

## FLORAL CITY GARDEN CLUB HORTICULTURE HINTS FOR FEBRUARY 2019

We're into the time of year when the next cold front may bring freezing temperatures, but so far my yard has been frost free. Remember that plants in pots will be damaged before plants that are in the ground. Also, during the day when the temperature goes back up, if you put frost cloth or blankets over your plants, they can cook under cover. Historically we're not guaranteed frost-free until the second half of March. Luckily, nobody can say that our landscapes are too dry this winter, I have yard puddles and the lake is quite high.

Looking forward to our March 23 plant sale, remember to make your list of homegrowns for Mary Graff and fill out your order form for caladiums and native plants to pre-order and pay for at our February meeting.

If you read Jane Weber's column in the Sunday Chronicle, you have read about flowering vines recently, including our January plant of the month – Carolina Jessamine and Coral Honeysuckle. I have marveled at another flowering vine, the Mandevilla. I have one planted on the east side of my garage, supported by a small trellis. It comes in both pink and white varieties, does best in full sun and can tolerate fairly low moisture conditions. It doesn't overwhelm the space, stays green all year and blossoms regularly most of the year. On the other hand, the Wisteria vines that cover the 8-foot by 20-foot arbor which surrounds our pool pump and gardening storage space, which has very similar light, soil and water needs, grows very fast and needs to be trimmed back several times a year; it loses its leaves in the fall/winter and normally has a huge flush of lavender blossoms in the spring, with few flowers any other time of the year. Be sure you know what to expect from any new plant you purchase, especially if it a perennial, shrub, tree or vine. Consult the Extension Office, your garden center nursery experts or any one of many publications about Florida plants to be sure you get the right plant in the right place. Steven Davis will talk about choosing plants for sun and plants for shade for this month's program on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

Everyone should have received an email with the FFGC Convention schedule about a week after Mary Whisler talked about it at our January meeting. The topics for educational opportunities are wide-ranging, including: floral design, educational exhibits and award application hints, workshops for treasurers and presidents, trees and hurricanes, using the FFGC website, growing crotons and cordylines and Keep Florida Beautiful. These seminars, along with speakers at the meals are some of the best parts of the convention. When District Directors give their summaries of what clubs are accomplishing it is truly impressive what an impact Garden Clubs have around the state. Consider signing up to attend.

This is one of the few years when my winter garden has produced salad greens and tomatoes at the same time. We have enjoyed cherry tomatoes, Bibb lettuce, arugula and red romaine all through January. Blueberries are in full bloom, so they will need protection from frost to assure production from mid-April to mid-May. This year we will install bird netting so that we get most of the berries. The coreopsis in my wildflower garden have bloomed every month of the year. Roses, hibiscus, camellias and azaleas are also showing off right now.

The County's arborist has completed an inventory report on the condition of the oaks along Orange and Aroostook Avenues in the Historic District. Three dead or dying trees are slated for removal, 75 trees need pruning and several are recommended for fertilizer injection. We will work with the Heritage Council Tree Committee, the County Road Maintenance Division and their arborist to designate appropriate locations for replacement of as many trees as we can afford with our current reserved funds. The County has committed funds for tree removal, pruning and treatment for at least the next three years along with keeping the inventory updated. They will also water all newly planted trees.

Our field trip to Kanapaha Gardens and the Butterfly Rainforest in Gainesville was a big success. Come see what you may have missed when we have a slide show of flower and butterfly photos during our social time at 11am on the 8<sup>th</sup>. We will do another field trip in February to Leu Gardens in Orlando plus a stop at the FFGC Headquarters to see their landscape too. More details at the meeting.