

Key West Garden Club Clean and Green Policy

The environmental health of our Garden and of our community is one of the primary focuses of our organization. With this focus in mind, our Clean and Green Committee under the leadership of Hazel Hans constantly reviews our environmental practices and procedures. We have instituted many changes, using the guiding principles of the Four R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot. You will be pleased to learn how much progress we have made in making our Garden "clean and green."

REDUCE:

- All light bulbs have been switched from incandescent to compact fluorescent lights.
- The cleaner used in the Fort is citrus-based, a less toxic alternative than most other cleaners, since we have volunteers with allergies who have problems with strong cleaning chemicals. Vinegar and baking soda are also used in cleaning solutions.
- Pest control is now taken care of in-house, using household products such as boric acid, sugar and baking soda instead of toxic sprays.
- Our water cooler filters FKA water, so we no longer order and store bottles of water. We do order single-use plastic cups, but they are recyclable.
- Our irrigation system is on timers and irrigation is done primarily at night.
- Exterior safety lights are timed to go on only at night.
- We are reducing our use of black plastic bags for yard waste. (See Recycle.)
- All mulch used in the Garden is from Golden Bough, i.e., from tree trimming in Key West and not purchased commercial mulch.
- As much as possible, new plants in the Garden come from our own Propagation Nursery, and these plants are often grown from cuttings from our own members' gardens.

REUSE:

- We use rags for cleaning instead of paper towels. The rags are washed weekly. (Note: We have a large supply of small blue towels which are excellent for glass cleaning as well as other cleaning and painting jobs. Members are welcome to take a few of these towels home to use instead of single-use paper towels.)
- Envelopes and zip-lock bags are re-used to give out information to board members and name-tags to volunteers before events.
- Propagation solicits used plastic planting pots from members instead of buying new. Plastic plant markers are cleaned and re-used.
- Soil from "defunct" plants in Propagation is collected and spread in the Garden.
- "Pop tops" are collected and given to the pediatric cancer center at the hospital in Fort Myers to help raise funds so that parents have a place to stay while their children are undergoing treatment.
- Old wooden benches are renovated to make into fabulous new benches within the Garden.

RECYCLE:

- We have a recycle bin by each trash can inside the Fort and five large recycle bins by the green gazebo for events.
- Volunteers regularly walk the interior and exterior of the Fort, picking up litter and separating trash from recyclable litter.
- All cardboard boxes are recycled.
- The membership applications are printed on recycled paper, and the yearbook is now distributed via PDF and not printed except for when a new member joins.
- Our new benches are 60% recycled plastic and 40% natural stone.

ROT:

- Volunteers bring in used coffee grounds to spread around the roses and gardenias.
- Compost piles have been established in various areas of the Garden to create more soil. (This also eliminates some of our yard waste, which means that much less has to be hauled away.) Volunteers in the Garden and in Propagation cut up prunings as they work, to add to the compost piles.

IN ADDITION:

- A major ongoing project is the pickup of litter along Atlantic Boulevard from 1800 Atlantic to the Beach Club, as well as the two walkways to the beach through the City's nature preserves (Berg and Kitso) along that stretch. We also monitor and remove invasive plants from those areas.
- A major flood control/irrigation project was completed within the past few years.
- Our Garden has been designated a "Certified Wildlife Habitat" by the National Wildlife Federation. It has met stringent requirements and "provides the four basic habitat elements needed for wildlife to thrive: food, water, cover and places to raise young." (One of the elements in this mix is the bat house up on the hill near the desert garden, which Fran Ford had installed.)

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED:

We must keep up our efforts to adopt behaviors that will nurture and protect our environment in our personal, professional and community lives. If you can think of any other way our Club can improve its practices and procedures, please contact the Clean and Green Committee, c/o Hazel Hans (305-296-3177; hanskeywest@gmail.com).

Thank you,
Your Clean and Green Committee