



July 2023

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Community Life Church Butterfly Garden

Linda Lillycrop, SRCMGV

The Santa Rose County Master Gardener Volunteers (SRCMGV) maintain a Butterfly Garden in collaboration with the Community Life Church (CLC) which is located at 4115 Soundside Dr, Gulf Breeze, FL. This beautiful garden is free and open to the public. It is also called a pollinator garden because the plants there attract all kinds of pollinators as well as butterflies.

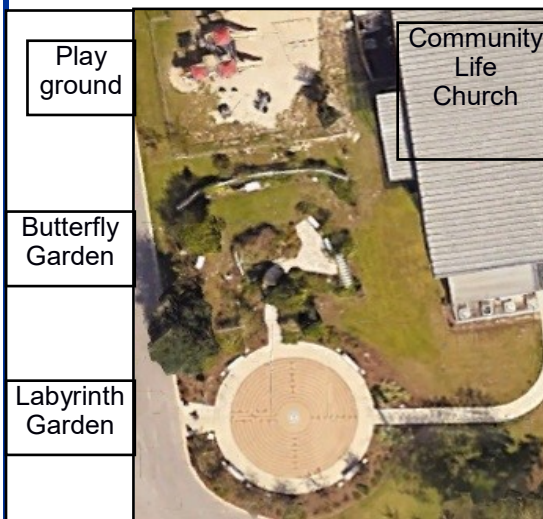


Figure 1. Aerial view of the gardens

In exchange for maintaining the Butterfly Garden, the SRCMGV holds business meetings in the CLC facility. The Butterfly Garden is located to the west of the CLC with the CLC Labyrinth on the south side (Figure 1), which has its own gardens that are maintained by the CLC volunteer gardening team. Recently, the two teams have scheduled workdays together in order to get to know each other better and learn from each other's experience. To the north of the Butterfly

Garden is the CLC playground, where we often hear the laughter of children while we work in the garden.

The **Butterfly Garden** and **Labyrinth** were established by the CLC in memory of a member's loved ones. The focal point of the



Butterfly Garden is a large white cross located in the center of 6 surrounding flower beds, Figure 2. The gardens have many visitors who enjoy the beauty of the flowers and the peaceful environment. The benches along the pathways are a nice place to sit for a moment of rest and reflection.

In the fall of 2023, the CLC will install an **Angel of Hope** statue which honors the lives of all children gone too soon and serves as a place of hope and healing for parents, families, and friends dealing with the tragic loss of a child. The statue will be located in the Butterfly Garden and the SRCMGV are assisting the CLC in plant selection for year-round foliage and flowers.



Figure 2. The Cross in the center bed

The Butterfly Garden includes a variety of trees (Crepe Myrtle, Elm, Magnolia, Camellia, Dogwood) shrubs (Azalea, Firebush, Confederate Rose, Redbud), grasses (River oats, Papyrus), herbs (Rosemary, Oregano, Fennel), vines (Sky Vine, Passion Vine, Evergreen Wisteria, Coral Honeysuckle), and a variety of annual and perennial flowering plants which provide nectar for butterflies, bees, hummingbirds, and other pollinators. The host plants for butterflies are intermixed throughout the beds and include native and Tropical milkweed (Monarchs), Fennel (Swallowtail), and Passion Vine (Gulf Fritillary). A goal for 2023 is to add more host plants for butterflies as well as increase the native flowering plants to attract the pollinators. To meet this goal, the majority of new plants for 2023 were propagated in the SRCMGV greenhouse, including African Blue Basil, Bee Balm, Duranta, Firespike, Golden Dewdrop, Milkweed, Pentas, Perennial Peanut, Salvia, Seaside Goldenrod and Sedum.

The eastern entrance to the garden, Figure 3, is flanked with flower beds on both sides of a large arch which provides a climbing structure for the white Sky vine, a vigorous perennial vine with large velvety leaves and clusters of white blooms. In the spring of 2023, the SRCMGV installed two trellises attached to the legs of the arch in an effort to control and enhance the growth of the vine. The Sky vine will soon cover the trellises and arch with vegetation and blooms.



Figure 3. Eastern entrance arch and trellises

Evergreen wisteria, a strong woody twining vine with clusters of sweetly fragrant, dark purple pea-like flowers climbs the southern arch which connects the Butterfly and Labyrinth gardens, Figure 4.

The beds on both sides of the walkway include many annuals and perennials, currently the zinnias are in full bloom. Just beyond the southern arch is the center bed with the cross and a bench surrounded by flowering plants (Firebushes, Zinnias, Confederate Rose, Milkweed, Fennel, Dewdrop, and Sensing plants for ground cover), Figures 2 and 5.

The remaining Figures 6-8 show the east bed and the north bed, along with a bluebird visiting the garden birdhouse. Finally, there is a photo collection of some of the flowers you will find in the gardens. The Butterfly Garden is a



Figure 4. Southern entrance

success due to the hard work of the SRCMGV CLC gardening team.

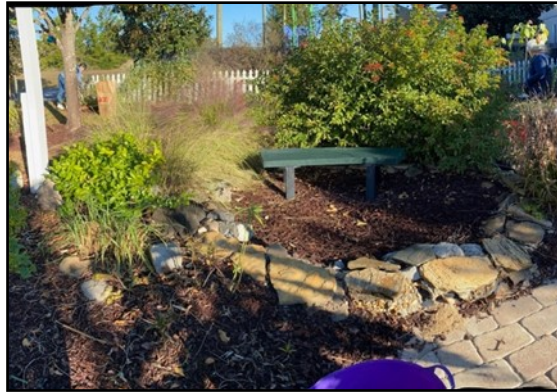


Figure 5. Center bed southern side



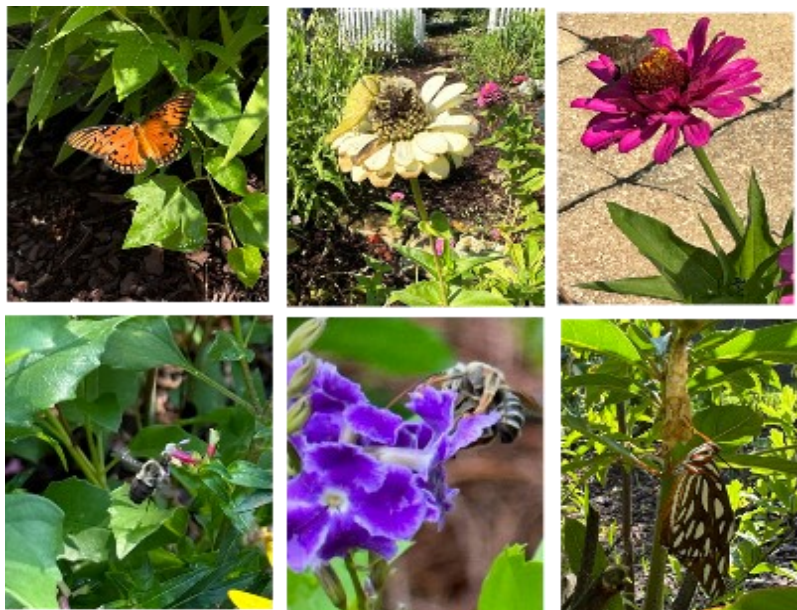
Figure 6. Eastern bed view NE to SW



Figure 7. Northern bed adjacent to playground



Figure 8. Birdhouse in western bed



All photos taken July 2023 by Linda Lillycrop

If you are interested in volunteering to help maintain the garden, please contact Linda Lillycrop at Linda.Lillycrop@yahoo.com or Patricia Fandt at fifiFlorida@gmail.com.

Indoor Gardening

Ellie Mascara, SRCMGV

If you are an avid gardener, you know that there is nothing more enjoyable than planting some seeds and watching them grow into beautiful plants. I place myself in that category. I love to play in the dirt, but I know there will come a day when I will no longer be able to twist and turn as I pull weeds, dig holes, and lug bags of mulch around my yard. An alternative to giving up gardening entirely might be growing plants indoors. This might seem like a difficult project, but I would like to share with you some tips for making an indoor garden a feasible alternative. For the purposes of this article, I am defining indoor gardening as growing a group of plants indoors that would typically be grown outside.

There are a few questions you should consider before you proceed. First, how big is the area that you can allocate for your garden? Is it small enough to grow in a single container or will it occupy a larger area in your home?

Secondly, what kinds of plants should you choose? With very few exceptions, vegetables and herbs can be grown successfully indoors. However, you can increase your chances of having a successful crop if your plants require similar growing environments. For example, carrots and radishes are root crops that grow well together. In general, hot peppers, tomatoes and lettuce do well in an indoor setting. Herbs such as chives, mint and parsley also thrive in an indoor garden.

One of the reasons why indoor gardens do well is because the gardener can control light and other factors in the environment. If a plant needs plenty of sun, it can be placed by a sunny window. If on the other hand, it needs low lighting conditions, it might be placed in a shady area of your home. In some circumstances an adjustable grow light might be needed to meet the needs of your plants.

There are several systems that can be used for indoor gardening. You might consider a soil-based system in which containers filled with enriched soil are used to grow plants. The advantage of this method is that, if necessary, the plants can be easily moved. This economic system is very much like traditional gardening, and it lends itself to small areas.

Another technique that has become increasingly popular is hydroponic gardening. When using this method, gardeners place their seedlings in water, add some liquid fertilizer, place them in a sunny area and watch as they develop strong root systems and grow into healthy plants.



Figure 1. This system can also be used on a smaller scale. Photo credit UF/IFAS

You can invest a lot or a little money in this method. Complex hydroponic systems can be purchased in stores and online. You also have the option of creating your own. An additional feature that you may want to include is placing fish in your water. They will provide fertilizer for your plants. This method is referred to as Aquaponics.

Glass terrariums can also be used as a container for growing plants indoors. It is ideal for humidity-loving plants such as ferns. Since terrariums come in several sizes, they can easily meet your space needs. Maintenance is minimal with this system.

Space is often a challenge for the indoor gardener. If your gardening area is limited, you might consider a vertical garden. An example of this concept is shown in Fig. 1. There are several gardening kits on the market which are specifically designed for vertical gardening. You might also opt for a kitchen counter garden. Again, these can be purchased online, or you may create your own. Bags or stacked pots are arranged vertically and watered from the top.

As you can see, there are several ways that you can satisfy your urge to “play in the dirt”. Whether you live in an apartment or you no longer find it easy to maintain an outdoor garden, think about the possibilities of indoor gardening.

Resources:

[Vertical Gardening - UF/IFAS Extension: Solutions for Your Life \(ufl.edu\)](https://www.ufl.edu/extension/vertical-gardening/)

[Indoor Gardening Systems: Endless Plant Possibilities \(thespruce.com\)](https://www.thespruce.com/indoor-gardening-systems-1387488)

Around our house...

Mike Burba SCRMGV

Hope everyone has a good Fourth and enjoys some fun outdoor activities! July, which is our wettest month of the year, lies in the middle of our rainy season that generally runs from early June to early September. It appears June may have taken the prize for the most monthly rainfall this year with those double-digit amounts we saw.

Over the last two months, I wrote about a plant discovered in a vacant lot near our house, the Tomato (*Solanum sisymbriifolium*) of the Solanaceae family of plants commonly known as Nightshades. I won't be able to make any more observations as the lot was totally cleared recently. See Figure 1. All trees and undergrowth were removed. One upside is, in the future I won't have to remove pine needles from the rain gutters every 3-4 months.

The replacement of our front yard with centipedegrass was completed in June. Here is a link for more information if you currently have or may be interested in getting centipedegrass.

[CENTIPEDEGRASS FOR FLORIDA LAWNS](#)



Figure 1. Vacant lot being prepared for building upon. Photo: M. Burba

One of the great joys of being a Master Gardener Volunteer is learning new and interesting things that are going on around us. For instance, I noticed a couple of perfectly round holes, about one half inch in diameter, in the side of a pole. One had what looked like an insect exoskeleton coming out. See Figure 2. Upon zooming in, it appears to be from a Large Carpenter Bee *Xylocopa virginica* (Linnaeus). It made sense with the size of the hole and its location in dead wood, which



Adult large carpenter bee, *Xylocopa* spp.

Photo credit: Paul M. Choate, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Exoskeleton of Large Carpenter Bee *Xylocopa virginica* (Linnaeus)

Photo credit: Mike Burba

carpenter bees like. We have a few on our pergola over the patio which we have been tolerating over the years and control with some minor insecticide use. Eventually the horizontal beams may start sagging down from their handywork, at which time I may wish more insecticide had been applied. See [Large Carpenter Bees](#).

Finally, where is my joy? While trying to find some images online of the final Carpenter Bee exoskeleton, I came across something called the Tiger Bee Fly. Never heard of it before so a learning opportunity presented itself! This fly is a large black fly, almost as big as the Carpenter Bee. It is a natural predator of the Carpenter Bee. They hang around where Carpenter Bees are making their tunnels and deposit eggs near the entrance when the female closes the tunnel opening. The eggs hatch and the fly larvae enter the tunnel. They eat the nutrients stored by the Carpenter Bee for its larvae. They then suck the life out of the bee larvae and eventually emerge from the tunnel and complete metamorphosis out of their exoskeleton. Needless to say, I will be watching for these flies around our pergola.

As always, it can't be stressed enough to contact the Extension office to discuss the best practices learned throughout decades of research at the University of Florida research centers. [Follow this link https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/) to the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension "Ask IFAS" website. Documents located there contain detailed, research-based information published in an easily understandable manner. Follow embedded links in EDIS documents for more detailed information and/or contact your local Extension office for more help.

Where can I find more information?

The UF/IFAS Extension Solutions for Your Life website and Gardening Solutions website offer online material, including pre-recorded webinars and videos, that can be accessed at your convenience.

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn-and-garden/>

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/>

In addition, we have our Master Gardener webinar page and our Gardening in the Panhandle web archives full of educational content.

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/volunteers/education/webinars.html>

<http://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/>

For a listing of local offices visit

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/find-your-local-office/>

Follow us on Facebook for updates

<https://www.facebook.com/SRCExtension/> Santa Rosa County Extension FB page:

<https://www.facebook.com/GardeningInThePanhandle/>

The Santa Rosa County residential horticulture agent, Josh Criss can be reached at 850-623-3868. joshua.criss@ufl.edu



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Contact US: to subscribe to the Garden Connection or make a comment,

email us at MGVNEWSLET@gmail.com