Avid gardeners usually jump at the chance to visit a botanical garden. Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, located in Sarasota, Florida is a trip certainly worth the drive. Selby Gardens was founded in the early 1900s by a local wealthy family with a love of tropical plants. The Selbys were a modest family. They were more interested in protecting the local flora and fauna rather than showing off their wealth by building a giant mansion equivocal to their monetary status.

Selby Gardens opened its doors to the public in the summer of 1975. People from all over the country and world visit the botanical gardens daily to enjoy the sights and sounds hidden within the gardens. If you love orchids than at least one of the 6,000 orchid plants will surely grab your attention and take your breath away. Should you prefer bromeliads over orchids, you will be in awe over the 3,000 plus bromeliad plants grown throughout the gardens.

Don’t forget to bring your camera, because you will want to stop and take a picture every few feet. Located on fifteen acres, the gardens are often referred to as an oasis as they bring out the beauty of the bordering the Sarasota Bay. There are several spots scattered inside the oasis where you can look for local wading birds hunting for food as the tide goes out. Three varieties of mangroves border the water creating a safe zone for wildlife.

Large live oaks provide the original canopy which is now shared with groups of bamboo that reach for the sky. The interesting banyan trees display their unusual traits at the garden. The garden also features a cycad display, an epiphyte garden, hibiscus garden, butterfly garden, a highly decorated koi pond, and many other exhibits. An indoor attraction which features various colorful dart frogs is a hit with the kids. A succulent garden stands out along the path through the tropical plants.

If you get a chance to get down to Sarasota or have a trip planned, you should add Selby Botanical Gardens to your list of sights to see. Make sure you bring mosquito wipes or bug spray, as they do not sell it in the gift shop. However, the gift shop offers a wide variety of books, cards, and chimes. Don’t forget the plant shop on the way out. You can purchase many varieties of orchids, epiphytes, and
The Green ‘Zine
Safety in the Garden

It seems as if garden safety doesn’t get a lot of attention, as gardening tends to be thought of as a relaxing pastime. I can’t think of ever seeing a newspaper with an article about a gardening accident. Accidents happen everywhere, and the garden is susceptible to dangers.

A 1998 study from the United Kingdom collected information from several emergency rooms and/or accident facilities. This study contained frightening statistics about accidents that were common in the garden or yard.

Heat related injuries are very common in the garden. They can come on quickly, and can be devastating. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are both serious conditions and should not be taken lightly. According to the National Weather Service (NOAA), in 2006 approximately 170 weather related deaths were caused by the heat. This number is almost twice that of other weather related fatalities. Before you even step foot outside to work in the garden, check the weather for the UV index, temperature, and the “feels like” temperature. Take these factors into consideration before you head outside.

Signs of heat related problems include and are not limited to: muscle cramping, feeling light-headed or dizzy, profuse or no sweating, nausea, fatigue, headaches, dehydration, rapid heart rate, low blood pressure, clammy or hot / dry skin, confusion, rapid breathing, and fainting.

Ensure that you replenish fluids to help restore your electrolytes. Make sure you do not take any medications which discourage prolonged exposure to the sun or heat. Know your own limitations and heed your body’s warning system.

Another safety hazard in the yard is sharp pruning tools. Trimming to some gardeners could mean small hand clippers or that brand new chainsaw. Either tool can potentially cause serious harm.

Make sure that someone is home if you will be using any cutting tools. It is always a good idea to let someone know when you are working outside.

When using cutting tools, make sure that you are familiar with its abilities as well as yours. Know how to use each tool properly and safely. When you are done working with your tools, clean them so they will last longer and work the next time you

Cont. pg 3

Five Tips for Living Greener: Give Them a Try

1. Patronize restaurants which do not automatically put glasses of water on the table. If your favorite restaurant does this, encourage they change this habit.

2. With gas prices rising, break-out that bicycle pump and ride your bike when feasible. Be sure to wear a helmet.

3. Make sure your vehicle’s tires are maintained at the recommended pressure. Less gas will be burned.

4. Mulch your garden and flower beds. This will help control weeds and save moisture.

5. Use slow release fertilizers rather than liquid applications.

By H. Tuxbury, Master Gardener
Safety in the Garden - Continued

Falls rank high in the number of trips to the emergency room. Head injuries are common when you are using a ladder. A fall from a step, stool, or a twenty-four foot extension ladder can be dangerous. Often times the severity of a head injury does not depend on the distance of the fall, but how one lands. Broken bones, sprains, and strains are all potential injuries when working off the ground.

When you are using a ladder make sure you look for overhead obstructions such as thick limbs, but more importantly, look out for those power lines. It is also a good idea to have someone stabilize the ladder as you are climbing and working from it.

Gardening can be a great way to relieve stress, burn calories, get your endorphins going, and beautify your yard. It is a great pastime but like other pastimes be smart and safe. Your garden will appreciate your attention and will look great in return. By Holly Tuxbury, Master Gardener

Upcoming FYN Classes at Oxford Community Building

For a complete list of classes please visit http://sumter.ifas.ufl.edu/ or contact the UF/IFAS Sumter County Extension Office at 352-793-2728. Classes are held at:

Oxford Community Building
4027 County Road 106
Oxford, FL

August 14: Central Florida Friendly Plants
August 28: Attracting Birds to Your Yard
September 11: Fertilizing Your Landscape Appropriately
September 25: Palm Management
October 9: Planting Natives
October 23: Planting for Winter Color
November 13: Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly
December 11: Growing Herbs and Vegetables

See you there!

Places to Go: Myakka River State Park - Check Out the Wildlife

Myakka State Park is located just south of Sarasota. Bring your camera as you are sure to see at least one gator and several different species of wading birds. Take a ride on one of the world’s largest airboats. After your ride, walk to the bird observatory, which takes you out over the water grasses. There is a tree canopy view from the tower. Next cross the one way suspension bridge to the second tower. You should be approximately 75 feet above the ground. You will experience a breath taking view. Make sure you keep your eyes out for deer, hogs, birds, butterflies, and orchids. If you are in the area don’t miss out. See http://www.floridastateparks.org for more information.
other plants. Remember that we are located in USDA Plant Zone 9A, which may not support some of the plants featured in the gift shop. Make sure that you can give your plants the necessary cold protection before you invest in a car full of plants.

For more information on Marie Selby Botanical Gardens please check out their website at http://www.selby.org.

Go visit the gardens with some plant loving friends and carpool to cut down on gasoline costs. If you do not have internet access you may call (941) 366-5731 to get more information. Marie Selby Botanical Garden is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with the exception of Christmas. Enjoy your trip.

By H. Tuxbury, Master Gardener

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**UF/IFAS Sumter County Demonstration Garden Certified NWF Backyard Habitat**

The UF/IFAS Sumter County Extension Bushnell Demonstration Garden has been recognized as a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Backyard Habitat.

Native plants and Florida friendly plants have grown over the past few years into a habitat worthy for wildlife. This summer a pair of mocking birds called the demonstration garden home and built a sturdy nest inside one of the Carolina jasmine vines. The pair felt safe enough to lay a brood of four chicks, even with all the visitors in the garden.

Many varieties of wildlife are using the garden as a safe haven and feeding area. A ruby-throated hummingbird takes full advantage of the blooming firebush and coral honeysuckle vine. Butterflies such as, gulf fritillaries and variegated fritillaries have laid claim to the sprawling passion vine. These butterflies and other pollinators are helping the garden thrive.

To certify your yard as a NWF Backyard Habitat you must: 1. provide food, 2. water, 3. cover, 4. place to raise young. You must also maintain good gardening practices. Examples of this include mulching, using rain barrels, fertilizing appropriately, etc. If you would like to certify your backyard as a wildlife habitat go to: NWF.org/ and follow their simple steps for certification. Good luck.

By Holly Tuxbury, Master Gardener

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Blue Dart frogs are stunning behind glass. Photo by H. Tuxbury

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A baby mockingbird takes a peak and approves of the Wildlife Habitat. Photo by H. Tuxbury
Hibiscus bud drop can occur for a number of different reasons, such as over watering and insect damage. One insect that causes hibiscus buds to drop prematurely is the hibiscus gall midge. A midge is a type of small fly that lays its eggs inside the flower buds. The hibiscus gall midge was first found in Florida in 1992 and has been found in Sumter County.

The adult midge lays several eggs inside each flower bud. The eggs hatch into a small cream to yellow “worm like” larvae. The larvae feed on the inside of the flower bud. The bud will fall to the ground and the larvae will leave the bud and crawl to the ground to pupate. Adults will hatch out in approximately 3 weeks depending on weather.

To detect hibiscus gall midge take your hibiscus buds and place them in a clear sandwich bag and zip it up. Carefully break the buds open with your fingers. You will see several small yellow worms, the larvae. You may even see the larvae jump and flip.

To control the hibiscus gall midge practice sanitation by picking fallen buds off the ground and pick infected buds off the plant. A systemic fungicide that you drench around the roots of the plant may have some effect. Never use malathion on hibiscus. It can cause the hibiscus leaves to turn yellow and drop. As of right now, there are no UF chemical recommendations for control. Sources: L.S. Osborne, E.R. Duke, T.J. Weissling, J.E. Pena, and D.W. Armstrong. A Serious New Pest is Causing Significant Problems for Dendrobium and Hibiscus Growers.

The Gulf fritillary butterfly is a bright orange butterfly that is commonly found in Central Florida this time of year. The Gulf fritillary migrates and arrives in Central Florida mid-summer and will stay throughout the fall. The adults (the butterfly) will lay bright yellow eggs that hatch into orange caterpillars with black spines. The caterpillars will feed on passion flower vines. They can devour the entire vine in a matter of days. Don’t grab your insecticide though, because passion vines are very vigorous and will bounce back from defoliation. Once the caterpillars eat their fill of leaves, they will develop into a chrysalis (cocoon). The chrysalis looks like a brown, dried leaf. When the butterfly hatches it will be attracted to nectar plants, such as lantana and pentas. Sources: Daniels, Jaret C. http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/bfly/Gulf_fritillary.htm. Dec 2007.
I have found myself wanting to find out about a certain plant, but I just can’t remember the name of the plant. The National Gardening Association offers a great online plant search engine which allows you to search for a plant by a common name or botanical name. If you do not know either, don’t fret. You can search for your plant by bloom color, the season that it blooms, the color of the foliage, and any special features which the plant may offer. To check out this search engine go to http://www.garden.org/plantfinder/ and give it a try. I think you will be pleasantly surprised at how easy it is to identify your plant.

Recently, The Tampa Tribune, featured an article that gave some great sources for serious plant lovers. The column is called “The Dirt,” and can be found by going to tbo.com keyword: Dirt. This column provides a forum for plant lovers to ask questions and get answers. There is a great source which they have a link to called Fine Gardening.

There are so many plants out there, it is impossible to remember how to pronounce all of them. If you would like to know how to pronounce your favorite plant’s latin name you can visit http://www.taunton.com/finegardening/pguide/pronunciation-guide-to-botanical-latin.aspx. This website lists plant names and their pronunciation. There is also a picture of a speaker that you can click on. The plant name will then be pronounced correctly.

Today with the push to go green, many plant catalogues have stopped coming in the mail and are only available on-line. Take the plunge and visit the website of your favorite grower or seed supplier. However, you might be like me and just can’t part with those old, plant catalogues.

A great project for a rainy day could be sifting through your old plant catalogues. Go through them and create a folder of favorite plants. Some catalogues also feature pictures of common garden pests. You can add a section to your folder of common pests and the plants that they infect.

Most of the catalogues come with a picture of each plant they offer, so just cut out the picture and plant information and add it to your notebook of plants. Here you have a record of plants, their information, and a color photo right at your fingertips. Once you have clipped out all of the plants you want, you can get rid of the remaining catalogue by recycling.

Master Gardener, Nancy King suggested in the last issue, to create a gardening journal. She suggested that you add information about the plants that you have in your yard. If you have a garden journal you can add these old plant catalogue pictures and information.

By H. Tuxbury,
Master Gardener
Central Florida is well into the rainy season. Even if some plants can survive the heat, the rains may beat them down. Some plants to consider for a quick recovery after storms are: Coleus, Creeping Zinnia, Globe Amaranth, Impatiens, Periwinkle, Rose Moss, and Wax Begonias. All of the above listed plants offer a wide variety of colors and textures.

Watch out for root rot (especially in periwinkles and wax begonias.) Look for standing water after a hard rain. If you notice spots that hold too much water, make a note of that in your gardening notebook. Remind yourself to mound up soil or establish raised beds for the next planting. You can’t stop the rain, but keep the watering to a minimum in these areas.

This is a difficult time of year to establish new flower beds. The days are hot and a new plant’s root ball will dry out very quickly. It is up to you to keep new plants moist for the first few weeks after planting.

Deadheading petunias, snapdragons, dianthus, and similar flowers can extend the blooming season of your plants. If nematodes are a problem in your garden, the French Marigold, has been successful in decreasing the population (MacCubbin, pg 46). The French Marigold is also referred to as the Nema - Gone.

**Citrus:**

If you are planning to plant citrus, make sure you check out the size of the tree at maturity. Some varieties can grow to thirty feet tall and thirty feet wide. (It is a good idea to check the maturity sizes with all trees you plant. Remember, you want the right plant in the right space.)

Choose a spot with full sun, good drainage, and little competition from nearby plants. Do not fertilize when planting and keep root balls moist for first few weeks. Citrus love the sandy soils that drain water quickly. Don’t forget about the dwarf varieties of citrus. They will look great on your patio in a container.

**August feeding for established citrus:**

“* Measure the trunk circumference 6 inches above the ground.

* Weigh out 1/4 pound of a standard citrus fertilizer for each inch of trunk circumference.

* Scatter the fertilizer under the spread of the tree & out past the drip line.” (MacCubbin, pg 105)

**Make your own Potting Soil**

Need soil for hanging baskets or planters? Here are two easy recipes.

**Soil 1**

* 1 gallon peat moss
* 1 gallon perlite
* 1 tablespoon dolomitic lime

**Soil 2**

* 1 gallon peat moss
* 1 gallon perlite
* 1 gallon compost

**two Tbls of “slow release” plant food granules could be added to either recipe.**

Mix all ingredients together in a clean container. Use immediately or store in a plastic trash can or plastic bag. Potting soils can also be used to improve sandy soils and to replace soils in nematode-infested beds.

**By Nancy King, M.G.**

This issue was written by Master Gardeners Holly Tuxbury and Nancy King. Brooke Burn, Urban Horticulture Agent, contributed to and reviewed this newsletter. This issue was approved for distribution on July 31, 2008.

SOIL TESTING

Soil pH Tests: Test the pH of your soil for a $2 fee. A detailed analysis from the University of Florida is available for a fee of $7. For instructions on how to bring in your soil samples please visit [http://sumter.ifas.ufl.edu](http://sumter.ifas.ufl.edu) or call: (352)793-2728 or (352)753-0124. Thank you.

Plant Clinics: UF/IFAS Sumter County Extension Office in Bushnell every Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Villages Annex Conference Room the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month. For more information please call: (352)793-2728 or (352)753-0124.

If you would like to submit an article please email HTuxbury@cfl.rr.com. Thank you.