promise of roses

Effort taken yields beauty to behold

Maybe **Bill Sharpe** never promised his a wife a rose garden. But **Mary Maud** sure has a magnificent one now.

Out on Apalachee Parkway, tucked away behind a field where cattle still graze, the couple tends an expanse of color and subtle scents that is a monument to gardening that is smart and inventive.

The Sharpes hosted our May 11 monthly meeting and graciously shared their secrets for nurturing bed upon bed of roses — not to mention their latest venture, creating an ex-

pansive grove of camellias.

Bill, 84, is a retired agent for the Florida Department of Agriculture. Both Bill and Mary Maud are master rosarians and judges for the American Rose Society. They are also camellia judges and trained master gardeners.

So you know they are ahead of the curve when it comes to developing and maintaining a first-class garden.

But it's reassuring to learn that the experts proceed much like the rest of

*(Please see **ROSES** on page 5)*

June 2006

Volume 5, Number 6

Published under the auspices of



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

EXTENSION

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

What's happening

Open house planning begins anew

One reason why our April 29 open house was such a success was all the planning that went into it.



And Coordinator **Jim Roberts** wasted no time in starting to prepare for the fall event with a May 8 post mortem about what worked well and what could have been improved this spring.

It's the kind of continuous improvement dynamic that is a hallmark of many winning enterprises: Build upon your strengths; correct your weaknesses.

Chalk up to our strengths, participation. Of 185 active master gardeners, 53 took some part in the spring open house.

At the post mortem, the list of things to do better ranged from to heavier cardboard for parking signs to encouraging garden work teams to take more responsibility in staffing their own beds at open houses.

There were ideas for making the event more pleasurable and meaningful for visitors by repositioning information desks, staggering some of the door prize drawings and conducting informational displays and demonstrations.

If this level of enthusiasm carries through over the summer, the fall open house should be something to look forward to.



Jackson's loss, our gain

During the rain delay during our last garden work day, David presented **Lydia Alexander** with a pin for 500 hours service as a master gardener. But not in Leon County.

Seems the folks in Jackson County thought enough of Lydia to track her down to make sure she was duly recognized for what she did for them.

Lydia took our class in 2005. But she became a master gardener in 2003, having taken classes in Bay County. (The agent who taught the class was in the Air Force, and when he was called to active duty in Iraq, classes were taken over by agents and master gardeners in surrounding counties.)

She was one of only eight or 10 master gardeners in Jackson County and did yeoman's service on numerous fronts.

She and her husband had more than three acres in Mariana. They downsized after moving to Tallahassee last July. But she hasn't slowed down her master gardening activities. And she's making a real contribution to the Leon County program.

Maclay winners

Maclay's Parade of Gardens May 8 was the most successful since the event was started 12 years ago, says **Angela Franz**.

She adds "this was largely due to volunteer participation" and sends along a big thank you to participating master gardeners.

The Friends of Maclay garden committee is currently looking at gardens to feature next year. If you have a candidate, please call Angela at 222-7407.

New class prep

The curriculum committee has been meeting to help David develop ways to improve the learning experience of the Class of 2006, which is scheduled to begin Sept. 7.

Issues being discussed include:

- ✓ How best to connect lectures with hands-on experience;
- ✓ How best to streamline class materials; and
- ✓ How best to emphasize the importance of the volunteer commitment of the program.

A process for interviewing candidates to outline what's involved is being developed.

Call for mentors

David plans to repeat the mentor program inaugurated last year. If you would like to serve as a mentor or alternate mentor for the Class of 2006, please contact **Jim King** at jking4109@aol.

The Leon County Extension

Master Gardener Newsletter

This is a publication of the Master Gardeners Association of Leon County, a nonprofit, educational organization that operates under the auspices of the Leon County Cooperative Extension Service and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).

Office

615 Paul Russell Road,
Tallahassee, FL 32301-7099
850-606-5202
<http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Board of Directors

- Kathy Bye**
President
- Paul Elliott**
Vice-President
- Mary Ann Tonnacliff**
Secretary
- Eileen Self**
Treasurer
- James King**
Immediate past-president
(ex-officio)
- Robert Douglas**
Editor (ex-officio)

Committee Chairs

- Robert Douglas**
Communications chair
- Vicky McClure**
Events chair
- Jim Roberts**
Fall Open House

Staff

- David Marshall**
Extension Agent/Program Leader
- Stan Rosenthal**
Extension Agent/Forestry
- Zulema Wibmer**
Horticultural Program Assistant
- Genice Harris**
Administrative Associate IV

Editors

- Robert Douglas**
Editor
- Ed Schroeder**
Newsletter Webmaster

Production

- Sue Adamczyk, Lydia Alexander,
Bob Douglas, Elizabeth Ann
Ennis, Sheila Erstling, Joan
Futch, Jim Roberts, Eileen Self
and Ilene Steele.

May edition team

Editor's message

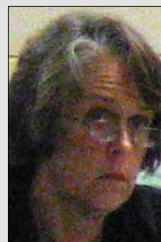
Our new team



Bob Douglas
President



Mary Ann Tonnacliff
Vice-President



Vicky Schwartz
Secretary



Angela Franz
Treasurer



Kathy Bye
Immediate Past president

Progress continues

A strong foundation has been laid by others

By Robert Douglas, Master Gardener

Unlike congress, our Master Gardeners Association doesn't offer any lucrative perks for those who serve in office.

No big salaries. No lobbyist-paid junkets. And no taxpayer-paid office staffs.

Then again, our board members don't have the power to declare war, run up the national debt or lead the country to ruin in at least 435 other ways.

But we can make a difference in our little corner of the world. And perhaps that's reason enough to serve the association's cause, which is:

- ✓ To encourage and maintain volunteer participation;
- ✓ To plan and implement opportunities for educational and volun-

teer activities;

- ✓ To suggest such opportunities to David; and

- ✓ To help spread the word about best gardening practices according to the gospel of IFAS.

From its outset, our association has been blessed with members of talent and dedication who have been willing to serve our cause — either as board members or in various other volunteer capacities.

Collectively, they have been instrumental in enhancing our master gardener program.

On July 1, a new board will assume office. To its members, good luck.

To those they succeed, thanks for all you've done.

Many thanks!



Paul Elliott
Outgoing Vice-President



Eileen Self
Outgoing Treasurer



Jim King
Outgoing Immediate Past President

What's coming up

State coordinator to visit Leon MGs

If you've never met him, you're in for a treat.

If you've ever been to a state master gardener conference, you know he's a special person.

And at our July 13 monthly meeting, **Tom Wichman** is scheduled to join us.

The statewide coordinator of the master gardener program has graciously accepted an invitation to visit the Leon County office for the first time. He'll bring with him a perspective of how what we do fits into a larger context.

Tom is an admitted Gator fanatic but he's always indulged good-natured banter with FSU fans. It will an honor to host him in the capital of Seminole Nation.



Tom will help us see ourselves in a broader context.



26th Annual FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER CONTINUED TRAINING CONFERENCE

October 23-25, 2006

Wyndham Jacksonville Riverwalk
Jacksonville, Florida

For more information and to register:

- ✓ Go to our website (<http://ifas.ufl.edu/mg.htm>)
- ✓ Click on: 2006 MG Continued Training Conference in Jacksonville, Register Now!

Propagation workshop set

Want to know more about how to propagate various plant materials? You'll have a great opportunity at our June 8 monthly meeting when our guest will be **Sue Watkins**.

A trained master gardener who once worked at Tallahassee Nurseries, Sue knows her stuff and how to teach others.

Her presentation will include an opportunity for hands-on experience.



Garden forensics

Site visitation program up and running



Howard Rhodes ponders what's up with Vicky Schwartz's camellias.

They came. They saw. And, hopefully, they conquered any doubts **Vicky Schwartz** had about what to do to get her camellias back on track.

“They” is the team of master gardeners participating in the site visitation program coordinated by **Glenn Mayne**.

Vicky — herself a master gardener — agreed to be a test site where the whole team could come for a hands-on run through of what the process involves. And most of the almost 20 team members showed up at Vicky's lovely midtown yard May 4 to learn the ropes.

Glenn and **Howard Rhodes** took the lead in conducting the visit and preparing a report for **David Marshall's** approval and, ultimately, Vicky's consideration. Here's a summary of that report:

Problem:

Camellia growth and bloom performance.

Diagnosis and observations:

Camellias — both newly planted and ones

there before Vicky moved in — were failing to thrive and bloom.

The plants were fertilized in March, are watered regularly and are in soil tested as suitable for camellias. There was evidence of scale and spider mites. But, generally, the plants were healthy.

Recommended actions:

- ✓ To help the plant get more light, prune to open up the middle. On large plants, prune low-hanging branches.
- ✓ Make sure camellia root balls are planted one-to-two inches above grade level and mulched heavily.
- ✓ For scale, mite and possible beetle infestation, the report recommended spraying with ultra-fine horticultural oil, in conjunction with several more potent chemicals in quantities and at times tailored to the plants examined.

To learn more about the program or find out how to find this report, please contact Glenn at glennmayne@netally.com.

Learning by doing

(ROSES, Continued from page 1)

us in resolving garden challenges that inevitably arise: Try something that seems to make sense and if it doesn't work, try something else.

Since they started their garden in the 1980s, they've had plenty of chances to experiment — sometimes finding success with less than conventional wisdom.

For example, they irrigate with pop-up sprinklers which are thought to foster diseases that thrive on moisture. (It should be noted that their plants do get the benefit of a relatively good breeze and open pruning. Mary Maud reasons the sprinklers are little different than rain.)

They've also learned:

- ✓ Never to use Roundup around roses;
- ✓ Nylon stockings make good ties; and
- ✓ PVC tubing makes durable stakes.

For those who had some questions after our visit, here are three answers that Mary Maud sends along here:

- ✓ **Plant tags:** She gets hers from AAA Engravers, P. O. Box 741100, Dept. R-3, New Orleans, LA 70174-1100. Phone: 504-361-3944. Fax: 504-361-1610. Email: best-sign@bellsouth.net.
- ✓ **Florida Betony killer:** Casoran. Available from CASSCO, P. O. Box 3508, Montgomery, AL 36109-0508. Phone: 800-962-1922. Email: cassco@caffco.com. Web site: www.cassco.cc/contact.htm.
- ✓ **Mary Maud's phenomenal pound cake:** Zulema has the recipe. Email her at Zulemaw@leoncountyfl.gov.

June in the Tallahassee Garden

With summer coming, it's time to Prepare for heat, humidity & storms

Tips from Katherine LaRosa, Master Gardener and David Marshall, Extension Agent

June 1st, as we all know, marks the beginning of hurricane season. It's also the beginning of a long stretch of hot, muggy weather. With these factors in mind, make a careful survey of your landscape.

- ✓ Prepare for the possibility of tropical storms by removing dead limbs or trees that might threaten your structures during periods of high winds.
 - ✓ Store unneeded loose items that might become projectiles.
 - ✓ Also prepare for the certainty of an increase in the mosquito population. Empty and get rid of all sources of standing water where mosquitoes might breed. Change the water in bird baths every few days.



Katherine

Trees and Shrubs

- ✓ Feed young trees and shrubs very lightly with an application of a complete fertilizer, such as 15-0-15 or 16-4-8.
- ✓ It's a good time to plant palms. They establish roots well in hot, muggy weather.
- ✓ For summer color, plant hydrangeas — planting where they will receive morning sun and afternoon shade. Most hydrangeas flower on old wood. Prune them as soon as they finish flowering so that the buds can form for next year.
- ✓ Propagate azaleas, loropetalum, viburnum and other woody shrubs by rooting tip cuttings. (For details on how to do this, see an article written by Daniel Mullins, Extension Horticulture Agent for the University of Florida IFAS Extension in Santa Rosa County, which can be found at http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/plant_rooting_method.htm.)

Lawn Care

- ✓ Don't fertilize your lawn unless you just planted it from plugs and you're trying to get the plugs to spread.
- ✓ Mow your lawn at least weekly.
- ✓ Set the lawn mower on a high setting. Mowing too low is a major stressor for your lawn.
- ✓ Sharpen the mower blade at least monthly.
- ✓ If your lawn is yellowish, iron can be applied to green it up without stimulating excessive new growth. Use ferrous sulfate at a rate of two ounces in three to five gallons of water per one thousand square feet of lawn.

Flowers

- ✓ Plant heat- and humidity-tolerant annuals and perennials.
 - ✓ For areas that receive afternoon shade, use coleus, impatiens, caladiums, jacobinia, shrimp plant, brugmansia (Angel's trumpet), and Summer Wave torenia.
 - ✓ For areas of full sun, plant *Cuphea llavea* 'Flamenco Tango', pentas, melampodium, Magilla Perilla, croton, Tropicana canna, bush allamanda, tangerine bulbine, 'Anne Marie' lantana, portulaca, salvia, vinca, gaillardia, firebush, and zinnia.
 - ✓ Fertilize amaryllis, crinum lilies, Easter lilies and other bulbs which have recently finished blooming but don't cut the foliage until it is completely dead.
 - ✓ Plant bulbs, tubers, or plants of blackberry lily, clivia, gloriosa lily, achimenes, crinums, iris and gladiolus.
 - ✓ Pinch back fall bloomers such as Mexican bush sage to encourage compactness and more flowers.

Vegetables and Herbs

- ✓ Plant sweet potatoes, okra, pole beans, southern peas, butter beans, lima beans, peanuts, hot peppers, and pumpkins.
- ✓ Propagate tomatoes to be planted in late July or August by rooting tip cuttings.
- ✓ Fertilize vegetables monthly or, if using slow release fertilizer, apply as often as directed.
- ✓ Harvest vegetables often to encourage continued production.
- ✓ Cut back overgrown herbs to stimulate vigorous new growth.

Fruit

- ✓ Fertilize established figs and keep them well mulched and watered.
- ✓ Lightly fertilize blueberries after harvest with an azalea-camellia fertilizer, scattering the fertilizer well under the entire branch spread of the plants.
- ✓ Prune out old unproductive blueberry canes.
- ✓ Fertilize blackberries and after harvest remove the canes which fruited this year.
- ✓ Prune the new canes to encourage side branching.

Demonstration garden

Our garden in spring is for romantics

By Anne Tofield, Master Gardener

May 15, 2006: There are many ways of looking at a garden, but primarily they come down to two:



Anne

- Plant lovers go from plant to plant, looking at every petal, leaf and stem; and
- The more romantic of us gather sensations, absorb the ambience and enjoy the play of light and color.

This Monday workday was made for the romantics among us as the sky darkened and a heavy downpour heightened contrasts as the grass turned emerald green before our eyes.

With the delphiniums going over, everything else took on new emphasis. Bright pink caladiums never looked so

bright and were in sync with the other pinks in that bed. Close by, silvery strobilanthus and purple torenias were a great combo as well. Pink justicias joined the scene, altogether very pretty. New fuchsias, coleus and crotons are adding surprises creating a new look in many areas.

Two new large plants caught my eye: *Brillantaisia gulan-sis* (which I have never seen anywhere, but must have), was heavy with gorgeous purple flowers; and also a deep, wine red cestrum which is just about to flower.

The most interesting part of the garden now is the trial area where David is trying many tropicals and other exciting, warm-winter plants to see how they survive our fickle zone 8b.

If winters continue to get warmer we may find ourselves flirting with zone 9, and wouldn't that be fun!

Mark your calendar

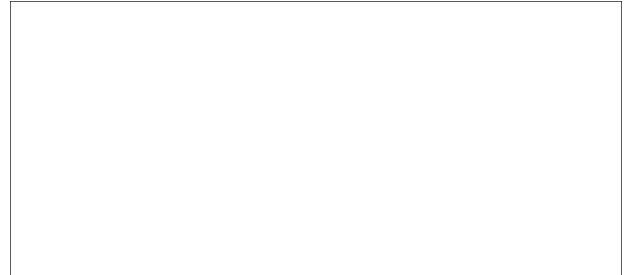
June 1 Thursday	Hurricane season begins.	
	MG Association Board meeting.	10 a.m. – noon
June 8 Thursday	Monthly education meeting. Propagation workshop with Sue Watkins. Please see Page 4 for more details.	9 a.m. – noon
June 19 Monday	Demo garden work day. Please check your email beforehand to find out what your team is doing.	9 a.m. – noon
June 21 Wednesday	First day of summer.	
July 4 Tuesday	Independence Day. Extension office closed.	
July 6 Thursday	MG Association Board meeting.	10 a.m. – noon
July 13 Thursday	Monthly education meeting. Florida MG Coordinator Tom Wichman. Please see Page 4 for details.	9 a.m. – noon
July 17 Monday	Demo garden work day. Check our website in advance for what your team is doing.	9 a.m. – noon
Sept. 7 Thursday	New master gardener class scheduled to start.	
Oct. 22-25	Master Gardener State Conference in Jacksonville. Please see Page 4 for details.	

All events are at the office unless otherwise indicated.

University of Florida
Institute of Food & Agricultural Services
Leon County Cooperative Extension Service
615 Paul Russell Road
Tallahassee, FL 32301-7099

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Tallahassee, FL
Permit No. 644

David W. Marshall
Extension Agricultural/Natural Resources
Program Leader



The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an Equal Employment Opportunity – Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES REQUIRING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE EXTENSION OFFICE AT LEAST 5 WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO A PROGRAM SO THAT PROPER CONSIDERATION MAY BE GIVEN TO THE REQUEST. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE, FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES, SEA GRANT AND 4-H YOUTH, STATE OF FLORIDA, IFAS, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING.

