

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Manatee County Agriculture and Extension Service Offers Lawn & Gardening Classes and Other Events

Manatee County, FL (January, 2012) – The Manatee County Agriculture and Extension Service is offering a variety of gardening classes for January and February, 2012. If you cannot attend one of these fabulous classes, keep reading for information on other ways to obtain gardening information.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Unless otherwise noted, all classes are free and are held at the Manatee County Agriculture and Extension Service, 1303 17th Street West, Palmetto, Florida 34221. Minimum workshop size is required; workshop size is limited. For workshops that require a fee, please make checks payable to “Friends of Extension.” Register in advance online via our website at <http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu> or call 941-722-4524 for all workshops.

JANUARY, 2012

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PLANT ID TOUR @ DESOTO NATIONAL MEMORIAL/RIVERVIEW POINT PRESERVE:

January 14 (9-11am) – Guided tour by Extension Master Gardeners. Stroll through DeSoto National Memorial and Riverview Point Preserve to learn more about Florida’s native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Tour is suitable for all ages.

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PLANT ID TOUR @ EMERSON POINT PRESERVE:

January 21 (9-11am) – Guided tour by Extension Master Gardeners. Stroll through Emerson Point Preserve to learn more about Florida’s native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Tour is suitable for all ages.

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PLANT ID TOUR @ ROBINSON PRESERVE:

January 22 (9-11am) – Guided tour by Extension Master Gardeners. Stroll through Robinson Preserve’s salt marshes to learn more about Florida’s native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Tour is suitable for all ages.

COOKING WITH HERBS:

January 25 (2-4pm) – Presented by Samantha Kennedy, Extension Agent. Throw that salt shaker away! Learn about different kinds of herbs and how to use them to spice up your life! Topics include selecting, drying, storing, and meal preparation.

SMART LANDSCAPE – PLANNING AND CARE:

January 25 (1:30-4:30pm) - Presented by Elissa Mirabelli, Horticulture Program Assistant. **This class satisfies the landscape portion of the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program.** Learn practical design tips, landscape pitfalls, garden chores, hardscape choices, texture combinations and remedies for difficult areas. Should you need identification of a plant, arrive early to class and bring a branch with leaves (and ideally with flower or seed).

MANATEE COUNTY’S CERTIFIED MASTER NATURALIST HABITAT TOUR @ FLATFORD SWAMP:

January 28 (9-11am) – Guided tour with Lisa Hickey, Certified Master Naturalist Instructor. Be adventurous and slog through a wetland habitat slough. Wetlands and freshwater habitats are vital natural systems that filter pollutants before it reaches our surface and groundwater supply, support many wildlife species, and are diminishing every year. Located in eastern Manatee County at 39450 Taylor Road, Myakka City.

WARM WINTER ANNUALS:

January 31 (7-7:30pm) - Presented by Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent. A brief introduction will be given showing residents how our children’s educational garden was converted to a sensory garden for impaired children. The introduction will be followed by a showing of wonderful winter annuals to color your landscape beds. **Location: Longboat Key Garden Club - 5550 Gulf of Mexico Drive, Longboat Key**

FEBRUARY, 2012

GROWING HERBS IN YOUR GARDEN AND COOKING WITH HERBS:

February 4 (9-10:30; 11-12:30pm) – Presented by Master Gardeners Becky Moreland and Amy Stripe. Workshop begins with which herbs grow well in our County, how to dry them or prepare them for many uses. The presentation finishes with Samantha Kennedy, Extension Agent, whipping up a few delicious and nutritious recipes using herbs. **Workshop is located at Art Center Manatee – 209 9th Street West, Bradenton**

LOWDOWN ON LAWN IRRIGATION: This class satisfies the irrigation education portion of the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program. - Presented by Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent.

February 7 (1:30-4:30pm) - Tune up your sprinkler system, learn how to adjust the timer and sprinklers, improve uniformity, eliminate water waste, and cut costs. A free lawn sprinkler tune up kit will be given to each attendee. Location: Braden River Library – 4915 53rd Avenue East, Bradenton

GROUND COVERS, GRASSES & VINES:

February 8 (1:30-4:00pm) – Presented by Elissa Mirabelli, Horticulture Program Assistant. Landscaping with low-growing ground cover plants, grasses and vines has become a popular trend of landscape practices because once established, these plants need little or no water. Learn noteworthy plants, site considerations, and management of these three diverse plant groups.

BEEKEEPING:

February 11 (9-11am) – Presented by Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent and Master Gardener Bethany Allen-Ford. Workshop provides tips on how to start backyard beekeeping, safety concerns and awareness of Africanized honey bees, and the importance of pollinators.

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February 11 (9-11am) – Guided tour by Extension Master Gardeners. Stroll through DeSoto National Memorial and Riverview Point Preserve to learn more about Florida's native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Tour is suitable for all ages

GOOD & BAD GARDEN BUGS AND THE SLITHERY SNAKES, TOO:

February 13 (11-11:45am) – Presented by Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent. Learn tips to identify the good predator insects in your garden from the pesky bad insects, when you should spray and why you should wait before applying the pesticides. Workshop will include the identification of beneficial garden snakes for Florida. **Location: Lakewood Ranch Garden Club at Lakewood Ranch Town Hall – 8175 Lakewood Ranch Blvd., Bradenton**

MASTER GARDENER TRAINING CLASS:

First class begins February 15 – Call Lisa Hickey, Extension Agent prior to January 31 for further information. Become one of a few Manatee County residential gardeners that have accepted the challenge of learning horticultural principles and become a future volunteer of the Florida Master Gardener program.

CLOVERBUD WORKSHOP:

February 18 (9am-noon) – Discover the wonderful world of 4-H and plants through hands-on activities. Workshop is open to youth ages 5-7 years old as of September 1, 2011. To register, call the 4-H office no later than February 15. **Location: Harlee 4-H Center.**

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PLANT ID TOUR @ EMERSON POINT PRESERVE:

February 18 (9-11am) – Guided tour by Extension Master Gardeners. Stroll through Emerson Point Preserve to learn more about Florida's native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Tour is suitable for all ages.

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PLANT ID TOUR @ ROBINSON PRESERVE:

February 19 (9-11am) – Guided tour by Extension Master Gardeners. Stroll through Robinson Preserve's salt marshes to learn more about Florida's native plants and inhabitants of a coastal habitat. Tour is suitable for all ages.

COMPOST HAPPENS – HOME COMPOSTING WORKSHOP:

February 22 (10-noon) – Presented by Michelle Atkinson, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Coordinator. Learn to turn your kitchen scraps and yard waste into useful soil amendments, along with details on how to set up a home compost bin. **Fee for compost bin.**

RECYCLE THE RAIN – RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP:

February 23 (2-4pm) – Presented by Michelle Atkinson, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Coordinator. Let us provide you with great water conservation tips. Learn how to install, paint, and maintain your own rain barrel. **Fee for rain barrel.**

BUCKET BRIGADE:

February 29 (9-11:30am) – Presented by Ervin Shannon, Vegetable Program Assistant. Learn container gardening and how to assemble a bucket to use for your gardening needs. Bring two round 5-gallon buckets. **Location: Horticulture Learning Center.**

COOKING WITH HERBS:

February 27 (6-8pm) – Presented by Samantha Kennedy, Extension Agent. Throw that salt shaker away! Learn about different kinds of herbs and how to use them to spice up your life! Topics include selecting, drying, storing, and meal preparation.

SMART LANDSCAPE – PLANNING AND CARE:

February 28 (1:30-4:30pm) - Presented by Elissa Mirabelli, Horticulture Program Assistant. **This class satisfies the landscape portion of the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program.** Learn practical design tips, landscape pitfalls, garden chores, hardscape choices, texture combinations and remedies for difficult areas. Should you need identification of a plant, arrive early to class and bring a branch with leaves (and ideally with flower or seed).

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to the workshops identified above, several other opportunities are offered to receive free gardening information:

1. The Manatee County Master Gardener monthly newsletter, *The Master Gardening Bench*, is available to download at <http://bit.ly/ManateeMGnewsletter> -- look for *The Master Gardening Bench* on the right of the page and click on "Monthly e-newsletter".
2. Can't make it to the Manatee County Agriculture and Extension Service office to get advice or to solve your gardening problems? E-mail us at manateemg@gmail.com. Be sure to include as much information as you can in your e-mail and include your telephone number in case additional information is needed. Attach photos if possible. Remember, a photo can be worth a thousand words!
3. Get FYI from FFL (Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program). Visit the Manatee County Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program page on Facebook and "like" us to stay current on workshops and classes, events, publications, tips for your landscape, plant information, and more.
4. Interested in having a beautiful landscape while saving water? The Manatee County Agriculture and Extension Service offers a Mobile Irrigation Lab with a FREE evaluation of your landscape and irrigation system. Call Elissa or Bob at 941-722-4524 today to schedule your free evaluation.
5. Ask an Extension Master Gardener! – Every 2nd and 4th Saturday (10am-1pm) Come visit the Extension Master Gardener information table and get answers to your gardening questions. **Location: Rocky Bluff Library, 6750 U.S. Highway 301N, Ellenton**

Programs of the Extension Service are available to all without discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions, or affiliations.

The Manatee County Agriculture and Extension Service provides the educational resources of the University of Florida through materials and training to the citizens of Manatee County. Topics relate to gardening, landscaping, water conservation and more. It is cooperatively funded by Manatee County Government, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Some programs are partially funded by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD).