HOME AND GARDEN COLUMN

OSCEOLA COUNTY FAIR

It's hard to believe that another year has passed and it's time again for the Osceola County Fair & Livestock Show! This past year has brought a lot of exciting changes for the Extension Services and the Fair, with the most important one being our move. We are now residents of the new Osceola Heritage Park. Of course with all significant changes, it takes some time for us to get settled, but the benefits of our new facilities and the "new and improved" fair, is definitely worth any adjustments.

The Osceola County Fair offers something for everyone. Not only does this year's fair have fun rides and delicious food, it also has many exciting events and exhibits that are supported by the Osceola County Master Gardeners, 4-Hers, and Extension Services. These include demonstration gardens, arts and crafts, educational exhibits, and livestock shows.

The Osceola County Cooperative Extension's Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program will have a demonstration butterfly garden at the fair. This exhibit will show how to attract butterflies into your own garden and include real butterflies and plants to observe. Educational publications on butterfly gardening will be available, along with other material outlining the FYN "Florida Friendly" landscape maintenance practices.

The Osceola County Master Gardeners will also have an exhibit. Their exhibit is entitled "Great Lawns Think Alike" and will feature how to properly care for your lawn and lawnmower safety. The Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer questions about the exhibit, your landscape, or any other plant questions you may have. Numerous publications from the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences will also be available free of charge at the exhibit. These comprise of various topics, including lawn care, vegetable gardening, and attracting wildlife to your yard.

The Osceola County 4-Hers are also present at the fair. They are there showing off all their hard work that they've been working on since last year's fair. This includes their artwork, woodwork, plants, bake goods, clothing, and animals. They will show their livestock, such as hogs, sheep, and cattle, at numerous times during the fair. The 4-Hers also have three food booths at the fair. If you find yourself wanting a hot dog or cookie while at the fair, support your county 4-Hers, and purchase food items from their booths. There will be two booths in the Exhibit Hall and one by the arena in the KVLS building.

So, in between that corn dog and funnel cake and before that ferris wheel ride, find time to visit the Osceola County Master Gardeners, observe the butterflies in their garden, and show support to the 4-Hers by visiting their exhibits. You'll be amazed what the kids of this county can do!

Besides getting ready for the Fair, we have also been busy with developing new educational programs. Learn how to create a beautiful landscape with minimal inputs at the "Florida Landscaping" seminar on February 15th at 1pm. A Butterfly Gardening workshop will also be held on February 20th at 3pm. Both programs will be held at the Extension Services building at the Osceola Heritage Park. Please call (321) 697-3000 to register for the classes or to find out about other upcoming programs.

The "Osceola County Garden School" begins the end of February and will be held Tuesday and Thursday evenings for three weeks. You are welcome to come to one seminar or attend all six. Please call for more information on the topics held each day and to register.

The Osceola County Master Gardeners have extended their Plant Clinic hours. They will now be available to take your calls, Monday to Friday from 10am to 2pm. Call them with all your plant questions at (321) 697-3000.

Know anyone that may be interested in 4-H? Believe it or not, you do not have to live on a farm or be from a rural area to be a member of 4-H. There are events and projects in 4-H for everyone. Please call the
Osceola County Extension Service for more information.

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