THE HIBISCUS LEAFLET

Cultivate. Educate. Create. Inspire.
A proud member of the National Garden Club, Inc. & the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs

"Where Flowers Bloom, Butterflies Follow"

President's Message

Dear Members:

Happy Fall Everyone. It seems hard to believe that as I write this newsletter the holidays are right around the corner. My favorite time of year!

We started our year off with a wonderful Provisional orientation of 16 new members at the lovely home of Sissy Shute. Thanks to Sissy and Mabel Galoppi, our provisional coordinators, for this informative gathering.

Our September meeting was well attended with a wonderful program by speaker, Juan Lluria, on "A visit to Marie Antoinette's Private World of Petit Trianon"

Many thanks to Sharon Trbovich and Sandy Milledge for the Diggin' It Workshop and the Fun with Flowers. Please see article and pics of events attached.

Thanks to Joanne Meagher for a very successful September Heritage Garden at the Merrick House.

October 18 saw our tree planting at Camp Mahachee with the Girl Scouts planting 250 trees for our Project 250. Please see article and pics of event attached.



Our Garden Club hosted the District XII Autumn Meeting at the Coral Gables Congregational Church on October 20. 11 of our members attended this meeting. Our Divas created fabulous arrangements for the tables. Our theme was Flutter into Fall. The event was catered by Sarah Sharpe. Many thanks to JoWanda Peterson for her help co- chairing this event with me.
At this meeting, our Garden Club was presented with a Diamond Centennial Certificate acknowledging our Garden Club was federated in 1926. Many thanks to Susan Rodriguez for her research on this project to make it happen. Check pics on following pages.

Our October evening meeting was well attended. Members dressed up in their Halloween finest and came to our first ever Happy Halloween Happy Hour. It was so enthusiastically received. Our program was by Speaker, Brian Repoza, on South Florida Backyard Birds. Thanks to Tracy Umansky for our successful Plant Sale raffle.



Club Events Coming Up:

Thursday, November 5th @ 10:00am
A Floral Extravaganza
Coral Gables Congregational Church

Saturday, November 7th @ 10:00 am
Diggin' It Workshop
Garden Center, Biltmore Hotel

Wednesday, November 11th @ 12:00pm
Placing the Wreath on the Blue Star Memorial - Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center

Thursday, November 12th @ 9:30 am
Board Meeting
Garden Center, Biltmore Hotel

Thursday, November 12th @ 5:30 pm
Sip 'N' Snip - Lamar Louise Curry Park

Saturday, November 21st @ 9:00 am
Heritage Garden - Merrick House

Monday, November 23rd @ 11:15 am
General Meeting
Danielson Gallery, Biltmore Hotel



"Where Flowers Bloom, Butterfly Follow" - cont.

President's Message

Many thanks to Katy Sobrado for organizing an amazing field trip to Montgomery Botanical Center, and to our member Tonya Meister-Griffith and her husband, Patrick for making this event so spectacular. Katy provided an amazing luncheon for the 16 of us attending. Please see pics and article attached.

On Veteran's Day, November 11 th , our Garden Club will place a wreath at the Blue Star Memorial at Noon. Please note time change. The City is holding an event for Veterans' Day from 9:00 AM-11:00 AM. We needed to change our time so people could attend our placing the wreath at the Blue Star Memorial. All please try and attend!

Our fabulous Floral Extravaganza, chaired by Susan Rodriguez, is November 5th at the Coral Gables Congregational Church. The event will feature Mario Fernandez of Belle Fleur who will be keeping with our theme this year of "Keep America Blooming" by presenting "250 years of Celebrating the Holidays "American Style". It will be a very special event, sponsored by the Marlene Kerdyk Beautification Fund.

Starting with the holidays, be looking around the City for beautiful red poinsettias which our Garden Club is having planted in keeping with our Project 250. Please mark your calendars for our beautiful General Meeting Holiday Party on Wednesday, December 9 at the Coral Gables Congregational Church.

Please check the upcoming events for Sip & Snip, Fun with Flowers, Heritage Garden and Merrick House Holiday Decorating Event.

Hope you have all received your beautiful yearbooks. If you have not picked them up at the past two general meetings, Peggy Groves will be mailing them out to the members. If you do not receive yours, please contact Peggy.

Please look at your copy of the Coral Gables Magazine for November. There is a feature article about our Club and the Micro-Forest and article on the gardens of our member Joanne Meagher. Next two homes to be featured will be Tracy Umansky in November and Eli Jelke in December. The Coral Gables Magazine has been most generous in showcasing our Club.

At this time of year with Thanksgiving in a few weeks, I am thankful to be your President and for my friends in our wonderful Garden Club. Happy Thanksgiving to you all of you, Happy Hanukkah and a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.!!!

Look for exciting plans in 2027.

See you at our November 23rd day General Meeting.



Warmest wishes,

Barbara Reese
President, Coral Gables Garden Club

"Friends are flowers in the garden of life"

Garden Wisdom: Things to Think About

By Mark Hamende - Horticulture

Beautiful blooms, healthy soil and fresh vegetables for South Florida living.

🌿***BUILD BETTER SOIL:*** Healthy roots begin with soil that holds moisture while allowing air to circulate. Add finished compost to improve soil structure and use a soil test to guide nutrient and pH adjustments. Remember adding peat moss lowers the pH, thus making the soil more acidic.

🌿***WINTER IS VEGGIE SEASON:*** South Florida flips the gardening calendar: fall and winter suit many crops grown in spring farther north. October is within the tomato planting window (August-February). Try a sunny vegetable patch and check the UF/IFAS crop calendar before sowing.

🌿***WATER WITH A PURPOSE:*** Check the soil before reaching for the hose. Water at the root zone, allowing moisture to reach the roots. Adjust your routine for rainfall, heat, soil type and the needs of each plant.

🌿***MAKE CONTAINERS THRIVE:*** Choose pots with drainage holes and a potting mix suited to your plants. Group plants with similar light and moisture needs. Container soil can dry quickly, so check it regularly.

🌿***BEAT THE HEAT & RAIN:*** Summer calls for a different menu: try heat-loving okra, southern peas or sweet potatoes. During heavy rain, keep drainage holes clear and avoid standing water around roots. Check soil moisture before watering; mulch helps conserve it between showers.

Growing Kale and Beets Recap from the September/October Meeting

🌿***LACINATO KALE:*** (also called dinosaur or Tuscan kale) grows best in full sun and fertile, well-drained soil enriched with compost. Plant seeds about ¼ inch deep, spacing plants 12-18 inches apart, and keep the soil consistently moist with about 1 inch of water per week. It can tolerate the hot summers but thrives in the winter. Harvest the outer leaves when they are 8-10 inches long, leaving the center intact so the plant continues producing. Most plants reach maturity in about 60-70 days and will keep yielding leaves for many months.

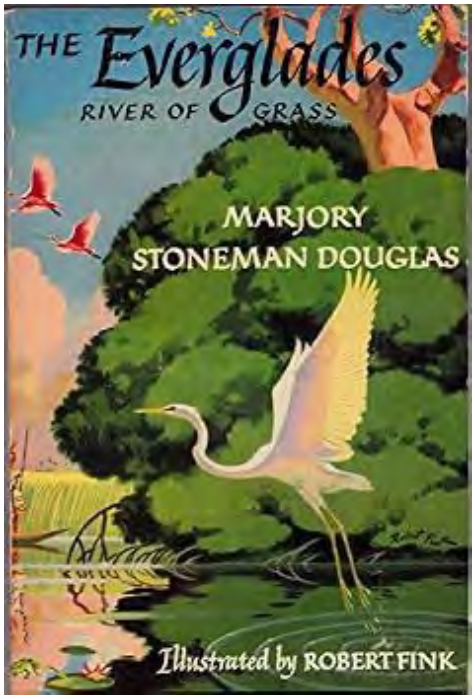


🌿***GROW YOUR OWN BEETS:*** Sow seeds from October through January in a sunny spot with loose, well-drained, compost-enriched soil. To improve germination, soak seeds 24 hours in warm water before planting. Plant seeds 1/2–1 inch deep and 1 inch apart, with rows at least 12 inches apart. Thin seedlings to 2–4 inches apart. Keep soil evenly moist, not soggy. Try Detroit Dark Red or Early Wonder; harvest in about 50–70 days. The greens are edible, too!



Special Highlight: 80 Years After Marjory's Book, an Opportunity to Finally 'Rescue the River of Grass'

By Eve Samples, Executive Director, Friends of the Everglades



Next year marks the 80th anniversary of Marjory Stoneman Douglas' book, The Everglades: River of Grass — a lyrical and eye-opening text that shifted the world's perception of the Everglades from a swampy wasteland to a national treasure.

In the very last sentence of her book, Marjory issued a clarion call that remains resonant today. She wrote:

> *"Perhaps even in this last hour, in a new relation of usefulness and beauty, the vast,magnificent, subtle and unique region of the Everglades may not be utterly lost."*

Eight decades later, the Everglades face accelerating threats — and we have a time-sensitive opportunity to advance a lasting solution.

Sea levels have risen approximately 8 inches in Miami since Marjory's book was published, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). King tides that have flooded South Florida's streets this fall are intensifying because of rising seas.

Making matters worse, an intense El Niño is forecast to double or triple Miami's rainfall this "dry" season, due to unusually warm equatorial ocean waters.

We have entered an era of climate extremes. Restoring the Everglades is the key to surviving it.

The good news is a solution is at hand.

Scientists have long agreed that the key to lasting Everglades restoration is more land for water storage and cleansing marshes south of Lake Okeechobee. Acquiring 100,000 acres to restore and reconnect the still-severed River of Grass would bring historic benefits to our entire region.
The "Rescue the River of Grass" solution would:

🌿Send adequate amounts of clean water south to Everglades National Park and Biscayne Bay;
🌿 Protect South Florida's water supply from saltwater intrusion;
🌿 Achieve court-ordered phosphorus pollution limits for the Everglades;
🌿 Prevent harmful Lake Okeechobee discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and Lake Worth Lagoon — which have been plagued by toxic algae;
🌿 Create new habitat for wildlife and outdoors enthusiasts;
🌿 Make a more resilient South Florida in the face of sea level rise and climate extremes.

Special Highlight: 80 Years After Marjory's Book, an Opportunity to Finally 'Rescue the River of Grass'

By Eve Samples, Executive Director, Friends of the Everglades

That last point — a more resilient South Florida — is top of mind now, as we endure flooded streets and poor water quality from this fall's king tides. More than half of the Everglades have been lost to drainage and development over the past century. Recreating more nature-based water storage and treatment is essential to our survival.

The even better news: Money is available in state coffers to pay for this solution.

In 2014, on the heels of a statewide water crisis, an astounding 75% of Florida voters said "yes" to a constitutional amendment for environmental land acquisition. As a result, one-third of documentary stamp revenue on real estate transactions is sent to the state's Land Acquisition Trust Fund for environmental initiatives through 2034.

That doc stamp revenue is bringing more than $1 billion a year into the Land Acquisition Trust Fund. This money is *Floridians' money* for environmental land purchases — and there is no greater bang for our buck than buying land south of Lake Okeechobee.

Friends of the Everglades and our allies have hosted town hall events across the state to build political will for this solution. More than 40,000 people have signed the Rescue the River of Grass petition that calls on lawmakers to finally buy land needed to restore the Everglades. You can sign, too, at Everglades.org/Rescue.

The 80th anniversary of Marjory's book in 2027 will coincide with the 80th anniversary of Everglades National Park. There's no better way to celebrate both than to Rescue the River of Grass.



Special Highlight: Planting for the Future at Camp Mahachee

By Bonnie Seipp



🌱What a wonderful day at Camp Mahachee with the Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida! On October 18, 2026, the Coral Gables Garden Club proudly donated 250 trees in honor of our nation's 250th anniversary, advancing a vital effort to restore the camp's hardwood hammock to its native state.

🌱Our Club has been a committed partner in this restoration project since its inception three years ago. We are thrilled to report that **7,500 of the 10,000 native trees planned for the project have now been planted**—a significant milestone in restoring this valuable natural habitat. To recognize their hard work and dedication, each participating Girl Scout received a special Coral Gables Garden Club patch.

🌱Camp Mahachee serves Girl Scouts from throughout Miami-Dade County, offering opportunities to explore the outdoors, develop lifelong skills, and build lasting memories. Many of our members were Girl Scouts themselves and fondly recall campfires and sleepovers at the campsite. Supporting this project allows our Club to give back to a place that has enriched generations of young women.



🌱Our investment extends beyond planting trees. By helping restore a native rockland hammock and engaging young people in conservation, we are protecting local ecosystems while fostering environmental awareness in the next generation. **Through our partnership with the Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida, the Coral Gables Garden Club is turning its commitment to conservation into lasting environmental impact—one tree and one young steward of nature at a time.**









Garden Club Attendees: Barbara Reese, JoWanda Peterson, Susan Rodriguez, Bonnie Seipp, Marlin Ebbert, Joanne Matthews, Rhonda Anderson, Wendy Cook, Mark Hamende.

And, Emily one of our scholarship recipients, who is studying orchids, and a friend joined us!

Field Trip: A Memorable Outing to Montgomery Botanical Center

By Katy Sobrado

Members of the Coral Gables Garden Club gathered on Tuesday, October 27th, for our first field trip of the year—a spectacular morning at the historic 122-acre Montgomery Botanical Center. Guided through the grounds, we had the privilege of exploring their world-class scientific collections of rare palms and cycads. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Director Dr. Patrick Griffith and his wife, our fellow Garden Club member Tonya Meister-Griffith, along with their wonderful staff, for their exceptional hospitality and enthusiasm in hosting our group.

Our visit carried special meaning for the Garden Club, as Montgomery Botanical Center shares a rich historical connection with our organization. The center was established in 1959 by former Garden Club member Nell Montgomery Jennings in memory of her husband, Colonel Robert H. Montgomery. Walking through the pristine estate offered a lovely reminder of the enduring legacy of South Florida's early botanical visionaries and our club's shared heritage in local horticulture.

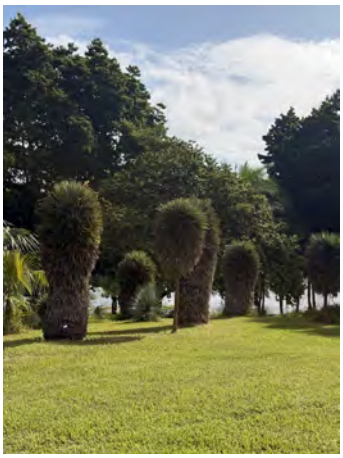
Following our tour, members enjoyed a delicious Mediterranean buffet lunch hosted at Nell's historic home right on the property. We were deeply honored to dine on Nell's very own china, a personal touch that added so much warmth and charm to our afternoon. Between the stunning living collections and the memorable setting for lunch, it was a wonderful day of botanical discovery and fellowship.



"Members and guests of the Coral Gables Garden Club gathered on the steps of historic Nell's House alongside Director Dr. Patrick Griffith."



"Jo Wanda Peterson standing between the massive, dramatic buttress roots of Montgomery's historic Kapok tree (Ceiba pentandra), planted in the late 1960s."



"A striking row of Cuban Petticoat Palms (Copernicia macroglossa), showing off their signature skirts of persistent dried fronds along the Montgomery grounds."



"Director Dr. Patrick Griffith highlighting the uniquely swollen trunks of the rare Cuban Belly Palms (Colpothrinax wrightii), showcasing the extraordinary conservation significance of Montgomery's living collection."

Kale: *Benefits, Storage Tips and a Delicious Salad Recipe*



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

Since we are talking about kale in this issue, I'd like to share a few tips on how to store and prepare it, along with the recipe for the kale salad I made for our September General Meeting

BENEFITS

Kale is a nutrient-dense leafy green packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants. It supports immune function, heart health, digestion, and overall well-being. Adding kale to your meals is an easy way to boost your intake of essential nutrients and enjoy the benefits of eating more leafy greens. From fresh salads to soups and sautés, it's an easy and versatile ingredient to add to your meals.



THE SIMPLE STORAGE METHOD

Here's an easy way to help kale stay fresh longer:

- Trim a small piece off the bottom of the stems.
- Place the bunch upright in a jar or container, similar to how you would store fresh flowers.
- Add a small amount of water to the bottom of the container.
- Store it in the refrigerator, ideally in the door or an easily visible area.

This method helps keep the stems hydrated while allowing the leaves to stay fresh and crisp, having washed, ready-to-use kale in the fridge!

KALE & QUINOA HARVEST SALAD

This hearty and flavorful salad is perfect for making ahead and enjoying throughout the week. For best results, add the avocado just before serving to keep it fresh and vibrant!

SALAD INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups kale, stems removed, washed, dried, and cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 cup cooked quinoa (tri-color works beautifully)
- 1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup avocado, cubed (add just before serving if making ahead)
- 1/2 cup red onion, thinly sliced
  ***Tip**: Rinsing or soaking red onion in cold water helps mellow its sharp flavor, making it milder and slightly sweeter for raw dishes.*
- 1/2 cup yellow bell pepper, diced
- 1–2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

VINAIGRETTE INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar (aged, if possible)
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon sugar or honey

***Note**: This recipe makes more dressing than needed. The salad uses about 1/4 cup.*

DIRECTIONS:

STEP 1: MASSAGE KALE

Place the chopped kale in a large bowl. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil and massage with clean hands for 2–3 minutes, until the leaves soften and darken in color. This step improves texture and reduces bitterness.

STEP 2: COMBINE THE SALAD

Add the cooked quinoa, tomatoes, red onion, yellow pepper, and Parmesan cheese to the bowl with the kale.

STEP 3: PREPARE THE VINAIGRETTE

In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, Dijon mustard, and sugar or honey until well emulsified.

STEP 4: DRESS THE SALAD

Drizzle 3–4 tablespoons of the vinaigrette over the salad and toss well to coat all ingredients evenly.

STEP 5: FINISH AND SERVE

Gently fold in the avocado just before serving. Adjust seasoning if needed and serve immediately.

A WORD OF CAUTION: If you take blood-thinning medication, such as warfarin, or have a history of certain types of kidney stones, consult your healthcare provider before making significant changes to your kale intake. Kale is rich in vitamin K, which can affect some blood thinners, and contains oxalates that may be relevant for certain types of kidney stones.

For more tips and recipes go to BarefootNutrition.com

District XII Fall 2026 Meeting

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs

hosted by Coral Gables Garden Club

Tuesday, October 20, 2026

















SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 14–15, 2027

PASSPORTS TO PETALS

A Flora Journey Around the World

CORAL GABLES GARDEN CLUB



NATIONAL GARDEN CLUB
STANDARD FLOWER SHOW

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
April 15th 10:00–3:00 PM

FUNDRAISER
April 14, 2027
6:00 PM

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Garden Club Events Highlights:

Provisionals Orientation







Diggin' It Workshop

"Our first Diggin' It workshop for the year was a great success with 13 attendees sharing and taking home some new and interesting little plants that will hopefully mature into beautiful specimens to enter in our April "Passport to Petals" Flower Show. Genus, species!?! These "proper names" were explained and each "take home" specimen was labeled to be ready to exhibit in six months time. The Horticulture section of the Flower Show will include cut specimens and potted plants, so begin looking at your and gardens and patios now for your possible entries." - Sandy







Garden Club Events Highlights:

Fun with Flowers

Our October Fun With Flowers was FUN!! We had a special guest designer, Emilie Palmerie from the Boca Raton GC. Emilie is also the Fun With Flowers Chair for FFGC. Emilie created 3 fun Halloween designs using grocery store flowers that she auctioned off with the proceeds going to CGGC! She also gave us a preview of what she would have all of us create…a topiary design created only Alstomeria. We were 18 in attendance including the entire Griffith family. After our Fun With Flowers we enjoyed a light snack and cookies!! We meet every other month on the first Saturday of the month in the Garden Cottage…..come join us!!! - Sharon









Heritage Garden Clean Up





Lamar Louise Park



Garden Club Events Highlights - cont.

September General Meeting








October General Meeting & Happy Hour









2026 Club Happenings

2026 Date	Time	Event	Location
11/05 (Thu)	10:00 AM	A Floral Extravaganza	Coral Gables Congregational Church UCC 3010 De Soto Blvd
11/07 (Sat)	10:00 AM	Diggin' It Workshop	Garden Center Biltmore Hotel
11/11 (Wed)	12:00 PM	Placing the Wreath on the Blue Star Memorial	Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center
11/12 (Thu)	9:30 AM	Board Meeting	Garden Center Biltmore Hotel
11/12 (Thu)	5:30 PM	Sip 'N' Snip	Lamar Louise Curry Park 2665 De Soto Boulevard
11/21 (Sat)	9:00 AM	Heritage Garden	Merrick House 907 Coral Way
11/23 (Mon)	11:15 AM	General Meeting	Danielson Gallery Biltmore Hotel
12/03 (Thu)	10:00 AM	Merrick House Holiday Decorating	Merrick House 907 Coral Way
12/08 (Tue)	10:00 AM	Fun With Flowers	Garden Center Biltmore Hotel
12/09 (Wed)	11:15 AM	General Meeting Holiday Party	Coral Gables Congregational Church UCC 3010 De Soto Blvd
11/19 (Sat)	9:00 AM	Heritage Garden	Merrick House 907 Coral Way
01/09/27 (Sat)	10:00 AM	Diggin' It Workshop	Garden Center Biltmore Hotel
01/13/27 (Wed)	9:30 AM	Board Meeting	Garden Center Biltmore Hotel
01/25/27 (Mon)	11:15 AM	General Meeting & Plant Sale	Danielson Gallery Biltmore Hotel
01/30/27 (Sat)	9:00 AM	Heritage Garden	Merrick House 907 Coral Way

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