

THE COURIER

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

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

Part of this year's butterfly conference included a tour of the beautiful garden at Pelican Preserve, located at the intersection of Colonial & Treeline Avenue. There are 2 restaurants open to the public so make it a great day out for your club.

Contact Curator James Price
561-9360

WWW.CROOKEDGARDEN.COM



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President's Message

Greetings fellow gardeners! Can you believe it's already November?? We've had such an eventful couple of months; the time is just flying by. The District IX meeting at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Estero was a smashing success. Mitzi Marckesano and Ena McGrattan were brilliant with their organization of the event and there were legions of you who helped out with everything from registration to pages. The food was great; the vendors were wonderful, thanks to Wanda Schmoyer and Madeline Bohannon. The hotel did a wonderful job of making everyone welcome and we even managed to make a few dollars for the garden. FFGC and District IX officers have all sent their warmest thank you wishes. The program "A Living History" by Mr. and Mrs. Edison, portrayed by Donald & Bobbie Robertson went off without a serious hitch. Thank you all for coming and showing your support.

This is the month of craft fairs and cool weather and the beginning of the holiday season. The garden is nearing completion with the addition of the irrigation system and the landscaping. We're still a few blades short of grass as of this writing, and we've been scouring the country for some shell for the shell path. Imagine that, in Florida there is no shell to be found! If anyone knows of a source, please let one of the officers know.

Special thanks to the *James Hendry Chapter of the American Hibiscus Society* for your swift beginning to your garden and the donation of the hibiscus for some of the perimeter spaces. John Cocolis, the committee chairman, has been hard at work planning and coordinating with Angela to make it happen. An area we could use some help is the planting of the pot gardens. The pots have been delivered to the site and are ready to be placed. If your club would like to adopt them as a project, please contact Angela Swope or I and let us know if your club is interested. Some will be placed near the Trellis in front of the garden to be filled with vines and some are to be placed near the fountain. Still others will be placed around the gazebo and scattered around the garden. All you need is some knowledge of pot gardens and a plant list which we'll coordinate with Mr. Fogg.

We're on to planning the flower show in the spring and getting the floral design classes organized. There was a tremendous response to the classes and they filled up quickly. We're planning a grand opening of the gardens for after the holidays in January so keep that in mind and don't forget to pick up your packages at the November meeting for the Strolling Flower Show the first week in February of 2009.

As they say, time waits for no one and so we push on to 2009. I'm so proud of all of our clubs and the level of participation you have all kept up. Some ask "What does the Garden Council do for my club?". I ask you all, where can you get a building, Reference Library and garden space for displaying beautiful specimens of your favorite plants all for \$30 a year! That's all it costs, and a little of your time now and then.

What a bargain!

Diane Raimey



November 14th 2008 FMLCGC General Meeting - Call to order 9:30 am

Inspirational Message - Nancy Wheeler
Pledge of Allegiance - Winnie Stone
Reading of the Minutes - Florene John, 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)
Ways & Means Chairman—Madeline Bohannon

Wish List Committee - Sylvia Lightbody
Flower Show Committee— Betty Mazzarella
Gardens Committee - Angela Swope
Horticulture Chair - Kathy Woodlock
Public Relations - Ena McGrattan
Old Business / New Business / Announcements

PROGRAM: John Kiseda Lee County Parks & Rec Environmental Education
Adjournment - Ways & Means 50/50 drawing
Join us at 9:00am for refreshments provided by the Periwinkle Garden Club

<p>BOARD MEETINGS (Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRIDAY NOV. 7, 2008 • FRIDAY JAN. 2, 2009 • FRIDAY MARCH 6, 2009 <p>MEETINGS FROM 9:30 AM TO 11:30 AM</p> <p>At the Garden Council Bldg. 2166 Virginia Ave. Fort Myers</p>	<p>GENERAL MEETINGS All are Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRIDAY NOV. 14, 2008 Hostesses-Periwinkle Garden Club • FRIDAY JAN. 9, 2009 Hostesses- Tropicana Garden Club • FRIDAY MARCH 13, 2009 Hostesses- Royal Palm Garden Club • FRIDAY MAY 8, 2009 Hostesses- Garden Club of Lehigh Acres <p>MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 2ND FRIDAY OF THE MONTH EVERY OTHER MONTH SEPTEMBER TO MAY</p> <p>Meeting Location: 3061 E Riverside Dr Fort Myers, FL</p> <p>HOSPITALITY 9:00 AM TO 9:30 AM MEETINGS 9:30 AM TO 11:30 AM</p>
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The best vitamin for making friends - B1

FALL DISTRICT IX MEETING

All the planning by Co-chairs Mitzi Marckesano and Ena McGrattan paid off in a wonderful meeting Friday October 17th at the Estero Embassy Suites. The 50th anniversary of FFGC's District IX was celebrated in style with a beautiful meeting place, delicious lunch and presentations by Florida Federation officers, all presided over by District IX President - Maxine Herbert.



FFGC President, Margaret "Cinny" O'Donnell (l) confers with District IX President Maxine Herbert before the meeting begins.

Registrar Beverly Ray reported 143 attendees including Presidents of 22 clubs. Vendors, auction items and informational displays were all poolside.

Before lunch we were treated to a living history program by Mina & Thomas Edison.



FMLCGC President Diane Raimey, Co-Chairs Mitzi Marckesano & Ena McGrattan and VP Angela Swope

Cissy Richardson - State Membership Chairperson presented a thoughtful program on "Should have, Could have, Would have" pertaining to retaining new members.



Ena McGrattan with Thomas & Mina Edison (Donald & Bobbi Robertson)

Winnie Stone was presented with the new pin honoring contributors to the FFGC annual design calendar. Everyone was invited to the May 7, 2009 District IX Spring meeting in Sebring and FFGC Convention April 15 in Daytona Beach. We finished with the 50/50 drawing, Chinese and silent auction winners. A great day !



Theo Kavaouras - District IX Ways & Means made sure everyone got their raffle tickets.

A Turkey Trimming



It's hard to believe I wrote a column on Florida cranberries in the Nov. / Dec. 2000 Courier. I am very fond of Hibiscus *sabdariffa*. Mainly because it is the number one ingredient in most herbal teas. This past August, I served a punch made from *sabdariffa* calyxes at the Taste of Lee County. I was first introduced to "Florida cranberries" at a Thanksgiving dinner with the Caloosa Rare Fruit Society. Florida natives used it years ago and I have two plants growing in my yard. Hibiscus *sabdariffa* is a designated "Florida Heritage Cracker" plant and as such can be found at the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings home at Cross Creek. This doesn't mean it is a native plant; it has just been here a long time. It was grown as a common garden crop at most Florida homes since 1900. After World War II, fresh foods were more readily available with mass transit and home Victory gardens went by the wayside.

Hibiscus *sabdariffa* is also known as Roselle, Rosella, Sorrel, October Hibiscus, Jamaican Sorrel, Indian Sorrelle, Quinombo Shino, Rossa de Jamaica, JavaJute, Karkade, Oseille de Guinie, Makventee (it's from the Malvaceae family), Sereni, Acedaera de Guinee, Dam But Dam, Chua Me Dat and many more, coming a long way from India into the hearts of many countries.

H. *Sabdariffa* can be started from seeds here in mid-May. After it becomes a plant, I root tip- cuttings to start new plants and it helps bush out the original plant. It requires about four months to mature. One of the reasons it is called "October Hibiscus" is because it is a photoperiodic plant, only blooming when the daylight becomes shorter. My own plants are just now blooming. Up North, where it is treated as an annual, it may never bloom

because it is very cold sensitive and dies at the first cold snap. So --- I want to catch the seed pods (calyxes) before they get woody and save them for my "cranberry sauce". The late Kaye Crude, our local herbal authority and gardening guru of ECHO with her mound gardening and pigeon pea nitrogen giving plants; said, "If Roselle pods are to be used for sauces or pickling, they should be picked while firm and swollen and while the stem easily snaps from the stalk. Florida cranberry sauce is prepared by cutting off the stem and making a slice up the side of the pod. The immature white seed pod, which resembles okra, is removed but should be saved to thicken up soups. The calyxes are then steamed until softened into a sauce and sweetened to taste, making a very acceptable substitute for cranberry sauce."

The calyxes contain 3.19 % pectin, a natural source for pectin. The young leaves and tender stems are eaten raw in salads, cooked as greens or cooked with meat or vegetables. They add a bit of tartness and a refreshing tang. Dried roselle calyxes can be found in plastic bags sold at local Hispanic stores. "Flor de Jamaica" or "Jamaica Flores" are not the flowers but calyxes. Also, since the red dye cancer scare, roselle is attracting the attention of food and beverage manufactures as a color aid.

There is also a false roselle, Hibiscus *acetocella*, called cranberry roselle, not because it makes a cranberry substitute, but it is the color of cranberry. So -- here's to your Thanksgiving dinner - hibiscus *sabdariffa* can provide your cranberries, tea or punch and a salad addition to your turkey.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS !



Submitted by Joyce Comingore, Pres. Hibiscus Society for Kathy Woodlock, Horticulture Chairman

Editors Note: William Sonoma sells Wild Hibiscus in syrup, produced in Australia, a beautiful and edible addition to your holiday champagne.

Florida ARBOR Day is Friday January 16th, 2009

Plant a tree.

Or join the Arbor Day Foundation at www.arbordayfoundation.org

2009 Strolling Flower Show

Thursday Feb. 5th and Friday the 6th are the dates for the 2009 Flower Show, staged by Periwinkle Garden Club and sponsored by the Bell Tower Shops. The theme of this year's show is : **"Going Green for Mr. Edison"**. The 2009 show will be held at the Bell Tower Shops in Fort Myers, at Daniels Pkwy and Route 41. Periwinkle Garden Club encourages all veteran and novice arrangers to participate in this judged show. Drawing for the windows will take place at the Garden Council meeting on November 14, 2008. Information packets will be available at that time. Contact Madeline Evans at 267-0961 for more information. The luncheon on Thursday will be at the Clarion Hotel, catered by Sam Seltzer's.



Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, inc. Floral Design Courses

Join FFGC accredited floral design instructors from around the state as the Garden Council presents a 6 course study in Floral Design this spring. Sessions will begin Thursday Jan 15th, 2009 and be held every 2 weeks until the 26th of March. Lecture and demos begin at 9 am with a hands-on workshop session after lunch. Emphasis will be on basic design principals using readily available fresh and dried plant material, fruits and vegetables. Flowers are furnished for the first 2 classes but students need to bring their own tools although pin holders, tape, etc. will be available for purchase. There are no prerequisites to the course and each session can be taken separately with a discount for all 6 courses. Currently limited to 30 students. Classes will be held at the Garden Council building on Virginia Ave.

The local contact is accredited Master judge Marty Ward at (239) 549-7516.

Let's do something creative with those plants around the yard.



Just one of the colorful designs that graced the tables at the Fall District IX meeting.

Floral Design Course Dates:

1/15/09, 1/29/09, 2/12/09, 2/26/09, 3/12/09, 3/26/09.

The Wish List

Sylvia Lightbody does a great job keeping track of the myriad of items required in the conversion of the buildings on Virginia Ave into the new headquarters for the Garden Council, including the transformation of the grounds into the vision of our Landscape Architect, George Fogg. You and your club can assist this vision by donating an item(s) on the Wish List. For example, the impressive entrance fountain was given by the Green Thumb Garden Club. The plant arbor that runs across the entire length of the building was made possible by a very generous donation by benefactor Mrs. Berne Davis. Please consider making a contribution. If you have any questions regarding the Wish List please contact Sylvia Lightbody at 561-5704 or email Slightbody@comcast.net



The Fountain is in place and that wonderful sound is enjoyed by Joyce Comingore - Hibiscus Society President, Garden Council VP and the *driving force* behind the new Botanical gardens, Angela Swope joined by Courier Editor Paula Novander and Beverly Roy.

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER
Calendar of Events

Bonsai Society of SW Florida <i>Show & Sale</i> 947-3552	Fri. Nov. 14th 10am - 6pm Sat. Nov. 15th 10 am - 5pm	St. John the Apostle Church 3049 McGregor Blvd., Ft Myers
Bonita Fruit Club Plant Sale Contact Madeline Bohannon 693-8778	Sat. Nov 8	Riverside Park near the Band Shell Downtown Bonita Springs
Green Thumb Garden Club Annual Crafts Auction	Tues. Nov. 18th 9am - 12pm	2061 McGregor Blvd., Ft Myers Contact Phyllis Wells 283-0750
Periwinkle Garden Club Holiday Market Place Auction	Wed. Nov. 19th, Social 9:30 Auction 10am - 12:30ish	High Point Place, 3rd Floor 2014 West First Street Contact Lucy Mastej 948-9268
Edison Garden Market Edison / Ford Winter Estates For info call 334-7419	Sat. Nov. 29th 9am - 5pm Sun. Nov. 30th 10am - 4pm	2350 McGregor Blvd. Garden Art & Supplies, Gardening info www.efwefla.org
Punta Gorda Garden Club <i>A Harbor Christmas \$10</i>	Fri. Dec 5th Noon - 5pm Sat. Dec 6th Noon - 5pm	Tour 4 homes & First United Methodist Church Decorated for Christmas, Plant Vendors Cookies & Punch Info www.pggc.org
Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society Plant sale	Sat. Dec. 6th , 9am - 5pm Sun. Dec 7th, 10am - 4pm	Auditorium Terry Park 3410 Palm Beach Blvd, Ft Myers Email Larry Giroux at DrLarry@comcast.net
FFGC Tropical Short Course Embassy Suites 661 NW53rd St. Boca Raton, FL	Mon. Jan 26th 8am - 2:30pm Tues. Jan. 27th 8am - 2:30pm	Lloyd Singleton, Kristin Jacobs & Jan Sillik Allen Sistrunk, Georgia Tasker & Julia Clevett For more info or to register email kathyhoran@webtv.net
Strolling Flower Show "Going Green for Mr. Edison"	Thur. Feb. 5th & Fri Feb. 6th	Bell Tower Shops Madeline Evans at 267-0961

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