

# THE COURIER

## THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FORT MYERS / LEE COUNTY GARDEN COUNCIL, INC.

### P R E S I D E N T S M E S S A G E

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

C O N G R A T U L A -  
T I O N S T O 3 A R E A  
G A R D E N C L U B S  
W H I C H H E L D  
F L O W E R S H O W S  
T H I S S P R I N G .  
G U L F C O A S T  
G . C . , G A R D E N  
C L U B O F C A P E  
C O R A L A N D  
R O Y A L P A L M ' S  
F R O G S A N D  
F R I E N D S A L -  
L O W E D M A N Y T O  
S H O W O F F T H E I R  
T A L E N T S .

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Dear Members,

My first year as president comes to a close. Looking back, it seems to have flown by and while it's normal that the first year of a term fills to up with tasks which involve getting acquainted with the job, it seems we have accomplished much and at the same time so little can be seen of the effort made. The garden planning is completed and we are coming to the end of the frustrating and rewarding process of making sure we have everything in its proper place with all our I's dotted and our T's crossed. I know many of you wonder why things seem to be moving so slowly in putting the garden together, but many plans have been made and much has been accomplished this year.

The first part of the year we hired, then fired, a contractor who we thought could complete the entire project under one contract. It was a matter of timing with the housing markets falling rapidly and companies scaling back to a skeleton staff, but in the aftermath, our new construction companies stepped forward and as they say, where one door closes, many new ones are opened. This time we expect better results, with the top notch people we've hired. I can't help but think there was a little divine intervention at work. We also cleaned house while having a little fun at the garage sale and continued to equip the new building. The Botanical Library was planned out and started on its way. We had a wonderful Christmas gathering full of fun and food.



A beautiful miniature of the Garden was produced with loving care for all to see and suddenly excitement was felt by all who have been planning for so many years, as a visual of the garden emerged. We pulled together a Wish List of needed garden items and projects and developed a beautiful thank you in the form of a Donor Wall for the office.

After a parking lot was found and removed from the center of the property, we are once again waiting, patiently, for permitting to be completed. It is so hard to wait when everything is in place and ready. All of the outside structures are ordered. The pavers for the main path are waiting to be installed, the shell for the shell path is ready, the fountain was ordered and is waiting at Driftwood Gardens to be installed and the workers are poised to begin as soon as we receive the O.K. from the city planners.

I'd like to thank everyone in all of the clubs and societies for their wonderful support this year and a special thank you to the Board members, Committee Chairs and Officers for all their hard work. The Garden Council has broken all records for fundraising with so many stepping forward to contribute to the success of the building, library and garden. Over \$50,000 has been raised and more is being pledged all the time. I hope you will continue to support our efforts and enjoy the fruits of your labor by using the building and grounds for your organization. It is yours, and there is no charge for members of the Fort Myers-Lee County Garden Council, so don't hesitate to find good uses for it to enhance your activities and membership opportunities. Have a great summer, and I'll meet you in the garden next Fall.

*Diane Raimey - President*


**May 9th 2008 FMLCGC General Meeting - Call to order 9:30 am**

Inspirational Message - Nancy Wheeler  
Pledge of Allegiance  
Reading of the Minutes - Louetta Muller, Recording Secretary  
Financial Report - Marty Ward, Treasurer  
President's Report - Diane Raimey  
1st Vice President's Report - Mitzi Marckesano  
2nd Vice President's Report - Angela Swope  
Reports of Committee Chairs (as needed)

Wish List Committee - Sylvia Lightbody  
District IX Fall Meeting Committee - Mitzi Marckesano  
Gardens Committee - Angela Swope  
Horticulture Chair - Kathy Woodlock  
Public Relations - Ena McGrattan  
Old Business / New Business / Announcements  
PROGRAM: State of the Gardens - Diane Raimey  
Adjournment - Ways & Means 50/50 drawing

Join us at 9:00am for refreshments provided by the Poinciana Garden Club

**GARDEN COUNCIL MEETING DATES**

<p align="center"><b><u>BOARD MEETINGS</u></b> (Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRIDAY MAY 2, 2008</li> <li>• FRIDAY SEPT. 5, 2008</li> </ul> <p>MEETINGS FROM 9:30 AM TO 11:30 AM Rutenberg Park Library Building</p>	<p align="center"><b><u>GENERAL MEETINGS</u></b> All are Welcome PROGRAMS ARE HELD THE 2ND FRIDAY OF THE MONTH EVERY OTHER MONTH SEPTEMBER TO MAY</p> <p align="center">Location: 3061 E Riverside Dr <b>Fort Myers, FL</b> HOSPITALITY 9:00 AM TO 9:30 AM MEETINGS 9:30 AM TO 11:30 AM</p>	<p>Please do not forget to pay your dues and submit your purple sheets of information to Treasurer, Marty Ward.</p> <p>Marty will pass on the club information to Diane Raimey to include in the yearbook and Courier contact information to Editor, Paula Novander</p> <p><i>Thank-you</i></p> 
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**H O W P L A N T S O B T A I N W A T E R**

Most gardeners know that plants acquire water and minerals through their root systems, and leave it at that. But the process is not quite that simple. The actively growing, tender root tips and almost microscopic root hairs close to the tip absorb most of the plant's moisture as they occupy new territory. As the root continues to extend, parts behind the tip cease to be effective because, as soil particles in direct contact with these tips and hairs dry out, the older roots thicken and develop a bark, while most of the absorbent hairs slough off. This rotation from being actively foraging tissue to becoming more passive conductive and supportive tissue is probably a survival adaptation, because the slow capillary movement of soil moisture fails to replace what the plant used as fast as the plant might like. The plant is far better off to aggressively seek new water in unoccupied soil than to wait for the soil its roots already occupy to be recharged.

A simple bit of old research magnificently illustrated the significance of this. A scientist named Dittmer observed in 1937 that a single potted ryegrass plant allocated only 1 cubic foot of soil to grow in made about 3 miles of new roots and root hairs *every day*. (Ryegrasses are known to make more roots than most plants.) I calculate that a cubic foot of silty soil offers about 30,000 square feet of surface area to plant roots. If 3 miles of microscopic root tips and hairs (roughly 16,000) lineal feet) draws water only from a few millimeters of surrounding soil, then that single rye plant should be able to continue ramifying into a cubic foot of silty soil and find enough water for quite a few days before wilting. These arithmetical estimates agree with my observations in the garden, and with my experiences raising transplants in pots.

*Taken from the website [www.garden-hose-guide.com](http://www.garden-hose-guide.com) sponsored by Ames Garden Hose Reels - lots of interesting stuff!*

From Wanda Schmoyer - VP of the James E. Hendry Chapter, AHS. Mina Edison Estates Teas on May 7, May 14, May 21 and June 4 - seating at 2 pm (tea will be held on each of the dates rain or shine) Reservations are required, seating is limited and groups may arrange special times and programs... call 334-7419. Price is \$40 per person (groups of eight or more receive discounted admission. Tea with Mina Edison's favorite recipes will be served in the beautifully restored Edison Caretaker's House. Enjoy a presentation by estate Horticulturalist and Curators. Stroll Mina Edison's award winning Moonlight Garden, her newly restored Rose Garden and house porch gardens. **GARDEN HATS AND DRESS ARE ENCOURAGED!** Several of our members have expressed an interest in going along with other Garden Council members. Please let Wanda know if you are interested and she will arrange a group. Wanda and other AHS members recently attended the Edison Estate Botanical Tour lead by Debbie Hughes. "What a treat ... as we met under the Banyan tree for lunch first, then a tour of their greenhouse and across the street to the gardens and even down to the water. We learned so much and had a great time. The price for the public to go on this tour is now \$23.00 per person so I think we got a good deal especially with having Debbie as our own personal guide the whole time.

THANK-YOU DEBBIE - YOU ARE THE GREATEST!" Wanda reported trips with other members of Garden Council. It was another  
WANDA [unistew@embarqmail.com](mailto:unistew@embarqmail.com) cell 848-7090



several members from other clubs attended. "Let's share more of our field opportunity to get to know them better and a great way to share expense.

WILD PETUNIA - A great little plant

OOPS ! Lipstick Plant and Rouge Plant are NOT the same thing. I got them confused. In the last issue of the Courier, I wrote about the Rouge Plant, *Rivina humilis*. In one paragraph I said the seeds are poisonous and in another paragraph I talk about using the seeds to color margarine. I used a number of sources for the pertinent information, but my own memory for the margarine reference. I should have known better to not double check my memory. The seeds of the Lipstick plant or Annato, *Bixa orellana*, are used as a food and fabric dye--not the rouge plant. Please accept my sincere apology for the mistake.

While at the state convention, I attended a very informative workshop presented by Dara Dobson entitled " Wildflowers and Native Plants ". Not only is Dara the FFGC Native plants and Wildflower Chairman, but also an Accredited NGC Show Judge and Master Gardener. Her program focused on " Mix and Match....adding natives to your existing landscape ". Throughout her presentation, she used the word " swoosh" . As she featured a wildflower in her power point presentation, her favorite phrase was, " just swoosh this native in among your landscape plants." One native plant that can be easily " swooshed" into the general landscaping is the wild petunia *Ruellia caroliniensis*. Actually this plant is a great substitute for the invasive Mexican petunia or for impatiens. Wild petunia looks great along the edges of walkways or patios. This plant is a mostly erect herbaceous perennial wildflower with tubular lavender flowers and dark green leaves. Mature size is 1 foot and 1 foot. It thrives in all soil types from North Carolina south throughout Florida and west to Texas. Although it will grow in any soil type, a richer soil will produce a larger plant and more flowers. It is salt and drought tolerant after establishment and survives in full sun to partial shade, however it does better in full sun. This marvelous plant survives on neglect flowering in south Florida throughout the year. Wild petunia gets its name from the lavender flowers which resemble cultivated petunia but are smaller. The delicate short lived flowers open early in the day then drop by nightfall. Mass plantings will provide a continuation of color. Propagation is very easy using seeds or cuttings taken in summer. Left alone, this plant reseeds itself and fills in an area by the second season. One source I used cautioned that wild petunia may spread into other areas by the self sewn seeds. Annual pruning to remove old stems may be necessary. Moist well-drained sites are preferred. Wild petunia is also the larval food for the Common Buckeye and the Malachite butterflies.

***Kathy Woodlock, Horticulture Chairman***

### Donor Wall of Honor

At our March 14th meeting Garden Council members got their first look at the sample metal sculpture that will be used to create a Donor Wall of Honor in the Garden Council building. Committee chair - Angela Swope has worked with the local artist and the Garden Council Board to determine a policy based on the amount of their donation.

\$50 donations still receive an engraved brick on the walkway.

A \$250 donation will receive a copper (bronze) leaf on the Donor Tree.

A \$500 donation receives a silver (aluminum) leaf on the tree and \$1,000 donations will have a gold (brass) leaf. A \$2,500 donation will receive a copper (bronze) rock under the Donor Tree. A \$5,000 donation will have a silver (aluminum) rock and \$10,000 donation a gold (brass) rock. Any donations over \$20,000 will receive a special marker (bird, flower, etc.) on the Donor Wall. With board approval, a donation valued over \$5,000 may receive a plaque placed on the donated item. For more information on the Wish List - please contact Sylvia Lightbody 561-5704.



Mitzi Marckesano shows off the Donor Tree



The Official Newsletter of the  
Fort Myers / Lee County  
Garden Council, Inc.

2166-2172 Virginia Avenue  
Fort Myers, FL 33901



Happy Mother's Day May 11

***Congratulations to Estero Island Garden Club  
on their 50th Anniversary !***

To all our Northern friends heading back  
Be safe and remember ....

*Now 'tis spring, and weeds are shallow rooted;  
Suffer them now, and they'll o'ergrow the garden  
And choke the herbs for want of husbandry. – Shakespeare*



Each year the staff at Beloit College in Wisconsin puts together a list to try to give the faculty a sense of the mindset of the year's incoming freshmen. And just in case you aren't feeling old enough already here's a sample. Most of today's college students are too young to remember the space shuttle blowing up. Bottle caps have always been screw off and plastic. They have always had an answering machine and cable television. They cannot fathom not having a remote control. "Off the hook" has never had anything to do with a telephone. They never took a swim and thought about "JAWS". Popcorn has always been cooked in the microwave. They don't have a clue how to use a typewriter and they've never "rolled down" a car window. OK - I'm officially old. Hats off to the graduates !

**M A Y - J U N E C A L E N D A R O F E V E N T S**

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
District IX Spring Meeting	May 1	Bartow, FL
Mina Edison Estates Tea Reservations are required, Seating is at 2 pm and is limited. \$40 per person.	May 7, 14, 21 or June 4	Edison Estates - Fort Myers
Hibiscus Show Wanda Schmoyer - VP unistew@embarqmail.com	June 1 1-4 pm Contact for more information or if your organization would like to set up a booth over 700 hybrid hibiscus plants will be offered for sale	Araba Temple - Hanson St.
Native Plant Sale	July 26	Rotary Park, south on Skyline Blvd off Cape Coral Pkwy Cape Coral
District IX Fall Meeting Contact Mitzi Marckesano for details	Oct. 17	Fort Myers, FL

<b>President</b> Diane Raimey 565-4755 Email: draimey@aol.com	<b>Recording Secretary</b> Louetta Muller 939-0225 Email: Loumuller@comcast.net	<b>Courier</b> Paula Novander 945-6548 Email: pnovander@yahoo.com
<b>First Vice President</b> Mitzi Marckesano 561-5513 Email: Couponqwn@hotmail.com	<b>Corresponding Secretary</b> Helene Jackley 368-7406 Email: helenefoe@embarqmail.com	<b>Directors</b> Ena McGrattan 561-1735 Sylvia Lightbody 561-5704 Teta Roberts 482-1531
<b>Second Vice President</b> Angela Swope 690-3312 Email: Aswope@bearpawsystems.com	<b>Treasurer</b> Marty Ward 549-7516	

ON THE WEB [WWW.FMLCGARDENCOUNCIL.COM](http://WWW.FMLCGARDENCOUNCIL.COM)