



Photo by: Shanda Herbert

The Gabby Gardener

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Presidents Corner

February's **Mardi Gras Dog Parade** brings thoughts of spring. Thank you to those who walked in support of the Garden Club and our place in the community.

While some of us are helping with the Busy Bees Flower Show set-up, others will be on a March 7th **Eco-Buggy Tour of Longleaf Preserve** which takes the place of the March general meeting.

Next up is the **Busy Bees Flower Show** and we are grateful that District VI chose the GCD. I hope you all take the opportunity to visit the show – Friday, March 8th, 1 - 4 and Saturday, March 9th, 10-3. The floral design section is amazing and the horticulture part provides a wonderful plant experience. Bring your friends – the admission is free!

Leu Gardens' Annual Plant Sale on March 9th & 10th, 9-5. Admission is free all weekend! Explore the Gardens and pick up some treasures to take home.

Volusia County Master Gardeners' Plant Faire at the Ag Center (3100 East New York Avenue) on Saturday, March 16th, 8:30 – 12. Cash or check only. They will have a variety of plants available – natives, pollinator plants, antique roses and much more.

Milkweed Circle's annual native milkweed sale will be at GCD on Tuesday, March 19th (delivery day) and Wednesday, March 20th, 3-6 pm. Open to public. Hope to see you there!

Next for GCD is the **Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival** which will take over West Indiana Avenue from 9 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 23rd, with an array of vendors and presentations by wildflower and gardening experts. Don't forget to stop by the **GCD's booth** to buy caladium bulbs. Eight of their nine speakers have been featured at the GCD!

Hopefully you will find some new plants at these events. Doug Tallamy reminds us that "...it is the plants that we use in our gardens that determine what nature will be like in 10, 20 and 30 years".

Circle Around

February was another busy month for our Circles.

Firecrackers were scheduled to enjoy floral design.

Magnolias continued their tradition of making floral Valentine vases for a local nursing home.

Marigolds' field trip to Ravine Gardens was canceled and they met instead at Parva.

Milkweeds had a program on "Attracting Pollinators with Natives" with Stacey Mattrazzo, the Executive Director of the Florida Wildflower Foundation. She is also a Florida Master Naturalist, Environmental Educator and adjunct professor at Rollins College.

Roses held a workday in support of the Weedettes at the GCD garden.

Wild Coffees heard Sam Baker talk about the development of **Wriggle Brew Growth & Rescue**, an organic product derived from worm castings, micronized crab and lobster shells that increases microbes in the soil to "promote growth and health".

**Please remember that most circle programs and activities are open to all members. Please contact the circle to make sure there is no space limitation.*

Celebrate the Dark Sky April 2 through April 8

International Dark Sky Week is a worldwide celebration of the dark and natural night. This year, the 2024 celebration is April 2 to April 8, April 8 also being the day of the solar eclipse!

As lighting options become more inexpensive and brighter, we are illuminating the night more and more. Every eight years, light pollution around the world doubles! Today, 80% of the world's population lives beneath light-polluted skies. 8 out of 10 children will grow up never seeing the Milky Way.

Is light considered a pollutant? Yes! Any artificial light that is not needed is a pollutant that has serious and harmful consequences.

Light pollution can:
disrupt wildlife
impact human health
waste money and energy
contribute to climate change
block our view of the universe

Our family would often look up at night and see what planets, stars and constellations we could identify from our backyard in Sanford. When the kids were young, we'd watch for lightning bugs. As the area grew, the number of lights grew, but the number of visible stars did not. The lightning bugs were gone. We moved to Deland 7 years ago last July, and there was a hurricane that October and most of our neighborhood lost power. The night after the hurricane passed, I went out and could see the constellation Orion so very clearly and its nebula in the sword with only my eyes!! That was when I realized how much of the night sky had slowly vanished due to light pollution.

The effects of light pollution have grave consequences beyond our human enjoyment. Plants and animals depend on natural light cycles to govern life-sustaining behaviors such as reproduction, nourishment, sleep, and protection from predators.

(Continued-Dark Sky)

Light pollution is overtly more recognizable in big cities. However, in one's own neighborhood, there can be light trespass where excessively bright or constantly on outside lights shine from a neighbor's yard into your yard or window. Or light pollution from landscape lighting which shines directly up into the night sky.

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE OUTDOOR LIGHTING

If light is deemed useful and necessary, follow these guidelines to prevent, or when that's not possible, minimize light pollution:

USEFUL - All light should have a clear purpose.

TARGETED - Light should be directed only to where needed.

LOW LIGHT LEVELS - Light should be no brighter than necessary.

CONTROLLED - Light should be used only when it is useful.

COLOR - Use warmer color lights where possible.

WAYS TO CELEBRATE THE DARK SKY:

There are numerous "small ways" to increase awareness of the need for protection and to enjoy the magnificence of the Dark Sky, especially during Dark Sky Week! A few are below. Most importantly, **Just Look Up!!**

- Host a night walk in your community./neighborhood
- Spread the word about International Dark Sky Week on social media.
- Write a letter to the editor about the importance of protecting the dark sky.

At the April general meeting, I'll bring the 2023 or 2024 Dark Sky Week Volusia County Proclamation and pamphlets from Dark Sky.org to share.

Light pollution, unlike other forms of pollution, has a cost-free solution, and everyone who cares can be a part of that solution. Simply turn off the lights!! Then go outside, look up and be awestruck!!

Carole J Gilbert

Dark Sky Advocate

**Information permitted to be used from [Dark Sky web-site](#) in promoting education and protection of dark skies.

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Classes and Events in March

Tuesday, March 5, 1PM, **Master Gardener Plant Clinic**, (1-2:30) Plant Swap, DeLand Library Auditorium

Tuesday, March 5, 2:30, **Seed Packaging**, Auditorium of the DeLand Library Contact Person: Susan Ludvigh sludvigh@cfl.rr.co

Thursday, Mar. 7, 9:45 AM, **Eco-Buggy Tour** of Longleaf Pine Preserve, 4551 Pioneer Trail, New Smyrna Beach, 32168. RSVP required to gcd2ndvp@gmail.com Contact Person: Lance Harding wildcoffeecircle@gmail.com

Friday, March 8, 1 - 4 PM, **District VI Flower Show** at the Clubhouse, 865 S. Alabama Ave.

Saturday March 9, 10-3pm, **District VI Flower Show** at GCD clubhouse, 865 S. Alabama Ave.

Wednesday, March 13, 10:30 AM, Creative Corner **Origami Class** at the Clubhouse, 865 S. Alabama Ave. Presenter: Maureen Miller-Calamo. **Folding Easter/Spring Baskets plus another spring model**. \$5 donation for supplies. Contact Person: Maureen Miller-Calamo 516-445-2338 or mocalamo@aol.com

Tuesday, March 19 (delivery) & 20th, Sale open to public 20th, 3 –6 pm. **Native Milkweed Delivery/Sale** at the Clubhouse, 865 S. Alabama Ave.

Thursday, March 21, 1 PM, GCD **Book Club**: The Walled Garden by Robin Farrar Maass Contact Persons: Cindy D. cindy@davenportmail.com or Sara Z. sarazollinger@att.net

Practices that Pamper Pollinators



Most of us think of bees and butterflies as pollinators but there are many other insects that contribute as well. Beetles, flies, moths, and wasps help too. Here are some tips to help keep them happy.

Learn more about pollinators and what they need. Find info at <https://www.flawildflowers.org/>, <https://www.pollinator.org/>, <https://www.xerces.org/pollinator-conservation>, <https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Pollinators> and many more. Keep reading, learning, and then sharing it with others.

Accept that we have different pollinator groups (wasps) and they are all important. Please tolerate the wasps. They need protection from climate change and pesticides.

Prepare yourself to create their habitats/environments.

Commit to what level you can manage.

Do not mow your lawn from November to May. Pollinators need those “weeds” found in your lawn during the colder months.

Stop using pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or any -cides!

Let nature control nature. Why do we as humans think we can control nature? We cannot and anything that you see happening in your yard is temporary. Those pests will not stick around for months at a time. There is always something that eats them. Do one less chore in your yard.

Source your plants wisely. Avoid buying cultivars that have been bred to have pleasing characteristics to humans but have no food value to pollinators. Stick to native plants!

Choose a variety of flower shapes, heights and bloom times. Don't worry about color. They see things differently from us. Plant the same plant in a group as well.

Keep some bare ground spots in your yard. Use pine straw mulch if it bothers you to see bare earth.

Do not cut back any dead material until March because pollinators use grasses and hollow stems to hide or sleep.



Article credit to James Stevenson, Education & Outreach Botanist, Parks & Conservation Resources, Pinellas County

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