

# The Backyard Gardener

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## 2009 Master Gardener State Conference

The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Master Gardener State conference was held this fall in Ocala, Florida at the Hilton with approximately 350 people attending. Many were first-time attendees. Eleven MGs accompanied Karen to represent Volusia County. Accommodations were great and the talks proved to be quite informative. Noted speakers included: Jaret C. Daniels (UF Founder and Director of the Butterfly Network), Walter Reeves, ("The Georgia Gardener": Radio talk show host), Eric Darden, Disney Horticulture (Epcot Flower and Garden Festival – Behind

the Scenes), and Tom MacCubbin, UF Extension Agent Emeritus (Edible Landscapes for Everyone).



A bus tour of the Research at the Environmental Horticulture Landscape Teaching lab was also a popular event that was offered. The proceeds of the auction totaled \$3,405 which

will be used to further MG programs and awards. Many of the homeowner publications are being updated including a tri-fold brochure, new yard recognition checklists, yard advisor manuals and yard signs, and introducing, three new Florida-Friendly Landscaping Shopping Guides that cover North, Central, and South Regions. Each contains specific suggestions for groundcovers, shrubs, and trees as well as water saving, fertilizer, and mulch tips. The 2010 State Conference will be held in the Florida Panhandle. We'll keep you posted!

## Water Restrictions

### Eastern Standard Time

1) Residential irrigation is limited to 4 p.m. to 10 a.m., Saturdays for odd-numbered addresses and Sundays for even-numbered addresses.

2) Businesses may irrigate from 4 p.m. to 10 a.m., Tuesdays.

### Daylight Saving Time

1) Residential irrigation is allowed at odd-numbered addresses from 4 p.m. to 10 a.m., Wednesdays and Saturdays and even-numbered addresses Thursdays and Sundays.

2) Businesses may irrigate from 4 p.m. to 10 a.m., Tuesdays and Fridays.

For more details go to:  
[www.volusia.org](http://www.volusia.org)  
Water restrictions and conservation tips  
(effective 6/1/09)



## Coordinator's Corner

2010 starts a New Year and a new look for the newsletter in this decade. *The Backyard Gardener* is a new gardening resource to all horticulturists in Florida. It will continue to feature innovative and basic concepts in gardening with current research from the University of Florida. This newsletter with

the help from Master Gardeners and myself, will provide advice, helpful hints, and Florida friendly practices that offer enjoyment and success in your home garden. I hope that you enjoy the new look and continue to find it helpful in your adventures in the backyard garden. Keep reading and feel

free to provide any feedback for future articles or information. All the best in the new decade!

*Karen Stauderman*

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## Classified Ad

I have lots of free horse manure I would be willing to share with anyone interested.

Stephanie Gallegos ('92)

THE BACKYARD

GARDENER

## Glass Mulch

Every fall the Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association puts on its annual trade show at the Orange County Convention Center. It is a great opportunity to reconnect with old friends and see the latest landscape plants and related "green" products.

One of the big stars at this year's show was glass mulch. Glass mulch is made of recycled glass that has been melted, colored, and then tumbled to remove all the sharp edges. It is available in 15 colors and comes in sizes from 1/4" to 2".

One supplier sells glass mulch in 50-pound bags for \$80 plus shipping per bag. A 50-pound bag will cover a 6- to 7-square-foot, 1-inch thick area. It should be installed on weed mat, or it will disappear into sandy soil very quickly.

Aside from the benefit of having vivid colors available to play with, the manufacturer claims glass mulch won't fade or bio-degrade, helps cool the soil, and is a natural deterrent to pests like slugs.

Since glass mulch is about eight to ten times the cost of

traditional cypress mulch, most of us will only be able to use it for accents around a birdbath or a fountain.

Another problem may be finding it locally. If you go online and search "glass mulch," there are several sites that will ship bags directly to you.

Brian Chesher ('95)



## Caladiums

Ninety percent of all caladiums are grown in the central Florida area and the bulbs are shipped worldwide. Caladiums grow in muck near area lakes and are grown in full sun. Bulbs in production use full sun. Bulb harvesting is around mid-November after the leaves have declined.

In the home landscape, caladiums like rich, loamy soil. They can grow in sun

and shade, but require more water if grown in sunny locations. Fertilize once during



the growing season. Remove the bulbs for the winter and dry them after the first cold

snap. A freeze can damage the bulbs.

Store in a cool, dry place. Plant in early April, 2 1/2 inches deep and mulch over the bed. The bulbs will deteriorate after a few years; replant often.

Experience the Annual Caladium festival in Lake Placid, Florida in late August.

[www.onlakejune.com/caladiumfestival](http://www.onlakejune.com/caladiumfestival)

Katie Diehl ('02)

## The Carefree Gardener

Some gardeners have an itchy trigger finger on their pruners and trimmers, fastidiously clipping and whacking as soon as anything starts to look less than perfect. But the everything-must-go approach deprives wildlife of food and cover.

Consider keeping your pruners holstered and let nature take its course. With careful plant selection your garden can strut its stuff all season long and

pruning can be limited to a once-a-year buzz cut in late winter before new growth begins. The less maintenance a garden requires translates to less effort and expense on your part.

Choose your plants suited to the location, with minimal water needs, year-long interest, and pest free if possible. Do those smart gardener things: get the soil in shape from the start, compost organic waste, and mulch beds to keep moisture in and

weeds out.

Lawns have their place, but it's no secret that big sweeps of perfect lawns require a lot of maintenance. Calculate the minimum requirements and stick to them. Some gardeners even take a "mow what grows approach" and don't bother with sodding or seeding. Consider alternative ground covers like jasmine, ivies and ornamental grasses as an alternative.

Brian Chesher ('95)

## Back Yard Table Art

### Subject

A rustic place card for each guest at your table.

### You Will Need

- ◆ 5"- long sticks – lots of them
- ◆ Hemp or twine
- ◆ Shipping tags

### Instructions

You will need straight sticks that you can find in your back yard. These sticks can be picked up from the ground or can be cut from branches you have pruned from a tree or shrub (or if you are feeling especially "haute cuisine," you can use cinnamon sticks).

Each stick needs to be as thick as a pencil or even a little thicker is okay. Cut each stick about 5"

long and stack them into bundles. You will need 30 to 35 sticks for each bundle. If you can find thicker sticks, you can use fewer in your bundle. Tie each bundle with rope or twine and tie a bow on the front of the stack. Now stand each stack up so that it is resting on the cut ends.

Next you need some shipping tags. You can pay a visit to your favorite office supply store or you can make your own. Use cardboard in a color to match your table color scheme, or cream color looks authentic. The tags will need to be 3" x 4". Using a hole punch, punch a hole in the center of one of the nar-

row ends. Also at this same end, cut the corners on each side to make it look like a tag.

Now loop a piece of twine through the hole and let a 3" end of twine extend from the hole. Using a magic marker or calligraphy pen, write one guest's name on each card. Insert one corner of the card into the top of each bundle of sticks and place one of the bundles at the top of each guest's place setting on the table.

### Follow Up

I have a little winter village set up and I stacked the bundles up like a wood pile next to one of the barns.

Jean Porter ('04)

## Mexican Sunflower (*Tithonia rotundiflora*)

Her trick: I trim it to the ground until August. This gives it a nice bushy look rather than the leggy ones you see around town.

Stephanie Gallegos ('92)



## Making a Small Bromeliad Garden

When bromeliads take over your landscape, put them to good use. Bromeliads will grow in locations where other plants just won't do — over a drain field or septic tank, for example. They would be easy to remove if you need to. Also, grouping them can be very attractive.

Here are some ideas:

- ◆ Plan for the eventual size of the plants as they multiply over the years.
- ◆ Match the plant to the conditions of light and water.

- ◆ Avoid straight lines.
- ◆ Trust your own judgment; after all, it is your garden.

Lay out curvy beds with a garden hose, dig out the grass, and start planting. *Noregelia* can go under a magnolia tree. The pink *Acchmea fasciata* can outline beds of azaleas and leatherleaf ferns. "Queen's Tears" can be planted in front of hibiscus plants and rows of fiery red *Pyramidalis*. They all bloom at different times; the effect will be wonderfully colorful.

Marty Borkosky ('80)

## Orchid Grower's Tips for Slat & Hanging Baskets

1. Cut an old pair of pantyhose (or knee highs) off above the knee. Fill the foot section with a tablespoon of nutricote slow release fertilizer such as that found in Dynamite and Osmocote. Use pliers to bend one short wire at the top of the hanger to hook the top of the hose onto it. As the plant is watered, it also feeds the orchid.
2. Use a plastic gutter cover to line slat baskets to hold sphagnum moss and large pieces of fern bark to grow *Oncidium* orchids.

Norma Adamczyk ('96)

## Shipping Citrus?

Licensed commercial citrus packing houses operating under a USDA compliance agreement will pack your homegrown citrus fruit. They are under no obligation to provide this service, and there is no guarantee of fruit quality.



All containers are marked with a USDA certificate. Costs and arrangements will vary. Contact your local USDA office for more information.

Linda Anderson ('06)

## Vertical Gardens

Landscaping vertical surfaces is the new trend in landscape design, but it is not a new idea. Today's new approach is credited to Patrick Blanc, a Frenchman whose work *Le Mur Vegetal* is recognized as a breakthrough in landscape design.

Blanc describes his "system" as a metal frame custom designed to fit the space, covered with PVC sheets which are then covered with felt. The system is soilless, so weight is not an issue. Plants

are fed and watered continuously with a hydroponic solution. Frames can be fastened to the wall or freestanding, preventing structural damage to the building from the plant's roots. Landscape designers have created amazing projects with vertical gardens. For more ideas type "vertical landscapes" into your favorite search engine.

[verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com](http://verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com)

Brian Chesher ('95)



## Edging - The Finishing Touch

Selecting and installing attractive edgings will make an important contribution to the look of any garden. As a design element, edging can create interesting patterns to complement your plantings' visual movement and structure. It also defines and separates planting beds from walks and lawns producing a neat, finished appearance. To some extent it also will help to reduce maintenance time by cutting down the time needed to control grass from migrating into planting beds and walkways.

What to use is limited only by budget and imagination. Any big box home improvement center will have precast concrete edging in dozens of styles and colors. There also are bricks, concrete pavers, landscape timbers, railroad ties, etc.

Another option is to go with one of the companies that specialize in continuous concrete edging. Whatever you choose take the time to check with



the home improvement store for installation instructions.

Finally, there is no rule that says that we are limited to only one type of edging per landscape. You may select to use different materials to define different parts of your yard or to reinforce a theme.

*Brian Chesher ('95)*

## Senate Bill for the Backyard Gardener

Homeowners and homeowner association boards may be unaware of the passage of Senate Bill 2080. The Bill overrides homeowner association (HOA) rules that restrict the use of Florida Friendly Landscaping. Home-

owners can convert their yards to FFL practices (such as mulching, recycling, wildlife habitats, reduces watering practices, fertilize appropriately) without recourse from HOAs.

*Jo Wormington ('03)*

## Master Gardening in Ohio

While in Ohio this summer, I had the opportunity to visit the Master Gardener program at the Clark County Extension Office near Springfield. I was impressed by the beauty of the gardens and the spirit displayed by the MGs there.

The gardens are divided into three major parts: teaching gardens, testing gardens, and the Victory Garden.

The teaching gardens are divided into areas for shade plants, sun-loving plants, vines, herbs, perennials, annuals, ornamental grasses, groundcovers, and vegetables. Each type is labeled so visitors can see what grows best in each kind of location. Teaching tours and workshops are scheduled for those wanting to learn more.

The test gardens contain plants from different companies. MGs treat each kind of plant in exactly the same way. They plant seeds or plants identical distances apart, provide identical amounts of fertilizer and water to each depending upon the directions given, and keep them weeded. They take notes on when the plants from each company bloom and complete reports on diseases or insect damage. Results are reported to Ohio State University. The best producers with the fewest problems are recommended to nurseries for the next growing season.

In the Victory Garden, MGs planted a 10,000-square-foot vegetable garden. When vegetables were ready for harvest, MGs were on site from 6 a.m.

## Mailbox Beauty

Perhaps you would like to give the area under your mailbox a very different look than it has now. Your mailbox may be on a city or county right-of-way, or you don't want to expend too much time and money, or maybe you have a well-intentioned neighbor who mows over your landscape efforts. A native plant like blue spiderwort would look impressive with yellow trailing lantana and a coontie, or enhanced with green border grass.

Just keep in mind that your mailbox must be clear to facilitate mail delivery. If the mail carrier continually has a problem with delivery, the postmaster may, with the district manager's approval, withdraw delivery service.

*Norma Adamczyk ('96)*



## Clinic Follies

A lady called the clinic and mentioned she had all her palmettos removed. When asked why, she stated, "Because that's where palmetto bugs come from!"

*Mary Wright ('08)*

until 9 a.m. daily. This summer, they harvested 5,000 pounds of food and donated it to the Second Harvest Food Bank. In addition, they provided mini-victory garden kits for inner city and/or unemployed families and taught them how to plant vegetables and process the food they harvested.

*Mary Kay Pyles ('03)*

Test Gardens

