



The Garden Club of the Upper Keys

News & Notes

MEMBERS' EDITION

September 2022

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General Membership Meeting

Please join us at the Francis Tracy Garden Center on Tuesday, September 20 for our first General Membership meeting of the Year. We will have a social hour from 10 to 11 AM with refreshments. The presentation and meeting will commence at 11 AM.

Meeting Agenda

- **Call to Order & Welcome:** President Kathy Janco will welcome members to our meeting.
- **Guest Speaker:** Kathy will introduce our guest speaker, Dr. Jason L. Downing, PhD. Dr. Downing is the Orchid Biologist at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.
- **Guest Speaker Presentation: The Million Orchid Project.** Dr. Downing will discuss the Million Orchid Project. A brief introduction to his presentation is provided below.
- **Business Meeting:** Presiding over the business meeting, President Janco will share recent Board actions and decisions.

County Extension Service Plant Clinic

We are excited to announce that instead of holding the Plant Clinic at the Garden Club on the third Wednesday of the month, we are changing the date to the third Tuesday (the same day as our General Membership Meeting)! The plant clinics will be held from 9 to 11 AM. This schedule will enable everyone to attend the meeting and get any plant or plant pest questions answered at the same time. Following the meeting, the Master Gardeners will continue answering additional questions as needed. So, if you have questions about plants or plant pests, bring them in before the meeting.

The Million Orchid Project

South Florida was once an orchid paradise with a rich variety of tropical orchids growing naturally on the branches of trees. In the late 1800s, orchids were taken from the trees and sold as disposable potted plants throughout the country. Orchid populations dwindled rapidly, and now our iconic native orchids exist in such small numbers that they have little hope of recovering on their own.



At its core, The Million Orchid Project is a massive science experiment initiated by Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden that uses a citizen science approach to actively engage the community in orchid conservation. Thousands of local schoolchildren, volunteers and scientists are working together to propagate, plant and protect the new orchids throughout southeastern Florida. The project is unique in its scale, its experimental nature, its focus on public spaces and its involvement of the local community from its inception.

For more information, visit the following link: <https://fairchildgarden.org/science-and-education/science/million-orchid-project/>



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*In every walk  
 with nature,  
 one receives  
 far more than  
 one seeks.*

~ John Muir  
 ~~~~~

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 of the
 Upper Keys, Inc.
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Board of Directors

President - Kathy Janco
 V-President - Laurie Brooks
 Treasurer - Anne Makowsky
 Secretary - Laura Hartner
 Directors of:
 Fundraising - Debbie Sue
 Jonas
 Hospitality - Betty Ann Gear
 and Fran Reig
 House - Christine Hudson
 Membership - Darlene Rota
 Program - Patti Graham
 Property - Charlene
 Regenhardt
 Publicity - Pat Uhl

From the desk of President Kathy Janco ...

It is with great pleasure I welcome all our members, guests, and friends to our 2022-2023 year. Our 70th year... amazing. So much history and so many memories!

I look forward to this coming year as we celebrate our 70th anniversary together: while we look back through our amazing history, and plan for our future for the years ahead. It will be a great year when we plan our future together.

Our board and chair members have been meeting every month during our summer meeting hiatus to ensure all things for our club are taken care of promptly. We have been planning for a wonderful year ahead. We want you to enjoy your valued membership and time at your club. If there is anything you would enjoy and think others would as well, please reach out to me or any board member.

During this summer we also have been blessed to fill our two open positions for committee chairs. Thank you to these ladies for volunteering their time and expertise to our club:

- Vendor Liaison ~ Jenny Crittenden
- Archivist/Historian ~ Loreale Carrera

We are also planning to have our club's history highlighted during our meetings, Fall Festival, and the Garden Walk this year. Our community should be aware of our rich and lasting history. It will be with all our members' help to make our events a success.

If you have any photos, articles, or memories you would like to share please send them to us by mail, email them to the club email address (<https://gardenclubupperkeys.org/>) or bring them to me at the next meeting. I will scan them and return the originals to you.

Wishing you and your family health and happiness.

Kathy Janco

The Garden Club of the Upper Keys, Inc.



A note from the editor...

I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer!

Our newsletter format and content continues to evolve. I reorganized the Director's Notes portion of our newsletter to make it easier to find information related to our programs, events, and education and outreach efforts. Our Resource Links Page (which is only included in the Member's version of the newsletter) lists phone and email contact information for all of our board and committee members. Laura Hartner created a handy calendar with dates for our planned events this year, which is included on page 11.

I'm excited to learn about the Million Orchid Project and our native orchids. Over the summer, I was able to obtain a native butterfly orchid for our club and it's featured as the Plant of the Month. Also in keeping with the orchid theme, Darlene Rota wrote a

Gardening Best Practices article on how to prepare your orchids for a hurricane—a timely topic for September!

It's less than 2 months until our first fundraiser. Debbie Sue is working diligently to plan the Fall Festival and needs our help! You will see several articles and reminders throughout this issue on starting plants and making crafts to sell. Laura Hartner plans to hold a couple Garden Get-Togethers to make crafts. Come join the fun while supporting this important fundraising event! If you have any ideas of hand-made items that might be good for the fundraiser, please let her know.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone again at our first meeting of the Fiscal Year!

Cordially,
 Charlene
 Regenhardt





Fall Festival 2022—November 12, 2022

Based on the votes received last May, the fall fundraising event has been named the Fall Festival. Also based on membership feedback, we have changed the date to the second Saturday of November. Many of us either travel or host family members for Thanksgiving, which made baking and staffing the event difficult during a weekend when we are already busy! The new date is about two weeks before Thanksgiving rather than the Saturday after Thanksgiving.



Notes from the Directors...

Programs

PROGRAM DIRECTOR Patti Graham has been lining up speakers for our General Membership meetings. Patti has speakers lined up for this coming fall:

- **October:** History of Captain Roy and Frances Tracy, presented by one of the best historians of the Upper Keys, Lorealea Carrera. Lorealea is Vice-President of The Historical Preservation Society of the Upper Keys.
- **November:** Janice Duquesnel will present on the Biology and Ecology of Mangroves. Janice has worked for the Florida Park Service since 1995 and is the District 5 biologist based in the Florida Keys.

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

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.

Community Outreach & Education

VICE-PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION Laurie Brooks

continues to organize and oversee the club's activities related to our mission to promote, protect and conserve the natural beauty of the Upper Keys through community education and presence. Ongoing endeavors are listed below.

Plant Clinics

The Monroe County Extension Service holds plant clinics several times each month as a free service for the local community. Master Gardeners staff the clinics to help assist with plant identification, disease diagnosis,

insect identification/control and other services related to diagnosing gardening and/or landscape problems. Since February 2021 our club has hosted monthly clinics at the GCUK clubhouse staffed by several of our members as well as other local master gardeners. The clinics are now offered from 9 to 11 AM on the same day as our general membership meetings. The new time makes it even more convenient for our members, as well as other community members, to have their questions answered before the meeting. The members of the community are welcome to stay for the guest speaker's presentation, which is usually on a gardening-related topic. Holding the clinic at the Francis Tracy Garden Center has the added benefit of being surrounded by living exemplars of plants for identification and horticultural practices.

Plant Clinics for the Upper Keys are also held at the Murray E Nelson Government Center (MM 102) and the Island Home Garden Center (MM 88.7). The next clinics will be **September 22** at Island Home (fourth Thursday of the month from 9 AM until noon) and **October 5** at Murray Nelson (first Wednesday of the month from 10 AM until 1 PM).

REEF Workdays

Laurie is the club's liaison for GCUK's support to maintain the butterfly and Connect to Protect gardens at REEF headquarters. In 2018, GCUK installed a small pond and butterfly garden and in February 2020, we helped REEF install the Connect to Protect garden. The gardens were established to educate the public about conservation of plants and animals native to the keys, and the signage on the property acknowledges GCUK for our support in establishing the gardens. REEF headquarters receives hundreds of visitors each year, who are able to enjoy and learn from the gardens that we help maintain.

The next REEF workday will be **Sunday, September 18** from 10 to 11 AM, followed by a brief, 1-hour workday session at GCUK from 11 AM to noon. The October workday at REEF is scheduled for **October 9**.

(Community Outreach & Education, continued)

Ocean Studies Charter School

Several years ago, members of our club helped the school achieve National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitat designation by planting a water garden and establishing a butterfly garden. We subsequently worked with the school's garden club to plant a Connect to Protect garden. Laurie continues to support the school's gardens and is currently working on a committee to create an outdoor classroom (trails, kiosks and signage) for the Hammock. As part of the project, the school will be creating a plant nursery to grow plants. Laurie 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.

Florida Keys Native Plant ID Class

Laurie continues to set up meetings for the Florida Keys Native Plant ID class with Jim Duquesnel. The class is conducted via Zoom on the third Tuesday of the month from 5:30 to 7:00 PM. A presentation on the Sapotaceae family was presented by Susan and Duane Kolterman on July 19 and Jim Duquesnel presented on August 16. The next workshop will be **Tuesday, September 20**. Cynthia Guerra will present Dennis Giardina's presentation on invasive exotic mangroves in South Florida. If you are interested in attending, contact Laurie, who can send you a Zoom invitation.

God's Kitchen

Burton Memorial United Methodist Church provides a food service to help local families that are in poverty or fall into the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) category. These are our friends and neighbors who go to work everyday, but struggle to meet the basic costs of living. In Monroe County, an estimated 49% of the population falls into this category!

Every Thursday and on holidays, God's Kitchen provides a hot meal. Several local organizations cook and serve the meals on a monthly rotating basis. GCUK prepares the meal on the fifth Thursday, when it occurs (typically four or five times per year). Two years ago, God's Kitchen was serving 30 to 50 meals; the number of meals served has doubled since then!

GCUK volunteers served 75 meals on June 30. **Our next date to cook will be September 29.** Thanks to John Reig for making most of the meatloaves and to Cindy Davis and Betty Ann Gear for continuing to coordinate this effort! Please contact them to help make

meatloaf and sides for this worthwhile community support function. In addition to coordinating support to God's Kitchen, Cindy and Betty Ann routinely work at Burton Memorial's Food Bank.

Future Education and Outreach Efforts

In addition to the work described above, Laurie is working to renew our scholarship awards that were suspended last year due to the need to cancel fundraising events. She is also looking into reactivating our support to Island Dolphin Care's sensory garden which was suspended due to Covid concerns. Other activities that were suspended include Habitat for Humanity (we previously provided one or more native plants to the new homeowners) and Crystal Health and Rehabilitation Center (we previously helped residents at the center make flower arrangements to brighten their rooms). If you are interested in working as a coordinator to reactivate these services, please contact Laurie.

Another potential project is the creation of demonstration gardens. She has talked to an Ocean Studies student who is interested in a demonstration project.

Laurie encourages everyone to continue to send ideas for community outreach/in-reach – particularly ways to partner with youth in our community.

Activities and Events

FUNDRAISING DIRECTOR Debbie Sue Jonas is diligently working on planning this year's two major fundraising events. The first one up is our Fall Festival. The second will be our Garden Walk. Details about each of these events are listed below. If anyone has other fundraising ideas, please connect with Debbie Sue.

Fall Festival, Saturday, November 12

The Fall Festival promises to be well attended with many interesting vendors and their wares to delight the returning snow birds, year-round residents and holiday visitors to our Upper Keys. We need each and every Garden Club member to plan to donate from at least one of the following categories:

1. Home baked goods,
2. Hand crafted items for sale, and/or
3. Established non-invasive plant starts.

All of these sell well and will increase our profits on this important day! Debbie Sue will have sign-up sheets at the General Membership Meeting. The plants take the most lead time and need to be started right away. The insert boxes for Garden Gifts and Starting Plants on the following page provides some guidance and details; we will provide guidance for baked goods next month.

(Activities and Events, continued)

Starting Plants for the Fall Festival

Propagating plants from cuttings or seeds needs to be started at least a 5-6 weeks prior to the fundraiser. It is time to plan and initiate this effort now!



Many of us who live in the Keys start our veggie gardens around October and November, so some veggies or herbs are certainly good candidates to sell. Native plants are always a good idea as well.

We will have a sign-up sheet for plant starts to get an idea of the variety that we will offer at the Fall Festival.

There are some plant starts at the Francis Tracy Garden Center that can be potted up for the sale. These include aloe, blue porterweed, lady palms, and wild coffee that have self-seeded. **Please come to the next FTGC Workday (October 4 from 9-11 AM) to help pot some plant starts for the Fall Festival!**

A final note: please don't bring invasive plants for sale! The list of invasive plants can be found [here](#).

Garden Walk, Saturday, February 18

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).

Garden Get-Togethers

Laura Hartner began planning and holding Garden Get-Togethers at the Francis Tracy Garden Center to engage members in garden-related activities in an outdoor environment during Covid. Today, activities occur either in the garden or inside the clubhouse. Over the summer, attendees made items to sell during our Fall Festival. The sessions also gave us an opportunity to socialize with each other during the summer meeting hiatus.

All members are invited to join us at the Francis Tracy Gardens on the following dates to continue to make items for sale or for their own personal use.

- Tuesday, October 4, 9-11 AM – Digging up and repotting plants from the FTGC for sale.
- Wednesday, October 12, 10 AM to noon – Making cranberry or other herbed vinegars for sale or your own use. See the insert box on the following page.

We will likely add some new get-togethers in October to continue making and packaging garden gifts for sale. If you'd like more information or are willing to help, please call or text Laura Hartner. Thank you!

Garden Gifts

One of the new features at the 2022 Fall Festival is "Garden Gifts." Over the summer, attendees at the Garden Get-Togethers have been making items to sell at the festival inside of the clubhouse. These items include:

- 100% cotton leaf-printed tea towels,
- Reusable beeswax food wraps that eliminate single-use plastic and keep food fresh made with cotton fabric coated with food grade beeswax, jojoba oil and pine resin, and
- herb-infused sea salt made with Maldon sea salt, rosemary, thyme, citrus zest, and orange juice.

Other projects on the list include notecards and seed packets of selected herbs, cranberry infused vinegar and selected starter plants from the Francis Tracy Garden Center.

Members, we need your help in continuing these projects prior to the Fall Festival. They can be done at Garden Get-Togethers or at your convenience at home. If there are craft items that you would like to donate, kindly call Laura Hartner.



(Activities and Events, continued)

PUBLICITY DIRECTOR Pat Uhl has been working with Debbie Sue Jonas and Patti Graham to support publicity efforts for meetings and fundraisers. Pat continues to submit events to free media publications and arrange for select paid advertisements such as the recent 1/4-page ad in the September issue of the *Coconut Telegraph*.

Pat posts information and photographs regularly on our Facebook page. Recent Facebook posts have included save the date notices for our fundraising events as well as an image of the banner announcing the club's 70th

anniversary. The banner is hung in front of our property along US1.

Pat undertook the responsibilities of webmaster for our club website and has made some very impressive updates to format and content over the summer — please take a look at the improvements when you have a chance (gardenclubupperkeys.org).

Pat also began creating monthly fliers listing club activities including meetings, workdays for property cleanup, and other events. She is posting the fliers at select locations including Key Largo Public Library, Islamorada Public Library, and the UPS Store in Key Largo.

Garden Get-Together Festive Cranberry Vinegar

By Laura Hartner

The October 12, 2022 Garden Get-Together will be held at 10AM inside the clubhouse. We'll be making Festive Cranberry Vinegar using the recipe from <http://www.puttingupwiththeturnbulls.com> for sale at the Fall Festival and for the attendees' own use. The recipe will make seven 375 ml (12.68 oz) bottles of vinegar.

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups cranberries (approximately 1 1/2 packages ~ but 1 package would do)
- 7 tsp whole cloves
- 6 ~ 3 inch cinnamon sticks
- 2 cups cider vinegar
- 18 dried apricots
- 1 orange zest only, cut into ribbons or strips approximately the length of your skewers
- 21 small sprigs of fresh mint (approx. 3 per bottle)
- 7 bamboo skewers (or one for every bottle).

DIRECTIONS:

1. Please sterilize your bottles and rinse and pat dry the cranberries before you come.
2. Measure the bamboo skewers against your bottles. Trim the skewers, if needed, to be about 3/4 as long as the bottles. Soak the skewers in water.
3. In a nonreactive pot, combine the cranberries, cloves, cinnamon sticks and vinegar and heat gently until just barely simmering. Do not boil. Note: when the cranberries start to burst check the heat of the liquid...it is probably ready to remove from the heat. Remove from the heat and let cool completely.
4. Peel the orange, then cut the peel into thin long ribbons. Cut the apricots in half, making sure they will fit through the neck of your bottle.

5. Once cooled, strain the mixture through a sieve, reserving the vinegar.
6. Place an equal amount of whole cloves in each bottle. Cut the swollen cinnamon sticks into 1/8" strips and place 3-5 strips in each bottle.
7. Using the heated cranberries and cut apricots, carefully thread them onto the skewers, alternating between the apricots and cranberries. Wind an orange zest ribbon around the apricot and cranberry skewer.
8. Place the finish skewer with the orange ribbon and the sprigs of mint in the bottle.
9. Using a funnel, pour the vinegar into the bottle, ensuring that all the ingredients are covered. Cap or seal with a cork. Let steep 2 to 3 weeks before using. This vinegar should be used within 3 to 4 months once the bottle has been opened. Remove and discard the fruit and spices as they will mold if exposed to air.

Voila! It is that simple and see how beautiful they are!

If you would like to make this vinegar, please contact Laura Hartner. You will need to bring your own bottle(s) and the ingredients listed above. If you plan to only make one bottle and want to share the price of ingredients with others, please call Laura with the number of bottles you wish to make and the bottle size to determine prices for you.



Member's Corner

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Darlene Rota sent the membership renewal mailing out on August 2nd along with a membership survey. A big "Thank You" to those who promptly signed and returned the form, paid dues, made donations and/or completed the survey! If you have not yet mailed your forms, please do so before September 30 or bring it to our September 20th General Membership Meeting. So far, 58 members have renewed.

Darlene is tabulating the results of the brief survey and will submit the results in next month's *News & Notes*.

A new initiative that Darlene and the rest of the board is implementing is to include a Member Spotlight article in *News & Notes*. Our board plans to select a member to feature. It will be a venue to introduce a new member, recognize a special achievement (either a personal achievement or one that benefits the club), or to recognize member volunteers for their support to our club. We have many talented, hard-working and generous members and sometimes a mere "thank you" doesn't seem adequate.



A warm birthday wish to our members with September birthdays!

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



Passing of Claude Plyler

The board is sad to announce the passing of Mr. Claude Plyler on September 14. Claude and his wife Raquel are long-time honorary members of the club. Mr. Plyler was a friend to all, and an amazing human being who always went out of his way to help others. You never saw him without a big smile on his face that reflected his love of life. When our garden club was hit by hurricane Irma he and Raquel immediately donated and planted many mature palms and trees throughout the property. They did the same for their church in Miami. Claude and Raquel also participated in our Garden Walks over the years. Claude was a cherished member of our club and we will always remember him each time we walk through our beautiful palm-filled gardens. We are sending Raquel our wishes for strength, love, and peace.

Member Spotlight: Jenny Crittenden

Born and raised in Miami, FL, Jenny has been a weekend visitor to the Upper Keys her entire life, as her grandfather was born here and had a house in Islamorada. She became a member of the Garden Club in 2019. Her main reason for joining was to support her mother, Pat Saunders, who is well-known for donating the lovely floral arrangements raffled off at each month's General Membership Meeting.



Jenny works full time, and is unable to attend our Tuesday meetings. Nonetheless, she helps our club in many ways. Jenny and Pat are caretakers of two gardens: the Song of India bed and the Front Porch bed. Last month, Jenny took the initiative to go to the Garden Club after work each night to spread the massive pile of mulch delivered to spruce up the property. The grounds are looking better than ever because of her generous support! She also helped mulch last spring in preparation for the 2022 Garden Walk.

In addition to helping with the property, Jenny recently joined our Fundraising team as Vendor Liaison to recruit and organize the vendors for our two fundraising events: Fall Festival and Garden Walk. She embraces our mission to develop, promote, protect and conserve the natural beauty of the upper Keys with particular interest in our objective of promoting community planting and beautification.

Jenny has a passion for being outdoors and maintaining the outside living spaces. Their property sounds lovely and inviting with 40 orchids ornamenting the many trees. As a self-declared "foodie," she loves growing herbs and leafy greens as well as tropical fruits.

Jenny's hope for the future is that our club can find ways to enable more of the community to enjoy the beauty of our gardens. It is her wish that we might diversify meeting times and our membership by broadening monthly meeting options. Some examples of ways to accomplish this are through Zoom links to the current meetings, recordings that can be viewed later or occasional meetings on weekends or evenings.

The GCUK Board of Directors gratefully acknowledges the following generous gifts sent in with membership renewals:

Sea Grape ~ Friends of the Garden Club

- Helen Shinnars
- John and Frances Reig

Moonflower ~ Patrons of the Garden Club

- Donna Hanson
- Barbara Pareira
- Phyllis Daniels
- Maxine Enkey
- Phyllis Mitchell

- Carol Stevenson
- Martha Edwards and John Kocol

Satinleaf ~ Sponsors of the Garden Club

- Sandra Paradis

Lignumvitae ~ Benefactors of the Garden Club

- Anne Makowsky
- Linda Jones

Francis Tracy Garden Center Clubhouse

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.

Property

PROPERTY DIRECTOR: Charlene Regenhardt continued to arrange workdays, lawn services, and is working on having some of the large wild tamarind trees trimmed by a professional arborist.

Another initiative that we started earlier in the summer 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 helped plan and execute the work. The challenge, as always, is finding something colorful that the iguanas won't devour! Work is still in progress on this bed and there are a few plants that have not been eaten by lizards. We continue to look for more "iguana-proof" varieties. Over time the bed will progressively improve.

GCUK Member Deb Riolo purchased several plants and relocated some of the colorful croton plants in the Peace Park garden to improve the appearance of the front berm. It looks better than ever, and she has plans for a few more improvements in the future. Thank you Deb!

A BIG thank you also goes to DeeDee Barreto and Martha Edwards for taking on weekly watering chores. In addition, GCUK member Jeff Jones used his strong pickaxe skills to plant several larger specimens such as the silver palm in the swale bed and two foxtail agave in the cactus garden. He also replaced the handle of the red wheelbarrow which broke during use at one of our workdays.

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!**

Property 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, October 4 (9-11 AM) and Sunday October 9 (11 AM-12 PM).



Plant of the Month Butterfly Orchid (*Encyclia tampensis*)

by Charlene Regenhardt

This dainty little orchid is one of several native species that are being planted in public spaces and businesses in Miami and nearby towns as a part of Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden's Million Orchid Project.

Over the summer months, I looked for a native orchid species for our gardens. Seedlings are available from Fairchild but I was in search of a larger, "photogenic" specimen for the featured plant this month. I was happy to obtain it from Motes Orchids. Although Motes doesn't usually sell native orchids, the business owner offered to sell me one from his private collection, and then added a second one as a donation to our club — how lucky to get two of them! They are currently nestled in the crook of the willow bastic tree located on the north side of the clubhouse.



Above: Our butterfly orchids are nestled in the crook of the willow bastic tree on the north side of the clubhouse.

Left: Closeup of butterfly orchid bloom.

The butterfly orchid is native to the Bahamas, Cuba, and Florida. It is one of the most abundant epiphytic orchids in the central and southern counties, especially along waterways. Most descriptions state that *Encyclia tampensis* was first collected in the Tampa Bay area by John Torrey in 1846, and it's name "*tampensis*" comes from the location.

Pseudobulbs are dark green and typically an inch or less in diameter with one or two narrow grass-like leaves. Inflorescences emerge from the leaf axil and can have up to 45 fragrant flowers with sepals and petals in various shades of yellow, copper, green or bronze, and the lip is white veined with purple spots or striping in the center.

Despite being one of Florida's most prolific native orchids, Florida considers *E. tampensis* a regulated plant needing protection from commercial exploitation, which means people who want to harvest any for sale from the wild must have a permit. A permit is also required for collecting more than 2 for personal use from private lands, or any at all from public lands. Certified nurseries are specifically permitted to sell commercially grown protected plants.



Cultivation Data

Source: www.floridagardener.com

Soils: N/A; this epiphyte grows on trees such as mangrove, live oak, mahogany, strangler fig, slash pine, bald cypress, buttonwood, and pond apple.

Nutritional Requirements: Low; however a dilute orchid fertilizer can be used.

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

Light Requirements: Full sun to part shade.

Flower Color: Blooms usually are yellow-green or brownish with a whitish lip; petals and lips are touched with a rose-purple spot or stripe. Many variations in color (including white) have been found.

Flower Characteristics: Showy inflorescence. Fragrant, said to have a sweet honey scent.

Leaves: One to three long slim leaves, from a few inches to a foot or more in length, grow from a gray-green pseudobulb. Leaves tend to be longer on plants growing in shade.

Fruit: The fruit is a hanging capsule, ellipsoid in shape, 3 by 1.5 cm, and, when mature, splits into three "valves" to allow the wind to disperse the tiny, dust-like seeds.

Gardening Best Practices

How to Prepare Your Orchids for a Hurricane

by Darlene Rota

If you are an orchid lover, one of the great advantages of living in the Keys is that you can grow orchids outdoors all year long. Many varieties are well suited to our climate and their bright blooms and bright green leaves can adorn our trees and palms by growing directly on the bark or in baskets hanging beneath the limbs. However, when a hurricane or severe tropical storm hits, they can be damaged so I looked for some advice on how to minimize damage as well as what to do after the storm passes through.

I found the following advice on a website from the late Milton O. Carpenter, who was a renowned orchid grower, hybridizer and retailer. He was a past president, trustee, life member and judge emeritus for the American Orchid Society. He passed away in February 2022, but his website is still online (<http://www.evergladesorchids.com>) and includes several articles including the advice shown below.

- If your collection is small and mobile then certainly bring all into the home and place away from windows.
- If some of your plants are growing on trees you might want to tie a small piece of shade cloth around the plant (and tree-trunk) so that (a) the plant is less likely to be “gone with the wind” and (b) if all the leaves are blown off the tree the plant is less likely to suffer sunburn from the increased light.
- If you cannot bring all the plants into the house, take them off benches and put them on the ground where they are less likely to be blown over. Be careful to keep them above any flood water. If submerged in salt water, rinse the orchid and growing medium with fresh water as soon as possible!
- If plants are still in your shadehouse and some of the shade cloth has been blown away, replace it immediately. It only takes a few hours to really sunburn the leaves – and this damage does not generally go away.
- If plants have been blown over and are starting to come out of the pots, check the roots as this may be a good time to re-pot. Generally most orchids respond to re-potting immediately after they have finished blooming.
- It is a good rule to have enough spare shade cloth on hand to replace any damaged or missing shade cloth.
- Because your plants left in the storm will be wet for some time, have fungicide on hand to apply as soon as the rain is over. You can even use ordinary kitchen cinnamon in a pinch. Then, try to let the plants dry out well before watering again.
- Don’t leave orchids in bloom outside if possible; the blooms will probably be ruined and the wind resistance can cause the plant to fall over. Consider cutting the flowers and put them in the house.
- If plants are left outside, remember the possibility of the tags becoming lost. Tie name tags to the plant itself so the name and other info will be retained.
- If plants are left outside, do everything possible to protect the leaves from wind-blown bruises, sunburn, etc. Remember the leaves are the “food factory” for the plant, converting sunlight into sugars for the plants to live.



2022-2023 GCUK Calendar

July 2022						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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31						

August 2022						
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September 2022						
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October 2022						
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November 2022						
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December 2022						
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January 2023						
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February 2023						
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March 2023						
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April 2023						
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May 2023						
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June 2023						
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Board meeting, 10AM	General Membership Meeting, 10AM-Social, 11AM-Program	Special Events: Fall Festival-11/12; Garden Walk-2/28; GW Committee Mtg.-1/17, GW Media Day-1/19; GW Preview Day - 2/7
FTGC Workday, 9-11AM	Master Gardeners' Plant Clinic, 9-11AM	God's Kitchen
REEF Garden Workday, 9-11AM	Native Plant ID Class, 5:30PM	Plant Clinic 9-11AM & ID Class 5:30 PM
Federal Holiday		Adopted 07.12.2022

Resource Links

Topic: Plantsmap

Description: Plantsmap is the host website for our growing database of plants at the Francis Tracy Garden Center. The biological markers that we purchased under the TDC grant are linked to the website via QR codes. FYI—go to this site to see marked plants to learn more without being in the garden.

Link: [Organization Garden Club of the Upper Keys | Plants Map](#)

Topic: Florida Keys Native Plant Workshop

Description: Laurie Brooks is hosting the Zoom meeting on Tuesday, March 16 from 5:30 to 7 pm.

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526147402?pwd=RCtIMU5pbENhZk4yd1VvaHRpMG50QT09>
Meeting ID: 452 614 7402; Passcode: 123456

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

Description: Natives for Your Neighborhood provides a wealth of information about natives in South Florida.

Link: [The Institute for Regional Conservation Natives for Your Neighborhood](#)

Topic: South Florida Plant Guide Website

Description: Information on plants that thrive in South Florida (many are not native, and some may be considered invasive, so use caution when using this resource)

Link: [Guide to Florida Landscape Plants for the southern half of the Sunshine State \(south-florida-plant-guide.com\)](#)

Links to Native Plant Nurseries

Casey's Corner Nursery & Landscaping (Call first)
31877 SW 197 Ave. Homestead, FL
(305)248-7284

Green Genes (by appt. only)
Homestead, FL
(409)659-5693; Dianelockwood24@gmail.com
Plant Creations (open Monday through Friday)
28301 SW 172 Avenue, Homestead, FL 33030
(305) 248.8147; www.plantcreations.com; natives@plantcreations.com

Veber's Jungle Garden, Inc.
24605 SW 197 Avenue, Homestead, FL 33031
(305) 242-9500; www.vebersjungle.com

Key West Tropical Forest and Botanical Garden (Monthly plant sale, Third Saturday, 10 AM to noon)
5210 College Road, Key West, FL 33040
(305) 296-1504; <http://www.kwbgs.org>; info@keywestgarden.com

Alexander Landscaping
910 S. Flamingo Road, Davie, FL 33325
<http://www.alexfarm.com>; alexfarm@comcast.net

SeaShore Seeds (by appt. only)
102 Rock Harbor Dr. Key Largo, FL 33037
Contact: Deb McCoy seashoreseeds@gmail.com
(305) 393-8695

The above list of vendors is for the convenience of our members but does not imply endorsement.

Board of Directors, Outreach, and Subcommittee Contact Info

Position	Name	Email	Phone
President	Kathy Janco	president.gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(305) 394-1604
V-President	Laurie Brooks	vpresident.gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(908) 547-9472
Treasurer	Anne Makowsky	treasurer.gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(774) 316-0161
Secretary	Laura Hartner	secretary.gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(908) 963-5704
Fundraising	Debbie Sue Jonas	fundraising.gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(305) 240-1149
Hospitality	Betty Ann Gear	keysbettyann@gmail.com	(305) 587-7120
	Fran Reig	franreig@aol.com	(917) 302-0749
House	Christine Hudson	house.gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(757) 344-6362
Membership	Darlene Rota	gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(305) 240-9389
Program	Patti Graham	programs.gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(757) 771-2963
Property	Charlene Regenhardt	property.gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(303) 941-2815
Publicity	Pat Uhl	publicity.gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(305) 916-9647
God's Kitchen	Cindy Davis	cynd56@aol.com	(305) 509-9011
	Betty Ann Gear	keysbettyann@gmail.com	(305) 587-7120
Vendor Liaison	Jenny Crittenden	vendors.gardenclubupperkeys@gmail.com	(305) 987-1013
Parliamentarian	Lonell Rice	lonellrice@yahoo.com	(248) 318-7751

Draft Meeting Minutes

Draft

GARDEN CLUB OF THE UPPER KEYS INC.
Minutes of the General Membership Meeting
May 17, 2022
Francis Tracy Garden Center, Key Largo, FL

President Kathy Janco called the meeting to at 11:15AM. She welcomed members to the “Members Only” Potluck Luncheon and provided the sequence of events for today’s meeting. Members were then invited to partake in the luncheon.

The business meeting continued after lunch. The minutes of the April 19, 2022 General Membership meeting were approved as sent electronically to club members in News & Notes. President Janco shared that the club was celebrating its 70th birthday on June 10, 2022.

Evelyn McGlone, a past president, inducted the new Club officers for 2022-2023. Her theme centered around a patriotic theme. The following officers were installed: Directors Debbie Sue Jonas (Fundraising), Betty Ann Gear and Fran Reig (Hospitality), Christine Hudson (House), Patti Graham (Program), Charlene Regenhart (Property) and

Pat Uhl (Publicity) and the Executive Committee Kathy Janco (President), for Laurie Brooks (Vice President and Director of Community Outreach and Education), Laura Hartner (Secretary), and Anne Makowsky (Treasurer).

President Janco shared that much had been accomplished this year and these tasks were enumerated in her lengthy Annual Report which is attached to these minutes. She thanked the Board and the members for their contribution towards a successful club year.

President Janco thanked Pat Saunders for her donation of a beautiful arrangement of tropical flowers and foliage today and for most of the club’s meetings. She thanked today’s attendees for their delicious contributions towards today’s lunch.

The Directors shared highlights of their work.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Hartner, Recording Secretary

End of Year Report

by Kathy Janco

GARDEN CLUB OF THE UPPER KEYS INC. The 2021~2022 Year in Review

The Francis Tracy Garden Center, Garden Club of the Upper Keys is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization whose mission is to develop, protect, and conserve the natural beauty of the Upper Keys. We accomplish these through education of and in cooperation with our members, residents, and visitors.

OFFICERS: President - Kathy Janco; Vice-President - Laurie Brooks; Secretary - Laura Hartner; Treasurer – Anne Makowsky

DIRECTORS: Fundraising – Kathy Holmes; Hospitality – Betty Ann Gear and Fran Reig; House: Christine Hudson; Membership – Charlene Regenhardt; Program – Patti Graham; Property – Charlene Regenhardt; Publicity – Pat Uhl.

SUPPORT: Archives – Gerry Yeager; Parliamentarian – Lonell Rice; Webmaster – Amy Jorgenson; Website Coordinator – Lonell Rice, Facebook Administrator – Pat Uhl, Grant Administrator - Charlene Regenhardt, Vendor Liaison – Evelyn McGlone Community Outreach Assistants – Cindy Davis, Insurance- Steve Holmes.

REPRESENTATIVES: Islamorada Chamber of Commerce Liaison – Steve and Kathy Holmes; Key Largo Chamber of Commerce Liaison – Evelyn McGlone and Kathy Janco.

It is the end of another wonderful year, our 69th. We have been following in the footsteps of our founders since 1952, of which we are extremely proud. I love the history of this amazing club and look forward to its future. I am truly blessed to have been the president of such an amazing organization with such deep roots and history as part of our wonderful Island community.

I hope the chapter I have added this year to our history, with the help of the Board and members, is a good one. It is the act of transition between the past and the present...a moment in time when we take a look back to see how far we have come before we set our eyes in faith upon the bright and lasting future of our club. It is a time to count our blessings and achievements and to express our appreciation to those who have brought us this far.

To serve as an officer of any club especially ours, the Garden Club of the Upper Keys a privilege, but to serve a club dedicated to the creation and preservation of natural beauty, the cultivation of good friendships, and the planting, and growing of trees, plants, and flowers, making this Island community, our Island, a better place in which to live and love, is a very special privilege we should hold dear.

Although our 2021-2022 Club year continued to be affected by Covid, our Board and members worked diligently to make this a productive club year. We continued to follow safety protocols for social distancing and had most of our Board meetings on Zoom and our General Membership meetings on Zoom and in-person both outdoors and indoors at the Francis Tracy Garden Center. I am so excited to share what our officers and directors have accomplished. As you read their summaries, you will see that our club functions with the hands and help of many.

Membership Director Charlene Regenhardt reported that we began our fiscal year with 101 members which included 54 individual, 36 family, 7 honorary and, 4 complimentary members. During this club year, 12 of our members did not renew membership for multiple reasons including concerns related to Covid or relocating away from the area. However, we did acquire 5 new members and our membership roster is currently 93 which includes 55 individual, 26 family, 5 honorary, and 6 complimentary members. Although we saw a net loss of 8 members, that is less than a 10% reduction. As with many organizations similar to ours, membership levels have been challenging due to Covid. Next year, we will work on growing our membership with a focus on attracting a younger demographic.

I want to acknowledge Charlene for her awesome work as a writer and editor for our monthly *News & Notes*. This publication of which we can be truly proud provides club news and valuable information and references on gardening topics.

(End of Year Report, continued)

An emphasis was made to increase our social media presence using the GCUK Website and Facebook page, according to **Publicity Director Pat Uhl**. Our website continues to display a new “look” thanks to Webmaster Amy Jorgensen, Website Coordinator Lonell Rice, and Pat Uhl. This year was the first time that tickets to Garden Walk could be purchased on our website in addition to offering Garden Walk Tickets at 6 community venues.

There were four fundraising events this year. The Yard Sales held in November 2021 and April 2022 were promoted on our Website and Facebook page and on the Facebook pages of both the Islamorada and Key Largo Chambers of Commerce. In addition to utilizing the above resources, the Gingerbread Craft Market held in November 2021 was publicized on the calendars of both the Islamorada Chamber and Key Largo Chambers of Commerce. Garden Walk 2022 was promoted using all of those resources in addition to several other methods. We received complimentary advertising in Currents Magazine and Keys Arts publications and paid advertising appeared in the Coconut Telegraph, Keys Weekly, Free Press and the South Dade News-Leader. We held a “Media Day” which was attended by the Keys Weekly and South Dade News-Leader. Additional paid advertising appeared online via Miami Patch. Lastly, event posters were distributed to community businesses.

Pat is modifying the Francis Tracy Garden Center sign to include the words, “Home of the Garden Club of the Upper Keys.”

I am sure you have noticed the much-needed improvements made to our house over the past few years. **House Director Chris Hudson** has been responsible for overseeing its continued upkeep. This year, Chris and her husband Craig commissioned a survey of GCUK property with five copies made. This will help us with long-range planning. Chris had the dishwasher and house toilets repaired and coordinated the bi-monthly cleaning of the house or as needed before/after events. She ensured that the fire extinguishers were inspected and filled as needed and that the air conditioning filters were cleaned. Chris kept our storeroom organized with needed items for club use.

In addition to her duties as House Director, Chris reworked and maintained the garden area outside the sun-room. She helped with trimming, weeding, spreading gravel, and planting in the Cacti Garden and around the Peace Park Garden. Chris helped set up and worked at all of our fundraising events. She contributed yard sale items and cookies and jams for various events. Chris also collected Garden Club mail and distributed it for action through the summer months.

Our **Hospitality Co-Directors Betty Ann Gear and Fran Reig** are the perfect hostesses for our General Membership Meetings and special events, such as the Open House, fall Yard Sale, Gingerbread Craft Market, and Garden Walk 2022. They have reorganized items in the kitchen cabinets and procured refreshment items as needed. Betty Ann, Fran, and John Reig help to set up the room or the outdoor environment for our meetings. Club members are welcome to join Betty Ann and Fran in their hospitality duties.

This past year, Betty Ann sent three floral arrangements to members. It is important that members inform her if flowers or cards need to be sent.

Vice-President Laurie Brooks also serves as the **Director for Community Outreach and Education**. Laurie works with the REEF staff and interns and Garden Club members to maintain and improve the butterfly, Connect to Protect and Ocean Unity display gardens at REEF Headquarters once a month. After this monthly work session, the participants travel to the Francis Tracy Garden Center to work on our gardens. Laurie has used her expertise to teach the principals of Florida Friendly Landscaping to the interns.

Laurie coordinates the monthly Native Plant ID classes initiated by Jim Dusquenel which have been held via Zoom this year. Varied speakers and topics make this an interesting and valuable educational event.

Thanks to Laurie, one of the monthly Master Gardener Plant Clinics are held at the Francis Tracy Garden Center. Club members Michelle Leonard-Mullarz, Susan Matthews, Gayle Kolasa, Suzy Cushman, Lonell Rice, and Cheryl Solomon are often found participating. Holding the clinic in the garden has the added benefit of being surrounded by living exemplars of plants for identification and horticultural practices.

The eco-environment planter gardens in the front of Ocean Studies School is doing well as is the water garden in the back.

(End of Year Report, continued)

Thanks to Laurie, we once again have lending and reference libraries on the bookcases in the Sunroom. The Reference library bookshelf is used to house the Master Gardener plant clinic box and materials as well. A catalog and magazine exchange shelf is found on the lending library side. Laurie asks for recommendations for books to be ordered by the Master Gardeners.

Laurie is a contributor to News & Notes, writing articles that correspond to the “Plant of the Month” or the topic of our monthly speaker. She has been a speaker at our General Membership meeting, demonstrating techniques and sharing her expertise.

Cindy Davis and Betty Ann Gear spearheaded our work at God’s Kitchen at Burton Church. The crew of cooks and servers provide our requested dinner of meatloaf to anywhere from 60 to 75 participants.

Along with the club’s Executive Committee, Laurie is brainstorming ideas for potential ways that would enhance or promote gardening with community youngsters.

Fundraising Director Kathy Holmes resumed in-person fundraisers after a year of limited fundraising due to the Covid pandemic. Our Yard Sale scheduled for October was postponed until the spring due to concerns due to Covid. However, Debbie Sue Jonas chaired a “pop-up” Yard Sale on November 6. Members donated a variety of items and the Reigs organized a refreshment booth.

The Gingerbread Craft Market held on November 27, 2027 was a success due to the help of many members. In addition to members donating items to sell and a variety of vendor participation, we offered activities for children.

We held two on-line two fundraisers that did not require members’ presence at the club house. Both the Worchester Wreath Company offered wreaths and decorative greenery for the winter holidays and the Sweetest Knight Fudge Company in Key West offered a variety of fudge for sale. Our club received a percentage from the sales of these items by both companies.

Our 41st Garden Walk and biggest fundraising event of the year, “Garden Walk 2022”, was held on Saturday, February 19, 2022. Participants were able to tour five beautiful properties located in Islamorada. Back at the Francis Tracy Garden Center, participants could enjoy refreshments compliments of club members, interact with a variety of vendors and purchase delicious lunch items from Cousins’ Lobster Truck. Needless to say, many members made this event a success from sprucing up the club grounds, assisting with organizational tasks, donating refreshments, participating as garden hosts and docents, parking control, and other on-site tasks. It is important to note that this was the first year that tickets to the event were offered on-line on our club website. As president, many thanks and much appreciation goes to Kathy Holmes for coordinating this event.

The postponed fall Yard Sale held on April 2, 2022 was chaired by Laura Hartner and Debbie Sue Jonas. Thanks go out to members who donated items and helped with organizational tasks before, during, and after the sale.

Winn Dixie Market in Tavernier has a charity bag program by where a donation is given to an organization for the sale of reusable grocery bags during a specific month. The Garden Club was chosen to be the charity for April 2022 but with the supply chain shortage, the few bags went quickly.

Program Director Patti Graham “took off running” with her responsibilities. She arranged for speakers at our General Membership Meetings, asked speakers for publicity information for News & Notes and a program introduction, ensured any needed A-V equipment or display tables were available, and followed up with a thank you letter, certificate of appreciation, and honorarium. This year’s programs were:

- September 21, 2021 (Zoom presentation) - “Florida Friendly Landscaping” presented by Michelle Mularz, Environmental Agriculture Agent for UF/IFAS Monroe County Extension Service.
- October 19, 2021 (Zoom Presentation) - “Planting for Pollinators” with an emphasis on natives, presented by Suzanne Koptur, Professor of Biological Sciences at Florida International University.
- November 16, 2021 (held at the Francis Tracy Garden Center) - “Restoring Florida Bay: An Everglades Overview” presented by Emma Haydocy, Executive Director at Florida Bay Forever.

(End of Year Report, continued)

- December 14, 2021 (held at FTGC) – “Holiday Party” Due to Covid concerns, it was decided to move from our traditional potluck luncheon to ordering food from Publix.
- January 18, 2022 (held at FTGC in the garden) – “Planting and Pruning Techniques” presented by club member Laurie Brooks which included hands-on demonstrations and a “Show and Tell” by club members who brought their favorite garden tools to share. February 15, 2022 (held at FTGC in the garden)
- “Designing Colorful Container Gardens” presented by club member Kathie Carr with a demonstration of how to make a container garden.
- March 15, 2022 (held at FTGC) - “Gardening in the Air” presented by David Adamusko on the topic of air plants. After the presentation, David and his wife sold air plants with proceeds going to support “Save the Children” an organization that has a presence in Ukraine.
- April 19, 2022 (held at FTGC) - “The Voice of the Hive” presented by Isabella Ballestas, owner of Keez Beez. After the presentation, Isabella conducted a honey tasting for members.
- May 17, 2022 (held at FTGC) “Annual Potluck Luncheon and Installation of Officers”

Starting last club year, Laura Hartner arranged for and led “Garden Get-Togethers” which sought to bring small groups of members together to create garden-related items while working outside in the garden or, if needed, in the Sunroom. Each month Laura created an in-depth description of the project with a supply list to be posted in News & Notes for members attending as well as those members who wanted to make these projects at home. This year’s activities were:

- September 28, 2021 - Flavored extracts- vanilla, lemon, orange, almond, coconut, mint, and cinnamon.
- October 26, 2021 - Printed tea towels using leaves from FTGC or the participants’ home gardens. Additional towels made by members were sold out at the Gingerbread Craft Market.
- January 12, 2022 - Garlic baskets with guest instructor member Deb Riolo.
- February 23, 2022 - Printed tea towels. This popular project was repeated due to member requests.
- April 5, 2022 Twine holders for air plants.
- April News & Notes – Directions to make infused honey and eco-friendly beeswax food wraps were posted in this edition for members to make at home.
- May 24, 2022- “Finish That Project”- members were asked to bring in projects that they took home and never finished.

Patti designed “Save the Date” flyers which were emailed to members for special events, that is, our club Holiday Party, the Annual Potluck Luncheon, the Members’ Only Garden Walk, and a field trip.

Sandra Paradis, Anne Makowsky, Kathie Carr, and Marilyn Rogers opened their gardens on Plantation Key for our traditional “Members’ Only” Garden Walk on March 17, 2022. After the tour members met for lunch at Tides Beachside Bar and Grill at the Islander Resort. Charlene Regenhardt created an itinerary and map to be given to members on the day of the Garden Walk.

Patti arranged for a field trip on April 28, 2022, to the Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC) at UF in Homestead. Dr. Alan Chambers, who spoke to our club via Zoom in the fall of 2020, conducted the Vanilla Collection tour and field tour at TREC. An email was sent to club members several days before the trip with directions and an itinerary for the day that included a lunch at the White Lion Café.

Secretary Laura Hartner is the record keeper for our club, taking minutes at both Board and General Membership meetings. She ensures that Board members have needed documents in a timely manner and that General Membership meeting minutes are posted in News & Notes. But those are not the only tasks that Laura has accomplished this past club year.

Laura co-chaired the club’s Open House on December 4, 2021, with Charlene Regenhardt. This event provided an opportunity for commercial plant donators to our TDC (Tourist Development Council) Grant and the community to see the end results of the grant. Laura offered several Garden Get-Together craft sessions. She

(End of Year Report, continued)

made a variety of flavored extracts, Gingerbread men and women ornaments, and leaf-printed tea towels for sale at the Gingerbread Craft Market. She chaired the Tickets Committee for Garden Walk 2022 and co-chaired the April 6 Yard Sale with Debbie Sue Jonas.

Treasurer Anne Makowsky reported that the Garden Club of the Upper Keys has strengthened its financial position during this fiscal year despite continued challenges from COVID and inflation. Thankfully, after the initial COVID year hiatus, the Garden Club was able to hold several well-attended and successful fundraisers. Members generously continued to support club projects with their dues and donations. As we commence our next fiscal year, cash balances should adequately fund our three-year operating cash reserve, and next year's budget, and provide support for continued garden development and other projects related to our mission.

Members donated generously to facilitate the replacement of the ceiling and lighting in the meeting room. Funds donated specifically for the project fully covered the \$8,200 expense and the project was completed in June 2021. The GCUK received a reimbursement grant from the Monroe County Tourist Development Council of \$12,742 for a nursery shade house and related site improvements such as the storage shed hardening, Plantsmap identification stakes, and information kiosk. In-kind donations of materials and services from members and local nurseries enabled the club to complete this project with out-of-pocket costs of only \$2,300.

In looking at our fundraising activities, Garden Walk returned this year, and 498 tickets were sold. Tickets were numbered and strict protocols were put in place to track the actual number of tickets sold. We initiated the sale of GW tickets through our website and processed payments for 148 tickets via PayPal. We hope to focus on ways we can drive more ticket sales through our website. A big thank you to Pat Uhl and Amy Jorgenson for coordinating this effort. Our documentation for tracking ticket sales worked well, but areas, where we can improve, have been identified and updates will be made for the next event. The Gingerbread Craft Market proceeds were enhanced with the addition of a silent auction headed up by Darlene Rota. The Yard Sales held in December and April were quite successful as well.

This year, we transferred our cash accounts from South State Bank to Bank of America to take advantage of more reliable online banking access. In the future, we need to hire a new website manager and further develop our website to accept payments for dues and donations as well as event tickets. Appointing members to the Finance Committee will assist in allocating funds and working with a long-range planning committee.

Following the resignation of **Property Director Nancy Perez**, **Charlene Regenhardt** stepped up to share and fulfill the leadership duties of **Property Director** along with **Laurie Brooks and me**. We, along with a number of members, worked to improve our property. Some of the most significant accomplishments for the property during FY 2021-2022 were achieved under the capital improvements grant we received from the Tourism Development Council (TDC). Charlene served as the grant writer for this grant and became the primary implementer of its goals. The goals of the grant project were to establish sustainable gardens and growing areas that can also serve as educational tools, as well as purchasing and installing botanical markers with QR codes linked to an online database.

Two of the capital improvements were completed in FY 2020-2021: hardening of the outdoor storage shed and installing new watering stations with faucets and hose reels. The remaining capital improvements completed during the summer of 2021 included:

- **Construct Screened Enclosure for Plant Nursery:** The plant nursery is an enclosed screened area that enables our club to propagate and grow plants. Other components for the plant nursery included an outdoor sink and a water catchment system with a rain barrel.
- **Purchase and Install new Native Plants:** This project element was completed entirely with in-kind donations by garden club members and three plant nurseries (Island Home, D'Asign Source, and Casey's Corner). Due to the generosity of our members and the local nurseries, we significantly exceeded our goal for new native plants. One hundred seventeen plants were donated to our club, including 98 native and 19 non-native plants. At the beginning of the project, we had an estimated 45 native species; we now have more than 90 native species. Botanical markers were installed for 82 of these native species to date, with plans to purchase additional botanical plant markers in the future.

(End of Year Report, continued)

- **Purchase and Install Botanical Plant Markers:** We purchased 150 plant stakes and botanical markers and a team of garden club members installed them throughout the property. The garden club's plant library is hosted on a website called Plantsmap.com which maintains a unique web page for each plant species. The botanical markers include a QR code at the bottom right-hand corner. On smartphones with a QR reader (a free phone app), a picture of the barcode brings up a link to the web page on the phone's browser.
- **Construct Informational Kiosk:** A key element of the project included building a kiosk with an enclosed bulletin board that provides a site map showing the gardens and property features. This project element was accomplished by Laurie Brooks and her husband Don, who designed the structure, purchased the materials, and built it on site.

There were a number of additional accomplishments to our property. They were:

- **“Adopt-a-Bed” Program and Property Maintenance:** President Kathy Janco initiated this program. The following members are commended for their support of this program: Pat Saunders, Jenny Crittenden, DeeDee, and Richard Barreto, Deb and Rich Riolo, Lonell Rice, Darlene Rota, Laura Hartner, Laurie Brooks, Evelyn McGlone, Kathy Janco, Anne Makowsky, Betty Ann Gear, Ellen Berosh, Debbie Martin, Jean Neudorf, and Charlene Regenhart. In addition to these members, many other members (too many to name individually) attended various workdays to help weed, prune, plant, and perform other general property maintenance.
- **Mulching the Wooded Areas and Garden Beds:** Numerous members helped spread mulch in the garden beds to spruce up the property before Garden Walk 2022. Kathy Janco arranged for the mulch and a contractor to spread the remaining mulch throughout the wooded area, which not only improved the overall appearance of the grounds but is helping to control weeds.
- **New Gravel in the Driveways:** We hired a contractor to freshen the side driveways and add gravel behind the building into the new shade house/plant nursery vicinity. Club member Terry Estep donated pea gravel to freshen up the U-shaped drive located in front of the clubhouse. Kathy rehired the contractor to spread the donated pea gravel.
- **New Mulch for the Cactus Garden:** We purchased small river pebbles and a team of volunteers weeded the bed and spread the mulch during one of our workdays. It looks great!
- **New Garden Beds:** We established two new garden beds to feature coastal plants (Coastal Bed) and moisture-loving plants (Swale Bed). Some of the plantings were from the plants donated under the grant project. In addition, the Pine Rockland Garden was expanded to nearly double in size to make room for several new plants related to this habitat type.
- **Removal of the Seaside Mahoe:** Thanks to the help of David Bisant, an arborist affiliated with the University of Maryland who visits the Keys once or twice a year, we removed this tree that is considered a Category 1 invasive.
- **Plantsmap Data Entry:** Last year at this time we had about 75 plant species entered into our club's plant library. Over the summer, we expanded the entries to more than 150. Several members, including Laura Hartner, Lonell Rice, Anne Makowsky, and Darlene Rota helped with this huge effort.

Our **Archivist, Gerry Yeager**, believes our club archive is in good hands at the History and Discovery Museum. Our agreement with the museum states that our collection can be removed at any time at the request of the club or the museum. Our collection has been gathered from various locations, stored in acid-free archival boxes, inventoried (preliminary), and deposited at the History and Discovery Museum. Gerry believes that we can now transition from an Archivist position to a Historian because the collection is secure and available for research by members of the club. At this point, the collection should not be open to the public due to the fragile nature of the scrapbooks but with future digitization, it can be open to anyone.

In closing, I would like to thank my wonderful, fun, caring, and hard-working 2021-2022 board of directors. Each and every one of them worked tirelessly with great motivation, and imagination to move our club forward. I look forward to many more wonderful years belonging to a club such as ours and I thank you all for the opportunity to serve as your president. With people like you...our members, the future looks bright. Join me in 2022-2023 as we celebrate our 70th Anniversary!