



The Gabby Gardener

Garden Club of DeLand

April 2022 Volume 28, Issue 8

Presidents Corner



The Garden Club is losing one of its treasures – **The Daisy Circle** which began blooming in 1973. Over the years these members have consistently provided strong leadership and support for our activities.

Fortunately, several members will continue in other circles. While we celebrate their accomplishments, we also recognize their need to retire. Their members will always be welcome.

At the same time a new night time circle has sprouted. The Wild Coffees are focused on native plants and planting for wildlife, especially birds and pollinators. Their meetings are at the Clubhouse on the second Monday at 6:00pm. **All are welcome!**

GCD Celebrates Plant America

April is Plant America month for National Garden Clubs. It is a time to look beyond our home gardens to apply our skills to the broader community. We are encouraged to make a positive impact through environmental responsibility.

The perfect example is GCD's efforts at the Sensory Butterfly Garden in Bill Dreggors Park. This garden project started as a place to enjoy and explore with all your senses, but gardens are ever evolving. Next came a greater interest in butterflies and desire to learn about their habitat needs.

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Along the way we have learned about the importance of site preparation. We have added soil to improve growth and mulch over cardboard to suppress weeds. Our volunteers have worked diligently on removing the invasives – Mexican petunia (*Ruellia simplex*), wedelia (*Spagneticola triobata*) and towering Mexican sunflowers (*Tithonia diversifolia*). No one really knows how many pounds of weeds have been pulled!

Native plants which can be more forgiving in their climate tolerance and water needs are now supplementing traditional plantings. Along with nectar plants you will find areas with host plants for a variety of butterflies – monarchs, zebra longwings, sulphurs, gulf fritillaries and swallowtails.

Our club-wide group of volunteers are inspirational in their dedication.



I hope you have an opportunity to see the garden's ongoing growth around the original sensory experience. It is indeed a special place for the benefit of the DeLand community.

Marshall

Circle Around

Daisies made the decision to retire their circle.

Firecrackers learned about the flowers of Ireland.

Magnolias have fun on the Winter Park boat tour.

Marigolds met at Select Growers.

Milkweeds and Roses had Sensory Butterfly Garden workdays.

Wild Coffees held their organizational meeting and are officially part of GCD!

Gardening for the Future

GCD General Meeting

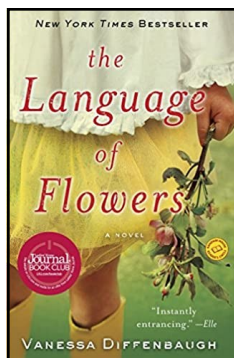
Thursday, April 7, GCD General Meeting in person, 5:45pm Social / 6pm Meeting at the clubhouse.

Speaker: **Master Gardener Howard Jeffries**

Topic: **Improving Your Soil with Amendments / Organic vs. Synthetic.**



The Garden Club of DeLand's Book Club



The Language of Flowers
Vanessa Diffenbaugh

April 21st at 1pm at the clubhouse.
Cindy Davenport & Sara Zollinger
Contact info: cindy@davenportmail.com

Brick Back-Logs

Many are waiting to see the bricks they've requested to appear in pathways! Due to a back-logs at the engravers, the process is now approximately 6 months behind.



If you have a specific date for bricks to be set in place, please note the "needed by" date on the request form. This is not a quick process, and I'm told involves changing out plates in order to do bricks over other monument types.

Orders obtained since December are expected to be picked up by end of April.

Thank you for your patience...

Pat DeSalvo, Bricks Chair
[GCD Brick Order Form](#) (PDF)

Garden Club of DeLand New Members 2022-23 year

Barbara Chapman	Wild Coffee
Cathy Courtney	Milkweed
Karen Donohue	Wild Coffee
Patty Dunn	Milkweed
Ellen Eigner	Milkweed
Miriam Gaylord	Wild Coffee
Jim Jackson	Wild Coffee
Jacquelyn Lewis	Wild Coffee
Elaine Opisso	Wild Coffee
Mary Schaperow	Wild Coffee
Holly Winbiger	Wild Coffee
Liza Wright	Marigold
Fred Zollinger	Wild Coffee

Vegetable Gardening in Florida

I wanted to take a moment to look at some Florida Native edibles.



Bird Pepper

One of my favorites is a little plant called **Bird Pepper** (*Capsicum annuum* var. *glabriusculum*). In my garden it is an annual but in other places in Florida it is year around. Bird pepper is the only true pepper native to Florida. It is thought to be the wild progenitor of the common culinary pepper, *Capsicum annuum*,

which includes bell, cayenne and jalapeño. The fruit is edible to humans, but be warned — it is hot! On the Scoville scale, it typically measures between 50,000 and 100,000 units, but some have been documented at over 1,000,000 units. That's hotter than a habanero! [1]

I am going to try **Wild Strawberries** (*Fragaria virginiana*) this

year. The plant is a larval host for the Gray hairstreak butterfly. Its spring flowers attract bees and butter-



Wild Strawberries

flies, while its tiny

summer fruits are a treat for humans and wildlife.

They can be eaten right off the plant or collected and used in jams, jellies or pies. The leaves, which are high in Vitamin C, can be brewed to make tea. [2] The widely cultivated, grocery store, strawberry (*F. x ananassa*) is a hybrid of *F. virginiana* and Beach of Coastal strawberry (*F. chiloensis*), native to the Pacific coasts of North and South America. [2]

Continued

Last year I planted **Wild Garlic** (*Allium canadense* var. *canadense*) in one of my flower gardens and it has re-appeared. It blooms primarily in late winter and spring and attracts many insects, including moths and native bees; honeybees tend to dislike it. Wild garlic has a strong, tell-tale smell of garlic or onion. All parts of the plant are edible and may be prepared the same as garlic or onions. Bulbs may be eaten raw, sautéed, pickled or roasted. Use the young leaves as you would chives. [3]



Wild Garlic

[1] <https://www.flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-capsicum-annuum-var-glabriusculum/>

[2] <https://www.flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-fragaria-virginiana/>

[3] <https://www.flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-allium-canadense/>

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Florida Native Gardening

As promised, I have added a few new plants to my native plant assortment here in my backyard, and I am excited to talk about them.



Tea Bush

The first one is called **Tea Bush** (*Melochia tomentosa*). The Tea Bush is a shrub that will grow to about 3 feet tall and is a nectar plant for pollinating

insects, especially bees. Roger Hammer reports that insects swarm on the flowers, especially small butterflies such as hairstreaks, crescents, blues, and skippers, and also nectar-seeking wasps, various native bees. [1] It is unfortunately only native to zone 10b the Miami area so I will need to protect it in the winter season. The bush was purchased at Green Isle Gardens, a native plant nursery.

The next shrub I added is a **Marlberry** (*Ardisia escallonioides*). The Marlberry can get up to 15 feet tall but it handles pruning. It

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blooms white flowers off and on throughout the year and is attractive to both bees and butterflies as a nectar plant.

The berries that it produces will attract birds. [2] This plant came from the Leu

Gardens plant sale at the Native Butterfly Flowers Nursery booth: this is a Native plant nursery center in Melbourne.



Malberry

Finally, I was able to purchase 2 **Tarflower**



bushes (*Bejaria racemosa*). Late last month I was volunteering at the Cuplet Fern Native

Tarflower

Plant sale in Sanford where they had these 2 plants. They are very small and I need to baby them for a bit but it is an exciting find. Bees and flies are attracted to the flowers, and are often caught on the sticky flowers. Native bee visitors include sweat, resin, leaf-cutter, and bumble bees. [3]

I hope everyone has found a new exciting native plant at all the plant sales going on this spring.

[1] <https://www.fnps.org/plant/melochia-tomentosa>

[2] <https://www.flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-ardisia-escallonioides/>

[3] <https://www.fnps.org/plant/bejaria-racemosa>

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