



KEY WEST GARDEN CLUB

Fall Newsletter
2019



Message from the President

Happy New Year! Happy New Decade!

I do hope that you all had happy, relaxing holidays catching up with family and friends and I look forward to seeing you in the new year.

2020 promises to be an exciting one for the Garden Club with two major construction projects happening at West Martello.

The first is a major renovation of the brickwork throughout the fort and all the exterior walls. The specialist contractors, from Massachusetts, have already repointed and refurbished the bricks in the bird cage, dining room and turret room....the quality of the work is first class; please do take a look around next time you are at the gardens.

It is a long, slow process so we expect the work to be ongoing for most of 2020.

The second project has already started and should be completed by March. A different set of expert artisan contractors, from Minnesota, are fixing the ceilings/roofs of the bunkers (AKA "the dungeons") an extremely difficult job, resulting in the pavilion not being open whilst this project is ongoing. The Peace Garden above this area will need to be completely redesigned once the project is complete.

Meanwhile the gardens have been enjoying great growing weather! Plenty of rain and sunshine, resulting in a very lush and colorful garden! Huge thanks to all of our Monday volunteers returning and helping get the gardens back into shape, as well as complete refurbishment of "The Barn" storage area in Propagation.....under the leadership of Mike Sheehan and Chuck Zenter....Thank you both.

Jane Tiedeman led the Holiday decorating team in transforming the Fort and Gardens into a Magical wonderland, in quite difficult circumstances, given all the construction work!!

Christa Varacalli led a small team in completely redesigning our website...please check it out at www.keywestgardenclub.com...We will be using this as a springboard for rebranding the Garden Club in 2020...watch out for more news in the coming months!

Our first Member meeting of the new year will be held on **Thursday 2nd January and will be held at the large Conference room at the Gato Building on Simonton Street, home of Monroe County.**

The County are kindly letting us use their facilities whilst our pavilion/meeting room is out of action whilst the bunkers ceilings are being fixed. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Wishing each and every one of you a happy & healthy 2020!

Rosi

President

Plant Sale

The Plant and Art Sale was again a successful event. Kudos to Mary Brady, who did a masterful job of getting it all to run smoothly. The art vendors did very well and helped lots of folks with their Christmas gift-giving.

The plant-selling portion of the event was huge. Jane Tiedeman and her group were magnificent in taking the lead in moving plants from Propagation and from the truck, and putting together the selling area. Kitty Somerville and her crew manned the selling, cashiering and carting, which was very organized. The buyers had a very good experience. People were very pleased with plants, the knowledge given and the service we rendered. The signage put together by Propagation really helped in the selling of plants.

A trip to Ingram's Nursery in Homestead is a necessary step for the Plant Sale. Sharon Thomas and Kitty Somerville have developed a good relationship with the staff at Ingram's. Sharon T., Kitty, Sharon Lieberman and Sue Sullivan made the trip to buy extra plants to be delivered before the sale.

The weather was perfect and we give a huge shout-out to all the volunteers who worked in all the areas for the sale.

Mary Olson, Lou Ann Steely and their gang were kept very busy at the food booth.

"The Grilling Guys" were the best! Brats sold out!

Mike Sheehan, Chuck Pratt, Don Tiedeman and Jerry Lieberman were part of our "wagon wrestlers", gate checkers and dog sitters.





There are still great plants available. Come check it out!

Work at the Fort



Kitty Somerville's "watercolor pic"



The Bird Cage Room is almost done. The lattice work was replaced, the arch was restructured and bricks redone. Propagation has done a fabulous job of replacing plants and making it "Picture Perfect".



The shed in Propagation was falling apart because of termites. Our great crew redid the shelves and laid tile. We are solucky to have such hardworking guys like Mike Sheehan and Chuck Zenter.

Tim Tschanz has been working on refinishing the exterior of the doors to the Pavilion. The finish was in bad shape as the contractor had used interior urethane on those very expensive exterior storm doors.

We have a temporary fix on the bridal gate. Dave Deck installed some metal angles so the gate could not be lifted off its hinges. Lou Langois is going to work on this to make it more attractive but still effective. Earlier this fall the gate was found off the hinges enough so someone could squeeze through. Butch Steely is always at the ready to pitch in. He, Lou Anne Steely and Hazel Hans(Event and Fort Chairs) did an amazing job of reorganizing the dungeons so the construction company, IMR, can do restoration.

October meeting:

Retired professor of photography, Lynne Bentley Kemp, extolled the virtues of the cameras found in iPhones. She showed the Garden Club members slide after slide of mind-boggling photographs taken with her new 11 PRO iPhone. The most important thing is focus. A sharp picture is vital. Second in importance is composition. The Key West Garden Club shows off a landscape also affected by the surrounding Civil War fort structure. The outdoor art adds texture and playful images amid the greenery.



10:30s

Among some of the 10:30 sessions, members learned how to plant pea shoots with Kitty and decorate wreaths with Jane Tiedeman.



Fertilizer Party

A few times a year we fertilize the plants. Everyone brings a bucket and it goes quickly.

Followed by muffins and mimosas... Best part!!



Denny was a great asset.

Gift Certificates now available.

You can now use a gift certificate at the Garden Club. What a great idea for any gardening friends! The certificate can be used for merchandise, or plants or even membership. They can be purchased at the front desk.

Trip Advisor Review December 2019 - Thank you to all who help keep the Gardens beautiful:

"A green oasis by the sea

One of my favorite spots to visit when I'm in Key West. The historic old West Martello Tower is filled with a lush array of tropical plants in every hue of green imaginable. The fragrance garden is especially lovely, where blooms from sweet almond, gardenia, and other flowers scent the air.

It's a nice spot to recharge and relax, far from the crowds on Duval. I was joined on the courtyard of the butterfly garden by an inquisitive pair of ibis and some Monarchs. And the crashing surf nearby was the perfect accompaniment.

A bonus...it's done up beautifully for Christmas right now. And free, though donations are welcome. Some cute items for sale, too, if you want a unique souvenir."

Los Angeles, California

Sent to our receptionists:

"Good afternoon,

I want to thank you and complement all your hard work! My husband and I were biking around town and came upon your lovely building and beautiful landscaping. We are visiting from Denver and couldn't pass up such an inviting stop. We were greeted by a friendly staff member and invited to walk the paths and visit the gardens. The work involved in keeping everything trimmed and manicured is most time-consuming. I applaud your volunteers! I am so glad that you are able to use the old fort. The brick and walls complement your horticultural efforts beautifully. I was amazed seeing the before and after pictures of the devastation of the hurricanes that hit the gardens--the work you have gone to and your accomplishments show magnificently in the photos!

Thank you for making this world a prettier place."

Darla and Jim Miller, Denver



Save the Date.

The **winter luncheon** will be **January 26th** at the Hyatt Centric, 601 Front Street in Key West from 12 to 2 PM. The cost is \$35. It is a buffet and includes a drink ticket. This is such a beautiful location and is always a great way to catch up with friends. Information can be found on the Garden Club web site and payments can be made online. Reservations must be received by January 10th. Contact Sharon Jones (305) 766-3386, tintaj5510@gmail.com or Pam Van Soest (707) 326-1106, pvansoest123@gmail.com

You can sign up at the website at <https://keywestgardenclub.com/club/luncheon/> . □

Dues Reminder:

Don't forget to renew! Membership dues are due by January 1. You can pay online at our website at <http://www.keywestgardenclub.com/Membership.html>. Remember to sign up for your online account and private password while you are there! Remember we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit and your donations are tax-deductible.

Decorations

A Huge Holiday Thank You to Jane Tiedeman and her decorating gang. We were constrained this year because of the work being done on the Fort, but it all looks so festive!



**Wishing you all the best of Holidays and peace
and good health in 2020!**

Thank you for photos from Lynne Bentley-Kemp, Kitty Somerville, Hazel Hans, Sue Sullivan, Robin Robinson and Eloise Pratt. Thank you to Christa Varacalli for proofing.

Editor, Sue Sullivan