



Photos courtesy of Marcia Beasley

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Floral City Garden Club: Stop! Don't pull that 'weed,' it's a wildflower

By **MARCIA BEASLEY**
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Along the Citrus County roadsides, the pink and white phlox have completed their blooming and are being replaced with Indian blanket. The rain lilies have bloomed with each fresh shower and now the wild petunia, *Ruellia Humilis*, are spreading lavender blossoms through out the area here in Floral City.

Wildflowers do not confine themselves to neatly maintained gardens; they are — as their name implies — wild flowers. When weeding those manicured gardens and lawns, one may be tempted to pull this relatively insignificant plant, but once a patch are established and blooming, they make a nice impression. And, they are perennials and do not have to be tediously planted year after year like their namesake the annual petunia.

Wild petunias do not require the consistent watering that annual petunias require in our area. They are drought tolerant, easily cared for and attract pollinators such as butterflies, humming birds and

bees. They grow in dry soil (think Florida sand), full sun to partial shade from early to late summer and are found throughout the continental United States.

If you are tempted to "pull that weed" just Google wild petunia and learn that you could pay up to \$40 for a three-pack of the plant! This wildflower does transplant and can be grown in a container. In our area, their home is in yards, along the roadsides and woodlands where it is free to bloom all summer.

The Floral City Garden Club members found a few wild petunias while maintaining the Floral City Community Memorial Garden. The Memorial Garden located next to the public library in the Floral City Town Center has been completed revived and ready to accommodate visitors as they "walk the labyrinth" or sit for a spell and contemplate.

As they worked in the garden, members discussed the idea of meeting again at President Carol Wood's home at 11 a.m. Wednesday, June 15, to



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plan next year's field trips, workshops, program and speakers.

They also were in agreement that they want to invite — to this gathering — anyone who is not a member who would like to learn about or suggest that the club give programs about certain horticulture, landscape or floral design or environmental topics or

suggest visits to related areas as a group field trip.

Interested non-members may call Carol at 81-235-3917 for directions to her home. Or if you have areas of interest that you would like to see the Garden Club present, call President Wood and share your interests. The club will do its best to present programs that the community would like.

Visit www.floralcitygardenclub.com for more information.