



The Gabby Gardener

Garden Club of DeLand

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Presidents Corner



In my pre-retirement life in Virginia, February found the garden frozen and it was time to order seeds and plan projects starting in the spring. Here the garden never fully hibernates, and I am busy paring down my ideas.

I have been zooming Ohio State University's Tending Nature series on Native Plants and Every Gardener's Role in Fostering Biodiversity (Free on zoom with backup videos at go.osu.edu/tendingplants – Friday mornings at 10 through February 11th).

Doug Tallamy's presentation focused on the premise that preserving nature just via park systems is insufficient conservation. Each of us has a role in helping to save our planet now, especially changing our approach to gardening. Important also to the future is encouraging children to interact with nature regularly so they understand the natural relationships to become future stewards of our planet.

Gardening goals need to move beyond just beauty by adding natives that "support life, sequester carbon, feed pollinators and manage water." To do our part now at our homes, Doug Tallamy asks us to change to using "gardens for life" practices by shrinking lawns, planting keystone plants, turning off outdoor lights (think instead of using motion detectors, LED bulbs, especially yellow ones) and allowing caterpillars to complete their development.

We can make a difference by starting with one container of natives on a patio or adding a small bed. Lawn reduction is central to conservation. No one is advocating ripping out entire landscapes, but rather choosing native additions. Truly, with a little effort we can all be environmental stewards.

(continued)

Helpful Tips:

A more effective way of controlling mosquitoes than spraying is to fill a bucket with water, add a couple handfuls of hay or straw which he lets ferment to provide a food attractant (algae), then add a mosquito dunk which kills the larvae. Top the bucket with a piece of hardware cloth to prevent accidental drownings (think small animals).

Resources:

[NWF.org](https://www.nwf.org)'s plant finder ranks native plants by the number of caterpillars that use them as host plants for individual zip codes. [Home-grownnationalpark.org](https://homegrownnationalpark.org) is a grassroots group founded by Doug Tallamy to encourage planting natives to help restore biodiversity and ecosystem function.

Circle Around:

DAISIES canceled their meeting.

FIRECRACKERS focused on camellias with a field trip to South Seminole Farm & Nursery in Casselberry.

MAGNOLIAS further developed their creativity with an art lesson conducted by Circle member Dr. Helen Benet.

MARIGOLDS met at Lyonia Environmental Center where they visited the exhibits and pollinator garden before a successful hike to see Scrub Jays.

MILKWEEDS learned more about butterflies with Circle member Erin Miceli 's talk on "Planting Natives for Butterflies."

ROSES canceled their meeting after an increased Covid risk.

DeLand Mardi Gras Dog Parade & Festival

Dates: February 26, 2022
Location: Woodland Boulevard
Time: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

This fun annual tradition in downtown DeLand features floats, bands, Mardi Gras costumes, beads, boas and parasols! The morning starts with a costume contest followed by a parade. Come out and watch pups and their pals as they parade in costume. Festival is on Georgia Avenue.

GCD members, we will be walking from Michigan Ave. to Howry Ave. Please wear Monarch Wings or GCD T-shirt and Mardi Gras beads, etc.

* This is an all GCD event to promote
The Garden Club of DeLand

MAPLE TREE

This tree is called a **Summer Red or Acer rubrum**. It is a native tree commonly found in swamps from Canada to Northern Florida and west to Texas.

It was found, perhaps as a seedling, in South Carolina and propagated there around 1990.

The foliage is burgundy in the spring, dark purplish green in summer, orange yellow and purple in the fall and gone in the winter.

This Maple is a fast grower and spreads up to 30' requiring full to partial sun. It is a thirsty tree and likes 3" of mulch – but don't run over its roots with a lawnmower if you want it to be happy.



The Garden Club of DeLand's Book Club

The Last Garden in England
by Julia Kelly.

February 17th at 1pm at the clubhouse.
Cindy Davenport & Sara Zollinger
Contact info: cindy@davenportmail.com

A visit at Sharyn Marzullo's garden.



We had 23 gardeners there and it was a great learning and sharing time.

Thanks to our gardeners for sharing their gardens and friendship.

We will have more fun visits in February.

Hope to see you there!



Welcome New Members

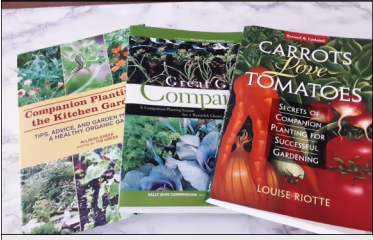
- Anthony Miller - Milkweed Circle
- Mary Ripple - Firecracker Circle & Milkweed Circle

GCD General Meeting

Wendy Anderson, Environmental scientist and educator. Topic: What's Old is New: Agrihoods Redefine Neighborhood Gardening. Please tune into the next **General Meeting on Thursday, February 3rd**, 9:30 Social, 9:45 Meeting.

* Member participation is the key to getting excellent speakers and helping them feel appreciated for sharing their valuable time with us.

Vegetable Gardening in Florida



When I plan out my garden, choosing which vegetable seeds to plant and where to plant them, I also choose my companion plant seeds.

Companion plants are plants that assist or compliment the

growth and development of your chosen vegetable plants.

The most common and oldest of companion planting is what is commonly called the three sisters: corn, climbing beans and squash. The corn gives the climbing beans something to climb up, the squash provides ground shade to prevent moisture loss and it discourages weeds and pests, the beans are soil nitrogen fixers assisting the plants to thrive.

I like to use flowers and herbs in my companion planting. Nasturtiums are planted around my squash, cucumber and melon plants to discourage pests and control weeds. I like to put marigolds around my tomatoes, peppers and eggplant crops. Marigolds help to discourage root-knot nematodes that are attracted to members of the Solanaceae family of which all my favorite crops are a member.

I also use herbs as companion planting. Basil is a great companion plant for tomatoes, it will not stop pests but it may enhance the flavor of the tomatoes. I put dill around my squash and cucumber plants to discourage pests and to also enhance flavor.

I love to plant carrots with radishes and around tomato plants, they all assist each other to grow and thrive producing better crops.

Peppers get marigolds to help discourage those nematodes and I plant basil and oregano to enhance the flavor of the peppers.

There are great books to use for companion planting I usually refer to the classic Carrots Love Tomatoes by Louise Riotte, but I also use Companion Planting for the Kitchen Gardener by Allison Greer and Great Garden Companions by Sally Jean Cunningham and then there a wonderful link: <https://www.almanac.com/companion-planting-guide-vegetables>. Companion Planting Guide for Vegetables

Discover new evidence for which vegetables should be planted together with the "Evidence-Based Companion Planting Guide" from The Old Farmer's Almanac. Plus, get a chart of the top 20 vegetable companions.

www.almanac.com

Florida Native Gardening

Now is the time all of us gardening in Central Florida to get the itch to clean up our gardens, clip back the brown and dead, and rake the yards. We tend to have the belief that since it looks brown, dead and messy it looks ugly. I want to suggest a new paradigm, a new way of thinking. Leave the sticks and the brown and dead and the messy leaves, allow nature to be unmanaged for a couple of months.

Those brown and dead looking stems are possibly teeming with life. Our native bees use those brown and dead looking stems from many native plants as their winter home. In



my yard my snow square stem (Melanthera nivea) and my **spotted beebalm** (Monarda punctata) (also known as dotted horsemint) are both being used by native bees for overwintering.

Leaving the leaves till at least the end of March will ensure that the wildlife that is overwintering in the leaves will emerge. "Native frogs, toads, salamanders, skinks, spiders, slugs, worms, and other small invertebrates all live in leaf litter. Many of these critters help control pest insects. Certain moths and butterflies spend all or part of their lives in leaf litter." [1]

For us butterfly lovers it is very important that we leave the leaves. "The vast majority of butterflies and moths overwinter in the landscape as an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, or adult. In all but the warmest climates, these butterflies use leaf litter for winter cover. Great spangled fritillary and wooly bear caterpillars tuck themselves into a pile of leaves for protection from cold weather and predators. Red-banded hairstreaks lay their eggs on fallen oak leaves, which become the first food of the caterpillars when they emerge. Luna moths and swallowtail butterflies disguise their cocoons and chrysalises as dried leaves, blending in with the "real" leaves.[2]

[1] <https://floridawildlifefederation.org/critters-in-the-leaf-litter>

[2] <https://xerces.org/blog/leave-the-leaves>



snow square stem

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Colorful Garden receives Garden of the Month



What does a former New Yorker do when retiring to sunny DeLand? This one brought all her garden furniture, yard art and potted plants along.

Maureen Miller-Calamo has jumped right into

Florida gardening with a love of color and butterflies. A member of the Milkweed Circle of the Garden Club of DeLand, she gathers plants and ideas from meetings, garden tours and local nurseries. Maureen and her husband Bob enjoy creating projects together like rebuilding potting areas, lighting for garden accents, water fountains and raised beds in their small but well-appointed garden. "I love my potting area we made from salvaged pieces of my New York greenhouse that was destroyed in a storm. Bob is great with the techy projects, we can operate the lights and water features from our phone apps."

How much time do you spend in the garden? "At least an hour a day, unless I am doing a project, that can take longer. My husband and I enjoy projects."

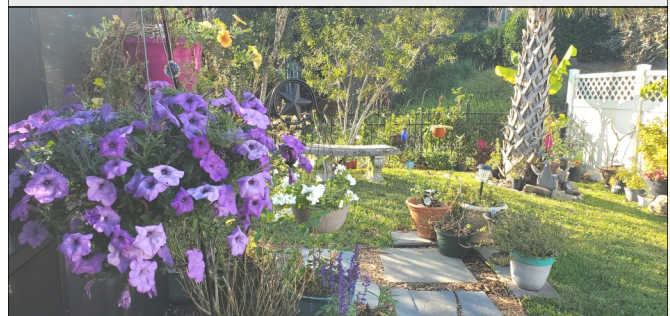
When shopping for a new home in the area,

butterflies caught Maureen's attention and she knew where she wanted to be. Her garden includes larval plants: cassia, milkweed and passion vine as well as nectar plants: salvia, bottlebrush tree, coral honeysuckle, firecracker, impatiens, coleus, lantana, and coreopsis. The visitor's eye is drawn up to lots of colorful hanging baskets with a variety of flowers cascading. A newly installed sabal palm is surrounded by colorful baskets and planters at different heights providing visual variety with lots of joyful garden art.

"These three fig trees are from my father-in-law's cuttings." It's amazing how many varieties of edible plants are grown in this small garden including, lemon and banana trees, blueberry, lettuces, green beans, cucumbers, parsley, fennel, basil and peppers for cooking. "I enjoy watching them grow and picking the vegetables. I enjoy the process. I love it here, it's smaller than the garden we had in New York. This is just the right size. I am drawn to color." Maureen is also an origami instructor. She takes her love of color from the origami patterns to her garden. Her gift for placing plants in colorful patterns has turned her garden into a work of art.

Congratulations to Maureen and Robert Calamo; Garden Club of DeLand awards this hidden jewel in Victoria Park Community with *February 2022 Garden of the Month.*

Submission by Cheryl Floyd for the Garden Club of DeLand, affiliated with the National Garden Clubs, Inc.



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