

A quarterly online magazine published for Master Gardeners in support of the educational mission of UF/IFAS Extension Service.

Ochs Community Garden

By Anne Swain and Candy Helber, Master Gardeners

The Chester Ochs 4-H Educational Garden team is excited to announce that the new community garden will be open to both youth and adults in the fall of 2019. Preparations for the opening are underway. In addition to gardening activities, there will be fundraisers and promotional events. A 4-H agent will manage the garden in conjunction with Pinellas Extension agents and 4-H and Master Gardener volunteers.

The Chester Ochs 4-H Educational Garden, located in Largo, is near the Walsingham Bridge to Indian Rocks Beach, less than a five-minute drive from the Florida Botanical Gardens. Currently, Master Gardener volunteers maintain the Garden. This spring, Master Gardeners who

April 2019 Issue 17

Ochs Community Garden

On the Shelf

Seeking a Green Thumb? Grow Some Herbs—Chives

The Evolution Garden

International Master Gardener Conference

36th Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Conference

Master Gardeners Speakers Bureau

Send in your articles and photos



Photo credits: Anne Swain and Candy Helber







worked on the vegetable gardens at the Florida Botanical Gardens will join the Ochs Master Gardeners in preparation for the community garden's opening in the fall.

The Chester Ochs 4-H Educational Garden is on nine acres, which include:

- A productive vegetable garden
- Many varieties of fruit trees
- Pollinator gardens
- Compost bins
- Mulch piles
- Storage barns housing tools
- A house with kitchen and bathroom
- Irrigation sources

Expanding to launch a community garden is a great opportunity to use a large, open space for the benefit of the community as well as a fun volunteer opportunity.

You are welcome to visit the Ochs Garden on Monday mornings from 8 am to 10 am. The address is 14644 113th Ave. N Largo, FL 33774. Please contact Theresa Badurek at <u>tbadurak@pinellascounty.org</u> for more information. For information about the 4-H youth garden, contact Alyssa Bowers at 727-582-2597 or by email to <u>abowers@pinellascounty.org</u>







On the Shelf By Debra Kramer, Master Gardener

It was a coincidence that I read <u>The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How</u> <u>Maria Merian's Art Changed Science</u>, by Joyce Sidman, during Women's History Month. The beautiful cover of this book caught my eye as I wandered through the children's section of my local library. The nonfiction juvenile and young adult sections of the library often feature books that provide just enough information with lots of illustrations to hold my attention.

The story is pertinent to Master Gardeners. Maria Sibylla Merian was born in Germany in the mid-1600s at a time when the role of women was strictly defined and severely limited. Despite her lack of a formal education, she had an innate combination of artistic talent, curiosity, and a disciplined, scientific observational approach to her natural environment. She also benefitted from parental support. The world of creepy crawlers, moths, and butterflies fascinated her.



Beginning with chapter one, titled "The Egg", each of the 12 chapters has a title that reflects each stage in the life cycle of a butterfly. The book deftly combines history, art, poetry, science, illustrations, and biography in a well-balanced and accessible format. I was fascinated with her life and the contributions she made to our understanding of "summer birds" (as she called butterflies). Her experiences growing up, marrying and parenting at a young age, leaving her worldly possessions to join a religious movement, moving to South America while continuing to draw, paint, collect specimens and publish books are truly awe-inspiring.

Despite the classification of this book as juvenile non-fiction, it is appropriate and interesting for readers of all ages. I was glad that a random encounter with this library book broadened my knowledge of a special woman from the 17th century who significantly added to the understanding of our natural world.

Note: The Pinellas County library system has eight copies of this book at the various local branches.





Seeking a Green Thumb? Grow Some Herbs By Janis Rosser, Master Gardener

In this series on growing herbs, I wrote about basil in October and mint in January. Now it's time to write about the versatile spring herb chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*).

Chives, the smallest member of the onion family, have been around for more than 5,000 years. This hardy perennial is both drought and cold tolerant. Grow it by planting seeds or cuttings, allowing full to partial sun, and moistening soil thoroughly. Chives grow in clumps, similar to grasses. They send up hollow thin leaves, reaching 8 to 12 inches tall. They sport a very insignificant bulb. At maturity, chives bear pale purple flowers with both the stalks and flowers being edible. Harvesting occurs approximately 75 – 90 days after planting.

Is there a difference between chives and green onions? Though often used interchangeably, they are not the same. As noted above, chives have hollow, thin, long green blades with an almost non-existent bulb. Green onions, an annual, have green stalks with bulbous, white, edible bulbs. Flavor wise, chives have a delicate onion and garlic flavor while green onions have a mild onion flavor. Cooks primarily use chives' stalks whereas they use mostly the bulbs of green onions (Chives vs. Green Onions).

According the foodreference.com site, chives (like most herbs) are subject to old world myths and ancient beliefs. Gypsies used chives in fortune telling. Folks believed that you should hang bunches of dried chives around your house to ward off disease. Medicinally, people used chives to relieve pain from a sunburn or sore throat. Today, they may have limited medicinal use because of their smell.

Finally, Marcus Valeriuse Martialis in his "Epigrams" from 80 A.D. wrote, "He who bears chives on his breath, is safe from being kissed to death" (<u>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/chives</u>).

References:

Chives. Retrieved from http://www.foodreference.com/html/f-chives.html

Herbs in the Florida Garden. http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh020

Chives vs. Green Onions. Retrieved from https://tastessence.com/chives-vs-green-onior



Chives. Photo credit: Blue Goose, Inc. UF/IFAS.





The Evolution Garden By Dianne L. Fecteau, Master Gardener

How did the plants we grow in our gardens come about? Professor William Friedman, director of the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University, wrote that, "many of the plants we grow in our garden are premier examples of the ongoing process of evolution," leading to the characteristics we love. I thought of his comment recently when visiting the Evolution Garden within Singapore's Botanical Garden.

The Evolution Garden takes visitors on a journey through time, showing how plants evolved from their simplest beginnings, long before humans showed up, to the 250,000 different flowering plants that the world enjoys today.

At the entrance to the garden, there is a display of "trees of stone". These are petrified trees. The process of petrification, which begins with a tree dying, takes millions of years. First, the tree washes away, lodging in water where sediment cover prevents air from reaching the tree. As a result, the wood does not rot. If the sediment does not crush the tree, it can petrify. The wood absorbs minerals in the sediment. If the absorption happens slowly enough, the structure of the wood with all its cells and rings is preserved.







All photo credits: Dianne L. Fecteau





Leaving the entrance, a pedestrian bridge crosses to a stark, barren area, designed with artificial rocks and a mud pool. Signs explain what life was like approximately 4,600 million years ago after strong volcanic activity. The atmosphere of poisonous gases lacked oxygen; the temperature was intolerably hot with searing UV radiation from the sun.

Following this volcanic landscape, the garden designers show that plants began in water. Shallow pools display replicas of stromatolites—mounds of calcium carbonate slowly produced by colonies of bacteria inhabiting shallow seafloors some 3,600 million years ago. After this, the garden displays various groups of plants in an evolutionary sequence.

Beginning in water, plants evolved from algae into bryophytes, the first land plants. These were nonvascular plants-mosses, liverworts, and hornworts that required a moist environment. Seedless, vascular plants such as ferns then formed vast ancient forests in low-lying wetlands. Walking along the path that weaves through the garden, you come to the gymnosperms-the cycads, pine trees, and gynetophyta-that were the first plants to have vascular tissue and seeds. These developed during the time of dinosaurs. Eventually, you arrive at displays of flowering plants, the angiosperms. Apparently, something magnolia-like was once considered the primitive flowering plant but recently an ancestral water lily has been proposed in its place.











During a walk through this garden, it is impossible not to reflect on the problems that plants encountered as they moved from water to living on land. They had to learn how to regulate water loss. They had to learn how to obtain necessary resources from soil and the air. This is why they eventually developed vascular tissue—to transport water and sugar within. They learned how to support their body with roots and shoots. Finally, they learned how to reproduce and disperse their offspring through such things as spores, seeds, and fruits.

The Evolution Garden provides a wonderful foundation for visiting the remainder of the Singapore Botanical Garden with its many theme gardens such as an ethnobotany garden, ginger garden, medicinal garden, rain forest, and national orchid garden.

References

Botany Handbook for Florida https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg012 Plant and Animal Evolution https://sci.waikato.ac.nz/evolution/AnimalEvolution.shtml The Silurian Period https://ucmp.berkeley.edu/silurian/silurian.php







2019 International Master Gardener Conference

The 2019 International Master Gardener Conference takes place June 17-21, 2019 in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. In addition to the conference itself, there are half- and full-day tours to area public gardens on June 16, 17, and 21. So far, over 500 people have signed up. Visit the web site for more details. <u>http://www.internationalmastergardener.com/</u>

Save the Date! 36th Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Conference

The 36th Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Conference will be returning to the Embassy Suites Lake Buena Vista South in Kissimmee, Florida on October 20-23, 2019. Stay tuned for upcoming information.







Send your Articles and Photos

The next Issue of *The Dirt is June 2019. Note that it is a bit earlier than usual because of summer vacations. The deadline for articles is May 26.* Share your passion for gardening with your fellow Master Gardeners by writing an article for *The Dirt*. Include images where possible. However, if you include images they must fall under one of the following guidelines:

- your own
- UF/IFAS image
- open access image, as in wiki-commons, where all rights are open and the photographer is credited
- used with the express permission of the photographer





When you do send images, please do not embed them within the article. Include them separately. Please send all files as Word files. I cannot edit .pdf files.

Do you like to photograph plants or trees but don't like to write? Send me your photos with a description, even without an accompanying article, and I'll publish them with the description as well as a credit to you, the photographer.

Send your articles, images, and your photos to Dianne Fecteau at dianne@kendiacorp.com. My phone number is 727.366.1392.

All articles are subject to editing. In addition, Theresa Badurek, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent and Master Gardener Coordinator, reviews and approves all articles prior to publication.

The Dirt

Published quarterly for Master Gardeners by Master Gardeners: April, July, October & January

UF/IFAS Advisor: Theresa Badurek, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent and Master Gardener Coordinator

Editor: Dianne L. Fecteau.

Contributing Writers: Debi Ford, Ellen Mahany

UF/IFAS: An Equal Opportunity Institution



