

# NEWSLETTER

*VillageWalk* Garden Club  
of Bonita Springs

## WELCOME BACK MESSAGE FROM OUR GARDEN CLUB PRESIDENT



Welcome all!

This summer your Executive Board and Committee Chairs have been busy setting up activities for you as well as working to improve communication. Butterfly Gardeners have worked tirelessly in the garden.

I have been involved with our club from its creation, serving on the Executive Board in many positions, including President. I hope you will consider enriching your experience by joining a committee or volunteering in the Butterfly Garden.

I look forward to working and socializing with you all.

*Cheryl Gedris*  
President VillageWalk Garden Club

## VERONA WALK VISITORS

Residents of Verona Walk in Naples contacted the VillageWalk Garden Club and Butterfly Garden earlier this year. They wanted to learn from our garden club because they were in the early stages of forming a garden club, starting a butterfly garden, and beginning littoral plantings in their community. We hosted a tour/meeting in the Butterfly Garden followed by lunch at the Grill.

Cheryl Gedris, club president, Linda Blaise, head of Butterfly Garden, Dolores Damiano-Szafran, littoral plantings expert, head gardeners (Kristi Dicecco, Candi Minnick, Linda Greendyke, Elizabeth Henry, Sally Golightly, Don Blackwell) and many volunteer gardeners were on hand to provide support. The visitors were well-informed, and several were Collier County Volunteer Master Gardeners. They asked a lot of great questions. The visitors from Verona Walk were very enthusiastic after their visit. We wish them well on their undertaking which will take a lot of time and effort, but it will be very rewarding and a great contribution to their community.



Verona Walk Garden Club with Members of Our Club

**This newsletter is by the VillageWalk Garden Club of Bonita Springs Communications Committee:**  
Contact at [villagewalkgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:villagewalkgardenclub@gmail.com)

Newsletter Team

Bernice and Ed Anzures, Cathy Japuntich, Toni McGlynn, Ralph Brinley, David McBride

# THE STORY OF THE LIVE OAK

*Amy Swanson, a volunteer in the Butterfly Garden, has written a fanciful tale of a live oak tree longing to be part of the Butterfly Garden. She's told the publishers that the live oak tree makes moaning-like sounds when the wind blows. Those sounds inspired her to write this story. We think that you'll enjoy it.*

The trees were talking. Not the typical gossip about the folly of young saplings or complaints of squirrels. This was different. There was excitement and worry. Something was about to happen and it involved the humans.

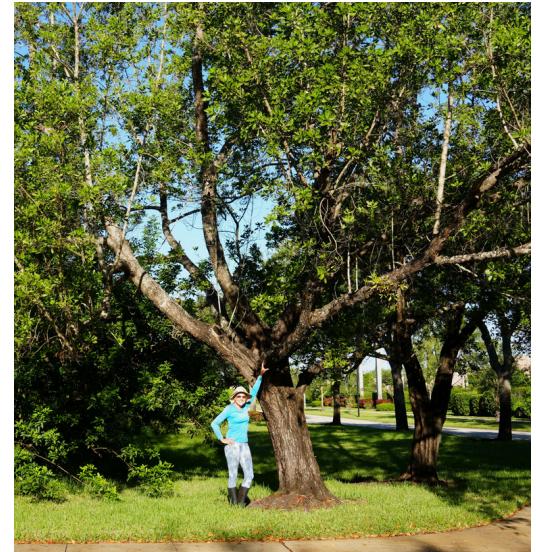
The humans had been meeting in an area of wild growth. They walked and measured and talked. A cottontail had been dispatched to gather information. The bluejays, never trusting the ground creatures, did their own spying. The reports back were the same. The humans were planting a Butterfly Garden.

So they watched as the humans dug and planted. The saplings would laugh at how much the humans would sweat. They planted host plants for caterpillars and flowers as butterfly food. As they expanded to the left and to the right, many of the trees began to get excited hoping they would be included in this glorious garden.

The Live Oak at the corner of the sidewalk had been watching too. The humans were getting closer. They were now to the edge of the sidewalk. Surely, they would cross. They had already encircled the Cypress and the Pines. Even the smug Dahoon Holly with its red berries had been included.

It was the mockingbird that brought the news. The humans had decided the garden would stop at the sidewalk. Upon hearing this news, the Oak began to moan. The wind carried the sorrowful sound to the humans working in the garden. They did not understand the mournful plea. They looked around then they went back to their work.

To this day, the wind carries the sound of the sad tree. It still moans to be part of the lovely garden that it can only guard.



**Amy and the Live Oak Tree**



**Amy Hugging Her Tree**

## GARDEN CLUB MEETINGS

- Learn from and interact with guest speakers and enjoy treats at our club meetings.
- Make new connections and friends.

### Benefits to Joining the Club

- Attend our annual Holiday Dinner Party and enjoy an evening of great food, entertainment and fun.
- Participate in trips and tours to experience the wonderful region that we live in.
- Read our newsletter to keep up with current garden club events and expand your knowledge of gardening, plants, nature, and environment.
- Volunteer in the Butterfly Garden to beautify our neighborhood.
- Help with the annual Plant/Bake Sale and Butterfly Festival to promote a sense of community.

### All are welcome!



# NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY OF DAVID MCBRIDE

**David is a photographer on the Communications Committee and an avid nature photographer. These stories are the second installment of David McBride's nature photographs. Thanks to David for sharing his photographs and stories behind the photographs. We look forward to featuring more of his work in the future.**



**Great Crested Flycatcher**

One bird that is common all over VillageWalk is the [Red-bellied Woodpecker](#). Some people call them Red-headed Woodpeckers because they do have a red cap on the top of their heads. The [Red-headed Woodpeckers](#) are less common and are a smaller bird. I have seen a couple of them in or near the Butterfly Garden in January and February. The one pictured flew by me and landed about 20-30 yards away when I had just reached the western edge of the Garden on the same day that I photographed the Anhinga. This is a juvenile, which is why its head is not completely red as an adult's head would be. It stayed on this tree for less than a minute before flying away, but that was long enough for me to get a couple of photos. For more information about the woodpeckers, [click here](#).



**Photographer David McBride on another nature adventure**

Once again, the end of my walk included the Butterfly Garden. Along with the opportunity to enjoy the butterflies, a good number of birds can be found there as well. I always find Mockingbirds, Blue Jays, Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. But I also come across a wide variety of other birds that vary by the day. I have seen Red-shouldered Hawks, Northern Cardinals, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, White-eyed Vireos, and even an American Kestrel. On this day, I spotted a Cedar Waxwing and a [Great Crested Flycatcher](#) in a tree in the Garden. The Great Crested Flycatcher was sitting on a branch and posing nicely. While it did not have the crest up, on top of its head, where it would be visible, it did show off its yellow belly quite nicely.



**Juvenile Red-Headed Woodpecker**

## NATURE FUN FACT – HUMMINGBIRD FLIGHT

In the Butterfly Garden, you might not see a [hummingbird](#), but you might hear the distinctive “humming” sound from the rapid beating of their wings. Their wings can move up to 60-80 beats per second when flying and 200 beats per second when diving. When flying forward they can reach speeds of 30 mph and 60 mph when diving. They are the only birds that can hover. If they rotate their wings 180 degrees, they can even fly backwards! They are the aerial acrobats of the bird world.

*[Main Source: National Audubon Society]*



**Female Ruby-Throated Hummingbird**

## MEET YOUR FELLOW GARDEN CLUB MEMBER - CAPT. LINDA BLAISE, U.S. MERCHANT MARINE, RET.

*The publishers asked Denis Blaise to contribute the following article about one of the keystones of the Garden Club, his wife Linda. Thanks to Denis for taking time this summer to complete it.*

Linda was a botany major in college, but she made her living with an elementary teaching degree. For fifteen years, she taught for St. Petersburg and Ft. Myers Christian schools.



She was a “live-aboard” for nineteen years on two houseboats and two sailing catamarans. The last seven years were on a mooring half a mile from shore, in Oyster Bay Harbor, Long Island, NY. Over the years, she learned to maintain and repair the plumbing and electrical systems, the generators, and the gas and diesel engines of her nautical homes.

As a USCG 100-ton licensed Captain, Linda owned and operated a Sea School Captain’s License Prep Courses franchise. Over a twelve-year period, she taught some ten thousand men and women who passed the USCG exams and became charter boat Captains. She was one of three instructors in the US who taught a US Coast Guard required one-day refresher seminar on the Col Regs (Collision Regulations) Rules of the Road to Ocean Unlimited Tonnage Captains of cargo and tanker ships.



Linda posing in her “happy place”, the Butterfly Garden.

From their retirement home in Goodland, Linda, and her husband Denis, ran week-long bird watching charters from Boca Grande to Key West. Then, at age fifty-two, she learned to ride motorcycles. Over eighteen years, the couple logged over two hundred thousand miles, through fifty-two countries on four continents.

When they moved to VillageWalk in 2010, Linda’s love of nature and gardening finally had a chance to blossom. She is a founding member of the Garden Club, and the able mentor of some four dozen volunteer gardeners in the Butterfly Gardens.



The 36 ft catamaran Whiskers with 660 cu. ft. of space was the Blaises’ home for 7 years in Long Island, NY.

The Captains Blaise at the New York City Jacob Javits Boat Show.



Linda on her BMW1100RSL, decorated as Baron von Richthofen's WWI Fokker Triplane.

# BIDENS ALBA – AN UNDERAPPRECIATED WILDFLOWER

There are eight species of [Spanish Needles](#) (aka Butterfly Needles, Shepherd's Needles, and Beggarticks) in Florida, *Bidens alba* is the most common one. The Florida Wildflower Foundation states that *Bidens alba* is “perhaps one of Florida’s most controversial wildflowers both for its weedy aggression in home gardens and its questionable native status.” The volunteers in the VW Butterfly Garden know its characteristic of “weedy aggression” well. Even brushing lightly against seeds will cause them to stick to clothing because of barbed prongs on the seeds. Often the volunteer gardeners have had to remove scores of these tenacious seeds from their clothing! Their seeds also embed in animal fur which aids in their dispersal. *Bidens alba* is not particular about its environment, and it will grow in places where other plants will not. It is also drought tolerant. Because they have a very effective seed dispersal mechanism and are adaptable, *Bidens alba* will readily propagate often creating large patches. These plants are considered aggressive, but not invasive.

Despite its aggressive nature, it is a valuable part of the Florida landscape. Because it can grow quickly even in poor soils and drought conditions, it is able to stabilize soil. It blooms throughout the year although it flowers most profusely in the warm, wet summer months. As a result, it is an important nectar and pollen source for bees (honeybees and native), butterflies, and moths all year long, which is not often the case for other flowering plants. With regards to honey production, it is the third most important nectar source for honeybees in Florida. Even though *Bidens alba* attracts so many insects that are pollinators, *Bidens alba* is self-pollinating, so it does not require pollinators to produce seeds and propagate. The pesky seeds of *Bidens alba* are an important food source for wildlife including the [Painted Bunting](#), considered one of the most beautiful birds in the North America, and the [Gopher Tortoise](#), a threatened species in Florida. *Bidens alba* is also the host plant for the [Dainty Sulfur butterfly](#). As its name suggests, it is small (dainty) and yellowish (sulfur). It is the smallest sulfur butterfly in North America and is often seen in the Butterfly Garden and other areas of VillageWalk.

We hope this article demonstrates the beneficial nature of *Bidens alba* despite the issues associated with it. *Bidens alba* is a much-maligned plant that needs to be appreciated more for its value to the environment, wildlife and honey production in Florida.

*[Main Sources: Florida Wildflower Foundation, University of Florida/IFAS, Florida Native Garden]*



**Bidens alba Flower**



**Bidens alba Seed Cluster**



**Flat-Tailed Leafcutter Bee at CREW Bird Rookery**



**Painted Bunting at the VillageWalk Butterfly Garden**



**Gopher Tortoise at Keewaydin Island**



**Dainty Sulfur Butterfly at the Naples Botanical Garden**

## ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

*Please join us for our 9<sup>th</sup> annual Garden Club Holiday Party*

# *Silver Bells*

**Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.**  
*doors open at 5:15pm*  
**Members \$20, Guests \$30**

*A glittering evening featuring*

- Socializing & 50/50 Raffle
- Delicious food catered by Village Walk Bar & Grill
- Outstanding DESSERT BAR by club members
- Garden Club memories presented by  
**Rick Navin and Ed Anzures**
- DJ Music & Dancing

**\$20 - Members, \$30 - Guests** (This event is partially subsidized by your dues)

Checks payable to: Village Walk Garden Club

Tables may be reserved with names & payment of all attendees

Reservations & payment may be made at the November 11<sup>th</sup> meeting

or

Drop off to Carol Zeek 15354 Trevally (drop box in entryway)

questions: Text Carol at (317) 752-6697

**RESERVATIONS AND PAYMENTS ARE DUE BY NOVEMBER 24TH**

**Please wear your name tag**

NO WALK-INS, NO REFUNDS

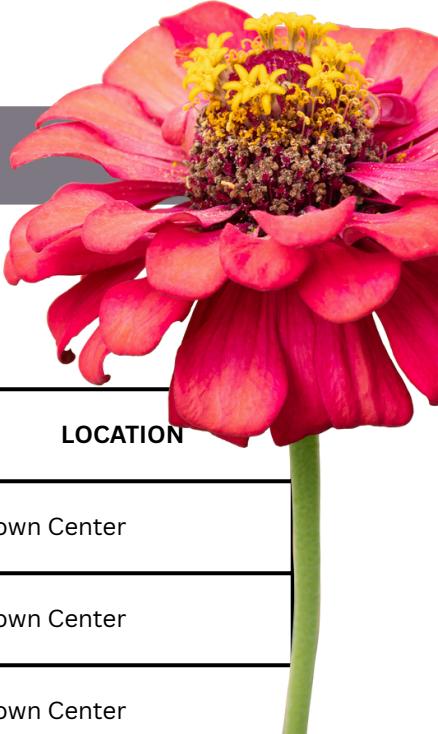
50/50 Drawing winners MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN

You may bring your own beverage of choice  
(soft drinks/water/mixers provided)

**DESSERT CONTRIBUTIONS APPRECIATED!**

# IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE 2025-2026 SEASON

\*Note that all the Garden Club meetings are on Tuesdays except the one on April 23 which is on a Thursday.

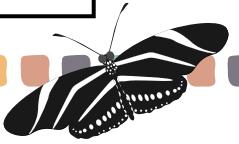


MEETING/EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Garden Club Meeting	Nov. 11, 2025	1:00 -2:30 PM	Town Center
Holiday Party	Dec. 4, 2025	5:00 - 9:00 PM	Town Center
Garden Club Meeting	Dec. 9, 2025	1:00 - 2:30 PM	Town Center
Garden Club Meeting	Jan. 20, 2026	1:00 - 2:30 PM	Town Center
Plant/Bake Sale	Jan. 24, 2026	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Bocce Parking Lot
Garden Club Meeting	Feb. 17, 2026	1:00 - 2:30 PM	Town Center
Butterfly Festival	Mar. 7, 2026	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Butterfly Gardens
Garden Club Meeting	Mar. 17, 2026	1:00 - 2:30 PM	Town Center
Garden Club Meeting*	Apr. 23, 2026	1:00 - 2:30 PM	Town Center
Garden Club Meeting and Plant Exchange	May 19, 2026	1:00 - 2:30 PM	Town Center



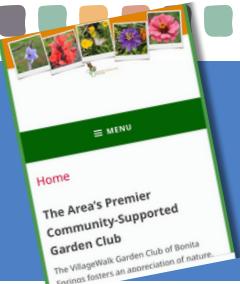
## WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

A couple was walking their small dog through the Butterfly Garden this summer while I was taking photographs. The lady saw that I was wearing a Butterfly Garden Volunteer shirt, and she stopped to talk to me. She thanked me and all the volunteers for the wonderful gardens that she and her husband enjoy so much. She said the words "Thank You" so many times. I don't recall being thanked so many times for anything that I've ever done!



The volunteer gardeners should know that their contributions to the Butterfly Garden are making a real difference in people's lives. If you aren't a Butterfly Garden volunteer and want to make an impact in other people's lives while enriching your own, consider helping in the Garden.

*Ed Anzures, Garden Club Member and Butterfly Garden Volunteer*



## CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

[www.villagewalkgardenclub.com](http://www.villagewalkgardenclub.com)

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

