



THE HIBISCUS LEAFLET

Coral Gables Garden Club Coral Gables, Florida ~ Celebrating our 97th Year

A proud member of the National Garden Club, Inc. and the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs

December 2021

President's Message: Holiday Greetings



Tis the Joyful Season of giving, family and friends. I am so excited and pleased that we will have a fantastic turnout for the Very Special Holiday luncheon on December 8th. Our Hospitality Chair, Maria Gonzalez, is working hard to create a lovely holiday buffet with her December team and will be taking extra precautions to make sure our food is served safely and responsibly. Carmen Cason will grace the tables once again with her beautiful centerpieces, and Teresa Zohn has planned a festive program for our entertainment.

So, let's celebrate and make some new memories, wear your holiday attire, don those fascinators we made a couple of years ago or that ugly sweater if that is your tradition. You are welcome to wear a mask as we want you to feel safe. For the safety of our members, I ask that if you are not vaccinated, you do not attend.

I would like to recognize our members who have continued to help the garden club achieve its goals this past month. Many thanks go out to Sharon Trbovich for ordering and selling the gorgeous Amaryllis bulbs and for Evelyn Budde getting up at the crack of dawn, November 11th to lay a wreath on the Blue Star Marker in honor of our fallen heroes.

Teresa has planned wonderful programs this year, for which I am grateful. Many thanks to Linda Waldron Lawrence, our very own member and writer for Gables Living, who gave a wonderful presentation on pollinators, sharing many links to educate our members on the decline of our pollinators and what we can do about that in our own gardens. Check out the links on the resource page of our website under conservation and Linda's links: <https://www.coralgablesgardenclub.org/links/>

Alexis Erhenhaft and her committee will be decorating the Merrick house on December 6th, so join me on December 12th for the Merrick House Open House. Santa Claus will be arriving around 3:00 PM, and there will be lots of great opportunities to buy gifts. We will be able to see the house in all its holiday splendor. Sign up for a shift to work at our table by emailing me at susan56athome@gmail.com Setup is at 11:45 AM, and the event is over at 4:00 PM. We will be selling notecards and Amaryllis Bulbs.

There is so much to look forward to in the New Year. A Tour of kitchens event, countless workshops, and programs, a very Special Spring Fundraising event chaired by Barbara Reese and Jowanda Peterson, and a May Installation luncheon twist that will charm you, thanks to our Chair, Liz Parnes. Our 2nd annual Photography Competition is being planned for an April

1st start date. Please look for the lovely notecards we will be selling at our Christmas party, with images of some of our members' submissions from last year's contest on the note cards. Thanks to Betsy Tilghman for organizing that effort.

May your holidays be filled with joy, warm memories, and happiness. Thank you for serving our organization so well. Sincere thanks for your commitment, and I wish you and your family a heartwarming Christmas and Hanukkah holiday. Have a very Happy New Year and stay safe!

Cheers,

Susan Rodriguez, President



Monarch on a Poinsettia—See story on page 3

January Program News

by Teresa Zohn

The **January 24, 2022**, meeting will be a lunch meeting. Immediately prior to the meeting, we will hold a workshop in the Garden Center at 10:00AM. The hands-on Flower Design workshop will be conducted by the District 12 Director, Leticia Gunn. She presented a 5-minute design presentation at our November meeting. The charge for the workshop will be \$20 and will be limited in capacity. The doors for the General Meeting will be open at 11:15, and the meeting will start promptly at 12 noon. The Program will feature Meg Daly from the Underline. The meeting is currently scheduled in the Fellowship Hall of the Coral Gables United Church of Christ; this could change.

Christmas for the Birds

by Betsy Tilghman



Have you noticed our oak trees recently? Driving down Coral Way, you feel transported into a tunnel of natural beauty – especially after a rain, when resurrection fern covers the trees' sweeping branches like nappy green velvet. Walking our side streets, I find myself picking up the acorns that are dropping in good numbers this fall. Merry Christmas, you birdies and squirrels. Yes, I'm thinking about our gorgeous live oaks, *Quercus virginiana*.

Quercus is a Latin word, derived from the Celtic *kaerquez*, meaning "beautiful tree." It is a fun root word to know as you travel through Italy, because the Italians, like Americans, are

happy to call places *Le Querci*, *Due Querce*, *Albergo Vecchio Querce*, or oak something else. And then there are plants with leaves that look like oak leaves – like the Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*).

The oak tree is native to the Northern Hemisphere, with about 450 species worldwide, 90 in the U.S. and six in southern Florida, where the live oak predominates. The live oak's name is derived from the fact that the tree is always green, losing its leaves briefly in the spring as the new leaves push the old ones off the tree.

Douglas Tallamy, an American entomologist and ecologist, has written extensively about oaks, in both the best seller, *Nature's Best Hope* and his newest work, *The Nature of Oaks*. He describes oaks as a keystone species – an essential cog in our ecosystem. Of all the food eaten by insects, birds and mammals, 75% comes from a few key genera, and oaks top the list with nearly 900 caterpillar species calling oaks home. Blue jays and oaks evolved together – the birds developed a small hook on their beak tip to break open husks, and their esophagus evolved to carry several acorns at once so they can fly far from the tree and bury some nuts (research indicates up to two miles from the tree) for eating later. The forgotten acorn? It's that oak tree that seems to have appeared from nowhere!

Our hemisphere's long-lived, majestic oaks underpin an abundant web of life, supporting symbiotic relationships from birds to truffles. So, as we remember what we are grateful for this holiday season, let's not forget the oaks. And let's be thankful that we live in a city of oak trees, which are hard at work, sheltering and feeding this beautiful world.



Smartphones are the Best Camera to Have on Hand...

I would love to see more participation from our members for our 2nd annual photography competition, so I reached out to Bonnie Masdeu an award-winning artist and photographer. Bonnie submitted some of the most gorgeous images to our inaugural photo competition.



She also teaches iPhone photography and has offered a class to the garden club in the field at Fairchild Gardens. This year we will have a category for Smartphone photography precisely to level the playing field. The contest begins April 1st and ends on April 31st. I want to schedule an outing sometime at the end of January, so you have plenty of time to practice what you learn from this class.

If you are interested in developing your skills as an amateur Smartphone photographer, contact me at susan56athome@gmail.com or call me at 305-439-3440. We will have to limit the class size to twenty people, and the fee will be \$25.00 for a two-hour session.

Thank you,

Susan



Help Save the Monarch by Becoming a Waystation

by Susan Rodriguez

I would like to thank the 17 members and friends to our club for purchasing native pollinator plants at our first Virtual Plant Sale. With your support we planted 125 native pollinator plants last month for our home gardens and projects. For those of you who are creating a new butterfly garden or adding to your existing butterfly garden, here is an opportunity to become a certified Monarch Waystation.

How is that done and why would we want to? By creating a waystation, you are contributing to Monarch Conservation. How you do that is by providing at least 10 milkweed plants (preferably native but not mandatory) to your garden and a variety of nectar plants that bloom continuously or bloom sequentially. If you get certified, you will receive a certificate and can buy a small metal outdoor sign that would contribute to the education of the public.

I believe we have several members who already qualify, and it would be great if we could get 100% participation from the members who have sunny areas in their gardens or container gardens. If you would like to learn more and/or apply, please click on this link at Monarchwatch.org. Send me an email at susan56athome@gmail.com letting me know you applied so we can recognize our participants.

Tip: Reuse the poinsettia plants in your garden or keep them in pots on your patios after the holiday season, instead of discarding them. Monarchs love the bright red color and consume the yummy nectar from the yellow center.

Green Tip: Nordstrom “Beautycycle” Recycling Program

by Marlin Ebbert

Many personal care items come in packaging that is difficult to recycle. Nordstrom will accept a wide variety of empty containers that will be recycled for eventual reuse. Collection bins are located in the beauty departments of Nordstrom stores.

Accepted:

- EMPTY bottles and caps, tubes, shampoo, conditioner, styling products, vials, cleansers, toners, tubes, tubs and twist-up containers from cosmetics

Not accepted:

- Aerosol cans, perfumes, nail polish or nail polish remover
- No electronics

Fun with Flowers

by Kitty Winkler and Sharon Trbovich

Holidays are fast approaching, and once again, our intrepid garden club members are excited about flower design. Please note, the holiday designs **Fun with Flowers** event has been rescheduled for **December 7th** via Zoom and will feature two holiday designs.

Organizers have already prepared individual bags for each attendee, containing packets of plant preservatives, raffia and a small holiday ornament. Also included are a full-size block of Oasis and a small block of the same material for the mini design. Participants will receive waterproof paper to cover the mini Oasis in order to complete that design, and instruction sheets explaining how to complete both designs.



Above: Sharon Trbovich (l) and Kitty Winkler prep bags for attendees



Favorite Holiday Recipes

Contributed by our members

The holidays are all about family, friends, fun and food! What better way to kick things off than to share our favorites. From appetizers to desserts, these recipes have stood the test of time and merriment. Thank you to our contributors for sending along an array of goodies to choose from. You'll find a quick preview of some of our recipes here, with all the recipes on the club website resources page: <https://www.coralgablesgardenclub.org/links/>.



— Sausage Cheese Balls

Serving this appetizer has always resulted in requests for the recipe, just as when I first tasted these rosemary sausage cheese balls. Easy to prepare in advance, freeze, and bake while dressing for the party!

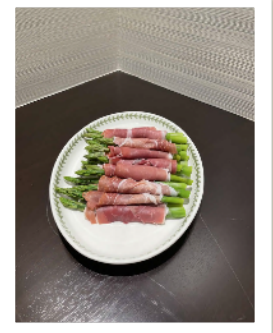
—Denise West

<https://www.coralgablesgardenclub.org/wp-content/uploads/Denise-Wests->

Asparagus wrapped with Prosciutto —

Here is a delicious appetizer to serve with a favorite ranch dressing for dipping. Enjoy!

—Teresa Zohn



— Holiday Cranberry Salad

This “salad” has been on my holiday tables since I was a child. It cannot be left behind. Don't let the jello put you off – it is only a binder, barely there in the mix.

—Sandy Milledge

<https://www.coralgablesgardenclub.org/wp-content/uploads/Cranberry-Salad.pdf>



<https://www.coralgablesgardenclub.org/wp-content/uploads/Tersa-Zohns-asparagus-appetizer.pdf>



— Fig and Walnut Tapenade

I love savory appetizers, and this is a recipe I've used for years from the epicurious website to accommodate the vegetarians in my family. Of course, you could eat this without cheese, it's delicious on its own.—Susan Rodriguez

<https://www.coralgablesgardenclub.org/wp-content/uploads/fig-and-walnut-tapenade.pdf>



— Cheese Crunchies / Cookies

These savory/sweet treats will surprise and please. They freeze beautifully! —Marlin Ebbert

<https://www.coralgablesgardenclub.org/wp-content/uploads/Marlin-Ebberts-Cheese-Cookies.pdf>



— Golden Creamed Onions

An indulgent addition to a holiday menu. Who says side dishes have to be boring?

—Judy Mangasarian

<https://www.coralgablesgardenclub.org/wp-content/uploads/Judy-Mangasarians-Creamed-Onions.pdf>

Learning the art of French Pastry

by Marci Montgomery

If you were fortunate, as I was, to travel to Paris as a young

student with time on your hands and not much money in your pockets, then you might recall the thrill of simply looking through the windows of the city's great pâtisseries.

Cradling a hot chocolate outside a pastry shop on a cold winter's day, you could linger at the window's edge, anticipating what you might choose for yourself if you had the means, from the abundant colors and shapes before you.

Row upon row of *tartes citron* crowned with pretty sugared fruit decorations; oblongs of delicate *millefeuille* (that we call Napoleons) with creme pât inside and a layer of white icing drizzled with chocolate over top to die for; *éclairs* by the dozen with their tempting swipes of frosting; and adorable little rounds of I don't know what—probably creme- or mousse-based—coated in a layer of dark chocolate so shiny you could check your makeup in them... These are the mouthwatering, indelible memories of Paris.

I must ask my teacher what those round shiny things were. He is sure to know.

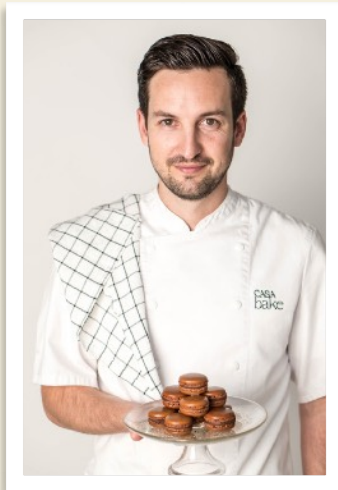
Perhaps it's unfair to lay claim to Chef Benoît Pagliardini as *my* teacher, since he is happy to be French pastry instructor to any and all comers. (And if you share my addiction to French pastry, I highly recommend you become one of them without delay.) His classes are available through his company, Casa Bake and given throughout Miami.

A class I attended recently with Chef Benoît was located at Gustave's on Miracle Mile in the Gables and devoted to making the delightful French cookies known as macarons—in this case, *Le Macaron Vanille*, which has always been my favorite flavor.

It was the most fun you can imagine in a few hours time, learning the secrets to these classic French delectables with their crisp shells and cold creamy centers. We discovered that almond flour was part of the flavor secret; another flavor secret can be found in Chef Benoît's recipe on our website [[link goes here](#)]. We students laughingly found out that piping dough is harder than it looks but enormous fun, and that multi-tasking is a skill every pastry chef needs. Best of all, we each took home a box of our own creations to share with family and friends. If you are looking for holiday recipe inspiration, this is the place to be. *Vive la France!* — <https://casabake.square.site/casa-bake-classes>. PS — If you are interested in a private class for Garden Club members, please contact me at marci.montgomery@icloud.com.



Les Macarons Vanille



*Above—Chef Benoît of
Casa Bake*



Club Happenings and Volunteer Opportunities 2021/22*

2021

- Dec 4 (Sat) **Mangrove Pup Harvest 10:00 AM — Matheson Hammock.** Please contact Susan Rodriguez.
- Dec 6 (Mon) **Merrick House Christmas Decorating — **Event is at capacity****
- Dec 7 (Tues) **Fun with Flowers 10:00 AM-12:00 PM via Zoom — Holiday Designs**
- Dec 8 (Wed) **Very Special Holiday Luncheon Meeting 10:00 AM— Biltmore, Danielson Gallery**
- Dec 12 (Sun) **Merrick House Open House with Santa Claus 11:45 AM - 4:00 PM —Merrick House**
- Jan 15 (Sat) **CGGC at the Farmers Market** in a community booth from 8:00 AM-2 PM, promoting the photography competition, the Spring event and the club. Need volunteers for 2-hour shifts. 8-10,10-12,12-2. Contact Susan Rodriguez at susan56athome@gmail.com

2022

- Feb 12 (Sat) **Tour of Kitchens:** The Coral Gables Community Foundation's 13th annual Tour of Kitchens is back in February. Watch for news on our club's participation this year.
- Feb 16 (Wed) **Field Trip: Casey's Corner Natives Nursery,** Homestead, FL
- Feb 28 (Mon) **Fun with Flowers 10:00 AM-12:00 PM – Winter Wonderland Designs** (Sign-up deadline is Thursday, February 24).
- Mar (TBD) **Garden Therapy - COVID -19 permitting**
- Mar 18 (Fri) **Spring Floral and Fashion Show**
A very special Floral and Fashion Show chaired by Barbara Reese and Jowanda Peterson, this will be our main Fundraiser and open to the public. The show will be held at the Biltmore Hotel, Alhambra Room, starting at 11:00 AM. Plan now to bring your friends, as this promises to be a fabulous event! Please sign up for a committee by contacting Barbara Reese: barbarareese1@aol.com, (305)-445-2258 or Jowanda Peterson: jogpeterson@gmail.com, (305)-669-3140.
- April 1 (Fri) **CGGC Photo Contest**
April 1st - April 31st, 2022—Our 2nd annual Photography Competition that reaches all photographers in the State of Florida. Participate in this virtual fundraiser from the convenience of your home. Volunteers who have website, Excel and/or social media experience are needed. We will be distributing promotional materials at our Farmers markets, so we need volunteers to participate in the setup and the day's events. Contact Susan Rodriguez at susan56athome@gmail.com. An exhibition after the results is being discussed; we would need a Chair to plan this event. Please contact Sherry Jordan or Susan Rodriguez. To become a sponsor of this event, contact Margaret (Peggy) Groves, our new member at mmgrovesint@gmail.com or (305)-804-6751.
- April 23 (Sat) **Fun with Flowers 10:00-12:00 – Springtime Designs** (Sign-up deadline is Thursday, April 21)
- April (TBD) **Arbor Day To be arranged with the City of Coral Gables**
- May 4th **Luncheon and Installation of CGGC Officers, Merrick House:** Contact Liz Parnes at ecparnes1@aol.com to sign up for that committee.

*2021-2022 club happenings subject to change based on COVID Guidelines

Feb, 2022 note: The Lamar Louise Curry Park, a collaboration between the Garden Club and the city of Coral Gables, is beginning construction and scheduled to open in February 2022. The triangular plot of city land in front of Venetian Pool at 2701 De Soto Boulevard was chosen by our club and the city to turn into a flowering park and was officially named the Lamar Louise Curry Park on October 9, 2018 by the city commission. The ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled to be in February, so if you would like to be involved in the planning, contact Audrey Ross at aross@miamirealestate.com or Sharon Trbovich skyyeterriers1@gmail.com.

There are many opportunities to volunteer; please review our committees on the website and in your Yearbooks, and contact the appropriate Chair to volunteer.

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