

EDUCATION FOR ALL AGES



ARTIST SANDE KEIL CONDUCTS A WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS AT MIAMI EDISON AND JOSE MARTI MIDDLE SCHOOLS AS PART OF THE POPULAR FAIRCHILD CHALLENGE'S "ART OF TROPICAL FRUIT" COMPETITION.

David Whitman/FBGC

Fairchild's Center for Teaching and Learning is committed to reaching all Miami-Dade students and residents to explain the important role of tropical plants in our lives. This dynamic team is responsible for educating people of all ages.

**PRESCHOOLERS**

In February, teachers from the Children's Home Society came to Fairchild for training on the implementation of scientific activities designed by experts from Pennsylvania-based Cognitive Learning Institute (CLI). Preschoolers at CHS are now being introduced to concepts such as size, weight, length and shapes as they conduct entertaining and age-appropriate

scientific experiments. Then in April, the "Science Saturday" program encouraged parents and preschoolers to participate in hands-on activities such as the Color Scavenger Hunt, How Far Can You Jump? and the Tools that Hold Water. Parents were taught how to recognize scientific language and behavior in their children and given strategies to foster this behavior at home.

**K-5**

The Fairchild Explorer Program (FEP) is a series of interactive guided tours designed to teach students about the wonders of nature. Tours focus on different aspects of the tropical environment in programs that challenge the mind and excite the senses. Children experience the natural world close-up and enjoy hands-on activity in the Learning Garden. Each child also takes home a personally potted plant as a reminder of their role in conserving tropical plants. FEP is part of Miami-Dade Schools curricula and is celebrating its 25th year.

**MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLERS**

Fairchild's ethnobotany-based program for middle schools, Green Treasures, is bridging generational gaps by encouraging students to work with their elders and understand the native uses of plants.

Nine schools from Hialeah to Homestead were each recently awarded \$200 in school garden grants from the Fairchild Challenge program. The money helps students create theme gardens or restore natural habitats at their schools as part of Fairchild's environmental outreach program for teens. The Fairchild Challenge is creating awareness and responsibility among South Florida's teens about the importance of plants.

The program has been recruited by five major botanic gardens in the U.S., including Chicago Botanic Garden.

**ADULTS**

This spring, Fairchild and the University of Florida debuted a 16-week graduate credit course entitled Orchidology as part of its seasonal class offerings. Taught by Professor Wagner Vendrame, Assistant Professor of Environmental Horticulture, this interesting course brought many students into the world of one of the tropics most fascinating plants, the orchid. Students gained in depth knowledge and a greater understanding of the biology, history, nomenclature and cultural uses of orchids.

**TEACHERS**

Continuing education courses for teachers are also part of Fairchild's outreach. Courses include Green Treasures: Ethnobotany as a gateway science, Basic Botany, Tropical Botany (aka Botany Bootcamp), Fairchild Challenge: Promoting critical thinking and Department Chair Workshops and are available for all South Florida teachers. Classes have dedicated curricula and offer TEC credits to those completing them.

*We are extremely interested in creating a butterfly garden sanctuary for the Fairchild Challenge.*

*Our school is located in the heart of the Redland farming community and is considered an agricultural school. Our students are excited about creating this sanctuary, which will also serve as an extended classroom. They will have the opportunity to learn about our Florida butterflies and native plants. Our hope is to open our students' minds and hearts to nature.*

Craig De Priest,  
Principal, Redland Middle School