



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

Quote of the month: *Some people want a big house, designer clothes and a new car – others create a garden where they can escape those people.* thegoodnewscafe.net
(with thanks to Valorie Breen)

NEWSLETTER – January 2021

Christmas has come and gone for this very strange year – and now we have news that the over 65's will soon be able to get the vaccine to fight the dreaded Covid 19. Who knows – we may be able to get back to having actual meetings once 'herd immunity' is established. Wherever we meet, whether online or in person, our garden club remains strong, active, and connected in what will be our 28th anniversary year and indeed we have two more new members. Please welcome Betty and Jim McCullough.

Our January meeting will again be via Zoom and President Ann will send the link closer to the date – January 13 at 6:30 pm. Join us to get all the latest information, particularly an update on March in the Park plans and needs.

Holly Days Gathering Dec. 5

Our Holly Days Gathering was a great success. Here are some pictures of a very happy event:



Pre-gathering set up at Rotary Park



Socially distanced guests catching up on all the news



A 'prize' for everyone

Thanks to all who made this a very happy occasion! About 39 members attended.

January Birthdays

Many happy returns of the day to our
'Winter Babies':

Charlene Anderson, Terry Fisher, Joan
Nicholson, Marta Nunes, Barb Philibert, Janet
Pung, Jeannine Roberge, Becky Ruben, Mary
Ann Sedlock and Sylvia Swartz

Happy birthday to you all!

We Welcome Our New Members: Betty and Jim McCullough:

Betty and Jim moved here permanently on
Sept.1st from Kent Island, MD, but have had their
home in Cape Coral for 10 yrs. Jim is a retired
construction Superintendent and enjoys
vegetable gardening. Betty is a retired MD Realtor
and High School Art instructor and now enjoys
painting, jewelry making and flower gardening.
Their home in MD was on two acres with large
vegetable garden and many flower beds including
butterfly and hummingbird habitats.

Newsletter Online

Our monthly newsletter is always available online
– go to our website at
<https://www.gardenclubofcapecoral.com/getinvolved/newsletter/>

So, if you want to look up something from a past
issue, just click on the link.

Annual Directory Cover Photography Competition

Don't forget our annual photography
competition. The winning photo will appear on
the cover of our next Directory. There is **no limit**
on the number of photos you can submit. Email
submissions to Nora Hoover no later than March

31, 2021. Photos will be made anonymous to
prevent bias. The winner will be announced at the
May Garden Club meeting.

Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council Flower Show, March 5 and 6, 2021 - *The World is Yours to Explore*

The schedule for this show, honoring Judy
Francino's presidency of the Garden Council, has
now been published and is available online at
<http://www.fmlcgardencouncil.com/march-flower-show/>

There are some exciting and novel design and
botanical arts classes as well as Horticulture so
put your thinking caps on and let's make sure our
club is well represented at the show. If you
haven't previously participated in a show or won
a blue ribbon, there are classes specifically for
you!

Garden Club of Cape Coral Members Honored by Garden Council

Because of Covid 19, there was no special
luncheon to mark the Fort Myers-Lee County
Garden Council's annual Awards Ceremony and
presentation of the Berne Davis Service Award.
Instead, the Council sent out a 'Prize Patrol' in the
vein of Publishers Clearing House, who were on
the road during the Council's November Zoom
meeting.

During the Zoom meeting, Sue Lawson was
presented with the Council's Busy Bee award for
all the work she does for the Council. She will
take over the Presidency in June 2021 and has
been very busy this year planning and organizing
the Council's recent Flower Design series, and
also the Council's upcoming Flower Show. Below
is a delighted Sue displaying her Busy Bee pin and
Certificate:

Garden Club Members honored - continued



Congratulations, Sue!

Sylvia Swartz was surprised and delighted to hear a knock on her door during the Zoom meeting and to find Berne Davis Honorary Service Award Chair Mitzi Marckesano on her doorstep, complete with award and bouquet of red roses. Sylvia proudly displays the beautiful cut glass Berne Davis Honorary Service Award vase. Sylvia joins Jean Shields as the second GCCC member to win this prestigious honor.



Focus on Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*)

Dave Whiting, (Executive Director),
National Gardening Association Newsletter
12/19/20



Poinsettias are a strange plant, different from almost anything we purposely grow. It has a highly unusual beauty, with colorful bracts being the main focal point,

brought on by a curious ritual of alternating light and darkness. It is poisonous and, other than its

ornamental nature, isn't particularly useful, but it does bring a beauty and color at a time of year when little else is growing, and that makes it the most popular December garden purchase in the country.

The poinsettia is a member of the huge genus *Euphorbia*, commonly known as spurges. There are around 2,000 different species of plants in this group, and if you don't recognize the name, you would certainly recognize some of its members. From tiny little plants to gigantic trees, the genus actually has a lot of interesting varieties to enjoy.

Poinsettia was introduced to the US in the early 1800s by the American ambassador to Mexico, a Mr. Joel Poinsett, from whom it also got its common name. Like the other spurges, it is highly drought tolerant and is simple to care for. Also, like many other spurges, its beauty is found in its bracts rather than its blooms.

So, what's a bract? It's a leaf-like structure on a plant, that looks like a leaf, but it is not. The "blooms" on a bougainvillea are, in fact, bracts. If you look at the center of the bracts, you will see the actual little blooms. Sunflowers and daisies grow bracts. If you look at the flower heads, you'll see the green leaf-like things around the blooms, and those are bracts. Bracts perform a variety of useful functions, but the most ornamental ones seem to be designed to attract pollinators with their striking colors.

Now, when you bring your new poinsettia home with its healthy green leaves and bright red bracts, it may soon show some stress signs by yellowing a few of its leaves. Just pluck those leaves off and all will be well. Give it as much light as you can, and let the soil get somewhat dry before watering again. This is a tropical plant, and it doesn't like cold weather, so keep the plant warm.

Focus on Poinsettia – continued

Enjoy the plant through Christmas time, and once you're on the other side of the season, it'll start to go dormant. This is the point when most people throw it out, but we're gardeners and we can't bear the thought of throwing away a live plant, so let's have some fun and keep growing it. Keep caring for it as usual, giving it plenty of light and watering as usual. As we get into springtime, slow down the watering and let it stay dry for longer periods of time. When the stems start to shrivel up a little bit, go ahead and cut the whole plant back to just a few inches, and store it somewhere cool.

Starting in mid-summer, take it out, submerge it in a bucket of water, wash off as much of the old soil as you can, and then repot it into the same container using nice fresh potting soil. Put it on your shady porch, water it, give it some nice fertilizer (I like vermicompost tea) and treat it like you would any other potted plant. As it grows, pinch the stems to encourage branching. Now here's the interesting part. When you get to early October, you need to trick it into producing the colored bracts, and you do that by giving it alternating darkness and light. So, at 5:00 PM put it in an absolutely dark closet, and then at 8:00 AM bring it back out into the light. Do this each day, and the plant will soon think it's the time of year to "flower" and will start producing those snazzy red bracts. A gardener feels a great sense of accomplishment in forcing a poinsettia, and I recommend everyone do it at least once, if only for the fun experience.

Want to attract more birds to your yard? Plant Bird Friendly Plants!

(Source: UF/IFAS)

To encourage birds to visit your landscape, provide them with these three essential

elements: quality food, **fresh water**, and safe cover from predators and the elements.

When we talk about feeding birds we are generally thinking of songbirds and hummingbirds. A healthy Florida yard can help support these attractive species, plus woodpeckers, doves, cranes, and many more. But what to feed them? Diets differ between species; some birds are frugivores (eating fruit) and some are insectivores (eating insects). Some, like mockingbirds, actively switch back and forth. The most fool-proof menu you can offer migratory and native birds are Florida's native plants and the insects that feed on them. These food sources provide the right nutrients at the right time, supporting birds through all seasons of the year and all parts of their lifecycle.

A yard crawling with bugs is one brimming with bird food! Birds don't just eat seeds and fruits; some rely on worms or insects as their main source of protein. Other sources of bird food include lizards, skinks, small snakes, and amphibians. A healthy population of insects will draw these to your landscape, too. Entomology research indicates that our native plant species support far more native insects than do non-native plants. This is good news; it means that supporting native bird populations (and attracting them to your yard) is as simple as installing native plant species.

Last but not least, brush piles and snags provide shelter to insects. This makes them a source of bird food, and for brush and **cavity-nesters**, a source of shelter as well. Brush piles in particular are magnets for small bird species, like warblers and Carolina wrens. Woodpeckers and other birds feed on the insects that live in snags. Birds of prey, like raptors and owls, often use snags as hunting and nesting perches. If you're planning to remove a tree from your property, instead of cutting it to the ground completely, consider leaving a ten- to fifteen-foot stump for wildlife to use.

Want to get out? Reminders from Sherie Bleiler of things we can safely do:

Garden tours: Rotary park gives tours of the gardens, full of native plants, flowers and even the endangered atala butterfly. This park is at the south end of Pelican Blvd., where it meets Rose Garden Road. Tours are every Friday and Saturday at 10:00 am. Meet at the butterfly house.

The butterfly garden at the south Cape Coral Library is open during normal library hours. Enter through the library and out the back door on back right. You will find butterfly brochures and many plants labelled. Mask required.

Upcoming Events

Edison Ford Estates:

January 9, 10 AM **Garden Talk: How a Hypertufa is made and creating a hypertufa container .**

Join Horticulture Director, Debbie Hughes, and Fred Rubino for a lesson on building a hypertufa container. Hypertufa is a lightweight, porous material made from various aggregates and bonded together using Portland cement. It also makes a lovely mounting board for orchids and other epiphytes. All participants will receive a 20% discount coupon for use toward plants purchased in the Garden Shoppe. Participants will meet at the Information Booth after registering. Tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis and are only available at the ticket counter

Garden Class: Introduction to Florida Gardening, Part I January 12, 1:30 PM

Gardening in Southwest Florida requires unique knowledge as it is the only state in the continental U.S. that is in USDA growing zone 10.

This class is designed to provide gardeners with all the tools to un-learn previous gardening experiences and command the exciting world of tropical gardening in less than perfect soil. Part 1 will cover plant taxonomy, plant reproductions, working with SW Florida weather challenges, understanding the differences between native plants and ornamental plants, and recognizing invasive plants. Palm trees will also be discussed, and a great list of resources will be provided. Classroom time: 90 minutes.

Advance registration is required for all classes, as each class is limited to 25 participants. Masks are required, and participants should bring a notebook, water bottle, hat, sunscreen, garden gloves and comfortable walking shoes. All in-class participants will receive a 20% discount coupon toward plant purchases in the Garden Shoppe. All classes are taught by Karen M. Maxwell, Horticulture Specialist.

Cost: Edison Ford members: \$50; non-members: \$75 for both classes; each class individually: \$35 for members; \$50 non-members. Pre-registration for both is required before the commencement of Part 1 for the cost discount. Both classes are not required but recommended.

Garden Class: Introduction to Florida Gardening- Part II January 19, 1:30 PM

The Part II program will dive deep into some of the important elements of becoming a successful gardener in SW Florida. State programs such as the Florida Friendly Gardening and Master Gardener Volunteer program will be covered. Additional topics include how to use fertilizers and soil amendments, common pest recognition and chemical and biologic controls, common weed identification, good irrigation and draining techniques, selecting plants for the Southwest Florida landscape, and a recommended reading or resource list will be provided. Classroom time:

Edison Ford events – continued

90 minutes. Advance registration is required for all classes, as each class is limited to 25 participants. Masks are required, and participants should bring a notebook, water bottle, hat, sunscreen, garden gloves and comfortable walking shoes. All in-class participants will receive a 20% discount coupon toward plant purchases in the Garden Shoppe. All classes taught by Karen M. Maxwell, horticultural specialist.

Cost: Edison Ford members: \$50; \$75 for non-members for both classes; each class individually: \$35 members; \$50 non-member. Pre-registration for both is required before the commencement of Part I for the cost discount.

Jan. 15th **Florida Arbor Day**

Jan. 16th **American Hibiscus Society** - James E. Hendry Chapter Winter Hibiscus Sale 1-3 PM
Covenant Presbyterian– 2439 McGregor Blvd.,
Fort Myers FL

Jan 15-17 **Tamiami Orchid Festival** 10 AM-6 PM
Miami-Dade County Fair Expo, Miami, FL
\$12 at door

Jan 16 5 to 9 PM – **Drive-in Movie** at the Cape Coral Historical Society, 544 Cultural Park Drive, Cape Coral

The movie (appropriately) is *Night at the Museum*. There is no charge, but registration is required. Only 75 vehicles will be allowed so use the following link to register.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/drive-in-movie-in-cultural-park-featuring-night-at-the-museum-tickets-134719286011>

Parking begins at 5 PM. There will be a couple of food vendors (ice cream and pizza) and the Movie begins at 6:30 PM.

March 5 and 6 **Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council Standard Flower Show**,
The World is Yours to Explore - see schedule distributed with this Newsletter.

March 13 **Alva Garden Club**
Annual Plant/Bake Sale and Strawberry Shortcake Festival 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM at Alva Museum, Alva

The next newsletter will be published in early February – please submit ideas, articles, suggestions to Sylvia Swartz, Editor, tamarqal2@aol.com. Comments/suggestions always welcome.