

## Garden Club of Stuart Newsletter

December, 2025

In keeping with the theme of the garden club, *“Mental, Physical, and Emotional Health Through Gardening”* I will start each newsletter with a few pertinent lines.

*Emotionally, gardening is incredibly uplifting. The sense of accomplishment you feel watching a tiny seed sprout into a healthy plant can make you feel proud and give you a real sense of accomplishment. Being outdoors also works its magic – sunlight and fresh air naturally lift your mood by increasing those “feel-good” chemicals in your brain. And if you share your gardening experiences with others, it can build connections and reduce feelings of loneliness.*

On November 11, the Garden Club of Stuart participated in the Veterans’ Day Parade in downtown Stuart. It was a delightful experience. Eighteen of our members, including two husbands, braved the morning chill, dressed up patriotically and marched proudly in honor of our veterans. Susan Licari and Karen Benson decorated their cars with red, white and blue flowers and ribbons while Rosita Aristoff and new member Vanessa Somoano pulled a wagon with beautiful flowers surrounding the portable Blue Star Marker. The rest of our members passed out wildflower seeds, flags and Garden Club information to the public. Daina Karol took many photos for Facebook and Mary Ann Abegglen posted a video on the web site. The crowning glory of the ladies was their spectacular decorated hats. There are pictures both on Facebook and the website of our decked-out ladies.

This gave me an idea for a little fun at our meetings. But first, a little background. When Garden Clubs were first organized in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, they were connected to beautification movements and conservation efforts. The first American garden club, the **Ladies’ Garden Club of Athens, Georgia**, was founded in 1891 and is recognized as the first official garden club in the United States. **The Garden Club of America (GCA)** was formed in 1913, bringing local clubs together and giving the garden club movement national organization and influence.

Since the inception of the first garden clubs, the purposes changed and grew. In the 1930’s gardening became a fashionable hobby attracting women from all classes to form more clubs. What started out as a conservation effort blossomed into a local and national beautification era, advocating for state and national parks, wildflower preservation, botanical collections, and even anti-billboard campaigns. By the 1960’s clubs became known for flower shows, garden judging, youth gardening projects, and home landscape. Garden clubs continued to change and grow, up to now, when there is much emphasis on sustainability and inclusivity. Clubs welcome diverse age groups and backgrounds. Key themes today are pollinator protection, native plants, climate- aware gardening, urban farming, and garden therapy and wellness.

As the aims and purposes changed and grew, so did the women who participated in them. In the early years, wealthy women of influence joined garden clubs. Up until the 1960’s, they wore the styles of the day and included hats, gloves, matching purses, even pearls. Gradually, the attire became more casual and eventually giving up the gloves and matching purses. The one thing that remained was hats. The purpose may have

changed to a more utilitarian use, but by and large, wide brim hats were and are fashionable. Which brings me to the “fun” part.

For the Veterans’s Day Parade, the ladies decorated a patriotic hat to wear. They were a big hit and looked terrific. Hats are a great way for us to connect with the lovely ladies of the past. I am thinking it would be great fun to have a “hat of the month” theme at each meeting. They are not difficult to make. All you need is a wide brimmed hat to start. Using pipe cleaners, make a “wreath” that would slip on and off the brim. Then using silk flowers, ribbon, colorful objects etc., attach them to the pipe cleaners, and slide that new wreath on to your hat. That way, your hat won’t be ruined and you can make a different wreath for the next month. I know it is short notice, but I propose “designing” a holiday/seasonal hat for the December meeting. There can even be a small prize for the most creative hat. I will know how you like this idea by how many come to the next meeting with a hat. I hope I will not be the only one wearing a hat. Good luck with this idea.

**Garden Expo 2026:** This is a plant sale held by the Jensen Beach Garden Club. It will take place Saturday, March 7, 2026, at Memorial Park, Stuart. The Garden Club of Stuart has committed to this event and will be selling plants and garden related items. By now many of you have propagated some plants to be sold. It doesn’t matter what kind they are, but they must be professional quality to show off our club. Now is the time to concentrate on growing these plants on. Trim them if needed, rotate them so they grow evenly, watch for insects, etc., in short do whatever is necessary to produce a plant of very good quality. I love to propagate plants, so I have well over 100 plants started for the sale, (if cold weather doesn’t get them). I may need some help a little later so I may call on some of you to baby sit them in your home. If you are just propagating now, or if you must repot, use inexpensive pots. There is no sense in giving your good pots away. Remember also that in 2027 we will be having a flower show. If you are growing something now that might be exceptional, save it for the flower show.

### **Events Coming Up**

**Flower Show School Course 1** at the Boca Raton Garden Club and hosted by District XI Florida Flower Show Judges will be held January 13-16 and will focus on learning how to exhibit Horticulture and Floral Designs in a Flower Show. It is also geared to members who want to hold a Standard Flower Show, want to become a Judge, or simply want to learn floral design. Registration by December 31. Information is on [ffgc.org](http://ffgc.org)

The **69<sup>th</sup> Annual Tropical Short Course and Tri-Refresher** presented by FFGC and District X presents speakers on a wide variety of topics, including the environment, gardening, landscape, and floral design. Registration cutoff is January 5. Information is on [DistrictX.org](http://DistrictX.org)

Li Roberts has been hard at work finding some social activities so we can enjoy each other’s company without the structure of a meeting. The first event is **Lights & Lunch**, featuring a bus ride to Palm Beach Gardens Mall, lunch and plenty of shopping. This will take place Friday, December 19. Marty Bus 20X leaves Morgade Library promptly at 9:55 am, with a return promptly at 3:50 pm. The ride is approximately 45 minutes. Text Li or email her to let her know you will be attending. This will be worth attending if only to see the beautiful Holiday decorations in the mall.

The next event, **B-B-Q & Bargains**, will be Thursday, January 8, with lunch at *Southern Pig & Cattle* and shopping at Style Encore. More information will be at the December meeting

Three websites at your disposal for more information: [www.gardenclubofstuart.org](http://www.gardenclubofstuart.org) for GCS information, [www.districtx.org](http://www.districtx.org) for district news, and [www.ffgc.org](http://www.ffgc.org) for state news. If you are on Facebook, go to groups, then Garden Club of Stuart for current information and photos. Please feel free to send photos of your gardening activities to Mary Ann Abegglen and Daina Karol to put online. Keep your 2025-2026 Yearbook handy for upcoming events and information. If you want to share any ideas or information on the newsletter, just drop me a line and I will try to include it in a future newsletter. One more thing, if you or your Circle have received awards for anything and you want them preserved in one place for posterity, give them to Judith Just who will keep them safe in one place.

Thanks to all who are bringing guests to the meetings. It looks like our membership is rapidly rising due to your efforts. There will be postcards available at the meeting to give out to people who may be interested in joining a garden club. Take as many as you need and keep a couple in your purse ready to share with others. You never know when you will be in a checkout line chatting or trying on a new dress in the store when you talk to someone who may be interested. Just like the boy scouts... be prepared. Keep up the good work.

I hope to see many, many of you at our next meeting, Monday, December 8, and, perhaps, wearing a hat. Until then, happy gardening. Mary Neal, President GCS

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