



“Helping the community where we can and bringing people together to do good things... Imagine the community you want to live in, and then spend a little time every day taking small steps to create it!”

The Caring Community
Spring 2024 Newsletter issue #11
www.thecaringcommunity.love

“and into the garden I go to lose my mind and find my soul”... 😊

Spring is here! This is the time of year when we reflect on all the wonderful food we produced with our winter gardening, and make plans to cover-crop for the Summer season. We’ve had fantastic volunteers this season, and our garden leaders have stepped up to meet all the challenges that our gardens have presented.

Have you volunteered with us yet? Summer brings different volunteer opportunities as we gear up for mango and then avocado season. Homeowners who have more fruit than they can handle will be allowing us to harvest it and take it to food banks. If you’ve never had the pleasure of picking fruit with friends, we can give you that experience!

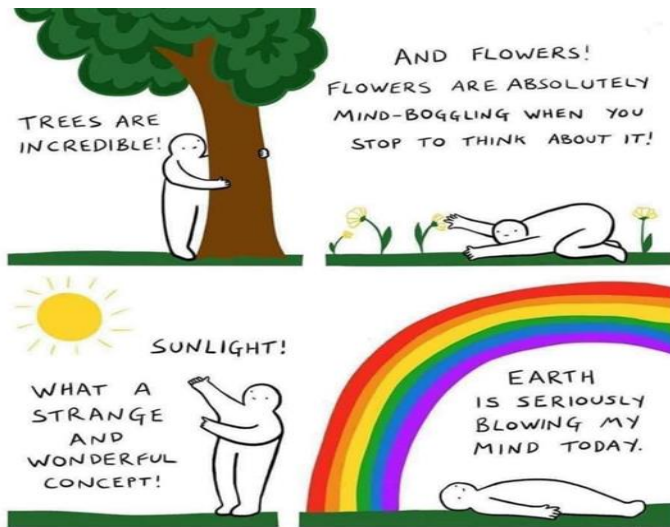
Enjoy all that spring brings, and we’ll see you in the garden!

Cynthia Schaefer is an herbalist, homesteader, founder of *Flurban Paradise*, and community organizer for various organizations such as *The Caring Community* and *South Florida Edible Gardening and Sustainable Living*. Find her at Flurbanparadise.com

april TO-DO LIST

@POSITIVELYPRESENT

- 
PLANT NEW IDEAS
- 
REFRESH YOUR NEST
- 
SPEAK UP FOR YOURSELF
- 
UPROOT NEGATIVITY
- 
COLLABORATE WITH OTHERS
- 
MAKE ROOM FOR PROGRESS
- 
APPLAUD YOUR GROWTH
- 
LOOK OUT FOR MAGIC
- 
ACCEPT WHAT HAS CHANGED
- 
BE KIND TO THE EARTH
- 
GIVE OUT LOTS OF LOVE
- 
KEEP YOUR MIND OPEN



“You are comprised of 84 minerals, 23 elements, and 8 gallons of water spread across 38 trillion cells. You have been built up from nothing by the spare parts of the Earth you have consumed, according to a set of instructions hidden in a double helix and small enough to be carried by a sperm. You are recycled butterflies, plants, rocks, streams, firewood, wolf fur, and shark teeth, broken down to their smallest parts and rebuilt into our planet’s most complex living thing. You are not living on Earth. You are Earth.” ~ Aubrey Marcus

Claire Measel/Jessica Vella/Susan Moss, HOPE Outreach Food Bank Garden Co-Leaders hopeoutreachfoodbankgarden@gmail.com

Since our last newsletter, we've taken on two additional recipients of our Hope Garden harvests: Riverland Community Pantry in Ft. Lauderdale and Kindhearted Krew Ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church (TLC... 😊) in Pembroke Pines. The Cupboard in Davie (which was always our Go To pantry when we volunteered every Friday), is closed on Saturdays, so we're only able to donate there every first Thursday of the month.



Our greens (two types of kale, bok choy, arugula, garlic chives, parsley, butter lettuce), papaya, bananas, and bazillions of cherry tomatoes, various types, in every single garden bed, are out of control (in the best possible way), and it is already time for Spring Planting, which we will do this month. Also, look for a Reading and Weeding event soon, which was a lovely gathering last year!



Kyle Bastos, The Caring Community Davie Educational Garden at Robbins Park, kylebastos@gmail.com

The Robbins Garden rounded out another blockbuster season of gardening workshops this winter! In January we were thrilled to have Town of Davie Mayor Judy Paul, Vice Mayor Susan Starkey, and Councilmembers Caryl Hattan and Michelle Whitman cut the ribbon for the unveiling of our brand-new seed library and message board, where anyone can come to donate and swap seeds and learn about events occurring in the food forest. We welcomed Master Gardener Jeannie Schmidele for two workshops, where she taught us seed-saving best-practices and how to attract pollinators to our home gardens. In March guest instructor Xavier DeRoos of ReNuable provided a science lesson on composting (microbe farming as he prefers to think of it) and shared the significance of getting your "farm" to 131 degrees for optimal effectiveness. Of course there were a selection of plants for attendees to take home after each class including turmeric, butterfly pea, banana, Jamaican cherry, sugar snap pea, katuk, chaya, salvia and more to add to their home edible and pollinator gardens.



As the spring heats up we'll be taking a pause on formal classes, however as some of the best learning occurs through doing, the education continues through our Saturday morning maintenance sessions when we'll be planting our warm weather crops including okra, cow pea, and yard-long beans. We always welcome new and familiar faces to help us plant, mulch, water, amend soil, and harvest for the local food bank. Hope to see you in the garden!

Injie/Scott Holtzman, South Creek Sanctuary Food Bank Donation Garden, scottholtzman@mac.com



Volunteer Days are Tuesdays, 4-7 p.m. The sanctuary garden is always flowing and needs/work will vary from week to week. Depending on the week there is also a possibility to have a nice community meal after and perhaps a fire - and maybe some musical jams! Please bring, most importantly, your enthusiasm, an open heart and a desire to serve each other and have fun! Direct-message Injie to confirm attendance: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/686570185959258/user/851114522/>

Katy Cain, Gleaning for Good/Society of St. Andrew (soSA) SE Florida Area Coordinator, sflgleaning@endhunger.org 954-643-4502

We are reaching the end of the season for leafy greens in Palm Beach County, with just two or three more weeks left. We should have peppers and cucumbers through the end of April and into May... and then... MANGOES! If you would like to volunteer, please see our events page: <https://www.mobilize.us/endhunger/>

We rescued 10,615 lbs of fresh produce in Broward County in 2023. Thank you to all of our donors and volunteers for making it happen!



Calendar of Events – April/May/June 2024

HOPE Outreach Food Bank Garden, Marando Farms (behind the barn), 5151 SW 64th Ave., Davie FL
Workdays every Saturday from 9-11 a.m. to plant, weed, harvest, mulch (whatever needs doing!); the first Thursday of each month as well!

Robbins Lodge Park, 4005 S. Hiatus Rd., Davie FL (across from the playground)
Workdays every Saturday from 9-11 a.m. to plant, weed, harvest, mulch (whatever needs doing!)
Classes will resume in the fall... 😊

Teacher Self-Care Stations, Pioneer Middle School, Employee Assistance Program building, 5400 SW 90th Avenue, Cooper City (2nd portable on the right):
New funding coming through (fingers crossed); volunteer dates announced soon!

South Creek Sanctuary Food Bank Donation Garden, 551 Palmetto Dr, Coconut Creek FL
Workdays every Tuesday, 4-7 p.m. to plant, weed, harvest, mulch (whatever needs doing!): If interested, contact Injie at scottholtzman@mac.com

Gleaning for Good (various locations, various hours); if interested, contact Katy (see p. 3)

For All Outdoor Events: Bring your water and gardening gloves. Optional items: trowel, pruners, if you have them.

La Zoola Pop-Up Market

Sunday, April 21, 1-4 p.m.: The Patch, 1201 W Dania Beach Blvd., Dania Beach FL
Come buy, barter, or trade local! Fresh-grown fruits and veggies, plants, prepared foods, tinctures, tonics, arts and crafts, and much more! FREE to vend and attend!!! We take a break from May-September, and markets will resume in October 2024... 😊

To volunteer, please go to the link below to fill out and submit the form. After your response is received, someone from our organization (another volunteer) will contact you to discuss upcoming events/volunteer opportunities:

<https://love.us1.list-manage.com/subscribe/post>

“Be a weed. A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows.” ~ Doug Larson

Spotlight on Aileen Leija, Special Events Coordinator



Susan Moss: *When did your affinity for gardening begin?*

Aileen Leija: Three years ago when i first came to South Florida, seeing the subtropics of South Florida how can you not fall in love with the plants? Coming from Texas where everything is brown (it's a lot drier), I was amazed with how green South Florida is. I started volunteering in community gardens and eventually got my certification in permaculture design and herbalism. Now I teach children about regenerative gardening and install gardens in schools and throughout the community.

SM: *When did you become involved with The Caring Community? How has your role expanded?*

AL: When I took my permaculture course, my teacher was a friend and student of Cynthia, the leader of The Caring Community. I started following Cynthia and took some of her herbalist classes, and then she introduced me to The Caring Community, saw my love for plants, and asked if I wanted to take the role of Special Events Coordinator where I would lead the community in the first Gardens Matter event. We expanded to working with the town of Davie to make Gardens Matter Day, which was held at Robbin's Park October 2023.

SM: *What is your greatest hope/wish for the sustainable gardening community in South Florida?*

AL: My greatest wish for the sustainable gardening community is to continue to grow through education and reach-outs! For the community to connect back to plants through food, medicine, and nature for self-care. When you grow, you know you're not alone and you feel better because you know where your food is coming from. No harmful chemicals, only love.

SM: *What is your best lesson/takeaway from your involvement with the community?*

AL: The best lesson I got from my involvement with the community is the community, I have a new family! I have a relationship with the people around me, the plants around me, and it's healed my relationship with the earth. I no longer feel separate from nature; I know I AM NATURE. We all are! I feel the sense of oneness. The sense of reciprocity. I take care of Mother and spread her unconditional love, and she takes care of me and my community.

Movie and Book Recommendations

Women of the Watershed (South Florida PBS)

"Women of the Watershed celebrates the role that women have played in the conservation of the Florida Everglades from the time of the suffrage movement to the modern-day scientists, advocates and artists who are integral to the conservation of this unique wilderness." www.fuxion/tv/women/water.html

You Are Here: Poetry in the Natural World by Ada Limon (Editor)

"...features fifty previously unpublished poems from some of the nation's most accomplished poets, including Joy Harjo, Diane Seuss, Rigoberto González, Jericho Brown, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Paul Tran, and more. Each poem engages with its author's local landscape—be it the breathtaking variety of flora in a national park, or a lone tree flowering persistently by a bus stop—offering an intimate model of how we relate to the world around us and a beautifully diverse range of voices from across the United States. Joyful and provocative, wondrous and urgent, this singular collection of poems offers a lyrical reimagining of what "nature" and "poetry" are today, inviting readers to experience both anew.



Greek Salad (submitted by Claire Measel)

With the growth of homegrown tomatoes and cucumbers declining as the weather starts to warm, Greek Salad is a great way to enjoy what is still available. Adding raw shredded kale or collards, or serving over lettuce, is a great way to add some extra flavor and nutrition!

1 onion, sliced into thin half-moons

4 medium vine ripe tomatoes, (you could also use grape or cherry, cut in halves if you have a lot. I would substitute a quart of them for the four medium ones.)

2 medium-sized cucumbers; peel off strips to make an alternating pattern

1 green pepper, seeded and sliced into rings

1/2 cup of olives (kalamata are traditional, but you could use what you like)

1 1/2 teaspoons of dried oregano

1/4 cup of olive oil

1 to 2 Tablespoons of red wine vinegar

7 ounces of feta (traditional or vegan)

(1 cup optional shredded greens)

Put all the cut vegetables in a bowl. Blanch the onion first if it's too overpowering in a raw state. Add 3/4 teaspoon of oregano, oil, and vinegar to the bowl and toss the veggies. Crumble the feta and place it on the top. Add the rest of the oregano and serve. It also goes great with quinoa!

GREENER

I WANT TO PAINT THE TOWN GREEN.
LEAVE IT GREENER THAN I FOUND IT,
ADD MORE **POPS OF COLOR:**
EMERALD,
SAGE,
AND **PERIDOT**

SHINING LIKE THE LEAVES ON TREES.
ADD TO THE THRIVING STREAK
OF STORIES THAT RUN THROUGH OUR CITY.
IN EVERY FOREST, THERE'S ROOM FOR GROWTH.
THERE'S ROOM FOR ALL TO BE HEARD.
IT IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT TIME
TO TEND TO OUR ROOTS.
CHECK MEDUSA.

THE TREE IN FALLS PARK.
WHERE WE LIVE, NEW SPROUTS
SHOOT UP HERE, THERE.
EVERYWHERE THE EYE LOOKS.
THEY SING A SONG FOR US
TO REMEMBER WE'RE ALL
BOTH THE GARDEN AND THE GARDENER.
SO, DIG DEEP WITH CARE,
AND REMEMBER
NO MATTER THE WEATHER,
TO STRIVE AND THRIVE.

BLOOM ANYHOW!

WRITTEN BY GREENVILLE'S
POET LAUREATE
GLENIS REDMOND

EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22!!!



From Susan Moss: Thanks and Love to The Caring Community

Some of you know (and many do not) that my 35-year-old son Eric was killed in a car accident September 26, 2023. It has been over six months of pain... introspection... and an on-going learning experience. If you have lost a loved one (and who among us has not), you will relate to some of my takeaways:

Live each day to the fullest; life can change in the blink of an eye. Every Day Is Day One. Start each day with a tabula rasa (clean slate). Forget the grudges; make, and keep, amends. Tell your dear friends and family you love them whenever you can. Spring is a time of re-birth and renewal. What can you do differently to be your most authentic self? How can you best honor the special person in your life who is no longer here?

My college roommate Linda (who had come down from Pensacola for E's Celebration of Life), brought some Blood Lily bulbs from her yard; we designated the perfect spot in the Hope Perennial Garden as sacred ground, to plant them in his memory with a Make Your Own Sunshine plaque (he was a Leo).

I loved my hilarious, smart, kind, articulate, generous-of-spirit (and let's not forget handsome!) son fiercely. Justin Cronin says: "As long as we remember a person, they're not really gone."

"I had my own notion of grief. I thought it was the sad time that followed the death of someone you love. And you had to push through it to get to the other side. But I'm learning there is no other side. There is no pushing through. But rather, there is absorption. Adjustment. Acceptance. And grief is not something you complete, but rather, you endure. Grief is not a task to finish and move on, but an element of yourself, an alteration of your being. A new way of seeing. A new definition of self." ~ Gwen Flowers

Think
how many long years
this tree waited as a seed
for an animal or bird or wind or rain
to maybe carry it to maybe the right spot
where again it waited months for seasons to change
until time and temperature were fine enough to coax it
to swell and burst its hard shell so it could send slender roots
to clutch at grains of soil and let tender shoots reach toward the sun
Think how many decades or centuries it thickened and climbed and grew
taller and deeper never knowing if it would find enough water or light
or when conditions would be right so it could keep on spreading leaves
adding blossoms and dancing

Next time
you see
a tree
think
how
much
hope
it holds

^^^Whenever You See a Tree by Padma Venkatraman

Join our Meetup group and check our Facebook pages to get announcements on upcoming garden events!



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