

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

## President's Message

The gardens are looking beautiful, thanks to the tender care of our team of dedicated Master Gardeners who lovingly tend the gardens every week: Beth Meehan, our Hibiscus maven, Sue Fero and Nora Pearson who apply their expertise to all the orchids both in the new Orchid Splendor area, and those dotted all over the garden including the square pergola as you enter the gardens; Cindy Sinn, our Food Forest guru, Audrey Heneage who cares for the Larchmont entryway Pollinator Garden (and is also our Librarian); and Pam Signorelli, who is a busy bee throughout the gardens. Special thanks too, to our Assistant Garden Manager for the summer months, Carole Kerns, who expertly runs the garden while our Garden Manager, Margaret Walker, is in New Hampshire for the summer. Without the hours of labor so generously given by our Master Gardeners, our gardens would not look like they do today.

The Garden Council hosted the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs District IX Fall meeting at Embassy Suites, Estero, on Tuesday, 17th October. Eighty-five people registered for the meeting, and we were honored to be joined by the President, First, Second and Third Vice Presidents of the Federation. President Tina Tuttle and her team delivered a very interesting PowerPoint presentation on everything that FFGC does for its membership and what we can expect during their two-year term which will end in May 2025. Some of the great photos taken by our photographer for the event, Anina Bachrach of Gulf Coast Garden Club, are shown below. Thank you, Anina.

Our Arbor Day plans are taking shape. Poinciana Garden Club has graciously donated a Dahoon Holly to be planted at 11 AM on January 19th (Florida's Arbor Day) and the Garden Council itself is trying to locate a tree in the same family as the Simpson's stopper as our contribution to Arbor Day. As plans unfold, I will keep you informed.

Our Junior Garden Club continues to meet monthly – see article and pictures of their September gathering on p. 7. They recently met again when they made kabobs from Florida fruits and then went exploring in the gardens where they were fortunate to see the complete butterfly life cycle – a butterfly laying eggs, a chrysalis in another area and an Atala butterfly fluttering around the counties.

*Sylvia Swartz, President "Enjoy but conserve Nature's beauty and harmony"*



President Tina Tuttle and her 1st, 2nd and 3rd VP's with meeting hostess Sylvia Swartz. Left to Right...

1. Letitia Gunn 3rd VP
2. Tina Tuttle President
3. Christy Linke 1st VP
4. Mary Ann Whisler 2nd VP
5. Sylvia Swartz

### 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

- Nov. 7 Dist. IX Judges Council
- Nov. 14 SW Florida Orchid Society
- Nov. 21 Shell Island Garden Club
- Nov. 28 Royal Palm Garden Club
- Dec. 5 Potpourri Designers
- Dec. 12 The Poinciana Garden Club
- Dec. 19 Periwinkle Garden Club
- Dec. 26 GARDEN CLOSED
- Jan. 2 McGregor Garden Club

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

Questions?  
Sue Fero 518-496-2133

### 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 10AM-1PM when the office is open.

## Garden Council Meeting Dates

### UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

(Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs)

- **Date: Nov. 3rd, 2023**
- **Date: Dec. 1st, 2023**

**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, Nov. 10th, 2023**

**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 November 10th, 2023**

**“ All About Sprouts and Microgreens”**

**by Christine Lindsley, “The Sprout Queen” of Pine Island Botanicals**

## SAVE THE DATE FOR GARDEN COUNCIL SOCIALS!

Friday, December 15th - Holiday social with cookie exchange - 1:00 PM at the FMLCGC

Friday , February 9th - Mardi Gras - 1:00 PM at the FMLCGC

Friday, April 14 - Spring Fling social - 1:00 PM at the FMLCGC

## PRESIDENTS' MEET AND GREET

Presidents or representatives from sixteen of our member Clubs/Societies were represented at our Meet and Greet on October 3rd when President Sylvia discussed the amenities and opportunities that the Garden Council has available for all member clubs, plant societies and affiliates. She distributed each club's individualized security code for the alarm system and instructions on how to disarm the system. Many of the representatives present made very helpful comments and suggestions and all agreed it was a useful meeting. It was decided that it would be beneficial to hold these meetings twice in every season.



## *Edison - Ford Winter Estates*

2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers FL 33901

Web: [EdisonFord.org](http://EdisonFord.org)

### Monthly Garden Talks Saturdays 10AM

Nov. 11th-Season of Herbs  
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

Nov. 4th & 11th—Orb Hypertufa Planter 9 AM—Noon  
Dec. 2nd—Amaryllis Waxing 10 AM—Noon  
Dec. 8th—Holiday Wreath Making 10 AM—1 PM  
(Check Website for location & fees; registration required)

### Special Events

November 18-19th – Fall Garden Festival 9 AM—4 PM  
November 24th—Holiday Nights Opening Night 5:30 PM—9 PM  
December 2-3rd – Bromeliad Sale 9 AM—4 PM

## ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

NGC Environmental Specialist  
Bernadette Hamera, Estero Island Garden Club

As summer draws to a close, we are still having extremely warm temperatures and blue-green algae has been showing up in our rivers and canals. The latest report from the Florida DEP shows that about 80% of Lake Okeechobee is covered with it. And with rainy season upon us, they do not have any choice but to release that water down the river to us. Could it go south, that is the subject for another time.

But I'd like to share with you some of the *News Press* article from last May 22nd titled "Don't let harmful blue algae blooms spoil your beach trips".

"Toxins produced during these blooms have been implicated in human and animal illnesses in at least 43 states. Scientists have estimated that in the USA alone, freshwater HABs have caused more than \$4.6 billion in damage yearly. Algae and cyanobacteria—often called blue green algae—are simple, plantlike organisms that live in water."

We wish there was an easy solution to this problem. We have been reporting about this for years now. I don't remember when Lake O was as bad as it is now. The Army Corps of Engineers are hoping that they can only release a small amount down the river to us. But we are already experiencing streaking in the river in downtown Fort Myers to Redfish Point. It's a surface accumulation that's coming from upstream and it's hitting pockets of Cape Coral right now, according to the *News Press* on August 1st.

Solution—I wish I knew—but we have to stay vigilant and contact our representatives and let them know that it is unacceptable. The Garden Council is sponsoring National Garden Club's Environmental School Series this November we will cover *Air and related issues*; *Water* is the next subject which will be in the spring. The classes are two days, on zoom, and very reasonable.

NGC Environmental School (via Zoom)  
"Air and Related Issues"  
Thursday and Friday, Nov. 16-17th  
8:30 AM-4:00 PM Fee \$55.00

To register, please contact Bernie Hamera at  
[bhamera@outlook.com](mailto:bhamera@outlook.com)

*Space is limited and filling up fast!*

## Horticulture by Wendy Sprague

### I'VE GOT THE BLUES!



Got the blues?? I love the blues...blue flowers sometimes bordering on purple hues! One of my favorite blue flowers is quite common here in Florida—Plumbago (*Plumbago auriculata*). The attractive “cool” blue flowers are present year-round in South Florida. This often sprawling, mounding shrub enjoys full sun and well-drained soil. A quick grower, it can be pruned to keep a mounded shape. Native to South Africa, but “Florida Friendly”, it is related to our native White Plumbago (*Plumbago zeylanica*), which is a larval plant for the Cassius Blue Butterfly. Both plants will attract butterflies.

Another favorite blue flower is not quite so visible and may not be as familiar. This is the Southern River Sage (*Salvia misella*). This low-growing groundcover is native to South Florida and the Caribbean. Southern River Sage is a delicate wildflower and may be found in semi-shaded moist areas. It creeps along the ground from a main stem and is usually no taller than 6-8”. Southern River Sage is an evergreen plant that can make an attractive green groundcover for areas where growing grass is a challenge. The stems of tiny blue flowers can be seen in all but the coldest months. To some, this may be a lawn weed, but for me, the tiny blue flowers are a delight! Keep an eye out for them in pastures or natural areas.



### UPCOMING GARDEN COUNCIL SOCIAL

#### Get Ready to Have Fun:

Our Holiday party is on December 15, 1 PM in the Council meeting room. We had a large attendance at our October social when Pam Signorelli demonstrated the art of Zentangle. Everyone thought it would be difficult to replicate but in fact it was very easy.



Pam has come up with another fun project for December – Quilted snowflakes - see photo. The snowflakes are made from silver edged paper, with added sparkles. There is a choice of cord for hanging or greeting cardstock in black or red. All materials provided.

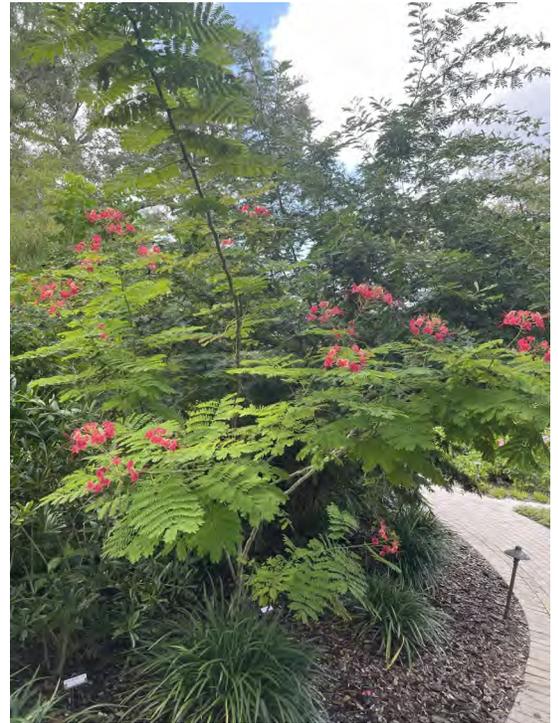
We will also have a cookie exchange - - if you want to participate, please bring 4 dozen cookies and you will go home with a plate of assorted cookies baked by your friends at the Garden Council. There will be Christmas music, door prizes and maybe some silly games to get us in the party spirit.

There will be a sign-up sheet available at the November 8 Council meeting but also feel free to Contact President Sylvia (239-339-3778 or email [tamargal2@aol.com](mailto:tamargal2@aol.com)) to register. There is no cost to attend the social but if you would like to participate in the craft session, the cost is \$5.

## BERNE DAVIS GARDEN UPDATE

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BERNE DAVIS BOTANICAL GARDEN by Carole Kerns

The Master Gardener Volunteers conducted regular tours throughout the summer to the many guests who visited. The main highlight of the tours has been viewing the Atala butterflies in all stages of life. Much to the delight of our Junior Garden Club members, they were able to observe these stages of development when they met in October. The regular visiting hours of Tuesday from 10:00AM – 1:00 PM have resumed and, beginning in December, the garden will also be open on Thursdays. We like to encourage our visitors to return periodically in order to observe plants which bloom at different times during the year. Presently, the plants that are blooming include the Dwarf Poinciana, the Yellow Trumpet Flower, and the Bahama Cassia.



**DWARF POINCIANA**



**BAHAMA CASSIA**

Master Gardener Beth Meehan has just planted five new Hibiscus plants to add beauty to the Hibiscus section.

Our ecologist, Nick Gallant, prepared a special section this summer to highlight the new Silk Floss Tree that has been planted. We hope that, in years to come, it will be as beautiful as the one we lost to Hurricane Ian. A potted Dahoon Holly Tree has been placed in the Orchid section, waiting to be planted on Arbor Day to provide much needed shade to the orchids.

Please take a walk through the garden to see all of the beautification projects that continue to be made.

## ATTENTION ALL CLUBS and SOCIETIES

Would your group like to be a vendor or sponsor?

This year's festival features some exciting speakers, an active exchange for plants, seeds and starts, and plants and seeds for sale for those who wish to purchase – as well as live music and food trucks.

It's going to be a great day with a fun crowd!

Website: <https://www.seedandplantfest.com/>

Sign up as a vendor: <https://www.seedandplantfest.com/vendors>

...or sponsor: <https://www.seedandplantfest.com/sponsors> - which gets you a free vendor spot and lots more for maximum exposure!



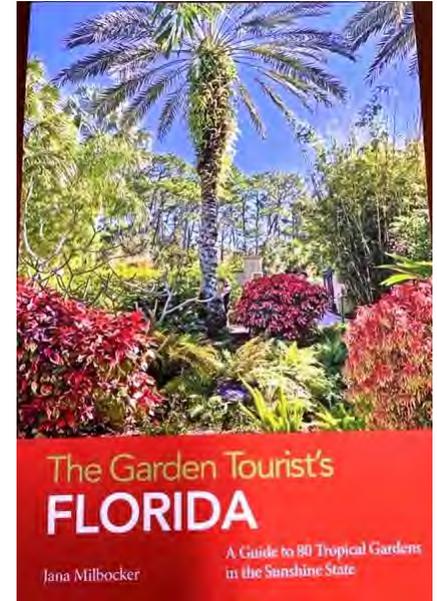
## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Thinking of Holiday Gifts? We have it for you!

We have limited supplies of Jana Milbocker's book *The Garden Tourist's Florida: A Guide to 80 Tropical Gardens in the Sunshine State*.

Priced at only \$20 to members, this makes a great holiday gift for any of the gardeners in your life or it can be a great addition to your library.

We will have it available for sale at the Council meeting – get yours while supplies last!



### Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council Scholarship

**2023-2024 Academic Year Scholarship Recipient is announced! Please meet Kara Fischer of Newtown Square, PA who is majoring in Environmental Studies with a minor in Climate Change at FGCU.**



**Kara will be starting her graduate studies at FGCU and will be continuing her research on algal toxicity profiles within our local waters. She wants to work in the field, taking samples, as well as work in a lab to analyze results. Being a graduate student at FGCU will allow her to strengthen her understanding of human populations actions and the relationship with algae species and the possibility of toxins within our waters. This scholarship is a blessing to her as it allows her to keep attending FGCU and to be a part of opportunities the environmental science field has to offer here in Florida.**

## REMINDER

Does your Club or Plant Society have special events, news or accolades they would like included in the next Courier? Great! Please email your information and/or photos to [fmlcgardencouncil@gmail.com](mailto:fmlcgardencouncil@gmail.com) at least two weeks before the publishing of the newsletter. Kindly make your subject in the email "Courier News". Thank You!

## Junior Garden Club

Our Junior Garden Club had a wonderful time creating Pumpkin Ghosts from tomato cages.

They also enjoyed learning how to create starts from cuttings of the passion flower vine for future plantings.

Below is the group posing in front of their Pumpkin Ghost placed in the garden for visitors to enjoy.



## DISTRICT IX



### Florida Federation of Garden Clubs District IX Fall meeting

The Garden Council was honored to host the District IX FFGC Fall meeting at Embassy Suites Hotel in Estero on Tuesday, October 17.

A light breakfast of bagels, cream cheese and jellies was available during the registration process and the meeting began promptly at 10 AM. Unfortunately, due to health reasons, District IX Director, Claudia Chopp, was unable to join us, but Leslie Montwid, former District Director, stepped into the breach. Ann Block, Garden Club of Cape Coral gave the Invocation. Estero High School Junior ROTC presented the Colors and First VP Susan Fero, led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Greetings from the Village of Estero were given by Estero Councilman District 6 Jim Ward. In response, President Sylvia welcomed everyone and encouraged those present to support the DIX Ways and Means Silent Auction run by Chair Trudie Kirkland. The business meeting followed. Gail Edgren, Chaplain of Punta Gorda Garden Club conducted a short memorial service for members who have passed since the Spring meeting.

The President of FFGC, Tina Tuttle, and her First, Second and Third Vice Presidents delivered an interesting PowerPoint presentation with lots of information about the benefits available to member clubs; and also described the Federation's 2024 Centenary celebrations including their Arbor Day tree plantings which will be taking place throughout the state on FL Arbor Day, Jan 19th 2024. At the conclusion of the presentation, President Tina cut the 10th Anniversary cake and Ann Block spoke the Blessing prior to luncheon. After lunch and the adjournment of the business meeting, the 50:50 draw, Baskets Raffle and Silent Auction winners were announced.

## CLUB HAPPENINGS

**The Poinciana Garden Club's** newest event is their Garden Hop held twice a year. For the first Garden Hop held in the morning on Saturday October 28, three club members gave tours of their gardens in the Buckingham Area of Fort Myers. Members clipped many different cuttings and were able to uproot new starts of Cranberry Hibiscus, Fishtail ferns and divisions of Costus Dwarf French Kiss and Black Stemmed Elephant Ears.. Some members went to Rum Bucket for lunch. Beautiful event with beautiful weather. Check out the YouTube video on our public Facebook Page:

The Poinciana Garden Club.



## CLUB HAPPENINGS

The Cocoloba Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society has a native plant sale every **Tuesday and Sunday from 9 AM to 1 PM** at River Oaks Preserve. The Preserve is located at 9541 Broadway Ave E in Estero. The demonstration gardens are being planted and growing as native plants grow!

**Gulf Coast Garden Club** will have a table of native plants, house plants and other items for sale at the VOLKERFEST being held on November 18th from 1-7pm at Riverside Park, 10450 Reynolds St. (Old 41), in Bonita. This will be an informative event for the whole community. Vendors, Music, Food & Drink  
For additional information call Anina Bachrach-313-207-7711

## IN MEMORIAM

Royal Palm GC - **Winnie Stone** A Past District Director (east coast) until Hurricane Andrew blew her to Fort Myers. She was a Flower Show judge and mentor to many aspiring Floral Designers. Long time member of Royal Palm Garden Club. She died Sept. 25th, two weeks shy of her 101st birthday.



Gulf Coast GC - **Suzy Valentine** Flower show judge and fierce competitor in Horticulture, Suzy and her husband David Southall loved all plants, especially succulents and grew an amazing variety at their home in Bonita Springs. Suzy will long be remembered for her assistance in so many Flower shows in the Bonita Springs and Fort Myers area, and for her horticultural tidbits presented at Council meetings.



## FMLCGC Calendar - Dates to Remember

- Nov. 4-5th** Sat. & Sun.-Bonsai Society of SWFL 41st Annual Show & Sale, FMLCGC Sat 9-5PM, Sun 9-3PM  
**Nov. 14th** Tuesday-Periwinkle GC Fundraising Auction & Sale FineMark Bank (College & Winkler) 5:30PM  
**Nov. 16-17th** Thurs. & Fri.-NCG Environmental Class, "Air and Related Issues", via ZOOM, 8:30-4PM  
**Dec.2-3rd** Sat. & Sun.-Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Annual Plant Sale, at Edison Ford Winter Estates 9-4PM daily with free parking  
**Dec. 15th** Friday-FMLCGC Holiday Social and Cookie Exchange

## Your Board Members

### President-

Sylvia Swartz 239-339-3778  
Email: tamargal2@aol.com

### First Vice-President-

Susan Fero 518-496-2133  
Email: sdf40@aol.com

### Second Vice-President-

Wendy Sprague 239-728-6543  
Email: ibseafox@aol.com

### Recording Secretary-

Paula Smith 412-915-1517  
Email: pacmss2023@gmail.com

### Corresponding Secretary-

Sylvia Lightbody 239-561-5704  
Email: slightbody@comcast.net

### Treasurer-

Gail Shaw 239 464-4235  
Email: gail17410@comcast.net

### Assistant Treasurer-

Ria Benton 239-478-8560  
Email: mjbenton51@gmail.com

# NEWS FLASH

## Recruitment of Admin. Assistant

Our current Administrative Assistant, Caryn Kast, is retiring at the end of this calendar year (Dec. 31). This can be an unpaid volunteer opportunity for someone within our membership, or an hourly paid (contract) position for someone who is not a member of any garden club or plant society. The hours are 10 AM to 1 PM (3 hours) at the Garden Council on Tuesdays, September through May; and remote work during the summer compiling the Yearbook.

Duties include assisting the President, preparation of our quarterly newsletter The Courier, and compilation of the annual Yearbook. Experience with PowerPoint, Excel and Word is essential. If you know of someone looking for either a volunteer position or a part-time paid contract position (\$21 per hour) who meets the criteria described above, please contact President Sylvia Swartz, 239-339-3778 or email [fmlcgardencouncil@gmail.com](mailto:fmlcgardencouncil@gmail.com).

## Full Job Description – Office Assistant to President of FMLCGC

### Hours:

-3 hours every Tuesday from September through May 10am-1pm during Garden Open Hours at 2166 Virginia Ave., Fort Myers FL 33902

-As needed to complete duties in the off months working remotely.

-Maintain a log of hours worked and create an invoice monthly to give to the Treasurer for payment. The average is 16 hours per week or 200 hours per year.

### Duties:

-Primary duty is to design the annual Yearbook and arrange printing prior to start of season. This is done in Publisher software. Once the yearbook is proofed and printed you will bundle 5-6 books per club for distribution. One yearbook should be mailed to each advertiser. An electronic copy should be sent to our webmaster, Kim Dailey at [kim@papyrusdocument.com](mailto:kim@papyrusdocument.com)

- Gathering of information for the Yearbook begins in April and continues throughout the summer. Clubs and Societies will turn in an information sheet to help you create the individual club pages.

-Confirm that Yearbook advertisers would like to continue advertising and follow through with obtaining new ads and/or advertisers if necessary. Fees for advertising help to offset the expense of printing.

-Design and publish newsletters to the member clubs and societies. Five issues are created and distributed per season starting in September, November, January, March and ending in May. A copy of the newsletter is also sent to our webmaster.

-Assist in set-up and tear down of garden welcome table on Tuesdays in season. (Sept.-May)

-Assist in putting up signs and taking down signs as needed on Tuesdays in season. (Sept.-May)

-Assist President in whatever office duties are assigned, such as monitoring office email, sending blast emails, maintaining contact list in gmail, maintaining list of member clubs and societies, holiday decorating, etc.