

Welcome back! It has been a long, hot summer and I hope you got a lot of rest and relaxation to start the new garden club season. Last year was a great success and I think this year will be even better.

Our last meeting was the annual luncheon which was spectacular, thanks to Charlene Cook and her crew. Several awards were presented which I will recap at the meeting. I will also present the FFGC awards that were announced at the convention.

Work continued over the summer. In June, we again participated in National Garden Week and in September 34 members participated in beach cleanup. Susan Licari spent endless hours getting the 2026-2027 Yearbook ready for the first meeting, and individual Circles published their own yearbooks while planning for the new season and work began on the upcoming flower show. (See individual reports on the Website). I am so proud of everyone for all your hard work. You are a class act! Now to upcoming events.

In keeping with our ongoing theme *“Mental, Emotional, and Physical Health through Gardening”*, I will quote from the Indian River Holiday edition of Coastal Pearl Living - Gratitude:: *“... just twenty minutes in a garden can significantly lower cortisol, the hormone linked to stress, while improving overall happiness scores... contact with certain soil microbes...can elevate serotonin levels in the brain, acting as a natural antidepressant. In Florida...these opportunities for joy are abundant, waiting right outside the back door.”*

After reading that, you will be thanking me for the opportunities for joy I am giving you in this newsletter.

This year starts with a bang. On October 22, the FFGC Fall District Meeting will take place in Wellington. I am sending a flyer to everyone with this letter. If you have never attended one of these meetings, you are missing a lot. In addition to meeting our District Director, Mary Ann Cody and other members of District X, there is good food, a huge raffle, and an interesting presentation. Please consider attending. The drive isn't far if you are carpooling and chatting. Wouldn't it be fun if we had the most attendance from District X, (outside of Wellington itself)?

In November we will be participating in the Veterans' Day Parade. Kim Wildenberg is chairman of the event and planning great things. Get busy decorating your hats and baskets and plan to go out and honor our veterans.

Now for the **Trifecta**. Three events that require real gardening – the Garden Expo, the Flower Show, and Ways & Means. All three can be prepared for simultaneously. Just follow my well thought -out plan.

It is autumn and the air is getting a bit cooler so you can work outside. This is the time for you to trim, repot, and shape plants for the winter.

Get out your trusty sheers and fill several pots with soil. It doesn't matter the size, just have them at the ready. As you are trimming, take the cuttings and stick them in a prepared pot. Set the pots in an inconspicuous spot that is handy to water. You will then be PROPAGATING new plants for two of our needs - Garden Expo and Ways & Means. The Garden Expo, February 27, is sponsored by the Jensen Beach Garden Club and has become a very big magnet for gardeners. Last year GCS made over \$600 selling plants there. We could even double that amount this year. Ways & Means sells plants every month and some of your propagated plants can go there. See how easy that is?

Now for our third plant event. The biennial **Standard Flower Show** is March 19-20. You could be manicuring the plants you trimmed ready for that show. The rule for entering plants is that you have all horticultural specimens in your possession at least 90 days prior to the show, and arboreals (woody specimens) at least 6 months. You have plenty of time to acquire new plants to grow on for the show.

To help you plan now, I am giving a list of some of the plants that will be featured in the show: Begonias, African Violets, Episcias, Columnia, Orchids, Anthurium, Philodendrum, Bromeliads, Draceana, Spider Plant, Ferns, Cacti , Succulents, and Vines, to name a few. The schedule for the flower show will be on the website soon and you will be able to make more plans. You will have ample time to purchase some plants to stay within the deadline. Chairman Karen Bonney and/or her committee members will keep you abreast how to prepare for that event at each meeting.

By now many of you have received your new **yearbook for 2026-27** through your Circles. If you have not, they will be available at the general meeting October 12. See Susan Licari for your copy. And while you are at it, thank Susan for the many hours she spent putting it together. It is a very beautiful book. Take the time to read it thoroughly, it is a wealth of information in a beautiful format.

There will be much more to come. Plan to be a Participant in our events. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the General Meeting.

Regards. Mary Neal