



THE MORNING GLORY

Newsletter of the Garden Club of St. Augustine April, 2021

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

After a strange and difficult year caused by the Covid – 19 pandemic, science and nature bring us GCSA members hope of better and longer days. Pharmaceutical companies developed vaccines in record time using messenger RNA technology. Every day, we get more minutes of daylight so buds are appearing on bare branches and bulbs are breaking through the ground. Our Circles continue to meet either in person with social distancing or via Zoom and continue planning future programs. Our Club will hold the April 10 Plant Sale.

Besides giving the advantages of wisdom and experience, the average age of our club members has allowed most of us to receive one or both vaccinations already. Covid – 19 is a novel or new virus, so we are continuing to give scientists time to study it and make recommendations on avoiding and treating it. Mask wearing and social distancing are not fun but going through a winter with less flu and colds has been good.

The weather is warmer, so our Circles can meet more easily in large gazebos and take field trips to nurseries and gardens. We are starting seeds, rooting cuttings, transplanting offshoots or babies of bromeliads and cacti. Like most gardeners, we have accumulated a number of pots, so we are filling them with soil and plants.

Zoom technology allows Circles to have speakers and members join meetings remotely from Michigan or New England and to do presentations from their homes and offices. Our December Wreath Sale went well with people walking through our clubhouse. Likewise, we will hold the Plant Sale mostly outside on the clubhouse grounds. Also in early April, the Tour Committee plans to meet to discuss whether we will hold a tour of homes or gardens in December.

Our 2019-21 Board is winding down its work and the 2021-23 is forming. Do try to join us in our upcoming meetings. Meanwhile, keep well and see you soon,

Shirley



PLANT SALE, SATURDAY APRIL 10, 9 to 1

From Sue Swain

Our Plant Sale planning is moving along smoothly. It's scheduled for Saturday, April 10, from 9AM until 1 PM. **Special Alert for all Garden Club Members:** Any plants not sold by 12 noon will be reduced by 50% for members.

Please plan to drop off your plants at the Garden Club on Thursday, April 8 between 8 AM and 10 AM. Each member should try to contribute five attractive plants that they have grown from seed, propagated from their existing plants or removed and replanted from their yards. (You may also purchase and contribute plants.) All plants must be donated in clean pots. They may be annuals, herbs, perennials, succulents, bulbs or any attractive plants. Please put the name of the plant on a marker in the pot. If you would like to contribute "gently used" decorative pots and other attractive gardening décor, we will set up a space for its sale. (No junk, please.)

There will also be a raffle table to which you may contribute a nice basket, unique or expensive plant or another item approved by the Plant Sale Committee in advance. Raffle tickets will be sold.

Ways and Means items will be for sale inside the building. Keith Fuller will join us to give two talks, at 10 AM and 11:30, and will be available with advice if asked. All are welcome!

If you have questions, please call any one of the following Plant Sale Committee members: Maggie Ouellette, 824-6622, Trudi Edenfield, 495-3715 or Sue Swain, 794-5274. We so appreciate your support, as always, in helping with this public event. We look forward to this being a fun project for all.

" CDC mask and social distancing recommendations will be followed at this event."

TOUR OF HOMES DECISION

The Tour of Homes committee met on April 1 in Canopy Park located at the Shores, led by chairman Virginia Cunningham. There were seven Circles represented. Discussion was held to decide whether we should hold the Tour this year. After a long discussion, it was voted to delay the Tour until December 2022. This will give members more time to prepare and should, of course, be safer for all.

FFGC SALES

The FFGC Calendars are now \$4.26 each. Also, we have District pens. We will sell those at around cost, which is \$2.25 each. Please support District IV with your purchases. Contact our Garden Club president for more information.



JANUARY GARDEN OF THE MONTH

From Laurel Coon, Dianthus Circle

Throughout the year, the Garden Club of St. Augustine has the honor of describing the gardens within private homes as "Garden of the Month." Each month is sponsored by one of ten Circles whose members pick a home to represent. As we know, this last year has been quite a difficult one with an unbroken and devastating pandemic that has changed life as we have seen it.

The January Garden of the Month is a backyard versus a street view of a home that was lifted several years ago on Arricola Avenue in Davis Shores. When purchased in 1990, the single-story ranch home's back yard was engulfed in older Cedar trees to the degree that "you could not see the sky." In 2016-2017, Hurricanes Matthew and Irma changed all of that. Matthew had the storm surge, and Irma had less of a surge but stronger winds. As a result, the home was raised to a second story. Subsequently, the majority of the tall and majestic Cedar trees became twisted and brittle and had to be taken down. This resulted in many shade tolerant plants quickly expressing their dislike of direct sunlight while other plants prospered.

Plants within the fenced yard include the Bird of Paradise, which is named for its stunning colorful spiked flowers. The owners recently planted several Giant White Bird of Paradise against the fence with one starting to bloom. Bottlebrush trees were planted and flourish in the sunlight and have displayed seasons of blossoms.

Several of the largest plants within the garden started in two small pots fifty years ago. The Philodendrons within the yard are huge. Impressively large leaves are heart-shaped, medium green, and glossy with deep, wavy incisions along the edges. The other older one is one of the Scheffleras. Several tower over other plants and look like trees. The elongated leaves of the Schefflera plant liken its shape to that of an umbrella. Flowering trees such as

Oleanders and Crape Myrtle surround the Rubber Plants, which also were towering over the eight-foot fence.

An incredible Staghorn fern hangs from one of the only remaining Cedar trees. They prefer to be kept in a location that boasts consistent, shaded light. The Staghorn ferns have an out-of-this world appearance. The plants have two types of leaves, one of which resembles the horns of a large herbivore. They grow slowly but can end up being quite large and impressive once mature.

A general theme of Cordyline or "Ti" (pronounced "tee") plants are typically lumped together throughout the property. The owner has propagated many of them with rooting hormone powder. When pruned, they usually produce several offshoots. The most popular and commonly grown is "Red Sister" with its brilliant ranges of fuchsia-pink new growth and bronze-magenta leaves. They tend to show off their best color during cooler weather. And as noted, some varieties are more sun loving than others.

Crotons were seen in an assortment of colors and leaf shapes intermingling within the gardens. Crotons need bright, indirect light. They do not like unfiltered, direct sunlight, but thrive in dappled sunlight. Vibrant colors depend on bright light. Variegated ginger, sometimes called "shell ginger" is seen as clumps within the backyard and provide striking striped green and yellow leaves and a wide-spreading habit.

Bougainvillea have been seen in various garden pots and others had been planted over the years. As the shade and sunnier areas in the yard changed, so did the success of the Bougainvillea. They love sun!

Vines on the fence include Honeysuckle and Night Blooming Jasmine. The Bleeding Heart vine growing up the porch posts. Bleeding Heart is a "twiner" so be prepared to give it room to climb and grow without anything too near it that could be overtaken. Plants that will take over as ground cover were Ferns and Dwarf Oyster Plants. The owners also used to raise Bromeliads, which are seen under several palms in the front of the home.

Assorted flowering and green plants are planted in either blue or black flowerpots throughout the pavestones. Probably what folks know on Arricola is that backyards will always cycle with young and mature plants and trees dependent on the weather. Do not be afraid to prune to gain control and propagate or "root" single branches in a simple garden and then enjoy the results.

DISTRICT IV SPRING MEETING

It is scheduled for Friday, May 21st at the Jacksonville Garden Club. You will be able to meet our new District Officers, headed by Director Connie Gladding, who will be installed at the upcoming FFGC Convention.

NATURE DETECTIVE NEWS

Marilyn Smith and Cathy Snyder are busily planning this summer's Nature Detective series for the various libraries in St. Augustine. This year's theme is Dragonflies, based on the wonderful award-winning book by Marta Magellan. The Garden Club has agreed to support this effort once again, and the libraries will also provide financial support as needed. About 250 children are expected to attend the summer programs, which will probably be held virtually. The kits for each registered child will be picked up at the libraries prior to the program. Once again, our Garden Club members will be needed to help assemble the kits and transport them to the libraries. More information will be provided as the summertime approaches.

NOVEMBER 2020 GARDEN OF THE MONTH

From Dianna Christakos, Sunflower Circle

Since moving from Maine some five years ago, I have discovered much about the do's and don'ts of gardening in Florida. Being able to garden year-round carries some significant challenges. By trial and error, and some considerable expense, I found that one must be flexible to new techniques and rules. Unable to reproduce my beautiful perennial gardens from Maine, I had to change direction.

The heat of Florida has proven to be a greater adversary than the cold. Also, in my housing complex the deer roam the streets totally unafraid since they have no natural predators. They visit nightly to sample new nursery purchases. Desperate to find plants that tolerate the heat and are deer resistant has proved to be a challenge.

Undaunted, I pressed on and bought a few succulents with thorns, like Mammalarias, and here begins my love story with succulents. I have planted them in pots mainly so I can hide them from hurricanes. My Elephant Bush is over six feet tall, my Mexican Candelabra graces my front door, and my yard is filled with exotic plants of every considerable shape, color and size. I plant the ones that grow tall, like the variegated Cactus Pear, in big pots and they are amazing. And the deer do not touch them!

The story does not end here. This summer, I discovered that nearly all bloom, and what a spectacular show they put on! The smallest little cactus puts out a bloom twice its size. A Pillar Cactus is 8 feet tall and was covered with 28 blossoms. The blooms only last one day but I have actually stayed awake to see some of them open. Many are night bloomers.

The benefits do not end there. These plants do not tolerate much water, which is a good thing for conservation. They love the heat. In addition, they are seldom bothered by pests and diseases.

So, take my word and try growing some succulents. Some

varieties also do well indoors and make lovely terrariums. They are also very easy to propagate. There is no downside to growing these amazing plants!



WEBSITES OF INTEREST

The Jacksonville Garden Club has been busy during the past year giving virtual presentations along with some in-person demonstrations. Videos are all available for us to view and are very worthwhile! Go to the following website and look around. Click on the "Events" button, then on the calendar to see what's been happening.

<https://www.gardenclubjax.org/>

Visit <https://sites.google.com/site/ffgcdistrict4> to find out what's going on around our District.

Please send your ideas and photos for our next edition to [Jan Litchfield](#) or [Sue Swain](#).