



Stephen &amp; Kristin Pategas

## in the garden *by Stephen and Kristin Pategas*

### 100 Years Of Advice

Over the last few decades you undoubtedly read Tom MacCubbin's gardening columns and articles in the *Orlando Sentinel*. A few years ago, after a long and illustrious career, Tom (pictured below) retired from the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service with the status of urban horticulturist emeritus. While he shared knowledge with countless individuals he was just the tip of the iceberg for what his employer, the Institute of Food and Consumer Services (IFAS) provides and has provided for 100 years this year.



Attendance at Florida's Farmers' Institutes grew at a phenomenal pace. In 1901, 22 sessions reached 3,000 people; by 1913, there were 200 sessions reaching 20,000 people. The institutes were popular because they were effective: one organizer noted in 1912 that corn production per acre had increased almost 50 percent from what it was in 1904."

In 1964, IFAS was created by combining the Extension Service, UF's College of Agriculture and School of Forestry, and the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station. Today, all 52 states with land grant universities are tied into cooperative extension services and in Florida, each of our 67 counties has an

extension office. Our local Orange County Extension is at 6021 S. Conway Road just north of the Orlando International Airport. Contact them at (407) 254-9200 or <http://orange.ifas.ufl.edu/> When you visit, be sure to check out their almost three-acre Exploration Garden full of edible and ornamental plants and ideas. If you are lucky, you might just bump into Tom, who stops by to visit every now and then. With 100 years of history, who could stay away?

*Below, New Zealand tea tree in bloom in winter.*



So, happy birthday to the cooperative extension service! In 1914 the Smith-Lever Act created a nationwide partnership between land grant colleges (such as the University of Florida) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture and established the Cooperative Extension Service. The fascinating IFAS blog by Darryl Palmer reports that the goal was "... to package the research and education of America's land-grant universities and deliver it to the people. Universities published their information, but at the turn of the last century, as much as 11% of the adult population was illiterate. The challenge was how to reach a mass audience in a state as large as Florida.

The first Extension efforts in Florida begin in 1899 with the first Farmers' Institutes. Held in town halls, schools or in the open air, Farmers' Institutes combined teaching, demonstration and socializing—like a cross between a science fair and a church picnic. Speakers from the Florida Agricultural College and the Agricultural Experiment Station gave testimonials to the benefits of improved agricultural techniques.



*Above, IFAS photo from the University of Florida archives.*



*Above, find a plethora of plants in the Exploration Garden.*



*Above, a view of the Exploration Garden from the building.*

*Photos by Stephen G. Pategas, Hortus, Oasis.*

Now 100 years later along with over 27,000 people every day, we can access <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/> and <http://solutionsforyourlife.com/> for information about gardening, agriculture, water conservation, natural resource protection, managing pests, overcoming natural disasters, nutrition and sustainability. Take a class at the extension service or, during the remainder of 2014, head to the City of Winter Park for a free sustainability program with instructors from the Orange County Cooperative Extension Service. Classes take place 10-11:30 a.m. on Saturdays at the Winter Park Community Center at 721 West New England Avenue, Winter Park.

| Date  | Topic  |
|-------|--|
| 7/26  | Using food from the garden - storage and preservation                    |
| 8/23  | Lakeshore landscapes   |
| 9/20  | Seasonal foods   |
| 10/25 | Getting your landscape ready for winter                                  |
| 11/22 | Irrigation basics - clocks, system adjustment, micro-irrigation retrofit |
| 12/20 | Holiday plant care   |

Reservations: <http://www.eventbrite.com/o/city-of-winter-park-sustainability-program-5593791349>. Questions? Contact 407-599-3364 or [sustainability@cityofwinterpark.org](mailto:sustainability@cityofwinterpark.org)