



KEY WEST GARDEN CLUB

Winter News Letter

2018



Message from the President

What a difference a couple of months make!

Our Gardens at West Martello are now all redesigned and replanted, thanks to our amazing group of volunteers, who come every Monday morning and work their socks off!

We are so fortunate to have such hard working and generous garden club members, many have returned for the Season from the chilly North and many new members who came to help us after the storm and stayed with us. The new fountain is now complete, primarily thanks to Chuck Zenter, volunteer extraordinaire with help from the indefatigable Robert Parker.

The black bamboo and bright red Lipstick palms on either side of the fountain make a dramatic entrance to the gardens, and are already much photographed.

Opposite is the newly designed “Jurassic” or “Dinosaur” garden – a rare collection of plants which were around millions of years ago, in the time of the dinosaurs; and in the inner courtyard is a white perfume garden – full of jasmine, gardenias, sweet almond and Fiddlewood...the white blooms look beautiful against the red brick of the fort and the perfume wafts throughout the courtyard as visitors wander through.

On the side of the hill, where the majestic Pandanus, or Screw pine used to be, we have planted a collection of rare palms from Cuba and the Caribbean; it was incredibly hard work to dig out all the pesky Pandanus roots and to terrace the side of the hill, thank goodness for our strong guys, who made it look easy!

The Colonel’s Garden, at the front of the main entrance has also had a total “Make-over”; this is our “Front window” for passers by and needs to be inviting and interesting. We are trialing a number of new plants there as well as replanting some perennial favorites, so keep an eye out for it next time you come to the Club.

Finally the newly restored Butterfly Garden is a feast for the senses – a blaze of color, fabulous fragrances and literally hundreds of butterflies of all types, now this is a huge hit for all our visitors, young & old alike!

The recent Plant Sale and guided tours of the restored gardens were a huge success and a real gift to the community; it was fabulous to see so many joyful faces that weekend;

Just 5 months after Hurricane Irma, we have risen from the ravages of the storm and given birth to a new garden and a re-energized Garden Club!

I couldn’t be more proud of this wonderful Club, I am so fortunate to be part of!

Rosi



Butterfly Garden

Donna Farrow, Bridget Dawson, Marisol Mitnacht. Laurie Tifts and a host of other volunteers have recreated this haven for Cassius Blue, Swallowtail, Gulf Fritillary, Monarch, Sulphur and some Skipper butterflies have been seen. A wonderful place to sit quietly and observe.



The Portlandia is in bloom and the fragrant White Garden is growing and filling in.



Birds of a feather???

On the left is a resident hawk who is very happy hanging out in our trees. On the right is our “resident” chicken who has been hanging out in the kitchen and laying eggs on top of a storage bin. Whatever makes you happy...



Hard Workers

Finishing off the fountain was hard work done by Jeff Ware, Caro, Robert Parker and Chuck Zenter.



We had (cute) Navy volunteers, who were here from California. They helped with cleaning up the screw pine roots. In the middle right, "Bull" was also a major digger. Our own volunteers planted the Cuban palms and did the mulching. This **Palm Garden** will grow into an interesting focal point up by the white gazebo.

The Dinosaur Garden

This garden has the ancient plants: Dioons, Cycads and Zamias. It also has our own funky "Rasta Rooster" sculpture that was donated by the artist Bounce Margil.



Some of our Orchid Crew placing orchids in trees by the water fountain. Our orchids look so beautiful all over the Garden.



Plant Sale And Garden Tour

Our decision to not have the Garden Tours this winter was due to the damage to our prospective gardens by “Irmageddon”. This was the right choice. We had loads of customers for our plant sale and the tour of our own Garden was a huge success.

The truck arrives with plants from the wholesale nursery.



Jane Tiedeman, Rosi Ware, Sue Sullivan, Kitty Somerville and Sharon Lieberman were some of the volunteers who helped with the organization of the plants.



Quiet beauty before the onslaught of plant-hungry visitors.

Many thanks to Mary Brady who organized the sale and made sure that Soroa Orchids arrived. We sold many orchid fertilizer balls with Robin Robinson in her finest ball-selling regalia.

Rosi Ware had her contingent of docents who gave informative tours of their areas of the Garden.

Jane Tiedeman organized the volunteers for selling the plants. Kitty Somerville, Sharon Thomas and Sharon Lieberman and Sue Sullivan were instrumental in getting the plants. Elaine Belanger and Hazel Hans and others moved lots of merchandise. Mary Olson, Lou Anne Steely, Sharon Jones and friends manned the refreshment station in the Orchid Arbor and we had an amazing group of volunteers who just made this entire event work smoothly.

The Club made money, Propagation got some plants and we made gardeners in the Keys very happy.

Winter Luncheon

The Winter Luncheon was held at the Hyatt Centric on Front Street. It was well attended and a beautiful day!

This gives volunteers a chance to catch up and dress up. And, everyone went home with an Anthurium!!

Thanks to Jill Benado and Marlynn Wolkoff for helping to put this together.

Also pictured are some of the gorgeous **Floral Designs** by our talented designers.





Memories New and Old



This couple was married in the Garden eleven years ago. They returned with their family. (They have been busy!)

They were disappointed to see the Strangler Fig had been toppled by Irma but were very impressed by how beautiful the Garden looked and much sunnier.

Below, we have Angela Adams, her singing partner Mef and Mike Kellog on guitar.

This was a new venture for the Club.

A lovely afternoon of music for everyone. It was a gorgeous Key West Day and this was open to the public. Visitors to the Garden got to see beautiful plants and hear great music. Thanks to the generosity of Angela and her friends for donating their tips to the Club for Irma restoration.



Unsung Hero

This year the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys honored all the non-profits in the Keys as opposed to individuals in the groups.

This was a tribute to thank these organizations for their roles in helping the Community of the Keys to get back on its feet after Hurricane Irma.

The Garden Club is amazingly fortunate to have had so many volunteers help out even though they had their own disasters to deal with.



The 10:30 Educational Session

The Monday morning “10:30” is still a very popular part of volunteering at the Garden Club. Members give short informational talks on plants that are in the garden or that are propagated for sale. And, we often have Mimosas and scones because we just have so many things to celebrate like birthdays and fertilizer parties!



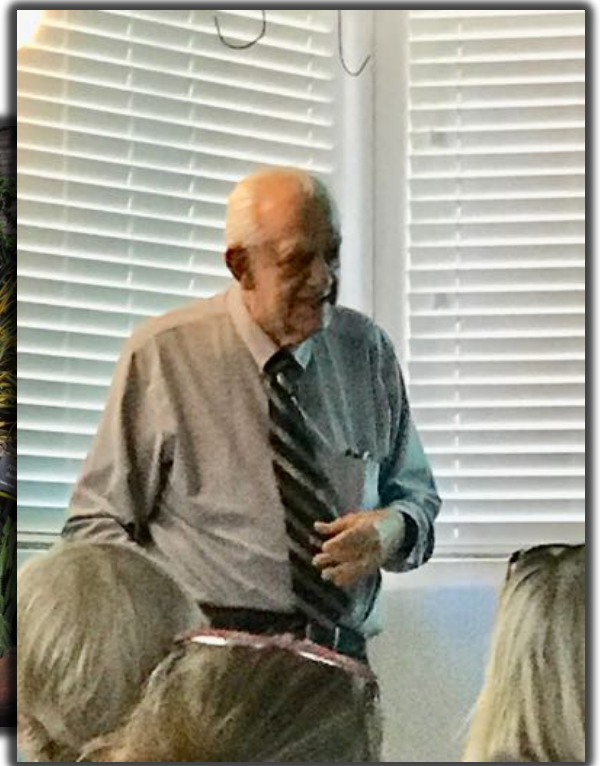
General Meetings

Our General meetings have been really well attended. We have had such interesting speakers, thanks to Jane Tiedeman, who put together the programs this season.

Bill Irwin of Florida Keys Community College spoke to the Club about the latest group of neonics that affect the good insects especially bees.

Tom Hambright gave a talk about the history of West Martello and its relationship with the Garden Club

Our next meeting is April 5th. Jeff Stotts' topic will be “Using Native Plants to Enhance Quality of Life” Please join us.



Our rapt audience.



Wedding Planner Event

Our wonderful Receptionists Elaine Belanger, Kathleen Gillis and Ron Zemlicka put on an event for the event planners in Key West. The goal was to have the planners see how well the Gardens were doing after the hurricane. They had separate areas of the fort arranged to show how events could be set up. Hazel Hans was also very involved. Food was donated and Lou Anne Steely helped to offer refreshments. Amy Lee Lay of Catered Affairs arranged the vendors. So much initiative!!!



The Birdcage Renovation

Propagation has taken over the care of the “birdcage”. The room was totally taken apart. Jeff Ware put in some irrigation. The ladies have added interesting plants with varying heights.



ET VOILA!!



Around the Garden



Buddha and his gecko friend; Sharon Jones and her new favorite orchid; Sharon Lieberman and her beautiful plant wall hanging; a very happy monarch on a Desert Rose (We **do** have milkweed!)



Namaste

Thank you for photo contributions from Kitty Somerville, Lynne Bentley-Kemp, Hazel Hans and Robin Robinson.

Thank you to Christa Varacalli for proofreading.

Sue Sullivan, Editor