



The Garden Club of the Upper Keys

News & Notes

October 2020

General Membership Meeting via Zoom

Please join us at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, October 20 for our monthly General Membership meeting. The last page of this newsletter (Members Only version) provides the meeting link (url), Meeting ID, Passcode and some basic instructions.

Meeting Agenda

- **Call to Order and Welcome:** President Kathy Janco will welcome members to our October meeting.
- **Guest Speaker Presentation:** Program Director Laura Hartner will introduce our guest speaker Edward Katell, founder of the Islamorada Community Garden.
- **Guest Speaker Presentation: When to Prepare and Plant your Keys Edible Garden:** Our speaker, Edward Katell, will discuss his experience gardening in the Florida Keys. A brief description of his presentation is provided below.
- **Business Meeting:** Presiding over the business meeting, President Janco will share recent Board actions and decisions. She will introduce members of the Board to provide highlights of the work accomplished in the past month.

When to Prepare and Plant Your Keys Edible Garden

This is the time of the year when folks in the Keys begin preparing and planting their edible gardens. Our October program features Ed Katell, founder of the Islamorada Community Garden located on the property of the First Baptist Church of Islamorada at 810201 Overseas Highway.

Mr. Katell is a southern Florida native and has worked in the Keys since 1985. After meeting the owners of the Denali Organic Growers in Alaska, he was inspired to grow his own garden and was soon hooked on growing food to eat. Former pastor Jonathan Ewing of the First Baptist Church offered him land to start a garden and thus, the beginnings of the Islamorada Community Garden started its roots. Through the donations of many and the use of recyclable materials, the plots in the garden have grown to 21 over the past ten years.

Mr. Katell attributes his skills to the advice of many “old timers” and several gardening professionals. He remarked that “It has been a fantastic journey that never gets boring.” Mr. Katell enjoys teaching others everything he has learned about growing food in the Florida Keys including his successes and failures. He quotes Janet Kilburn-Phillips who said “There are no mistakes in gardening, only experiments.”

Kilburn-Phillips created English cottage gardens in the UK and encountered challenges when she tried to grow them in the US with different climate and soil conditions. Her experiences are a concrete example of how mindset matters: she didn’t throw in the towel and say English Cottage gardens can’t be done in America, she adapted, persevered, and found new ways to succeed at something she loved. That mindset is equally relevant to those of us who are new to the Keys and are trying to grow our gardens using the same varieties and methods we employed where we previously lived.

So, if you are interested in starting an edible garden or wish to learn some new techniques, please join us at 11:00 AM on October 20th on Zoom. The meeting is only open to members, but they can share the link posted in the Zoom meeting instructions with their friends.

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The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.
- Alfred Austin

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Hospitality - Betty Ann Gear
and Fran Reig
House - Christine Hudson
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From the desk of President Kathy Janco ...

Happy October to you all! Although the temperature hasn't cooled off much, we have had some beautiful days and gorgeous sunsets. I am looking forward to a bit of relief from the heat as our snowbirds—bird, animal, and human alike—flock back to our beautiful island.

Be sure you take a moment to stop by the clubhouse to look at our attractive new coat of exterior paint. Feel free to drive on in! Park your car and take a moment to enjoy your garden and some fresh air.

I thought of a new idea I would like to implement for our club's outdoor gardening fun. We have approximately 15 planting beds. I would like to ask you to reply via email to gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com if you would like to adopt a bed to nurture (e.g., weed and prune). No new planting is required at this time. Some of the "beds" such as the one with the statue of St. Francis are quite small and would take only a small amount of time and effort to maintain. "Many hands make light work!"

Laurie Brooks and Charlene Regenhardt are going to name the beds and draw up a sketch so that we have a list of who is maintaining each area. That information will be sent out in a *News Flash* in the next few weeks. Thank you in advance for volunteering! Don't forget you can do this with a friend or in a small group. Let's make it a fun thing to do together!

A garden requires patient labor and attention. Plants do not grow merely to satisfy ambitions or to fulfill good intentions. They thrive because someone expended effort on them. —Liberty Hyde Bailey

Summer has passed us by in a strange and odd way this year. I hope you, your family and friends have weathered coronavirus and are safe and well. I look forward to seeing more of you at our Garden Club's Zoom meetings. We have several interesting guest speakers scheduled. We are also going to try to find fun and interesting activities to do together at a social distance. Our Board misses you!

Stay safe and be well!
Kathy

The GCUK Board of Directors gratefully acknowledges the following generous charitable gifts:

Sea Grape ~ Friends of the Garden Club

- Rae Quanbeck

Moonflower ~ Patrons of the Garden Club

- Sharon Braunberns
- Donna Hanson
- Laurie and Don Brooks
- Gerry Yeager
- Ellen Berosh and Jim Card

Satinleaf ~ Sponsors of the Garden Club

- Evelyn McGlone
- Laura Hartner

Lignum Vitae ~ Benefactors of the Garden Club

- Anne Makowsky
- Lonell Rice
- Kim and Bill Cook

A note from the editor...

This month's *News and Notes* reveals the results of the recent survey taken by 32 of our members. We appreciate the time you spent telling us your thoughts on meeting formats, program topics and your overall interests as members of our organization. Being a member of GCUK fosters different interests and purposes for all of us, from social interaction to education about our environment to support of other community causes. For many of us, it's a combination of all of those and as individualized as each of us are.

That's why it was so valuable to learn what you consider important—so that we can continue to provide speakers, articles, demonstrations, and field trips on topics that are meaningful to you.

In addition to the survey results, this issue includes a brief article highlighting God's Kitchen which turned out to be the outreach effort considered the most important, but only by a slim margin.

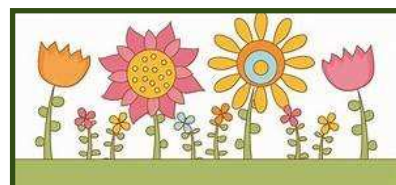
Our "Plant of the Month" article, written by Laurie Brooks, features the fiddlewood, a small tree (that looks more like a large shrub) located along the northeast edge of the Peace Park Garden. It is a native plant, which was shown by our survey to be the most popular topic of interest.

Our "Out & About at Francis Tracy Garden Center" photo page features several interesting plants and animals I noticed while visiting the grounds this past month. The hermit crab was a bit of a surprise since they are primarily nocturnal. The plants that I featured all happened to be from the cactus garden this time.

A new area that we are adding to our newsletter is a "Resource Links" page, which provides links or includes the urls for upcoming Zoom meetings such as the Florida Keys Native Plant Workshop, books or websites that provide information related to topics presented by our guest speaker, and topics of interest that you identified in the survey.

As always, I encourage you to share your suggestions for newsletter articles, plants to feature, pictures to share, resource links, or general comments. And please stop by our lovely garden center when you have the chance for any purpose that is meaningful to you, whether it's to enjoy nature, pull some weeds, check out the fresh coat of paint on our clubhouse, or watch the bees buzz around the fiddlewood tree!

Cordially,
Charlene Regenhardt



Notes from the Directors...

HOSPITALITY CO-DIRECTORS Betty Ann Gear and Fran Reig need volunteers for the upcoming club year once we are able to meet at the clubhouse again. Assistance includes helping set-up and clean-up refreshments at monthly General Membership meetings and special events. You can volunteer for specific months or for the entire club year. It's a great way for new members to connect with others and be active. If you are interested in helping out, please call Betty Ann or Fran.

HOUSE DIRECTOR Christine Hudson says that the painting of the clubhouse is finished! Members can look forward to seeing a fresh face on our clubhouse when they visit this fall.

PROPERTY DIRECTOR Beverly Middleton reports that work has continued on beautifying the front berm. A group of 6-9 avid members have been sharing ideas and labor and have removed the old woody and "way past prime" plants to reveal our noble native trees. We are selectively replacing understory plants with fresh specimens that are primarily native species. The goal is

to make an uplifting first impression as folks drive by and to improve visibility of the clubhouse.

The work and planning continues every Wednesday around noon at the garden. Our "heavy lifter" James Zebrowski is always there at that time so you won't be asked to strain or labor hard unless you so desire.

To date, all native plants have been donated by members and Deb McCoy of Seashore Seeds.

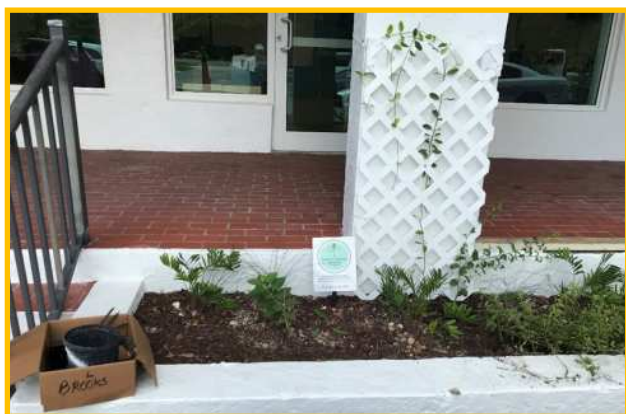
VICE-PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION Laurie Brooks has arranged upcoming Florida Keys Native Plant ID classes with Jim Duquesnel. The next classes will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, October 20 and Thursday, November 19 at 5:30 PM. Dates have been set through March of 2021 alternating Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The four ecosystem themed planters in front of Ocean Studies Charter School's new building are looking great! Laurie added two more plants to the Pine Rockland Garden after a visit to Fairchild to collect additional Connect to Protect plants.

(Continued on page 4)

Notes from the Directors...

(continued from page 3)



OSCS Connect to Protect Planter

Laurie continues to be actively engaged with REEF. The next work day for the REEF butterfly, Connect to Protect, and Ocean Unity display gardens will be Saturday, October 24 from 9:30 to 11 am. We will be installing “sea floor” plants and seasonal flowers below the fish sculptures and doing general garden maintenance for the grand opening of the ocean unity sculpture display. “Sea floor” plants will include liriopse for sea grass, small round cacti sea urchins, some snake plant (in pots) for kelp beds, and other imaginative creations! Please call Laurie if you can participate in the next work day.

Laurie is currently taking the Master Gardener class. She is looking forward to exploring ways for our club to interact more with the program. She started collecting rain data for the CoCoRaHS program – check it out at CoCoRaHS.org! This is one of many ways that Master Gardeners can volunteer.



PROGRAM DIRECTOR Laura Hartner continues to line up speakers and presenters for our upcoming General Membership meetings. Our September program, “Hurricane Planting” presented by Franco D’Ascanio, president of D’Assign Source, Marathon was well received. He generously provided a copy of his slide presentation to members. (A copy can be found on our website, in the Members Only section.)

We look forward to our next presentation via Zoom featuring Ed Katell as announced on the cover page of this newsletter. Charlene Regenhart and I toured the gardens last month and think you will enjoy hearing Mr. Katell’s presentation. He has offered to give our members a tour of the garden so Laura will be working with Mr. Katell to make arrangements.



Entrance to the Islamorada Community Garden



This keyhole garden is one of the first raised beds installed at Islamorada Community Garden. See the Resource Links for more information on keyhole gardens.

Our November program is “Growing Vanilla in Florida: From Native Species to Commercial Opportunities” presented by Dr. Alan H. Chambers. It will also be a Zoom program.

We hope to return to our traditional December program of a “pot luck” outdoors in our garden which can offer social distancing. More details will be forthcoming.

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Notes from the Directors...

(continued from page 4)

Based on the results of our survey, we are also planning for small group “hands on” and/or demonstration projects in our gardens. A list of ideas has been generated, however, if you have any suggestions or can recommend a speaker (even yourself), kindly contact Laura through gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com.

PUBLICITY DIRECTOR Patti Graham encourages everyone to visit our newly updated and reorganized Club website. For those of you who are not Facebook members you DO NOT have to be on Facebook to visit our page. When prompted to sign in click on “Not Now” and you will still be able to visit our site. Joan Hilt does a great job posting fun and informative information. There are posts for Plant Clinics, what edibles to plant in the Fall and, also recently, I saw a recipe for Florida Beauty Berry Jelly.

Patti also encourages everyone to please try our October Zoom meeting. Zoom is very easy to use, so please don’t be intimidated by thinking it’s a complicated process to sign in and enjoy interacting with our members and hearing our guest speaker presentations.

FUNDRAISING DIRECTOR Kathy Holmes reports that the Garden Walk for Saturday, February 13, 2021 has been cancelled. The board reached this difficult decision very reluctantly; it was felt that the situation is still too unpredictable to press forward with the event.

Planning for and publicizing Garden Walk requires a substantial level of effort, and the publicity costs alone (e.g., press releases) are significant and would ultimately be wasted if it was necessary to cancel at the last minute. Kathy is pursuing other fundraising options for the remainder of this year and getting a jump start on lining up properties for the 2022 Garden Walk. If anyone has fundraising ideas, please contact Kathy.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Charlene Regenhardt is processing membership forms. So far, 30 individual members and 30 family members have replied. Of these, 7 are new members. We also have 7 honorary and 2 complimentary members. A big “Thank You” to those who promptly submitted their dues!



The Board of Directors recognizes that the pandemic has affected many of us in different ways. At the board meeting on October 12, several board members stated that they wanted to sponsor any current members that may be experiencing personal hardships. If you wish to remain a member but are having difficulty paying your dues, please send an e-mail to gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com. The request will be completely confidential.

Community Outreach Highlight: God’s Kitchen

The “salty services” offered by Burton Memorial United Methodist Church and its volunteers provide food to help dozens of families each week. The church operates both the Daily Bread food pantry and a meal service on Thursdays and holidays called God’s Kitchen. The target population includes the 13 percent of residents living in poverty as well as the additional 36 percent that fall into the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) category.

Before the pandemic, these two categories encompassed an estimated 6,400 residents in the upper Keys. The need is even greater than before, as even more members of our community are underemployed and challenged to make ends meet! Last year, God’s Kitchen typically served around 45 meals. The number of meals served is now typically over 100.

GCUK provides home cooked meals in months when there is a fifth Thursday. Volunteers at God’s Kitchen

package the meals for pickup by community members, so all we need to do is cook the food (preferably in disposable containers such as foil pans) and deliver it to Burton Memorial between 4 and 4:30 in the afternoon.

Edna Waldorf is our club liaison with Mary Lou Wilkinson as the lead coordinator for God’s Kitchen. Most recently, for the meal GCUK provided on July 30, John Reig did all the cooking and prepared paella. Several members provided donations to help purchase the ingredients. Many other GCUK members frequently cook for God’s Kitchen and volunteer at the Food Bank.

The Thursday, October 29 date to cook for God’s Kitchen was cancelled!

Please note that God’s Kitchen notified Edna earlier this week that there was no need for our organization to provide a meal this month. The food pantry was given a substantial donation of food and the organization wanted to prepare meals using the donated food. We will announce our next opportunity to support God’s kitchen in a future edition of *News and Notes*.



Plant of the Month Fiddlewood

(*Citharexylum spinosum*)

by Laurie Brooks

This issue's featured plant is another great tree in our clubhouse yard – the Fiddlewood. Roger Hammer tells us in his *Florida Keys Wildflowers* that *Citharexylum* is Greek for “lyre wood” or “fiddle wood,” as the wood is used in Jamaica to make musical instruments. The Greek word cithara is the root word for both the zither and the guitar. Spinosum refers to the fact that the juvenile leaves have marginal spines.

An identifying feature for this tree is the orangish petioles (where the leaf attaches to the stem) and central rib of the leaves. This slow to moderate growing tree is typically 15-25 feet tall but may grow to 39 feet in south Florida. If you walk out the front door of our clubhouse and turn left towards our peace garden you will see a beautiful rounded tree that is always in bloom and covered with bees. The flowers are quite fragrant!



The Fiddlewood produces edible fruit on female trees that are juicy and sweet. The fruit are small reddish-brown drupes enjoyed by birds and other wildlife. It is not recommended to eat the seeds, and each fruit has two seeds.

This member of the Verbenaceae (Verbena family) is dioecious—our botanical word for the day! It means that there are male and female trees and, like the Sea Grape, only the female trees bear fruit. Ours is a boy. This tree, which can be grown from de-pulped seeds, is best not planted in groups as it is often defoliated by moth caterpillars.



Two bees sipping nectar from our Fiddlewood tree



Cultivation Data

Source: www.regionalconservation.org

Soils: Moist, well-drained sandy or limestone soils, with humusy top layer.

Nutritional Requirements: Moderate to high; grows best with some organic content and may languish in nutrient poor soils.

Salt Water Tolerance: Low; does not tolerate long-term flooding by salt or brackish water.

Salt Wind Tolerance: Low; salt wind may burn the leaves.

Drought Tolerance: Moderate; generally requires moist soils, but tolerant of short periods of drought once established.

Light Requirements: Full sun to light shade.

Flower Color: White. Flower Characteristics: Semi-showy spikes. Fragrant, dioecious with male and female flowers on different plants.

Flowering Season: All year.

Fruit: Orange drupe turning reddish brown as it matures. Edible, juicy and sweet.

Wildlife and Ecology: Provides food and cover for wildlife. Larval host for the fiddlewood leafroller (*Epicorsia oedipodalis*) which may be a critical food for baby birds in spring. Nectar plant for butterflies, and attracts bee pollinators.

Survey Results

by Laura Hartner, Laurie Brooks, and Charlene Regenhardt

Our survey for Programs and Community Outreach Activities had responses from 32 GCUK members. The results for each question follow.

Q1. Meeting Format

Please rank the following meeting formats (1 for best) in terms of your desire and ability to participate.

The results for this question and the other questions that were ranked show the Survey Option, Rank % (percentage of responding members who chose each rank from 1 to 5), and an overall Score based on a weighted average algorithm. For example, 31% of members ranked “In person lecture consisting of small groups, social distancing, and held outdoors.” with a 1, which means 31% considers it the preferred format for meetings. Conversely, 15% of members selected it as the least desirable meeting format. The table cells for Rank (%) are color coded, with no color for 0-10% of responses, pale green for 10-25%, medium green for 25-45%, and darkest green for greater than 45%. The color treatment emphasizes the choices with the highest preferences and makes trends more apparent.

The algorithm for the score weights the percentage of each response on a sliding scale, ranging from 1.0 (if all members ranked the option with a 1) to 5.0 (all members ranked the option with a 5). Therefore, the **lowest** score represents the favorite option.

The survey data demonstrate that our members generally prefer hands-on workshops (option 5), in-person demonstrations (option 4), and in-person lectures held outdoors (option 1). Although just over one-third of our members preferred Zoom meetings (option 3), more than half ranked it fourth or fifth. The least preferred format is a webcast (option 2). Based on the responses for this question, Laura is planning to create more opportunities for in-person meetings and demonstrations. One possibility is a tour of the Islamorada Community Garden. The community garden was founded by Ed Katell, our guest speaker for the October General Membership meeting.

Survey Option	Rank (%)					Score
	1	2	3	4	5	
1. In person lecture consisting of small groups, social distancing, and held outdoors	31	15	27	12	15	2.65
2. Webcast to be viewed on-line and without ability to participate	4	8	8	19	62	4.3
3. Webinar or zoom meeting with ability to participate	36	4	7	39	14	2.91
4. In person demonstration consisting of small groups, social distancing, and held outdoors	4	56	28	12	0	2.48
5. In person hands-on workshop consisting of small groups, social distancing, and held outdoors	37	17	27	17	3	2.35

Q2. Topics That Interest Us

Please list three topics you would like to learn more about or workshops you would like to participate in.

For this survey question, we grouped responses by general topics and tallied the results in the table to the right. Our members overwhelmingly indicated an interest in native plants! There is also strong interest in nurturing plants through propagating, planting, dividing, and pruning. Other topics of interest include plants of specific varieties or for specific purposes, including butterfly gardens, flower arrangements, orchids and epiphytes and, to a lesser degree, vegetable and container gardening.

Based on your responses, we will strive to focus on plants that fit those topics of interest with our Plant

Topics We Want to Learn More About	# of Responses
Native Plants	11
Propagating / Planting Seeds / Dividing Plants	6
Pruning Plants	6
Butterfly / Bird Gardening	5
Flower / Wreath Arranging	5
Orchids / Epiphytes	4
Pest / Invasive Management	4
Seasonal Cycles	4
Soil and Compost / Fertilizers	3
Vegetable / Herb Gardening / Community Gardens	3
T&E Species	2
Container Gardening	2
Palms	2
Gardening Crafts	1
Pond / Aquatic Plants	1
Climate Change	1
Low Maintenance House Plants	1

of the Month series in *News and Notes*. These popular topics will also be a focus area for hands-on workshops and demonstrations. Our next two General Meeting presentations on October 20: *When to Prepare and Plant your Keys Edible Garden* and November 17: *Growing Vanilla in Florida: From Native Species to Commercial Opportunities*, encompass several of these popular topics.

Q3 and Q4: Current Community Outreach Activities

The following two tables represent our club member's responses about the community outreach activities considered most important, followed by our interests and abilities to participate.

Please rank the following activities as to importance for our club's community outreach – 1 as best.

Nearly one-third of members selected each of the first three options as most important, which demonstrates the diversity of outreach activities and interests among our membership. The last option is less popular.

Please rank the same activities shown in Question 3 as to your interest and ability to participate – 1 as best.

Nearly one-half of members selected caring for gardens at REEF and Dolphin care as the outreach activity we are most interested and able to participate in; however, cooking for God's Kitchen obtained the lowest Score (which indicates it has the highest overall popularity) since 74% of our members ranked it as best or second best.

All of our current outreach activities are worthwhile because they support and enrich the lives of different segments of our community, from youngsters to seniors, all with different needs and interests. A short article about God's Kitchen is included in this month's newsletter. Although working with children at their school is less popular, it's important because it teaches kids about the environment and is most closely aligned with GCUK's "education" mission. Those children will possibly be future GCUK members!

Q5 and Q6: New Outreach Activities at our Clubhouse

The following two tables represent our club member's interests in potential new outreach activities considered most important, followed by our interests and abilities to participate.

Please rank the following activities as to importance for our club's community outreach – 1 as best. These are potential new outreach activities that can be conducted at our clubhouse.

Our members overwhelmingly indicated an interest in rejuvenating our efforts to maintain and enhance the gardens at our clubhouse and helping to turn it into an ecotourism destination (option 1). There is also strong interest in working with UF IFAS to hold master gardening classes/plant clinics (option 4) and holding workshops on Florida-friendly gardening (option 3)—both are aligned with our club's educational mission. Our members are lukewarm on the remaining three options, and we plan to focus on the top three for the remainder of this year.

Survey Option	Rank (%)				Score
	1	2	3	4	
1. Cooking for God's Kitchen with the cooking now taking place at home	33	33	23	10	2.08
2. Flower arranging at the rehab center subject to our ability to visit in future	32	21	18	29	2.44
3. Caring for gardens that the club helped install at Island Dolphin Care when we can return and at REEF	34	24	17	24	2.29
4. Working with local children at their school	7	17	41	34	3

Survey Option	Rank (%)				Score
	1	2	3	4	
1. Cooking for God's Kitchen with the cooking now taking place at home	37	37	19	7	1.96
2. Flower arranging at the rehab center subject to our ability to visit in future	26	30	11	33	2.51
3. Caring for gardens that the club helped install at Island Dolphin Care when we can return and at REEF	48	3	30	19	2.2
4. Working with local children at their school	4	26	33	37	3.03

Survey Option	Rank (%)						Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1. Working to maintain the gardens at our clubhouse and helping to turn it into an ecotourism destination	62	21	3	7	7	0	1.76
2. Working with local children at our club house	7	19	15	22	15	22	3.85
3. Holding workshops for new home-owners at our clubhouse on Florida friendly gardening	12	31	15	8	27	8	3.34
4. Working with UF IFAS to host master gardener classes and/or plant clinics on our property	21	18	25	14	4	18	3.16
5. Serving as a docent on our property to give tours	0	12	4	23	38	23	4.56
6. Growing plants and/or collecting seeds to sell for fundraisers (We may need a nursery license.)	10	3	38	21	4	24	3.78

Q6 Please rank the same activities shown in Question 5 as to your interest and ability to participate – 1 as best.

Responses for interest and ability were ranked in similar fashion to Q5, which shows that our members not only considered option 1 as most important, but they are also interested and willing to participate.

Survey Option	Rank (%)						Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1. Working to maintain the gardens at our clubhouse and helping to turn it into an ecotourism destination	58	23	0	8	0	12	2.08
2. Working with local children at our club house	12	20	8	8	16	36	4.04
3. Holding workshops for new home-owners at our clubhouse on Florida friendly gardening	13	13	35	13	22	4	3.3
4. Working with UF IFAS to host master gardener classes and/or plant clinics on our property	7	26	22	22	7	15	3.38
5. Serving as a docent on our property to give tours	8	12	20	16	32	12	3.88
6. Growing plants and/or collecting seeds to sell for fundraisers (We may need a nursery license.)	15	7	15	30	15	19	3.83

Planned and Ongoing Projects Related to Option 1

A project that Property Director Beverly Middleton recently initiated, with help from her team of “Gardenistas,” including several of our master gardeners, is refreshing the front berm along Overseas Highway, which one of master gardeners referred to as a “jumbled tangle of aged undergrowth.” To date, most of the shrubs and undergrowth were removed and the mature trees were trimmed up to maintain the canopy while allowing a view of our charming clubhouse from the highway. Plants to be installed are predominantly native species, and include coontie, bay cedar, alamanda, tropical milkweed, firebush, and more. Work is in progress and we hope to show off the completed project with some pictures in the November newsletter.

Two other projects are also underway that support the ecotourism initiative:

- First, our garden club is a registered organization on Plantsmap.com, a website community that hosts botanical collections. The website has customized tools for documenting, organizing, mapping, tagging and sharing information about plants. We documented 27 plants so far. More details about this endeavor will be featured in the November edition of *News and Notes*. In the meantime, we encourage you to take a look at our Plantsmap site at: <https://www.plantsmap.com/organizations/garden-club-of-the-upper-keys>. Please contact Charlene if you are interested in helping to document our GCUK plants on the Plantsmap site.
- Second, we applied for a “bricks and mortar” grant from the Monroe County Tourist Development Council (TDC) last April. The Project Title for our grant proposal is ***Property Enhancements to Promote Ecotourism***. The improvements requested under the grant included a new irrigation system for the Peace Park Garden and adjacent area, construction of a plant nursery/shade house, purchasing and planting additional natives, and purchasing and installing biological markers. The biological markers use QR codes that will provide a link to details about the plant on Plantsmap.com. The grant application is under evaluation and we will be notified of the decision by the end of December. If we are fortunate enough to be awarded a grant, we will provide a detailed report on the proposed project in *News and Notes*, and we will need lots of help to implement it.

Q7 through Q10: Open-Ended Questions

Our survey included three open-ended questions to solicit additional ideas for community outreach, member activities and programs for the remainder of this club year. The final question enabled the survey respondent to provide their name and any additional comments, to allow us to follow-up with them.

A few of the most popular ideas for community outreach included additional landscaping or beautification efforts, such as at welcome centers, other non-profit centers (similar to what we do for REEF), and community gardens.

Additional ideas for member activities include more field trips (especially when Covid-19 concerns are less prevalent), plant and seed exchanges, and yoga in the garden sessions. A series on History of the Garden Club was also mentioned and our President Kathy Janco has already asked our Archivist Gerry Yeager to champion that effort.

A diverse list of ideas for future programs for the General Membership meetings was presented including many of the same topics suggested for Q2. Laura is actively engaged in finding presenters for a broad range of topics as well as opportunities for hands-on demonstrations at our clubhouse.

Five members listed their names and/or additional comments for follow-up.

Notable Dates and Birthdays

A warm birthday wish to our members with October birthdays!

October

- J Kocol
- C Yentsch
- G Yeager
- L Hartner
- K Holmes
- P Smith
- P Saunders



Upcoming meetings and club activities:

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- 13** GCUK Board Meeting (10 am)
- 20** GCUK General Membership Meeting (11 am)
- 20** Florida Native Plant ID Class (Zoom, 5:30 pm)
- 24** Work Day at Reef (9:30 - 11 am)

Notes:

- Stop by the clubhouse on Wednesdays at noon to help with property maintenance chores

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- 10** GCUK Board Meeting (10 am)
- 17** GCUK General Membership Meeting (11 am)
- 19** Florida Native Plant ID Class (Zoom, 5:30 pm)

Notes:

- Stop by the clubhouse on Wednesdays at noon to help with property maintenance chores

Looking Forward...

- **Board** meetings at 10 am on Nov 10, Dec 8, Jan 12, Feb 9, Mar 9, Apr 13, May 11
- **General Membership** meetings on Oct 20, Nov 17, Dec 15, Jan 19, Feb 16, Mar 16, Apr 20, May 18. Meetings begin at 11 am; If held at the clubhouse, doors open at 10 am for social time.
- **Special Events: Members Only Garden Walk** – Mar. 23, 2021.

NOTE: The Gingerbread Craft Market scheduled for Nov. 28, 2020 and Garden Walk scheduled for Feb. 13, 2021 are CANCELLED.

Out & About at Francis Tracy Garden Center

You never know what interesting creature you might see when you walk around our gardens. A few weeks ago I was strolling down the walkway on the east side of the clubhouse and heard a curious sound—"plink." I noticed a sea-shell several feet in front of me. It turned out to be a large hermit crab that saw me approaching and ducked for cover.

The pavers are about 1-foot square, which provides a sense of scale. The shell is about 6 inches long and the crab was the size of my fist. I had to wait a few minutes before he came back out of hiding to take his picture. I think he swiped the shell from the Peace Park Garden!



Here are a few photos of some plants in our cactus garden that are blooming or preparing to bloom.



One of the more unusual succulents in the cactus garden is blooming fairly often lately. Commonly called the Starfish Plant or Carrion Flower (*Ceropegia gigantea*, also called *Stapelia gigantea*), it emits an odor similar to rotting flesh to attract flies for pollination.

There are two clumps of small *Ceropegia* succulents in the cactus garden, and I thought they were the same species... until the second clump started blooming. The second clump is

Ceropegia leendertziae and produces deep burgundy flowers that are cup-shaped, although the flower still has 5 lobes.



Three of our Arizona Star Agave (*Agave weberi*) are getting ready to bloom! The plants currently have stalks about 6 feet tall, which will continue to grow to as much as 20-feet tall and produce a large candelabra-like bloom of yellow flowers. Stay tuned, I'm not sure how long it takes for the stalks to grow that tall!



Finally, since it's October and Halloween is coming, it seemed appropriate to add a picture of a "spooky" sounding plant: Devil's Backbone (*Euphorbia tithymaloides* 'Variegatus'). This succulent plant is from the West Indies and Mexico. It was popular as a "pass along plant" because of its ease of propagation from stem cuttings. It is sometimes called "Zigzag Plant" because the stems grow in a zigzag pattern.

Resource Links

Topic: Florida Keys Native Plant Workshop

Description: Laurie Brooks is hosting the Zoom meeting on October 20 at 5:50. James Lange from Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden will be presenting on grasses.

Link: Zoom Meeting [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526147402?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526147402?pwd=RCtlMU5pbENhZk4yd1VvaHRpMG50QT09)
[pwd=RCtlMU5pbENhZk4yd1VvaHRpMG50QT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526147402?pwd=RCtlMU5pbENhZk4yd1VvaHRpMG50QT09)
 Meeting ID: 452 614 7402
 Passcode: 123456

Topic: Institute for Regional Conservation (IRC) and Natives for Your Neighborhood

Description: A private non-profit organization, the IRC is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and management of biodiversity, and to the prevention of regional extinctions of rare plants, animals and ecosystems. Natives for Your Neighborhood provides a wealth of information about natives in the Keys and South Florida. Links to both the IRC and Natives for Your Neighborhood are listed below.

Link: <https://www.regionalconservation.org/index.html>;
<https://regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/default.asp>

Topic: Natives ("AlterNatives for Planting")

Description: Document on City of Key West website that lists invasive plants that are commonly used in landscaping and suggests native species as alternatives to plant.

Link: <https://www.cityofkeywest-fl.gov/DocumentCenter/View/933/AlterNatives-for-Landscaping-in-the-Florida-Keys-PDF?bidId=>

Topic: Keyhole Garden

Description: Wikipedia link for Keyhole Garden's purpose and origins.

Link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keyhole_garden

Topic: Soil

Description: Dr. Elaine Ingham, soil biologist, author of numerous books (search on her name at Amazon.com). Guest Speaker Ed Katell highly recommends listening to her videos. There are many on youtube.com that can be found by searching on her name.

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/>; <https://www.youtube.com/>

Topic: Soil Food Web

Description: A short youtube video explaining basics of the soil food web and what is needed for healthy soil.

Link: <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Elaine+Ingham&&view=detail&mid=967BF6FB3F2D5C81D711967BF6FB3F2D5C81D711&rvmid=6B6C4A38D6E9723C0BED6B6C4A38D6E9723C0BED&FORM=VDQVAP>

Topic: No-dig Gardening

Description: This is one of the methods Ed Katell, founder of the Islamorada Community Garden is using. Charles

Dowding has a no-dig organic gardening website at charlesdowding.co.uk, and can also be found on podcasts at joegardener.com.

Links: <https://charlesdowding.co.uk/>;
<https://joegardener.com/>

Topic: Compost

Description: Article "Making Fungal Compost" by Jack Kittredge provides directions to make the Johnson-Su composting bioreactor.

Link: <https://thenaturalfarmer.org/article/making-fungal-compost/>

Topic: Organic Vegetable Growing in the Florida Keys

Description: A presentation by the Glee Community Garden in Key West on organic gardening.

Link: <https://www.communitygardenkeywest.com/documents/Growing-Vegetables-Organically-Florida-Keys.pdf>

Topic: Health Can Bloom in the Florida Keys Home Garden

Description: This is a blog article put out by the Florida Keys Treasures website. There are a number of interesting and educational articles on a wide range of topics, so we included the link to the alphabetical list of topics as well.

Link: <https://floridakeystreasures.com/health-can-bloom-florida-keys-home-garden/>; <https://floridakeystreasures.com/keystreasuresblog/>

Topic: Gardening

Description: Website offering a variety of gardening videos

Link: <https://www.goodgardeningvideos.org>

Topic: Vegetable Gardening

Description: Recommended planting times for vegetable gardening, Zone 11a.

Link: <https://www.plantwhatwhen.com/usa-zone-11a.html>

Topic: Hydroponic Gardening

Description: Website about hydroponic gardening. Provides lots of how-to instruction as well as offering pre-constructed systems for purchase. They have years' worth of articles that can be accessed at the second link.

Link: <https://www.hydroponics-simplified.com/>; https://www.hydroponics-simplified.com/The_Urban_Farmer-backissues.html

Topic: Florida Vegetable Gardening (book)

Description: This book provides advice on vegetable gardening in Florida; however, it is not specific to our Keys climate. Another book written by the same author is [Create Your Own Florida Food Forest](#).

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/>