

NEWSLETTER

VillageWalk Garden Club
of Bonita Springs

President's Message

Many members have started their migration to other homes. Save travels everyone! We arrived a couple weeks ago...look what was waiting for us! Last year it was struggling but apparently this bleeding heart is loving life! Love early morning garden walks with Charlotte. She finally is realizing she's not supposed to eat the plants.



Volunteer Opportunities!

Plant Procurer(s) - VWGC has one main fundraiser in January. This is our plant and bake sale. Just about everyone in the club helps with this event. Many of the sub-committee leads (set up, transport, pricing, breakdown, etc) are returning. Val Shaha has been the chair of the plant side of the sale, coordinating plant procurement and sub committee leads. She is stepping down after many years but has done a great job documenting her tasks. We need someone with organizational skills, who can delegate task, coordinate procuring plants for the sale. This is a great position for co-chairs who want to volunteer but not sure of taking on the task by themselves. Val and I will be there to support as needed.



2024 -2025 GARDEN CLUB MEETINGS

The 2024-2025 garden club meetings will be at **1:00 PM** on Tuesdays.

- November 12, 2024
- December 10, 2024
- January 21, 2025
- February 18, 2025
- March 18, 2025
- April 15, 2025
- May 20, 2025

**New Time
1:00 PM**



Fundraising Chair - We also need someone to fill the fundraiser chair position. The chairs of the plant and bake sale report to the fundraising committee chair. The chair reports once a month to the Executive Board. Most of the chairs for the last couple years have been snowbirds. Meetings can be in person or remote using Zoom. Planning meetings start in November.

Tour Leaders - Looking for 3-4 members to give tours of the Butterfly Gardens. You do not have to be a gardener to lead the tours! Linda Blaise will provide training. Tours of our Butterfly Gardens are in popular demand.

Please consider volunteering for one of these positions. It's a great way to meet people, share your talents with VWGC. If you need more information and/or ready to help, contact me at jfegan49@gmail.com

*Enjoy your summer!
Jackie Fegan, President
VillageWalk Garden Club*

TOUR OF THE SWFL CONSERVANCY

On May 3, Trips and Tours hosted a visit to the SWFL Conservancy in Naples. They are a non-profit organization whose mission is to "protect Southwest Florida's unique natural environment and quality of life ... now and forever." On site, they also run an animal hospital for native animals.

During the tour of the Discovery Center we discussed native wildlife, reduction of the Everglades ecosystem due to human population influx into Florida, invasive species such as the Burmese python and lionfish, and climate change leading to more intense and more frequent hurricanes. Here are some interesting facts that we learned about the endangered Florida panther and the invasive Burmese python...

- The population of Florida panthers is only 120-230 in the wild. They only numbered 20-30 in the early 1970s, but the Endangered Species Act helped their numbers increase.
- Male Florida panthers need about 200 square miles of area in which to live so habitat loss due to land development (houses, agriculture, etc.) has been decreasing their population.
- Burmese pythons eat mammals like white-tailed deer that make up the diet of the Florida panther. These invasive snakes have reduced the mammal population in the Everglades by 90%.

A cool interactive Augmented Reality (AR) experience allowed people to take pictures with an animated alligator, black bear and Florida panther then email the pictures to themselves.

There was also a touch tank with various marine creatures like horseshoe crabs, sea stars (more accurate name than star fish because they aren't fish!), fish, sea urchins, and mollusks.

Some sights from the boat cruise on the Gordon River included a yellow-crowned night heron on a mangrove branch, a yellow-crowned night heron sitting on its nest in the mangroves on a small island, a traveler's palm, and some magnificent multimillion dollar homes along the river.

Thanks to Linda Musick for organizing the outing!



Baby alligator (cute, but still menacing!)



Tour group



Touch tank with marine life



20 ft long Burmese python skin



Yellow-crowned night heron



Augmented Reality photo with a Florida panther



BUTTERFLY FUN FACT

Butterfly Fun Fact - A butterfly's sense of taste is mainly located in their feet because that's where most of their taste receptors are located. Butterflies taste plants when they are searching for a suitable host plant to lay their eggs and to feed the baby caterpillars that hatch from these eggs.

IMAGES FROM THE BUTTERFLY GARDENS 1 THROUGH 4

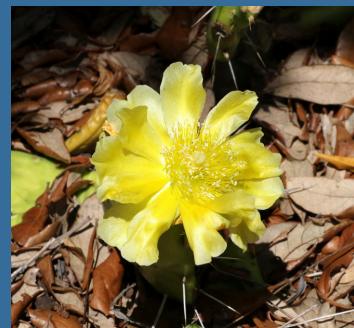
(Plant/animal identification was done using PlantNet, Seek, Merlin phone apps)



Leopard Flower



Rue



Prickly Pear Cactus



Moss Rose



Mexican Hat or Mother
of Thousands



Jatropha

IMAGES FROM THE BUTTERFLY GARDENS 5 THROUGH 10 + CORNER GARDEN



Bush Clock Vine



Copper Leaf



Phalaenopsis Orchid



Shell Ginger



False Bird of Paradise or
Hanging Lobster Claw



Parrot's Beak or
Parakeet Flower

WARHOL SILVERSPOT BUTTERFLY AT THE BAKER MUSEUM IN NAPLES

In the early 1980s, the American artist Andy Warhol created two sets of animal images entitled "Endangered Species" and "Vanishing Animals". These portfolios helped increase environmental awareness and fund various wildlife organizations. Currently at the Baker Museum in Naples, ten of these prints are on display including the San Francisco Silverspot butterfly (callippe silverspot). Unfortunately, the Xerces Society, the largest international invertebrate (animals without backbones) conservation group, considers this butterfly to be "critically imperiled" mainly due to habitat loss. It is only found in the San Francisco Bay area where the host plant for the larvae (caterpillars) is the California Golden Violet or Johnny-Jump-Up. The show includes a number of other Warhol pieces and runs through September 6. The museum has free admission on the last Wednesday of every month from 6 PM to 9 PM. With the Florida weather heating up, the Baker Museum is a wonderful place to enjoy great art and air conditioning!



Warhol Silverspot Butterfly at the Baker Museum



California Golden Violet or Johnny-Jump-Up (Barry Rice, wildflowersearch.org)



Actual Silverspot Butterfly (Patrick Kobernus, baynature.org)

MAY GENERAL MEETING AND PLANT EXCHANGE

On May 21, the Garden Club members brought in a favorite plant and exchanged it for another plant to add to their collection. There were over 20 plants that ranged from little ones like the moth orchid to the ones that can grow quite large like the dwarf royal poinciana. Every person talked a little bit about their plants and how to care for them. A few interesting examples included the following:

- The lobster claw plant (a member of the heliconia family) puts out unusual and beautiful drooping flower stalks, but it can grow profusely and take over a garden, so it is important to keep it under control.
- The growth habit of bougainvilleas can be trained so that plants like orchids can be hung on them.
- The privet senna, a Florida native plant, is a host plant for sulfur butterflies like the orange-barred sulfur which is often seen in the butterfly gardens.
- Eating the succulent purslane has health benefits because they are rich in Vitamin A & C and omega-3 fatty acids, but they can be a bit tart!



The meeting ended with social time with delicious finger foods and drinks. A big THANK YOU goes to the Hospitality Committee for the refreshments that they provided for all the meetings.



SPRING NESTING SEASON IN THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

Spring is an important season for bird nesting. Several nests have been found in the bushy plants in the Butterfly Garden. In Garden 1, Amy Swanson and Terry Galloway discovered a brown thrasher nest in a wild lime shrub. The many needle-sharp thorns of this plant protect the eggs and the nestlings (baby birds still in their nest) from predators. As Linda Blaise has mentioned, it is important to closely examine trees and shrubby plants for active bird nests before trimming during nesting season. The bird nests are often well hidden so look carefully!

Four eggs were found in the nest. Both male and female brown thrasher parents can incubate the eggs by sitting on them. During incubation, the eggs are kept warm and within an ideal temperature range. All four eggs successfully hatched. The parent birds would dig up bunches of worms in the nearby ground to feed the nestlings. The fledglings (baby birds that have left the nest) were able to move along the ground, but they were still not capable of flight which would come later in their development, and they were still dependent on their parents to feed them.

Thanks to Amy and Terry for making us aware of the nest so that the experience could be shared with everyone.



Four eggs in a nest



Parent incubating eggs



Attentive parent looking for threats



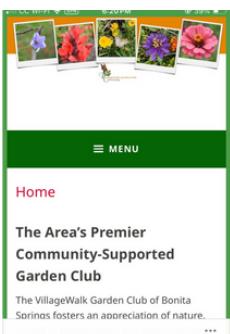
Yummy worms!



Four very hungry nestlings



Parent digging for worms to feed the fledgling



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

www.villagewalkgardenclub.com

Our new website is full of information about the garden club, events and sustainability practices.

