

NEWSLETTER

VillageWalk Garden Club
of Bonita Springs



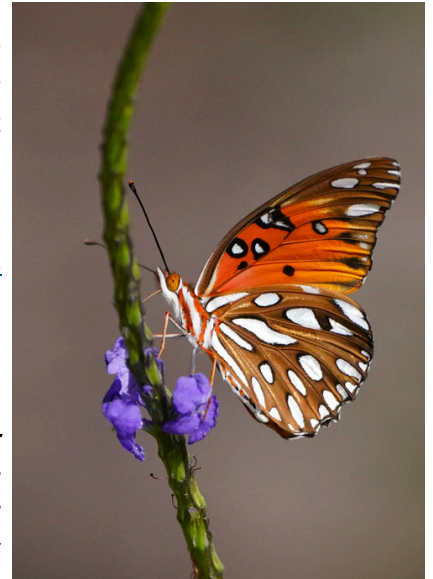
ANNUAL BUTTERFLY GARDEN BUTTERFLY COUNT

A [Butterfly Count](#) is “a citizen science project where volunteers survey and record butterflies in a specific area to help scientists monitor butterfly populations and their habitats”. It’s a “snapshot” census of the butterfly population. They are held all over the United States and the world throughout the year.

The 3rd Annual Butterfly Count was held in our Butterfly Garden on Dec. 6th. VillageWalk residents and visitors participated. Connie Nagele from [The Friends of Collier County Butterflies](#) led the activity. She will be discussing the results in the February Garden Club meeting, and we will publish them in a future newsletter. Here are some comments from Connie Nagele:

We recently wrapped up a butterfly count here in VillageWalk, and our community observers did a fantastic job documenting activity across the gardens. Even in the cooler months, our gardens continue to support a surprising amount of pollinator life – a great reminder of how much our plants and green spaces matter.

If you’re curious about what we found, why these counts matter, and how you can get involved in citizen science right here at home, join us in February for a fun and eye-opening presentation on VillageWalk’s butterfly data. You’ll learn what our gardens are telling us, why butterflies are powerful indicators of ecological health, and how your own sightings can contribute to conservation.



Gulf Fritillary on Porterweed at the Butterfly Count

AREA EVENTS	DATE	LOCATION
Annual Ikebana Exhibition	February 6-8, 2026	Naples Botanical Garden
Spring Garden Festival (large garden show with plant vendors, food trucks and live music)	February 14-15, 2026	Edison and Ford Winter Estates (Ft. Myers)
Naples Orchid Society Annual Show and Sale	February 20-22, 2026	Naples Botanical Garden

This newsletter is by the VillageWalk Garden Club of Bonita Springs Communications Committee:
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Newsletter Team
Bernice and Ed Anzures, Cathy Japuntich, Toni McGlynn, Ralph Brinley, David McBride

SPECIAL VISITORS TO THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

Frances Mason-Barton and the late Trevor Barton, natives of England and one-time residents of VillageWalk, were the visionaries that started the VillageWalk Garden Club (2014) and the Butterfly Gardens (2015). From the seeds that they planted, the Garden Club has become the area's premier community-supported garden club, and the Butterfly Gardens have grown into an acclaimed wildlife habitat that is enjoyed by all in VillageWalk. Trevor passed away recently in 2025. In December, Frances traveled from England for a visit to the Butterfly Gardens with her family and friends. Linda Blaise and several Butterfly Garden volunteers were on hand to greet our special visitors. During Frances' visit, she spoke fondly of the Gardens and of the importance of native plants and a natural way of gardening that avoids the use of chemicals. A plaque honoring the contributions of Frances and Trevor has been installed in Garden 2, the site of the original garden.



Plaque in Garden 2

**In appreciation for the vision of
Frances Mason-Barton
and
Trevor Barton
in creating the Butterfly Gardens
of the VillageWalk Garden Club in 2015.
This is the site of the first Butterfly Garden.**



Frances and Her Family



Frances with Linda Blaise



Frances with Candy Minnick, Elizabeth Henry and Bernice Anzures

THANK YOU DON BLACKWELL

Unfortunately, Don Blackwell, the Club's longtime treasurer, is leaving VillageWalk and the Garden Club. For many years, Don has been a steady presence on the Club's Executive Board. We want to welcome Lynn Lewis Rogers who is the new Club treasurer.

In addition to his Club duties, Don has been the head gardener for Butterfly Garden 10 which is the largest garden. Don and Herb Hofmann have been the dynamic duo that has made Garden 10 into one of the most enjoyable gardens to visit. We wish Don and his wife, Marlene, all the best in the next chapter of their lives. A big THANK YOU to Don for all that he's done for the Garden Club and the Butterfly Gardens.



**Don and Lynn Lewis Rogers,
the New Club Treasurer**



**Don Working in Butterfly
Garden 10**

NATURE FUN FACTS - CACAO/COCOA

You can encounter Nature Fun Facts just about anywhere. We were eating breakfast and found fun facts about cocoa, the base for chocolate, on a Kashi Organic Cocoa Clusters cereal box.

First a few words about cacao and cocoa. In general, cacao refers to the raw, unprocessed beans and products (like nibs, raw powder) from the *Theobroma cacao* tree while cocoa comes from roasted cacao beans. Roasting is done for several reasons including modifying the flavor and aroma. In the online literature, cocoa and cacao are sometimes used interchangeably.



From the Kashi cereal box...

- [Cocoa beans](#) are seeds from the fruit of the cacao tree.
- Each cacao tree produces about 2,500 cocoa beans a year.
- The ancient Aztecs made a form of hot cocoa called "[xocolatl](#)". It was a bitter drink that contained no added sugar.

Other fun facts ...

- Cacao trees originated in the Amazon region of South America and are now grown in Central America, South America, and Africa.
- Roasted cacao beans and the resultant cocoa powder contain caffeine. Dark chocolate contains more caffeine because it is made with more cocoa powder.
- [White chocolate](#) is made from cocoa butter (fat from the cacao bean) and contains little to no caffeine.
- It is thought that either Christopher Columbus or Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conquistador, was the first European to encounter cocoa in the 1500s.
- To make the bitter cocoa-based drink more palatable, the Spaniards added sugar.
- Chocolate was originally reserved for royalty and the elite both in the Aztec civilization and in Europe, but now everyone can enjoy this delicious treat.

[Main Sources: Kashi Cereal, IFAS, International Cocoa Organization, History.com]

BUTTERFLY GARDEN PLAQUE FOR THE WORLS

Mack and Arlene Worl were long-time benefactors of the Butterfly Gardens that made it a financially stable entity. Mack made daily visits to the Gardens and had many conversations with the volunteer gardeners during his walks. We can't thank Mack and Arlene enough for their contributions to the Butterfly Gardens and the VillageWalk community. A newly installed plaque has been placed in Garden 6 near the Corner Garden to acknowledge their generosity and love of the Butterfly Gardens. Also there is a plaque on a bench across from Garden 9 with a quote from the Worls.

There's beauty and wonder in the gardens



Arlene and Mack Worl

***The VillageWalk Garden Club
recognizes the decade-long generosity of
Mack and Arlene Worl
in support of the Butterfly Gardens.
The Butterfly Gardens would not be what you see today
without their support.***

DECEMBER GARDEN CLUB MEETING PRESENTATION — IKEBANA



Stephanie English's Ikenobo Arrangement

Stephanie English demonstrated [Ikebana](#), the art of Japanese flower arrangement. She has been involved in Ikebana for 32 years and is currently a sensei, master or teacher, with [Ikebana Naples](#).

Ikebana designs are asymmetric whereas Western arrangements are typically symmetric. Japanese floral arrangements are also based on odd numbers which relates to the asymmetric aspect. In Ikebana, the designs are not only visually pleasing, but there is symbolism and meaning involved. There are several schools (styles) of Ikebana and Stephanie is a sensei for the [Ikenbono](#) school. Each school has its own focus and design rules. Ikenbono is the oldest school and originated in the 15th century. More recent schools were developed in the 20th century.

During her demonstration, Stephanie produced floral arrangements of 4 different styles using a variety of natural and man-made materials. The beautifully simple vessels were particularly notable. These special vases are considered heirlooms that are passed on to new generations practicing the art. The Ikenbono arrangement that Stephanie demonstrated at the club meeting consisted of [bullrush](#) (bent at an angle), [roses](#), [mums](#), [baby's breath](#), and [schefflera](#) (to hide the mechanics). The plant materials are inserted in a [kenzan](#) (metal base with spikes). Risers like pebbles or old CDs can be inserted inside deep vases to elevate the arrangement. Pebbles also provide stability, but they can add a lot of additional weight. Wires can be used for shaping, support, and stabilization. An unusual form that has become popular are miniatures that are square or round. They can be displayed in small spaces like bathrooms or with place settings where each person gets a unique design.

To learn more, check out the [Ikebana Naples](#) website. They have meetings and offer classes. Their [Annual Ikebana Exhibition](#) and marketplace will be held at the Naples Botanical Garden from February 6-8. Several Ikebana schools will have arrangements on display. In addition, materials like vases and specialized tools can be purchased from the marketplace.

HOLIDAY PARTY



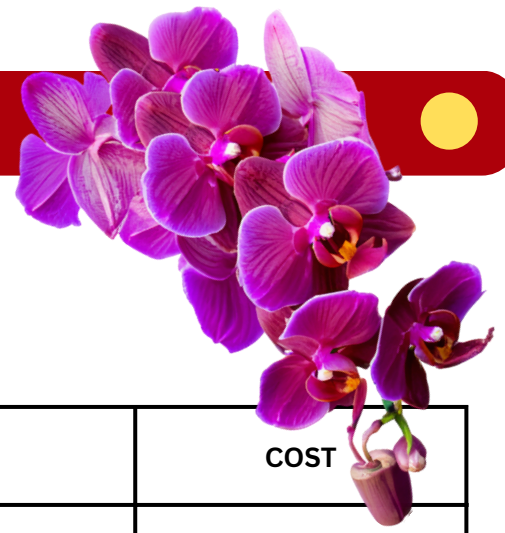
The annual Holiday Party was a resounding success with fun had by all that attended the sold-out event. Nina Iraggi led the committee (Cheryl Gedris, Carol Zeek, Dianne Sturzenberger, Candy Minnick, Barb Salatto, Kristi DiCecco, Sally Golightly, Linda Musick, Pat Krusac, Bernice Anzures, and Elizabeth Banks) that organized the party.

The theme for the decorations was Silver Bells. They were so beautiful that the HOA asked that they be left up for the other holiday events in the TownCenter. Val Shaha welcomed everyone. The delicious meal (VillageWalk Bar & Grill), wonderful desserts (talented bakers in the club), music + dancing (DJ Bobby Picone of VW), and Garden Club memories slideshow (Rick Navin, Ed Anzures, Ralph Brinley, David McBride, Sally Golightly) made for an entertaining and highly enjoyable evening. The planning will start soon for the 2026 Holiday Party! We hope to see you there.





TRIPS & TOURS



TRIPS/TOUR	DATE	SCHEDULE	COST
Everglades National Park Boat Tour of the Ten Thousand Islands (Handicap Accessible)	January 28, 2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meet: 8:00 a.m. (Bocce Parking Lot) 2) Depart by Bus: 8:30 a.m. 3) Depart by Boat: 10:00 a.m. (Everglades City) 4) Return by Boat: 12:00 p.m. 5) Return by Bus: 2:00 p.m. 	<p>Members: \$60 Non-Members: \$65 (Max 25 People)</p> <p>SOLD OUT, but there is a waiting list</p>
Bonita Springs Historical Society Guided Walking Tour (Handicap Accessible)	February 3, 2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meet: (Bocce Parking Lot) 2) Depart by Carpool: 9:15 a.m. to McSwain Home Museum, Downtown Bonita Springs 3) Tour: 10:00 a.m. (45 min.) 	<p>Members and Non-Members: \$20 (BS Historical Society Members: \$15) (max 10-15 people)</p>
Annual Collier County Agricultural Bus Tour (NOT Handicap Accessible)	March 18, 2026	<p>Further Details to be Announced</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meet: (Bocce Parking Lot) 2) Depart by Carpool to Collier County Fairgrounds 3) Depart by Air-Conditioned Bus for Tour (lunch included) 	<p>Members: \$100 Non-Members: \$120 (Max 10 People)</p>
Sundance Orchids and Bromeliads	March 26, 2026	TBA	\$20 per person (max 10 people)
Naples Botanical Garden – Guided Orchid Experience	April 16, 2026	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Carpool from Bocce Parking Lot: 9:00 a.m. 2) Tour: 10:00 a.m. (90 min.) 	<p>Members: \$55 Non-Members: \$75 (min 10 and max 20 people)</p>

More details on the above Trips/Tours are available at the Garden Club meetings and in upcoming email announcements. Signing up for the Trip/Tour can be done at the monthly Garden Club meetings or by getting in touch with the Trips and Tours Committee (Eileen Rowell & Rita Pignato, Co-Chairs; Jackie Fegan, Gail Brinley, and Leslie Bischoff). Please direct your questions to them.

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.**

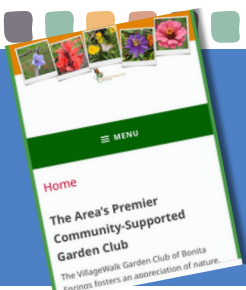
MEETING/EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Garden Club Meeting	Jan. 20, 2026	1:00 - 2:30 PM	Town Center
<i>Plant/Bake Sale</i>	<i>Jan. 24, 2026</i>	<i>9:00 AM - 12:00 PM</i>	<i>Bocce Parking Lot</i>
Garden Club Meeting	Feb. 17, 2026	1:00 - 2:30 PM	Town Center
<i>Butterfly Festival</i>	<i>Mar. 7, 2026</i>	<i>10:00 AM - 2:00 PM</i>	<i>Butterfly Gardens</i>
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



Plant and Bake Sale Jan. 24th 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

- Lots of Bromeliad Combo Pots & Bromeliad Art Pieces!
- Eleven fantastic varieties of Bougainvillea!
- Seven varieties of Cannas for your lanai or yard!
- Eight exotic varieties of Amaryllis, bursting with flowers!
- Color Bowls– great gifts to give to friends or keep for yourself!

And of course, a huge selection of homemade pastries, breads, cookies, and other yummy baked goods!



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

www.villagewalkgardenclub.com

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

