

THE COURIER

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

P r e s i d e n t ' s M e s s a g e

Update on the Lorelei statue



The original Lorelei sits guarding the Rhine river in Germany. The Fort Myers Lorelei unfortunately lost her head and a hand in a Halloween prank years ago but we think she is still beautiful.

She arrived at the gardens on Monday January 6th.

To WELCOME her we will hold an Open House on Tuesday Feb. 18th from 10 until 2pm. Stay tuned for more info.

Happy New Year !
 As we transition to the season of winter I am reminded by my bald cypress that even though it is warm the seasons really are ever present. As with many plants and flowers this time of year they are green but just not growing as fast. However, the bald cypress are turning brown and soon will be dropping down to make beautiful mulch. The down side is that some will end up in the pool but oh well - it is a natural process.

Kay Holloway is still busy with the Lorelei project and if all goes well some time in January she will be transported to the gardens. Kay has been working with the city's Public Arts Committee to ensure this lovely statue is protected. For you snowbirds, the Lorelei was originally brought to Fort Myers from Italy by a Periwinkle Garden Club member and friend of the Edison's - Evelyn Rhea. She was donated to the city of Fort Myers in the 50's and until recently graced the front entry of the Fort Myers library downtown. Now that the new library is open off First street, she was looking for a home and the Fort Myers - Lee County Garden Council are happy to make her welcome.

Kay has coordinated with Flint & Doyle, Inc. to move this thousands of pounds of marble and swing her into place in the middle of the hibiscus area. Kay and members of the garden committee have met with EnSite Landscape Design to come up with a planting plan so look for some changes in the future. And an Open House Feb. 18 to celebrate when all is in place. January 17th we will celebrate Florida Arbor Day at Lakes Park by planting a geiger tree. Scheduled for 9 am, please join us for this event.

Lakes Park is a beautiful park over the Christmas holiday. My grandsons came down from Orlando and it is hard to compete with Mickey but the little train ride thru all the lights wowed them. My Walker, almost 5 got off and said to the conductor "I loved that train", It just won over the conductor and he asked Walker if he would like to blow the whistle; of course he just smiled and said "yes". Let us hope the simple love thru a child's eyes will be remembered thru out the year to keep our hearts light.

Yours in roses,
Debbie Wyatt-Stotter
 President



F M L C G C General Meeting - Call to order 9:30 am

Inspirational Message - Judy McCluskey	2nd Vice President's Report - Sandy Kavouras
Pledge of Allegiance	Reports of Committee Chairs (as needed)
Reading of the Minutes - Suzy Valentine, Recording Secretary	Old Business / New Business / Announcements
Corresponding Secretary - Kay Holloway	PROGRAM: Margaret Kirkpatrick - Floral Design
Financial Report - Mae Jean Nothstine, Treasurer	Adjournment
President's Report - Debbie Wyatt-Stotter	Ways & Means - 50/50 drawing -
1st Vice President's Report - Brenda Norris	

Please join us at 9:00 am for refreshments provided by **Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society**

Garden Council Meetings Dates

<p><u>BOARD MEETINGS</u> (Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRIDAY Jan. 2, 2014 • FRIDAY Feb. 7, 2014 <p>MEETINGS FROM 9:30 am TO 11:30 am</p> <p>Garden Council Headquarters 2166 Virginia Ave. Fort Myers Phone: 332-4942</p>	<p><u>GENERAL MEETINGS</u> All are Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRIDAY Jan. 10, 2014 • Hostess - Bromeliad Society • Program - Nationally acclaimed Designer - Margaret Kirkpatrick • Next Meeting March 14, 2014 	<p><u>GENERAL MEETINGS</u> MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 2ND FRIDAY OF THE MONTH EVERY OTHER MONTH SEPTEMBER TO MAY</p> <p><i>RIVERSIDE Community Center</i> 3061 E. Riverside Drive FM 33916</p> <p>HOSPITALITY: 9:00 am to 9:30 am MEETING: 9:30 am to 11:30 am</p>
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Please note the new location for our General Meetings:
Directions from South Fort Myers to Riverside Community Center. Take Fowler Street North (off Colonial Blvd). Cross over to Evans (a right turn) at Hanson or MLK. Turn right on State Rd 80 (Second Street) and follow Second street, which turns into Seaboard to Palm Beach Blvd. STAY LEFT (do not go right down Palm Beach). Jog left across Palm Beach onto Riverside Drive.

Just a reminder that we are asking each club and society to take a turn hosting the gardens on Virginia Avenue one Tuesday during season from 10 am to 1 pm. Opening the gardens to the public enables us to maintain our Botanical Garden status. Hostesses are required to open the gates and be available for visitors to answer questions. It's good to have at least two people there. It is also a great time to enjoy the gardens.

- We are moving through the list of clubs alphabetically. The clubs responsible for the next two months are as follows:
- January 7th – Estero Island Garden Club – Carol Lowery, Laura Jibben and Bonnie McClure
 - January 14th – Fiddlesticks Garden Club – need confirmation of attendees
 - January 21st – Florida Herb Enthusiasts – Debbie Hughes and another member
 - January 28th – Florida Native Plant Society – need confirmation of attendees
 - February 4th – Garden Club of Cape Coral – Ginny Huffer and two other members
 - February 11th – Garden Club of Lehigh Acres – Kathryn Patterson, Terry Pinck
 - February 18th – Gardens of the World – Sandy Kavouras, Barbara Moore, Marty Ward
 - February 25th – Greater Fort Myers Rose Society – need confirmation of attendees



Please let me know who will be representing your club on the date designated by calling 239-561-1846 or emailing cdrotosswales@yahoo.com. Thank you for helping us share the gardens with our neighbors and visitors.
Carolee Drotos
FMLCGC Garden Committee

“The Genius of Edison and the Jewels of Flowers have Strolled Together for 65 years”

Designers remember your application is due back to Pam Kollmann by Jan. 15.

The 2014 Strolling Flower Show will be held Thur. Feb 6th and Friday Feb 7th at the Bell Tower Shops in Fort Myers. This is a sanctioned event of the Periwinkle Garden Club for 65 years. Come see how the designers interpret the theme and tie in their floral creations to their store. Awards are given for the best use of roses, gladiolus, chrysanthemums, all foliage and/or tropical flowers. Bell Tower donates gift certificates and the awards are presented at a luncheon Thursday at The Forest Country Club. Lunch will begin at 12:30. Reservations must be made with **Mello Nash**, please direct any questions to Mello Nash 994-7090 or Flower Show Chairman - Pam Kollmann 872-1029.



Periwinkle Garden Club
Organized in 1948

Excerpts from Joyce's article PICK A PECK OF PICKLED PEPPERS in the Cape Coral BREEZE Nov. 15, 2013

Having worked in the Produce Department of a grocery store, I was struck by the number of people that didn't know how to tell when produce was ripe and they were seeking help. Another question arises when you want to pick produce from your garden. Finding that fine line between ripe and over ripe. Some produce can be picked early and ripen off their vine, but some, like strawberries and watermelon stop ripening after being picked.

Leaf lettuce produces rapidly and can get too big a leaf. You cannot leave produce in the garden and hold its ripeness. Plants have to be picked to keep from getting bitter, tough, stringy, pithy, and woody. The plants also suffer, because they shut down when enough growth has come about. Lettuce will become tough and bitter. To keep a plant growing, it needs to be picked. Pickling cucumbers need to be kept small for pickling, squashes get pithy and tough, okra gets woody and stringy, beans and peas dry up in pods. Another consideration is how to store and preserve picked produce. Their life has ceased to grow and deterioration is on its way unless consumed.

Use your sense of smell, touch, sight and taste to determine when to pick. Don't judge by the size or color, but by the feel, smell and slight yield of a tomato. Smell first, then gently pull and if it falls off into your hand, it is ready, if not, wait a day or so. Tug the melon vine or squash vine to see if it will slip from the fruit. Watch the colors change on the peppers, feeling the skin flesh change from firm to pliable. Gently squeeze the okra, fondle the eggplant, and see the translucence of the pea pod fill with young tender peas. Gardening has been described as a full contact sport. Tune into all your senses to become aware of the peak ripeness, flavor and nutrition. Finally, take the taste test. It's usually best to pick in the cool, early morning, or the cool evenings. Fresh fruits and vegetables tend to be very fragrant. Pick at the peak of their vibrant colors. Corn on the cob will have brown hairy silk on the outside and inside it should be white and silky. When you peel back the husk, and press a kernel with your thumb, it should ooze milky white, not clear discharge.

Tomatoes depend on whether they are "determinate" that ripen all at the same time and cease ripening, or "indeterminate" which flower and set fruit until they die. Tomatoes have sugars and acids that give them their flavor which will decrease if left on the vine until perfectly red.. Don't refrigerate them—that will kill the flavor. Ripen them at room temperature.

The rule for fresh, crunchy cucumbers is about six to eight inches, with a medium to dark green color showing peak ripeness. They are at their best when they are uniformly dark green and crisp. Remove old fruits from the vine that more new fruits may develop.

Broccoli needs a tight head of florets. Look for the floret to be compact, dense and firmly closed. Don't let them open into a bloom of yellow flowers - the stalk is way past its prime.

Green beans require little fuss. They can vine or be bush beans, according to their variety. Pick when 4 to 6 inches long. They return nitrogen to the soil. Remember, they snap when ripe

Beets shoulders will protrude out of the soil line when they are ready. They are best at one and one fourth inch to two inches in diameter. You can eat the leaf tops as greens anytime they are 4 to 6 inches long.

Kale and Swiss Chard are harvested by breaking off the outer leaves when they are 8 to 10 inches long, as new leaves continue to grow in the center of each plant.

Cantaloupes ripen and the stems separate from the fruit. They will have tan or yellowish color between their webbing surface patterns. Cut the stem, don't pull, a damaged wound at the end leaves an opening for rot. After harvesting, they can be held at room temperature 1 to 3 days until the blossom end softens.

The watermelons base that is sitting on the ground will turn yellow, rather than white or green, once the melon is a lovely green. You can do the old thump test, but the ultimate test is when you plug it and taste it. Watermelons will not continue to ripen after harvest.

Okra should be harvested immature and tender,(2 to 3 inches long). The pods must be picked every other day if you want them to remain productive.

Herbs need to be kept cut back or pinched to keep them producing, and blooms kept off. Blooming changes the flavor.

Remember—vegetables and time wait for no man. Each vegetable has a precise time for harvesting. Twenty-four hours can send them into an over-ripe, bitter, tough stage. Thanks trees, for our fresh air.

Joyce Comingore: Master Gardener; Hibiscus enthusiast; member of the Garden Club of Cape Coral.

Local Farmer's Markets

Fenway South	Mon. 2 - 6 pm	11500 Fenway South Drive (JetBlue Park) off Daniel's Parkway Fort Myers www.buylocallee.com
River District	Thur. 7 - 1 pm	Under the Caloosahatchee bridge in Centennial park off W. First St. - Fort Myers 321-7524
Lakes Park	Fri. 9 - 1 pm	Free Parking - Lots of fresh veggies 7330 Gladiolus Drive, Fort Myers 533-7375
Cape Coral	Sat. 8 - 1 pm	Downtown, SE 47th Terr. and SE 10th Place, over 100 vendors capecoralfarmersmarket.com
GreenMarket	Sat. 9 - 1 pm	Alliance of the Arts, 10091 McGregor Blvd. - Fort Myers 99-2787



Tropicana Garden Club presents "Fun with Herbs"
 Plan to attend the first "FUN WITH HERBS" class Jan. 23rd from 1 - 3pm at Gwen Bomarito's home, 11527 East Palm Drive. This is the 3rd season that Gwen is offering these classes and all are welcome. Most meeting will be held at the Tropicana craft house, off McGregor near John Morris Rd. We meet bi-weekly throughout the winter season. There is a small fee for expenses of the 5 or 6 weeks series of lessons. There will be an herb display with information and samples of recipes to try. Herb series run from Jan. through March. If questions, please contact Gwen Bomarito at 239 985-0299.



National Garden Club, PLANT IT PINK

The new bird houses are in and our wonderful handyman Rhey completed a new mounting system that will allow us to display up to 10. Check it out when you visit the gardens.

Jan. - Feb. 2014 Calendar of Events

Gardens of the World Margaret Kirkpatrick will be doing a program of Flower Show Designs and CFAA (Creative Floral Arranger of America) Designs and sharing her secrets with us.	January 9, 2014	Lunch 1pm - program 2 - 4 pm	\$30 includes lunch
"Fun with Flowers" Margaret Kirkpatrick 's version includes the container and flowers to complete your design, bring your own scissors.	January 10, 2014	1 - 3 pm	FMLCGC headquarters
CFAA Seminar (Creative Floral Arrangers of the Americas)	Feb. 20-23, 2014	Marriott Orlando Airport	cfaofa.org
Pine Island Garden Gala	Saturday Feb. 22nd 9 - 2 pm - Phillips Park	Loads of plant vendors, demos and food	pineislandgardenclub.org
SW Florida Burrowing Owl Festival Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife	Saturday Feb. 22rd 10 - 4 pm	Plant vendors, info, demos and entertainment	Rotary Park 55505 Rose Garden Rd. , CC ccfriendsofwildlife.org
Grow The Garden An elegant afternoon of Chamber Music and an art auction benefiting the Lakes Park Enrichment Foundation A fundraiser to assist in their mission to create a Children's Garden at the Park to educate and excite	Sunday March 23	3:30	St Charles Yacht Club LakesPark.org
Spotlight on the South Florida Center Stage Hilton - St. Petersburg Bayfront	April 12-13 April 14-16	The Deep South Region Annual Convention FFGC 88th Annual Convention	and see the FFGC website or your Florida gardener for complete information

FOR THE LATEST INFO CHECK OUR WEBSITE FMLCGARDENCOUNCIL.COM

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