



# SUNNY TIMES

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## HIGHLIGHTS

Well, our November schedule was fully packed with events and workshops. Our Regional Conference was well-attended on November 13<sup>th</sup> with over 80 MGVs from the 12 Counties in the Southeast Region. We had a good representation from Broward County (19 MGVs) present. The presenters were excellent with interesting subject matter and very informative. I'd like to give a shout out to Amy Rielly for hosting the event at Flamingo Gardens. Our Open House on November 15<sup>th</sup> was another success with over 50 people showing as we shone a light on Extension and what we all do. We had tables for all the programs at the Extension including a table staffed by Commercial Horticulture's Dr. Orfanedes. A presentation of the history of the MGV Program and its details of the MGV Program was presented to the attendees which included many new, prospective candidates as well as members of the public. Also, a presentation by one of our 2025 Scholarship participants, Wismy Cius was very well received by all. Our final workshop of the year in our Speakers Bureau Series was the following Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> and lead by Janine Griffiths was also a success. So, as Lorna and I prepare for the new class for 2026, we'd like to wish you all a

**Happy Holiday Season! Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanza to all and may your New Year be a happy, healthy, an educational and a successful one!!**

STEVE

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## Try a Recipe



WHY NOT? FOR THE  
HOLIDAY SEASON PAGE 4

**MGVs - Thanks for your input, writeups, to make this issue so interesting!**



## Birthdays\*

- |                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| • Pat Rossi            | Nov 19 |
| • Pilar Londono-Cortes | Nov 20 |
| • Steve Deegan         | Dec 5  |
| • Jenal Menola         | Dec 10 |
| • Suzanne Smith        | Dec 10 |
| • Wendy Wilber:        | Dec 13 |
| • Inger Jones          | Dec 21 |
| • Kari Botek           | Dec 24 |

## Anniversaries of Note

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Elizabeth Roberts,             |          |
| Susan Kooiman, Rebeca Copeland | 10 Years |
| Beverly Williams               | 15 Years |
| Keith London                   | 25 Years |

**\*Please note, these dates come from BetterImpact. If you'd like to be recognized, please go into your Profile on BetterImpact-<https://app.betterimpact.com> and input your date of birth**



## RESULTS OF LIVE EVENTS

### 2025 Southeast MGCV Regional Conference

The Training Conference held Nov 13 at Flamingo Gardens Educational Center was an educational bonanza with attendees enjoying the tour of the Butterfly Conservancy after a productive day. Starting at 9am attendees learned about the primary function and goals of the Extension Services under the Dean/Director of Florida Cooperative Extension Services through the support system of offices at University of Florida-UF, Gainesville, Florida. UF/IFAS Administration coordinates with FL county extension offices to administer for over a dozen local programs. For e.g. Florida 4-H, Green Communities, Florida Master Naturalist and Florida Master Gardener programs are offered & produced. Together with workshops and events, the local extension office with direction from UF/IFAS Gainesville achieves the goal to educate the public regarding agriculture, natural resources, youth development, families and communities. Ms. Wendy Wilbur was on hand to educate. The Broward County Extension was instructively represented by Ms. Lorna Bravo Agent II and Stephen Deegan, MGCV Coordinator. Presenters provided attendees with detailed answers & support.

### Master Gardener Volunteer OPEN HOUSE

This workshop, intended for those who wish to be MGVs and join our program in 2026 went well. Seasoned MGVs answered many questions potential MGVs had and received info about UF/IFAS Broward County's Extension programs presented each year.

What was presented to approximately 50 attendees on Nov 15 : A history of the MGCV programs from inception through the Broward County Extension Program. The history gave a short synopsis of all signature programs the Extension offers. To illustrate key success of the Extension programs, several workshops and events already held, were held up as examples. Further, the function of the Extension depts and staff heads were revealed.

The Extension has a list of services for MGCV graduates to complete required hours. For example, at the: K.I.N.D. garden or Naturescape. Some activities headed by MGCV were represented, providing info to attendees. Lorna Bravo Agent II and Dr. Mike Orfenedes were on hand to assist in every capacity. A great presentation that Saturday done by Steve Deegan, MGCV Coordinator. Thanks for participating.

*Pat Rossi, MGCV*

## Pollinator Census 2025

The census is a positive endeavor for all states. Why does it matter, because doing the census signifies how healthy the environment is for its living creatures that visit plants. For example, for various bees, butterflies, moths, wasps. If you would like to volunteer, please notify Steve Deegan. The results for the **2025 Great Southeast Pollinator Census** are not available yet for Florida. [Click here](#) to check for updates!

### 2025 Census Results

#### By the numbers:

**27,048** Census counts were submitted  
**1,132** new pollinator gardens were created as part of the Census project

**594** educators indicated that they used the Census as part of their STEM curriculum  
**59** participants counted on oregano plants to be shared with our colleagues at the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in London.

**Information on state counting is available through the state specific results page:**

Alabama (coming soon)

Florida (coming soon)

[CLICK Georgia](#)

North Carolina (coming soon)

South Carolina (coming soon)

## Registration For 2026 Bee College in Gainesville is OPEN!



Join the UF/IFAS Honey Bee Research and Extension Laboratory at the 2026 University of Florida BEE COLLEGE in Gainesville, Florida. Register for one or two days March 20-21, 2026. Learn all things Honey Bees!!!

For more information [Click Here](#)



## LIVE EVENTS REVEALED

**THANKS FOR THE TURNOUT!**

### 2025 Southeast MGV Regional Conference



The Florida MGV advanced Training Conference is organized by the **UF/IFAS Extension Broward County** for certified volunteers to receive advanced horticultural training. The 2025 training was held at Flamingo Gardens Training Center, Davie FL

### Master Gardener Volunteer 2025 OPEN HOUSE



The Master Gardener Volunteer program is teaching about gardening. The next training starts February 2026 and ends around May 31. Questions, visit our website <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/broward/urban-horticulture/broward-master-gardener/>

For more information on any of these events contact:  
Lorna Bravo, Urban Horticulture Agent II  
UF/IFAS Broward County Extension  
3245 College Avenue, Davie, FL 33314  
(954) 756-8529



# HOLIDAY FAVORITES



## Holiday Baked Brie Appetizer

- 8 oz. wheel of brie cheese
- fresh rosemary leaves chopped
- 2 tblsp honey
- 1/2 cup cranberry sauce
- orange zest
- 1/2 cup of chopped walnuts or pistachios
- crackers for serving



Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place a sheet of parchment paper on a baking sheet. Score the brie with a diamond pattern on the top. About 1/8 inch deep into the brie. Place brie on the baking sheet. Top the brie with the cranberry sauce. Bake for 8-10 minutes, or until gooey. Remove from the oven. Transfer brie to a serving board or platter. Top with nuts, rosemary, honey and orange zest. Sprinkle with a dash of sea salt. Serve with fruit and crackers.

## Holiday Cocktail

### Cranberry Rosemary Spritz

- 1 oz. Cranberry Juice
- 3 oz. of Champagne or sparkling water
- Fresh Cranberry & Rosemary sprig for garnish (rub herbs between hands to release oils then add to cocktail)

## THOUGHTS

### Winter in South Florida

When hurricanes retreat and skies turn clear,  
We switch off the weather channel and breathe without fear.

The grass grows slowly, shifting to gentler shades,  
While bougainvillea burst into reds and sunlit cascades.

Dolphins and manatees glide through inlets so still,  
Gracing winter waters with their quiet thrill.  
A cool breeze drifts softly along the shore,  
Mornings gleam bright, and evenings arrive earlier than before.

Hummingbirds streak by in vivid, swirling flight,  
Gardeners tend flowers and vegetables in the warm, gentle light.  
New winter beds flourish with greens crisp, shoots alive.

For this is the season our gardens truly thrive.  
We pause the fruit-tree feeding, giving nature time to rest,  
As South Florida welcomes the season it loves best.

*Jennifer Drewsnap-Shipley MGV*





# The Buzz – of Bees

## As Pollen, Nectar Specialists

Florida is home to over 300 species of native bees while some non-natives were introduced. They're important pollinators to varieties of plants and wildflowers providing cross-pollination with flower visits. The production of many crops, including fruits and vegetables, depends on bee pollination. Bees vary in size and color. Native bees are solitary and use pollen collected as protein, this is vital to growth. Pollen is fed to the hatched egg, and the larvae for its further development as food. They're ground nesters. Small to medium-sized bees visit farm sites for pollen and a range of flowers for nectar. Their stops include pollinating fruit such as apples & peaches. The native sweat bees, which are seen in our gardens, are dull colored to having metallic black sheen or brilliant green or blue.

They're named for being attracted to human sweat. *Three Native Florida Bees-UF/IFAS*

### Gardening Solutions.

Other native bees in Florida are large and small carpenter bees. In this species only females sting if necessary. Males hover, to defend territory. The Eastern Carpenter bee (*Xylocopa virginica*-genus, specie) is a large, metallic-black bee resembling a bumblebee with a smooth, shiny black abdomen and a fuzzy yellow thorax. Found along the coast and Gulf regions are the Southern Plains Carpenter bee (*Xylocopa micans*). Both are about  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 inch long. Females make tunnels in dead wood, stocking it with pollen & nectar, laying an egg, sealing it and repeating the process for the tunnel length. They're known as solitary bees; but will share nests and chores when nests are scarce.

Also found here are two small Carpenter bees - *Ceratina cockerelli* black colored & *Ceratina dupla floridanus* metallic in color & mistaken for sweat bees. They're less than 8 mm long or slightly over  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. They also dig tunnels or nests storing pollen & egg in dead plant cells, for example in piths of roses.

Another, the leafcutter bee, medium sized, similar to the honeybee size, are important native pollinators. Pollen is carried only by females on the abdomen. For nests, they use pre-existing holes or cavities lining them with cut leaves using the skill of their mandibles or jaws. In all these nests of bees, pollen & nectar is put in the holes with the larva (the grub stage from egg fed by nurse bees) which eats its way out in spring/...

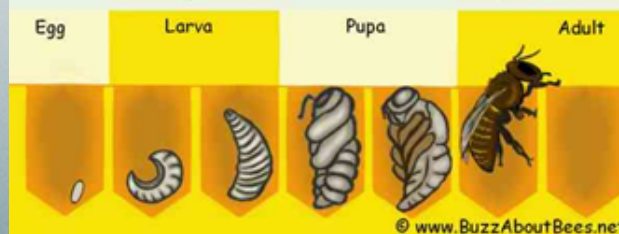
The honeybee, may be the most recognized bee in our garden, *Apis mellifera* was introduced by colonists to the US. They're known for honey production and colonies of complex hives & social behavior. With golden brown bands or black on its abdomen, the bees are  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in length & oval shaped. All workers in hives are females raised from fertilized eggs. They're assigned different chores according to age. At first, workers clean hives. The oldest females do the dangerous chore, pollen & nectar foraging. Workers also take nectar, make honey, seal it in with beeswax honeycomb scales. Other bees present are drones; male bees without stingers raised from unfertilized eggs. And one queen bee.

Workers produce, feed her royal jelly, e.g. (proteins, fatty acids, minerals) from the egg, larvae, pupa & adult stages during her life. The queen honeybee, the largest, there can be just one, is the sole egg-layer. To do that she flies to other hives, mates with other drones then returns & lays hundreds of eggs daily. Drones sole purpose is mating with the queen, i.e. providing genetic diversity.

Sometimes no longer needed, they're escorted out the hive by workers. The more aggressive subspecies honeybee *Apis mellifera scutellata*, looks like the introduced one. Those escaped from Brazil; & made their way here from TX. All bees though need flowering plants to provide nectar and pollen, a source of food. Be involved, plant those flowers.

PatRossi MGv

## The Lifecycle Of The Honey Bee



### Sources:

...Five Facts: Bees in Florida.  
<https://floridamuseum.ufl.edu/science/five-facts-bees-in-florida/>  
...Questions from the plant clinic:  
Native bees - blogs.  
<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu>  
...Why do we need bees?  
<https://friendsoftheearth.uk>

## MGV FEATURED PHOTO IN THE SPOTLIGHT



**Title: Lady of the Night Orchid**

**Photo Credit: Jeffery Hoyos**

**Specimen: *Brassavola nodosa***

**Location: Coral Springs**

Submit your photos to: Jenal at  
jenalmenola@gmail.com please include name,  
location, specimen name and a title for the photo.

## Volunteer Opportunities contact:

**Steve Deegan**

**[stephen.deegan@ufl.edu](mailto:stephen.deegan@ufl.edu)**

### Newsletter

#### Contributors:

**Pat Rossi- Editor**

**Stephen Deegan**

**Lorna Bravo**

**Jenal Menola**

## An Excellent Time to Plant Cilantro!!!

As the temperatures subtly drop and the summer sun gives us a break, our herbaceous friend cilantro is thriving. Cilantro, *Coriandrum sativum*, grows best in the cooler months of South Florida. The entire plant is edible. So if you wish to enjoy the leaves and have a nice harvest, start your seeds during this cooler time of year. Cilantro is known to flower quickly in the warmer months. If you seek coriander which is the seed of cilantro, then you will benefit growing in the spring and summer when the plant will bolt. Which is also when our pollinator friends come to appreciate Cilantro.

Cilantro is said to be one of the oldest herbs, approximately 5000 years old and the seeds were found in Egyptian tombs. The seeds are ground to a powder to get a lovely spice of flavor for your favorite recipes.

Some may use the roots of the plant for teas and herbal remedies. Most enjoy the bright green leaves as food or a garnish. The citrus yet pepper tang of Cilantro isn't loved by all. Some find the taste to be offensive and soap-like. For those who do enjoy the taste they will reap the health benefits such as liver support, digestive enzyme boosts and anti-inflammatory properties. This herb also helps the body detoxify from heavy metals. This Winter give cilantro a try in your home garden.

By: Jenal Menola, MGV

**For more information on cultivating  
Cilantro, check out UF/IFAS page [HERE](#)**



# More of Garden To Kitchen

## Garden Herb FAVORITES

I have always used herbs to flavor foods, whether it's cilantro and culantro in sofrito or rosemary on roasted potatoes, or parsley and chives for just-that-extra-flavor.

Recently, looking around my garden, I've rediscovered some that I haven't planted but are well established and that I've come to value.

One of those is Tulsi (from Sanskrit) or Holy Basil, commonly used in Ayurvedic (ancient Indian medical system) and Chinese medicine, it is native to north-central India and is widely grown in Southeast Asia, Australia, the Middle East and West Africa. The stems, leaves and seeds are used to brew tea, create tinctures and essential oils.

Previously, I have used Tulsi as a garnish but after a little research, I learned that it is rich in Vitamin K which supports heart health and bone mineralization /...



It has bioactive compounds like camphor that may aid in reducing the duration of flu and common cold symptoms. It is also known as an adaptogen herb, meaning that it has components that may help to reduce excess cortisol hormones in the blood, leading to reduced mental, physical and emotional stress. Who couldn't use some stress-relief these days?

While it is an ancient herb and has many benefits, like any other herb or medicine, Holy Basil is not recommended for everyone. It is important that you check with your doctor before use. As a general precaution, it should not be used by pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, anyone using blood thinners of any kind or anyone about to have surgery.

Herbs add so much to the flavor of our lives, let's get to know them better.

*By Suzanne Smith MGv*

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## Wonderful World of Wasps

When most people think of wasps, they think of yellow jackets, hornets, and painful stings. But did you know that most wasps are beneficial to our gardens? Florida has hundreds of species of wasps, and most are completely harmless. Unlike hornets & yellowjackets that live in colonies & can be aggressive, the majority of wasps are solitary, docile & will only sting if threatened. In fact, wasps are vital to our ecosystems: they perform important jobs as pest control & pollinators!

Wasps are essential to integrated pest management, a sustainable way to protect your garden from pests. Different species prey on a variety of pests, including mole crickets (*Larra bicolor*), beetle grubs (scoliid wasps) and caterpillars (parasitoid wasps) that damage our crops & turfgrass. Parasitoid wasps are used in the agriculture industry to combat a variety of pests, including the Caribbean fruit fly & the Asian citrus psyllid. On a larger scale, wasps contribute over \$400 billion worldwide as agricultural pest control /...



Harvest Day @ Patricia Davis Community Garden

Photo Credit: Jeffery Hoyos

## Wild & Wonderful

Wasps are VIPs: very important pollinators! Many of our crops & native plants benefit from wasp pollination, including goldenrods, firebush, milkweeds, and more. Most wild fig trees, including our native Florida strangler fig, are only pollinated by a single species of perform double duty as pest control & pollinators!

You can help support our wonderful wasps (and our native bees) by building pollinator hotels, leaving areas of bare soil for nesting, not spraying pesticides, and planting native flowers suitable for wasps.

By Ryan Xu MGV



Scoliid Wasp of FL. *Colpa octomaculata*, Bug.Guide.net  
Credit Scott Nelson.



Parasitoid Wasp. Wiki.  
*Megarhyssa macrurus*, also known as the long-tailed giant ichneumonid wasp

## MGV's In the Wild!



**November 7th**

**Approx. 100lbs of mixed greens harvested. Tokyo Bekana, Mizuna, Arugula and Radishes. These items were sold in the Pompano Farmers Market the following day to support the Community Garden.**