



Community Service Report

Revised 8/19/2023

Summary:

The Gulf Coast Garden Club (GCGC) executes the following community service activities:

1. Awards summer camp scholarships.
2. Stages free flower shows open to everyone.
3. Donates children's books on gardening to area libraries.
4. Volunteers at Fort Myers Berne Davis Community Garden.
5. Makes all our educational meetings open to Church Members.
6. Provides volunteers for other organization's events, such as Bonita Springs Historical Society.
7. Organizes special courses using our members' expertise.
8. Established and maintains a Blue Star Marker in Bonita Springs.
9. Supports non-partisan lobbying efforts pertaining to environmental regulations.

Introduction:

GCGC is a non-profit organization comprised of both experienced and novice gardeners and designers who share their ideas, designs, and information with all who are interested. The Gulf Coast Garden Club provides education, resources, and opportunities (local, state, and national) for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, civic, and environmental responsibility.

This local Southwest Florida club is affiliated with:

- Fort Myers/Lee County Garden Council (FMLCGC)
- District IX of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs
- Florida Federation of Garden Clubs (FFGC)
- Deep South Region of the National Garden Clubs
- National Garden Clubs (NGC)

GCGC meets at St. Leo's Church Educational Center in Bonita Springs. Although more than 10% of its members are parishioners at St. Leo's, club membership is open to anyone interested in the mission of the Gulf Coast Garden Club.

The club was started in 2003 and became an official member of the National Garden Clubs in 2004.

Details:

1. Awards summer camp scholarships

Through the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, the GCGC awards scholarships to the Wekiva Youth Camp. The Wekiva Youth Camp is an environmental education program begun in 1959 as a Junior Nature Camp where garden club volunteers helped to instill a love, concern, and desire to protect the flora and fauna of our beautiful state of Florida.

2. Stages free flower shows open to everyone

The Gulf Coast Garden Club produces a flower show every two years. The shows follow the requirements of the National Garden Club and are juried by Master Flower Show Judges. The events are widely publicized in Lee and Collier Counts to reach out to the South West Florida population as well as the visiting snow birds. Photo albums of the flower shows are available on the GCGC website.

3. Donates children's books on gardening to area libraries

The GCGC purchase Network with Nature books and has donated them to the Bonita Springs Library and the South County Library in Estero. This year we plan to learn if St. Leo's Library would like these books. Although the book was developed for K-4 students its lessons apply to all ages.

4. Volunteers at Fort Myers Berne Davis Community Garden

GCGC Members volunteer both as docents and gardeners at the Berne Davis Botanical Garden, 2166 Virginia Avenue, Fort Myers. The garden is open on Tuesday & Thursday mornings.

5. Makes all our educational meetings open to Church Members

The GCGC holds 8-10 monthly educational meetings with a keynote speaker. These meetings are open to Church Members and the public.

6. Provides volunteers for other organization, such as Bonita Springs Historical Society

This year the club is planning to provide volunteers to Bonita Springs Historical Society to help with the landscaping of the McSwain House Historical landmark in Bonita Springs, Florida.

7. Organizes special courses using our members' expertise.

National Garden Clubs, Inc. provides education, resources, and national networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility. Many of our garden club members have attended these courses, become Masters in these areas and have gone on to set up 2 year courses for members and the general public here in the South West Florida area to attend and through the use of Zoom people from all over the USA attended.

8. Established and maintains a Blue Star Marker in Bonita Springs.

The Gulf Coast Garden Club purchased and installed the Blue Star Marker at the corner of Reynolds St. and Old-41 in Bonita Springs. This marker stands in living tribute to all those who served in the Armed Forces of the United States past, present, and future. The club continues to maintain the landscaping surrounding the marker.

9. Supports non-partisan lobbying efforts pertaining to environmental regulations.

Gulf Coast Garden Club supports Waterkeepers Florida. Waterkeepers Florida is a regional entity composed of 15 organizations in Florida to protect and restore our water resources across over 45,000 square miles of watershed, which is home to over 15 million Floridians. They facilitate collaboration and collective action on statewide issues.

Club members encourage creative ways to repurpose, recycle, and compost materials rather than let them end up in landfills.

References:

1. Summer Camp: <http://www.wekivayouthcamp.org/>
2. Flower Show: https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipOdUfdc945enW4o1QzYVZp7K-gaVIEtrXPj4lwpSTyJS4EjVgBtaohoj6sQIA_XXQ
3. Children Book: <https://www.gardenclub.org/store/network-nature-k-4-childrens-book>
4. Berne Davis Garden: <http://www.fmlcgardencouncil.com/>
5. Educational Meetings: <https://gulfcoastgardenclub.org/wp/next-meeting-agenda/>
6. Special Classes: <https://gardenclub.org/programs>
7. Blue Star Marker: <https://gulfcoastgardenclub.org/wp/blue-star-marker-dedication/>
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/WXoRiRd95CZ2FwHz7>
8. Waterkeepers Florida: <https://www.waterkeepersflorida.org/>