

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

Berne Davis Botanical Garden

Open to the Public
Tuesdays 9 - Noon

Each Club and Society takes
turn providing docents.

Each club is responsible for finding
members to work or finding another
club willing to trade dates.

May
Volunteer Board Members

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

Questions?
Contact Susan Fero
sdf40@aol.com

The new docent schedule will be
published in September

President's Message

As the end of my first year as your President approaches, like everyone else I cannot believe how fast the time has passed. Our Master Gardener team, led by Margaret Walker and Carol Kerns, has continued to develop and beautify our lovely gardens. Carol has worked diligently to get our plant stock labeled – we even have QR codes now! Margaret returns to NH soon for the summer and we will miss her while she is gone, but her influence lingers on in the many good choices that have been made for the garden and the practices that have been instituted.

It's membership renewal time – we will be working on the Yearbook over the summer so please send in your updates as soon as possible. Your Board is working to increase visibility and use of the gardens and property. We continue to have a steady stream of visitors, but one note of concern is that *FL Weekly* has discontinued its “what to do” weekly announcements so we all need to be diligent in spreading the word about our Tuesday openings, April to September, 9 AM to noon. Please continue to share this information regularly with your membership – maybe even post it from time to time on your Facebook pages.

Our Berne Davis Luncheon was again very well attended, and I congratulate this year's winner of the Tree of Life Berne Davis Service Award, Charlene Anderson of the Garden Club of Cape Coral - richly deserved, Charlene. You have served the Council, your Garden Club and FFGC District IX diligently in many ways. Many thanks to Mitzi Marckesano and Committee for the meticulous organization and stunning staging of the event. See p. 6 for details of the winners of the Board's Rainbow, Perennial and Busy Bee awards.

The FFGC 100th Anniversary Convention was a fun event. Congratulations go to our member clubs, Garden Club of Cape Coral and The Poinciana Garden Club, which both won FFGC Awards that will be presented at the FFGC District IX Spring meeting at Lake Placid on May 22.

Enjoy but conserve Nature's beauty and harmony,

Sylvia
Sylvia Swartz
President



Garden Council Meeting Dates

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

(Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs)

June/July TBA

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, May 10th, 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 May 10, 2024

“The Right Trees for Florida Landscapes”
Clark Ryals, Senior Forester
Caloosahatchee Forestry Center,
Florida Forest Service

Edison - Ford Winter Estates

2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers FL 33901

Web: EdisonFord.org

Monthly Garden Talks

Saturdays 10AM

May 11th—Gardenias

Social Events

Oct. 12-13

Nov. 23 –24

Feb. 8-9, 2025

Orchid Symposium

Fall Garden Festival

Spring Garden Festival

Farmers Market

Every Friday

June & July 9AM—1PM

MEMBER EVENTS/HAPPENINGS

Estero Island Garden Club

The Estero Island Garden Club (EIGC) continues to help re-green Fort Myers Beach after the devastating effects of Hurricane Ian. The most recent project was on Sunday, March 24 when a garden was installed along the wavy wall, an area that separates the Lee County parking lot from Times Square. Beach Talk Radio (BTR) raised funds for the purchase of more than 200 native and florida-friendly plants and the 280 bags of mulch that were spread that day. They also recruited 60 volunteers and bought shovels. It would not have been possible without their help. The EIGC was involved in designing the garden, identifying the right plants for the space, working with the County and Town, ordering and receiving the deliveries, digging, planting and directing BTR volunteers.



Planting Team



Estero Island Garden Club Officers 2024-2025

On April 8 at a luncheon at Diamond Head Beach Resort, our new Officers were installed by Garden Council President, Sylvia Swartz. As each new officer was installed, she received a potted herb appropriate to the responsibilities of her new role.

New officers are: Cathy Turner (President); Rose Larkin (Vice President Programs); Ann Fossum (Vice President Membership); Patty Feste (Vice President Communications); Laura Tonar (Treasurer); and Wendy DeGaetano (Membership Hospitality).

Garden Club of Cape Coral

The club's NGC Standard Flower Show featuring "The Wonderful World of Books" at the SW Cape Library on 26 and 27 April was very much appreciated by the many visitors to the show during its public open hours.



Ande Garlanger's Tillandsia "Curly Sue"



Show Chairs Kathy Woodlock & Sylvia Swartz with Fran McIntyre's exhibition design



Terry Fisher's winning all-natural plant material wearable necklace

MEMBER EVENTS/HAPPENINGS—continued

Punta Gorda Garden Club

Forty-seven gardening books were collected from members and donated to the Friends of the Library at the Punta Gorda Charlotte Library. Gently used clothing was collected for the Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies (C.A.R.E.). We filled a van at our April meeting. The folks at C.A.R.E. were pleased at the variety and sizes of clothing contributed.



One of our members, Debbie Engel, demonstrated the creation of a Kokedama and everyone present made one. There were 56 very enthusiastic people messing around in dirt, moss, and string. Lots of fun and many smiles! A great last meeting of the year.

Birdhouse kits were ordered and a workshop was held to assemble and paint them. They will be installed at the Women's Club garden in Punta Gorda or at members' homes.



We went to Arcadia to pick blueberries and stopped on the way home to hike through the Audubon-Pennington Nature Park in Port Charlotte.



Happy Blueberry Pickers



Happy Hikers

Our Spring Luncheon followed on April 30th at the Isles Yacht Club. Embracing the theme of "Sharing Together." members were asked to bring school supplies from a list provided by a local elementary school which is open year-round and this is the time of year when many students and teachers need to replace or replenish much needed desk supplies.

MEMBER EVENTS/HAPPENINGS—continued



Margot Elmore with some unusual tools

The Poinciana Garden Club's April program was "Safe Gardening." The speakers were members Margot Elmore (retired ICU & Wound Care RN) and Sandy Troy (retired NP & Emergency Dept Director). They entertained the club with funny antics, stories, wound care tips, and demonstration of gardening tools some members did not recognize.

The Poinciana Garden Club

A 60 Blooming Years Federated Anniversary!

The Poinciana Garden Club began in 1962, and was sponsored by the Periwinkle Garden Club and federated with the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs on May 11, 1964. The club's celebration at the Garden Council on Saturday May 4th 2024 included Sylvia Swartz, President of the Garden Council, who presented the FFGC 60th Anniversary Certificate to co-Presidents Carol Duffy and Regina Rice.



Regina and Carol proudly display the FFGC 60-years Anniversary Certificate



Poinciana Garden Club



Mitzi Marckesano and Ena McGrattan

Several former Garden Council Presidents joined the celebration, including Mitzi Marckesano, Ena McGrattan, and Debbie Wyatt Stotter. Also present was former FFGC District IX Director, Dale DeFeo.



Gail Shaw and Dale DeFeo

The Poinciana Garden Clubs' motto is *Let's Grow Friends and Flowers* and their promise is "We Do Things." Famous for great field trips—Garden Hops; educational programs; social events; two community service projects (Cups of Cheer, Trash Off Trails); plant raffles at every meeting at the Garden Council headquarters; Plant & Treasure Sale; Flower Shows; 12 awards since 2018— and counting.

Raffle items included restaurant gift card, three months of pool service by Gulf Coast Pool Tech, a variety of gift baskets, garden item from Riverland Nursery, artistic items handmade by members, and more.

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs Convention, Jacksonville, April 10-12



The Garden Council was well represented at the recent 100th Anniversary Convention in Jacksonville, presided over by Federation President Tina Tuttle. Council President Sylvia Swartz, First Vice President Sue Fero, and Treasurer Gail Shaw attended, accompanied by Charlene Anderson, Cathy Dunn, Janice Russell and Mitzi Marckesano. We were all happy to join former Council President and now FFGC District IX Director, Susan Lawson, at her District IX cocktail party preceding dinner on Thursday night. There were business meetings on Thursday and Friday mornings, and then we were at leisure in the afternoon to view the 100th Anniversary Flower Show (fabulous!), shop from a wide variety of vendors, or simply enjoy meeting representatives from many other state clubs. Following the banquet on Friday night, former White House Florist Laura Dowling gave us some fascinating insights into her years at the nation's "First House".

Garden Council Board Awards at the Berne Davis Luncheon



Congratulations again to Charlene Anderson, Garden Club of Cape Coral, on being this year's recipient of the Berne Davis Tree of Life Honorary Service Award. Charlene is pictured with Mitzi Marckesano, chair of the Berne Davis Honorary Service Award Committee.

The Council's Board also makes its annual Busy Bee, Perennial and Rainbow awards at the BD Luncheon. Perennial Award flower pins were given to Anina Bachrach for her outstanding fund raising efforts in support of our "Awesome Blossoms" Strolling Flower show; and also to Charlene Anderson for the enthusiasm and hard work she demonstrated in organizing the FFGC District IX Fall meeting last October.



Wendy Sprague, the Council's Horticultural Tidbits commentator at Council meetings and writer for *The Courier*, was recognized with the Rainbow Award, as was Pam Signorelli for supporting Susan Lawson in organizing and running our quarterly social crafting get-togethers.



The Board's Busy Bee award, was given to Sue Fero in recognition of the organization and successful staging of this year's Strolling Flower Show "Awesome Blossoms" which was an 'awesome' success!



BERRNE DAVIS GARDEN UPDATE
Margaret Walker, Garden Manager

The Berne Davis Garden is beautiful this spring. There are many new plantings for you to see. Our Gold designation from the Florida Friendly Landscaping has been confirmed until 2026. The work of the Master Gardeners is evident in all sections of the garden, and we are fortunate to have such a dedicated group of volunteers.



One particular section of which we are very proud is the newly named "English Garden." It's located between the Cacti and the Rose area. Joyce Johnson (MG 2021) and Pam Signorelli, (MG 2021) have worked tirelessly to complete this garden with a variety of native species, annuals, and unique exotics. They have added climbing structures and a windchime that has a melodic tone as you stroll the garden. We are so fortunate for their thoughtful research of plantings to make this area a success.



*Joyce Johnson and
 Pam Signorelli*

Joyce and Pam have also been instrumental in the plantings around our live oak and are willing workers for any project throughout the Berne Davis Botanical Garden. Joyce has refreshed our signs with paint and did the heavy pruning of our trees in the Food Forest section. Pam just finished the mulch spreading in many sections and even had her husband, Mark come with his chain saw to remove a stump we needed removed. It is wonderful to work with the Master Gardener team and we celebrate all of their hard work.



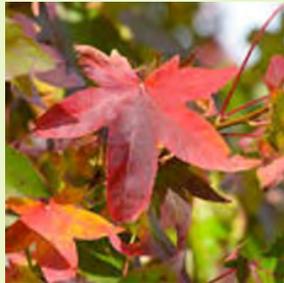
Our fabulous and hard-working Master Gardener Team
 L-R: Beth Meehan, Carole Kerns (Asst. Mgr.), Nora Pearson, Audrey Heneage, Pam
 Signorelli, Margaret Walker (Manager).
 Missing from photo: Cindy Sinn and Joyce Johnson

HORTICULTURAL TIDBITS

Wendy Sprague

Looking forward to autumn . . .

When fall comes to Florida, many of us pine for the colorful leaves that decorate our deciduous trees. But wait...you can have that right here!! The Sweet Gum Tree, (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), will provide you with the fall colors you miss! A BIG tree (up to 70 feet tall and 50 feet wide), it can make a nice shade tree for large properties. Use care in locating this tree as the roots can be aggressive, lifting driveways or patios. Glossy green leaves similar to a maple in shape will provide your autumn color in the fall. They bear a spiky fruit that is often very sharp underfoot when they drop from the tree in winter. Sweet Gums like full sun, tolerate wet soils and attract few pests.



Another tree for fall color is the Florida Maple, (*Acer saccharum* subsp. *floridanum*). Unlike other varieties of maple, it thrives in south Florida's weather as it is a native. It will provide muted yellow and orange leaves in the fall and grows 20' to 60' tall. Another large tree, but worth it if you have the space.



These trees do have similar leaves but careful inspection will allow you to determine which tree you have. Don't try to plant the maples you had up north...they do not do well in our climate.

FMLCGC Dates to Remember

June 1 - deadline to pay dues and submit information sheets for Yearbook

Sept. 13 - first Council meeting of the 2024-2025 season 9:30 AM social 1/2 hr., 9:30 AM business meeting

Your Board members 2023-2025

President: Sylvia Swartz
Tel: 239-339-3778
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