

The Garden Club of the Upper Keys

News & Notes

May 2022

General Membership Meeting & Pot Luck

Please join us at the Francis Tracy Garden Center on Tuesday, May 17 for our final General Membership meeting of the Year. Holding with tradition, we will have a pot luck luncheon starting at 11 am followed by the meeting, where we will install the new officers for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Meeting Agenda

- Pot Luck Luncheon: Please bring your favorite brunch or lunch dish of either an appetizer, main dish, side or dessert to share with everyone. We will have a buffet table set up in the sunroom and tables and chairs set up in the meeting room.
- Call to Order & Welcome: President Kathy Janco will welcome members to our meeting.
- Installation of Officers. Long-time member Evelyn McGlone will officiate the installation of new officers for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.
- Business Meeting: Presiding over the business meeting, President Janco will share recent Board actions and decisions.



Slate of Officers for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year:

Executive Board

President Secretary Treasurer

Kathy Janco Vice – Pres Laurie Brooks Laura Hartner Anne Makowsky

Directors

Fundraising Hospitality House Program Property Publicity

Debbie Sue Jonas Betty Ann Gear & Fran Reig Chris Hudson Membership Darlene Rota Patti Graham Charlene Regenhardt Pat Uhl

nsi	de	this	issue:

PRESIDENT'S Message	2
A Note From the Editor	3
Notes From the Directors	3-4
Plant of the Month	5
Summertime Project Ideas for Fall Fundraiser	6-9
Notable Dates and Birthdays	10

The Garden Club of the Upper Keys



To plant a garden ís to believe ín tomorrow! ~Audrey Hepburn

The Garden Club of the Upper Keys, Inc. at The Francis Tracy Garden Center 94040 Overseas Hwy. Tavernier, FL 33070

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 - Vacant Publicity - Pat Uhl **From the desk of President Kathy Janco...** Farwell to our 2021-2022 year.

Wishing each and every one of you a safe and happy summer.

I hope you find time to enjoy family, friends, and the things you love.

Look forward to an exciting and fun-filled 2022-2023 year when we return.

Síncerely, Kathy

The May 17 Meeting is Your Last Chance to Suggest a Name for our Fall Fundraiser





Gingerbread Craft Market

The fundraising event the Garden Club sponsors in the fall has been called a variety of names through the years, such as the Plant Sale, the Fall Festival, and most recently, the Gingerbread Craft Market. The Board has heard that some members would like to change the name of our fundraising event that is held the weekend after Thanksgiving. The Board is considering a change in the date of this event to the first or second Saturday of November, so this is an opportune time to also look at this event in terms of a name.

The Board would like you, as a member to suggest a name for this event. It could be one of the ones previously used or one that you think is fitting for a fundraiser at this time of year. Be creative and have fun with this task!

Please enter your choice in the jar placed by the meeting sign-in sheet at the May General Membership meeting or send by email, with your name, to: gardenclubupper-keys@gmail.com no later than May 1, 2022. A Board committee will then review all of the entries, select one to be the name of the fall fundraising event, and share its name with you.

Garden Get-Together

The next Garden Get-Together on Tuesday, May 24 at 10 AM will be an opportunity to finish any of your uncompleted projects started at previous Garden Get-Togethers. In addition, we will be making some leaf printed tea towels like the ones sold at the Gingerbread Craft Market last fall.

Please contact Laura Hartner by Tuesday, May17 if you wish to participate. Also, please let her know if you need any materials. She has some materials left over for most of the projects that she can supply at a low cost.

Page 2

A note from the editor...

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the Pot Luck for the May General Membership Meeting (see page 1). I can't believe it's already May and our next meeting is the last one of the fiscal year! It's been a very productive year and our fundraisers were very successful!

Summer is a good time to work on tasks that we didn't have time to work on during the busy year. I plan to continue to maintain our plant inventory in Plantsmap.com and work on maintaining and enhancing the grounds and gardens.

As indicated on page 4 we continue to look for volunteers to help lighten the load over the summer months. We will continue to hold two monthly "workday" sessions (first Tuesday and third Sunday of the month). I hope some of you will pitch in—the grounds still need to be weeded and watered lest we come back in September to a jungle of unwanted volunteer plants that spring up wherever the birds and wind decide to plant them!

The workday sessions 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.

Another activity to think about over the summer is what to make for the fall fundraising event. The article on page 6 provides a few ideas, but the possibilities are virtually endless. Laura Hartner plans to hold a couple Garden Get-Togethers over the summer to make a few crafts. We are already scheduled to make some tea towels later this month. If you have any ideas of handmade items that might be good for the fundraiser and would like to give the project a try at a Garden Gettogether, please let her know, or send a message to gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com.

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 for upcoming meetings at the clubhouse. Assistance includes helping to 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 continues to ensure all of the indoor equipment—from fire extinguishers to AC units—are functioning properly and efficiently. Please let Christine know if we are running low on any clubhouse supplies, if something gets broken or if anything needs special attention.

VICE-PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF COM-MUNITY 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 May 17 from 5:30 to 7:00 PM.

Laurie continues to participate in the workdays for the REEF gardens as well as the workdays for the clubhouse gardens. The next workday will be Sunday, May 22 from 10 to 11 AM, followed by a workday session at

GCUK from 11 AM to noon. The workday was moved to the fourth Sunday due to her travel plans.

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. Trails and eco-pod locations were staked and a professional survey was done by a biologist. The eco-environment planter gardens in front of the school are doing well as is the water garden in back.

The Master Gardener Plant Clinics continue to be held at our clubhouse on the third Wednesday of the month. The next one will be May 18 from 9 AM until noon. Plant Clinics have resumed at the Murray Nelson building as well. The next one will be June 1 (first Wednesday of the month) from 9 AM until noon.

The next scheduled date to support cooking for God's Kitchen is June 30. Our club cooks when there is a fifth Thursday in the month. Please contact Cindy Davis or Betty Ann Gear to help make meatloaf and sides for this worthwhile community support function.

Laurie recently made a field trip to St. Justin's Church property on March 12 with a woman who had visited us at GCUK to scope out an invasive/exotic removal

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

project. She is working on scoping the project as a potential community service project for school-aged youngsters. She will likely need a few club volunteers to help organize and supervise the effort. More information will be provided as it is developed.

Laurie encourages everyone to continue to send her ideas for community outreach/in-reach – particularly ways to partner with youth in our community. She has been working with the rest of the executive board members to renew our scholarship awards that were suspended last year due to the need to cancel fundraising events.

PROPERTY DIRECTOR: Charlene Regenhardt will take on this position for the next fiscal year.

The workdays and Adopt-a-Bed initiative have helped make the workload more manageable. **The Board** would like to thank our members for their continued support in maintaining our property!

A BIG thank you goes to DeeDee Barreto and Martha Edwards for taking on the weekly watering chores. Another initiative that we started this past month is sprucing up the front porch bed to make it more colorful and attractive. Pat Saunders, Jenny Crittenden, Kathie Carr, Laurie Brooks and Patti Graham have been planning and executing the work, which is underway.

Property Management Volunteers Needed

We are still looking for a few volunteers to help lighten the maintenance workload by watering one day a week and/or assisting with our new plant nursery. Both of these maintenance efforts require regular attention but are not very strenuous or time consuming (each would only be about a 1-hour per week commitment). If we could get assistance with these light duty tasks one day a week, it would greatly lessen the workload. We are hoping to enlist a pool of volunteers that can sign up for one or two months duration on a rotating basis. In addition, we encourage members to pitch in on workdays, which are typically the first Tuesday (9-11 AM) and the third Sunday (11 AM-12 PM) of each month. The next scheduled workdays are Tuesday, June 7 and Sunday June 19.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR Patti Graham has been lining up speakers for our General Membership meetings. The May meeting includes the installation ceremony for new officers and will include a Potluck Luncheon (see announcement on page 1).

Patti already has speakers lined up for this coming fall:

- September, Jason Downing, Orchid Biologist from Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
- October, Jim West will present on the Plight of the Monarch Butterfly
- November, Janice Duquesnel will present on the Biology and Ecology of Mangroves

Patti continues to work on planning potential programs and field trips for next year.

PUBLICITY DIRECTOR Pat Uhl has been working with Kathy Holmes and Patti Graham to support publicity efforts for meetings and fundraisers. She posts information and photographs regularly on our Facebook page and works with Lonell Rice and Amy Jorgenson on website updates.

Pat is looking into Wild Apricot as a platform to support various club activities such as fundraisers, announcement, and membership management. The website capabilities include online payment options for dues and events such as the Garden Walk. She will work with our new Fundraising Director Debbie Sue Jonas and our new Membership Director Darlene Rota to evaluate available capabilities. If selected, they will work together as a team to subscribe to and set up the Wild Apricot account.

Pat is also working on plans to update and supplement the club's existing brochures. She is also working with a committee to update our sign along US-1.

FUNDRAISING DIRECTOR Kathy Holmes wants to thank all of our members for a very successful year of fundraising events! She will be working to transition this important role to Debbie Sue Jonas this summer.

Work is underway to identify potential gardens for Garden Walk 2023. It is not just the job of the Fundraising Director or Garden Walk chair, all members should be on the lookout for appropriate gardens. For questions or suggestions, please call or email Debbie Sue Jonas (contact info is on the Resource Links Page). If anyone has other fundraising ideas for next year, please connect with her.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Charlene Regenhardt

is finalizing membership records in preparation to transition the Membership Director position to Darlene Rota. As of the end of the fiscal year, we had 93 paid members.

Page 5

Plant of the Month Desert Rose (Adenium obesum) by Charlene Regenhardt

This low-maintenance succulent can be found in the cactus garden as well as several other beds

the cactus garden as well as several other beds throughout the Francis Tracy Gardens. Most of the desert rose plants are blooming profusely, and are currently among the showiest plants on the grounds this month.

Desert rose produces trumpet-shaped flowers in shades of pink, red, or white in the spring and summer. Many hybrids are commonly available in garden centers. All succulent plants have some sort of water storage system; the Adenium genus is distinctive among succulent plants because they develop a caudex, or swollen trunk to store water. The look is that of a flowering bonsai.



The large Desert Rose in the Cactus Garden is loaded with blossoms!

This species is Native to the Sahel regions, south of the Sahara (from Mauritania and Senegal to

Sudan), and tropical and subtropical eastern and southern Africa and Arabia. It thrives in arid or semi-arid climates, yet adapts well to tropical and semi-tropical environments with higher humidity, provided it has well drained soil that can dry out a bit between watering. It is a popular houseplant and bonsai in temperate regions.

Desert rose is a very slow grower, but can reach a height of 4 to 5 feet when mature. Because of its slow growth and need for good drainage, it does very well as a potted plant. The sap of these succulent plants contain toxins, so wear gloves when handling if you have sensitive skin. Although an evergreen in south Florida, the plant does drop many of its leaves in winter although it often still produces a few flowers. This plant is used to rainy periods but to avoid root rot, watering should be greatly reduced in the fall and winter when it tends to become partially dormant.

As a member of the Dogbane family (Apocynaceae, the same family as Oleander), desert rose is susceptible to being munched on by oleander caterpillars. It also can be occasionally bothered with aphids, spider mites, mealy

bugs, or insect scale, which can usually be removed by a fast spray of water to wash off the larvae eating the leaves. If water isn't enough to control the pests, an application of neem oil will usually remedy the problem.



Common name	Desert rose, Sabi star, mock azalea, impala lily
Botanical name	Adenium obesum
Family	Apocynaceae
Plant type	Succulent
Mature size	3–9 ft. tall, 3–5 ft. wide
Sun Exposure	Full
Soil type	Sandy, well-drained
Soil pH	Neutral to acidic
Bloom time	Summer
Flower color	Pink, red, rose
Hardiness zones	11, 12 (USDA)
Native area	Tropical Africa, Arabian peninsula
Toxicity	Toxic to humans, toxic to pets

Summertime Project Ideas for our Fall Fundraiser

By Laura Hartner and Charlene Regenhardt

It's never too early to think about ideas for craft items to sell at the fall fundraising event. Over the past few years, we have focused more heavily on making and selling baked goods as well as other food items such as jellies and extracts, and less on making craft-related items. Something that several of us observed at our Gingerbread Craft Market last fall was that the craft items, in general, sold a little better and helped raise more revenue than the baked goods.

In light of that observation, we hope to hold a couple Garden Get-Togethers over the summer to make some craft items for the fall fundraiser Although we are not proposing that we stop selling baked goods, we think it makes sense to add to our offering of hand-made crafts, especially items with a garden-related theme. Whether you are here in the Keys or at a summer residence far away, the summer break is a good time to think about what might sell at the fundraiser and make a few items so that they are ready to go this fall!

We have a few ideas to get your creative juices flowing. But don't limit yourself on the ideas presented here! We hope that many of our members can make a handful of creative, one-of-a-kind items to sell.

Leaf Printed Tea Towels

These were a big hit at last year's Gingerbread Craft Market. They were priced at \$6 each. We had 15 for sale and they sold out by the end of the day. We made about 15 more at the Garden Get-Together in February and plan to make the rest of the batch of towels this month. We will have at least 30 ready to go for the fall fundraising event.

The same concept could be used for napkins, table runners, aprons, or Tshirts. Just about any fabric would work. The February 2022 newsletter provides instructions for this project.

Beeswax Wraps

These wraps are used for covering dishes or wrapping sandwiches or other items for refrigerator storage and can be used over and over again. They are becoming popular as an eco-friendly alternative to single-use plastic products. You can find them on Etsy for around \$5-10 each.

We might try making some of these over the summer. We found 2 different methods for

making them (either in an oven or using an iron). Instructions for the second method were included in the April 2022 newsletter.

Infused Honey

Infused honey can be used to sweeten tea, lemonade, fruit, and baked goods. It can be stirred into salad dressings and marinades or served with a cheese plate. Herbal honeys may also be used medicinally, for example, sage honey to relieve a sore throat or chamomile honey to promote relaxation.

Instructions and a couple recipe ideas (Cinnamon Spice and Sleepy Time) were included in the April 2022 newsletter.

(Continued on page 7)







(Continued from page 6)

Herb Infused Salt and Vinegar

Sone of you will remember making these items at one of our first Garden Get-Togethers (instructions were provided in the January 2021 newsletter). These items were a big hit with the members who attended and are very quick and easy to make. The herb-infused salt was wonderful, with it's citrusy herbal flavors. And, the bottles were very attractive. We suspect that they might be popular as hostess gifts at this years' fall fundraiser.



Page 7

Flavored Extracts

We made a variety of these for last years' Gingerbread Craft Market. They didn't sell very well; we think we offered them in bottles that were too large and they would have sold better in smaller bottles. We also thought that we should limit the variety to only vanilla and key lime (and perhaps also cinnamon or lemon). We want to test out our conclusions by offering a limited amount in smaller bottles to see if they sell better this year. The September 2021 newsletter provides instructions for various types of extracts.



Macramé Plant Hangers

If you're talented at the art of macramé, making a plant hangar might be a good project for a lazy summer afternoon. The possibilities are virtually unlimited in size, complexity, and materials. Jute, cotton, polyester, and nylon twine are available in many colors and thicknesses. Add beads or other embellishments to make the end result a little more colorful or fancy.

Air Plant Hangars

The possibilities on the variety of methods or materials to use are endless. At previous Garden Get-Togethers, we have made them from air-dried clay (see April 2021 newsletter) and more recently from twine (see March 2022 newsletter).

Other Air-Dried Clay Crafts

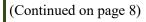
Some of us made a various crafts out of air-dried clay back at our April 2021 Garden Get-Together (instructions were provided in the April 2021 newsletter). In addition to hangars for air-dried plants, possibilities included small planters for a succulent plant or a wall sconce to hold a dried flower bouquet. To ensure these items hold up, especially in the outdoor humidity, these pieces should be finished with an acrylic sealer. If used for a planter pot, it is also recommended to use a plastic liner inside the pot to keep moisture away from the clay material.











Page 8

(Continued from page 7)

Baskets

We've made a couple different types of baskets over the past year, including the small ones with flat reeds that we made at the Garden Get-Together in April 2021 and the garlic baskets with round reeds that we made in January 2022. The garlic baskets might be an option for a container to hang orchids on tree branches.



Bird Houses

As with feeders, there are many types from simple to elaborate. Some birds will even use a gourd! One of the simplest designs found <u>here</u> can be made out of a single board plus a few screws and nails. Although not part of the design of the linked instructions, other building plans include a hinged side panel and closure to make cleaning easier. If you want to try your hand at building a bird house, keep in mind that the dimensions of the box, diameter and placement of the entry hole, and placement outdoors (height and orientation of the opening) matter! Specifications for different types of birds can be found <u>here</u>.



Bird Feeders

We found several clever ideas for bird feeders on the internet. One of the simplest uses an orchid pot with 2 saucers, hung on a cable. It could be painted or adorned in many different ways, or just left as a rustic clay pot. Mason jars can also be used. Galvanized or plastic screw-on bases for food and water as well as portals for hummingbirds are available at Amazon and other websites. Search on "mason jar feeder base."



Plants to Sell

Whether starting plants from cuttings or seeds, this task needs to be started at least a 5-6 weeks prior to the fundraiser for plants that germinate and grow quickly and as much as several months ahead of time if you are propagating plants from cuttings (it can take weeks for roots to form and new shoots to sprout on the plant). Given the time of year for our fundraiser, some veggies or herbs might be attractive to our patrons. Native plants are also a good idea. Please don't bring invasive plants for sale! The list of invasive plants can be found <u>here</u>.



(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Seeds

A new initiative that we want to try this coming year is selling some seeds in packets with our garden club logo. A prototype of a packet for milkweed is shown in the picture. We'd like to try a limited variety of flowers, herbs, veggies, and some native species that are fairly popular and easy to grow.

If you grow any of these plants during the summer months and are willing to reserve a plant or two in your garden for seed collecting, coordinate with Charlene Regenhardt. She is taking the lead on finding varieties to sell and creating the seed packets. Also, some of you may have some popular native plants that you could collect seeds from. A few options are listed in the table below, but it is not meant to exclude other types that may also be desirable or suitable.

FL Native Flowers	Veggies	Herbs / Greens	Other Noteworthy Natives
Milkweed*	Everglades Tomato*	Basil	Blackbead*
Blanketflower*	Tomato (other varieties)	Parsley	Necklacepod*
Coreopsis (tick Seed)*	Malabar spinach	Cilantro	Bahama Senna*
Red Sage (salvia)*	Seminole Pumpkin*	Dill	Beautyberry*
Blue porterweed*	Long beans (Asparagus beans)		Wild Coffee*
Corkystem*	Asian Cucumber	Roselle	Coralbean*
Yellowtop*	Cowpeas		Seagrape*
Dune or beach sunflower*	Okra		Lignum Vitae*
Liatris*	Chayote squash		Bay Cedar*
Black-eyed susan*	Mexican sour gerkin		Sabal Palm*
* Native to Florida (some are not native to the Keys but are native in other parts of the State)			

Note Cards

We have quite a few members with artistic talent! An assortment of hand-made note cards would be useful to many of our patrons to attach to hostess gifts and for holiday greetings. Blank cards with envelopes can be found at a variety of shops, including Michaels and Amazon.

Decorated Flower Pots

Another way to showcase your painting or decorative talent is an assortment of decorated planters. These can be hand-painted, decorated with mosaic tiles, or a wide variety of other combinations. The possibilities are only limited to your imagination and creativity!



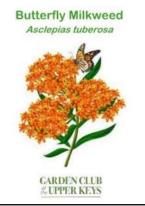








Page 9



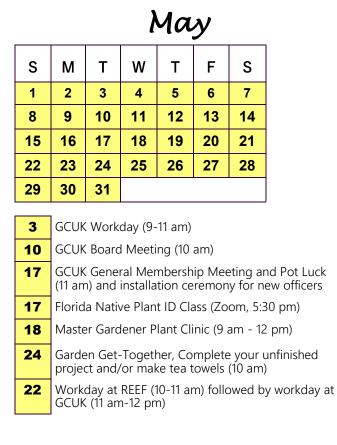
Notable Dates and Birthdays

A warm birthday wish to our members with May birthdays!

May

- * Martha D.
- Maxine E.
- Julia H.
- Michelle M.

Upcoming meetings and club activities:



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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

7	GCUK Workday (9-11 am)		
15	Master Gardener Plant Clinic (9 am - 12 pm)		
19	Workday at REEF (10-11 am) followed by workday at GCUK (11 am-12 pm)		
21	Florida Native Plant ID Class (Zoom, 5:30 pm)		
30	Cooking for God's Kitchen		

Looking Forward...

- **Board** meetings on second Tuesday each month from September through May.
- General Membership meetings on third Tuesday each month from September through May.
- Special Events: Fall fundraiser, Garden walk, Members Only Garden Walk, and Field trips... specific dates and times will be published this coming fall.

TUMP