PLANT LIFE COLUMN

FLOWER SHOW OR PHALAENOPSIS ORCHID?

If April showers bring May flowers, what do March downpours bring? Hopefully, some wildfire and drought relief! The rainy weather is a mere inconvenience when you balance it against all of the reasons we need the drenching. Enjoy the opportunity to do garden planning, sharpen mower blades, clean up a workroom or shed or just watch gardening television all day.

As badly as we need the rain, I hope there are dry days in store for next weekend, April 7 and 8. Many local groups have activities planned that may interest you.

ORCHID SALE

Osceola County 4-H Clubs are sponsoring an Orchid Sale at several locations throughout the county. Purchase easy to grow Phalaenopsis orchids for $12 and support our University of Florida youth organization.

Phalaenopsis orchids, also known as moth orchids, produce spikes of long lasting blooms in shades of pink, purple, yellow or white. Some have lines or freckles decorating the petals. This type of orchid prefers indirect light and is tolerant of low light levels on northern porches or hanging under trees. Care information is provided at each sale location.

Look for tables of orchids outside Publix in St. Cloud on 13th Street, outside K-Mart in Kissimmee at 2211 West Vine Street and at Spring Fling at the St. Cloud Lakefront. The sale begins at 9 a.m. and runs through mid-afternoon. Get there early for the best choice. Orchids are also available at the Kissimmee Valley Agricultural Center, located at the fair grounds between Kissimmee and St. Cloud on highway 192.

4-H is a nationally recognized youth organization that helps boys and girls develop skills in leadership, citizenship and public speaking through a variety of educational projects, activities and contests. University faculty and volunteer adult and youth leaders assist club members in a variety of ways.

Veterans of 4-H programs in agricultural communities are familiar with projects in farm animal husbandry and home economics. The new face of 4-H includes activities in aerospace, computers, marine and aquatic science, wildlife, nature study and consumer choices.

Proceeds from the sale help provide scholarships for summer camp, adult leader training and program (321) 697-3000 for more information or to make donations to support our youth. Adult volunteers are always needed.

ST. CLOUD FLOWER SHOW

St. Cloud Garden Club is holding their 48th Annual Flower Show, at the St. Cloud Senior Center on Indiana Avenue and 8th Street. Join them on Saturday, April 7, from noon until 5 p.m. and on Sunday, April 8, from noon until 3 p.m. Beautiful floral designs will interpret the theme "As Time Goes By 2001." Plants grown by local members, educational displays, door prizes and a plant sale are part of the program.
Join them and see what is growing on in St. Cloud.

SHINGLE CREEK CLEANUP

Shingle Creek Waterway Clean Up begins on April 7 at 8:30 a.m. at several locations throughout Orange and Osceola County. Contact Bill Graf, South Florida Water Management District, at 407-858-6100 ext. 3837 to volunteer and confirm meeting locations along the creek. Boaters, canoe and kayak enthusiasts and anyone with environmental interest are encouraged to help clean up litter and debris that has accumulated along the creek.

This project is part of a major multi-county, multi-agency effort to study issues affecting the Shingle Creek watershed from its headwaters in Orange County, across highway 192 west of Kissimmee into Lake Tohopekaliga’s west shore. Osceola County staff assisting in organizing the clean up event in Osceola County include Bobbi Jo Cromwell, Lake Specialist; Rod Schultz, Environmental Specialist and Danny Sheaffer, Solid Waste Recycling. Yea team!

FREE FISHING WEEKEND

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has designated April 7 and 8 as Free Fishing Weekend in Florida; no fishing license is required. Staff and volunteers are hosting two activities in Osceola County on April 7 from 9 a.m. until noon to promote fishing as a recreational activity: one at Brinson Park Pier on Neptune Road in Kissimmee and the other at the county pond at Chisholm Park off Narcoosee Road, highway 15 in Narcoossee. Non-anglers and youth are invited to participate. Bring your own gear if possible, but some gear will be available on a first come, first serve basis. Chisholm Park pond has recently been stocked with 1500 catfish so the fishing should turn to catching if all goes well. Volunteer fishing instructors will be available. For questions or directions, call the FWC Kissimmee Fisheries office at 407-846-5300.

Be sure to check out updates to our quarterly newsletter, Roots and Shoots on our web site at http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu/oscmg.html.

Feel free to E-mail plant questions to epabon5@ufl.edu

Enjoy the wet and wonderful weekend!

Eleanor Foerste
Natural Resources Agent
Osceola County Extension/University of Florida
1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane
Kissimmee, FL 34744
(321) 697-3000
Fax (321) 697-3010
efoe@osceola.org
osceola.ifas.ufl.edu
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