



## The Garden Club of the Upper Keys

# News & Notes

September 2021

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## General Membership Meeting via Zoom

Please join us at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, September 21 for our monthly General Membership meeting via ZOOM. Due to the uptick in COVID-19 cases, the board decided it is the safest way to meet this month. If you are not a member and would like to join the meeting, please contact Program Director Patti Graham at [programdirector@gardenclubupperkeys.org](mailto:programdirector@gardenclubupperkeys.org) and she will provide you with the meeting link.

### Meeting Agenda

- **Call to Order and Welcome to our First Meeting:** President Kathy Janco will welcome members to our first meeting of the 2021-2022 club year.
- **Guest Speaker:** Program Director Patti Graham will introduce our guest speaker, Michelle Leonard-Mularz, Environmental Horticulture Agent for UF/IFAS Monroe County Extension Service.
- **Guest Speaker Presentation: Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program.** Michelle will discuss this UF/IFAS Extension program to promote sustainable landscaping. A brief introduction to her presentation is provided below.
- **Business Meeting:** Presiding over the business meeting, President Janco will share recent Board actions and decisions.

### Florida Friendly Landscaping Program

The Florida-Friendly Landscaping (FFL) Program is the state of Florida's premier Extension program that promotes sustainable alternatives to "conventional" landscaping. The program is based on nine principles designed to help residents and business owners create and maintain beautiful yards using low impact, environmentally friendly, science based landscape practices. A brief summary of the principles is provided in the Gardening Best Practices article on page 6. Michelle's presentation will take the summary to the next level of detail.

Florida-friendly principles use less water and reduce polluting Florida waters. The vision of the FFL program is to be the champion of Florida's environment through science, education and inspiration. Owners of these Florida-Friendly Yards receive a sign to display in their yard. Yards can be conventional and well manicured or more natural. Come find out how many principals you are correctly applying in your yard.

Michelle Leonard-Mularz is the Environmental Horticulture Agent for UF/IFAS, Monroe County Extension Service as well as a GCUK member. She holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Horticulture with a minor in Entomology and is a Certified Arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture. She previously worked with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, initially as a plant inspector, then enforcing the Florida Pesticide Law and Structural Pest Control Act. Prior to the position with FDACS, she worked in private industry for a plant broker and began her career at Broward County Extension Service as the commercial horticulture program assistant.





**"We just passed our 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary since our club was founded—let's make it a year to remember!"**

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 - Patti Graham  
Property - Nancy Perez  
Publicity - Pat Uhl

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

September means the Garden Club of the Upper Keys starts its meetings once again. **WELCOME BACK!** We just passed our 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary since our club was founded—let's make it a year to remember!

The calendar says summer is coming to an end. But if you are lucky enough to live on one of the islands of the wonderful Florida Keys archipelago, you are never sure when that day is. Yes, we have to have some cooler weather tossed in that some, like me, anxiously await.

There is much to look forward to despite the spread of the Covid 19 Delta variant. The board takes the health and safety of our members and community to be of the utmost importance. We will monitor all updates from our local officials and the health departments and make changes to our calendar of events when necessary. On that note, the board has decided to have our first meeting via Zoom.

If you did not have a chance to attend last year's Zoom meetings, they were truly wonderful. We had many informative and engaging speakers and this year, thanks to Patti Graham, the lineup looks like it will be another fantastic year. Let us give our speakers the support they deserve and *log in...* they are taking time out of their day to meet with us. It's easy and nice to see familiar faces. No driving is required.

We hope to see you in person later this month at one of our garden clean-up days or later at one of our Garden Get-Togethers. Workdays can be as easy or hard as you wish as there is always a branch to pick up or a weed to pull. Any or all help is appreciated. I also would again like to thank the members who adopted a garden bed to take care of. It has made the garden much easier to tend to. There are still a few left if you would like to adopt one. Please. Look forward to hearing from you.

I hope you have had a good summer and I am excited to see everyone again. If you need anything at any time, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,  
Kathy

### **Change in Yard Sale Date!**

At our September 14, 2021 meeting, the GCUK Board voted to postpone the previously advertised Yard Sale to the spring (April or May) of 2022. A specific date has not yet been selected. It was felt that our members' concerns about the Covid virus and ability to help in the efforts needed to make this a successful fundraiser warranted a move of date.

We ask that, as you complete your spring cleaning, you collect gently used household items, lamps, collectibles, workable electronics, kitchenware, small furniture, clothing, plants, sports equipment, toys and children's books. This is also a great time to propagate plants that can be sold. As we get closer to the date of the sale, we will ask for your help with a number of various tasks.

We recognize this is an inconvenience for those of you who have been stockpiling items for the sale and have limited storage space. Several members have been collecting items and expressed a need for help storing items they have gathered up.

Please contact Yard Sale chair Laura Hartner (contact information is found on page 14 of members edition) if:

- 1) You need someone to take items for storage, or
- 2) You have some available space to keep items until the sale.



## A note from the editor...

Welcome to the first edition of *News and Notes* for this membership year! We are continuing to include some of the newsletter topics we initiated last year, including Plant of the Month and Gardening Best Practices.

Although a repeat from last year, the Gardening Best Practices article on Florida Friendly Landscaping written by Laurie Brooks is a brief summary of this month's presentation by Michelle Leonard-Mularz. Michelle's presentation will provide a greater level of detail on the Florida-friendly principles and help us understand how to apply them in our own gardens as well as the Francis Tracy Gardens.

While I was working on this issue, I noticed the picture of our Pine Rockland Garden in last year's September issue. Most of the plants are double in size compared to last year! One of the reasons we focused on adding more natives to the property this summer is because they thrive here without requiring a lot of care.

Laura Hartner created a useful Calendar that shows all of the various club activities scheduled for this year on a single page. I found it to be so helpful, that I wanted to share it with everyone and it is attached on page 12.

Laura and Patti Graham worked together to plan our next Garden Get-Together, *Making Flavored Extracts*,

on Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 10AM. I am looking forward to attending and hope to see you there! The instructions are provided in Laura's article on page 7.

Since September is the height of hurricane season, we are repeating last year's article on hurricane preparedness for gardeners. It never hurts to review this practical advice when the season comes around again. Perhaps you already have your own checklist for your gardens.

Speaking of hurricanes, I recently did a little searching on the internet to find the most hurricane resistant trees. It turns out that our state tree, the sabal palm, is one of the best! No surprise since it's native to Florida. Laurie donated a small sabal palm last month as part of the drive for plant donations under the TDC grant. It's featured as our Plant of the Month (page 5).

If you have any suggestions for articles, plants to feature, pictures to share, or general comments, don't hesitate to give me a call or e-mail. This is YOUR newsletter and we want it to spark your continued interest and enthusiasm for the GCUK.

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 house has never looked better! She continues to ensure all of the indoor equipment—from fire extinguishers to AC units—are functioning properly and efficiently.

**PROPERTY DIRECTOR Nancy Perez** reports that the work and planning for property maintenance tasks has continued throughout the summer. We have scheduled property workdays for the first Tuesday of the month (9AM– 11AM) and the third Sunday (11AM– 12PM). She thanks our membership for coming to help with all of the various weeding, trimming, and planting chores on these workdays and encourages those who

were not able to come to join in the fun next time. While some tasks can be a bit strenuous, others are fairly light work and it all adds up to make our property look its best. She also thanks the members who adopted a garden bed and wants to remind members that there are still a few un-adopted beds available. The Adopt-a-Bed initiative has made the garden much easier to tend to.

**VICE-PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION Laurie Brooks** continues to set up meetings for the Florida Keys Native Plant ID class with Jim Duquesnel. The next class will be September 21 from 5:30 to 7:00 PM tentatively with Jim Duquesnel talking about vines. August's presentation by Duane Kolterman was about the Gentians and Dogbane (milkweed) families and was very informative.

Laurie continues to participate in the Workdays for the REEF gardens, as well as the workdays for the clubhouse gardens. After working on the REEF gardens on August 29, two of the REEF inters came down to the Francis Tracy Gardens to help GCUK with some much-needed weeding.



## Notes from the Directors...

(continued from page 3)

Laurie also continues to support the Ocean Studies Charter School's gardens and is currently working on a committee to create an outdoor classroom (trails, kiosks and signage) for the Hammock. The Eco-Environment planter gardens in front of school are doing well as is water garden in back. A Sabal minor to the palm garden was added.

The Master Gardener plant clinics continue to be held at our clubhouse on the third Wednesday of the month. The next one will be October 20<sup>th</sup>. Holding the clinic at our garden club has the benefit of being surrounded by living exemplars of plants for identification and horticultural practices. Clinics have resumed at the Murray Nelson building and the most recent one was held on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

In addition to all of the previous activities, Laurie and her husband Don took the lead on designing, building, and installing the informative kiosk that was an element of the TDC Grant. She contributed the materials to construct the kiosk as a in-kind donation to GCUK.

Laurie encourages everyone to continue to send her ideas for community outreach/inreach – particularly ways to partner with youth in our community. Send ideas to her via email, text, or phone. Her contact information is provided on the Resource Links page of the member's edition of this newsletter.

**PROGRAM DIRECTOR Patti Graham** has been lining up speakers for our upcoming General Membership meetings. This fall's lineup includes:

- **October 19: "Planting for Pollinators with an emphasis on Native Plants"** presented by Suzanne Koptur, PHD Professor of Biological Sciences at Florida International University.

- **November 16: "Birds that Migrate through the Keys"** presented by Kevin Welsh, Everglades Science Center Biologist-Monroe County.

Patti is also looking for various "in-reach" activities to be held at the clubhouse. Please join in our Garden Get-Together on September 28 to make flavored extracts. They are easy to make and will be ready in time for the holiday season to be used for baking or hostess gifts.

**PUBLICITY DIRECTOR Pat Uhl** announces that she has been working with a committee to update our sign along US1. She has been actively posting to our Facebook page to encourage new members to join and inform the public of upcoming events and activities. She is working with Kathy Holmes on fliers for the upcoming yard sale, Gingerbread Craft market, and Garden Walk. She also works with Lonell Rice and Amy Jorgenson on website updates.

**FUNDRAISING DIRECTOR Kathy Holmes** continues to plan for our signature fundraisers: the Gingerbread Craft Market (Saturday November 27, 2021) and Garden Walk (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).

She is working with Laura Hartner to host the yard sale that was recently postponed from October to April or May. Kathy is also looking into fundraising ideas in partnership with Winn Dixie and Sweetest Knights. If anyone has fundraising ideas, please connect with her.

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

**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Charlene Regenhardt** sent the membership renewal mailing out on September 4th and is beginning to process membership forms. A big "Thank You" to those who promptly submitted their dues! If you have not yet mailed yours, please do so before September 30.

## Thank You to our Generous Members!

The Garden Club of the Upper Keys campaign to raise funds to repair and replace the ceiling and lighting in our meeting room was a huge success. Support from members enabled us to immediately hire a contractor, purchase materials for the project and avoid any unfortunate price increases. Members Steve and Kathy Holmes made a very generous offer to match funds raised through this campaign and got us to the \$7,000 needed to get this project completed. Special thanks to Craig Hudson for researching our options, getting bids and acting as our "General Contractor"! Craig and Christine Hudson also donated the two new ceiling fans. Thank you to the following members who donated to our building improvement project:

- |                            |                            |                   |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| • Steve & Kathy Holmes     | • Fred & Laura Hartner     | • Darlene Rota    |
| • Craig & Christine Hudson | • Gerry Yeager             | • Marilyn Schmitz |
| • Linda Jones              | • Richard & DeeDee Barreto | • Fran Reig       |
| • Patti Graham             | • Karen Kovarik            |                   |



## Plant of the Month

### Sabal Palm

(*Sabal palmetto*)

by Charlene Regenhardt

Our sabal palm is a recent addition to the Francis Tracy Garden Center and we plan to plant it in the hammock area not far from the Peace Park Garden. Sabal Palm is a native palm and the state tree of Florida, as well as the state tree of South Carolina. It grows in pine woodlands, hammocks, and on river banks. It typically grows to 40 feet tall, but can reach as tall as 90 feet in Florida. However, it has a very slow growth rate.

Most palm trees have leaves that are considered either "palmate" or "pinnate." Palmate leaves originate from a single point at the end of the stem called the "petiole" and resemble the palm of your hand, while pinnate leaves have a main vein extending from the base to the top of the leaf and resemble a feather. There is one genus of palm (*Sabal*) that has costapalmate leaves. Instead of all of the leaf fronds originating from a petiole that is round like a button, the petiole has an elongated shape more like a knife blade. All members of the *Sabal* genus have a costapalmate leaf.

There are 15 different *Sabal* species and four of them are native to Florida. The three other *Sabal* species are much smaller: 1) *Sabal minor* is found in moist areas, 2) *Sabal etonia* is found in dry scrub habitats, and 3) *Sabal miamiensis* is found only in the Miami-Dade rock pinelands of southeast Florida and is believed to be nearly extinct.

Sabal palms do not have crown shafts, so the fronds grow directly from the trunk. After fronds die and fall off, the frond bases called "boots" form a spiked, crisscross pattern on the trunk. Young sabal palms can take 10 years to form a trunk. Older sabal palms lose their boots to reveal a smooth, grey bark. There are at least two theories about how the term "boot" came to be to refer to frond bases. One is that Spanish conquistadors who used them as shoe horns coined the term boot. Another is that soldiers in the U.S. Army hung their boots on them during the Seminole War to keep snakes and other critters out of them at night.

Early Floridians had a variety of uses for the sabal palm. The bud of the tree is edible and is known as "heart of palm" and swamp cabbage, the trunk and fronds were used to build shelter, and various fibrous parts were used to make cordage. Its fronds are also used to make thatched roofs.



### Cultivation Data

Source: [www.regionalconservation.org](http://www.regionalconservation.org)

**Soils:** Moist to seasonally wet or dry, well-drained to moderately well-drained sandy, limestone, or organic soils, usually with, but often without a humusy top layer.

**Nutritional Requirements:** Moderate to low; it prefers soils with organic content, but will still grow reasonably well in nutrient poor soils.

**Salt Water Tolerance:** Moderately low; does not tolerate long-term flooding by salt or brackish water, but tolerates short term inundation by salt water from storm surge with minimal damage.

**Salt Wind Tolerance:** Secondary line; tolerates significant salt wind without injury, but usually is somewhat protected.

**Drought Tolerance:** High; does not require any supplemental water once established

**Light Requirements:** Full sun to light shade.

**Flower Color:** Creamy white. Inflorescence is semi-showy, nearly as long as the leaves. The flowers are fragrant.

**Flowering Season:** All year; peak spring-summer.

**Fruit:** Dry, smooth, dull round nearly black berry; peak in fall. Seeds solitary.

**Wildlife and Ecology:** Provides significant food and cover for wildlife. Larval host for monk skipper (*Asbolis capucinus*) butterflies. Nectar plant for eastern pygmy blue (*Brephidium isophthalma*), southern hairstreak (*Fixsenia favonius*) and other butterflies. Attracts bee pollinators. Birds and other animals eat the fruits.

# Gardening Best Practices

## Florida Friendly Landscaping

by Laurie Brooks



Begin practicing the nine principles of Florida Friendly Gardening and have your yard certified as a gold or silver Florida-Friendly Landscape when you have met the requirements. You can learn about these requirements by attending one of our master gardener plant clinics here at the clubhouse on the third Wednesday each month from 9 am until noon. Here are the principles to follow to help preserve our fragile island and reef ecosystem:

### 1. Right Plant, Right Place

You wouldn't put a goldfish in a bird cage, would you? All plants both native and non-native have their own individual requirements for water, light, nutrients, and space. Thinking about these requirements and planning your garden and landscape accordingly will both save plant lives and reduce your garden workload! Using native plants as much as possible will reduce watering and fertilizing as these plants are accustomed to our climate and soil conditions. Remember water is a scarce resource here in the Keys and fertilizer that ends up out on the reef is not good for our corals. Giving shrubs and trees adequate space to grow and keeping them away from building foundations and utility lines will also reap benefits down the road.

### 2. Water Efficiently

This one seems fairly self-explanatory, but a few suggestions are in order. Remember that even natives when newly planted need more frequent watering to help their roots get established. Choose lawn and ground cover plantings that are drought resistant. Water before 10 in the morning or after 4 in the afternoon to avoid the heat and evaporation. Use water wands to put the water at the base of the plant – sprinklers that wet leaves also lose a lot of water to the air. Pay attention to community water restrictions and guidelines. Collect rainwater runoff if possible and even recycle the water that comes from your AC unit.

### 3. Fertilize Appropriately

This is a current hot topic here in the Keys and local ordinances are pending. Most native plants need no fertilizer and judicious use of fertilizer on lawns and non-native plants will save money and the environment. Use slow-release fertilizers and learn about fertilizer components so that you are giving your plants only what they actually need.

### 4. Mulch

Mulch, mulch and more mulch (2-3 inches)! It builds your soil as it breaks down, inhibits weeds and reduces water loss. Don't use Cypress mulch as it is not sustainable. Don't volcano mulch – keep mulch away from tree trunks.

### 5. Attract Wildlife

Who doesn't want to see beautiful birds and butterflies? Provide water, nectar plants, berries and seeds and host plants for caterpillars.

### 6. Manage Yard Pests Responsibly

This includes harmful weeds as well as insects, snails and iguanas. Herbicides are also pesticides. Pull those weeds and hand pick off the bugs. Use minimally harmful substances only when absolutely necessary.

### 7. Recycle Yard Waste

Leave those grass clippings on your lawn and save on fertilizer. Fallen leaves make great free mulch and can be added to compost bins to provide the necessary brown elements to help decompose your green cuttings and kitchen waste (only vegetable matter no meat, fats or dairy – but don't forget to include coffee grounds and filters, and tea bags).

### 8. Reduce Stormwater Runoff

Keep it in the ground – mulch helps with this. Install rain barrels or cisterns.

### 9. Protect the Waterfront

We live on an island! All of the above will help protect our fragile island and reef ecosystems but if you live directly on the water you have a special obligation to protect your local water resources whether it is a wetland or a canal be sure to know what additional precautions you should take.

### Want to know more?

Much more detail on each of the above can be found in *The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Handbook* available from the University of Florida IFAS Extension or by talking to your Master Gardeners. The website can be found at the following link: [Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ - UF/IFAS Extension \(ufl.edu\)](http://Florida-Friendly-Landscaping-UF/IFAS-Extension.ufl.edu). The handbook can be downloaded from the following link: [The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Handbook 2015 \(ufl.edu\)](http://The-Florida-Yards-&-Neighborhoods-Handbook-2015.ufl.edu).



# Garden Get-Together

by Laura Hartner

## Making Flavored Extracts

Our first Garden Get-Together will be held on Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 10:00 AM at the Francis Tracy Gardens. We will make flavored extracts for cooking or baking. Last year's activity to make vanilla extract was popular and resulted in a great product for use in our kitchen and to give as gifts for the holiday season. Laura Hartner, Garden Get-Together Chair, wanted to start earlier this year so that the extracts will be ready for holiday cooking/baking or gift-giving.

The extracts are easy to make and use only Vodka and fresh natural flavors. It only takes a few minutes to assemble the ingredients, but 6 to 8 weeks to "extract" the flavor. One can find extract bottles in most cooking stores and online. Clear bottles allow you to watch as the liquid changes color over time while amber bottles block the light from impacting the extracts. Once the extraction process is complete, you can choose to strain the extract, removing the raw flavoring ingredient, and pouring it into a clean bottle for longer term storage or gifting. Note that vanilla beans can be reused multiple times to make extract using each pod 3 or 4 times. If you keep your extracts sealed, in a cupboard, away from light and heat, they should keep indefinitely due to the high alcohol content.

## Ingredients:

- 8 (eight) ounces VODKA and:
- **Vanilla Extract:** 4 to 6 whole vanilla bean pods (3 to 4 inch)
- **Almond Extract:** 1/2 cup raw unsalted slivered almonds
- **Lime Extract:** 2 lime rinds, peeled into strips
- **Lemon Extract:** 2 lemon rinds, peeled into strips
- **Orange Extract:** 1 large orange rind, peeled into strips
- **Mint Extract:** 1 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves
- **Coconut Extract:** 1/2 cup roughly chopped fresh coconut meat
- **Cinnamon Extract:** 4 sticks whole cinnamon

## Instructions:

1. Prepare the raw ingredient(s) for extraction. For vanilla extract, use a sharp knife to split the vanilla pod open lengthwise to expose the tiny seeds inside.

2. Place the raw ingredient inside an 8-ounce glass bottle or mason jar.
3. Pour vodka into bottle to fill, leaving a 1/2-inch space between the vodka and the top of the bottle.
4. Place the lid on the jar to close. Let sit for 6 to 8 weeks, giving the bottle a gentle shake every 2-3 days. Be sure to store extracts in a cool, dry place away from sunlight.
5. Then, if you'd like, you can strain the raw ingredients from the extract bottles. Extracts stay good for at least several years.



Please contact Laura Hartner by **Monday, September 20** to reserve your space. Group size is limited to 10 club members.

## For this activity, you will need to bring:

- The raw ingredients for extraction of the flavors you'd like to make (See quantities on the left)
- Vodka ( 8 ounces per each flavor you wish to make)
- Small knife
- Peeler
- Cutting board
- 8 oz. glass bottle or Mason Jar (with metal top) and sterilized in boiling water
- Funnel, if needed, to pour vodka into your container

When you notify Laura that you would like to come, let her know what flavors you plan to make, and she will make labels for your bottles for you. If you wish to have Laura purchase bulk vanilla beans, bottles, or vodka from a big box store for you, please let her know that also and the quantity.

The information and photo for making the extracts was taken from the following website link: [How to Make Homemade Extracts \(Any Flavor!\)](https://www.thestayathomechef.com/how-to-make-homemade-extracts-any-flavor/) ([thestayathomechef.com](https://www.thestayathomechef.com)).

# Hurricane Preparedness for Gardeners

by Charlene Regenhardt

Although we are already well into hurricane season as of this issue of *News and Notes*, the “peak” season is typically now in September. In addition to taking the recommended health and safety precautions (having ample amounts of drinking water, nonperishable food, and buttoning up the house), there are additional preparations that can be taken to protect our outdoor spaces. Below are a few tips taken from a variety of sources including University of Florida (UF/IFAS), gardening publications and insurance companies.

## Landscaping Tips

Minimizing damage to landscaping begins with the overall landscaping plan. When you install or enhance your outdoor space, consider the following tips and recommendations:

- **Use salt-tolerant greenery**, especially in areas prone to flooding. Native palms such as buccaneer, sabal, and silver are recognized for their salt tolerance. Salt tolerant trees include geiger, live oak, mahogany, pigeon plum, satinleaf, sea grape, buttonwoods, and the stoppers.
- **Plant the right trees in the right places.** Some trees are more prone to breakage and shallow-rooted trees can topple over from high winds. Trees that are notable for wind tolerance are often natives and include tamarind, geiger, live oak, gumbo limbo, mango, and many of the palms.



- **Pay attention to drainage.** Assess the ground elevation across the property and especially around your house or sheds/outbuildings. The ground should slope away from these structures. When installing raised beds or berms, make sure that they are placed so that they don't cause water to pond and help direct water away from the house. These measures help prevent flooding and can help keep insects and other pests from entering your home.

## Annual To-Do List

Consider making an annual outdoor maintenance list that will have you nearly hurricane-ready before the first storm of the season and will shorten your list of last-minute preparations. Suggestions include:

- **Pruning.** Take time early in the year, before new growth develops, to thin out the canopy of trees. Pay attention to trees and shrubs against the house and remove limbs that might whip against walls or windows, potentially causing damage and creating a racket. Regular pruning mitigates property damage and helps keep insects and other pests from finding a home along the perimeter of your house. Later in the year, trim off coconuts and dead fronds from palms, but do not remove palm leaves that are still green as they protect the crown and their removal can cause nutrient deficiencies.
- **Hire an Arborist.** Schedule an annual or biannual inspection and mitigation service from a tree services company. An arborist will inspect for disease and prune dead or diseased branches from trees, which are the most likely to break in a storm. The arborist will also know if a permit is required and will ensure the work is compliant with regulations. All it takes is a phone call from an overzealous neighbor to initiate a code compliance investigation. (See September 8 news release at <https://www.monroecounty-fl.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1388>.)



(Continued from page 9)

- **Perform gutter maintenance.** Clear gutters of leaves and other debris at the beginning of our rainy season (June). Make sure gutters are firmly attached and direct water away from the house. If there are no gutters and the water pours off the roof in a concentrated area, consider placing pavers in the runoff area to reduce erosion and ponding. If storm drains are nearby, ensure they are also clear of debris. Although gutters and drains may need to be serviced more than once a year, maintenance at the onset of the hurricane season will lighten the load later in the summer.



- **Treat the dog days of summer like northerners treat winter.** For most of the year, our garden ornaments and outdoor furniture are aesthetically pleasing. Come hurricane season, these items can become projectiles. July through September is generally quite hot, so most of us don't spend as much time outdoors. Consider tidying up and minimizing outdoor furniture, decorations, and gardening equipment during the heat of summer to reduce the effort required to secure them right before a storm.
- **Make late summer the "fallow season."** If you are a veggie gardener, you are already aware that most vegetables languish in the summer heat. Many of us grow vegetables in containers that are apt to topple over from high winds. Instead of fighting to keep vegetable plants producing, clear off the garden, begin planning your fall garden, and start seedlings such as tomatoes and peppers in September to get a jump start once the weather is better for growing. For example, I empty large light-weight pots holding my now mostly-dead tomato plants, use or stockpile the soil for other landscaping purposes, and stack and move the pots and tomato cages to the back of the garage. Come fall, I purchase new soil for the tomatoes.

## Batten Down the Hatches

If a storm is imminent, take measures to safeguard remaining outdoor furniture and equipment:

- **De-decorate your garden.** Now is the time to gather up wind chimes, bird feeders, garden ornaments, and the like. Lift the water basin of a two-piece birdbath and lay it on the ground to keep it from toppling over.

- **Protect potted plants.** If plants are small enough, it's best to move them indoors. If they are too big or you have too many, wedge the plants behind hedges or shrubs where they will have some



- protection from the wind. Large potted plants can be laid on their sides and tucked out of the wind. Move potted plants to the lee side of the house or place against a sturdy fence. Group your pots as closely together as possible and lay bags of soil or mulch around the cluster of potted plants to help secure them.
- **Secure outdoor furniture.** Indoors or a storage shed is best, but if you don't have the space, take advantage of existing structures. Some people with a pool put the lawn furniture in the pool. You can also strap lawn furniture to the pillars on an elevated house to keep it from blowing away. Don't forget to secure the trash and yard waste cans as well.
- **Minimize water seepage under garage doors.** Lay down bags of mulch outside of the doors. Bags of mulch are larger and cheaper than sand, do just as good a job of redirecting water, and you can use the mulch in your garden later.
- **Don't prune right before a storm unless absolutely necessary.** It's best not to prune if the debris can't be collected and disposed since it will be blown around in the storm. Over-pruning can also make some trees and palms more vulnerable to damage.

## Want to learn more?

- The University of Florida website has a number of useful publications (go to <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/> and search on "hurricane")
- An excellent article by botanist Rodger Keller (1943-2006) is maintained on the Key West Garden Club website (<https://keywestgardenclub.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/rodger-keller.pdf>)
- *Landscape Hurricane Preparedness* by Michelle Leonard-Mularz, UF-IFAS Monroe County Environmental Horticulture Agent can be found at: [www.monroecounty-fl.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17819/June-2019-Newsletterpdf](http://www.monroecounty-fl.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17819/June-2019-Newsletterpdf)
- Crawford, Pamela. (2006) *Stormscaping: Landscaping to Minimize Wind Damage in Florida* Canton, GA: Color Garden, Inc. (available at Amazon or other booksellers)

# Notable Dates and Birthdays

A warm birthday wish to our members with August and September birthdays!

## August

- \* Pamela G.
- \* Janet L.
- \* Martha M.
- \* Sandra P.
- \* Heidi P.
- \* Hellen S.
- \* Cheryl S.
- \* Sandi W.

## September

- \* Don B.
- \* Jim C.
- \* Steve H.
- \* Karen K.
- \* Deborah M.
- \* Evelyn M.
- \* Sylvia M.
- \* Harold S.



## Upcoming meetings and club activities:

### September

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		

<b>7</b>	GCUK Workday (9-11 am)
<b>14</b>	GCUK Board Meeting (10 am)
<b>15</b>	Master Gardener Plant Clinic (9 am - 12 pm)
<b>21</b>	GCUK General Membership Meeting (11 am)
<b>21</b>	Florida Native Plant ID Class (Zoom, 5:30 pm)
<b>19</b>	Workday at REEF (10-11 am) followed by workday at GCUK (11-12 am)
<b>30</b>	Cooking for God's Kitchen (Contact Laurie Brooks)

### 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						

<b>5</b>	GCUK Workday (9-11 am)
<b>12</b>	GCUK Board Meeting (10 am)
<b>17</b>	Workday at REEF (10-11 am) followed by workday at GCUK (11-12 am)
<b>19</b>	GCUK General Membership Meeting (11 am)
<b>19</b>	Florida Native Plant ID Class (Zoom, 5:30 pm)
<b>20</b>	Master Gardener Plant Clinic (9 am - 12 pm)

## Looking Forward...

- **Board** meetings at 10 am on Sep 14, Oct 12, Nov 9, Dec 7, Jan 11, Feb 1, Mar 8, Apr 12, May 10
- **General Membership** meetings on Sep 21, Oct 19, Nov 16, Dec 14, Jan 11, Feb 15, Mar 15, Apr 19, May 17. Meetings begin at 11 am; If held at the clubhouse, doors open at 10 am for social time.
- **Special Events:** The Gingerbread Craft Market is scheduled for November 27, 2021 and the Garden Walk is scheduled for February 19, 2022. A yard sale will be scheduled for April or May 2022.

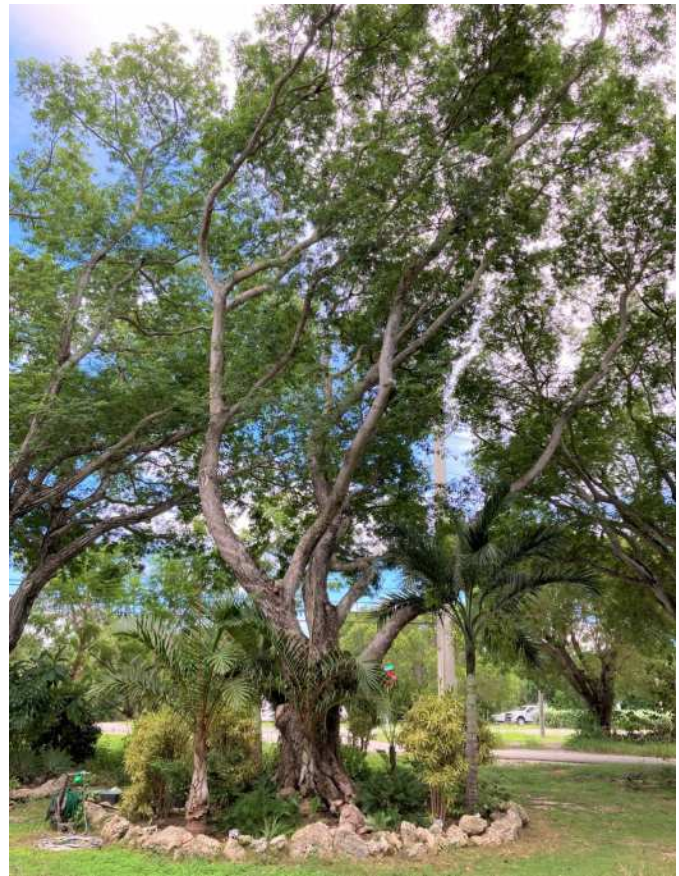


## Out & About at Francis Tracy Garden Center

We are deep into summer here in the Keys. The natives such as the fiddlewood and button sage are feeding the butterflies and bees, but their blooms aren't very showy.

The fiddlewood sure smells good, so I encourage anyone wanting to spend a few moments enjoying nature to stop by. There are some new native plants along the walkway that surrounds the Peace Park garden that you may like as well.

Perhaps because of the lack of showy blooms, it drew my vision upwards towards the canopy of trees and made me appreciate how the branches of the old gumbo limbo and wild tamarind trees twist and spiral as if they are dancing. The view reminded me of the saying by Vincent van Gogh "If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere."





# 2021-2022 GCUK Calendar

July 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				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

August 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

September 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

October 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	
31						

November 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

December 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

January 2022						
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30	31					




February 2022						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

March 2022						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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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		

April 2022						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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

May 2022						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

June 2022						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			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		

-  = Board Meeting 10AM
-  = REEF & FTGC Workday 11AM
-  = GCUK Special Event: Yard Sale - TBA; Gingerbread Craft Market - 11/27/21; Garden Walk Volunteer Preview- 2/8/22; Garden Walk - 2/19/22

-  = General Membership Mtg., 10AM Social, 11AM Program/Mtg
-  = Native Plant ID class 5:30PM

-  = Master Gardener Plant Clinic, 9AM-12PM
-  = God's Kitchen

-  = FTGC Workday, 9AM
-  Federal Holidays in **Red** with white background