



## ~ Smoke Signals ~

# The Calusa Garden Club Newsletter

**February, 2021**

Editor: Ami Ruiz

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[calusagardenclub@aol.com](mailto:calusagardenclub@aol.com)

**Leigh Plummer Memorial Park:** Thanks to many of you who were able to join chairperson Linda Colombo and me for the 2021 Florida Arbor Day Tree Planting. On January 15, we planted a paradise tree and a Jamaican dogwood tree. Leigh Plummer Memorial Park holds a special place in the hearts of Calusa Garden Club members because our club members were the original driving force who worked with Collier County to establish Leigh Plummer Memorial Park as a Florida native plant display and education location. Dale DeFeo and Linda Colombo discovered this bit of history while reviewing our Calusa Garden Club archives in 2016-2018, and in 2019, Linda spearheaded the project of our Club planting Florida native trees in Leigh Plummer Memorial Park. Thank you, Linda for continuing to lead our Club in this project.

In 2020, our Board voted to memorialize our deceased members by planting a tree in Leigh Plummer Memorial Park. Those members who passed away in 2019-2020 and who were remembered at our ceremony on January 15 were: Peggy Grass, Cherry McCurn, Jacquelyn Pierce, Eva Schliesser (a founding member of Calusa Garden Club), and Doris Wentland. In an additional memorial to Eva Schliesser, in 2020 our Club member Sue Oldershaw facilitated the transplanting of a tree from Eva Schliesser's yard to the Calusa Park Butterfly Garden, thereby granting a wish expressed by Eva to her children.

**Blue Zones Project and Nature: The Primal Healer:** In January, our Club voted to become a Blue Zones Certified organization. The Blue Zones Project, sponsored in Collier County by Naples Community Hospital, promotes healthy living through wellness pursuits, nutrition, exercise, and belonging to an association of like-minded people. We look forward to exploring the parallels between The Blue Zones goals and our garden club activities and goals. In that regard, The *National Gardener* magazine, Winter 2021 edition, contained a very educational article: "Nature: The Primal Healer" at page 17. The author, Reina Snyder, NGC Chair of Plant America with Trees and a member of Florida District X, surveyed published studies on how nature can heal. She outlined a study that demonstrated that gazing at a garden can lead to quicker healing from surgery, infections and other

ailments. Further, she highlighted the mindfulness technique called "Forest Bathing" started in Japan that is gaining prominence throughout the world. Forest bathing has been proven to reduce blood pressure and strengthen the immune system. This article supports so well our decision to become a Blue Zones Certified club. Our experiences working in our gardens, in our environmental preservation efforts, and working with plants and flowers will reduce stress and lead to health benefits for each individual. We all want to lead healthy lives and to be able to enjoy our chosen pursuits. ...Sara

### Upcoming Events...

2/8	10:00	Member Meeting & Floral Design Workshop on Zoom
	11:00	Speaker: Sue Oldershaw and Donna Kay – Gardening on Our Island
2/22	10:00	Floral Design Workshop on Zoom
2/27	8:30	Calusa Park Butterfly Garden Work Group
3/1	10:00	Board Meeting on Zoom
3/8	10:00	Member Meeting and Environmental Workshop on Zoom
3/22	10:00	Floral Design Workshop
3/27	8:30	Calusa Park Butterfly Garden Workshop
3/29	10:00	Board Meeting on Zoom
4/1	11:30	Spring Luncheon and Officer Installation. Wesley United Methodist Church
4/12	10:00	Joint Board Meeting on Zoom

## Marco Island Historical Society Presents...

"A Pressing Matter: Preserving Marco Island's Flora"

December 8, 2020 - April 3, 2021

The Marco Island Historical Society (MIHA) is presenting an exhibit at the Marco Island Historical Museum on the history and vast variety of Marco Island's amazing and important plants and flowers. The exhibit includes a large number of botanical samples that have been pressed for preservation. Many of these samples are on loan from the Smithsonian Institution, the University of Florida, and the New York Botanical Garden.

### ***Marco Island Historical Society Presents:*** ***"A Pressing Matter: Preserving Marco Island's Flora"*** *December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 through April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021*

The Marco Island Historical Society (MIHS) announces the opening of a new exhibit at the Marco Island Historical Museum. The exhibit presents the history and vast variety of Marco Island's amazing and important plants and flowers.

The exhibit includes photos and prints of historic and rare plant pressings from the New York Botanical Garden, the Smithsonian Institution's U.S. National Herbarium, and the University of Florida, as well as actual plant pressings on loan from George Wilder, botanist and herbarium curator at the Naples Botanical Garden. The exhibit also will include a demonstration on how plant presses work with a free mini plant press giveaway item while supplies last.

**Marco Island Historical Museum**  
**180 South Heathwood Drive**  
**Marco Island, Florida 34145.**  
**(239) 252-1440**



Julian A. Dimock. Image #48771 American Museum of Natural History Library.



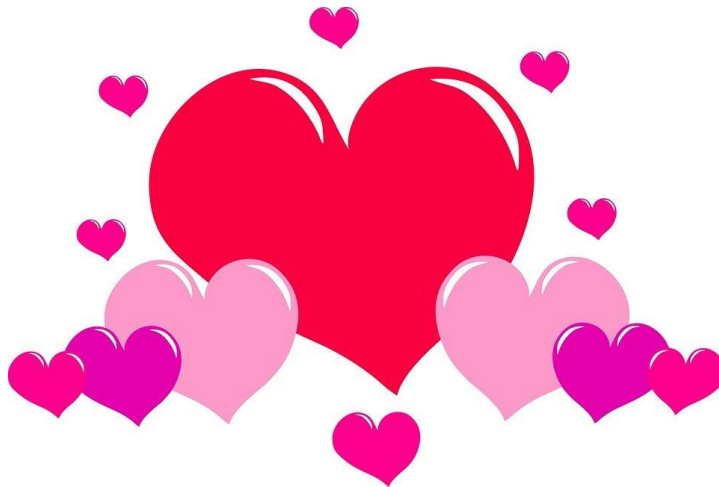
Julian A. Dimock. Image #48360, American Museum of Natural History Library.





Scholarship Applications are  
due by 2/28!!!

Flowers in Public Places -- at City Hall  
on January 14  
with City Manager Michael McNees  
on the right, and his assistant Casey  
Lucius and Marianne Foley's floral  
design in the middle. Kathy  
Hershberger with her floral design, at  
the Bargain Basket with volunteer  
Karen Blackwell.



## Welcome, Peggy and Nancy...



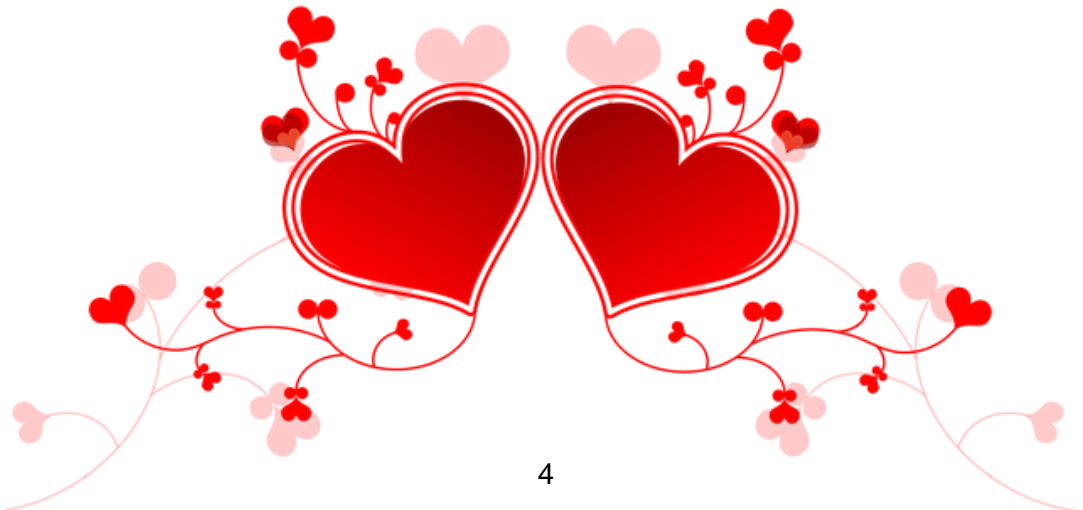
Hi, I am Peggy Anuta. My husband, David, and I are originally from northern Indiana. I did a lot of gardening at our home in Warsaw, Indiana. We became full time residents of Marco Island four years ago. I started gardening in earnest here about two years ago, focusing on Florida native and drought friendly plants. I am a past member of the MI Beautification Committee. I look forward to becoming an active member of the Calusa Garden Club and to increasing my knowledge of Florida plants, gardening, and floral designs.



I was born and lived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. I have an accounting degree from Franklin and Marshall college and spent my career in banking. I am married to an Englishman, John Knight, with whom I share a passion for sailing. We have sailed most of the Windward and Leeward islands of the Caribbean. In 2012 we sailed across the Atlantic and have been spending summers on our boat exploring Europe. Our boat is currently in Mediterranean Spain awaiting better times to allow us to travel.

We are residents of Marco Island. I was active on a landscape committee here on Marco and with our small garden at our home. I'm keenly interested in learning more about the local landscape plantings and design. I also enjoy flower arranging. Looking forward to learning and making new friends.

Nancy Knight  
946 Sand Dune Drive  
Marco Island, FL  
717-471-2535



## The Blue Zones...

The Blue Zones Project was launched in southwest Florida in November 2015 and to date the project has impacted over 720 organizations and more than 225,000 individuals. It is not a diet, exercise, or healthcare plan. It is a program adopted by cities, towns, organizations, and individuals to encourage people to practice activities that, after thorough research, have been determined to increase health and longevity in communities.

Blue Zones Project does not mandate that you adopt certain health practices. The program is about choice and making small choices that lead to big health benefits in the long run. Choices as simple as, instead of offering pastries at your next meeting, you can offer fruit. As a garden club, we already adopt many of the principles of living a healthier and happier life.

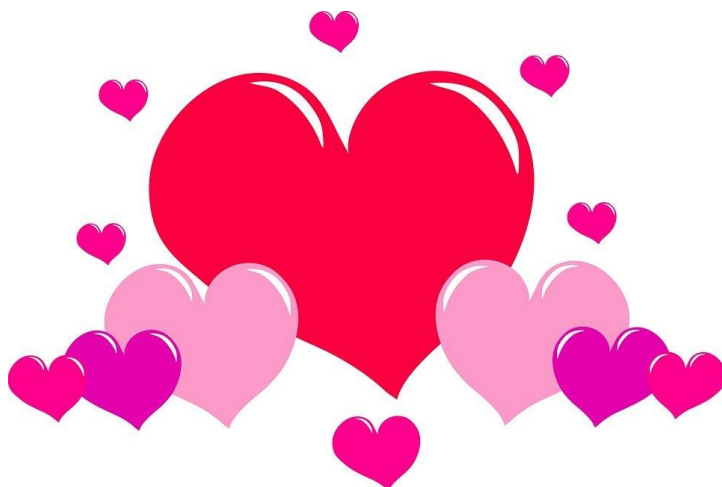
Marco Island is striving to be recognized as a Blue Zones city and have invited Blue Zones Project representatives to approach clubs, business, and restaurants to join in to make a difference. As I reviewed the 9 Goals of Blue Zones living, I realized that as Calusa Garden Club, we already identify with most of the Blue Zones principles.

The Power of 9 Goals are:

1. Move naturally – find ways to move --- gardening is a great way.
  2. Purpose – We are like minded group with a purpose to share our gardening knowledge and floral design skills with each other as well as others not in our club.
  3. Downshift – Reverse disease by find a stress-free activity – gardening – floral designing – learning new things.
  4. Nutrition – 80 percent rule – try to eat mindfully and stop when 80 percent full.
  5. Plant slant – try to put more fruits and vegetables on your plate – we can add fruit to our meetings and encourage our members to grow fruits and vegetables.
  6. Friendships – Schedule time with friends in a social environment or meeting – these are our gadabouts and social time in meetings.
  7. Family first – Invest time with family.
  8. Belong – Belong to a faith-based community.
  9. Right Tribe – Surround yourself with like-minded people who support your ideas and support you –
- THE CALUCSA GARDEN CLUB

We as a club are already participating in the majority of the goals of Blue Zones without even realizing it. I hope our Club will agree to adopt the Blue Zones Project and apply to become certified as a Blue Zones organization.

Next steps. Each member will receive an email asking her to agree with the above Power of 9 ideas. Once we receive 12 members who are in agreement, and hopefully more than 12, then Calusa Garden Club of Marco Island will become a Blue Zones club. We will receive a ribbon cutting, plaque and publicity and be able to help Marco Island become a Blue Zones city.



## Florida Arbor Day...

### CALUSA GARDEN CLUB PLANTS TWO NATIVE TREES FOR FLORIDA ARBOR DAY

On January 15, 2021, in honor of Florida Arbor Day, Calusa Garden Club members gathered at Leigh Plummer Memorial Park to plant two native trees. Calusa Garden Club President Sara Wolf gave the assembled guests, including Marco Island City Manager Michael McNees, a brief history of Leigh Plummer Memorial Park prior to the tree planting. Wolf also stated that the trees were being planted in memory of five Calusa Garden Club members who had passed away in the last two years, and the group took a moment of silence to remember these members: Eva Schliesser, one of the founding members of Calusa Garden Club, Cherry McCurn, Jacquelyn Pierce, Doris Wentland, and Peggy Grass.



Calusa Garden Club has a history with Leigh Plummer Memorial Park. In 1982, Calusa Garden Club of Marco Island contacted Collier County to propose establishing the park as a native plant educational area. The area located at 400 North Barfield Drive, and surrounded by Piedmont Circle, had been set aside by the Deltona Corporation developers as a park, and the Garden Club members wanted it to display plants native to South Florida. Under these joint efforts, Leigh Plummer Memorial Park was established in 1984 and named for Mr. Leigh Plummer, a Marco Island resident and longtime Board Member and President of Marco Island Civic Association. Mr. Plummer's wife, Nell, was a Calusa Garden Club member. At the 1984 dedication of Leigh Plummer Memorial Park, the county announced that the pond would be named Calusa Lake, after the first Native American settlers of Marco Island.



Friday's planting of two native trees, a paradise tree, and a Jamaican dogwood tree, continued the tradition revived in 2019 by Linda Colombo, then president of Calusa Garden Club, to plant native trees in Leigh Plummer Park. This is the third year the Club has donated and planted trees in the park, with the assistance of Marco Island Parks and Recreation supervisor Martha Montgomery and Marco Island Landscape Maintenance supervisor Steve Pawlawski. Without the City of Marco Island's work to move irrigation drip lines to new trees, the trees would not survive.

Eryk Jadaszewski, owner of Everglades Native Designs, LLC, donated his efforts and expertise to plant the two new trees. Jadaszewski also recommended the paradise tree and the Jamaican dogwood tree as the appropriate trees for the Park, based on his knowledge of Florida native plants.

Calusa Garden Club is a member of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs and membership is open to those interested in horticulture, floral design and environmental matters residing 5 months or more in Collier County.

Calusa Garden Club meets October through April. Contact the Garden Club at [calusagardenclub@aol.com](mailto:calusagardenclub@aol.com), or visit the Garden Club's website [calusa.org](http://calusa.org), or its Facebook page Calusa Garden Club.

#### Pictures:

Susan LaGrotta and Sara Wolf took the pictures accompanying this article and have given reprint permission.

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Calusa Garden Club

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## Horticulture Report...

JANUARY 2021

Dale DeFeo, Horticulture Chairman

### HIBISCUS

Hibiscus is a ubiquitous component of our Marco Island landscapes. Most of these plants are *Hibiscus sinensis* or *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*. There are so many varieties and cultivars to choose from – blossoming in red, pink, white, peach, orange, yellow, violet, and lavender, with literally hundreds of exotic color combinations. They also come in single, double, and ruffled blooms and blooms can be as large as 10+ inches on some cultivars. Blooms usually last only one day or two days at the most on this type of hibiscus, but each plant produces a profusion of blooms with some opening each day. To get maximum blooms, hibiscus should be grown in full sun with a minimum of 6-8 hours of daily full sun to bloom. These hibiscuses grow from 6-16 feet tall if not kept in check by pruning. Spring and fall are the best times to prune and winter should be avoided because even in our tropical climate, a rare frost or very cold snap on a tropical plant that has been hard pruned can result in severe dieback or even death. The plants can be kept in almost perpetual bloom by keeping the soil slightly moist (avoid overwatering/soggy soil) and adding organic matter to their bases, but established plants are very drought tolerant. According to the University of Florida, used coffee grounds mixed into the topsoil are beneficial to the plant. Also, banana peels are a great source of potassium, which hibiscus love. The American Society of Horticultural Science found that adding earth worm compost consistently resulted in larger flowers. A pH between 6.5 and 6.8 (slightly acidic) is ideal. When first getting plants established and to encourage profuse blooming, a 16-16-16 fertilizer is recommended by Pennington Growers.

In addition to our tropical hibiscus, there are several hardy types that will grow well in our 10A climate and some will produce even larger flowers. The hardy types are those that are deciduous and can survive in Zones 5-9. February is the best time in our area to plant these. *Hibiscus syriacus* ‘Blue Bird’ is one that will grow here. Flowers are azure blue. *Hibiscus moscheutos* is a native to the southeast zones 5-10, grow 6-10’ in height if not kept pruned and produce pink, red or white flowers. There are numerous others that do well in zone 9 and may grow here if planted where they only get a maximum of 6-8 hours of direct sun, preferably mostly in the morning.

Another type that does well but here, but we see only occasionally on Marco Island is the tree hibiscus, *Hibiscus spp.* This also comes in a weeping form. A tree hibiscus usually has smaller blooms adorning the tips of weeping branches. You can also train almost any hibiscus into a standard (tree) form by starting with a small plant and pruning to maintain a single stem with side shoots removed until it is almost the height you want it to be and then allowing it to fully branch out at the top. Just do not overdo the strong landscape impact of a hibiscus tree form. They are better used alone or sparingly to create focal points rather than overwhelming your landscape design by using too many.

Note: When any hibiscus experiences bud drop, the main culprits are cold, excessive heat, limited sunlight and/or irrigation extremes. Also, the main problem insect is mealy bug, but aphids, white flies and spider mites also may occasionally be a problem. Fungi is also a problem and causes leaf spot. Southern stem blight is another fungal disease. To help avoid these, be sure mulch does not touch the plant stems. Avoiding overcrowding is another way to keep insects and diseases at bay.



‘Giant Ombre Purple’



‘Hawaiian Sunset’



‘Impelo’



‘Giant Ombre Coral Ruffles’



Hibiscus tree

## An Explosion of Color...

Driving around Marco Island you don't have to wait long till you come upon a bush or a small tree with a stunning display of blossoms. Southwest Florida has a year-round growing season with plenty of sun and summer humidity. This allows gardeners in the Sunshine State to enjoy blooms all year long.



A flowering bougainvillea is very common all over the Island with their vibrant and colorful displays. To most homeowners in Marco, bougainvillea is the most favored flowering plant offering colors of fiery red, white, pink, orange, lilac, yellow and even bicolors. They thrive in hot sunny spots, are low maintenance, and you can even let it grow wild, but an occasional trimming will help to control size. Bougainvillea is a flowering machine!

If you love blue, the *Plumbago auriculata* 'Imperial Blue' is your plant. Blue flowers are rare; color blue is seen in only 10% of the 280,000 flowering plants on Earth. Blue is the color of calm and serenity and a blue plumbago, with its billowing drifts of blues and rambling habit, adds a cottage garden appeal to your front door or walkway. They also do well in containers and attract butterflies. There is even a lesser known white plumbago. Mix both in a container or combine with other foliage, those with pinks and yellow flowers, for contrast.

*Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow (Bunfelsia)* sounds like a romantic Shakespeare sonnet. It is a tropical plant that puts forth pansy like flowers that change from one day to the next with all the colors present at the same time. The blossoms start with the color violet, then changes to pale lavender blue and finally white. According to the garden books, purple stands for Yesterday, lavender for Today and white for tomorrow. This fantastical plant thrives in the heat and humidity of South Florida. Caution: According to the ASPCA, the plant is toxic to cats and dogs so keep this in mind when choosing a planting location.



Panama Rose, a year-round bloomer with bright pink clusters that attract butterflies. It is a consistent flowering bush and a great addition to a bed of butterfly plants.

Dombeya Seminole, often called the Tropical Hydrangea with clusters of pink flowers seminal to the hydrangeas up north.

The *Dombeya burgessiae* (Seminole) is often called the "Tropical Hydrangea" with its clusters of pink flowers like hydrangeas up north. It is a reliable bloomer from October to May attracting bees and butterflies. The more sun it gets, the fuller the plant will be with more spectacular pink clusters. It can grow up to 7 feet tall but it's easy to maintain by pruning it down to 4 feet after spring bloom. This is a favorite front yard specimen plant for both Sue Oldershaw and Linda Schwoeppe of the Calusa Garden Club.

A landscape staple, the Panama Rose (*rondeletia leucophylla*) blooms nearly year-round with bright pink flower clusters that attract butterflies. It is often referred to as Bush Penta as it resembles the Penta (another butterfly plant). Suggest that you plant this near walkways or patios as the flowers have a very light scent which is stronger in the evening. Panama Rose is a consistent flowering bush and is a great addition to a bed of butterfly plants.

*Euphorbia (leucocephala)* Snowflake Shrub or small tree produces an abundance of delicate, airy white flowers reminiscent of baby's breath contrasted with apple green leaves. It can grow to 3-5 feet and may be trimmed once blooms are spent; it will keep coming back. And this is a favorite for pollinators, too. This is not an easy plant to find as the *Euphorbia* family is known for many other specimens – such as its smaller cousin *Euphorbia* Diamond Frost, a mounding ground cover also with clusters of white flowers.



**Donna Kay, a Master Gardener and Calusa Garden Club member, is a volunteer at the Naples Butterfly Garden where a Euphorbia Snowflake is a favorite for butterflies. Donna bought her two Euphorbias from the Naples Botanical Garden. Keep this plant in mind when looking for a spectacular white bloomer for your landscape. When everything else in the landscape is orange, pink and red the white canopy of the Euphorbia Snowflake is a showstopper.**



**Euphorbia Snowflake produces abundant delicate airy white flowers covering the shrub's canopy—a favorite for pollinators.**

**Yesterday Today and Tomorrow, a must have in your landscape. Pansy like flowers of violet, changing to pale lavender and finally white. Purple stands for yesterday, Lavender stands for Today, and White for tomorrow.**





Calusa Garden Club gives our special thanks to Gary Grisko, owner of Sandcastle Landscape Management, LLC for his donation of plants and planting services for the Pioneer Garden at Marco Island Historical Society. Thank you, Gary!



**THANK YOU!!**  
Mike Kirby, Subtropical Trees, for donating a tree to Leigh Plummer Park for Arbor Day.

Subtropical Trees  
CEP and Certified Arborist  
3241 German Woods court, Naples FL 34116.  
Mobile 239-271-0081

**THANK YOU!!**  
Eric Jadazewski, Everglades Native Designs, LLC for planting the tree in Leigh Plummer Park for Arbor Day.

Everglades Native Designs, LLC  
239-300-8115  
[evergladesnatedesigns.com](http://evergladesnatedesigns.com)

THANK YOU to Cache Cleaners for storing our 6 bins of archives. Cache Cleaners is offering Calusa Garden Club members a 10% discount on cleaning services, which you can obtain by showing your CGC Name Badge.

Thank you, Bruce, and Susan Neustadt!