

# Living

## How does your garden grow?

### Seniors learn horticulture at Sunrise center.

By SYLVIA GURINSKY  
FORUM STAFF WRITER

The song "Make Our Garden Grow," from Leonard Bernstein's musical "Candide," features the line "The sweetest flowers, the fairest trees, are grown in solid ground."

For one day, at least, Robert Bornstein did not entirely agree with Leonard Bernstein.

Bornstein, a horticultural therapist, recently told a class at the Sunrise Senior Center, "Wonderful house plants can be created from your garbage can."

He passed a couple of potted plants around, including one growing from a carrot top. "It's just starting," he said.

He also showed a red onion. "This is just stuck in not too long ago," he said. He also displayed a rosemary plant, which the students sniffed.

"Oh, nice," one said. "Like perfume," another student said.

The program, "A Garden Right From Your Kitchen," is part of "Green Thumbs", a series of monthly classes that Bornstein conducts at the Senior Center.

"Each month there's a different topic," Aimee Paris, recreation supervisor for the Senior Center, said.

Upcoming classes include one on potpourri topiary on July 28 and a fresh flower arranging class in August. Recent topics have included flowers pressed in glass, edible flowers, floral keanoke

and a class on chocolate, for which, Paris said, "We had a good turnout."

The most recent class paid close attention to Bornstein's advice on using kitchen scraps to grow fruit and vegetable plants.

"Instead of spending a good deal of money, try searching your trash can," Bornstein told them.

Bornstein and the class discussed successes — and failures, including a sweet potato plant he passed around.

"This is one that didn't make it," he told the class. "Isn't that sad?"

"Not all of our plants can be winners."

"I feel better now," a student said.

Bornstein told the class, "If it didn't work one way, try it another way."

He encouraged their attempts with a small gift. Bornstein gave each student a plastic bag, pebbles, charcoal and small glass containers.

"I want you to have good luck with whatever you decide to grow," he said.

Long before the class, many of the students had their own green thumbs.

Among other things, Betty Epstein of Sunrise has grown pineapples and cucumbers. "It was delicious," she said of the cucumbers.

However, she learned something new in the class. "I didn't know about the charcoal," Epstein said.

Esther Yheagoda of Sunrise has grown things "since I was in kindergarten or first grade."

"I enjoy planting," Yheagoda said. "I love flowers, I love plants." Her plants have included philodendrons, also



Norma Broder of Sunrise also enjoys the classes. "It's really been quite educational and it's fun," she said.

Fun is the idea for the senior center classes, Bornstein said. The Fort Lauderdale resident works with children, psychiatric patients, and Alzheimer's, heart and stroke patients, using gardening themes as therapy.

"People had farms and vegetable gardens up north," Paris said. "Robert allows them to do that. He shows innovative and creative ways," she added, to grow gardens."

ing with," he said. "For [the senior center] — to provide life-enhancing activities ... incorporating nature and beauty into their lives. It's a stress reliever. It relieves loneliness or depression."

thing has to look perfect," Bornstein said.

Bornstein learns from his students.

About orchids, he said, "you listen to the old-timers, you through an orchid under a tree, they bloom and you forget about them."

Sylvia Gurinsky can be reached at 954-752-7474 or

**PLANTING PLEASURES:** Esther Yheagoda passes around an ornamental sweet potato plant during the Sunrise senior center horticulture program called "Did you know you could plant a garden in your kitchen?" taught by Robert Bornstein. Staff photo/Debra L. Ames

## Where Will Your Heart Lead You?

### "To more fishing!"

José's cardiac catheterization at Memorial Cardiac and Vascular Institute revealed what his doctor feared: a 90-percent blockage in a main artery. He was nervous about having double bypass surgery, but José knew he was in good hands.

"I was scared, but they gave me the feeling I could trust them. My surgeon was Dr. Cortelli, and he did an excellent job of patching me up. He was a great doctor—very professional and very reassuring."

José is back on the water, hoping to catch that prize tuna. He looks forward to seeing his children graduate college, and to more cruises.

"Memorial saved my life. Because of Memorial, I have a second chance at life, and I'm living it to the fullest."

José, Open Heart Surgery Patient



"We caught José's blockage before he had a heart attack. You can learn your risks and prevent a heart attack before it happens."

Michael Cortelli, MD  
Chief of Adult Cardiac Surgery



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ing horticultural activities to their recreational therapy programs. Bornstein, who began his career working with patients who had been declared criminally insane, now has a busy practice serving 40 senior residence facilities across South Florida and charges roughly \$90 an hour for his services.

Ten minutes slip to thirty. "I'm late!" he realizes, and jumping into his Prius, guns it to Deerfield Beach.

"You see, ladies? He's always running," Geraldine Markiewicz, a retired first-grade teacher, tells fellow Horizon Club residents as the therapist races into the assisted living facility bearing bags of materials for a flower arranging hour. Fifteen residents range around the common area, some in wheelchairs. Bornstein passes around thimble-sized plastic containers that look like champagne glasses, followed by sprigs of eucalyptus, cattails and dried flowers. Each person selects an element, decides its arrangement, and attaches it to a thumbtack of floral foam with all the hand-eye coordination he or she can muster.

Neuropathy, rheumatoid arthritis and the shaking hands of Parkinson's disease can make such fine movements difficult. Yet as the arrangements take shape, no bigger than a salt shaker, they look as fine as if a caterer had created them for a wedding table.



**WINDOWFUL:** Robert Bornstein shows off class projects by one of his clients at the Forum at Deer Creek in Deerfield Beach.

of the benefits, they are joining horticultural activities to their recreational therapy programs. Bornstein, who began his career working with patients who had been declared criminally insane, now has a busy practice serving 40 senior residence facilities across South Florida and charges roughly \$90 an hour for his services.

Modeled on the Homeless Garden Project in Santa Cruz, Calif., the 22-acre farm on former Homestead Air Reserve Base land offers skills and business opportunities to community members like Xavier Wright, as well as fresh food.

"I'm an outdoor person. My grandparents grew cotton and peaches," says 25-year-old Wright who arrived at the Chapman Partnership homeless shelter a single father with full custody of his autistic son. "I love this," he says, setting pigeon pea seedlings in the soil.

Leading the way past circular demonstration beds of swiss chard ringed with marigolds and leeks to retard pests, Nasajo parts a screen of giant taro leaves, revealing a garden like a scene from a children's book.

"My favorite spot. It's where the polycultures are planted."

A thin trail winds among banana and papaya trees, taro, sweet potato and beans; plants grown together for mutual benefit, one of the essential ideas behind permaculture and the farm. Like the plants, people thrive, too.

Gleicy Otuno, who studied culinary arts through a pro-