



MASTER GARDENER SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON JODY BORECKI

Story by Peggy Kane

Gardeners sometimes don't agree with each other on plant-related questions, but the one thing every Martin County Master Gardener would agree on is the selection of Jody Borecki to receive the honored Master Gardener Spotlight Award. Jody brings her unique qualities of caring, humor, and enthusiasm to the Martin County program, creating a ripple effect of love and optimism in those around her. She has touched many lives in her Master Gardener (MG) role, as she certainly does in her "other" profession as an ICU nurse.

Jody graduated in the 2003 Fall Class and immediately became a regular with the Friday morning plant propagation group -- after working a 12-hour night shift at Martin Memorial Hospital! She says working with plants is a good way to relax after work prior to getting some well earned shuteye during the day!

Luckily for the Master Gardeners, she also has days in the week when she has not worked the night before, and somehow manages to be active for both day & night MG activities and events. She has been the Chairperson for the MG School Garden programs, and coordinates a monthly workday at Challenger School in Stuart to help upkeep a therapy garden for the children there. She has served as a MG Advisory Board member since her election in 2006, and is active in all MG fundraising events, including the memorable deluge day of fruit picking in Homestead for the 2005 Taste of the Tropics.

Community Education and outreach are the goals of the University of Florida MG program, and Jody has achieved both in many ways. Aside from working in the gardens with children at Challenger and Sea Wind Elementary Schools, she Co-chaired the awarding winning MG educational booths at the Martin County Fair for 2 years, serves as a Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Yard Recognition Advisor, staffs MG booths at public education opportunities, and has spoken to her own Martin County group on what she learned as an attendee of the National Master Gardener Conference in Arkansas, as well as the Florida State MG trip to California. Jody is known for furthering her education by attending MG field trips, workshops, and conferences, and passing on her knowledge to others. She is a regular assistant at the Tropical Ranch Botanic Garden monthly public sale weekends where she answers the public's questions on plants.

Jody is an inspiration to MGs in many ways, but I think her spirit of caring is her essence that is most important to our group. Many know of the impact she made on the life of our eldest Martin County Master Gardener who passed away last year. Estelle Rogers was beset with health problems that had necessitated her move to an Assisted Living and a separation from many of the activities she most loved, one of which was Master Gardeners. Jody befriended her, and with Jody's help, Estelle's last year, which was her 87th, included new friends and new experiences, attendance at MG functions, as well as the inception of a Garden Club at the Summerville Assisted Living for the residents.

As if all of this is not enough, Jody has raised 3 daughters, helps babysit for her 2 young grand daughters, has a dog and cat in addition to hundreds of garden plants, is an avid collector of unusual garden art, and is an aspiring and talented photographer! We are proud to spotlight her as a Martin County Master Gardener.