



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 – SEPTEMBER 2020

*Gardening is not our whole life, but it
makes our life whole – source unknown*

Welcome Back!

I promise this entire newsletter will not be about the problems we are having with Covid 19! Suffice it to say that our new season begins with perhaps a new experience for many of us – a virtual meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, September 9 at 6:30 pm. President Ann has circulated details on how to join the meeting – one of the positives of having a virtual meeting is that our snowbird members will be able to attend.

During the meeting, Susan Noble, Membership Chair, will share information on how to obtain your copy of the 2020-2021 Directory. Following the business meeting, Sherie Bleiler, former President of the Club and current member, will talk to us about the Butterfly Garden at the South Cape Library, which is maintained by the Club.

One major piece of news is that there will be no Holiday Party this year – instead, we will have a virtual get together and Susan Lawson will delight us with a presentation on *Holiday Fun with Flowers*.

Our Monthly Trips

Our monthly trips are suspended at least until January since not many places are accepting groups of visitors because of the Pandemic.

Kudos to our Special Events team (Lois Lubber, Christine Prestella and Donna Schneider) for their perseverance in setting up the following schedule:

January 14 (Note Thursday date)

Guided tour of *Buckingham Farms hydroponic area*, and lunch incorporating ingredients grown on the farm

February 13

Guided tour of *Peace River Botanical and Sculpture Gardens*, Punta Gorda, lunch at Lashley Crab House

March 13

March in the Park

April 10

Garden Walk – visit the gardens of three Club members

May 1 *Tour the Shell Museum, Sanibel* and visit to nearby local nursery, lunch at Doc Fords

Monthly Trips – continued

Carpooling details will be included in upcoming newsletters and at virtual meetings.

Just Say Yes!

President Ann will discuss our Nominating Committee. The current slate of officers' term ends in May 2021. If you are contacted by a member of the Nominating Committee, please think seriously about serving on the Board. It's a great experience.

New features in the Newsletter

Following suggestions from our members, we are adding some new sections to the Newsletter:

- Valorie Breen will submit an inspirational quote to inspire and cheer us – see this month's at the beginning of this newsletter – thank you, Valorie;
- We will include birthday wishes to members having a birthday;
- There will be an article on Dona Baliotis' selection for 'Plant of the Month' with photo;
- Lynne Viacava will give us information about new members – even more important now that we're not able to meet in person;
- There will be information on what fruit/veg to plant that month; and
- Whenever possible, a 'how to' article – like the one on Water Gardening this month.

If you have other additional ideas or comments, please tell editor Sylvia Swartz, 239-339-3778, tamargal2@aol.com

Birthday Girls

We send happy birthday wishes to Rachele Epp, Susan Lawson, Susan Los Huertos, Lois Luber, Fran McIntyre, Paula Plum, Christine Prestella, Barbara Salafia and Nancy Wallin – what a lot of September babes!

And, just so that they don't feel left out, many happy returns of your special day to the twenty or so members who celebrated June, July, and August birthdays.

The Fruits of March in the Park

How fortunate we were to be able to go ahead with this year's March in the Park – we just squeaked it in before the whole state went into lockdown. Huge thanks to everyone who made the event such a success!

Even though there weren't as many people in attendance, we had an incredibly good result and were able to make the following civic donations:

Marty Ward Merit Awards to local high-school students: \$4,000

Donations to FFGC Camp Wekiva and SEEK program

Rotary Park Butterfly Garden in memory of late members: \$100

Donations to six local high schools for horticultural/environmental programs involving students totaling \$2,800.

Our total donations amounted to nearly \$5,500.

Flower Shows

Whilst our Standard Flower Show – *The Golden Years of Cape Coral* – had to be cancelled, the Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council is continuing to plan its Standard Flower Show taking place in early March. Watch this space for more information as it becomes available.

Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council

The Club is a member of the Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council and all members are entitled to attend its Council meetings. Normally, it's a very good forum to meet members of other garden club and to know what is going on in the area. However, like most organizations, the Council's Board has decided to mount virtual meetings up to and including its December meeting.

The next Council meeting, which will be via Zoom, is September 11 and the Garden Council President will email an invitation to all Garden Club presidents, which will be shared with membership. This is a good opportunity to attend a Council meeting without having to drive into Fort Myers. There will be a short business meeting and then a presentation by Master Gardener and Naturalist, Tony Mauriello on *Plant Propagation Techniques*.

What to plant in September – Source: University of Florida Extension Service

Annuals/Bedding plants: If summer beds need refreshing, try scarlet sage, nasturtium, celosia, and wax begonia for color into fall.

Bulbs: Plant gladiolus every 2 weeks to stagger blooming. Stake each plant.

Herbs: Plant herbs that tolerate the warm temperatures of early fall, such as Mexican tarragon, mint, rosemary, and basil.

Vegetables: September opens the door for more vegetables. Plant: beans (bush, pole and lima), Cabbage including Chinese, Carrots, Cauliflower, Collard Greens, Cukes, Eggplant, Kale, Lettuce, Scallions and Shallots, Peas, Peppers, Sweet potatoes, Summer squash, Strawberries and Tomatoes.

Include flowering plants in your vegetable garden – they provide nectar and pollen that attracts beneficial insects. Marigolds are a particularly good choice.

Shrubs: Consider placing native shrubs, like beautyberry, marlberry, firebush, and dahoon holly, where you can view the birds that enjoy them.

If you don't want to plant vegetables but just want to 'clean' your soil, cover crops can be planted in off-seasons to suppress erosion, weeds, or nematodes. The following cover crops are recommended for Florida gardens:

- Summer: cowpea, velvet bean, soybean, and sunflower
- Winter: cereal rye (FL 401), crimson clover, and Austrian winter pea

Next Summer - Use soil solarization to reduce nematodes – microscopic worms that attack vegetable roots and reduce growth and yield. This technique uses the sun's energy to heat the soil and kill soil-borne pests. To solarize soil, first remove vegetation, then break up and wet the soil to activate the nematodes. Cover the soil with sturdy, clear-plastic film. Weight down the edges with additional soil to keep the plastic in place. Soil solarization should be done during the warmest six weeks of summer. High temperatures (above 130°F) must be maintained for best results.

Water Gardening (source: National Gardening Association Weekly Newsletter, August 29 – article by Robert Smaus -edited)

Many people think that water gardening is difficult. Water gardens look so exotic. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Two Kinds of Water Gardens

Water gardens are either still or active. You can garden in the first type but not the other. Most aquatic plants prefer calm water, excepting watercress, which seems to prefer moving water.

The Four Rules of Water Gardening

Ponds need aquatic plants, fish, and water snails for ecological balance; Grow aquatic plants in their own pots, in ordinary garden soil; Keep 75 percent of the water surface covered with vegetation; and you should never need to change the water.

The Main Ingredients

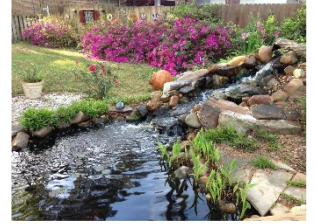
You need a pond or container with no holes, water, aquatic snails, fish, and plants. If you're not stocking it with fish, you don't need a pump or filter.

Types of Aquatic Plantings

Water lilies and a few other aquatics with floating leaves, seem the easiest types to control but need annual attention to control them. Make sure to grow aquatic plants in submerged containers so they can be lifted out and maintained.



You can excavate an inground pool (18" depth is ideal) and use a special pond liner available from specialty stores.



Or you can use a large container with no holes and deep enough to plant.

Planting a Water Garden

Where to find plants. Many nurseries carry them and there are also many mail-order sources. However, if you know someone with a water garden, you can probably get all your plants free.

Containers. Most aquatics grow best when planted in wide, shallow containers that you submerge in the pond. If the pots have holes, cover them with two layers of newspaper so soil doesn't leak out. Newspaper takes a long time to decompose!

Soil. Avoid regular potting mixes and soil amendments. They contain elements that will rot, pollute, or float. Aquatics grow best in containers filled with ordinary garden soil.

Fertilizer. At planting time, add some aquatic-plant fertilizer tablets placed next to the roots.

Stocking the Water Garden

Fish control algae and mosquito larvae. Ordinary goldfish control both - the tiny, guppy-like mosquito fish eliminate mosquitoes completely. (Mosquito-control agencies often give these fish away. Don't keep Koi in the same pond – they eat everything.)

Aquatic Snails. Water snails don't eat living plants, just decaying vegetation and algae.

Water Gardening – continued

Vegetation: Keep about 75 percent of the water's surface covered with vegetation to inhibit algae growth. Annually, after repotting the aquatic plants, the pool will turn green as the algae eat stirred-up nutrients. That's why you must never change the water. If you do, the pond must achieve its natural balance again.

Aquatic Plants

Yellow snowflake (*Nymphoides cristatum*). Flowers on this aquatic plant are frilled like a snowflake. Its leaves are like a lily's but extensively marbled with green and burgundy. It's considered hardy from zones 6 to 10. In cold-winter areas, protect it as you would tropicals.

Water poppy (*Hydrocleys nymphoides*). This aquatic also has floating leaves, and it's adorned with clear yellow poppy flowers.

Water hawthorn, also called Cape pondweed (*Aponogeton distachyus*). The white vanilla-scented flowers are floating racemes (flower spikes) that bloom in winter. The whole plant vanishes below water in summer and reappears in autumn.

Parrot's feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*). This reasonably well-behaved aquatic has feathery green floating foliage. The "feathers" stand about six inches above the water and add vertical form to the pond. Needs severe control.

Floating Plants. Some aquatics float. The lavender-blue-flowered water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) is the best known but can take over the pond. Water lettuce (*Pistia stratioides*), with its gray-green leaves and the tiny fronds of *Azolla filiculoides*, are good alternatives.

Bog Denizens. Bog plants grow with their roots just under the water's surface, e.g., water irises, azure pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*), and the tall and stately red-stemmed thalia (*Thalia dealbata*). Canna lilies also do well but need controlling.

Robert Smaus is the garden editor of the Los Angeles Times and has been the West Coast host of PBS's "Victory Garden."

Next month, watch out for an article on hydroponic vegetable gardening.

Upcoming Events:

Sept. 12 - Edison Ford Estates, Fort Myers - Plant Sale 9-4:30 plus multiple vendors. Free admission

Sept. 18 - Summer Nights at Edison Ford – Music on the Ford lawn. Cash Bar wine and beer. Bring chair or blanket tickets \$20

Sept. 26 - Houseplants - their care, benefits, etc., talk by Debbie Hughes, in the Edison Nursery garden (\$10 members, \$15 non)

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

Oct. 10 to Nov. 29 -Marie Selby 45th Anniversary Orchid Show, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota.

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

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