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Coordinator's Corner

Seems hard for me to believe that it was only five years ago when I took office as the Urban Horticulture Extension agent and Master Gardener Coordinator. And now, as I look back, I realize I have trained 99 Master Gardeners for the Volusia County Master Gardener program and have made countless friends.

I have enjoyed my time in this position, and now I am asked to venture into the realm as a Commercial Horticulture agent. The stakes are higher and the challenges are

greater, but I look forward to helping the Florida's commercial agriculture economic industry and their vested interests with the help from the University of Florida research center.

I will continue to act as interim Coordinator and Urban Horticulture agent until the time comes when we fill the Urban Horticulture position. Rest assured that I will be here to help train the new class of 2013, which will begin in February. I will still be in the same office down the hall

for those MGs that I run into from time to time. Feel free to pop your head in and keep me updated on your fun adventures.

For this last issue of *The Backyard Gardener*, I want to take the time to thank you for your volunteerism and support you have shown me over the years. The best is yet to come!

Karen Stauderman

Karen Stauderman
Commercial Horticulture
Extension Agent

Oh Deer, My Roses!

Over the past several months, we have been developing a rose garden with several hybrid teas, a couple of knockouts, a blueberry, and a poinsettia. All have been doing well, lots of roses in bud vases, until a couple of weeks ago.

One morning, all of the leaves and several buds were stripped from the hybrid teas. The bushes leafed up again and the same thing happened. I suspected insects, so I started spraying. Again,

the bushes leafed out very vigorously and again they got stripped. Only the hybrid teas had this problem. The next time, I went out early in the morning and looked at the ground carefully and noticed the faint remains of hoof prints. I came to the conclusion that deer are the mysterious "disease" affecting my roses.

Someone suggested moth balls, so we tried a couple of mothballs on top of the cairn. Complemented this



with an aluminum foil pie plate swaying in the breeze on a string between two stakes and several solar lights.

A month into this trial, it seems to be working. The roses seem to be thriving, we're cutting daily blooms, and I don't notice any deer tracks in the rose garden. So far this looks like a success.

John Meikle, NSB

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Bob Maddern, Port Orange
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Laura Rocco ('11)
Gwen Swertfager ('99)



Now these are award winning poinsettias!

Photo: Bob Maddern, Port Orange

THE BACKYARD

GARDENER

An Itinerant Gardener

In June, I joined a group of Maryland Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists on a day trip to a small section of the million acres in south and central New Jersey known as the Pine Barrens. This National Reserve and United Nations Biosphere Reserve is a unique ecosystem that balances thriving cranberry bogs and blueberry farms with controlled burns of pine forests to maintain meadow habitats.

That day the Master Gardeners of Burlington County (New Jersey) were working on the Bishop farmstead gardens, home of the Pinelands Alliance. In addition, there are efforts at Suningive

and Whitesbog Village, known as "The Historic Center for Cranberry Innovation and the birthplace of



the Highbush Blueberry," to restore Elizabeth White's landscaping from the 1920s to 1940s.

There are displays of medicinal plants (natives and exotics) from the 1920s. Pamphlets encouraging landscaping with native plants are available for local residents. While we never came across the infamous Jersey Devil, the blueberries were the most flavorful I've ever eaten.

What gardens have you visited recently? For more information check out these sources and for information on growing blueberries in the Florida landscape.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg359>

<http://www.whitesbog.org>

www.pinelandsalliance.org

Laura Rocco ('11)

Holiday on a String

Home is where the heart is. As mercurial temperatures occur this month, and as we put the air conditioner on hold and open the windows, it is time to let the outdoors in and refresh our home interiors as the holiday season approaches. Plants of all kinds, fresh or dried, can make for a creative sensation. Don't limit yourself to a pumpkin by the front door. Bring in the season with gourds, squash, and a variety of pumpkins arranged around your home. The variety of colors will pop when mixed with bright greens. We are fortunate

here in Florida with all the tropical foliage that can be gathered at no cost such as palmettos and palm leaves which can be manipulated by cutting, plaited, or spray painted to make creative designs at little or no cost. Gather grasses, seed pods, and autumn berries for another informal display. Dried pressed tree leaves always are colorful. Another popular plant is the hydrangea, fresh or dried, makes a wonderful, vivid splash in any room. Welcome the holidays with a season of decorating. Boxwoods with twinkling of

lights within the rich green; the traditional wreaths of pine and pine cones; eucalyptus and red berries; garlands simply made of long branches of pine with green or red velvet streamers that capture the spirit of the season are most festive and take little to no time to make and at relatively no cost. Use your creativity to say "welcome and happy holidays."

These simple gestures of decorating bring warmth to your heart and bring heart to your home throughout the holiday season.

Gwen Swertfager ('99)

Florida Fly-Baiter

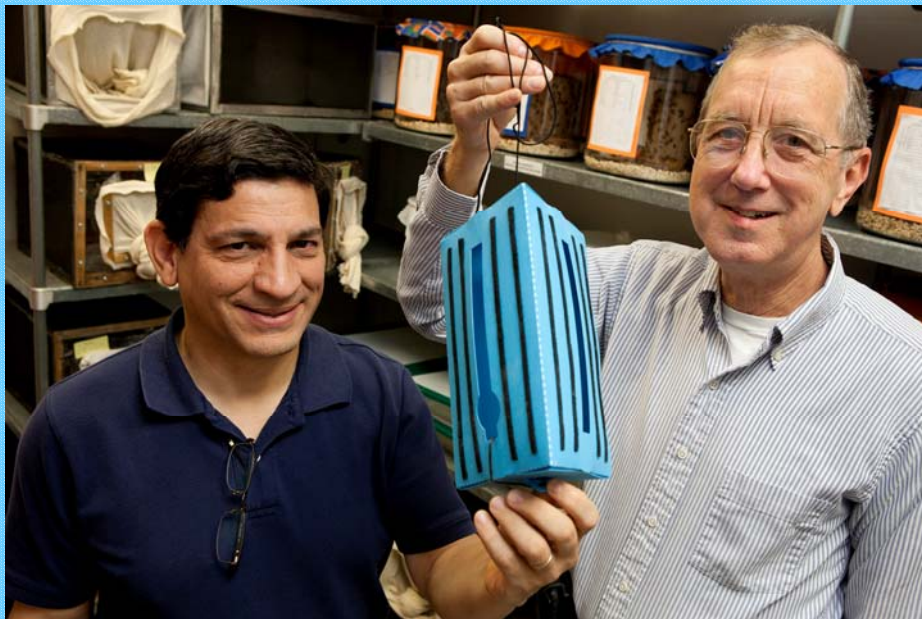
During the summer months flies seem to be in full force irritating us at picnics and in our landscapes. Fortunately, the University of Florida researchers have patented an innovative new fly control device known as the Florida Fly-Baiter. Most of us are familiar with the yellow-colored fly control traps that currently are on the market; however, this new device is blue. According to Phil Koehler, a professor of urban entomology with UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, a key discovery found that flies were three times more attracted to the color blue than yellow. In insect behavior studies, Kohler's group found the color yellow actually repelled flies.

Koehler, along with his graduate students, Joseph Diclaro, and Jeff Hertz have found success with their device. Both graduate students serve in the U.S. Navy and this research is funded by the Department of Defense's Deployed War-Fighter Protection program, which seeks to better protect troops from insect spread diseases.

The Florida Fly-Baiter works by alluring flies using color, scent, and

other attractants. Once the fly is at the device, they eat the toxic bait which rapidly kills them. This device works as a bait station that does not trap the flies, but instead lures them to eat, then enables them to leave to die away from the

within the black stripes covered with insecticide which line the outside structure. Hertz found that by adding dark stripes on the device, it fools the flies by mimicking hiding locations that flies are attracted to.



Phil Koehler and Roberto Pereira with Florida Fly-Baiter

bait device. This is convenient since it isn't compromised when it fills up with flies, like standard traps can. The baiter can be used outdoor or for limited indoor use. It is flexible, easy to assemble, and can be suspended or attached flat to surfaces such as walls or trees.

Koehler's lab recorded during testing; in excess of 40,000 flies were killed with one insecticide application. Additional insecticide can be applied as needed.

This research, recently published in the *Journal of Medical Entomology*, adds effectiveness of the device lies

Diclaro, who is lead author of the study and designer of the device, used his experience as a U.S. Navy hospital corpsman in Cuba in 1991. "At the time, there were so many displaced people living very closely together, and the garbage and waste accumulated, produc-

ing tons of flies," Diclaro said. "I remember walking out of my tent and just being covered with them."

"It's a much more targeted way to deal with the problem," Koehler said of the fly control device. The device, which controls house flies, phorid flies, and blow flies, is now available through pest control distributors. Insecticide is sold separately.

Karen Stauderman

Don't be Disappointed

My daughter, an elementary art teacher, asked if our garden club would sponsor and help plant a butterfly garden for her school. They had a small plot of school yard dirt between two kindergarten classes, about 20' x 20' with water available. The club agreed to finance the project, give advice, and help. We met with the student council and began our project. Everything was going so nicely we wondered, as a garden club, if we dare submit our project to the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs for a possible state award. The garden was beautiful with red and yellow flowers: a cassia tree, red salvia, red pentas, butterfly weed, yellow lantana, marigolds with dill, parsley, and fennel, etc. A bird bath with rocks and water completed the materials. We checked the rules for

entering and found a special agenda was required: a notebook with design format, pictures of the students, the list of expenses, and local publicity which we lacked.

The paper was contacted, but we failed to get a response, so we submitted our own article to them. They surprised us and sent a photographer to the dedication of the garden, and as if on cue, a monarch butterfly appeared for the picture. It was perfect. We landed a large spread on the gardening page complete with the monarch picture and they included OUR article, word for word.

We sent a beautiful notebook to the state to apply for the award and crossed our fingers. The state convention was in Daytona Beach that year, and we cautiously went to

check out the winners of the awards. We did it! We won the blue ribbon for Florida State Garden Clubs. We were so proud. This garden was a great addition for the school, especially the kindergarten grades.

In the fall, my daughter called and told me the garden was gone. No one had watered it during the summer and the new P.T.A. had another project for the area. What a let down. I pondered the situation. Things change. Children move on in school, but we have hopefully planted some gardening seeds in their hearts, so we must move on too; to the next civic project. Don't be disappointed!

Marty Borkosky ('80)

Turf Tales

When pre-approved by Karen, Master Gardeners are allowed to make home visits to check out problems. For my money, it's the best way to put what you have learned into practice.

A couple of years ago, an Ormond resident called the clinic to ask if someone could come out to take a look at his lawn, because he thought he had harmed it. The neighborhood was close to mine, so I offered to stop by on my way home. I asked if he had any free time, and he replied, "Young lady, I am 82 years old. All I have is free time." The best thing he said was "Young lady..."

I didn't need a GPS to find the property. His lawn was school-bus yellow. I asked what chemicals he had put down, and he brought out a huge bag

of 0-0-60 (muriate of potash, or potassium chloride), and could not tell me at what rate he applied it (no soil test had been done prior to its application).

I got down on my hands and knees to examine the St. Augustine turf, and invited him to do the same. He said, "Young lady, I am 82 years old, and I do not get down on my hands and knees." The best thing he said was "Young lady..."

I explained that turf grows from the bottom, and since the bottom of the blade was green, it was alive. I told him that I thought if he ceased all chemicals and just watered and mowed at the recommended heights, the lawn would eventually recover. I instructed him on how to have a soil analysis done at UF, and



Photo by Sodfather.com

what fertilizer blend he might consider in the Spring. He was determined to do the right thing.

A few weeks ago, I was in the same neighborhood, and stopped to look at his turf. I was devastated to see that he had resodded. I understood, though, because I knew how important a spectacular lawn was to him. I called, and told him I had seen the resodded lawn and it was beautiful, but I was sorry our time together had not worked out. "Young lady, we didn't resod at all!" he said.

Linda Anderson ('06)