



Spring Newsletter 2021



Message from the President

It's now June and the weather is getting more tropical...higher temperatures with the promise of rain most days...which our plants are enjoying!

We have all enjoyed a wonderful Spring in the gardens; particular high spots were giving a number of school children tours of the gardens.

Mary Olson and I really enjoyed taking groups of 7-year-olds; 12-year-olds and a great mixed group of homeschoolers on docented tours of our gardens at West Martello...it is wonderful to experience the gardens through their eyes and to see how much they all got out of the tours. So much enthusiasm, and a surprising amount of knowledge about plants, wildlife and the environment overall. It

definitely gives one hope for the next generation.

The homeschoolers actually turned their visit into a 4-part "documentary/vlog" which we have posted on our website <https://keywestgardenclub.com/key-west-garden-club-news-blog/> ("*School Children Visit the Garden*"). Do check it out!

A largescale brick restoration project is happening as I write this. The County received a FEMA grant to replace the broken arch and damaged citadel tower in the middle of the gardens—both were damaged during Hurricane Irma when our giant strangler fig tree fell on top of them! IMR, the company doing the work, are very skilled artisans, ensuring that the finished work will look stunningly beautiful, as if it had just been built in the 1860s.

The project should be completed by 30th June. I do encourage all of you to come visit and marvel at their work.

Finally, I want to give a shout-out to our fabulous orchid team...this year our orchids throughout the garden were spectacular, particularly the Phalaenopsis growing on the Lignum Vitae tree in the courtyard. It must have been photographed a thousand times by happy visitors!

And kudos to the butterfly garden team. The butterfly garden is looking so bright and joyful, attracting hundreds of all types of butterflies, much to enjoyment of our visitors, young and old.

It takes a large family to keep our gardens and fort so beautifully maintained and I thank you, our Garden Club family, from the bottom of my heart for all you do.

Yours,

Rosi
President

Key West Garden Club Board 2021-2022

Front row: (left to right) Rosi Ware, Kitty Somerville, Cathie Gottschalk, Sharon Thomas, Sharon Lieberman, Lynne Bentley-Kemp.

Second row: Sharon Jones, Christa Varacalli, Sue Sullivan, Mary Olson, Mary Brady, Pam Van Soest, Lou Ann Steely, Jane Tiedeman, Hazel Hans

Who's Who:

Director/President and Garden Chair: Rosi Ware

Director/VP/Fort Chair: Hazel Hans

Director/VP/Propagation Chair: Kitty Somerville

Director/Recording Secretary: Lynne Bentley-Kemp

Director/Corresponding &

Communications Secretary: Sue Sullivan

Director/Treasurer: Sharon Lieberman

Director/Garden Tours: Mary Olson

Director/Plant Sale: Mary Brady

Director/Events and Receptionists: Lou Ann Steely

Director/Programs: Cathie Gottschalk

Director/Membership: Christa Varacalli



Director/Strategic Planning and Finance Consultant: Sharon Thomas

Director/Orchid Chair and Luncheon: Sharon Jones

Director/Luncheon and Orchid Fertilizer Balls: Pam Van Soest

Work Around the Gardens



All of the bed in front of the Pavilion/Meeting Room was dug out, leaving 12" brick exposed for Dave Deck (our Unsung Hero) to waterproof the bricks. Dave also replaced rotted beams.

All the plants were potted up and the Propagation team found a great place to house them all temporarily.

Paul Shou installed the French drain, and finally the plants were replanted in a much lower bed!

Fabulous Teamwork!

Rosi's roses



The Butterfly Garden in all its glory

Plant Clinic

We now have a monthly plant clinic with [Michelle Leonard-Mularz](#), the IFAS Extension Agent, and a team of master gardeners. There is a wide range of plant problems presented for them to review. On this day scale, mites, caterpillars were all examined and discussed.



St. Paddy's Day and Thank You

Lou Ann Steely, Mary Olson and Shelly Chase, giving out the delicious goodies for the volunteers.



Masonry Work

Work has begun on the restoration of the arch that was destroyed when Hurricane Irma toppled our giant Ficus. The Citadel restoration is progressing quickly, as well as the outer walls.



Breaktime

Our volunteers occasionally do take a break and even create their own shade.

It is hot and sweaty work. Thank you all for working so hard!



Visitors - Pandemic and Post-Pandemic



The Mourning Dove was feasting on the Crested Cockscomb Celosia in the Butterfly Garden and a Monarch butterfly wanted to have some too. The dove won the standoff.

The Gardens and Kids

Local homeschooled children visited the Garden recently and are sharing their experiences while learning how to create online videos. This is from Part 2 of their *Key West Garden Club West Martello Tower Adventure*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQOkrJDzLT0>. The other 3 parts can be seen on our new website blog page: <https://keywestgardenclub.com/key-west-garden-club-news-blog/>. The link is on our homepage menu.



Key West High School Plein Air Painting



From Shannon Perkins, KWHs Art Educator

“Thank you for allowing Key West High School students to plein air paint at West Martello Gardens in June of 2021. On behalf of my students, we appreciate you! This was an awesome

experience that helped teens learn painting techniques, and also encouraged positive social interaction. Below are a few pictures from our visit. You may see more pictures of our plein air workshop on *facebook@kwhsart*. “





Orchids Rule!!

Scholarship



The Key West Garden Club (KWGC) awards the Lois Kitching Scholarship to an individual interested in pursuing a career that reflects the interests of the Club's membership. A grant of \$2000 per year for four years is given to a qualified applicant. Our new recipient, Marsella Munoz, will be graduating this year from Key West High School and will be attending Florida State University with a major in biological sciences. She was in the *Take Stock in Children* program. Her mentor was Garden Club member Ruth Reiter. Marsella has been very active with coral reef restoration and other environmental issues and is an amazing young woman.

Birdcage

Carol Borland has been watching over the Birdcage area and it is thriving under her care. Her husband Ralph has painted all the birdcages that peek out of the foliage.



Romance in the Gardens

Patrick proposed to Paula on their trip to Key West. She said YES!



Aren't we a gorgeous setting for a wedding!?!



And there this is sweet story:

Jill Tharp, a wedding planner in Marathon, never had the wedding-dress experience herself, but at 53 she bought 'the dress' and her husband of 5 years agreed to have those special wedding photos taken in the gardens of the Key West Garden Club. "It's her favorite place."

Monday Plant Sales-

The Key West Garden Club offers ornamental and native shrubs and trees for sale every Monday morning from 9:30 to 11:30, with experts to assist with any questions. For information call 305-294-3210.

Come and wander through our Propagation area and give some plants a forever home.



The Key West Garden Club is magical.



Thank you for photo contributions from Lynne Bentley-Kemp, Eloise Pratt, Kitty Somerville, Rosi Ware and Sue Sullivan. Thank you to Christa Varacalli for proofreading.

Editor, Sue Sullivan