

Dear Gardeners,

It has been a busy time at the garden and we are happy to share all the news with you! Our Founder and President, Kim Schnitzius has stepped down to Vice President. Our Vice President, Gina Reichenbach, has been voted in as the new President. Our other amazing board members are in their same positions: Jason Zauder- Treasurer, Mona Ricatti- Recording Secretary, Vianey Covarrubias Corresponding Secretary. Even though a board has titles and separate responsibilities, we truly work as a team. We are also always looking to expand our team and also include committees, so if you are interested, please reach out to us! Because we –Weston Community Garden Society– are “Planting Roots, Growing Community”. Join us! Ok, onto the good stuff!

Garden Bed Updates: We are nearly finished with the raised bed area. This took longer than expected, and we thank all our members who have been ‘on hold’ with their planting and planning in order to have this area suitable to grow amazing veggies and fruits. True to gardening, patience is the key. So, thank you. We are just about there! With the help of our volunteers, we have laid landscape fabric over a roughly 3000 square foot area, built 23 raised garden beds (10 ft x 4 ft), and layered them with high quality organic soil. We are building smaller, handicapped accessible raised beds, which will be included in this area as well. We are finalizing the design for the iguana barriers that will go around each individual garden bed and ordering the pebbles to line the pathways. With 4 of the garden beds, we just planted bush bean seeds with our volunteers. Once grown, we will donate to the local food pantry. This will certainly be a milestone!

Fundraisers: The **Garden Brunch Fundraiser** on January 20th was a huge success for the garden. We were able to raise funds, and chat with donors and members of our community. We were also extremely honored to have our Congresswoman, Debbie Wasserman Schultz join us. She is a huge supporter of the garden, and for this we are grateful. We applied for the **Lowe's Hometown Grant** and will hear in June if we are awarded this valuable assistance. We continue to look into and apply for more Grants for the garden. The **Rotary Club**

of Sunrise hosted a **Pet Show** at the garden on 2/10 which was a big success! We loved seeing the community come out with their fur babies for a fun day at the garden. In addition, the Rotary Club of Sunrise partnered with **Rotary of Miami Airport** to donate and plant 8 fruit trees in our food forest. It was a wonderful day.

Sustainability/Power and Water: We are working on our next 2 big purchases for the garden- an irrigation system and solar power. This will be a game changer, because right now, we have no source of power and no way to water everything except for filling up buckets with water from our rain barrels. This has worked fine for us, but now that our raised beds are nearly finished, we all need to be able to water everything that is growing! Staying true to our sustainability pledge, we will use the water from the nearby freshwater lake, and use “off grid” solar power for both these projects.

Events: We participated in the yearly **Weston World Fest**, hosted by the **Arts Council of Greater Weston** and **The City of Weston** at the Weston Regional Park. This was our 3rd year being part of it and, as always, so much fun. We set up a table with a Jack and the Beanstalk theme and helped kids plant bean seeds to take home, and shared information about the garden with the community. It was a great day!

Garden Workdays: There are volunteer workdays at the garden every 2nd Saturday of the month from 9 am-11 am. We are currently working on a revolving weekly schedule as well, so stay tuned for more hours. Some special workdays are being planned for the months of April and May.

Volunteering: Huge shout out to **Hands on Broward** for being a fantastic platform for volunteers to find us. We have had some amazing people come out on our workdays to contribute their time and energy. We are so grateful, as a community garden is not possible without community engagement of all types. Please check our website for upcoming volunteer opportunities, use the Hands on Broward link, or the General Volunteer link. We provide water and snacks, so please bring a refillable water bottle, if possible. If not, we have cups. We also provide gloves to borrow while working, but you are welcome to bring your own.

A hat and sunscreen are also key! Hope to see you there. ;)

Membership: If you would like to become a member of the Weston Community Garden Society, yearly dues are \$50, which includes your choice of either a t-shirt or reusable tote bag, education, and more! If you would like to reserve a raised bed, yearly dues are \$150 (automatic membership too), this is on a first come, first serve basis. Right now we have 15 available. We will add more as our garden “grows” ;) If you want to support the garden society in other ways, we have levels of sponsorship available as well. Please see our website for more information!

Social Media: Please visit us on **Facebook** at Weston Community Garden Society, or **Instagram** weston_community_garden

Thank you to our supporters and volunteers who are making this garden a reality! This assistance is invaluable, and every volunteer is needed and appreciated. If you would like to support the garden too, by donating, volunteering, or both, please visit our website at <https://westoncgs.org/>

“A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust.”

— Gertrude Jekyll, British Horticulturist

Yours in Gardening,
Gina

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