

Franklinia alatamaha



Friends of Mead Garden

Weed Warriors Need Recruits

Alice Mikkleson and Rene Kelley, Mead Garden's supreme Weed Warriors, declared war two years ago on air potato, briar, cat's claw, Virginia creeper, and skunk vine. These scruffy invasives, terrorists of the botanical world, are found all over Winter Park. They are obnoxious, non-native (exotic) vines that spread unchecked through parts of Mead Garden -- until the



WWs came along. Armed with hoes, shovels, hatchets, clippers, screwdrivers, and saws -- these lovely ladies attacked the tangled glut. Vines blocked the sun from a treasure of historic camellias and azaleas, choked out beautiful flowers, and killed canopy trees.

The WWs' goal is to restore, maintain and preserve the floral treasures of Mead Garden's first golden era. The early azalea beds, and a large collection of camellias planted by the Winter Park Garden Club in the 1960s, have limped along with rainwater only.

Last winter, after the Warriors had pulled and chopped thick weeds and vines for many months, the dark green camellia shrubs burst into rich blossoms of white, light or dark pink, and red. "It's such a joy to see them beginning to thrive," commented Alice.

The volunteer WWs have worked countless hours through weather, heat and insects. They are making headway, but alone they can't take care of the valuable floral and foliage assets of MG's natural beauty. "WE NEED HELP!" they declared with one voice and noted that they have slimmed down with physical work.

In cooler months they had help sometimes...scouts, students, a few community volunteers, and family. The spring Spud Hunts for air potatoes that become fearsome vines made a difference.

Mrs. Barbara Dow, who walks her dog Ivy, was so impressed with the WWs that she now faithfully pulls weeds from a bush every

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International Plein Air Paint Out

Jovial Central Floridians flocked to Mead Garden through the weekend of September 9-11 to watch artists paint the garden *en plein air* (in the open). Members of the Central Florida Plein Air Artists--and anyone else who wanted to--set up their easels and captured on canvas many colorful cameos of the beautiful 55-acre natural retreat in Winter Park. The community was much welcomed...adults, children and a few dogs strolled along the wooded paths, or stopped and watched rich images grow on blank canvases. Fifteen painters on Friday and 35 on Saturday lugged cumbersome equipment to their chosen sites in the park, and happily went to work.

These talented men and women were taking part in the 3rd Worldwide Paint Out sponsored by International Plein Air Painters. IPAP is a "blanket organization" that encourages the joy of painting landscapes out-of-doors, free from the limitations of walls and rules. Once a year in September, local groups belonging to IPAP all over the world hold paint outs in their own venues on the same weekend.

CFPAA Director Mary J. Gray explained how local painters chose MG. For years she has known MG, and used to bring her children who loved playing in a quiet, natural place. In 2003 the group collaborated with the Winter Park Garden Club for "Art In Nature," an award winning flower show. "The garden club members were so wonderful to work with," said Mary J. "We wanted to come back." She made arrangements with WPGC Past President Sara Johns, and also spoke with Beverly Lassiter, President of FMG.

Plein Air painting can be arduous. An artist hauls heavy gear—and in Florida a big hat, bug spray, mosquito repellent, sun screen, water—ready for a fast pickup in sudden squalls. One artist painted while his dog patiently watched people.

The convivial group

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Fresh from the Garden

We Have Come A Long Way

by Beverly Lassiter, President, Friends of Mead Garden

As we advance toward a master plan for Mead Garden, I am struck by how far we have come in such a short time. Back in early 2003 when the effort to revitalize MG was discussed, I never dreamed we would be where we are today. The time, effort and dedication of the Friends of Mead Garden, the Winter Park Garden Club, and the City of Winter Park have been remarkable.

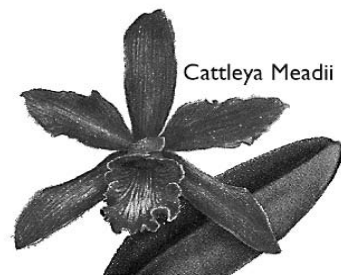
MG presented quite a challenge for our fledgling volunteer group. With many issues and concerns, the master planning process has included considerable community involvement through public meetings and forums, focus groups, a citizen survey, and interviews with stakeholders, interested community representatives, and City officials.

They responded with an overwhelming desire to maintain MG as a natural green space, a few special gardens, and educational programs.

In recent months, we received valued input as a result of several neighborhood coffee klatches and a community workshop conducted by representatives from the Project for Public Spaces (PPS). The PPS

workshop ran long. There was little time for questions and discussion, so a follow-up session is being held to receive further input from workshop participants.

This ongoing planning process will guide the development of a formal master plan. According to John Holland, Director of Parks and Recreation, a Master Planner will be on board by the first of January, 2006. The master plan will clearly identify goals for improvements to our beloved Garden, and that is when our real work begins.



Cattleya Meadii

For help with the PPS workshop we are grateful to Jeffrey Blydenburgh, Andrew Boyle, Carol Hille, Linda Keen, Travis Lundquist, Dori Madison; WPGClubbers Sally Campfield, Cheryl Corbett, Charlotte Everbach, Marcia Frey, Mary Anne Freyer, Alice Mikkleson, Evie Mueller, Rene Kelley, Ann Taylor; and to Dexter's Restaurants.

Weed Warriors

Continued from Page 1

day. When David Rodriguez, MG's lead worker, came in January, he and workers Daniel Sykes and Jimmy Angeles took over the heavy work. Now the WWs can focus on caring for the elegant old perennials.

What drives these garden amazons? Both began working in the earth when they were children. Rene grew up on a 2,000 acre Nebraska ranch with a very large vegetable garden. She loved being outdoors, at six she was riding a horse to take cattle to pasture, and by eight was spreading water around "tons" of plants, then playing in the dirt. Eventually her husband and she settled in WP where she is a Past President of WPGC and prominent in Florida Federation of Garden Clubs. Both WPGC and FFGC headquarters occupy sites in MG. Rene also is a master gardener and flower show judge.

For 10 years, working every day, she took care of the grounds around the WPGClubhouse, then became a weekly WW. "I like the physical fitness, love to work in the dirt and see beauty all around," she explained. Alice declared, "It's in my blood." Her grandfather, Judson Hand, experimented with high yield crops in southwest Georgia and attracted families to settle there. Her Aunt Alice developed Hills and Dales Gardens, now public, in LaGrange, Georgia. Uncle Cason Callaway built the spectacular Callaway Gardens near Hamilton, Georgia. One year he gave Aunt Virginia 10,000 magnolia trees for her birthday (she had asked for one) and she supervised their planting at Callaway Gardens.

At age eight, Alice started forcing bulbs. As she recovered from polio, her parents insisted that she go outdoors for the fresh air. She grew up gardening with her mother, aunt, and grandmother.

As a military family, the Mikklesons moved a lot. Where they lived, she gardened. "I always left a little part of me," she said happily. When the family retired to Winter Park Alice started a rose garden by a lake. Now with 75 gorgeous rose bushes, she uses drip irrigation to conserve water.

Alice and Rene belong to the FMG Board, and are active in WPGC. To express her feelings about the path MG revitalization should take, Alice quotes a friend, "Mow and blow, and trees only. If you can't take care of it, then don't put it in Mead Garden."

The Kelleys also were a military family. And coincidentally, Rene and Alice's husband both grew up in Nebraska. In last summer's three months of oppressive heat, only Alice and Rene kept working. Now...*Come join them.*

Weed Warriors are returning to their winter hours, Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. New volunteers will join dedicated workers who believe in relating to nature in a unique green space. You don't have to belong to anything...community members are very welcome. Come to MG, look for a sign along the brick road with an arrow pointing to MG WORK GROUP. Or call WPGC at 407-644-5770. Help generate another golden era for Mead Garden.

Give Scholarships for Summer Nature Camp

A thoughtful businessman in WP's Hannibal Square has set off an FMG Scholarship Campaign for MG's Nature Camp next summer. Dexter Richardson, owner of Dexter's of WP, is providing five scholarships through an FMG partnership with the WP Community Center. "I like to give back to the neighborhoods where I have restaurants," said the FMG Board member, who feels that he is a part of the West Side community. His WP restaurant has also contributed to neighborhood celebrations.

Plans are not yet finalized, but the aim of this education/nature scholarship program is to hold five scholarship places open for each camp week so that neighborhood children can learn about ecology and wildlife in our special "wilderness"... right in the midst of busy Winter Park. Camper



headquarters is the Environmental Center of Orange County Public Schools in MG. Depending on need, either four or five sessions will be held. Ronnie Moore, Executive Director of the Community Center, will help identify deserving children and involved families.

Do you want to underwrite from one to five scholarships? For more information, please call the FMG office at 407-599-2800, or send checks as noted on the Membership/Gift form below. Camper scholarships make great Holiday gifts or tax deductions. [Please check with your accountant.] One scholarship for one five-day camp session is \$150. Gift scholarships are not limited to the Scholarship Campaign. If you want to make a special designation, please note it on the form.

"...all the things that nature does for kids—...lengthened attention span, heightened creativity, ...more intensive use of ...senses, wonder and awe,...physical health—these are (what) parents want for their kids." A major California study showed that a group of students studying...outdoors was more attentive and cooperative than a similar group studying indoors. A study found that children with ADD concentrated much better after playing in "green, natural settings."

---Richard Louv, author, Lost Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

interview quoted in Orlando Sentinel, October 19, 2005.

Friends of *Mead Garden* Membership/Gift Form

Your name _____
(as you wish it to appear in recognition)

Company name, if applicable _____

Your street address _____

Your City/State/Zip _____

Daytime phone # _____ E-mail address _____

Annual Membership Levels

___ Longleaf Pine Tree	\$40	___ Azalea	\$250
___ Loblolly Bay Tree	\$75	___ Camellia	\$500
___ Bald Cypress Tree	\$125	___ Orchid	\$1,000
		___ Franklinia Tree	\$10,000 \$_____

Gifts, Tributes, Memorials

___ Tribute or Memorial (minimum \$25, please) In honor of ___ or in memory of ___: (name and mailing address) \$_____

___ Scholarships (number and any specific requests) _____ \$_____

Please make your check payable to Friends of Mead Garden. Mail to: Friends of Mead Garden
Post Office Box 1227
Winter Park, FL 32790

FMG is a 501(c)3 organization (eligible for matching gift from your employer)

For your generous gifts

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to the

The Richard J. Conlee Fund

of the

Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation

\$11,000

for the revitalization
of Mead Garden

and to the

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs

\$2,500

for entrance landscape
improvements

Thank You NEW MEMBERS

Camellia \$500 and above

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Ways to Give Tax Deductible Support:

-  Memberships— For yourself and/or gift memberships.
-  Tributes and Memorials— The families or honorees receive a lovely acknowledgement without gift amounts.
-  Estate Gift— Consult your attorney, financial advisor or the Central Florida Community Foundation.
-  Corporate Partner— Community recognition and special opportunities for your employees.
-  Create or Support a Special Program— Educational programs or new plantings, for example.
-  Found a new Giving Fund— Invite your friends to help.

Volunteer! Fun and Work for Any Age

Join the Weed Warriors, the Butterfly Brigade, summer camp counselors, special events volunteers, or the many other unsung heroes who dig in the dirt to help improve Mead Garden. Find out more from Friends of Mead Garden.

www.meadgarden.org

(407) 599-2800

Complex Journey To A Master Plan

For nearly two years FMG has been working toward a master plan (MP) for the revitalization of Mead Garden. A Project for Public Spaces (PPS) workshop, sponsored by FMG and held at the Winter Park Garden Clubhouse in MG on September 7, brought us closer to a plan, but many of us still do not understand the overall process or its implications.

Here is a composite description from landscape architects, and a brief review of types of input. Our efforts have been met with creative enthusiasm.

“A master plan might be considered a map that creates mileposts to achieve a goal.”

“A master plan is just a plan that describes and allows you to get from one point to another. If the plan is written down, there is more likelihood that something will be achieved that is acceptable to most people.” For a public garden such as MG, much information gathering takes place from the community, as well as technical data which includes resources, land, funds and talent. For MG the considerations have been multifaceted and complicated.

Last year FMG obtained a consultant who develops gardens, Pat Rich of EMD Consulting Group in St. Louis. She guided FMG in learning the preferences of public stakeholders (users) for enhancing the park. In her president’s message, Beverly Lassiter mentions several methods used to collect citizen input. As designed by Ms. Rich, three focus groups developed major priorities for MG, and all agreed that the “ambience and feel of the Garden is of utmost importance.” All wanted the Garden to keep its natural character, but cleaned up (this is happening now) “...with a balance between an overgrown and manicured look.” They wanted to maintain present ecosystems and wild places—the high canopy and native plants with invasive vines removed. They also stressed nature related education for adults and children.

Ms. Rich conducted a planning session for FMG members, in which the extensive, analyzed data from the focus groups were discussed. A wide range of creative ideas came forth. This organized information became the MG Strategic Plan (SP). The SP was presented to the Boards of Lakes and Waterways, Parks and Recreation, and then to the City Commission. It was received enthusiastically. Later, FMG mailed 3,000 questionnaires to WP citizens. The 6.7% yield brought more expressions of preferences.

This year PPS, a non-profit based in New York, with 30 years of experience in developing mostly urban spaces, conducted a workshop which considered more development and detail for MG. Among the 83 who attended were members of one or both FMG and WPGC, City staff connected with MG, and other residents. They were divided into 10 groups to visit 10 areas of the Garden, including the main entrance, boardwalk, amphitheatre, and waterways...then to make recommendations. Based upon input from these groups, PPS developed a draft report which was available at a later regular FMG Board meeting. A subsequent FMG workshop to review and develop an attachment for the PPS report was cancelled because of hurricane Wilma and will be rescheduled.

The public flow of information, in cooperation with the community, and the workshops, have been a major part of the MP journey. All the distilled information will go to a Master Planner selected by the City. Typically, this process involves a request for proposal (RFP), advertising for firms/landscape architects, establishing priorities, going before the L & W and P & R Boards, and, finally, before the City Commission. The MP then becomes the written directive. It can be updated during implementation to adapt to changing conditions, funding, and user demands.

Plein Air Continued from Page 1

chatted with friends and strangers and, like the public, had a great time.

A major challenge, which these outdoor painters love, is the day’s changes in lighting that affect the world they are painting. They have a 2-3 hour window before the light changes colors and shadows so much that their subjects change. They paint quickly, *alla prima* (complete in one sitting), and take pride in this feat. The Impressionists began the movement as they studied the effects of light on landscapes.



On Sunday the artists moved indoors to the cool WPGClubhouse to show and sell 50 paintings fresh from MG. WPGC members had created artful, abstract floral designs. One young woman in a wheelchair held a painting of an extremely bent palm tree. “I knew Mead Garden as a child and remember this tree. I’m so glad a wheelchair path is planned in the garden.” Joyfully clutching her treasure, she rolled into plein air.

Herbicides



by Tim Egan,
Winter Park Lakes Manager

Editor’s Note: *In Mead Garden you may see extensive brown areas where the City is getting rid of invasive, non-native vines. Tim Egan explains why and how.*

Although our natural landscapes rely on plants as much as we do to remain healthy and vibrant, exotic (non-native) plants can be detrimental to the ecology. Some vines in Mead Garden have no natural controls in Florida. They often grow excessively, crowd out native plants and kill mature canopy trees. This rampant growth leads to an unsightly landscape and low plant diversity, which leads to low wildlife diversity.

Hand removal of nuisance plants is used whenever possible, but many exotic plants grow so rapidly, or occur in areas so difficult to access, that manual control is not practical or even possible. Years ago the City of Winter Park developed a carefully regulated herbicide program to control such vegetation in our lakes. Now we have very healthy native plant communities in our lakes and minimal problems with exotic species.

This program has been expanded to other problem areas, and the City now performs treatments in terrestrial habitats such as Mead Garden. The program manages populations of nuisance exotic plants like skunk vine, air potato and wild taro (elephant ear). All the herbicides used are approved for specific habitats by both state and federal governments.

Modern herbicides undergo years of testing before they are given federal use labels. Application rates, allowable uses, and environmental cautions are clearly marked on the labels. The types of herbicides used by the City break down rapidly into natural compounds and, when used properly, have no residual effect on the environment.

Toxicity of these herbicides to fish and wildlife is very low (lower than aspirin). No adverse effects occur when used according to the approved label instructions. All herbicide applications in Winter Park are performed by Applicators licensed by the state of Florida.

If you have questions regarding herbicide use within Winter Park, please call the Lakes Division at (407) 599-3599.

Friends of Mead Garden is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization chartered July, 2003.

In partnership with the City of Winter Park, our purpose is to restore and enhance Mead Garden.

(407) 599-2800
1300 Denning Drive

The land that became the 55 acre park was explored in 1937 by Dr. Edwin O. Grover, VP of Rollins College, and former student John Connery. Mead Garden opened in 1940 as a tribute to the life work of horticulturist Theodore Mead.



Cattleya meadii
Mead's 1991 Singapore Stamp

Mead Garden

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Plein Air Artist Hadd Wirt paints a scene at the International Plein Air Paint Out.

Why do these people persist in the rough, unpredictable out-of-doors? Being one with nature is part of their passion; adventure and the unexpected are part of the fun. One artist noted, "When you watch quietly, you become part of the landscape." A great blue heron ambled up to her easel, so she painted it into her picture. These art and nature lovers are dedicated to capturing on canvas the lovely, gentle Florida that is fast slipping away in the face of relentless urban development.

Cynthia Edmonds, member of FMG and WPGC and accomplished plein air artist, expressed her thoughts: "I get so much more information outside than in my studio. When I sit still and ponder, I begin to see more colors than just green."

Calendar *(For more details check the website or call (407) 599-2800.)*

Every Sunday	2-4 PM	Weed Warriors - In the Garden
Third Saturdays	7:45-10 AM	Bird Surveys - Near WPGClubhouse
Every Thursday	8:15-10:15 AM	Butterfly Garden - Bring your favorite garden tools and gloves.
TBA	8:30 AM	FMG Board Meeting - WPGClubhouse
TBA		FMG Workshop - Rescheduled
Dec 3	9 AM	Winter Park Christmas Parade Downtown
Dec 10	Dusk	Winter Park Boat Parade Lakes Osceola and Virginia