



# Happenings



## Letter from the President, Chris O'Grady

Hi Everyone,

I hope this newsletter finds each of you doing well. As the new year approaches, we have several decisions to make about how MRGC will proceed. I will be sending out a brief survey in the near future to get your thoughts and opinions on what we should and should not do. Coronavirus cases are currently surging, and it will likely be months before vaccines are available. Below are the important issues to consider:

1. Should we resume monthly meetings and programs? Keep in mind, we are still not able to serve lunch. Bringing your own is an option. We must continue to wear masks and practice social distancing.
2. Should we plan on having the Wine & Cheese/Plant Auction in February? Actually, it would have to be a basic Plant Auction without food and beverages being served. You could bring your own snacks and wine. It is a fund raiser, and we can certainly use the money. It is always fun too, my favorite event. It must be all those plants I enjoy so much!
3. Should we proceed with Flower Show plans for March 12 & 13? We would have to keep expenses to a bare minimum, no fancy focal point. This show costs us money since we do not charge admission. As always, we would have a tip jar.
4. Should we make plans to have the Garden Tour in April? Caryl Ponder will chair. Obviously, this is an outdoor activity with decreased risk. Masks would still be required. We would limit the number of visitors allowed in each garden at a time. We would not have a gala or luncheon. The Garden Tour is also our biggest fund raiser of the year. Needless to say, profits would be less with no gala or luncheon.
5. Would you be interested in trying Zoom meetings? The Manatee Orchid Society has had two or three Zoom meetings. Not a lot of members have shown interest in participating. There have been technical glitches too. However, Zooming is an option.

Please think about the above questions and watch your e-mail for the survey. For those of you who do not use the computer, phone me and share your thoughts (941) 266-1254. If I don't answer, leave a message and I will return your call. I look forward to chatting with you. Warning: I have a crazy phone message about sky diving and bungee jumping. Don't think you have the wrong number!

I am planning to hold an "in-person" Board meeting at the Club on Wednesday, December 9, at 11am. We will be discussing members' survey responses and making plans for 2021. If you cannot attend, let me know by e-mail.

On the bright side, rentals are beginning to pick up. We are continuing to keep MRGC expenses at a minimum. Thank you again to everyone who has made generous donations to help get the Club through this unforeseen and difficult period.

Continued on page 2....

**Website:** [manateerivergardenclub.com](http://manateerivergardenclub.com)

**Location:** 3120 First Avenue West, Bradenton, FL 34205-3448

**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 14662, Bradenton, FL 34280-4662

**Members of:** National Garden Clubs, Inc., Deep South Region and Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc., District VIII

Find us on social media by typing the underlined in the search area: **Facebook:** [Manatee River Garden Club Inc.](https://www.facebook.com/ManateeRiverGardenClubInc) , **Twitter:** [Manatee Garden Club](https://twitter.com/ManateeGardenClub), and **Instagram:** [manateerivergardenclub](https://www.instagram.com/manateerivergardenclub).

President's letter continued....

MRGC recently received a lovely award certificate with a large, flashy red and green ribbon from National Garden Clubs, Inc. We won the Holiday Standard Flower Show 102A for "All You Need Is Love", presented in 2019. Congratulations to everyone who helped to make this show another amazing success. As always, MRGC's abundant talent makes our Club a standout even among the toughest competition. We can all be extremely proud!

This has been the strangest year I have ever experienced. Bet that is true for all of you too. Isolation has provided me extra time for reflection. I have given much thought to many things I previously took for granted. I have learned to be thankful for even the smallest blessings and to never take anything, or anyone, for granted. I miss all of you and our wonderful Club activities. I am thankful for being a part of MRGC. I deeply appreciate our Club which brings us together and reinforces our friendships. I look forward to the day when we can resume our normal activities.

I wish each of you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May all the joys of this blessed season be yours. Hopefully the coming year will bring us a return to normalcy, good health and happiness.

Chris



**December**

Brenda Johnson	12/9
Cathy Lamb	12/11
Marsha Wikle	12/11
Gail Manna	12/14
Trisa Wintringham	12/15
Paula Wolfe	12/19
Karyn Potts	12/26

<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	
From Bev Chapin, Treasurer	
Bank Balances as of October 31, 2020	
Operating Account:	\$ 2,390.42
Rental Account:	\$ 4,669.06
Money Market:	\$12,870.93
<b>Funds Available/Total:</b>	<b>\$19,930.41</b>
Eaton Funds:	\$ 2,778.36
Memorial Funds:	\$ 1,579.81
Legacy Funds:	\$ 500.00

## Annual Poinsettia Drive-Thru And Sale - November 28, 2020



Orban's Nursery is open to the public for one day only. Come see over 200,000 blooming poinsettias before they are shipped to garden centers for the holidays. This is a rare opportunity for the community to visit our nursery, take photos and buy our holiday plants. The event has become a popular local tradition and a portion of the proceeds go towards the Florida Nursery Growers, the Landscape Association's Manasota Scholarship Fund, and the Duette One Room Schoolhouse. -9601 9th Ave. NW, Bradenton-

## Community Outreach from Pat Danahy

This month I made a design for the Sheriff's Office on 67th Street East. Unfortunately, I forgot my camera and the lady that tried to send a picture must have typed my e-mail incorrectly, so I have no pictures. Everyone who saw it was so thrilled that people would go out of their way to thank them for doing their job. By thanking them, they in turn made me feel good.



In case you did not know.....because MRGC cannot spend time with our Seniors, as Director of Community Outreach with approval from Chris, I decided to donate designs to services with essential workers, such as fire stations, police stations, hospitals, libraries.....whoever has had to be helping the public during this stressful, contagious time in our lives.

It would be wonderful if others would chip in and get a bit creative to put some joy in others' lives. Does not have to be elaborate, just a small bit of flowers with a note to say, "Thank you from Manatee River Garden Club". And in return, I can guarantee you will feel better too. If you do, please send me some photos so I can pass on for our newsletter.

## FFGC 2021 Calendars by Pat Danahy, FFGC Calendar Distribution Chairman

The Florida Federation of Gardens Clubs Floral Design Calendars are available for sale from me for \$8.00 plus tax of \$.52. If you want it mailed there is a mailing cost, but with time on our hands, maybe we could meet someplace and save some money.

This calendar is not just for designers. They would make wonderful holiday gifts for anyone. I have a friend that loves how much space is available to jot notes, and he ordered one again from me this year.

Please think about using the calendars yourselves or as gifts. 2021 will be the last calendar until flower shows and exhibits start up again. The FFGC Board decided there were not enough pictures on file to create an interesting calendar for next year.

The order forms are on the FFGC website. Simply print off, complete and mail to me at 7005 River Hammock Dr., Unit 103, Bradenton 34212 with a check for the number of calendars wanted. And like I said, since all our members are within driving distance (unless spending the holidays in Maine for example), I would be willing to meet someplace to save the shipping.



## Garden Angels

from Linda Lestock



Garden Angels will meet on Tuesday, December 8 at 8:30am

[lindatajer@yahoo.com](mailto:lindatajer@yahoo.com)

## Volunteer Hours

From Paula Wolfe



Please report your hours worked on club projects at home, time with Garden Angels, and any volunteer hours at MRGC events. Contact Paula Wolfe at [silverlady3@gmail.com](mailto:silverlady3@gmail.com) in order to record your hours. You don't have to specify how the hours were spent - just write the total hours. This is a "Must-Do" for our 501(c)(3) status. Thank you.

## “Stem Benders”—Floral Design Study Group by Janice Hamlin

### Contrived Poinsettias

Before there was Pinterest, there was Garden Club.

Over the years, I have learned many wonderful natural craft ideas from garden club friends. One of my favorites is the “Contrived Poinsettia”. The poinsettia is crafted from dried magnolia leaves and pinecones. For those who like to use natural materials for decorating, it is very pretty and useful. Remember these are considered artificial flowers and cannot be used in a flower show, but are fun to use around your home.

#### Directions for making one red poinsettia

- 1 medium sized pinecone
- 10-15 dried magnolia leaves – clean and dry
- Paint – red, green, yellow, and primer
- Tacky glue



Paint 10 of the leaves red and the remaining 5 leaves green. I like to use a primer on the leaves before painting with a colored paint. The primer will allow you to use less paint to get a solid color. You can use either spray paint (most likely not water-based) or a water-based craft paint and a brush. When using spray paint, look for a spray primer to use on the leaves before using the colored paint. If you do not find a primer, silver or light gray spray paint can act as a primer. When selecting water-based craft paint, I use a water-based gesso as a primer, but again a light gray paint would also work. Using acrylic craft paints with a brush takes a little longer, but you can also be more creative with coloring the leaves.

The pinecone is used to hold the magnolia leaves and forms the center of the poinsettia. Dab a little yellow craft paint on the top tips of the pinecone to mimic the “flowers” on a real poinsettia.



After the leaves have been painted and are well dried, cut a “V” shape out of stem end of each leaf. This “notch” will allow you to insert the leaves in the spaces of the pinecone. Start to make the poinsettia by placing the largest red leaves half way from top of the pinecone and arrange them in a circular fashion. You will probably use 5 – 6 leaves. Next place another layer of slightly smaller leaves above this first layer and arrange in a manner that is pleasing. Finally, add a final layer of 4-5 green leaves below the red ones. You will find that you are selecting different sized and shaped leaves for the different layers of the poinsettia.



When you are satisfied with the placement, remove the leaves and put a little tacky glue on the “V” notched end of each leaf before inserting back into the pinecone and allow to dry.

If red is not in your color scheme for holiday decorating – no problem – your poinsettias can be any color you choose. I like to use shades of orange and yellow at the holidays, so this year I am making poinsettias that mimic the poinsettia variety “Gold Dust”.

I use the poinsettias to decorate wreaths and swags. They can be placed on a bed of greenery to make an easy centerpiece. They can even be used in a larger flower arrangement.



### **WE ALL WANT TO LEAVE A LEGACY; LET MRGC BE PART OF YOURS.**

For information, contact Betsy Lieberman, chair of the Legacy Fund Committee, or look on our website under SUPPORT

*Nancy Benny, an elder in MRGC, plants a croton as a way of connecting today to tomorrow.*

## What has happened to our monarchs and can you raise them in your garden? By Marsha Wikle



Good question! I hear this often – gardeners provide nectar plants and some milkweed and claim they are raising monarchs in their garden. The monarch population is down 80% in the past twenty years based on surveys of their wintering habitats in Mexico and California. Why has the population crashed, and are we helping by providing a backyard habitat?

The main reason given for the population crash have been the increased use of herbicides and pesticides in the midwestern agricultural region. Corn and soybean seeds were bred to be resistant to brand-name herbicides, so crops were sprayed through the summer growing season – decimating milkweed populations living in adjacent ditches. Vast acreages planted with the same crop are more vulnerable to insect infestations, so more pesticides are sprayed. Successive wet spring and summer seasons have resulted in homeowners crying for relief from mosquitoes. You spray for one insect, you kill them all.

The monarchs that manage to survive these hazards in the Midwest begin their migration in late August in Canada and continue through September in the more southern states. Not ALL of those butterflies go directly to Mexico. 48% of the monarchs found in a small Florida sample taken from Miami and Naples came from the Midwest or from the Texas-Oklahoma border. Studies of hydrogen and carbon isotopes found in rainwater and milkweed have been used to trace the origin of our Florida butterflies and guess what? Turns out migration is more complex than was thought. The other 52% are resident, although that is complex also!

Our warm temperatures year-round cause any arriving butterflies to break their diapause (the suspension of breeding through migration) and breed locally. So now we have monarchs in our gardens year-round. Monarch butterflies will nectar on any flower but will only lay eggs on milkweed. Our Florida native milkweeds die back in the fall and are downright scarce all winter. Most gardeners purchase tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) from nurseries or big box stores to provide host plants through the winter. Giant milkweed (*Calotropis gigantea*) is also a host. The problem with tropical milkweed, which does not really like our tropical climate that well but will

*Nancy Benny, an elder in MRGC, plants a croton as a way of connecting today to tomorrow.*

survive during our summers, is the dreaded OE (*Ophryocystis elektroscirrha*). One of about 10 diseases affecting monarchs, OE thrives on tropical milkweed. OE spores are carried on the wings of mature butterflies and deposited, along with eggs, on the leaves of the host plant. The spores are consumed by the tiny hatchlings when they eat their egg casing and the surrounding leaf. The tiny caterpillars are doomed from the start. Depending on the amount of OE they ingest, they may die before pupating or may live to pupate, but die in the chrysalis, or emerge as a defective butterfly.

### Sunshine from Judy Zampello



Have you heard about a member who has had a recent illness, hospitalization or loss of a family member? Maybe this person could use a dose of sunshine. Contact Judy Zampello at 792-3333 or [judyzampello@hotmail.com](mailto:judyzampello@hotmail.com) to have a card sent.



### Membership from Edie Anderson

By the time this newsletter arrives Thanksgiving will be over and Christmas holidays will be on the way. I know for myself the holidays will be different this year. I miss my family up north so much. There is nothing new and exciting to report this month in the way of membership. Hope 2021 will

### Flower Show by Crystal

Please mark your calendars for our 2021 Flower Show and tend to your horticulture for possible entries! Further details coming soon!



## Upcoming Activities for December Right Here in our Back Yard by Judy Boehm



### UF/IFAS Manatee County Extension Service

Webinar Registration: <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/events/?location=manatee> ; no charge

*Design Your Landscape to Your Site Conditions*  
 Tuesday, December 1 from 10:00am – noon  
 Learn about how your soil type, sun exposures, location, drainage, proximity to salt water and soil pH, among other factors affect which plants would best be suited for your landscape. This class satisfies the landscape educational requirement for the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program.

*Irrigation with Water Conservation in Mind*  
 Thursday, December 3 from 10:00am – noon  
 Don Adkins, Irrigation Program Assistant, will focus on how to adjust your in-ground sprinkler system to conserve water, how you can repair parts, and the benefits of installing smart irrigation devices. We will have a brief discussion on Florida-Friendly Landscape (TM) tips. This class satisfies the irrigation educational requirement for the Manatee County Outdoor Water Conservation Rebate Program.

*Florida-Friendly Landscaping for Pollinators Zoom Webinar*  
 Wednesday, December 16 from 10:30 – 11:45am  
 Join us to learn about the importance of creating habitat for the vast array of pollinators in Florida and the best plants and practices to employ to create a safe haven for them in our landscapes.

### UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension Service

Webinar registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/ufifas-extension-sarasota-county-422952084> - no charge

*Cool Plants to Attract Butterflies and Pollinators*  
 Thursday, December 3 from 9:00 - 11:00am

*Biorational Pesticides: Eco-friendly Pest Control*  
 Monday, December 7 from 11:00am - 12:30pm

Edible Gardening Series:  
*Fertilizing Your Garden*  
 Monday, December 7 from 12:00 - 12:30pm

*Find and Identify Insects*  
 Monday, December 14 from 12:00 - 12:30pm

*Creating Your Edible Garden*  
 Wednesday, December 9 from 10:30 –11:30am

*Florida Snakes*  
 Thursday, December 10 from 9:00 - 11:00am

*It's a Buggy World: Identifying Insects in the Landscape*  
 Thursday, December 10 from 10:00 - 11:30am

*Maximize Your Water Use with Micro-irrigation*  
 Saturday, December 12 from 9:00 - 9:30am

*Native Plants to Attract Birds*  
 Wednesday, December 16 from 9:00 - 11:00am

*Earth Day 50: Backyard for Birds*  
 Thursday, December 17 from 12:00 - 12:45pm

## Thank You, Sponsors!

Monica Newcomer, [Coldwell](#) Banker Realtor



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