



## GARDEN CLUB OF CAPE CORAL

PO Box 152022, Cape Coral, FL 33915

Member of National Garden Clubs, Inc., Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc.,  
Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc., (District IX) and Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council

### NEWSLETTER – October 2020

*"Just living is not enough . . . one must have sunshine, freedom, and a little flower".  
Hans Christian Andersen*

#### October meeting

With thanks to Valorie Breen for our October inspirational quote, keep an eye on your email for the link that President Ann will send to join our October Zoom meeting. The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm – plan to log on a few minutes before. Our October educational presentation will be by garden club member Cynthia Mahoney, who will talk to us about the Rose Garden at the Historical Society which is maintained by a team of volunteers from the club.

Horticulture Chair Dona Baliotis will be sharing information on Milk Weed and in particular the pests that affect it. A full report on that will appear in the November newsletter.

#### Meet some of our newer Members!

We extend a warm welcome to our newest members:



##### **Tammy Burgess**

I'm from Howell, Michigan. I've always had a garden and lots of plants. I joined this group to learn how to take care of and grow plants here in SW Florida. I look forward to learning more and to making friends.



##### **Joanne Kishfy**

I am originally from Rhode Island – moved here two years ago. Hobbies: gardening, sewing, and crafting, (lately making flowers and wall art with seashells.) I joined the Garden Club because I wanted to learn more about gardening in Florida and to meet new friends.



##### **Joan Nicholson**

I'm from Toledo, Ohio; born and raised. My husband and I moved to Cape Coral in 2010. I spend the summertime in Onekama, MI. It's a town of two lakes; Portage Lake and Lake Michigan. I'm a member of the Portage Garden Club. I love to play tennis, kayak, and swim.



##### **Ellen Morris**

I'm from Lake Ariel, Pennsylvania, and formerly northern New Jersey. I love to garden and now I am trying out different plants than I was used to up north. The Garden Club has been such an interesting and rewarding experience from learning about edibles to that of flower design. Thank you all for letting me become a member.

## New Member bios – Alessia Leathers – continued



### Alessia Leathers

Writer and educator born in Lima, Peru in 1970. I moved to Cape Coral in 2003 with my husband, Greg, and my daughter, Rafaella. Earned a

Master's in English at FGCU and work as an adjunct instructor. Active in Friends of Wildlife, chair of the annual Children's Environmental Art Contest

and Friends of the Library and founding member of Eyes on Conservation. Volunteer at the Mohr's Butterfly House.

## Corks, Corks, Corks, and more Corks!

Jean Shields reports that she was recently able to take 6 lb. of corks collected by members to Whole Foods in support of Whole Foods environmental program. Whole Foods receives a penny for each cork and donates all the cash received from the recycling of the corks. Thanks to all who contributed and keep up the good work!

## It's Here – Blue Star Marker installed!



*Photo courtesy of Elsa Schutzman*

The city installed the marker at Eco Preserve in late September – see picture above. Members of the Blue Star Marker committee installed the plantings (red and white Pentas) on Saturday, Sept. 26 and this is how the site looks now:



*Photo courtesy of Ann Block*

The dedication ceremony is on Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, at Eco Preserve at 1:30 PM. President Ann will be sending out an invitation via email to all members. Please note that it is vital that you respond yes or no – seating is extremely limited since the ceremony is being held under the Pavilion at Eco Park and we need to preserve

social distancing. Seats will be allocated on a first come, first seated basis. Of course, you may also attend and watch the ceremony from outside the Gazebo. There will be an honor guard provided by the American Legion, music from our own Ellen Morris, and the marker will be accepted by the Mayor of Cape Coral on behalf of the city. Taps will be played at the end of the ceremony and there will be a 21-gun salute.

## **Garden Club Directory**

Directories are available now from Membership Chair, Susan Noble. Contact her to arrange pick-up.

## Butterfly Garden at Rotary Park – Update from Sherie Bleiler:

The Butterfly House at Rotary Park is open for tours on Friday and Saturday at 10:30. You must wear masks in the house as it is a comparatively small space. Rotary Park is open every day. The park is at the south end of Pelican Blvd. in southwest Cape Coral. You can walk the paths and exercise circle, enjoy the mature trees and plantings, and see how many kinds of butterflies you can find.

## Habitat for Humanity Update Sherie Bleiler

Habitat for Humanity of Lee County had a zoom session with all its volunteers last week. Unfortunately, they are not involving volunteers in their home building yet. They tried to involve volunteers in June and again in July, but a number of people got sick and had to be isolated. The last thing they want to do is put anyone in harm's way. The Re-Store store is also closed until further notice. They do plan on building 55 homes this year which will be accomplished with small teams of staff. Even office staff will be at the home sites. In addition, the City of Cape Coral has asked Habitat to help 236 families obtain help from the Florida corona virus mortgage and rental relief fund.

Meanwhile, our club is still planning to participate in landscaping one of the Habitat homes in May as a club project. Our plan this year is to focus on the nine principles of a Florida Friendly yard. One principle is to use less turf, which leaves more space for plants that use less water and no chemicals. We will need to buy more plants, which will increase our cost. Debbie Haggett and I are applying for a "Plant America" grant to help defray our expenses. These grants are offered by the National Garden Clubs, our parent organization.

## Now for something new – how about trying Hydroptic Gardening!

A hydroponic garden is a fun way to grow your own herbs and vegetables. Hydroponic systems use nutrient-enriched water instead of soil and have existed for thousands of years.

"Hydroponics" is a term derived from the Greek words for "water" and "working." Ancient Egyptians described growing plants in water, and the Aztecs used floating gardens called "chinampas" to grow vegetables.

A floating hydroponic garden is easy to build and can provide you with lots of nutritious vegetables. Best of all, this type of gardening avoids weeds and other pest problems common to soil-grown vegetables.



This hydroponic garden is in a custom wooden planter but using a plastic pool or even a

bucket is fine for smaller projects.

### Materials Needed

- Plastic children's pool or other wide-mouthed bucket
- 1.5-inch-thick Styrofoam™
- Water-soluble fertilizer, such as 20-20-20 with micronutrients
- Epsom salts
- Net pots or Styrofoam™ coffee cups with slits cut in the bottom
- Hole saw or sharp knife

## Hydropic Gardening - continued

### Plant Selection

Thought and care are necessary when selecting your plants. It is important to note that transplants used for hydroponic gardens should be started in a typical soilless media, such as peat pellets or a prepared potting mix, available from garden centers.

Leafy salad crops usually do quite well in hydroponic gardens. Great cool season choices include lettuces (romaine, Boston, bibb, and leafy lettuces), mustard greens, mizuna, mint, and kale. Additionally, Swiss chard and the broadly named "Asian Greens" group of Brassica cultivars grow well in most hydroponic production systems. Other cool-season veggies don't fare as well—spinach is disease prone and collard greens tend to get too large.

Using a floating system does not override the normal challenges of gardening in the warm season in Florida. However, there are some crops that can handle higher temperatures well in a hydroponic system. These are basil, Swiss chard, cucumber, watercress, and some cut flowers like zinnia and sunflowers.

### Steps

1. Cut the Styrofoam™ to fit the pool and make sure it has sufficient room to move up and down.
2. Fill the pool with water to a total depth of at least 5 inches. Keep track of the total gallons of water you add.
3. Add water-soluble fertilizer, such as 20-20-20 with micronutrients, at a rate of 2 teaspoons of fertilizer for each gallon of water used in the water garden.
4. Add Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate) at a rate of one teaspoon for each gallon of water.
5. Use a hole saw or sharp knife to cut holes in the Styrofoam™. A 2.5-inch hole saw is

needed to drill the correct-size holes into the Styrofoam™ when using 3-inch net pots. Use 1.75-inch hole saw for 2-inch net pots. Bigger plants like Swiss chard, cucumber, and cut flowers need bigger cups to keep them anchored in the water—otherwise they fall out. The hole size should allow the bottom of a cup to be level with the underside of the Styrofoam™. It's particularly important that cups do not extend lower than 1/16 inch below the bottom of the Styrofoam™ sheet. This allows the root mass to wick up water without being totally submerged.

6. Place holes 6 inches from the sides and 12 inches apart.
7. Place young starter transplants directly into the cups. Use toothpicks, if desired, to hold the transplant in an upright position. Do not remove the potting soil from the transplant. Do not add any potting mix or other material around the young transplant as this will keep the roots too wet and inhibit oxygen intake.
8. Add extra water and fertilizer as needed to keep the Styrofoam™ sheet floating on a minimum of 5-inches of solution.

If you are growing hydroponically during hot summer months, it is recommended that you install a 30-50% shade cover.

Light rainfall will have little effect on the water garden; only extensive downpours would require fertilizer adjustment based on the amount of water added by rainfall. The solution in the garden needs to be replaced periodically for optimum production. You can grow two crops of salad greens in the same solution before changing the entire solution and starting with a new batch. Now, stand back and watch them grow. The care is easy. You won't even need to water your plants, because they get everything they need from the nutrient solution.

**If all that seems rather work intensive,— here's how to do it easily! Buy a kit from a hydroponic store – you can get them on the web, or through Amazon or buy locally from the hydroponic store North Fort Myers (details from Sylvia). If you buy**

## Hydropic Gardening – continued

through Amazon, don't forget to click on the link on our website to the Amazon store. We will benefit from your purchase.

## What to Plant in October

(Source: *Floridagardener.com*)

**Vegetables :** Beets, Broccoli, Cabbage, Celery, Chinese Cabbage, Carrots, Collards, Cucumbers, Escarole, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leek, Lettuce, Mustard, Okra, Onion Sets, Parsnips, Peppers, Pumpkins, Rhubarb, Romaine, Rutabagas, Spinach, Squash, Strawberries, Sweet Corn, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes and Turnips.

**Herbs:** Anise, Basil, Borage, Chives, Chervil, Coriander, Fennel, Garlic, Lavender, Marjoram, Mint, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Sesame, Sweet Marjoram, Thyme, and most other herbs.

**Flowers:** Asters, Baby's Breath, Bachelor's Buttons, Balsam, Calendulas, Candytufts, Carnations, Cosmos, Cockscombs, Daisies, Dianthus, Forget-Me-Nots, Gaillardias, Globe Amaranth, Hollyhocks, Lace Flowers, Lobelias, Lupines, Marigolds, Nasturtiums, Pansies, Salvias, Scabiosa, Snapdragons, Statice, Stock, Strawflowers, Sweet peas, Sweet William, Verbenas, Zinnias and other cool season flowers.

Next month's special interest article will be on planting shrubs and trees

## Upcoming Events:

**Oct. 3** Lakes Park 8 am Walking Tour with Bird Patrol – every Saturday

**Oct. 10** Orchid Sale and Symposium, Ford Edison Estates, Fort Myers. Refreshments will be available from Red Roc Cravings and Coastal Dayz Brewery. Admission to the orchid sale is free (not

including tours of the estates, lab, or museum) and parking is free. See more details on following page.

**Oct. 10 to Nov. 29** -Marie Selby 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Orchid Show, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota.

**Oct. 23-24** Landscape Design School IV  
9am-4:30pm Via Zoom – preregistration required.  
Contact Vicki Williamson  
([vbwilliamson47@gmail.com](mailto:vbwilliamson47@gmail.com))

Oct. 24 – Tropical Plant Sale, Rotary Park, Rose Garden Rd., Cape Coral 9 am to 2 pm – **Garden Club of Cape Coral will have a booth there – come visit!**

**Oct. 30** - Rhythm on the River – Edison Ford.  
Gates open 5:30 pm. Refreshments available.  
E-ticketing begins September – see  
<https://www.edisonfordwinterstates.org/>

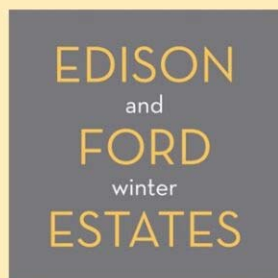
**Nov. 2** Floral Design Series  
Unit 8, Advanced Creative Designs  
10:00 am - 3:00 pm  
FMLCGC Headquarters Price: \$40  
Pre-registration required. Contact Susan Lawson,  
[slawson921@gmail.com](mailto:slawson921@gmail.com), 239-282-2328

**Nov 14** Poinciana Garden Club  
Annual Plant & Yard Sale Sat., 2020 8am  
FMLCGC Headquarters

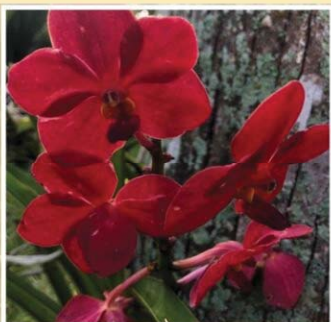
**Nov. 16** Floral Design Series Unit 9, Creative Containers & Designers Choice Award  
10:00 am - 3:00 pm  
FMLCGC Headquarters Price: \$40  
Contact Susan Lawson,  
[slawson921@gmail.com](mailto:slawson921@gmail.com), 239-282-2328

**Nov 20-21** Bonsai Society of Southwest Florida  
39th Annual Show and Sale Sat-Sun, 9am-3pm  
FMLCGC Headquarters, 2166 Virginia Ave., Fort Myers

**Dec. 5 and 6** Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society  
Annual Plant Sale Sat. 9am-4pm and Sunday  
10am-3pm, Araba Shrine Center, 2010 Hanson St,  
Fort Myers.



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LABORATORY



Participating vendors will  
be on site until 2 p.m.:

- ♦ Jim & I Orchids
- ♦ OFE Orchid Supplies
- ♦ Red Hawk Orchids
- ♦ So Orchids
- ♦ Sunland Orchids
- ♦ Tropiflora
- ♦ Red Roc Cravings  
food truck
- ♦ Coastal Dayz Brewing

## Orchid Symposium

Saturday, October 10, 2020

9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Our outdoor Garden Shoppe is stocked with flowering plants, fruit trees, herbs, succulents, butterfly plants, Florida natives and rare exotics!

- ♦ Free admission to the Orchid Symposium (does not include tours)
- ♦ Garden Guidance Table to answer your gardening questions
- ♦ Garden carts are limited, so if you have one, bring it along
- ♦ Discounts and raffle available
- ♦ Refreshments available for purchase
- ♦ Museum Store also open
- ♦ Vendors will instruct at their tents how to care for specific orchids

We are taking precautions to help keep you safe:

- ♦ Everyone attending the sale is required to wear a mask and practice social distancing
- ♦ Surfaces are being cleaned and sanitized daily
- ♦ Outdoor sales checkout will be available



2350 McGregor Blvd. · Fort Myers, FL 33901 · EdisonFord.org · 239-334-7419

The next Newsletter will be published in early November. Please send articles/information to Sylvia Swartz on anything you would like included - tamargal2@aol.com