OSCEOLA COUNTY FAIR

Last weekend’s frost blanket didn't chill the spirits of Master Gardeners. They have been planning for months so the vegetable and landscape will be in prime form during the Osceola County Fair, frost or no frost.

Plants in the landscape and garden were selected to tolerate cold weather. Pick the right plants so your yard doesn't lose its appeal after a cold snap.

Master Gardeners, Cooperative Extension volunteers, learn about Central Florida growing conditions in a series of classes presented by University of Florida faculty. After participating in more than 60 hours of classes, field trips, demonstrations and hands-on activities, volunteers are prepared to help residents in the community with gardening questions.

While at the fair, visit the vegetable garden on the east side of the fairgrounds. The Demonstration Gardens are in front of the red Youth Barn which houses many 4-H and FFA exhibits. Look for the huge double blue and white striped tent.

Learn about raised beds, composting, tropical vegetables, herbs, planting seasons, efficient irrigation, use of least toxic pest management strategies and harvesting techniques. Besides being open during the fair, the Master Gardeners work in the garden each Monday morning from 8:00 A.M. until 10 A.M.

The demonstration landscape, found next to the garden, shows a variety of plants adapted to our area. Many flowering plants are on display to give you ideas for winter color in your landscape. Come get ideas for your home. The gazebo provides a relaxing respite from the bustle of the midway. Sit and enjoy the sounds from a distance. Master Gardeners work in the landscape garden each Wednesday morning beginning at 8:00 A.M. in case you want to stop by after the fair.

Master Gardeners have a plant question booth set up in the fair’s main exhibit building. Bring your plant samples for identification or just stop by to chat about your favorite plants. A variety of fact sheets are available to help you have a healthy and attractive lawn and landscape.

The St. Cloud Future Farmers of America are setting up a plant display inside the building next to the Master Gardeners' booth. More than 100 different trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers and flowers will be labeled with plant care information.

More than 60 residents volunteer as Master Gardeners. Ten recent graduates will debut at the fair greeting visitors from the Master Gardeners' booth. Welcome Judy Dunham, Monica French, Jim Johnson, Larry Kestner, Patrick Lamond, Diana Musick, Alvin Nin, Mary Pfeiffer, Ginny Sampson, and Diana Williams.

Classes on a variety of gardening topics are scheduled beginning the week after the fair. Stop by the Master Gardeners' booth to get a copy, call the office at (321) 697-3000 or get info on the web at http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu.

Be sure to visit the Osceola County Fair, February 15 through 20 and see why the Master Gardener volunteers are so proud. The Fair opens at noon and is located on Highway 192 between Kissimmee and St. Cloud at the Kissimmee Valley Agricultural Center. Call the fair office at 407-846-7286 for information on special events, admission costs and hours of operation.
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