



# BLOOMING NEWS



## New Art Hub Gallery Sign

*Interview by Caitlin Koval*

If you have been to GROW HUB recently, you may have seen the new and beautiful mosaic sign hanging above the art gallery. I had the pleasure of interviewing the artist who created this sign and asked him a few questions about his work. The sign was made by Robert Miles, a fellow employee here at GROW HUB. According to Robert, the sign took about three weeks to complete.

During the process of making the sign, Robert did not work alone. I asked him if he had any assistance making the sign, and he said yes. He received help from other GROW HUB employees, as well as a volunteer. Robert said that he had assistance because there was no way that he could do everything by himself. We owe a special thanks to the helping hands of Amanda, Sheryl, and Lily. *(continued on page 2)*



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Robert said that he liked working on the sign. I asked him if he would be interested in making another sign similar to the art gallery sign. He said that he would be happy to make more signs like this one in the future.



*This fall, staff members Gwen, Katie, and Rose and horticultural therapy intern Alexa harvested turmeric from the staff community garden. The turmeric was dried and saved to be used for next season's planting, or ground for culinary uses.*

## Spring Pop-Up Events

*Caitlin Koval*

There will be three amazing events at GROW HUB this spring. The first one is on March 12, 2022 from 9:00 am to 3:00pm and will include fun activities for the entire family. There will be a bluegrass band at the site called the Front Porch Back Steppers. There is also going to be a food truck called Blue Line BBQ. In addition to the band and the food truck, there will be a few local vendors.

Some of the vendors will include Special Interest Nursery, which sells medicinal and culinary herbs and flowers and pretty much any plant that is valuable for people for use; Hyldemoer + Co, which sells drinking vinegars; Macrame GNV; Amii-maker; Disorderly Adventure, which sells plant hangers, soy candles and stickers; Suzanne O'Malley, who sells fairy gardens, gourds, garden stones and toad houses; and Baked Branches, which features nature-inspired polymer clay art and jewelry.

This Pop-Up event will be a lot of fun for the entire family. The other Pop-Up events at GROW HUB this spring will be on April 9th and May 14th from 9am to 3pm.



## Native Plants at GROW HUB

*Interview by Caitlin Koval with Cherice Smithers, who manages GROW HUB's native plant inventory*

### **What made you interested in growing native plants?**

I've always loved plants, but I became especially interested in natives after learning about native pollinators. Our native pollinators are threatened, but growing native plants is an important way to support them. We have so many different types of beautiful plants that are native to Florida, and growing them can help attract many bees, butterflies, and wildlife.

### **How long have you worked with native plants?**

I've been growing natives with GROW HUB since I started working here several months ago. Before that, I was growing them for the past few years in my home garden.

### **What are the techniques for growing natives at GROW HUB?**

I have been working with one of our volunteers, Kathy Paterson, who has supplied much of our native plant selection. We grow some species by seed, depending on the season. Many species need special treatment to germinate. Some need scarification, which involves roughing up the seed coat with sandpaper. Another special treatment is cold stratification, which means the species requires a period of cold weather before they germinate. We expedite this by putting seeds in the refrigerator for a shorter period of time. Another way we grow many of the native plants we sell is with cuttings. This involves taking a piece of a plant and dipping it in root hormone powder and putting it in soil. Then we keep it misted until roots develop, which usually takes 2-4 weeks.

### **What is your favorite native plant?**

*Liatris spicata.*

*GROW HUB is a member of the Florida Association of Native Nurseries (FANN). We have over 45 native plant species and our inventory continues to grow. Be sure to check out our selection!*



*Our new sign made by volunteer, Bruce Proctor.*



*Forked bluecurls  
(Trichostema dichotomum)*



*Narrowleaf yellowtops  
(Flaveria linearis)*



## EDITOR'S CORNER

### Hepburn- My Service Dog

I decided that I would get a service dog in order to increase my freedom even more because I have many disabilities. My dog's name is Hepburn.

She can assist me with several activities throughout the day such as picking up items that I drop on the floor. She can also assist me with opening my dresser drawer, and she can bark to alert my caregiver to the fact that I need their assistance if they are in another part of the house.

If I am in the community, she can push the automatic door buttons that are on the wall. Sometimes the automatic door buttons are too high for me to reach, and sometimes they are at an awkward angle.

When I am at home, she can assist me with things such as opening the refrigerator. She can close the refrigerator door. Furthermore, she can go out to the mailbox. She can hold the mail in her mouth, and she can carry it inside for me. After she carries the mail inside for me, you can put her front legs on the table. When she is done putting her front legs on the table, you can drop the mail onto the table. Her favorite activity to do when we are in a community is to take my credit card and hand it to the person behind the cash register so that I can pay for the items.

I love my dog, and I cannot remember what my life was like before I got her. She has made my self-esteem increase. She has also made my self-confidence increase, and she increases the level of independence that I have. In general, service dogs can change lives. Service dogs are able to create miracles. I got my dog in 2019, and that was a blessing. The pandemic started in 2020. Without my dog, I would have been in a major state of depression because I was not able to leave the house. She gave me the courage to wake up in the morning, and she gave me the courage to take her on walks throughout the neighborhood.



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