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

Berne Davis Botanical Garden

Open to the Public

**Summer Hours
Tuesday 9 AM - Noon
(May - September)**

Docent Schedule 2026

May FMLCGC Board Members

**Each club is responsible for finding
members to work or finding an-
other club willing to trade dates.**

***Problems/concerns—contact
First VP Wendy Sprague:
239-728-6543
ibseafax@aol.com***

P r e s i d e n t ' s M e s s a g e

Dear Members,

It is hard for me to believe that I have had the honor of serving as the President of The Garden Council for a year already!!! How time really does fly when you're doing something you enjoy with such wonderful people. The Council and the Garden have navigated a lot of changes over the past year, and I truly appreciate your support and patience.

Things have been busy with our members since the last Courier. Flower shows, educational programs, plant sales and field trips to gardens near and far. Just a reminder to regularly check our Face book page in addition to this Courier for upcoming events that might interest you. Most of our member events are open to all of us and it is a great way to meet new friends and catch up with old ones!

The Garden is looking particularly beautiful with lots of things in bloom: the Orchids and Hibiscus are spectacular, we had bananas in the Food Forest, and the Mulberry tree is covered in fruit. There are so many things to enjoy; bring your paints, a book or your lunch and sit in the shade next to the fountain or on a bench in the Gazebo, or you can take a picture standing under our newly renovated Torri Gate. If you are interested in getting your hands in the dirt, we do have Volunteer opportunities in the Garden!!

We hosted a wedding in April and are looking forward to another one in June, keep us in mind if you are looking for a venue for an event! There are so many ways to enjoy the benefits of your membership in The Fort Myers Lee County Garden Council.

A REMINDER that the next General Garden Council Meeting is Friday, May 8th at 9:30. The program starts at 10:00 and features David Outerbridge, Director of UF/IFAS Extension Service Lee County. He will speak on "Edible Landscaping". I hope everyone enjoys their summer wherever you are. Keep planting and keep growing! Sue



WWW.FMLCGARDENCOUNCIL.COM

Garden Council Meeting Dates

UPCOMING GENERAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

For All Society and Club Members. Please invite a spouse or friend .

September 11, 2026

Looking forward to seeing you after a fun filled summer.

Location :

**Garden Council Headquarters
2166 Virginia Ave.
Fort Myers, FL 33901**

HOSPITALITY: 9:30 AM to 10:00 AM

MEETING: 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

*ALL are Welcome!
Refreshments are provided.*

PROGRAM

GENERAL MEETING

Friday, MAY 8, 2026

“Edible Landscapeing ”

**Presenter: David Outerbridge
UF/IFAS Extension Service Lee County**



Edison - Ford Winter Estates

2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers FL 33901

www.EdisonFord.org

Monthly Garden Talks

Check the website for details

Garden Classes

Check the website for future Classes

Social Events

Check the website for details

Don't forget to visit the Garden Shoppe!

GARDEN COUNCIL NEWS

MEMBERSHIP FORMS AND DUES ARE DUE!!!!



All Clubs and Societies of the Garden Council should have received an email with the Membership form attached for their 2026-2027 dues (\$50 per club/society and \$150 for Affiliates). Please send your renewal check to The Council address 2166 Virginia Ave., Fort Myers, FL, 33901. This address is noted on the renewal information sheet.

Dues are due by JUNE 1st – this is so that we can include updated information on your organization in the Council's Yearbook. If you have not received the email or misplaced your membership form please contact Wendy Sprague our 1st VP as soon as possible.

You may contact Wendy via the council email fmlcgardencouncil@gmail.com or call her at 239-728-6543.

If you have any Membership questions they should be addressed to 1st VP, Wendy Sprague, Membership Chair.



Check out the Garden Council website for the District IX Speakers List - it covers seven counties and a multitude of topics.

<https://www.fmlcgardencouncil.com/>

Want to contribute great speakers to this list?
Contact Sandy Troy 239-994-8147.

Are you planning Fall Winter Spring events?

**Need Speakers?
See The Speakers Bureau QR.**



QR Speakers Bureau

**Send event flyers to Sandy to post on the
FM-LCGC Facebook page and to list in the
Florida Weekly.**

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

(Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs)

**May 1, 2026
June 5, 2026**

**Time: 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Location: Garden Council Headquarters**

GARDEN COUNCIL NEWS - Continued

2026 Berne Davis Honorary Service Award Luncheon

The 17th annual luncheon was held on March 31st at the Fiddlesticks Country Club and hosted by The Garden Council and Fiddlesticks Garden and Lifestyle Club. The theme of the event was Pastel Paradise, the tables were decorated with multi colored linens and hand made floral center pieces. Approximately 60 people attended with special guest Dr. Liston Bochette, City of Fort Myers Ward 4 Council Member and our constant supporter. The program centered on reminisces of Berne Davis and her special connection to the Council and Gardens which are named after her.



FMLCGC President Susan Fero announced the 2026 Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council Board Award winners:

Rainbow Award – Cathy Dunn member of Garden Club of Cape Coral and American Hibiscus Society James E Hendry Chapter. In recognition of her willingness to support and educate members of the Council.

Perennial Award – Sandy Troy Pennington in recognition of her dedication to promoting the Council and our member on social media and the creation of “The Speakers Bureau.”

Busy Bee Awards: Diane Pollock, Cindy Currado and Elizabeth Meska in recognition of their work as Co Chairs of the Holiday Decorations Committee.



Cindy Currado, President of Garden Club of Leigh Acres. Busy Bee Award



Sandy Troy Pennington, Poinciana Garden Club. Perennial Award

GARDEN COUNCIL NEWS - Continued

2026 Berne Davis Honorary Service Award Luncheon (Continued)

Susan Lawson, Berne Davis Service Award Chair, announced the 2026 winner of the Berne Davis Honorary Service Award: Cathy Dunn, member of Garden Club of Cape Coral and American Hibiscus Society James E Hendry Chapter.

Cathy Dunn was chosen by an anonymous panel for her propagation experience, new member recruitment, officer position and strong support in several clubs. She also gives educational programs and has published articles about her horticultural experience. Cathy was presented a crystal vase engraved with the Tree of Life.



Cathy Dunn, Garden Club of Cape Coral,
and American Hibiscus Society. Tree of Life
and Rainbow Awards

Please note there is a great number of photos of the event on our website.

MEMBER EVENTS/HAPPENINGS

ALVA GARDEN CLUB

Strawberry Festival and Plant Sale

The Alva Garden Club's annual Strawberry Festival and Plant Sale was a tremendous success.



Annual Member Garden Tour

Neighbors Nancy and Dave Lee and Dan and Viveca Skean hosted the Alva Garden Club's annual Member Garden Tour in April.



MEMBER EVENTS/HAPPENINGS

GARDEN CLUB OF CAPE CORAL

March in the Park

The 18th annual GCCC March in the Park was held on March 14th. Although cold weather and other challenges reduced our supply and turnout, the event was deemed a success.



Biannual Flower Show

The Garden Club of Cape Coral held our biannual Flower Show April 24 & 25. Quite a few new members participated, along with many of our more experienced designers. It takes many hands to put together an event like this and so many deserve shout outs especially Sue Lawson.



MEMBER EVENTS / HAPPENINGS - continued

GARDEN CLUB OF CAPE CORAL (CONTINUED)

Garden Tour

Three members opened their gardens for us to tour on March 28th. Each so different yet so similar in beauty and dedication shown. The final tour ended with our new members teasers tea! A beautiful day was had with warm fellowship, good conversations and gardens to visit and admire.



THE POINCIANA GARDEN CLUB

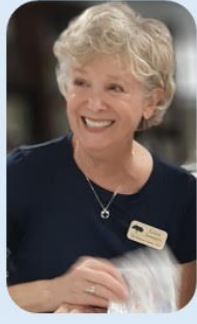
**The Poinciana Garden Club meets at the Berne Davis Gardens
2166 Virginia Ave. Fort Myers. Across the street from Edison Ford Winter Estates**

Free admission. Free parking on Larchmont Ave. Free garden tours by volunteer master gardeners 10 to 12.

Guests Welcome! Meetings start at 9:30 AM

At all meetings: Plant \$1 Exchange (bring a plant or veg or fruit from your garden)

50/50 Raffle & Craft Sale (members bring items to sell and donate 10%)

Tues. Mar 10	Tues. April 14	Tues. May 12	Wed. June 17	Tues. July 14
Beautiful Container Gardens with Cathy Dunn Wear your garden hat day!	Staghorn Ferns on the Lanai with Sandy Troy	Charcutier Board Fun, Induction of Officers, & Annual Meeting	Canvas Painting Party with Linda Lucas RSVP \$30. members 239-994-8147	Decoupage 2.0 with Karen Sumners
				

BERNE DAVIS GARDEN UPDATE

Meryl O'Rourke, Master Gardener Volunteer

The Berne Davis Gardens has been a hive of activity this last month! Providing a magical backdrop for the wedding of the son of our own MGV Pam, the garden sparkled with crystals and bride themed flowering plants. There was music in the air, fresh mulch in the beds and the smell of jasmine to bring a festive mood to the newlywed's grand party! Thank you for letting us be a part of your festivities.



Speaking of jasmine, the espalier is bursting with blooms, as is the covered walkway next to the office building. Take a moment and a slow walk to enjoy both the blooms and the delightful scent on your way to either the office or the meeting room next time you're in the garden. The espalier is located right next to the fountain, if you've not seen it yet.

The pollinator path makeover has begun. We've moved some plants, added some new ones, and changed the look, just a bit. The Torii Gate has had a face lift, thanks to the Bonsai Society, standing proud to welcome visitors down the pathway. False rosemary, *Conradina canescens*, starts the walk, leading to tea bush, *Melochia tomentosa*, which is considered to be a pollinator magnet. Also planted is native milkweed, commonly called "butterflyweed", *Asclepias tuberosa*. We'll be adding more plants during the summer months to entice the pollinators to make their homes.



BERNE DAVIS GARDEN UPDATE -Continued

We've seen a general uptick in the pollinators in the garden. Most notably, the Atala butterfly is busy not only eating the coontie plants (*Zamia integrifolia*), but they're also laying larvae pupa. During our garden checks, we came across a freshly hatched Atala drying its wings in the sun! It's moments like this that make me stop and give thanks to Mother Nature!



The food forest is coming alive, as well. Our peach tree, *Flordaprince*, is full of fruit in its first year in our garden! Mulberries are plentiful and sweet. The mango tree looks ready to give us a bountiful harvest. We're ready with the picker! We've spotted a small avocado making its way through the leaves, hoping for more to come. There was a nice crop of fingerling bananas, *Musa acuminata*, as well.

Several new vines were planted along the fence bordering the Edison-Ford parking area. Two vibrant fired up mandevillas, as well as a garlic vine, *Mansoa alliacea*, were added to the lineup. During some of the cleanup along the fenceline, we discovered an old bougainvillea, which at first look, didn't look to be viable. After a careful pruning, and some diligent watering, it now is covered with new growth, as well as flowers !

Last but certainly not least, I'd like to mention the terrific sale and silent auction held by the Bonsai Society. Aside from being well attended, I'm told there were some fabulous specimens that found new homes!

Have a wonderful summer and we'll see you in September!

Garden Council Meeting Hosts

2025-2026

May 8, 2026

GARDEN CLUB OF CAPE CORAL

Problems/concerns contact:
Susan Lawson 941-979-0615;
slawson921@gmail.com

HORTICULTURAL TIDBITS

Wendy Sprague

Veggies that Beat the Summer Heat

Oh no! I waited too long to plant my vegetable garden, it's too hot now!! Don't despair...there are crops that can be grown in the Florida summer heat and will actually thrive!

Try Collards or Mustard if you want some leafy greens. Malabar spinach, a topical vining spinach is also a good option. Be adventurous and try Okra or Eggplant. Sweet potatoes will thrive if you have the room for this spreading vine. Or, you could grow big with Seminole Pumpkins or Calabaza.

Room for a trellis? Try Yard Long or Winged Beans! Some shifting shade might help your hot summer garden, but be sure it has some sunshine during the day!

A good place to start looking for more information is: https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/topics/vegetable_gardening

A good place to look for seeds is Echo in North Fort Myers <https://echonet.org/>



Malabar Spinach, ifas



Seminole Pumpkin, ifas

Your Board Members 2025-2027

President: Susan Fero
Tel: 239-332-4942
Email: fmlcgardencoucil@gmail.com

First VP: Wendy Sprague
Tel: 239-728-6543
Email: ibseafax@aol.com

Recording Sec:

Treasurer: Joyce Stanley
Tel: 219-613-7506
Email: Jdstanley51@gmail.com

Second VP: Elizabeth Meska
Tel: 757-390-7814
Email: elizabeth.meska@gmail.com

Corresponding Sec: Sylvia Lightbody
Tel: 239-233-5634
Email: slightbody@comcast.net

FMLCGC DATES TO REMEMBER**AVON PARK CORRECTIONAL FACILITY****PLANT SALE**

Saturday, May 2, 2026, 9AM-2PM
Avon Park Correctional Institution

NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.**NGC 2026****ANNUAL CONVENTION**

May 4-6, 2026
St. Louise, MO

FFGC DISTRICT IX**SPRING MEETING**

Tuesday, May 5, 2026
Port Charlot, FL

**Garden Club of Lehigh Acres Cups of Cheer
for Woman's Shelter**

May 6th, 2026, 9:30AM
Fountain Crest Retirement
Community

GARDEN COUNCIL MEETING & PROGRAM

Friday, May 8, 2026,
9:30AM-11:30AM
"Edible Landscaping"
David Outerbridge - Director,
UF/IFAS Extension Service LC
FMLC Garden Council Headquarters

**CREATIVE FLORAL ARRANGER
OF THE AMERICAS, INC.**

May 28-30, 2026
Tampa, FL

NATIONAL GARDEN WEEK

June 7-13, 2026

**2026 National Convention
of the****American Hibiscus Society**

Hosted by Fort Myers American
Hibiscus Society
James E. Hendry Chapter
Thursday, June 25 -
Saturday, June 27th

The Poinciana Garden Club**Decoupage 2.0 Craft**

July 14, 2026, 10AM
FMLC Garden Council Headquarters
RSVP: 239-994-8147

The Poinciana Garden Club**Tatakizome(Japanese Flower Pounding)
Craft**

August 11, 2026, 10AM
FMLC Garden Council Headquarters
RSVP: 239-994-8147

NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.**NGC 2027****ANNUAL CONVENTION**

May 13-17, 2027
Madison, Wisconsin

**Please submit any
additional dates or
changes to:
fmlcgardencouncil@gmail.com.**

**All Events are
subject to change.**

WANTED

The Council needs your help.

TREASURER:

Need a basic knowledge of accounting/bookkeeping and Quickbooks.

Must be able to manage simple business transactions and bill paying and record keeping.

We have a dedicated laptop and the newest edition of Quickbooks to work with.

Minimum 2 hours weekly.

RECORDING SECRETARY:

Able to attend monthly Board meetings (2 hours), take minutes and email minutes to the Board members with in two weeks.

Able to attend bimonthly General Council Meetings (2 hours), take minutes and email minutes to president within a month.

Total time 4 hours a month.

For information on these positions please contact:

Sue Fero

Fort Myers Lee County Garden Council President

239-332-4942

fmlcgardencouncil@gmail.com

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