

NEWSLETTER

VillageWalk Garden Club
of Bonita Springs

President's Message

Hello Garden Club friends,
Many of you braved the summer heat and the daily rain. Others headed to other parts of the country for the summer months. We are snowbirds. We spend most of our time in the Finger Lakes region of New York. I wanted to share a beautiful afternoon we spent outside in the foothills.

See you soon,
Jackie Fegan, President
VillageWalk Garden Club



2024 -2025 GARDEN CLUB MEETINGS

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

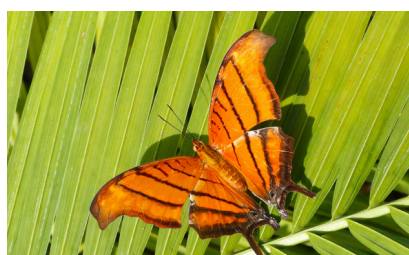
- November 12, 2024
- December 10, 2024
- January 21, 2025
- February 18, 2025
- March 18, 2025
- April 15, 2025
- May 20, 2025

New Time
1:00 PM

All VillageWalk residents are welcome. Bring a friend!



RUDDY DAGGERWING



Ruddy Daggerwing in Butterfly Garden 3 – Top Side View



Ruddy Daggerwing in Butterfly Garden 3 – Underside View



Strangler Fig Wrapped Around a Tree in Audubon Corkscrew Swamp -
Dr. Roy Winkelman

Ruddy Daggerwing Butterfly Visitor in the Butterfly Garden

After a Friday morning gardening session in the butterfly gardens this summer, volunteer gardeners and visitors were treated to the sight of a Ruddy Daggerwing butterfly collecting nectar. The top side (dorsal) of the wings are a beautiful rusty orange color with black stripes. The underside (ventral) of its wings has the appearance of a brown leaf thus providing it with good camouflage. Its name comes from the dagger-like projection from the bottom of its wings. It has been seen in the butterfly gardens before, but it is an infrequent visitor. The host plant for this butterfly is the strangler fig. Small specimens of this plant are in the butterfly gardens, but huge strangler figs can be seen nearby at Corkscrew Swamp. Strangler figs could also be present in the conservation land that is adjacent to the butterfly gardens. It is a great sign that the butterfly garden is attracting a wide variety of butterflies like the Ruddy Daggerwing.

APPLE SNAILS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD



**Invasive Apple Snail
Laying Eggs in VillageWalk**



**Invasive Apple Snail Egg
Clusters on a Bridge in
VillageWalk**



**Snail Kite Capturing an
Apple Snail – Tim Barker,
Audubon Photography
Awards**



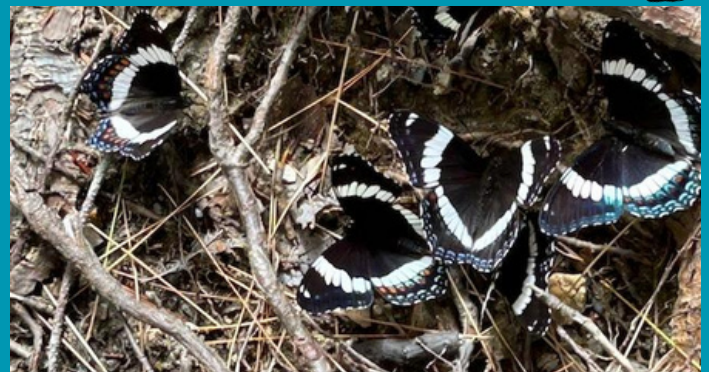
**Limpkin Foraging in
VillageWalk**

Did you ever wonder what the salmon-colored masses are that appear above the waterline of bridges, plants (e.g., bald cypress), and objects (e.g., logs, coconuts) in VillageWalk? They are the egg clutches of invasive apple snails. There are hundreds to thousands of eggs per clutch depending on the species. In the 1980s, these non-native apple snails came to Florida through the pet trade for use in aquariums. There is only one species of native Florida apple snail and there are four exotic species. These invasive apple snails can compete with the native apple snail, adversely affect the wetland ecosystem, and cause crop damage. While it is never a good thing to have invasive species, the abundance of these exotic apple snails has been a benefit to certain bird populations. In a talk this summer, Keith Laakkonen, the director of the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, said that the population of apple snail-loving limpkins has most likely increased thanks to the abundance of the invasive apple snails. Based on studies from the University of Florida, the endangered snail kites adapted their bills (longer) to better extract the larger exotic apple snails from their shells. As a result, the dwindling numbers of snail kites has rebounded. The long-term impact of the invasive apple snails is of significant concern and is an area of active research. For more information on limpkins, see the educational article on the VillageWalk Garden website.



BUTTERFLY FUN FACT

Butterfly Fun Fact - Butterflies sometimes gather in groups at mud puddles, other damp areas, and also rotting fruit, carrion, and scat in a phenomenon called “puddling.” They are intaking moisture, but they are also absorbing vital salts and minerals which are essential for their health, flight, and reproduction. These salts and minerals are not abundant in flower nectar which is their food source.



**Red-Spotted Admiral Butterflies at Diana's Bath in Bartlett,
NH - David Brown, VW Resident**

ROSEMALLOWS

Rosemallows (Florida Natives) – A Rainy Season Floral Treat

When the rainy season starts in May/June, spectacular scarlet rosemallow flowers appear in the wetland areas of SW Florida. The large brilliant scarlet flowers, about 7 inches wide, are a giveaway that this plant is part of the hibiscus family. They were once a common sight. Nikki Butcher, the artist/photographer and wife of renowned black-and-white photographer Clyde Butcher, recounts a story about how the state of Florida was on a mission to eliminate marijuana plants years ago. Marijuana leaves and scarlet rosemallow leaves are similar in appearance. As a result, the scarlet rosemallow plants without the telltale flowers were mistaken for marijuana plants and were removed from many areas. Fortunately, they were not all eliminated and are recovering. The scarlet rosemallow has a close relative, the swamp rosemallow, which has pink flowers. Nearby the native scarlet and swamp rosemallows can be seen from the boardwalks at the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp and CREW's Bird Rookery. In Garden 1 of our very own Butterfly Garden where it is quite wet, there is a scarlet rosemallow plant.



Scarlet Rosemallow in the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp



Marijuana-Like Leaf of the Scarlett Rosemallow in the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp



Swamp Rosemallow in the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp

Save the date

Important Dates to Remember

- **November 2** - Garage Sale to Benefit the Butterfly Garden
- **November 8** - Fall Bazaar
- **January 18** - Plant/Bake Sale
- **March 29** (rain date is March 30) - Butterfly Festival



Talk of the Butterfly Garden

"One of the many things I love about living in Village Walk is our beautiful butterfly gardens. The colorful flowers and gardens expertly tended by the numerous volunteers makes our gardens a very special place to enjoy. I am always proud to share our gardens with family and friends when they come to visit. It is a real treat to have butterflies fluttering by while admiring the beauty of the gardens. Thank you volunteers for creating this lovely place."

Jane (Bartlett) Brown - VW Resident



Poet Ed Gray

Love of Gardening Poem

Mary Freeh made us aware of the poetry of Ed Gray, a longtime resident of VillageWalk. He is a published poet, and his poems cover a wide range of subjects. He wrote a poem entitled "Love of Gardening" for his wife, Ann, which appears here in this newsletter. It should be noted that Ed is also a talented woodworker who has generously hand carved (no use of machinery!) replacement butterfly garden signs for the individual gardens. Thanks to Ed for sharing his gardening poem with the members of the garden club.

Love of Gardening Ed Gray – Village Walk

It's such a thrill when spring arrives, that feeling, I can't beat it;
And I would choose a garden as my fav'rite place to greet it.
My love of gardening is a seed, once sown it never dies;
It shows that special hopes and dreams are not yet realized.

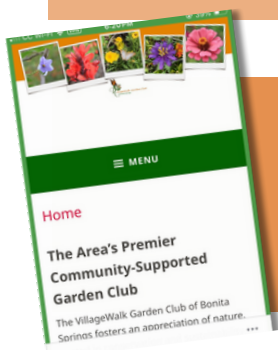
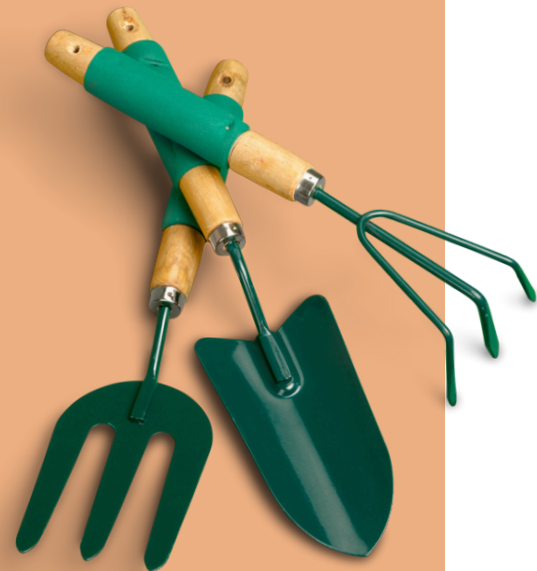
I play in dirt and I lose myself among the rows and beds;
While I'm immersed with all my plants, I find myself instead.
My plantings are my refuge, friend...such benefits I get;
In harmony with nature there's a love song...our duet.

My garden gives me special gifts that boost my attitude;
It decorates my soul and all my senses are renewed.
It feeds my body and my soul and teaches me to cope;
It shows me there's a promise of tomorrows filled with hope.

My garden treats me gen'rously. It's like a friend to me,
Who gives much more than it receives and teaches artistry...
Where landscape is my canvas and my paint is plants and flowers;
Creating beauty just the way that nature would empower.

While gardening, I learn so much, great patience is a must;
Success needs careful watchfulness...best lesson learned is trust.
Attention makes a garden thrive, like children or a marriage;
Each one reflects the care they get, with benefits to cherish.

In gardens I express myself, in ways that have such highlights;
It's autobiographical and gives me such deep insights.



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

www.villagewalkgardenclub.com

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

