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# Punta Gorda Garden Club Garden Tales Gardening Nourishes the Soul

## Club News

Port Charlotte and Punta Gorda Garden Clubs are holding a joint meeting on Jan 14. See details on page 3. This meeting is in addition to the PGGC General Meeting on Jan 20.

Volunteers are needed for the PGGC Arts and Craft Sale on March 6! This is a key Fundraiser for the 2020-21 Club year.



PGGC is a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc, Deep South Region National Garden Clubs, Inc., Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc., and FFGC District IX.

## President's Message

Gardening Buddies,

Goodbye 2020 - and good riddance!! Hello 2021! Aren't we all hopeful that this year will bring us better times with progress toward what we consider "normalcy?" We have all had more than enough time to dwell on how things used to be, and hopefully you have taken time to reflect on things you want to hold onto and others you want to change. Getting off the hamster wheel of our sometimes hectic lives to examine what really matters should benefit us all. But nine months of "free time" is getting to me. Hurry up vaccine!

I recently read this quote: "Sometimes all you can do is accept there is not much you can do. And sometimes all you can control is how well you let go of control." (Lori Deschene) I am thinking the loss of control of our daily lives is what has many of us most frustrated! Some days I am content to garden all day, sometimes I just want to read a book, some days I want to do projects around the house, but when I want to get out of the house and do something else, I want to do that! Ooooh, some days it makes me mad that I can't, and a little sad. So, each day I try to find some purpose or goal and work towards that, and I hope to continue doing so since that seems to make me feel more productive and content.

I have a few suggestions for those of you who are looking for things to do. The club is planning two fundraisers and could use your help with both. Each month the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce organizes a Citywide Garage Sale and PGGC hopes to rent space at the one on Saturday, February 6. So, my suggestion? Clean out a closet, some kitchen drawers, or part of the garage and put those extra items you find together to donate to our cause. Details about time for dropping off, etc. will be sent at a later date so watch your email. *Continued on page 2*

## Save the Date!

Board Meeting	PGGC & PGC	General Meeting
FUMC	Joint Meeting 2230	285 Seasons Dr
Punta Gorda	Hariet St	Punta Gorda
Jan 13 9:30 am	Port Charlotte	Jan 20 1 pm Gather
	Jan 14 9:30 am	1:30 pm Meeting

## Garden Tales

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The other event, Hop N' Into Spring, will be held on March 6th outside at FUMC from 10 am until 4 pm. Tables will offer plants, crafts, and artwork. An email was sent with details, so please let the chairs of each area know how you can assist with this effort. Your help is greatly appreciated!

Our January meeting will be held outside at Joyce Stanley's house and Cate Peterson will be presenting a program about Bromeliads. Please join us at 1:00 to set up our chairs and prepare for the meeting at 1:30. Fingers crossed for a nice day!

Happy New Year - let's resolve to make this the best year we can.

*Stay safe - Mary Yeomans*

### January 2021 General Meeting – Bromeliads

Due to the cancellation of the March Flower Show, the scheduled January program has been changed to a presentation by Cate Peterson on "Bromeliads". Cate Peterson is a board member and volunteer at the Peace River Botanical and Sculpture Gardens. She is a former Master Gardener and a past president of the Caloosahatchee Bromeliad Society. Cate loves to share her passion for bromeliads.

We will meet at Joyce Stanley's home in Deep Creek. Please arrive at 1:00 to park and get settled for the 1:30 meeting. You are simply going to love exploring her beautiful garden! Don't forget your masks, chair and water. Please park on the adjacent empty lot. Directions- 285 Seasons Drive, Punta Gorda Tel # (219) 613-7506

### Youth Activities

The Student Government Association of Charlotte High School got together for the first time this season on November 30th and decided what we hoped to accomplish this year. They already had an idea of what they wanted to plant and the next week we met at Becky's to pick out the plants - tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, dill and flowers to attract butterflies - i.e. pentas, lantana and butterfly weed. We also planted seeds of sunflowers, beans and more cucumbers. The students were very enthusiastic and eager to get to work. Next, we met at the History Park to decorate the enclosure with lights and garland (supplied by First United Methodist Church). Note the evergreen gnome!

Also, I met with the art teacher at Port Charlotte Middle School and, after the first of the year, I hope we can help them with soil and labor for their garden project. The Sallie Jones Elementary School teacher decided to not have a garden until the pandemic eases up. I will keep in touch.



*Marilyn Pachota, Chair*

## Garden Tales

### PGGC 2021 Punta Gorda Garden Club Art & Craft Sale

We would like to invite all members who currently reside in Florida to make a commitment to our “Hop’n into Spring” Event to raise funds for donations and scholarships in whatever way you are able to contribute. You are all so talented in your own special way! Please volunteer in one or more of the ways that are listed below. We thank you so much for your anticipated enthusiasm and help!

*Carol Houston & Sandy Bruglio, Event Chairs*

#### **Crafts - Cindy Dorety, Chair**

Since we cannot work as teams, we are asking members to volunteer to make items to sell. Donations are welcome, but not mandatory. Reimbursement for cost is available but prior approval from Cindy is needed. Remember that the club has limited funds. Otherwise, assume you are donating the items to be sold.

Please contact Cindy (cldorety@yahoo.com or 330-618-1803) with the item description and photo and an estimated cost. Spring colors, Easter and St. Patrick’s Day themes are ideas for items. Items or crafts of all types are desired. Contact Cindy for ideas. Suggested crafts include picture frames embellished with natural items, pinecone flowers, magnolia leaf wreaths, shadow boxes, painted rocks for a garden, etc.

Cindy will coordinate the items to minimize overlap. She will price the items based on the material cost and time involved to create. Deliver completed items to the FUMC on Mar 6 between 7:30 - 9 am. Pick up unsold items at the end of the event or they will be donated.

#### **Plants - Joyce Stanley, Chair**

Please contact Joyce (jdstanley51@gmail.com) with the number and type of plants you will donate. Plants may be grown from seed or propagated with cuttings, suckers, or pups. If possible, reuse plastic grower pots as most people will repot or plant them in their gardens. If needing pots, let Joyce know and she will try to get some for you. We are creating decorated pots and hypertufa containers for this sale.

Start plants now so that they are healthy and will look good for the sale. Joyce will price plants based on size and type and provide tags with the common name and general instructions for those who purchase plants. Drop off plants on Mar 6 between 7:30 - 9 am. Pick up unsold plants after the sale or they will be donated.

#### **3. Artwork - Elaine LaWell, Chair**

We have many very talented, artistic Club members! Please contact Elaine ([elainel111@comcast.net](mailto:elainel111@comcast.net)) if you are willing to donate a piece of your art. Send her a description and a photo of the item. Elaine will price it and let you know when to drop it off. Pickup all unsold artwork after the sale.

#### **4. Work at the Event - Carol Moore, Chair**

Contact Carol to work on the day of the Event at 941-916-3341 or [carol25582002@gmail.com](mailto:carol25582002@gmail.com). We need help setting up, selling, and cleaning up. Set up on Mar 6 begins at 7 am. The sale starts at 10am and ends at 4pm. Shifts will be set up for each area. All unsold items are picked up after closing. We will need help collapsing tents / tables and gathering signs.

*Thank you in advance for your help with this event! The Home Tour is a popular fundraiser and we hope for community support for this alternative. Please talk it up with folks you know in the area! If you have questions, please contact one of the Chairs.*

## Garden Tales

### You are Invited

You are invited to a combined meeting of the Port Charlotte and Punta Gorda Garden Clubs on Thursday, January 14, 2021. In the past, the two clubs had a combined meeting yearly. But as the clubs grew, a venue that could hold both groups was difficult to find. PCGC now has a new meeting place. PCGC is hoping that this not only will be a great opportunity to get the two “sister” clubs together, but will also be an interactive and fun learning day!

The meeting place is MacDonald Hall at the First Presbyterian Church, 2230 Harriet Street, Port Charlotte. Social time is at 9:30 am with coffee, tea and water supplied but no snacks at this time.

After the 10 am meeting, the “Fun with Palm Fronds” program will begin, led by Claudia Chopp and Sandi Witzke. Palm fronds will be provided so that all can make both palm weaving and Boondoggling projects. You just need to bring a pair of scissors, a smile and your eagerness to learn something new!

Seating of six will be at round tables to allow social distancing. Masks are to be worn while moving about, but optional while seated. To make sure that adequate tables are set up, please let me know you would like to attend by January 12th.

*Mary Yeomans, President*

### Farewell to Susan Forman

The PGGC Gardening crew said goodbye to Susan Forman on Dec 11 during the History Park work day. Susan moved to Colorado the following week. Sarah Corey created the book that Susan is holding and the group gave her a card and gift card. (L to R - Chris Green, Sarah Corey, Hal Sterwerf, Carol Moore, Susan Forman, Martha Cloran, Joyce Stanley, Judi Beaumont)



### Plant Profile: Amaryllis

For the past 15 years, I have received an amaryllis bulb for Christmas from a friend in California. And what do I do once it has bloomed? Plant it, of course! We are blessed with a great climate for growing amaryllis here in Southwest Florida. It survives our winters, so there is no need to have to bring it indoors.



The trumpet-shaped blooms grow up to six inches across, and several flowers often appear in succession. Flower color ranges from reds, oranges and pinks to pure white. Still others are spectacularly striped and multi-colored. Amaryllis planted outside usually bloom in March.

The amaryllis plant has glossy, strap-like leaves that are about 1.5 inches across and 18 inches long. The leaves persist for much of the year, though they may fade in late summer and may be killed by frost.

When purchasing bulbs, keep in mind that the larger the bulb, the larger the flowers. Also remember that flower stalks can be top heavy, so make sure you have something to prop it up.

Amaryllis bulbs can be planted outdoors between September and January in Florida. They will perform best if planted in a spot with partial sun and well-drained soil. In heavy shade, they will be less vigorous and will flower poorly.

Amaryllis are very easy to take care of. They are a favorite of the eastern lubber grasshopper, so keep a watch out for them!

*Jane Hayse, Horticulture Chair*

Source: [Amaryllis - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences \(ufl.edu\)](http://www.ufl.edu/~ifas/extension/vegetables/amar/amar.htm)

Any suggestions for the Plant Profile? Contact me at [jhayse59@hotmail.com](mailto:jhayse59@hotmail.com)

“EVERY DAY IS A GIFT.  
REMEMBER TO UNWRAP IT  
WITH JOY AND GRATITUDE.”

KATRINA MAYEN | @PROJECTHAPPINESS\_ORIG



### Antidepressant Microbes In Soil: How Dirt Makes You Happy

Natural remedies have been around for centuries. They included cures for almost any physical ailment as well as mental and emotional afflictions. Ancient healers may not have known why something worked but simply that it did. Modern scientists have unraveled the why of many medicinal plants and practices but only recently are they finding remedies that were previously unknown and yet, still a part of the natural life cycle. Soil microbes and human health now have a positive link which has been studied and found to be verifiable.

*Mycobacterium vaccae* is the substance under study and has indeed been found to mirror the effect on neurons that drugs like Prozac provide. The bacterium is found in soil and may stimulate serotonin production, which makes you relaxed and happier. Studies were conducted on cancer patients and they reported a better quality of life and less stress.

Lack of serotonin has been linked to depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder and bipolar problems. The bacterium appears to be a natural antidepressant in soil and has no adverse health effects. These antidepressant microbes in soil may be as easy to use as just playing in the dirt.

Most avid gardeners will tell you that their landscape is their “happy place” and the actual physical act of gardening is a stress reducer and mood lifter. The fact that there is some science behind it adds additional credibility to these garden addicts’ claims. The presence of a soil bacteria antidepressant is not a surprise to many of us who have experienced the phenomenon ourselves. Backing it up with science is fascinating, but not shocking, to the happy gardener.

*Mycobacterium* antidepressant microbes in soil are also being investigated for improving cognitive function, Crohn’s disease and even rheumatoid arthritis.

Antidepressant microbes in soil cause cytokine levels to rise, which results in the production of higher levels of serotonin. The bacterium was tested both by injection and ingestion on rats, and the results were increased cognitive ability, lower stress and better concentration on tasks than a control group.

Gardeners inhale the bacteria, have topical contact with it and get it into their bloodstreams when there is a cut or other pathway for infection. The natural effects of the soil bacteria antidepressant can be felt for up to 3 weeks if the experiments with rats are any indication. So, get out and play in the dirt and improve your mood and your life!

**Resources:** “Identification of an Immune-Responsive Mesolimbocortical Serotonergic System: Potential Role in Regulation of Emotional Behavior,” by Christopher Lowry et al., published online on March 28, 2007 in *Neuroscience*. [http://www.sage.edu/newsevents/news/?story\\_id=240785](http://www.sage.edu/newsevents/news/?story_id=240785) <sup>[2]</sup>

Mind & Brain/Depression and Happiness - Raw Data “Is Dirt the New Prozac?” by Josie Glausiusz, Discover Magazine, July 2007 Issue. <https://discovermagazine.com/2007/jul/raw-data-is-dirt-the-new-prozac> <sup>[3]</sup>

**Source:** URL to article: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/soil-fertilizers/antidepressant-microbes-soil.htm>

## Garden Tales



### January Birthdays Wishes

Carolyn Honour 1/6  
Anne Simpson 1/12  
Carol Nadolski 1/13  
Peggy Stanfield 1/14  
Joyce Tilden 1/14  
Ginny Wiesman 1/28  
Malanda Gordy 1/31  
Ursula Karlen 1/31

And many happy returns!

### Membership and Yearbook Updates!

Please update the following information in your yearbook:

Kathy Sutton's new phone number  
941-916-9520  
Dorrit Tompkins' new email  
newshoesdorrit@gmail.com

The February Newsletter deadline is Jan 20. Submit items and/or photographs to Mary Hanrahan ([mahamherst@gmail.com](mailto:mahamherst@gmail.com).)



### January Gardening Tip

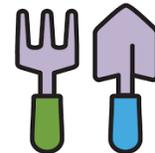
**Protect:** Protect tender orchid, impatiens, and tomato from falling temperatures. See Cold Protection and Chilling Damage of Landscape Plants: [http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_landscapes\\_and\\_cold](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_landscapes_and_cold)

### Help Needed!

Caroline Wooters requests 10-15 volunteers to help remove decorations from the First United Methodist Church on Jan 5 at 9:30 am. Expect to finish by noon.

Contact Caroline at [fcwooters@yahoo.com](mailto:fcwooters@yahoo.com) or (941) 505-1708.

### Garden Workdays



For new Work Day volunteers, please contact Carol Moore to confirm schedule. Volunteers should arrive by 8 am. Bring gloves, pruning shears, and bottled water. Usually finished in less than 2 hours!

Jan 6 - History Park  
Jan 13 - PG Old Library  
Jan 20 - PR Botanical Garden  
Jan 27 - Women's Club

