

March & April 2025 Volume 5

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Contributors- Lorna Bravo,
Stephen Deegan

Highlights

Well, it's March already and while the mornings are still quite cool, it won't last for long! Something we look forward to. This year, we have our **Speakers Bureau** in full swing with Rich Ackerman's "*Landscaping with Orchids*" – a must for all you orchid lovers out there. Please enroll on Eventbrite. Also, we have our 2nd Tuesday of the month webinar with "*Foodscaping*" a Florida Friendly Landscaping subject presented by Amanda Marek, a FFL agent in Marion County.

In April, we have contributing to Science with Dr. Corey Callaghan, reviewing the benefits of using iNaturalist on Tuesday, April 8th from 6:30 to 7:30 and our **Speakers Bureau presenter** Julieta Ross on "*Grafting Mangoes*". This is a LIVE workshop at Extension starting at 6:30pm to 7:30pm. So, please sign up on Eventbrite and enjoy our offerings over the next two months!

Steve

Featuring

MGV BIRTHDAYS

Donna Castro	Mar 10
Barbara DeWitt	Mar 10
Terri Bitler Ward	Mar 10
Michael Thomas	Mar 10
Joanne Ewart	Mar 11
Luanne Betz	Mar 19
Michelle Evins	Mar 19
Linda Shneyer	Apr 1
Fred Ackerman	Apr 2
NaMa	Apr 24
	Apr 24

ANNIVERSARIES

Marcy Lambert	Mar 10
Rose Bechard Butman	Mar 11
	cont'd p.6

Needed: from MGv's Any ongoing projects,
email: lbravo1@ufl.edu

Next issue: Plants with defense mechanisms

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Pollinator Garden at the Broward County Extension. **Mallo scrub-Hairstreak butterfly** on Scorpionstail flower. Photo PatR



Complete your Volunteer Time Record Your Hours

We ask you to log on to Better Impact System. The link for BetterImpact is:
MyImpactPage.com

When you need to log in your hours, click on the *hours tab* at the top of the page. Make sure you click Active, then Select the activities you need to log the hours for. Example:

[Volunteer@Program Support](#)
[Volunteer in Broward](#)
[Volunteer at Extension](#)
[Volunteer at 4-H](#)
[Volunteer at Events\(specific dates\)](#)
[Education](#)
[Committees and Teams](#)
[Social Events](#)
[Speakers Bureau](#)

Why do Volunteers need to log their hours? First and foremost is so that you can get credit for your efforts. We will be rewarding high hour contributions in October when we have our Annual Recognition Event. We have pins for 100, 200, 500, 100, 2000 hours and it is so gratifying to achieve these levels. But that can only be done if you log your hours. Secondly, it is important for our funding purely and simply. If we are not serving the community to the degree that is required by the County and the University, they could pull the funding and cut the program. That's why recording your hours is SO IMPORTANT. So, please do so.



THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO LOG
YOUR HOURS!!



MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER TRAINING 2025

The class started on Feb 12th with 23 New Master Gardener Volunteers in Training. We've since had three drop-outs and added one to the class for a total of 21! Our first classes have been very successful with introductions to the full Extension Team (day 1) and visiting Assistant Professor Marc Frank teaching Basic Botany and Plant Taxonomy (on day 2). Our third class was held with Dr. Abolfazl Hajihassani, Assistant Professor of Nematology; and our fourth class was with Dr. Kim Moore with her excellent soil lecture. With 14 weeks to go, there will be lots to get through. If you have a desire to sit through any of these lectures as a refresher, you're welcome to do so. I only ask that you give us a heads up of your intention to attend a particular class you're interested in. You can email me at stephen.deegan@ufl.edu - just let me know when you'll be joining us. Steve

If you are interested in being part of our next master gardener program or need more information, contact Lorna Bravo: lbravo1@ufl.edu

MGV in the Spotlight

I'd like to recognize Geo Tomczyk. Geo is one of our top volunteer hours-wise with over 729 hours last year! He even had time to complete six weeks for the Water Ambassador Course. An intrepid traveler to boot, he went on an orchid hunting adventure in Madagascar off the African coast in early November. Congratulations to Geo and a huge Thank you for all that you do and did in 2024!

Stephen F. Deegan





* Announcements*

Upcoming Webinars Local & State

Reminder don't forget to do your Education Hours; log those into the Better Impact system

MGV 2025 Broward Urban Horticulture Webinar Series **Location: Virtual**

- ❑ **2025 - See separate page**
Zoom links coming

MGV 2025 Webinar Series by Wendy Wilber, Gainesville Location: Virtual. Time 12 noon-1pm

- ❑ **Mar 27 - Invasive species in the landscape with Dr. Seokmin Kim**
- ❑ **Apr 24 - Toxic weeds, Invasives in the Florida landscape with Dr. Chris Marble**

Zoom links coming

For Past Webinars:
Scroll down to find "watch recording of the webinar" under each month's section

MGV 2025 Webinar Series by Wendy Wilber, Gainesville Location: Virtual, 12 noon-1pm continued

- ❑ **May 22 - Turf grass updates with Dr. A.J. Lindsey**
- ❑ **June 26 - Growing Clumping Bamboo with Tia Silvasy.**
- ❑ **July 24 - Prevention of Mosquito-borne diseases in FL with Eva Buckner**
- ❑ **Aug 28 - People. Plant interaction with Dr. Leah Diehl**
- ❑ **Sept 25 - Urban Pests & landscape Consideration with Dr. Faith Oi**
- ❑ **Oct 23 - Benefits of Bats and Conserving Bat Habitat with Dr. Shelly Johnson**
- ❑ **Nov 20 - Mushrooms in FL with Dr. Matt Smith**
- ❑ **Dec 18 - Artificial Intelligence for MGVs with Wendy Wilber and Wayne Hobbs**

Zoom links coming

Past Webinars. June 2024: Great Southeast Pollinator Census; May 2024: Milkweed, Monarchs and OE in Florida; April 2024: Climate Change in Real Life with Larry Figart and Savanna Barry; March 2024: Turf and Soil Testing with Brian Unruh; March 2024: Special Pest Alert: Thrips Parvispinus with Dr. Lance Osborne and Nicole Brenda. Et al

LINK - PAST WEBINARS

[Webinars - Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences \(ufl.edu\)](#)



The University of Florida is committed to providing universal access to all of our events. For disability accommodations such as sign language interpreters and listening devices, please contact Lorna Bravo at lbravo1@ufl.edu at least one week in advance. Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs.

2025 Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Series: Cultivating Sustainability in Your Garden

Xxx

March 11th	Topic: Foodscaping – Zoom 6:30 to 7:30 Speaker: Florida Friendly Landscaping Agent-Amanda Marek
April 8th	Topic: Contributing to Science 101 –the benefits of using iNaturalist Speaker: Dr. Corey Callaghan – Zoom 6:30 to 7:30pm
May 13th	Topic: Managing Adversity: Preparing Urban Trees for Future Climates and Natural Disasters – Zoom 6:30 to 7:30 pm Speaker: Dr. Ryan Klein
June 10th	Topic: Capture the Rain: Enhance Your Landscape with Rain Gardens Speaker: Urban Horticulture Agent Lorna Bravo – Zoom 6:30 to 7:30pm
July	NO MEETING
August 12th	Topic: Understanding Mosquito Control : Best Practices for South Florida Residents Speaker: Dr. Eva Buckner – Zoom 6:30 to 7:30pm
September 9th	Topic: Creating a Food Forest Speaker: Sustainable Food Systems and Natural Resource Agent David Outerbridge – Live Presentation 6:30 to 7:30 pm
October 14th	Topic: Heritage Vegetables Speaker: Dr. Dina Liebowitz – Zoom 6:30 to 7:30 pm
November 4th	Topic: Worm Wonders: Composting in Small Spaces with Vermiculture Speaker: Urban Horticulture Agent Lorna Bravo- Zoom 6:30 to 7:30pm
December 9th	Topic: Bat Monitoring–Citizen Science for Broward County Speaker: Dr. Shelly Johnson – Zoom 6:30 to 7:30pm

Live Presentation Location: UF/IFAS Extension Broward County
3245 College Avenue
Davie, Florida 33314

Contact: Lorna Bravo Email: lbravo1@ufl.edu
Steve Deegan Email: Stephen.Deegan@ufl.edu

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<https://tinyurl.com/vx3u7i9k>



All pix are: common Asian Lady beetles



L: www.Biolib.cv.com
R: www.naturepl.com

Beetles in Our Backyard



Elderberry flowers
<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>



Maypop, *Passiflora incarnata*, Wiki

Our local Beetles

We've seen these insects in our gardens, as black, brown, green, or pretty spotted orange things. They're known better as - **beetles**. Regarded as necessary, but sometimes unglamorous the beetle comes from orders and suborders of various families. Florida in fact has multiple orders of beetles including the order Coleoptera meaning 'sheath-winged'. Under the Order Coleoptera researchers have classified more than 200 beetle families extant (existing) or extinct, in four suborders: Adephaga, Archostemata, Myxophaga and Polyphaga - which are the beetles outlined here. Under suborders, there are too many families to list and globally under the Coleoptera order over 400,000 species exist. In Florida there are around 4,646 species with 560 species native to the state. But not all bugs looking like beetles are from the beetle family - looks deceive; the orange-black assassin milkweed bug (not a beetle) found on milkweeds looks like milkweed beetles found mostly in northern states. Having attributes often overlooked, they're found in nearly all habitats where vegetation exists - using trees foliage for shelter, food or hibernation. As part of their lifecycle the insects have egg, lava, pupa to adult stages. Many beetle species are also pollinators, they visit flowers seeking nectar or pollen then pollination occurs.



Native Ashy Gray Lady beetle. BugGuide.net

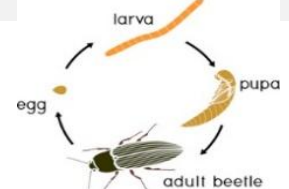


Ant-like Longhorn beetle BugGuide.net

In order to achieve the full cycle undisturbed, beetles hide their eggs or larvae inside plants with galls (i.e. abnormal growth) - used as shelters. Beetles front pair of wings called *elytra* form a thick-like-protected case across their back giving them an armored look and forming a hard shell over the abdomen of most beetles. The case protects delicate wings used for flight; though not all beetles fly. Sizes range from less than a 1mm (about the wire in paper clips) to over 5 inches. In the Lady beetle category, many types possibly are seen including introduced species, labelled beneficial, that not only eat plant pests but also reduce the need for chemical control which has led to a decline in native species. Example. The **Sevenspotted Lady** beetle, *Coccinella septempunctata* was introduced from Europe in 1950s & 60s. Likeable ladybugs attack plant decimators eg: scale, mites, aphids, even other beetle larvae. They use chewing mouthparts, which are unlike other bugs - usually having piercing mouthparts like needles. Adults may supplement scarce prey with nectar, water & honeydew, inadvertently transferring pollen helping with seed production. Another non-native the **Asian Lady** beetle *Harmonia axyridis* has had enormous population growth. In over 100 varieties, found in the US from Florida to Canada, colors vary, eg: solid orange or red & black spots, or black spots & orange 1/4 inch long, 1/5 inch wide, oval or convex shaped.



Miami Tiger Beetle
www.tropicalaudubon.com
Rediscovered in 2007



Beetles in Our Backyard-cont'd

Not all non-natives end in harmony – these beetles imported to tackle crop pests pressured native populations, visited the same plants and like *beetlemania take-over* successfully pushed native beetles out of FL. However, one of the many native beetles still present is the **Ashy Gray Lady** beetle, *Olla v-nigrim* defender of your garden, wreaking havoc to visiting beetles & bugs. Ashy Gray's babies consume hundreds of aphids & thrips before reaching adulthood. Another native that citrus growers released with excellent results is the **Convergent Lady** beetle, *Hippodamia convergens*. Other native beetles do good work for the environment, example: the **Longhorn** beetle, *Corytophorus verrucosus*, that flies. Moving like large ants, it has a large head with a red/rustybrown abdomen. It feeds on dead wood, nectar & pollen. So does the **American Oil** beetle, *Meloe americanus* that eats pollen, nectar and leaves though it'll cause blisters if threatened. With similar looks is the half to 1 inch **Antelope** beetle *Dorcus oparellus* a black, brown beetle; one of the largest. The **Miami Tiger** beetle, *Cicindelidia floridana*, iridescent green with reflective colors, can fly, are ant consumers within sandy pockets of sparse pineland in Miami-Dade county, FL. It's 0.26-0.35 inches long, highly visual with large eyes & is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act-ESA. Predators of these beetles are spiders, robber flies, lizards & birds. *PatR*

Sources: <http://10 Beetles Found in Florida - A-Z Animals>; <http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/Convergent ladybug - Hippodamia convergens>
<http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/ID/Beetles1.PDF>

HELP WANTED

At the Help Desk. Contact
Stephen.Deegan@ufl.edu
 954-756-8517



ANNIVERSARIES

John Wade Katros	Mar 15
Gabriel Clarke	Apr 27
Sarah Kerpet	Apr 27
Lizette Lewis	Apr 28
Pam Cantor	Apr 28
Patricia Goldman	Apr 29
Laura Metrick	Apr 29
Dawn Ward	Apr 29
Robert Dzamba	Apr 30

ASEZ. World Mission Society Church of God University Student Volunteer Group

THANKS

ASEZ stands for Save the Earth from A to Z, reflecting the commitment of university students to make a global impact. ASEZ is an international volunteer group consisting of university students from 7,500 locations across 175 countries. In the US, one activity can be restoring gardens, we say thanks for helping the environment in many ways. More coming in the next issue of *Sunny Times*

The pollinator garden blooms



Garden at Broward Extension, *Turnera subulata* by M. Yi