

## Facilities Usage Fee Explained

**Where to stay?** *We know that for many attendees finding the lowest possible hotel rate is paramount, and we are aware that often people choose to stay on the outskirts of town and then choose to drive to the conference each day. However, before you book your hotel room for the Master Gardener Conference, we want to mention the following.....*

### **Facilities Usage Fee (\$100)**

The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida Master Gardener Continued Training Conference continues to make every effort to keep costs at a minimum for those attending the Master Gardener Conference. One way this is done is to make a commitment to the host hotel (Hilton Ocala) that a specified number of hotel rooms will be occupied by our meeting attendees. In exchange for the hotel room occupation, the property provides the Master Gardener Conference with complimentary meeting space.

Over the last several years, many unsuccessful attempts have been made to explain this process to conference participants. In the past, conferences, symposiums and meetings have not filled their committed number of sleeping rooms, and, as a result, faced hefty penalty fees.

Individuals who choose to stay at the non-host hotel receive the benefits of the facilities, but do not contribute to the necessary commitments that allow the Master Gardener conference to use meeting space on a complimentary basis.

**Therefore, the Master Gardener Organizers instituted a "Facilities Usage Fee" for those who are attending the conference, but have chosen not to stay in the conference hotel.** This is the only way that we can continue to run the meeting without raising registration fees.

The \$100 Facilities Usage Fee will apply only to those who register (including exhibitors, speakers, students, one-day attendees, etc.) for the conference (with the exception of guests) but choose not to stay at the Hilton Ocala. Therefore, we encourage all meeting attendees to avoid this Facilities Usage Fee and stay at the host hotel at a rate of \$99/night, plus tax (please be aware that if you are sharing with another participant, your name must appear on the room reservation by the Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> hotel reservation cut-off date, otherwise you will be assessed this fee and obligated to pay it in order to pick up your registration credentials).

Staying at the host hotel makes it easy to enjoy the camaraderie of fellow Master Gardener attendees inside and outside of scheduled activities. Just imagine - no commuting time to conference activities; additional networking time with colleagues; and amenities, such as room service, safes, exercise facilities, and restaurants/shops-everything in one convenient location.

It certainly is your choice as to where you desire to stay during the meeting, but please understand that the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida Master Gardener Conference does have contractual commitments that we must honor, and we must do all we can to assure that there are no negative financial implications to the Master Gardener Conference.