



## Sarasota County Extension Change Continues...

### President's Message

Jetty Zarfos '07

Congratulations to the MGV Class 2020 who 'made history' with Dr. Pat and Wilma during CoVid-19.



Jetty with her hard-to-find-Florida Hydrangea. *Dombeya burgesia*. (Seminole)  
<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fp182>

Facing a daunting task, the MGV Class of 2020 conquered distance learning with flying colors! We will celebrate their success as soon as possible.

Congratulations and thanks to the generosity of our MGVs and their friends, the recent Fundraising Challenge was a

great success. For details, see page 7.

Please mark your Calendar for MGV Annual Meeting. 9-12 noon, Tuesday, October 13, 2020, where we will **elect officers and approve the 2021 Budget**.

**NOTE:** Double check VMS for up-to-the-minute meeting particulars. You are urged to get involved.

Lastly, I know I speak for all MGVs when I say we wish Dr. Pat Williams success in his new position as the Wakulla County Extension Director.

Until we can all meet at Twin Lakes Park, stay well and stay safe. Thank you for your desire and dedication to be the most trusted resource for horticultural education in Florida.

### Director's Message

Lee Hayes Byron



Lee Hayes Byron  
Sarasota County  
Extension Director

In times of change and transition, it is the people of an organization that keep the foundation strong. I am so grateful to each of you for continuing to support our mission despite the current difficulties. Not only is the pandemic keeping us apart, we are also facing a transition in staffing, with Pat's promotion and Wilma's absence. I want to thank you

for your patience and understanding as we face these changes together.

We are excited to have started reentry steps. We opened the office to the public on June 15<sup>th</sup>, with limited staffing each day to maintain social distancing. And, we have approval to resume volunteer activities for a limited number of projects, including: demonstration gardens, soil sample testing, growing operations, virtual education, and clerical support.

To protect everyone's health, we have added safety procedures and limits on the number of shifts and volunteers. So, if any of these roles interest you, please contact Karen Geis and make sure you first attend a virtual meeting with staff to go over the new requirements. And know that we are here to assist you and answer any questions you might have.

Thank you for your continued support of and connections to Extension and to each other. We look forward to seeing you back in the gardens!

## Need A Few Good MGVs

by Larry Prohs '14

By virtue of the Master Gardener bylaws it is that time of year when we are required to solicit interest in serving on the '20 – '21 MGV Board of Directors.

The Officers and Elections section of the bylaws can be reviewed by going to VMS>Newsletters and Documents>By Laws. There you will find the complete Florida Master Gardener Program Structure document.

The University of Florida/IFAS Extension Sarasota County Master Gardener program's goals are to increase the availability of horticultural information for the community at large and to improve the quality of life for residents of Sarasota County through horticulture volunteer activities. The Master Gardener Volunteer Board of Directors plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of our volunteers and adherence to our bylaws.

Positions open for consideration are President Elect, Treasurer, Secretary and Member at Large. Our current President becomes the Past President and current President Elect becomes President. 2020 class representatives have been selected and accepted by both the Wednesday and Saturday classes and will begin their one-year tenure with the annual meeting elections. Nominations may also be made from the floor during the annual meeting and must be accepted by the nominee.

To be eligible, all candidates must be in good standing with the MGV program.

If interested in serving and have questions about board functions or any position, please feel free to contact any board member or Larry Prohs [1prohsl@gmail.com](mailto:1prohsl@gmail.com): Landline: 941-922-1264 Mobile: 614-452-0950 with voicemail accessible on either line.



## Editor's Note



**Susan C. Levine '18**  
**Passionvine Editor**

While Gardening has not been cancelled, (see PLANT SALE Page 3), the result of CoVid-19 and the world wide pandemic, is that just about everything else is indefinitely postponed or outright cancelled. TLP now has a skeleton operating staff and limited on-site

opportunities. By the time you read this, there will have been several Zoom "re-entry" trainings. Watch for email from Karen Geis regarding possible future "re-entry" trainings plus other important information.

In the meantime, we meet via Zoom. We learn via webinars. Our once robust MGV adventures are now limited to a quick outing to the grocery store!

NOTE1: While Passionvine's Calendar, page 15, lists future MGV activities, with the fluid health directives, please refer to the VMS Calendar BEFORE you venture forth.

NOTE2: Passionvine is using hyperlinks. For a deeper educational dive, just click on hyperlink and when finished, close link's page and you will return to your original place in the Passionvine publication.

### Your MGVs Executive Committee

**President: Jetty Zarfos '07**

**President-Elect: Carol Hoernle '18**

**Past President: Cindy Drill '16**

**Treasurer: Judy Ligon '09**

**Secretary: Diane Kearney '18**

**Class Rep. Tenille Dixon Pawlus '19**

**Member-at-Large: Fran McPolland '18**

**NOTE: 2021 Board election will be held at October Annual Meeting. All board positions will be open EXCEPT**

**President and Past President.**

**Submit nominations to:**

**Larry Prohs '14**

# PLANT SALE 2020

GARDENING HAS NOT BEEN CANCELED!



**Fran McPoland '18**  
Plant Sale Chair

**PLANT SALE:**  
Job #1 GROW  
PLANTS!  
On April 23,  
2020, Fran  
McPoland '18,  
Plant Sale  
Chair,  
welcomed 36  
MGVs to the

first Plant Sale Committee Zoom call. As the major fundraiser for our MGv organization, the meeting centered on assessing adequate quantity and variety of product and trading helpful tips on propagation techniques, potting mediums, and purchasing resources. Follow-up meetings continued the discussion with creative maneuvers to coordinate plant growing and sales operations

Due to Covid-19 health guidelines, MGVs operate with directives from both the State of Florida and University of Florida's Extension. As of this writing, only two training options remain: July 2, 2020: 11am-12pm and July 2, 2020: 3pm-4pm. Watch your email for future updates.

How Many Ways Can We Say...  
THE PLANT SALE NEEDS YOUR HELP!  
Plant Sale a besoin de votre aide.  
Plant Sale ha bisogno del tuo aiuto!  
Plant Sale behöver din hjälp.  
Feimaidh Plant Sale do chesideachadh.  
Pflanzenverkauf braucht deine Hilfe.  
Teastaíonn do chabhair ó Dhíolachán Plandaí.  
O Plant Sale precis a da sua ajuda.  
Plant Sale indiget auxilio tuo ?  
Prodej rostlin potrebuje vaši pomoc!  
Sprzedaz roślin potrzebuje twojej pomocy.

With CoVid-19 affecting our daily lives, The 2020 Plant Sale Committee is working very hard to raid willing gardens while also home growing plants.



**2020 PLANT SALE**  
Have you signed up?  
**This year more than ever**  
**HELP NEEDED!**  
Saturday, October 10, 2020  
Go-To VMS  
**SIGN UP!**

# Meet Mindy Hanak

## Sarasota County Community & School Gardens Coordinator

By Molly Bartlett MGV '18

Sarasota County oversees both School and Community Gardens and [Mindy Hanak](#), Sarasota County Community and [School Gardens Coordinator](#) is the go-to staff professional who oversees both.

### COMMUNITY GARDENS

Community Gardens range in size from Englewood's 15 plots to Culverhouse's 60+ gardens. No two gardens are alike and each garden has at least one volunteer manager. And that is how I, a co-manager of the Nokomis Community Center, came to know Mindy.

For help, community garden managers turn to Mindy. For the past 5 years, I have co-managed the Nokomis Community Garden, a



**Mindy Hanak**  
Sarasota County  
Community and  
[School Gardens](#)  
Coordinator poses  
with [Bitter Melon](#)  
(*Momordica charantia*  
L.) Photo Molly Bartlett  
'18.

beautiful oasis of 27 plots, just off Legacy Trail and close to the Nokomis Community Center, where I have had the pleasure to work with Mindy. Overseeing Nokomis' 15'x30' garden plot was easy for me as prior to my 2010 relocation to Venice, I owned a 125 acre organic farm in NE Ohio. While I was happy to retire I was not happy to be without a garden and when I found the Nokomis Community Garden, I was in my happy place! As a native northern Ohioan, I am in love with the wide variety of

vegetables grown here in SW Florida PLUS the added bonus of being out in nature and working with other interesting gardeners.

### SCHOOL GARDENS

Overseeing 45-50 Sarasota school gardens,



**4-H Mindy with her Himalayan rabbits and their trophies!**

Mindy provides students' supplies including seeds, seedlings, education, PLUS coordinating MGV support. School gardens are a wonderful opportunity for kids to excel with outdoor projects. For many kids, this is

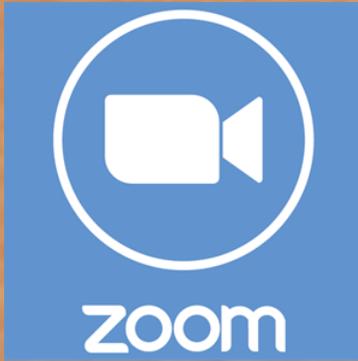
their first time discovering growing veggies or watching a sunflower grow from seed to a tall plant of radiant beauty. Mindy appreciates help from many MGVs.

Coming to SW Florida from Michigan, Mindy left a farm life filled with apple orchard, berries, vegetable gardens, and a grandmother known for memorable fruit pies! As a 4-H'er, Mindy showed her Himalayan rabbits (see photo above), but soon moved from 4-H to [American Rabbit Breeders Association \(ARBA\)](#). At one time, Mindy had 40 rabbits and assures me not one ever made it to the dinner table! Chickens, ducks, and a goat rounded out her menagerie. Meanwhile her parents were establishing a Sarasota nursery business, learning citrus growing, and raising 6 kids!

When Mindy is not at TLP she is happily settling into her new Sarasota home along with her boyfriend and her 13 year-old son, Remy.

"Awesome!" is how Mindy describes her feeling about working for Sarasota County Extension. That school-girl from Michigan has come full circle: After college she worked at a number of jobs always with people, putting to use her degree in Interdisciplinary Social Studies while she focused on helping people reach their potential. Today, in her dream job at extension, she daily blends her joy of working with people, education, and plants.

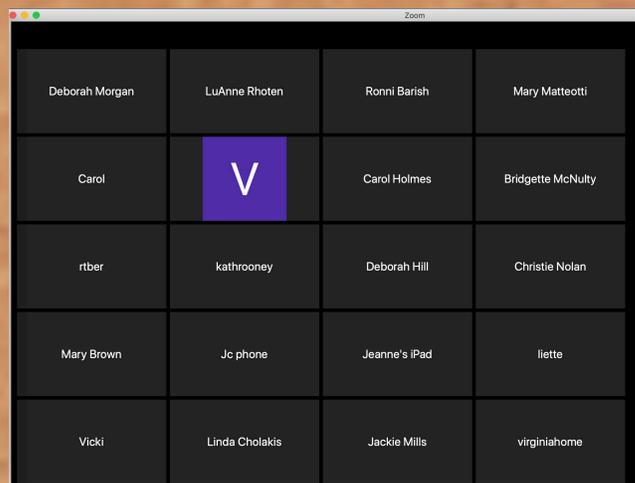
# PHOTO (ZOOM) GALLERY



After months of Zoom committee meetings, some people liked to show their face and others did not! Never the less, meetings were held and our MGV work progressed. The April 14, 2020, Quarterly Meeting set an attendance record with 94 attendees proving there is high interest in Master Gardening and that Zooming is a viable option.



**MGV President Jetty Zarfos '07 multitasking : relaxing AND MGV Zooming!**



# Goings on...

## How CoVid-19 changed 2020 MGV Class

by Leslie DeCaporale MGV '20



**Leslie DeCaporale MGV 2020**

It started out like any other Master Gardener Volunteer Program, but rapidly evolved into something markedly different.

The class of 2020 began their in-

person sessions in January at Twin Lakes Park under the instruction of Dr. Patrick Williams.

Midway through the curriculum, we found ourselves facing the COVID-19 pandemic and forced to revisit the means by which we would complete our training.

With participant input it was ultimately determined that we would forge ahead implementing a remote learning process.

Making the most of our quarantine time, we pressed on via ZOOM technology. Although 'plant walks' took on a different twist and in person discussions gave way to 'chat rooms', our passion, patience and perseverance enabled us to overcome any technical difficulties thrown our way.

And through it all, Dr. Pat, Wilma and others went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure we were successful in our pursuit.

Together we "zoomed" our way to graduation!

*Ed. Note: Next edition of Passionvine will profile the 2020 MGV Class.*



**Osprey Trailhead Junction workday**

**Front row:**

**Patty Rohrer '18, Bette Keys '18, Molly Bartlett '18, Meg Larrabee '14**

**Back row:**

**Mary Matteotti '18, Cheryl Tomasi '18.**



**At Osprey Trailhead work day, our MGVs came across this beautiful *Tillandsia* or airplant.**

**L to R: Patty Rohrer '18—Linda Christopher, OJT volunteer—Molly Bartlett '18—Elena Foster '14—Mary Matteotti '18.**

# Education Outreach Gardens (EOG)

Cindy Drill '16, Fundraising Chair



A hearty and heartfelt thank you to MGVs and extension staff for your generous support during the Sarasota Community Foundation's April Giving Challenge. We not only received \$5611 in donations, we also had the most donations of all the Friends of Sarasota County Parks (FOSCP) chapters!

Even with the confusion regarding how to designate our donations to the MGVs on the web site, we did very well!

A special thanks to Terry Redman and Grace Whitehouse of FOSCP for all the work they did to make sure we were credited properly for our donations. We will be receiving our match from the Patterson Foundation sometime in July.

That means we will have raised about \$11,200.

Not bad during a pandemic!

I also want to give a special "shout out" to Fred Thibault '14, for his generous \$1000 donation and Fred's challenge to all MGVs to match it. You met that challenge and then some!

Due to CoVid-19 and the continuing limitations on holding events, the timing on next steps are, of course, still unknown.

But, your Fundraising Committee is moving forward with a couple of grant applications for materials for the shade house (temporary structure to assist Plant Sale until greenhouse can be built) and educational signage for the Bioswale.

ON HOLD: Plans are still in place to hold a Kick Off event at TLP, so please stay tuned.

The Fundraising Committee is excited for the future of our Education Outreach Gardens.

We hope you are excited too!



## USE AMAZON SMILE HELP FUND RAISING

If you already have an Amazon account, your sign-in will show up on this page. It's really the same website, but when you buy through AmazonSmile, you are automatically making a charitable donation. Try it. We'll all like it!



### The Passionvine Team

Editor-in-chief/Publisher/Graphic Designer:  
Susan C. Levine '18; Proof-readers: Carol Hoernle '18, Carol Holmes '14, Patty Rohrer '18, Bill Wegmann '20, Pat Williams, PhD, and Jetty Zarfes '07. Contributors: Molly Bartlett '18, Lee Hayes Byron, Cindy Drill '16, Carol Hoernle '18, Carol Holmes '14, Jetty Zarfes '07, Patty Rohrer '18, Fran McPoland '18 and Karen Pariser '10.

# My First Garden...memorable beginnings

By Patty Rohrer MGV '18

I grew up in the Brooklyn of the 50's, not in these pandemic days which now is home to approximately 28,000 people per square mile! A six family apartment house with an incredibly heavy plate glass & wrought iron front door, was where my first self-made memories began.

We had the *only* tree on our side of the street. It was a Maple with plentiful "poly noses" or a Sweet Gum with equally plentiful "itchy balls," as well as very scary, probably very hungry, caterpillars. In summertime, immediately before dark, "lightning bugs" were plentiful. This was pretty much the extent of my



1957: Young Patty Rohrer '18 and with girlhood friend Marie Santoro.

early exposure to nature. There was no grass except the sweet grass at the cemeteries that surrounded our neighborhood.

There were no flowers except in Mrs. Bianco's backyard. The photo to left is me and Marie Santoro standing in front of giant Cannas, and the incredibly fragrant Basil: a favorite smell still. The rest of my time was spent roller skating on uneven sidewalks... until...1977.

I was in my late twenties, in our very first home (built 1898), where I inherited a well-established garden.

There was grass front and back, and a privet hedge in our common driveway, pussy willows, fragrant shrub roses, lilacs, and a perennial garden with luscious peonies.

Every May, I loved watching ants crawling on the peony flower heads. This garden was home to daffodils, tulips, spiderwort and iris! But here's the best part: our Greek neighbors Aphrodite and Georg loved to garden and they also loved me! I became their very novice student. Aphrodite said: "Pat, plant a vegetable garden; Georg will help you!" And he did. That was a wonderful time!

Over the following years, I have been fortunate to oversee other gardens in each of my homes and I hold dear my memories of those long-ago, Long Island spring plant sales, that brought me to my knees in the soil I loved to nourish. One year, while very pregnant with my older son, I planted a wildflower garden. That boy did turn out a bit wild- come to think of it!

Another year, I planted a \$10 Kousa dogwood sapling in honor of my younger son, who is still as steady as that now 32 year old tree.

These are still my fond self-made memories.

Now, here in Sarasota, during this CoVid-19 Pandemic, I walk each day, and stop to admire the beautiful and plentiful landscapes. In a future Passionvine, I will share other Florida stories, but for now, I am grateful to have become part of Sarasota County's Master Gardener Volunteer

Program, where sharing beauty is every bit as contagious as this terrible coronavirus. I urge everyone to be safe and stay healthy, but to definitely go outside to admire our beautiful natural world awaiting you-- even in this very unnatural time. Make your own, shareable self-made memories.



Grown-up Patty Rohrer '18 summers in Wading River, NY, and pots her Sage, Santolina, Chamomile, Rue, Valerian & Munstead Lavender, while her Duranta Sapphire (R) happily survived another Long Island winter!

# PLANT CLINICS

by Carol Holmes '14

Plant Clinics are an integral part of the MGV value added services to Sarasota County residents.

Whether you are a newly minted 2020 MGV or a veteran, here is a brief review of the “what, where and how” MGV Plant Clinics operate.

MGVs respond to residents’ yard and garden questions with research-based solutions from the University of Florida/IFAS and inform Sarasota County residents about the Florida Extension program by providing education and information. MGVs new to Plant Clinic work never fly solo! Rather, MGV new to Plant Clinic operations, work with an experienced MGV to learn the process of responding to various types of inquiries, including voice mail, email and in-person encounters.

## How do I sign up?

On the Home Page of VMS go to: Event Calendars, Plant Clinics have their own sign up calendar listing. Give it a try!

## Where do I find Plant Clinic site information?

CHECK-OUT VMS home page, where, in the last box in the lower left-hand corner it says: “General Information”. Click on “Projects” and scroll down until you see the listings for the Plant Clinics. By clicking on the name of the particular clinic link, you go to information about that particular clinic. Many of the clinics have an MGV contact listed, so you could talk with him/her to get more information.

## The 13 Sarasota County Plant Clinics. Find the one nearest to you.

- Elsie Quirk Library - 100 W. Dearborn Street, Englewood
- Fruitville Library – 100 Coburn Road, Sarasota
- Gulf Gate Library – 7112 Curtiss Avenue, Sarasota
- Jacaranda Library – 4143 Woodmere Park Blvd., Venice
- Lowe’s Fruitville – NE SRQ – 5750 Fruitville Road, Sarasota
- Lowe’s North Port – 5601 Tuscola Blvd., North Port
- Lowe’s Venice - 1745 S Tamiami Trail, Venice
- North Port Library - 13800 South Tamiami Trail, North Port
- North Sarasota Library - 2801 Newtown Blvd, Sarasota
- Phillippi Farmhouse Market – 5500 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota
- Twin Lakes Park – 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota
- Venice Farmers’ Market – Venice City Hall, 401 W. Venice Avenue, Venice
- Venice Library – 300 Nokomis Avenue, S, Venice



**Wilma Holley, (standing R behind desk) Sarasota County Program Specialist, with Cindy Weitekamp (seated L behind desk) diagnosing plant problem for Sarasota county resident with (standing right) Fred Thibault MGV '14 at the Twin Lakes Park Plant Clinic.**

# Master Gardeners Ask: What about CEU credits?

by Kath Rooney '18



Kath Rooney '18

I had been a Master Gardener for a while before learning about external CEU courses. Last year I found a great external course that I highly recommend. Presented by the National Garden Clubs, Inc. This 2-day course on Landscape Design was excellent. A bonus surprise

was our very own Dr. Pat Williams who presented the majority of the lectures.

Topics included: Landscape Design Process, Woody Plants, Herbaceous materials, Suburban design, Creating a plan, Trends in Landscape Design, History of Landscape design and so on. The course fee was \$65 for the two days. So a great course which I thoroughly enjoyed and a whole years CEU's earned in 2 days! For busy people, this is great!

For further information on this outside course, contact Sheryl Perkins, 941 744-7356 or email: [slperkins@hotmail.com](mailto:slperkins@hotmail.com).

## What's happening with MG Volunteer hours?

Until CoVid-19 halted our MGV activities, MGV hour requirements were 50 volunteer hours and 15 CEUs. Now, with CoVid-19, the 15 CEUs will not change as there are many on line educational opportunities. The 50 volunteer hour requirement will be prorated. Since the last day of regular volunteer opportunities was March 13, 2020, those MGVs hours completed in 2020 will be divide into 50 to arrive at a prorated volunteer hour percentage.

The MGV Class of 2020 has already completed their CEUs for the year and will have until the end of 2021 to complete 75 hours. If members of the Class of 2020 complete hours earlier, their status will change from trainee/ intern to Master Gardener in VMS system. Questions? contact [Karen Geis](#).

However, in order to participate in an "outside" CEU course, you must first complete the application form found on VMS.

Here's how:

- 1) Open VMS
- 2) At lower left you will see this:



3) Next Click on "Newsletters and Documents"

4) Scroll down to "CEU Request Form Outside MG Programs" where you will see:

### Documents

Document Group	Description
<a href="#">Meeting Minutes</a>	Minutes from both Executive Committee Meetings and Quarterly Membership Meetings, and any special meetings notations.
<a href="#">Treasurer's Reports</a>	MG Budgets for Quarterly/Exec Committee Meetings, etc.
<a href="#">Governing Documents</a>	Sarasota County Master Gardener Documents - (By Laws, Reporting MG hours)
<a href="#">MG Annual Renewal Documents 2020</a>	Annual Renewal Documents as per new UF MG Standards/Requirements, and updated MG Guidebook.
<a href="#">Quarterly Meeting Power Point</a>	PPT used during the Quarterly Meeting
<a href="#">Grant and Financial Documents</a>	Revised 4/9/2015 after Executive Board accepted new documents at 4/7/2015 meeting.
<a href="#">FOSCP Check Request Form</a>	Form for requesting money from FOSCP.
<a href="#">Plant Clinic Resources</a>	Documents necessary for Help Desks
<a href="#">Plant Sale</a>	Documents and information
<a href="#">CEU Request Form (outside MG Programs)-2019</a>	Form to request CEU credits

Select and complete document and, for now, until a new Extension Agent comes aboard, submit the form to Karen Geis.

For your convenience, here is direct link for the CEU Request form:

<https://florida.volunteersystem.org/users/documents/27CEU%5FRequest%5FForm21556.pdf>

There are so many wonderful CEU opportunities for MGVs, and especially now, when CoVid-19 limits our activities, remote CEUs are easy and interesting education!

# Sarasota Military Academy Prep

by Carol Holmes '14

Due to the CoVid-19 pandemic, Florida schools closed on March 29, 2020, and as of this writing will not re-open until the fall. For MGV's involved in planting school gardens, we were delighted to hear recently from the teachers whose classes had planted gardens.

Of particular note: we heard from Major Deb Walker, who teaches AgriScience and is Eco Team Advisor at Sarasota Military Academy Prep.

Deb wrote: *"I want to thank all of you for helping us reach kids and teach them about gardening! I had an unusually interested group this year who continue to send me photos of their home gardens. Such enthusiasm even in these difficult times.*

*"I went to school every other day during the pandemic to maintain the garden, and shared pics with the kids. They had worked so hard up to that point! There are still some tomatoes and the lunchbox peppers that are still producing, but next week will probably be the end.*

*We still do not know what will happen in the fall, but I have been saving seeds all year in case I have to ship them out to kids at home. I have never been to your seed library, so I will stop by with a contribution for a swap. Thanks everyone, and stay safe!"*



**Major Deb Walker  
Sarasota Military Prep**



**Seedlings Sprout!**



**Harvesting Bok Choy!**



**Sampling Bok Choy!**



**Mizuna!**



**Tomatoes!**



**So proud!**



**Big and beautiful!**

## Help Tell the MGv Story

### Join the Communications Committee

by Carole Hoernle '18, interim Communication Committee Chair

The Communications Committee seeks volunteers to help tell the MGv story. As Sarasota County's best kept secret, we must promote MGvs' important work. Your talent and ideas are welcome. ZOOM meetings will soon be announced for each team listed below. SIGN-UP via VMS.

#### Social Media Team

Help Dennis Heidenis '16 and Deb Bryant '17 keep the The Radio Hour's website up to date: monitor questions, refresh photos, and monitor trends.

#### Education Outreach Garden (EOG) PR Team

Specific marketing and advertising for the Educational Outreach Gardens as the project progresses, planning for keeping the community aware of its success. Photos, press releases, distribution to the community outlets, etc.

You will be working with Debra Bryant and Deborah Hill as they have developed the graphics to accompany all the EOG collateral materials.

#### Fund Raising PR Team

Specific marketing and advertising for the activity that will relate to all Friends of Sarasota County Parks (FOSCP) to help raise funds for our projects: i.e: the Giving Challenge 2021 and cross over as needed with other areas of the EOG.

#### Plant Sale PR Team

Specific marketing and advertising for the activity that begins this fall relative to the community-wide news culminating in October with the sale of the plants. Posters/Flyers, Directional Signage, and help with creating collateral materials for distribution on the day of the Plant Sale.

#### WWRWWD Team: Who We Are & What We Do

MGvs are Sarasota County's best kept secret and we don't want to be. How do we get the word out there? Put your ideas to work. We need your talents to tell our story. Videographers, photographers, write articles, PR, PR, PR. Our work supports the Extension Agents and provide research-based responses to community inquiry. We support 14 county-wide Plant Clinics (see page 9). We serve the community at farmers' markets and Home Owners Associations. We provide soil and water tests. We support our local extension agents and all they do to help our marine, agricultural and horticultural environments. Help us to tell our story!

#### The Passionvine, Newsletter Team

All things needed for internal communication from our leadership and member to member communication. Passionvine provides fellowship and ongoing learning opportunities. Passionvine: Editor Susan Levine needs proofreaders, contributors, columnists and photographers.

*The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature.  
To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul. —Voltaire*



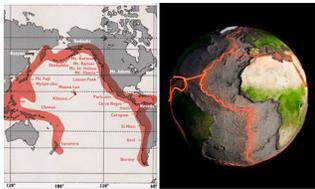
## Plants on Steroids: Part 1 of 2

by Karen Pariser '10 Photo credit: Karen Pariser '10

Editor note: In this July, 2020 Passionvine, Karen shares thoughts and photos from her Hawaii, Peru and Ecuador travels. Watch next PV for Galapagos and the Western and Lesser Antilles.

Prior to these CoVid-19 times, when international travel was doable, I was lucky to visit many international gardens and volcanic regions, where I noticed the tropical plants, with little to no human intervention consistently appeared healthier than the same plants grown here in Sarasota. I wondered: "Why must I carefully fertilize my plants when those grown in wild need no such help?" What's up?

### THE RING OF FIRE



the Ring of Fire: a 25,000 mile horseshoe shaped zone of frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. (see map above) And while volcanoes can be destructive, volcanic eruptions produce magma and ash: the key



Ring of Fire... Peru Cotopaxi 22,000 feet

ingredients to the most fertile soil in the world! In Sarasota, we crave a rich, mineral filled soil. However, we have sandy soil. Thus the necessity to add fertilizer to mimic magma and ash ingredients of the volcanic eruption: i.e. silica, oxygen, carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen chloride, micro-nutrients of feldspar, iron (necessary to make chlorophyll), magnesium, and potassium. Since Ring of Fire plants are lucky recipients from erupting volcanoes' magna and ash, it is

no surprise they flourish. For your flourishing garden, you need your own volcanic mixture!

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/why-is-volcanic-soil-fertile.html>

<https://prezi.com/iu7x2cylj6gw/soil-fertility-in-volcanoes/>

As a result of thousands of years of volcanic eruption, Hawaiian agriculture was recognized as a viable industry. So much so that between the 15th and 18th century, Hawaiian agriculture flourished from its Hilo Soil the most coveted of the mixtures of low bulk density and high water holding capacity. PLUS, due to Hilo Soil's volcanic mineralogy, it is almost always moist, able to hold more than one hundred percent of its weight in water. When these soils are dried, they dehydrate irreversibly into hard sand-like particles. And the crops love it!



False Agave's on steroids at Kula Botanical Gardens, Maui



Vibrant bromeliad varietals in different colors and heights complement the well nourished *Monstera adansonii* (swiss cheese split philodendron) and all tucked into lava rock.

# ADVENTURE COMMITTEE cont'd

Ecuador has many different soil regions. The coastal plain, developed from old rocks (sedimentary, metamorphic, or igneous) and eons of volcanic ash deposits. With its rich



**Ecuador's fertile soil produces bountiful agriculture around Cuenca, Ecuador.**

mineral content, it is no surprise the land has high agricultural potential to produce a wide range of profitable tropical crops including cocoa, coffee, banana, oil palm, sugarcane, rice, corn, soybean, cassava, and numerous tropical fruits.

Bananas, so prolific, are fed to the pigs! Just

too many for human consumption!



**Chocolate blooms and grows directly on the bark of mature trees which grows from 12-25 feet in height. (Cuenca, Ecuador)**



**Amazing bounty: 3,800 varieties of potatoes!**



**Typical lobster claw *Heliconia rostrata***

The Napo River Valley with deficient soil similar to Sarasota, has been developed into pasture to maintain cattle production, and more recently to cultivate corn, cocoa, and coffee production.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Iron laden African dust travels across the Atlantic to fertilize the Amazon Basin. Amazonian natives relish the wind which brings some fertility to the basin, unlike here in Sarasota, where in late summer onshore winds laden with iron may feed the Red Tide bloom by increasing nitrogen fixation....and causing many people respiratory distress. NOTE: At this writing, Florida is currently under this dust cloud.

The Ecuadorian Amazon Basin and Cloud Forest are home to many of the 194 known species of Heliconiaceae, the most spectacular being a "hairy



**St Lucia Botanical Garden hairy heliconia.**

heliconia or fuzzy heliconia" that appears to be a *Heliconia velleregia*, is native to Ecuador and Peru, living in the humid forests at low and medium altitudes with high annual rainfall.

Amazingly these South American heliconia are pollinated by hummingbirds, and are geophytes: they reproduce not only with their seeds, but also by their

underground organs, serving as storage for nutrients and water, thus assuring the species survival.

You may ask....well what does this all mean to me?

If you want a lush and beautiful tropical garden in Sarasota, you need a micronutrient rich soil. Thus, your soil must be amended, every 3 months (except during "no fertilize summers) with a 8-2-12 slow release fertilizer that includes zinc, manganese, iron, copper, boron, sulfur, magnesium, soluble potash.

You can experiment: plant with amended volcanic soil garden and compare with a non-amended garden. Notice the difference?

OR when CoVid-19 has left us...plan your travel for a Ring of Fire adventure!

# Calendar of Events

**NOTE: All Health and Safety parameters ordered by State of Florida and IFAS will govern all MGV activities. ALWAYS double-check VMS for latest information.**

September 11

**Trouble in Paradise: Invasive Plants Sentenced to Detention!** Armando J. Ubeda, Florida Sea Grant Agent, UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County and Wilma Holley, Program Specialist (Florida Friendly Yards and Horticulture) This Advanced "Invasive" Encounter will provide MGVs with the latest information on new and more exotic invasive plants which are working their way to Stage 1 (plants from hell)! Dianne Brownell '19 coordinator

October 10, 2020

**PLANT SALE:** Sign up via VMS

October 23, 2020

**Crowley's Nursery and Gardens: Edibles, Oddities and More!** A unique collection of bamboo, vines, butterfly attracting plants, citrus, hummingbird plants, fruit trees, and exotic hard to locate trees are found in this nursery. An in-depth tour of the greenhouse, gardens, and growing areas.

November 13, 2020

**Trash to Treasures the Ultimate in Recycling!** with Randy Penn. Part I Chemical Collection Center (North) 8750 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota How to recycle chemical waste. Then off to spectacular Rothenbach Park for a tour of the amazing reclamation of a trash heap into pristine hammock. Patty Rohrer '18 coordinator

December 6, 2020

**MGV Sunday Brunch Holiday Party @ Venice Yacht Club.** Half occupancy with 65-70 registration. Carol Burns '10/Karen Parisier '10 coordinators

January 6, 2021

**Wild Orchid Man in Australia:** More details closer to event.

February 13, 2021

**Spanish Point:** More details closer to event.

March 13, 2021

**Gardens in Paradise Docent Training/Docents for Garden Club and Florida Friendly House/ Garden:** More details closer to event.

March 26, 2021

**Naples Botanical Garden:** More details closer to event.

## Master Gardener Volunteer Committee Leadership Team

Debra Bryant '17 - TLP Butterfly/TLP Perimeter

John Cugasi '19 - EOG Project

Cindy Drill '16 - Fundraising

Liz Greene '17 - Plant Clinic

Carol Holmes '14 - School Gardens

Meg Larrabee '14 - Osprey Trailhead Garden

Suzanne Mauzey '16 - Demonstration TLP Garden

Fran McPoland '18 - Plant Sale

Karen Parisier '10- Adventure

Al Royal '06 - Shamrock Garden

The Adventure Committee provides MGVs CEU credits for alternative learning including field trips, armchair adventures and hands-on-learning experiences.

All programs are based on UF/IFAS Extension Sarasota County community initiatives including: agriculture, gardening and landscaping, natural resources, nutrition/ healthy living, and sustainability. An in-depth description of each program is listed on VMS. Sign-up is either on VMS or Eventbrite with links provided on VMS.



# Happy Trails to Trusted Teacher

by Larry Prohs '14

Pat Williams, PhD came to Sarasota in 2017 to assume the position of Residential Horticulture Agent. With a long standing love of horticulture, it was obvious from the get go that Dr. Pat, as he was affectionately known, was in his element.

It was however a challenging start as some months prior to Pat's arrival, the Master Gardener Volunteer program had lost the previous horticulture agent.

Add the departure of the County Extension Director and then working with an interim director until a permanent replacement was found, and clearly Dr. Pat had his work cut out for him.

Fortunately for the Master Gardener Volunteer program, Pat didn't miss a beat. If there was ever an example of hitting the ground running, Pat Williams could be that poster boy!

Dr. Pat immediately put in place a structured review of where the MGV program was in need of attention, where the MGV program could leave well enough alone, and where the program simply needed to start doing things that either had been neglected or just not done

He approached change knowing it would be uncomfortable, but was keen enough to know you get things done through people. Pat is a personable and caring leader. Gaining the trust of the MG volunteers, he moved the program forward to not only improve the status of the program in the community, but to additionally make up for lost volunteers by conducting three new training classes in 2019/2020.

We wish Dr. Pat success in his new post as the Wakulla County Extension Director.

Dr. Pat is a leader, a professional and a friend. He will be missed.



**Pat Williams, PhD**  
**Immediate Past Sarasota**  
**County Extension Agent**  
**A leader.**  
**A professional.**  
**A friend. He will be missed.**



**December, 2019: Dr. Pat celebrates**  
**1st Annual Birthday Party @ Osprey Trailhead Junction**  
**Visitors' Center**

**Front L to R: Patty Rohrer '18, Meg Larrabee '14, Molly**  
**Bartlett '18, Denise Walder '18, Elena Foster '14, Kathy**  
**Rooney '18. Back L to R: Chuck Butterfield (Friends of**  
**Sarasota County Parks) and Karen Geis, Sarasota**  
**County MG Volunteer Coordinator.**



***Dr. Pat always made time to***  
***support MGV projects.***  
***PASSIONVINE shares some***  
***recent memories...***



**Jill Halman, MGV '15 with Dr Pat Williams,**  
**tending Fruitville Reading Garden.**