



## The Garden Club of the Upper Keys

# News & Notes

May 2021

### Inside this issue:

PRESIDENT'S Message	2
Save the Date!	2
A note from the editor...	3
DIRECTORS' Notes	3-4
Garden Get-Togethers and Club-Sponsored Activities	5
Plant of the Month	6-7
Out & About at Francis Tracy Garden Center	8
Notable Dates and Birthdays	9

## General Membership Meeting

Members are cordially invited to attend the May 18, 2021 General Membership Meeting outside at the Francis Tracy Garden Center at 11:00 AM. The events begin with a business meeting presided by President Kathy Janco, followed by the installation of the club's 2021-2022 officers. Bring your favorite garden chair if you like, otherwise folding chairs are available. We will be outdoors if weather permits but will be prepared to meet indoors if it is raining. As a reminder, please wear masks inside the building and practice safe COVID measures outdoors.

**If you plan to attend, please notify Program Director Laura Hartner by Sunday, May 16, 2021 so that enough tables are setup outdoors. If you come to the flag ceremony on Sunday and we hope you will (see page 5), you can tell her in person!**

### Meeting Agenda

- **Call to Order and Welcome:** President Kathy Janco will welcome members to our General Membership meeting.
- **Business Meeting:** Presiding over the business meeting, President Janco will share recent Board actions and decisions. Members of the Board will provide highlights of the work accomplished in the past month.
- **Installation of Officers.** Long-time member Edna Waldorf will officiate the installation of new officers for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Edna has officiated several times in the past and always comes up with an interesting and enjoyable theme for the ceremony.
- **Plant Swap:** Bring a plant and receive one in return. Please label the plant with its name and any other information you think would be helpful or interesting to its new owner.
- **Brown Bag Lunch:** In lieu of the club's traditional Pot-Luck luncheon, members are asked to bring their own lunch. The club will provide cold drinks and a dessert. This will be another opportunity to end this club year face-to-face with our colleagues. If you plan to attend, please notify Program Director Laura Hartner by Sunday, May 16, 2021 so that enough tables are setup outdoors.



## Slate of Officers for the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year:

### Executive Board

President	Kathy Janco
Vice – Pres	Laurie Brooks
Secretary	Laura Hartner
Treasurer	Anne Makowsky

### Directors

Fundraising	Kathy Holmes
Hospitality	Beth Ann Gear & Fran Reig
House	Chris Hudson
Membership	Charlene Regenhart
Program	Patti Graham
Property	Nancy Perez



*"I look forward to what the 2021-2022 year holds when we can ALL participate!"*

The Garden Club  
of the  
Upper Keys, Inc.  
at  
The Francis Tracy  
Garden Center  
94040 Overseas Hwy.  
Key Largo, FL 33037

Mailing Address  
P.O. Box 373  
Tavernier, FL 33070

#### **Board of Directors**

President - Kathy Janco  
V-President - Laurie Brooks  
Treasurer - Anne Makowsky  
Secretary - Laura Hartner  
Directors of:  
Fundraising - Kathy Holmes  
Hospitality - Betty Ann Gear  
and Fran Reig  
House - Christine Hudson  
Membership - Charlene  
Regenhardt  
Program - Laura Hartner  
Property - Beverly Middleton  
Publicity - Patti Graham

## *From the desk of President Kathy Janco ...*

We have reached the end of the 2020-2021 Garden Club year.

I believe it is one for the record books. It will be amazing when the dust settles to see how we will remember this past year.

I have so much to be thankful for as far as the Garden Club is concerned. The Board of Directors has gone over and above their call of duty in so many ways. Because we were trying to figure out ways to keep the membership engaged, we did not take the summer off as the board usually does. We met each and every month via Zoom. I will have to say it was truly a gift in disguise...because I believe we got to know each other ever more than we normally would have. We got a lot of planning done and many projects inside the clubhouse and outdoor spaces completed. I am so proud of everyone.

I look forward to what the 2021-2022 year holds when we can ALL participate. We will be doing some catchup with regards to our fundraisers. I hope everyone will give their best efforts to help when needed or asked. I know we will be able to make it a wonderful year together. For those of you who are full-timers, we will find a project or two to make sure we can spend some time together this summer.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

*~Margaret Mead*

Wishing you all a wonderful summer. Stay safe and be well.

Kathy

## **Save the Date!**

**Garden Club YARD SALE**  
**Saturday, October 23, 2021 9am-5pm**  
**Francis Tracy Garden Center**  
**94040 Overseas Hwy, Key Largo**

We need gently used household items, lamps, small furniture, workable electronics, kitchenware, toys, collectables, clothing and children's books. Please have your friends, family and neighbors save any items for us.

Don't forget to propagate your favorite plants for the plant sale.

Questions? Please contact Kathy Holmes. Her contact information can be found on the resource links page.



## A note from the editor...

I can't believe the year is almost over and our summer hiatus is only a few weeks away! That's not to imply that everything comes to a screeching halt. The board still holds meetings during the summer, although they tend to take a more leisurely pace this time of the year.

Summer is a good time to address tasks that could be disruptive to meetings and outdoor events. In that vein, we will be working on projects related to the TDC grant, completing our plant inventory and entering it into Plantsmap.com, obtaining and planting some new native plant specimens, and purchasing and installing botanical markers.

Certain chores will need to be attended to during the summer, including maintaining the clubhouse and outdoor property. The grounds still need to be weeded and watered lest we come back to a jungle of unwanted volunteers that spring up wherever the birds and wind decide to plant them.

As indicated on page 10 we are looking for volunteers to help lighten the load over the summer months. We still plan to hold a monthly "workday" session, which will be announced via email, as publication of the newsletter also takes a summer hiatus. A few hours cleaning up the property once a month will help immensely! If you can't attend a workday session, feel

free to stop by to pull a few weeds every now and then. Afterward, there are several shady spots where you can sit and enjoy nature. Many of the beds are being maintained under our Adopt-a-Bed program, but there are still a few that need tending.

Although this has been an unusual and challenging year, we found opportunities to make progress on some much-needed updates to the property, both inside and out. We will enjoy the fruits of our labor in the years to come. I fully believe that the challenges we overcame this past year will make next year better than ever!

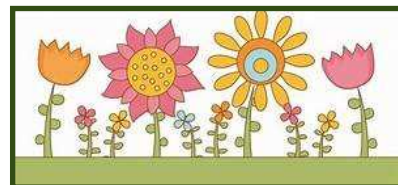
*Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering 'it will be happier'.*

— Alfred Lord Tennyson

Next year, we will redouble our efforts on fundraisers to make up for last year, and will need everyone's help. Also, if you find yourself cleaning out some closets or kitchen cabinets on a rainy day, please save sellable items for the Yard Sale this coming October.

I wish everyone an enjoyable summer and I'm looking forward to seeing everyone again in September!

Cordially,  
Charlene Regenhardt



## Notes from the Directors...

**HOSPITALITY CO-DIRECTORS Betty Ann Gear and Fran Reig** need volunteers to help with meetings at the clubhouse. Assistance includes helping set-up, clean-up, and refreshments. If you are interested in helping out, please call Betty Ann or Fran.

**HOUSE DIRECTOR Christine Hudson** reports that the final major project to replace the fluorescent lighting in the clubhouse is underway. Several people quickly responded to the appeal for donations to help pay for the unexpected costs encountered when it was found that additional electrical upgrades were needed to implement the project. Thanks to our club members who sent donations for the project, as well as our troop of fabulous volunteers in performing all the work on upgrades and cleaning tasks!

**VICE-PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION Laurie Brooks** announces that the most recent Florida Keys Native Plant ID class with Jim Duquesnel was held by Zoom on April 20. The topic was suggested by Janice Duquesnel and covered invasive plants that are often

confused with native "look alikes." We learned how to tell the difference between Wild Tamarind and Lead Tree as an example. The next class will be on Tuesday May 11 from 5:30 to 7:00 with Duane Kolterman (Susan's brother) who will be joining us on Zoom from Mayaguez, Puerto Rico to cover the family Rubiaceae (Madder).

The next work day for the REEF butterfly, Connect to Protect and Ocean Unity display gardens will occur on Sunday, May 30 from 10 AM to 11 AM. We will perform general garden maintenance. REEF work days will now be regularly scheduled on the third Sunday of each month except May which will be on the 30th. Our last work day was on April 17<sup>th</sup>.

We held our third Master Gardener plant clinic at Frances Tracy on April 21<sup>st</sup> from 9-12 and the next one will be May 19<sup>th</sup> from 9-12. Michelle Leonard-Mullarz, Gayle Kolasa, Lonell Rice, Suzy Cushman and Laurie participated. Holding the clinic in the garden had the added benefit of being surrounded by living exemplars of plants for identification and horticultural practices.

(Continued on page 4)



## Notes from the Directors...

(Continued from page 3)

We cooked for God's Kitchen on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Our next cooking date will be July 29<sup>th</sup>.

As some of you may already know, Jean Simmons has moved out of town and can no longer take the lead on the flower arranging sessions at the Crystal Health and Rehabilitation Center. The center is interested in resuming this popular event and we need a volunteer to take the lead role in organizing and sponsoring this event. Please contact Laurie if you are interested.

**PROGRAM DIRECTOR Laura Hartner** reports that more than 30 members attended our April 20, 2021 General Membership Meeting held outdoors at the Francis Tracy Garden Center. Micha McCrae, Executive Director of the Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden, presented our program entitled, "Growing Your Garden: Today, Tomorrow and Forever." He shared the elements that his garden used to grow, starting with "fixing up the front door." Mr. McCrae outlined techniques and procedures that were used to make the Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden the outstanding venue that it is today. These insights and processes will help our club to envision and move our garden forward in the community. A copy of Mr. McCrae's program slides are to be posted on the club's website.

Looking at our own club's growth, Grant Chairperson Charlene Regenhardt and Vice-President Laurie Brooks shared the scope of the recent Tourist Development Council (TDC) Grant we received. They discussed the major elements that are to be constructed and or installed, how the project was scoped out, the grant award and the in-kind donations and services specified in the grant application. They spoke of how the Plantsmap website is tied to the grant and what club members can do to help not only with grant implementation but in the future.

Our May General Membership meeting has traditionally been a "pot luck" lunch. Due to Covid, the May 18, 2021 event is to be held outdoors and with members bringing their own "brown bag" lunch. The club will provide cupcakes/gluten free option as well as cold drinks. This event will begin at 11:00 AM with the business meeting, the installation of officers, and a "Plant Swap". Lunch and social time will follow. **If you plan on attending this meeting, you are asked to inform Laura Hartner by e-mail, cell phone or text by Sunday, May 16.** This request is being made so that enough tables and chairs are available for you outside in the garden.

April Garden Get-Togethers found members making small reed baskets and using air-dry clay to make a small clay pot for succulents, a teardrop air plant holder and/or a small wall planter.

The next Garden Get-Together will take place on Tuesday, May 25 at 10:00 AM where one can make a macramé plant hanger. More information is posted on page 5.

**PUBLICITY DIRECTOR Patti Graham** and her team would like to remind members to continue visiting our Website and Facebook pages. Photos from recent activities have been posted to our Club website and Facebook. Please come to our May 18th meeting and join us for the Garden Get-Togethers. Take lots of pictures for our Website and Facebook page!

**FUNDRAISING DIRECTOR Kathy Holmes** is working on fundraising options. We have rescheduled our two signature fund raisers for next year. The Gingerbread Craft Market will be Saturday November 27, 2021 at the FTGC and our Garden Walk will be Saturday, February 19, 2022. If you know of any properties for the Garden Walk, please contact Kathy (contact information is provided on the Resource Links page).

To help make up for the cancellation of the 2020-2021 fundraisers, the board decided to host a yard sale this coming fall. It is scheduled for Saturday, October 23, 2021 from 9 AM to 5 PM. Based on the results of the yard sale in 2019, it was decided that we would NOT sell books, except for children's books. Please see the announcement on page 2 of this newsletter and begin saving items for the sale this coming fall.

Please consider how you can be a part of all of these events. Kathy will need all hands on deck!

**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Charlene Regenhardt** reports that for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, 54 individual members and 36 family members have renewed membership. We also have 7 honorary and 4 complimentary members, for a total of 101. A hearty "Thank You" goes out to everyone for your continued membership and support to our club!

Next year, we want to work on rejuvenating our organization, as our membership has declined a bit over the past year. Maybe you have some friends or associates that you can encourage to join GCUK this coming fall. Membership applications can be found on our website, or you can send Charlene a message requesting one to be sent to you.

## Garden Get-Togethers and Club-Sponsored Activities

### Flag Ceremony

Our flag that flies in the front yard at the clubhouse is showing some wear. We plan to replace it with a new flag and invited our local Brownie Troop to perform the ceremony to install the new flag and retire the old one.

The ceremony will be held Sunday, May 16 at 11:30 am. Please attend if you can as this is a great opportunity to meet some local youngsters and their parents. They have been practicing for this ceremony, so let's show them our gratitude with a big turnout for the event!



### In-person Plant Clinics

The clinics are held at our gardens every third Wednesday from 9 am to noon. The next clinic is scheduled for May 19th. Masks and social distancing are required.

### Garden Get-Together

On Tuesday, May 25 at 10 am Laura is offering the opportunity to make macramé plant hangers at a Garden Get-Together. There will be a few options for the design, similar to the macramé hangers shown in the picture.

The options are all relatively simple to allow members new to macramé to get the hang of tying the knots. A more advanced session can be held in the future if there is interest in making something more elaborate.

More information about the materials needed will be available at the General Membership meeting as well as in a message that will be sent to members next week.



### Workday at the Clubhouse

The May workday is scheduled for Sunday, May 30 at 11 am. We wish to continue weeding out invasive plants and tidy up areas that aren't currently maintained under our Adopt a Bed initiative. As with the previous workdays, we will provide bottled water and a light snack.

### Celebration of Life/Memorial

A Celebration of Life/Memorial for Beverly Middleton will be held on June 5 from 9 to 11 am at the Francis Tracy Garden Center. The family will create a display of Beverly's treasured 'vintage and new' apron collection.

Please come dressed in something colorful and wear your best hats in celebration of her zest for life. Fond memories can be shared on her tribute wall at the attached link: <https://www.beyerfuneral.net/obituary/Beverly-Middleton>

Our club is creating a photo memory board in her honor, so please bring any pictures you want to share to the meeting on May 18, or send Charlene Regenhart a digital copy to be printed on photographic paper. The board will be given to her family. This will be an opportunity for us to share how important Beverly was to us as a friend and colleague, as well as provide them with some pictures of her that they have never seen before. The memory board also sparks heartwarming memories and stories as people recall the time and place the photos were taken, which can be uplifting.







## Plant of the Month

### Rougeberry (*Rivina humilis*)

by Charlene Regenhardt

As a newcomer to our tropical environment, I am still discovering new plants. I had never heard of rougeberry (also called rouge, rouge plant, pigeon berry, baby peppers, bloodberry, and coralberry) until Lonell adopted the little bed near the side entrance to the clubhouse and planted five of them there.

They are small and rather inconspicuous, and the curly-tail lizards kept eating all the new leaves so it was difficult to know what they would look like when they matured. Looking for a solution, I found some small wire baskets at the dollar store that are similar to the chicken wire cloches sold at places like Gardener's Supply Company for \$20+ apiece. Lonell and I covered the plants with the baskets, using bamboo skewers to hold them down. The baskets seem to be working, so I went back and bought all the ones remaining in the Key Largo store. There are 10 baskets in the outdoor storage shed, so please help yourself if you need to protect any new young plants in one of your adopted beds.



Small wire baskets covering the rougeberry plants to protect them from hungry curly-tail lizards or iguanas.

This member of the pokeberry family hails from Florida west to Arizona, where it can be found on moist, but well-drained soils in both light shade to part sun. The small shrub grows 1-4 feet tall in hammocks throughout Florida, including the Keys. It likes moist places but is relatively drought tolerant.

The genus name *Rivina* came from German physiologist and professor of botany Augustus Rivinus, and *humilis*



One of the small rougeberry plants in the rougeberry bed at the Francis Tracy Garden Center. The small baskets are successfully keeping curly-tails from eating all of the new leaves.

means low-growing or dwarf. The common name comes from the bright red berries, which can be used to make rouge as well as dyes. The pigment in rougeberry is rivanin and is similar to the pigment in beets (betanin).

In Jamaica, rougeberry is used in traditional medicine as an external treatment for inflammatory conditions. The leaves are also used to make a tea used externally to treat cuts, bruises and other skin conditions.

Rougeberry is virtually maintenance-free once established and blooms all year round. The plant recruits readily from seed in the garden and can become very aggressive in shady areas. In fact, it is considered invasive in the Philippines, Singapore and the Galapagos Islands and is especially a problem in the tropical Pacific region, including Hawaii.

Rougeberry is a favorite of numerous birds, butterflies, and even small mammals eat the seeds. However, some sources say the seeds are considered toxic to humans.

(Continued on Page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

About a month after Lonell planted rougeberry, I was walking around my mother's property and saw some plants with tiny white flowers and red berries that had volunteered in a shady corner of the yard. It dawned on me that the plant was rougeberry (confirmed with a picture texted to Laurie). Now I know how pretty the plant is and what it will look like when the plants around the wild tamarind grow up.



*Rougeberry propagates readily, as I discovered at my mother's house near Pennekamp State Park.*

## Cultivation Data

*Source: Natives For Your neighborhood*

**Habitats:** A wide variety of forested ecosystems.

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

**Nutritional Requirements:** Moderate; can grow in nutrient poor soils, but needs some organic content to thrive.

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

**Salt Wind Tolerance:** Moderate; grows near salt water, but is protected from direct salt spray by other vegetation.

**Drought Tolerance:** Moderate; generally requires moist but tolerant of short periods of drought once established. Can go dormant during drought conditions.

**Light Requirements:** Light shade.

**Flower Color:** Pinkish-white.

**Flower Characteristics:** Semi-showy racemes

**Flowering Season:** All year.

**Fruit:** Showy red berries.

**Wildlife and Ecology:** Pollinators are attracted to the flowers and birds and small mammals eat the berries.

**Horticultural Notes:** Can be grown from seed

## Recent Garden Get-Togethers

Six members attended the most recent Garden Get-together to make garden projects out of air dried clay. Items that could be made included an air plant hanger, small pot for a succulent plant, and wall vase to hold dried flowers or an orchid.





## Out & About at Francis Tracy Garden Center

Rainy weather has finally returned to the gardens! Although it's only been a few showers over the past 3 weeks, it's been enough to encourage some of our plants to push out new shoots and blossoms. Even though the gardens are watered regularly, the plants seem to know and thrive when the rain falls. Some of the trees that shed leaves because of the drought conditions are also leafing out again. Most of the gumbo limbo trees sprout leaves in early spring, but dropped them again when the rains failed to come in March and April.



*Pearlberry in the Front Berm*



*Plumeria in the Bridal Bouquet Bed*



*Dwarf Powderpuff in the East Sunroom Garden*



*Jacaranda Tree at southeast corner of property*



*Panama Rose in the Front Porch Bed*



*Desert Rose in the Cactus Garden*



# Notable Dates and Birthdays

A warm birthday wish to our members with May birthdays!

## May

- Maxine E.
- Michelle L.
- Martha D.
- Pat D.
- Julia H.



## Upcoming meetings and club activities:

### May

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					

11	GCUK Board Meeting (10 am)
16	
18	GCUK General Membership Meeting outdoors at The Francis Tracy Garden Center (11:00 am).
18	Florida Native Plant ID Class (Zoom, 5:30 pm)
19	In-person Monroe County Plant Clinic at Francis Tracy Garden Center (9 am to 12 pm)
25	Garden Get-Together:
30	REEF Workday (10 am)
30	GCUK Workday (11 am)

### June

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			

8	GCUK Board Meeting (10 am)
8	Florida Native Plant ID Class (Zoom, 5:30 pm)
16	In-person Monroe County Plant Clinic at Francis Tracy Garden Center (9 am to 12 pm)
19	REEF Workday (10 am)
19	GCUK Workday (11 am)

## Looking Forward...

- **Board meeting** at 10 am on June 8
- **General Membership meeting** on May 18. Meeting begins at 11 am; lunch and social time follows.
- **Next Years' Fundraising Event** dates have been set. A Yard Sale will be held on October 23, 2021; please save lightly used items to sell at this event. The Gingerbread Craft Market is scheduled for November 27, 2021 and the Garden Walk is scheduled for February 19, 2022.