



KEY WEST GARDEN CLUB

Winter News Letter **2019**



Message from the President

What a wonderful “Season” we have had at the Garden Club this year! We have been blessed with a fabulous group of positive hard-working volunteers every Monday, who have collectively made the gardens the best they have ever been!

Everywhere there are beautiful blooms, delicious fragrances; and lots of happy butterflies, birds and bees enjoying it all!

Propagation has been selling our gorgeous plants continually, much to the delight of many of our visitors who want to take something home with them.

Our orchid collection has doubled in size, creating many “WOWs” from our visitors and members alike – check out the amazing photographs which Lynne Bentley-Kemp has been posting on our Facebook page every week!

We’ve hosted The Duchess of Rutland, who told us all about her magnificent home at Belvoir Castle and the recently found, “lost” garden plans by Capability Brown; the Key West Community Orchestra gave a charming concert in the gardens as part of the island-wide “Tribute to Wood” Festival; and we have had an excellent series of member meetings with great speakers every first Thursday of the month.

Thank you all for helping to make the Key West Garden Club an exceptional one; full of positive energy, serving our community and providing a broad education of tropical horticulture for everyone.

Rosi
President

Winter Luncheon

Our luncheon, held at the Hyatt Centric, was such a beautiful setting! A good time was had by all. Thanks to the members who turned out.





Floral Design had some unique and interesting arrangements these past few months. Thank you to the Floral Design crew who keep adding lovely creations to gaze at.



Guerilla Gardening

Marlyn Brita, Shelli Chase, Celeste Fehlig, Rosi Ware and Janet Borch helped out with the new Duval Street closure by adding plants to three of the planters in the 600 block of Duval. It appears that the closure of Duval St has been a success so far. These members added to the beautification of the street. The shopkeepers will keep watering the planters.



Unsung Hero

Since 2001, the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys has been hosting the annual Unsung Heroes event to



recognize the tireless efforts of our community's volunteers. Each Monroe County 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is invited to nominate one Unsung Hero to recognize that individual's unpaid contributions over the past year. Each Unsung Hero is presented with a certificate of appreciation at our celebratory luncheon on January 25th. Our hero this year was Martin Petersilia, who

worked exceedingly hard during the summer and fall months to make sure the gardens do well. Martin has since had to leave the Keys but we appreciate all that he has done for the Club.

Garden Tours



A big thank you to Mary Olson for heading up our Garden Tours this winter and to Rosi Ware for finding the gardens. We sold around 780 tickets and were financially quite successful.

Plant ID and mapping was led by Kitty Somerville. We used some of the new galvanized plant ID signs and they were placed strategically in some of the gardens. Visitors appreciated that extra info.

Our host gardens were very welcoming and cooperative for the tours, both prior to and during the tour days. head docents did an outstanding job of helping their docents as well as guests enjoy the gardens to the fullest.

Jane Dawkins, the owner of the garden at 2026 Staples Ave, graciously and generously hosted a fabulous After Party on Saturday evening following the closing of the tours. All homeowners, head docents and docents were invited. About 45 people were able to attend a lovely event with canapes and beverages. Thank you, Jane!



Kids and Fountains

Everyone enjoys the Gardens. These kids had a great time wandering around one beautiful morning and ended up at the fountain to rest and stick their hands in the water and splash each other (of course)!

Fun Fact: One of our visors was purchased for the head gardener to the Royal Family in Oslo, Norway!

Salt Ponds Nature Walk



Christa Varacalli and Mary Brady organized a plant identification walk in Little Hamaca Park in Key West. It was a lovely morning and we learned a lot about native plants and mangroves. The Nature Trail at Little Hamaca is so pretty and quiet: it has a boardwalk and



footpath winding through a mangrove forest, salt flats, and transitional and hardwood hammock communities. Mary and Christa did a fantastic job with preparation and presentation.

In the Fran Ford White Crown Pigeon Preserve we learned about poisonwood trees (don't touch!!), the food for white crown pigeons.

Wood Concert



The Key West Community Orchestra, with its 13-member homage to wooden violins and cellos, performed at the Key West Garden Club during the Studios of Key West's *Tribute to Wood* month. This enchanting evening performance was held in the gardens and it was perfect. The music was delightful, the birds sang along, and the weather cooperated. Their performance of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* was exceptional. We had an audience of over 60 and it was so nice to have them perform next to our wood sculpture "Burning Spirit" carved by Perry Arnold.

Monday Morning Sessions



Hazel Hans explained the differences in native palms: *Thrinax morisii* and *Thrinax radiata* among them.



Rosi Ware gave out information about our cactus garden by the white gazebo. Brain Cactus is a great hiding spot for small iguanas and is very difficult to cut back. Many thanks to the brave volunteers who did that job!



Sharon Thomas and the propagation crew showed members how to propagate rosemary. Trailing and upright forms were used. Heavenly smells.

Succulent Gardens

Sharon Lieberman, who is a master at succulent gardens, gave a lecture at the Marathon Garden Club. It was well received and well attended. Sharon donated one of her creations to the 50/50 raffle at the Marathon Club and she also sold some of her other garden dishes. Sharon has really neat ideas for her plants. Some of Sharon's gardens can be found in our Plants for Sale area of the courtyard. They need bright light, water once a week, and make sure there is good drainage.

Party!!



They say all work and no play.... Well, we **do** know how to play. Mimosas, Darren Robert's scones and Patti Rodriguez' muffins. We are lucky gardeners!

Knitting and Orchids

There is a group of knitters who regularly spend time in the gardens. They create new pieces while surrounded by our plants and orchids. Beauty is inspiring.



Hard Work and Great Results

On the hill by the gazebo our volunteers keep the plants thinned and watered. The *Gaillardia pulchella* or “Indian blanketflower” are flourishing on the path by the fence overlooking the beach. It is like a seaside meadow.



The lower photo is of Kitty Somerville's cats. She is a “grower”!!

Volunteer Thank You Lunch.

Mary Olson and Lou Ann Steely headed up the *thank you* for our volunteers. Pulled pork and chicken sliders and all sorts of wonderful salads, side dishes and great deserts rounded up the meal. We have wonderful cooks!!!

Rosi pointed out how the only way the gardens could look so gorgeous is the hard work and dedication that our volunteers put into all projects.



Happy Spring If you are leaving to go back North, safe travels and don't forget us.

Spread the word about our beautiful site by liking our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/gardeninafort/> and sharing on social media.

Thank you for photos from Lynne Bentley-Kemp, Kitty Somerville, Sue Sullivan and Robin Robinson.
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Editor, Sue Sullivan

