



THE HIBISCUS LEAFLET

Cultivate. Educate. Create. Inspire.

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

Legacy in Bloom: Cultivating Tomorrow

President's Message

Fall has always been my favorite season. Here in South Florida, it's a welcome time of change as the heat fades and new energy fills the air. School begins, Garden Club meetings resume, and we have the joy of renewing friendships, projects, and shared purpose.

At our October meeting, the General Membership voted unanimously to approve two major initiatives for 2025–26. Both reflect our values and provide meaningful ways to make a lasting impact in our community.

Camp Mahachee Restoration Project

Through the *Plant it Forward* campaign, launched by the Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida, 10,000 native trees will be planted, and funds raised to support restoration and maintenance at Camp Mahachee. Recognizing the importance of this project to our environmental mission and long partnership with the camp, the Coral Gables Garden Club has pledged **\$5,000 per year for five years** to help ensure its success.

Coral Gables Micro-Forest at the Coral Way Entrance

As part of our *Project Canopy* initiative to plant native and flowering trees throughout Coral Gables, we are donating **\$25,000** toward the creation of a micro-forest at the Coral Way Entrance. This new green space will cool pavements and nearby homes, improve stormwater management, create wildlife habitat, and enhance our city's beauty. The design will include meandering pathways, benches, and native plantings—transforming the area into a welcoming passive park for all to enjoy.

Our contribution has already inspired additional community support. **Vice Mayor Anderson** contributed **\$2,949.13** from her residual campaign funds, and the **Salley Jude Family Foundation** donated **\$10,000** to our *Project Canopy* initiative, thanks to member **Marlin Ebbert's** efforts in securing this gift.

We are also collaborating with **Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden** on new opportunities and have a full calendar ahead: *Fun with Flowers*, *Diggin' It Workshops*, *Sip 'N Snip*, our *Flower Show*, field trips, engaging speakers, and of course, our fabulous *Midnight in the Garden: Fashions and Florals* fundraiser.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Warmly,

Bonnie Crouch Seipp

President, Coral Gables Garden Club



Club Events Coming Up:

11/01 @ 10:00am

Diggin' It Workshop

Garden Cottage, Biltmore Hotel

11/06 @ 5:30pm

Sip N Snip

Lamar Louise Curry Park

11/13 @ 10:00 am

Field Trip

Fairchild Gardens

Happening in Coral Gables:



**BI-ANNUAL RECYCLING
DRIVE-THRU
EVENT**

CITY HALL PARKING LOT, 405 BILTMORE WAY

SATURDAY, Nov. 15
9 A.M. TO NOON

**Now Collecting
Plastic Bags & Film!**

YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

- Recycle electronics
- Safely dispose household hazardous waste
- Shred sensitive documents
- Recycle plastic bags & film
- Donate gently used clothing

Fashion & Florals Fundraiser “Nightfall in the Garden”

April 24th, 2026

The Coral Gables Garden Club is thrilled to announce our signature fundraising event, **Fashion & Florals**, taking place on **Friday, April 24, 2026**, at the beautiful **Coral Gables Country Club**.

This elegant evening will feature a runway show by acclaimed designer **Julian Chang**, who is providing both the fashions and the models. Guests will enjoy a silent auction, a night of dinner and dancing, and the opportunity to support the Garden Club's mission of community beautification, education, and environmental stewardship.

As a special treat, guests will also be invited to experience an **NGC Standard Flower Show** designed and presented by the **DIVAS**, showcasing stunning floral artistry and creativity, inspired by *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Tickets are \$175, and the proceeds directly benefit our local projects and programming.

We also encourage members to invite friends, neighbors, and colleagues. Your support helps us grow, thrive, and continue making a lasting impact in Coral Gables.

Jo Wanda & Barbara
Co-Chairs

*You are
invited*



Member Highlight: *My Enriching and Fun Journey at Camp Wekiva*

By Wendy Cook

My summers from 1977 until I turned 17 were shaped by the piney woods, crystal-clear springs, and unforgettable experiences of Camp Wekiva. Nestled in the heart of Wekiwa Springs State Park, this unique camp, sponsored by the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, was more than just a place to spend a week (or weeks) away from home. It was a classroom without walls and a foundation for the conservation values that I still carry with me today.

I began my journey as a wide-eyed camper, a little unsure of what to expect but quickly became enchanted by the magic of chilly mornings filled with bird songs and warm evenings lit by campfires and storytelling. Like many others, I came for canoeing, hiking, swimming, and crafts, but in the process my understanding and love for the natural world took shape.



Over the years, I grew into new roles. First as a Counselor-in-Training (CIT), learning how to lead and support younger campers while still discovering new things myself. Then as a Junior Counselor, I had the opportunity to assist with nature walks, organize activities, and serve as a role model for those just beginning their Camp Wekiva experience. Finally, as a Counselor, I took great pride in passing down traditions and knowledge to the next generation.

One of the most memorable and meaningful aspects of Camp Wekiva was the presence of the dedicated garden club members who volunteered their time to teach us about nature, conservation, and stewardship. These women were patient, passionate, and knowledgeable. They were living examples of the values they taught. Whether it was a hands-on lesson about native plants, a talk on the importance of clean water, or a simple moment spent identifying butterflies in the field, their influence was profound. They instilled in us a sense of wonder and responsibility, encouraging us to respect and protect the world around us.

Camp Wekiva continues to cultivate environmental stewards to this day. I am proud to have been part of that legacy. The friendships formed, the lessons learned, and the sense of purpose I found there continue to inspire me today.

Looking back, I realize how lucky I was to have been part of something so special. Camp Wekiva was more than a camp, it was a movement rooted in love for the land, and I am honored to have played a part in its story. I look forward to completing the circle and returning to Camp Wekiva as a garden club member in the future. *"So, here's to Camp Wekiva and all her crew!"*



Wekiva Volunteer Training:

February 6, 2026 @ 1 pm

February 8, 2026 @ 10 am

Wekiva Open House:

February 8, 2026 11am-1pm

**For more information visit
wekivayouthcamp.org**

Garden Wisdom: The Accidental Garden

By Betsy Tilghman - Horticulture

Last year when our side yard was on the garden club's house and garden tour, I met a young, enthusiastic couple who wanted to know about our landscaped property borders, hoping for a landscape architect's name. They loved the variety of plant material – we don't have the usual hedges but rather a somewhat dizzying array of trees and bushes.



Their question made me smile and remember the haphazard growth of this plot of land we have played with since the 1980s. First it was the mabolo (velvet apple) tree we moved to the west lot line from its unseemly place at the front of our house. Then came the slow demise of the old aralia hedges, making way for things that caught my eye at the nursery. The Suriname cherry bushes remained and thrived, as did the crotons and natal plums, whose white flowers perfume the evening. I hauled two handsome Gumbo Limbo branches from the Merrick House and stuck them in the dirt close to the mabolo. Then came the holes in the borders from hurricanes. Oh no! Our desire for quick privacy made way for fast growing copperleaf (*Acalypha*) bushes. But there were still holes - we needed height! So we planted white bird of paradise, a tall species of copperleaf and a tangle of bougainvillea. At one point we actually planted a proper orange jasmine hedge at the front wall and along the east side but our big dog created a breach in the bushes to torment the walkers. Thick cat palms were added. One day my brother came, bearing a branch of a shooting star *Clerodendrum*. Silly me – I planted it. Without serious attention the borders and yard would be a *Clerodendrum* thicket. But how beautiful these are when they bloom. An invitation to the Kampong to pick over the remains from the weekend's plant sale awarded our border with a stunning, non-invasive *Clerodendrum* Chain of Glory and a few candlestick bushes. Club member France Ingraham gave me cuttings of the Song of India, which provide a beautiful color contrast. During Covid, Fairchild started their online plant sales, making my plant obsession unfairly easy to maintain. Ah! The white *Alpinia purpurata* ginger I'd been longing for was right there waiting for me if I clicked quickly enough. They are stunning in my border. The milkweed and Bahamian lantana from Fairchild were planted at the south end of the border while a red firespike thrived at the north end. The Monarchs fluttered back and forth – a happy Covid diversion. Then my partner in crime, Susan Rodriguez, came along and we headed to Homestead and brought back banana plants, orchids and car loads of native plants. My thorny wild lime, Jamaican caper and native pollinator patch along one of the borders are testament to the fun of our exploits and discovery of South Florida's native species.

That's the border, minus another handful of unmentioned plants and the ferns which anchor the chaos of an accidental garden. There is always something to surprise, admire or tend to. Enjoy our beautiful land, and if you have the chance, don't be afraid to go wild!!



Harvest Kitchen: Locally Grown Mushrooms at Lion Farms!

By Michele Dudley, RDN, Culinary Coach, founder of Barefoot Nutrition®

Mushrooms are nutritional powerhouses! They're packed with nutrients, naturally low in calories, and an excellent source of fiber. Mushrooms help boost immunity, support heart, brain, and gut health, and offer powerful anti-inflammatory benefits—the list goes on!

Recently, I had the privilege of touring **Lion Farms**, a sustainable, organic, and regenerative farm tucked away in the heart of Miami's Redland agricultural area. Among many wonderful things, this farm grows an incredible variety of gourmet mushrooms—**Lion's Mane**, **Chestnut**, **Pioppino**, **Blue** and **Golden Oyster**, to name a few. I left the farm with a box brimming with these earthy treasures, inspired and excited to create something special.

The recipe that follows was inspired by that memorable day at the farm!

Visit [LionFarms.com](https://lionfarms.com) to schedule a tour, purchase their products or simply learn more about the amazing work being done there!



Lion's Mane & Chestnut Mushroom Bourguignon

A twist on a classic! I used meaty Lion's Mane and earthy Chestnut mushrooms for depth, texture, and rich umami flavor. This recipe was proudly featured by Lion Farms in **Edible South Florida**, a magazine dedicated to celebrating the bounty of our local farms and the beauty of whole-food cooking.

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups Lion's Mane mushrooms, torn into bite-size pieces (Tear, don't chop - this preserves the meaty texture!)
- 1 ½ cups Chestnut mushrooms, trimmed and kept whole
- 1 cup carrots, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 cup mini gold potatoes, unpeeled and kept whole
- ½ cup pearl onions, peeled (fresh or frozen)
- 2 teaspoons fresh garlic, minced
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 ½ Tablespoons plain flour
- 1 Tablespoon tomato purée
- 1 cup dry red wine (like Burgundy, Côtes du Rhône or Chianti)
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth (I recommend Bonafide®)
- Salt and pepper to taste. Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)



Directions: Heat pan over medium-high. Add half olive oil and arrange Lion's Mane pieces in a single layer. Press with a potato masher and pan frying on both sides until golden. Set aside. Add remaining olive oil to the pan. Sauté garlic and pearl onions with a pinch of salt for 2-3 minutes. Add carrots, potatoes, chestnut mushrooms, and the sautéed Lion's Mane. Sprinkle a bit more salt and sauté briefly. Sprinkle in flour and stir to coat everything. Add wine, stir, and bring to a boil. Add vegetable broth and tomato purée. Stir, cover, and simmer on medium-low until carrots and potatoes are fork-tender and the sauce has thickened (25-30 mins). Taste and season with salt and pepper if needed. Serve warm and garnish with chopped parsley. Enjoy!

For more tips and recipes go to BarefootNutrition.com

2025 Club Happenings

2025 Date	Time	Event	Location
11/01 (Sat)	10:00 AM	Diggin' It Workshop	Biltmore Hotel Garden Cottage
11/06 (Thu)	5:30 AM	Sip N Snip	Lamar Louise Curry Park 2665 De Soto Blvd, Coral Gables
11/13 (Thu)	10:00 AM	Field Trip - Tram Tour & Luncheon	Fairchild Gardens 10901 Old Cutler Road
11/13 - 15	10:00 AM	Metro Miami Flower Show	Simpson Park 55 SW 17th Rd, Miami
11/18 (Tues)	12:00 PM	Fashions & Florals Meeting	Biltmore Hotel Garden Cottage
11/22 (Sat)	9:00 AM	Heritage Garden	Merrick House 907 Coral Way
11/24 (Mon)	11:15 AM	General Meeting & Plant Sale	Biltmore Hotel
12/01 - 31	DAILY	Garden Club Historic Display at Library	Coral Gables Library 3443 Segovia Street
12/04 (Thu)	10:00 AM	Merrick House Holiday Decorating Event	Merrick House 907 Coral Way
12/06 (Sat)	9:00 AM	Planting Pollinators Sculpture Installation Reception and Programs	Coral Gables Library 3443 Segovia Street
12/10 (Wed)	11:15 AM	General Meeting & Holiday Party	Coral Gables Congregational Church
12/20 (Sat)	9:00 AM	Heritage Garden Cleanup, Planting, and Maintenance	Merrick House 907 Coral Way
01/10/26 (Sat)	10:00 AM	Diggin It Workshop	Biltmore Hotel Garden Cottage
01/24/26 (Wed)	9:00 AM	Heritage Garden	Merrick House 907 Coral Way
01/26/26 (Mon)	11:15 AM	General Meeting & Plant Sale	Biltmore Hotel



Questions about the Newsletter? Email hibiscusnewsletter@gmail.com or contact Michele Dudley (Editor)