

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
 THE FORT MYERS - LEE COUNTY GARDEN COUNCIL, INC.
 2166 VIRGINIA AVENUE, FORT MYERS, FL 33901

President's Message

And so, yet another year has passed!! How quickly time flies, especially if you're a gardener. No sooner do you plant something than it needs fertilizing or weeding or pruning – much like our lives need tending to keep ourselves on a positive pathway.

We are all so busy these days that sometimes we forget to slow down and look around. I've just had one such moment when I was alone at the Council and took a slow thoughtful wander through our beautiful gardens – so relaxing and rejuvenating. Our thanks go out as usual to our wonderful team of Master Gardeners led by Manager Margaret Walker, and Assistant Manager Carole Kerns and Garden Contractor, Nick Gallant. You'll hear more from Margaret later in this edition of *The Courier*.

We've had a busy year at the Garden Council with the Strolling Flower Show in Downtown Fort Myers in February, the Flower Show honoring outgoing President Sue Lawson "All that Glitters" – and what a success that was – not only full design classes but also jam-packed with fabulous horticulture entries. And then there was the District IX Fall meeting that we hosted in Estero in October when we got to meet and hear from our FFGC President, Tina Tuttle and her team of Vice Presidents. Last but not least, Judy Francino and Bernie Hamera managed a very successful Zoom presentation of NGC's Classes 2 and 3 Environment School in February and November respectively. Thank you Judy and Bernie.

The gardens remained open year-round on Tuesdays with Thursday openings during Winter and Spring thanks to our Master Gardeners. We've hosted visitors from all over the States and even some from Canada, and the UK. Please spread the word and encourage people to visit The Berne Davis Botanical Garden.

I'm sure 2024 will be just as busy and just as enjoyable and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible both at our January 12 General meeting at 9 AM, and our Mardi Gras/Valentine Social February 9 at 1 PM – you can be sure our Social Chair Sue Lawson will have something special for you!

Happy New Year to you all!

Sylvia



For the latest info check our Website

WWW.FMLCGARDENCOUNCIL.COM

Berne Davis Botanical Garden

**Open to the Public
Tuesdays 10 - 1 PM**

**Each Club & Society takes
a turn providing docents.**

**Each club is responsible for
finding 2 members to work or
finding another club to
trade dates with.**

Docent Schedule

- Jan. 2 McGregor Garden Club
- Jan. 9 Lee County IFAS
- Jan. 16 Kelly Greens GC
- Jan. 23 Gulf Coast GC
- Jan. 30 GC of Lehigh Acres
- Feb. 6 GC of Cape Coral
- Feb. 13 Florida Native Plant Soc.
- Feb. 20 Florida Herb Enthusiasts
- Feb. 27 Fiddlesticks GC
- Mar. 5 Estero Island GC

**Full Docent Schedule can be
found in your Yearbook on pg.53**

**Questions?
Contact Susan Fero
sdf40@aol.com**

ATTENTION

If you have not yet picked up your supply of 2023-2024 Yearbooks, please have some one from your club come by on a Tuesday or Thursday between 10am-1pm when the office is open.

Garden Council Meeting Dates

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

(Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs)

- Date: Jan. 5th, 2024
- Date: Feb. 2nd, 2024

MEETINGS FROM 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Garden Council Headquarters
2166 Virginia Ave.
Fort Myers, FL

GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

For All Society and Club Members.

Please invite a spouse or friend .

ALL are Welcome !

Friday, Jan. 12th, 2024

Garden Council Headquarters

GENERAL MEETINGS

MEETINGS ARE THE 2ND FRIDAY
OF EVERY OTHER MONTH
SEPTEMBER THROUGH MAY

Location :

Garden Council Headquarters
2166 Virginia Ave.

HOSPITALITY: 9:00 AM to 9:30 AM

MEETING: 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM



NEXT FMLCGC GENERAL MEETING

Friday January 12, 2024

Vermicomposting: Worm Farming
By: Angie Nichols, Lee County Master Gardener

SAVE THE DATE FOR GARDEN COUNCIL SOCIALS!

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 9TH ~ MARDI GRAS

Come and help us celebrate!



Holiday Party and Cookie Exchange was a hit!



Edison - Ford Winter Estates

2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers FL 33901

Web: EdisonFord.org

Monthly Garden Talks

Saturdays 10AM

Jan 13th-Crotons
Mar 9th-Hibiscus
May 11th-Gardenias

\$10 for EF Members \$15 for Non-Members
Participants get a 20% off Garden Shoppe coupon

Gardening Classes

Tuesdays 1:30PM and Saturdays 10:00AM

Jan 23rd & 27th -Intro to Florida Gardening Part I
Jan 30th & Feb 3rd-Intro to Florida Gardening Part II
Feb 20th & 24th . Palms in the Landscape

(Check Website for location & fees Registration required)

Special Events

Feb 10th & 11th. Annual Spring Garden Festival 9AM-4PM

Water Conservation During the Dry Season Helps Protect South Florida's Water Resources

Did you know conserving water helps reduce stress on our water supplies during the dry season when rainfall is limited? In South Florida, water is a precious resource that must be managed and conserved year-round to protect our communities and natural systems.

More than 50 percent of the water used by South Florida residents is for landscape irrigation. With billions of gallons of water used every day and projections for continued population growth, we all need to do our part to conserve water and ensure there is enough for people and the environment.

During the cooler winter months, lawns do not need to be irrigated as frequently. Most of the time, one day of irrigation per week is sufficient to maintain a healthy landscape.

Residents and businesses District-wide can do their part to help conserve water by following these simple water-saving tips:

- All landscape irrigation should comply with the allowed days and times as established in your local government's year-round landscape irrigation ordinance. Visit the SFWMD's Lawn Watering Restrictions webpage to learn more.
- Check irrigation timers to ensure settings are correct and rain sensors are working properly.
- Check irrigation systems to ensure they are working properly. Test and repair broken pipes and damaged sprinkler heads if necessary.
- Fix leaks. Finding and fixing water leaks conserves water, saves money and protects your home from damage.
- When utilizing water indoors, reduce shower durations, minimize loads of laundry, and only run dishwashers when full.
- Landscape the Florida-Friendly Way by planting low maintenance plants using environmentally sustainable practices.

To protect groundwater in the Mid-Hawthorn Aquifer in northeastern Cape Coral, the South Florida Water Management District declared a water shortage and issued mandatory irrigation restrictions for portions of Cape Coral and unincorporated Lee County on November 28, 2023. Landscape irrigation is limited to one day a week in the designated area for irrigation water supplied by private wells.

A water shortage warning issued on November 21, 2023, is in effect for all of Collier and Lee Counties amid continuing dry conditions and increasing water supply concerns on the Southwest Coast.

Conserving water during the dry season and all year long is an integral part of managing and protecting our water supplies today and for future generations. Learn more about the importance of water conservation and the ways you can reduce your water use.

Information courtesy of: South Florida Water Management District

BERNE DAVIS GARDEN UPDATE by Margaret Walker

It is wonderful to be back to Berne Davis Garden after my summer in New Hampshire. The Master Gardeners did a marvelous job keeping the garden beautiful despite the heat and drought conditions experienced.

Each section of the garden has been adopted by individual Master Gardeners and they work to maintain and improve their chosen section continuously. We are fortunate to have their expertise in their chosen plantings. Please visit the garden to view the newest plantings and speak to the Master Gardeners working in the garden.

The newly installed Silk Floss tree in front of the Bromeliad section has dropped its leaves for the Winter and looks like a "Charlie Brown Christmas tree." We know it will take time to gain its full beauty as we once had with the historic Edison Silk Floss lost in Hurricane Ian. As we wait for its eventual growth, we have planted flowering shrubs to enhance the area temporarily.



Our newest additions include an area behind the shed. The compost pile is currently working to develop planting materials with the rain barrel water used to soak the composting garden refuse. There are now raised beds for our Junior Gardeners' plantings as well. We are developing this unused section for our young gardeners and increasing our teaching of renewable resources to the public.



As we await Arbor Day, we are nurturing the trees that will grace our garden. We look forward to the installation of these new additions. As the garden manager, I pledge to continue our work to maintain our Gold Status with the University of Florida and our work to keep Berne Davis Garden a show place of which you can all be proud.

CLUB NEWS



At **The Poinciana Garden Club's** December meeting we began with the pledge of allegiance to the flag and ended with our beloved plant raffle. This special meeting recognized our 21 new members in 2023 who said they joined Poinciana because 'We do thingsö. Also, at this meeting we began a new tradition. For the first time, we gave an appreciation award to

those members who celebrated their 10-year anniversary in 2023. Five members were recognized: Darlene Tompkins 21yrs, Linda Moulaison 19yrs, Mary Kay Alba 12yrs, Ellen Chadwick 14yrs, Doy Willis 10yrs. Each was awarded a fused glass plant stake hand made by Margot, a member of Poinciana.



INVITATION ~ The Poinciana Garden Club invites members of all garden clubs and Plant societies to our Tuesday Feb 13th 9:30 AM Cups of Cheer event at the Garden Council. Together guests and members will make floral arrangements in mugs and tea cups and the Cups of Cheer will be delivered to Hope Hospice and Hope Senior Day Care in Lehigh Acres. Bring a mug or teacup and saucer to donate for Cups of Cheer. Last year, on Valentines Day we created and delivered 43 Cups of Cheer! Questions: call Sandy Troy, Program Chair 239-994-8147.

See our YouTube video from Feb 2023:öCups of Cheer, Community Service Project of The Poinciana Garden Clubö

CLUB NEWS CONTINUED

After several years of decreasing membership and then the Covid Pandemic the 40 year old **Garden Club of Lehigh Acres** was struggling to stay alive as a viable Garden Club to serve the community of Lehigh Acres.

We're happy to report the Club is coming back with the help of many Old and New members of the Garden Club of Lehigh Acres! There is a full schedule of programs planned for the Garden Club Season.

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month (thru May) at the Fountain Crest Retirement Community, 1230 Taylor Ln, Lehigh Acres, unless we are on a field trip. Social time starts at 9:30AM followed with scheduled speakers and club meeting from 10-11:30AM.

We are thrilled to see our membership growing! Since August we have increased membership to 22 members and look forward to welcoming more! Guests are welcome! For more information and upcoming events, check out our group on Facebook.

Submitted by: Vicki Williamson and Cindy Currado



The James E. Hendry Chapter of the **American Hibiscus Society** will hold a plant sale January 20th at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2439 McGregor Ave, Fort Myers. The sale will be from 11:00 AM- 2:00 PM. Cost \$20. There will be 400 plants for sale.

To see a list of blooms that will be available, visit their website at:

www.hendrychapterhibiscus.com

FMLCGC Calendar - Dates to Remember

- Jan. 20th** Saturday American Hibiscus Society Annual Plant Sale at Covenant Presbyterian, 2439 McGregor Ave. 11AM-2PM
- Feb. 9th** Friday FMLCGC Mardi Gras Social at Headquarters 1PM
- Feb.13th** Tuesday is **The Strolling Flower Show** hosted by the FMLCGC at Sidney and Berne Davis Art Center 10AM-4PM
- Mar. 2nd** Saturday **The Poinciana GC Annual Plant & Yard Sale** at FMLCGC 8AM-1PM
- Mar. 9th** Saturday Garden Club of Cape Coral hosting March in the Park, Jaycee Park (off DelPrado Blvd S) 9AM-3PM
- Mar. 9th** Saturday Alva GC Annual Plant & Strawberry Shortcake Festival, Alva United Methodist Church, 21440 Pearl St. 9AM-1PM
- Apr. 6th** Saturday American Hibiscus Society Annual Show & Sale, Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2439 McGregor 1-3PM
- Apr. 20th** Saturday SWFL Bonsai Society Silent Annual Auction 9am-11am, Live Auction 12-1PM, FMLCGC

SAVE THE DATE!

This year's Berne Davis Honorary Award luncheon is scheduled for Tuesday April 23rd, 2024 at Fiddlestick's Country Club. Located south of Daniels Parkway on Fiddlesticks Ave.

HORTICULTURE by Wendy Sprague

It's a bird...it's a plane...it's pest control?!

Now is the season for migratory birds!! The first Painted Buntings arrived in my yard ó the male with his bright red breast, blue head and green back and the female or immature male with green feathers. They are a colorful reminder that we should provide natural foods and shelter for our feathered visitors.



I recently spied a male Bunting feeding upon the seeds of Beggars Tick (*Bidens alba*), preferring that to the feeder hanging nearby! White ibis can often be seen as they aerate your lawn with their curved beaks while digging around for insects. Flocks of Common Grackles with their glossy black feathers with purple/green accents love to eat insects like mosquitoes and ants. Birds provide natural pest control!

Flocks of noisy starlings will consume insects, seeds and fruits. Even grass seeds in their waving seedheads can provide a tasty snack!

American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), Wild coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*), Wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), Firebush (*Hamelia patens*) and Fiddlewood (*Citharexylum fruticosum*) all produce fruit appealing to birds. They also provide shelter within their shrubby branches.



Fiddlewood seeds

And what do these birds do with all the seeds from that fruit? They plant more trees and shrubs! Nature's random gardeners! These winter visitors providing a pest removal service and creating more woodlands are surely welcome guests!

Your Board Members

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