



Spring Newsletter 2023

Message from the President

Hello from beautiful Key West!



As you may have heard, it gets a bit warmer in the summer months in Key West. Although, I find the views even more spectacular this time of year! The water is more azure, the days become a bit lazier, and we start our days earlier to allow us to get our work done so we can enjoy the waters -- albeit pool or ocean. This also means our diligent summer volunteers show up a little earlier to the garden on Monday mornings. We are fortunate to have a large group of fifty or more during the fall and winter months. We are also very fortunate that our summer group has actually grown in the past few years. We are averaging ten to twelve people now.

Even though some of our snowbirds fly away for part or all of the summer, many of them are still working behind the scenes to keep the garden alive and to continue our mission of educating others.

The summer visitor numbers are improving over past years, and our receptionists are welcoming and informative. Comments are very positive from our visitors, and we are told we are looking better than ever.

I encourage all locals to stop by once in a while, enjoy the welcoming breezes on the hill and the blooms and butterflies.

One last thought for all of us. Let's all hope we can keep those pesky hurricanes away this year!

Mary



New Board elected for 2023

President/Chair Reception: Mary Olson
VP/Director/Garden Curator: Rosi Ware
VP/Director/Fort Curator: Hazel Hans
VP/Director/Propagation: Kitty Somerville
Recording Secretary: Lynne Bentley-Kemp
Corresponding/Communications Secretary: Sue Sullivan
Treasurer: Rahn Clayton
Director/Hospitality/Merchandise: Lou Ann Steely
Director/Programs: Cathie Gottschalk
Director/Events & Docents: Pam Van Soest
Director/Membership/Web Guru: Christa Varacalli



Who's Who

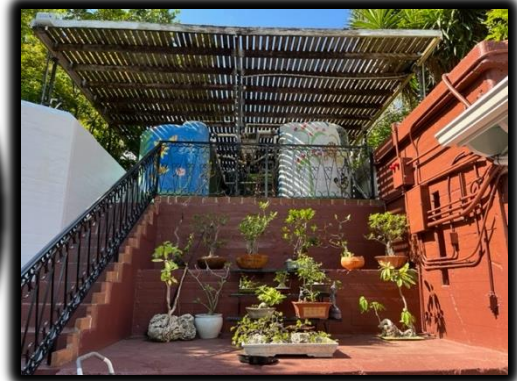
Chair/Plant Sale: Shelli Chase
Chair/Garden Tours: Connor Boyd
Chair/Holiday Lighting: Jane Tiedemam
Chair/Butterfly Garden: Cathie Gottschalk
Chair/Orchids: Pam Van Soest
Chair/Luncheon: Shelli Chase



Work Around the Garden



The rampart below the water tanks have been redone with the efforts of DeAnn Schofield and Nell Smets



The Bonsai display is much prettier.

The **vanda orchid arbor** needed to be replaced. We are so lucky to have architect Nell Smets, who organized the new build. Lots of help from Mike Sheehan, Davin Rose and others. It is coming along beautifully.





Vandas on vacation.



Flemming Mathiason and Doug (from Nashville).



Jean Richbourg and Caroline weeding the Hill.



Natives on the hill



New bamboo fencing on the hill hiding water tanks.

Mary Olson found us a new bell for the Peace Garden. Our last one had been there since the opening of the Peace Garden in 2011. The bells are made from recycled dive tanks and painted by local artists. The Peace Garden is meant to enhance awareness of a community's commitment to peace and a healthy environment.



A very happy Darlene Eslick and Jan Blackmon in the Butterfly Garden.



Nell on the attack!



Rachel O'Connor taking care of the bonsais while the rampart was being redone.



Lou Anne Steely, Marcia Lara and Rachel O'Connor watering thirsty plants.

Propagation



Janet Borch bringing in cuttings to propagate.



Christa Varacalli working on a staghorn fern.



Lynne Bentley-Kemp and Marcia Lara with a finished product.



Marlyn Brita repotting a desert rose.



Propagation does yeoman's work under the guidance of Kitty Somerville and her gang. The plants sold in the courtyard bring in lots of revenue to the Club. Propagation also grows plants that can be used throughout the gardens. Additionally, they grow plants that will be sold at our November plant sale.

The Butterfly Garden



The Butterfly Garden looks lush and colorful thanks to the hard work of Cathie Gottschalk, Jane Tiedeman and the crew. Cathie succeeded Donna Farrow as chair of this garden. Donna did an amazing job after Hurricane Ian.

The Oleander caterpillar (Syntomeida epilais Walker) will decimate desert roses. Wear gloves to remove. The larvae can be handpicked and frozen or dropped into a container of soapy water. It becomes the polka-dot wasp moth.



The “nicer” caterpillar. The monarch butterfly is known by scientists as Danaus plexippus, which in Greek literally means “sleepy transformation.” It eats your milkweed--but that’s OK-- and turns into the monarch butterfly. Plant milkweed, porterweed and other monarch-friendly plants, as the monarchs are becoming endangered. Learn more at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/uw311>



Caro, “King of the Hill”



The “Burning Spirit” sculpture donated by Perry Arnold was crafted from a mahoe tree that fell in Hurricane Wilma in 2005. It is being repaired and will be placed in the Dinosaur Garden.



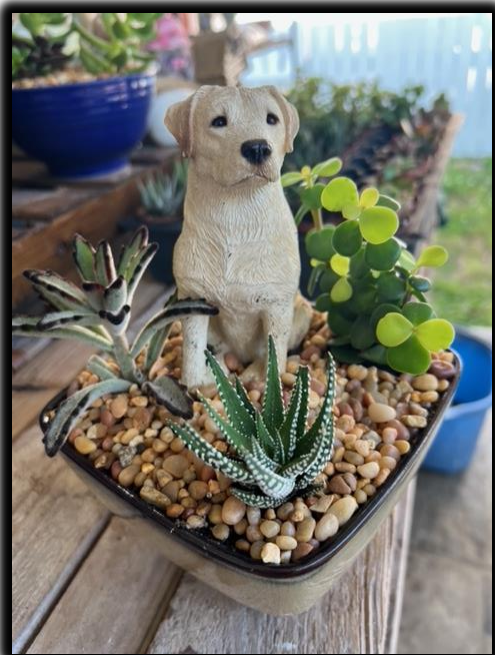
The “Rasta Rooster” kinetic sculpture donated by “Bounce” Margill has moved from the Dinosaur Garden to the almond tree hill.

Key West has a new UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture Agent extension agent. Maria Quirico. She introduced herself to the Club and impressed all of us with her depth of knowledge and willingness to reach out to the Key West Garden Club. The primary mission of Monroe County Extension Services is to disseminate and encourage the application of research-generated knowledge. Maria can be reached at Quirico-Maria@monroecounty-fl.gov
UF/IFAS/MONROE COUNTY EXTENSION 305-292-4501 1100
Simonton Street Suite 2-260,
Key West, FL 33040



Succulents for sale

Jerry Caputo continues to amaze with his sweet creations. All are for sale at the Fort. *Thank you, Jerry!*



Rosi Update

Our Rosi has made tremendous progress since her stroke in January. She continues her PT at her summer getaway. The new rehab team is very impressed with her progress and praised the Key West Select PT group. She and little Leroy have started working on her Asheville garden space. She is scheduled to have her hip surgery in late July. You go, girl!!



Other Construction Updates

The construction of the new gazebo to replace the green gazebo is ready to go. We are waiting on the County to do some electrical work, but once that is done all is in place to move ahead.

Fences have been repaired, irrigation has been repaired, and a new storage area has been installed for irrigation parts. The wooden benches and outdoor furniture are being spruced up. Brickwork on borders and sidewalks is ongoing.

It takes many hands to keep the Gardens and Fort beautiful and accessible. Many thanks to Hazel Hans for keeping up with all the issues.

Orchid Queen

Pam Van Soest heads up care of the orchids (among the many other hats she wears). She and her crew, which includes Lou Anne Steely, Nancy Henning and Mary Olson, have the orchids looking spectacular. Visitors love them.



Donations *(new section this issue!)*

A donation was made to the Garden Club in honor of Lou Ann and Butch Steely by Debbie Harp.

Help celebrate our new
Vanda Orchid Arbor!
It makes a great graduation gift!



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

Thank you to Christa Varacalli for proofreading.

Editor, Sue Sullivan