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A P R I L 2 0 2 0 V O L 1 1 , I S S U E 9

## ***Punta Gorda Garden Club*** ***Garden Tales*** ***Gardening Nourishes the Soul***

### **President's Message**

Dear Gardening Friends:

We are living through a historically significant time, and with it come many uncertainties. Will my family be safe from the virus? Will my investments provide for my retirement? When will life return to normal? And most importantly, will I have enough toilet paper? 😊

Coping with these questions can cause stress, and each of us has our own ways of dealing with that, but the experts have been reminding us of a few more. It has been proven in a number of studies that taking time outside to just look and listen can change one's emotional state and outlook. So, get outside, take a walk, work in the garden, and enjoy the fresh air. Social isolation sounds like scary stuff, but we can turn this into a positive experience by paring down that to-do list that has been around for a while. Clean out a closet. Cull your wardrobe. Call family and friends with whom you may not have communicated recently. Reach out to elderly neighbors to ask if there is anything they need. Sit outside and read a good book or that pile of magazines you have. Let's all work to find good in these difficult times.

Canceling the Bok Tower Trip and Flower Show and Luncheon certainly knocked the wind out of our sails in terms of club activities, but we had no choice with either one. The current plan is to hold the Flower Show on March 30, 2021, same theme, same place. Work in our public gardens has been suspended for now, but hopefully will resume in April sometime. The Great American Clean Up is postponed and will be held at a later date as yet to be determined. Both CHEC and the Botanical Garden are closed. The last I heard we should be "socially isolated" for eight weeks, so that means that we will not have a Spring Luncheon as planned. If that changes you will be notified.

The District IX meeting, Florida Federation of Garden Clubs (FFGC) convention, Deep South convention, and National Garden Clubs convention were all canceled too. I wonder how all of the business that needs to be done will be handled. I guess it is all on hold.

Our Treasurer, Joyce Stanley, has mailed all refund checks for the Bok Tower Trip and Flower Show Luncheon. If you receive one, please cash or deposit the check as soon as you can. That will help Joyce a lot!

If you have not yet paid your \$25 dues, please send a check made out to PGGC to the club address: P.O. Box 511167 Punta Gorda, FL 33951-1167 before April 30th. In May Joyce will pay FFGC \$12 per member for their dues from the checks she deposits.

Stay safe and healthy. Be calm and hang in there. Here's hoping this will all end soon.

Mary  
Mary Yeomans, President

### **Save the Date!**

**Board Mtg**  
~~April 8~~

**CANCELED**

**General Mtg**  
~~April 15~~

**CANCELED**

**May Luncheon**  
~~May 6~~

**CANCELED**

## Garden Tales

### *New Member Get Together*

On March 10th new members from September to the present were invited to a get together at Vinita Jones' home. This was an opportunity to meet other new members, to learn about our PGGC and to create some lovely dragonflies. Emila Britain, Dorrit Tompkins, Laura Flannelly, Bernadette Klein, Maggie Rogers, Kristie Wells and Suzy Campbell enjoyed the shaded garden and the porch filled with beautiful specimen plants at Vinita's lovely home. Mary Yeomans provided an explanation of our club, its objectives, and how it fits into the garden clubs of Florida, the Deep South and the national club. Mary also explained our scholarships, donations and maintenance of public gardens. Carol Houston described the upcoming flower show and encouraged new members to participate. Vinita Jones welcomed all and demonstrated how to make dragonflies.

Membership chairs, Martha Cloran and Nancy Knaus and Mentorship chair, Debra Engel, organized the get together. We were pleased to welcome our new members and to help them to feel included in our club activities and objectives.

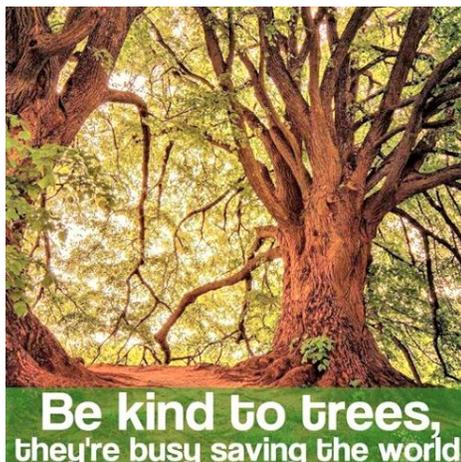
*Nancy Knaus, Membership Co-Chair*



### *Welcome New Member!*

Robin Gardynik  
3330 Antigua Dr.  
Punta Gorda, FL 33950  
rsgardynik@yahoo.com  
313-418-5788 (C)

*Please add the new member  
information to your yearbook*



**Be kind to trees,  
they're busy saving the world.**

**April 26 is  
Arbor Day**

## Garden Tales

### Gardening is a Stress Reliever



The next time that you feel stressed, skip the snack. Instead, go outside and garden. Here are factors that show how gardening helps relieve stress:

#### **Creativity**

Have you ever attempted to sketch, paint, craft or write? If so, you'll know that creativity can be a proven stress-buster. In just 45 minutes you can significantly reduce your levels of cortisol by embracing your inner artiste. There are few things more satisfying than taking an idea and turning it into a reality, and your garden is a perfect place to do so.

#### **Mental Focus and Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is an increasingly popular way of combatting the stress and anxiety. Mindfulness is actually a science, designed to prevent our busy brains from overwhelming us and blocking us from enjoying the little moments of calm that we all deserve. The idea behind mindfulness is simplicity itself - simply be. Picture the scene; you're in your garden, the sun is shining gently upon your face, there's a gentle breeze blowing around you, you close your eyes and open them to be greeted by the beautiful sights of what you have created... It's a moment to simply exist, and concentrate on your breathing. Feel that tension in your shoulders slip away as though it was never there in the first place.

Naturally, sitting still and doing nothing is not for everybody - and you can still embrace mindfulness by being physically active in the garden. It's all about living for the moment, and you can do just that while planting, weeding, mowing the lawn.

#### **Vitamin D Exposure**

When you are outside, your body enjoys fresh, clean air and soaks up Vitamin D from the sun. Vitamin D is a hormone found within the body (rather than an external vitamin that must be consumed through supplements). Our bodies generate Vitamin D as a chemical reaction as soon as sun bounces off our skin. The most important service that Vitamin D provides is the growth of calcium within the body, which is obviously essential to people of all ages to keep bones and teeth strong and healthy. The benefits do not end here, however, as Vitamin D also further bolsters the immune system, regulates the flow of insulin throughout the body and thus drastically reduces the risk of developing a condition such as diabetes, keeps the heart and lungs healthy, and even reduces the risk of cancer. Perhaps most importantly, Vitamin D is also a great way to enhance your internal feel-good factor; it's a known relief for stress, anxiety and depression.

#### **Reduction of Cortisol**

Cortisol is a hormone produced by the body in times of stress. It's responsible for all the symptoms that we associate with the condition, such as sweaty palms, elevated heart rate, irritability and muddy thinking. If left unchecked, cortisol can cause all kinds of physical issues such as weight gain and heart conditions, but it has just as big an impact on our mental faculties. Not only are we left feeling unable to think straight when we are stressed, but cortisol is also intrinsically linked to depression.

When we spend time outside in our gardens, we regulate our emotions more efficiently than if cooped up indoors. Part of that is due to Vitamin D, the fact that we are engaging in mindfulness and thus not allowing our minds to wander to unwelcome thoughts, and partly because we are engaging in a physical workout - whether we're conscious of this or not. Embrace gardening for all that it has to offer and let it help you get through challenging times.

Source: Blog from the American Institute of Stress; April 1 2019

## Garden Tales

### *Youth Gardening Corner*

A new “after school” garden club has been formed at Sallie Jones Elementary School. There are approximately 18 3-5th graders enthusiastically involved with a very enthusiastic teacher, Mrs. Mongiardini, and her willing husband guiding them. A raised bed was created using masonry blocks and soil. Plants were chosen to create a “pizza” garden using tomatoes, Peppers, onions and herbs and some pollinator flowers. We also buried some fish as fertilizer. The kids are super excited to watch their garden grow.

*Marilyn Pachota, Youth Program Chair*



### *REMINDER - Member Dues*

Your \$25 dues for June 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021 are payable in March. They are delinquent May 1st and your membership will be terminated if not received. Twelve dollars of your PGGC dues are submitted to FFGC and the club must pay them before June 1st.

Remit to:

Punta Gorda Garden Club  
P.O. Box 511167  
Punta Gorda, FL. 33951-1167

*Joyce Stanley, Treasurer*

## Garden Tales

### *Plant Profile – Sweet Almond Bush (Aloysia vergata)*

A recent addition to my garden is the sweet almond bush. No, it does not produce almonds and I admit it is not native (Argentina) but the wonderful aroma and attractiveness to bees and butterflies was too good to pass up. The plant is a shrub or small tree and its sweet, fragrant blooms are said to be similar to almonds. The flowers are white spiked clusters and will bloom from spring to fall. The branches have a slightly weeping growth habit.

If exposed to a hard frost, sweet almond bush will freeze back and regrow. However, under ideal conditions, it can grow up to 15 feet! There is no need to deadhead spent flowers but if you prune between bloom cycles, you will have denser growth.

The good news is that sweet almond can thrive in almost any soil conditions and is drought tolerant, plus there is no need for extra fertilizer. Imagine one of these beautiful shrubs outside your lanai providing a magical, sweet fragrance for you to enjoy!

*Jane Hayes, Horticulture Chair*

Sources: <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/nassauco/2017/05/29/fact-sheet-sweet-almond-bush/> and <https://homeguides.sfgate.com/kind-soil-sweet-almond-bush-need-47370.html>

*Do you have any suggestions for the Plant Profile? Feel free to contact me, Jane Hayse, at [jhayse59@hotmail.com](mailto:jhayse59@hotmail.com)*



## Garden Tales

### *Get to know our Club Member - Alan Schulman*



***Tell us about your background*** I am lifetime gardener and snowbird from the north suburbs of Chicago. As an active member, president etc. of Chicago based “Gardeners of the North Shore”, for 45 years, club members call me “Mr. Color” which is appropriate as I love to plant colorful gardens. Wherever there is an opportunity, I plant a garden. Everything from sunny and shade annuals and perennial flowers, vegetables, trees and bushes. Every year there is a club plant competition held at the Chicago Botanic Garden. There I regularly am awarded with numerous blue ribbons and plant category trophies. I am also a certified Gardeners of America show judge.

Most recently I adopted our History Park, where for the past 3 years wife Barbara and I have funded and planted (with the help of many volunteers from our club and others) the numerous planting beds that were available in the 3 acre park. Today the park hosts what can be described as a Mini Botanic Garden. In addition to the signature colorful annuals that brighten up the park, newly planted hybrid hibiscus, orchids clinging to the trees and a rose garden make History Park unique in Southwest Florida. My goal for the park gardens is to provide a pleasurable visit for all that come to view the flowers or just relax in the peaceful atmosphere. Note, the park is open daily and there is no admission fee.

Over the years I have spread the word of gardening to the community in projects like a yearlong, monthly, television program called “Easy Gardening”. As Co-host, I guided Chicago area audiences with a “how to” format that mirrored the PBS show Victory Garden but with local Chicago climate appropriate insights. The program featured everything from my 12’x20’ year-round greenhouse and gardens to visiting the Park Seed Co. where we filmed their trial gardens and interviewed the experts. The Winter greenhouse was featured in a multi-page 1994 article in “Fine Gardening”, a national gardening publication.

Gardening inspired me to invent “The Intelligent Plant Light”, a desktop plant light. To promote the light, I did a live presentation on nationally televised Home Shopping Network (HSN). In the 1980’s I wrote a newspaper gardening column under the byline “Eddie Earthworm” where gardening tips were shared with readers. In my spare time 😊 I am the founder and active CEO of a sump pump manufacturing company that produces a pump system called “The Basement Watchdog”. Some of our northern snowbirds may have one of these systems in their home up North.

***When did you join the PGGC?*** I am a very new member, just joining this past February.

***What are your favorite garden club activities?*** While I have not yet had the opportunity to participate in PGGC activities yet, I served numerous tenures as President, Vice President, committee chairman and historian for the Chicago club that I still belong to.

***What are your favorite plants?*** As noted in my background, any plant that has color is a favorite. It can be flowers or foliage, but its color is what attracts me.

# Garden Tales

## *Garden Calendar – April*

### **What to Do**

**Annuals/Bedding plants:** Plant heat-tolerant annuals, such as coleus, vinca, and portulaca. See Annuals: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_annual\\_landscape\\_plants](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_annual_landscape_plants)

**Bulbs:** Cannas thrive in the heat of summer. New varieties have colorful leaves as well as flowers. See Bulbs for Florida: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_bulbous\\_flowers](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_bulbous_flowers)

**Herbs:** Some to start now include basil, coriander, cumin, and mint. See Herbs: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_herbs](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_herbs)

**Vegetables:** Beans, Chinese cabbage, Southern peas, and sweet potatoes can still be planted. Mulch beds well and monitor irrigation if the weather is dry. See Vegetable Gardening in Florida: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_vegetable\\_gardening](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_vegetable_gardening)

### **What to Do**

**Pests:** Monitor insect activity and learn which bugs damage plants and which do not. See Landscape Pest Management: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_landscape\\_pests](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_landscape_pests)

**Beneficials:** Identify and conserve beneficial insects. Some insects should be encouraged in your yard! See Beneficial Insects: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_beneficial\\_insects](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_beneficial_insects)

**Tomatoes:** Watch for pests, disease, and nutritional disorders on developing tomato plants. See Home Tomato Gardening: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_tomato\\_gardening](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_tomato_gardening)

**Palms:** Identify and treat environmental and nutritional disorders in palm trees. See Palm Care: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_palm\\_care](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_palm_care)

**Oleanders:** Inspect chewed or ragged leaves for oleander caterpillars at work. See Oleander Pest Management: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_oleander\\_ipm](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_oleander_ipm)

**Fruits:** Propagate fruit crops by air layering and grafting. See Propagating Fruits in Florida: [http://www.solutionsforyourlife.com/hot\\_topics/lawn\\_and\\_garden/propagating\\_fruits.shtml](http://www.solutionsforyourlife.com/hot_topics/lawn_and_garden/propagating_fruits.shtml)

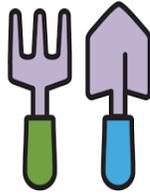
**Perennials and bulbs:** Divide clumps of bulbs, ornamental grasses, or herbaceous perennials to expand or rejuvenate garden beds or to pass along to friends. See Bulbs for Florida: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_bulbous\\_flowers](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_bulbous_flowers) and Perennial Landscape Plants: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_perennials](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_perennials)

**Shrubs:** Choose from a wide variety of shrubs to add to the landscape now. See The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Guide to Plant Selection & Landscape Design: [https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FYN\\_Plant\\_Selection\\_Guide\\_2015.pdf](https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FYN_Plant_Selection_Guide_2015.pdf) and Shrubs: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_shrubs](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_shrubs)

# Garden Tales

## Work Days

Dates may be subject to change.  
Carol Moore will notify the regular  
volunteers of schedule changes.



Please arrive by 8 am. Bring gloves, pruning shears, and  
bottle of water. Usually finished in less than 2 hours!

- Apr 6 - History Park
- Apr 13 - PG Old Library
- Apr 20 - at this time CHEC is CLOSED
- Apr 27 - Women's Club



## April Birthdays Wishes

- Claudia Chopp 4/2
- Elaine LaWell 4/13
- Sandy Bruglio 4/14
- Mary Pompeo 4/15
- Judy Oswald 4/16
- Mary Yeomans 4/19
- Libby Curnow 4/25
- Carol Moore 4/28

And many happy returns!



## April Events



Given the importance of social distancing, no public  
and club events are listed.

The May newsletter deadline is Apr 20.  
Submit items and/or photographs to Mary  
Hanrahan, Newsletter Chair at  
[mahamherst@gmail.com](mailto:mahamherst@gmail.com).

