



PHOTO BY KATHY WARNER/FOR THE NEWS-LEADER

Rebecca Jordi talks to ARC staff and clients about the Demonstration Garden's pentas plants, a perennial flower that thrives in our hot summers. ARC staff chaperons Ann Miller, Sandra King and Tracy Dawson brought the group as part of its weekly fieldtrip program. The group included Betty Wall, Maggie Lee, Dorothy Forcine, Laura Wootten, Jimmy Thomas, Lee Cadenhead, Terry Kirkland, Mike Powell, Shay Brock, Stevie Thrift, Louis Jordan, Dennis Mellotte, John Williamson and Sherry Williams.

ARC clients visit demonstration garden

Rebecca Jordi, Nassau County Horticultural Extension Agent, and Nassau County Master Gardeners Kathy Warner, Dottie Kelley and Bea Walker recently hosted 14 clients of the Nassau County Association of Retarded Citizens at the UF/IFAS Nassau County Demonstration Garden.

They were able to see the care and maintenance practices of landscape plants best suited for our area. These include: micro-irrigation; right plant/right place; mulching; recycling; attracting wildlife; weed and plant identification; and integrated pest management.

The Demonstration Garden, located outside the James S. Page Governmental Complex in Yulee, is now in its second growing season and the visitors were amazed to see the variety of recommended trees, shrubs, groundcovers, grasses, perennials and hardy sub-tropicals.

The ARC staff and clients have plans to re-establish their own garden and want to select low maintenance plants consistent with the limited time that can be spent on caring for them. Sandra King, ARC adult training instructor, was interested in gathering ideas from the Demonstration Garden for the ARC garden. Key interests include shrubs and flowers that do not require pruning and deadheading.

Armed with the Demonstration Garden information sheets distributed to the group, staff will be making preliminary plans for their garden and contacting the UF/IFAS Nassau County Extension office with any questions.

For the fieldtrip, however, the ARC clients simply enjoyed the beauty of the garden and the birds and butterflies there.

"This is a dream fulfilled for us, to have a demonstration garden that is being used to educate

county residents about plants, trees, shrubs, flowers and ground cover that are suited for gardens and landscapes in Nassau County," said Jordi in a press release.

The Demonstration Garden is open to the public and visitors are welcome anytime. The garden is self-touring, with plant signage and best management practice examples. Master Gardener-guided group or school tours can be scheduled by calling the extension office at 548-1116 or by emailing rljordi@ufl.edu.

More information about the Garden is available through the County Extension office in Yulee during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday. Detailed information about the garden is available at <http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/demogarden/factsheet.htm>. Extension services and programs information can be accessed at <http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu>.