

October 2008 Gardening Guide

By: Patricia Porchey

According to the book, A Place to Grow: Voices and Images of Urban Gardeners, “Community vegetable gardens-and the hope they bring for changing people’s lives-are at the very heart of urban renewal. With seeds, soil, and sweat, inner-city gardeners work steadily with genuine passion and commitment to make their neighborhoods better places to live.” Sarasota’s own Rosemary District Community Garden was a shining example. It was located in a blighted area north of downtown eleven years ago and became the stimulus for a new vitality in that area. It spawned a group of dedicated gardeners and became a gathering spot for all.

The recent escalation in food prices has renewed the interest in community gardens nationwide. The high cost of feeding a family has increased the interest in community gardens as a way to reduce the amount of food consumers buy at the grocery.

In addition to the economic factor, there are other reasons people like to be part of a community garden. More consumers electing to eat organically-grown produce have decided to grow their own food. Sometimes, there is a desire to grow one’s own food, but there is no area for a vegetable garden where they live. The desire to be with others sharing the same interest in gardening leads some to the community garden. These gardens are called “community” gardens for multiple reasons, but here the sense of bonding people together becomes real.

Florida’s climate allows for growing vegetables year round, a few can even tolerate the summer heat. There are four community gardens in Sarasota County. If you would like more information on how you can become a part of this phenomenon and feel the satisfaction of growing your own food, go to our website for an application or call our office.

There will be an open house at Orange Blossom Community Garden (formerly Rosemary District) in November to showcase this community garden. There will be a children’s garden and an opportunity garden for those with physical challenges. In addition to the normal ground-level beds, there will be raised beds, vertical beds, and even some recycled bathtubs. It will be a place for all ages and abilities to share the rewards of gardening.

Upcoming classes

Step by Step: Florida Friendly Landscaping is a series of five classes covering how to create and maintain attractive landscapes that protect Florida’s natural environment. They are being offered on October 7, 14, 21 and November 4 & 18 at the North Port Library from 10:00 am-Noon. There is a \$20.00 registration fee. You may now register for all classes on-line at <http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu/EdSched.htm> or call 861-9900.

- “Termites: What to Know & Do about Them,” Twin Lakes Park, Oct. 8 at 1:00 p.m.
- “Backyard Landscaping for Birds,” Twin Lakes Park, Oct. 8 at 4:00 p.m.

- “After the Storm: Caring for Damaged Trees & Palms,” Jacaranda Library, Oct. 9 at 10:00 a.m.
- “Termites: What to Know & Do about Them,” Shamrock Park, Oct.16 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Creating Your Florida Yard,” Fruitville Library, Oct. 20 at 2:00 p.m.
- “Living Green: Environmentally Sound Pest Management Practices,” Twin Lakes Park, Oct. 22 at 1:00 p.m.
- “Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Workshop,” Twin Lakes Park, Oct. 22 at 4:00 p.m.

Blooming & Planting Guide

- Vegetables & herbs: Basil, beans, beets, Borage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, celery, chervil, collards, coriander, cucumber, cumin, garlic, leek, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley, peas, radish, rutabaga, spinach, strawberries, thyme, tomato, and turnips.
- Annuals: Ageratum, Alyssum, Begonia, calendula, Celosia, Coleus, dusty miller, geranium, Impatiens, Lobelia, marigold, Melampodium, nasturtium, pansy, petunia, Salvia, snapdragon, and Zinnia.
- Perennials: Agapanthus, beach buttercup, blue daze, calla lily, Chrysanthemum, cigar plant, Coreopsis, Crinum lily, Dianthus, elephant ears, Gaillardia, Gerbera daisy, iris, Liatris, Pentas, Salvia, Shasta daisy, society garlic, and Verbena.
- Fruits in season: Atemoya, avocado, banana, carambola, citrus (calamondin, lemon, and lime), fig, guava, hog plum, kumquat, muscadine grape, papaya, pecan, persimmon, pomegranate, sea grape, sugar apple, and tamarind.
- Blooming plants: Allamanda, bird-of-paradise, bottlebrush, Cassia, Cordia, dwarf Poinciana, false dragonhead, firecracker plant, firespike, goldenrain tree, Mexican heather, oleander, Philippine violet, red and yellow shrimp plants, rouge plant, Plumbago, rose, Salvia, thryallis, Turk’s cap, Thunbergia, and Tibouchina.

Reminder

The Master Gardeners are holding their fourth annual plant sale at Bee Ridge Park on October 11 from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. An extensive selection of native, drought-tolerant, and edible plants will be available as well as information about the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program. The park is located at the corner of Wilkinson and South Lockwood Ridge Roads.

For information

If you have questions concerning your landscape, please call (941-861-9807) or visit the **Master Gardener Help Desk** at our office at Twin Lakes Park on Clark Road east of I-75. The **Help Desk** is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-Noon and 1:00-4:00 p.m. We have weekly satellite help desks at the four south county libraries and every third Saturday of the month at the **Downtown Farmer’s Market**.

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