



It was the early 1990s and the Floral City Garden Club had completed a xeriscape exhibition garden in front of the post office for the 20th anniversary of Earth Day. They were ready to take on another area to beautify downtown Floral City.

The space between the Floral City Public Library and the Masonic Lodge building was in need of enhancement. In 1993 they developed plans for an in-ground brick labyrinth, fountain, seating area and a espalier on the library wall.

After presenting the plans to library services and the lodge, club members went about pruning, planting and mulching.

However, it took a couple years and discussions with five brick masons before one was found who would take on the complex labyrinth design. Stuart's Custom Masonry followed the scale drawings and construction was accomplish in November of 1995.

After the informative sign, an entrance arbor and walkway were added and dedication of the Floral City Community Memorial Garden was held on Oct. 27, 1996.

The club agreed there would be no names in the garden, only memories. Names in memorial are recorded in a special notebook and displayed in the Floral City Public Library. Informational flyers and donor cards are also available.

Anyone who desires to honor a Floral City resident may do so with a donation toward the perpetual maintenance of the community garden. Donors' names and that of the person being honored are recorded in the memorial book.

The in-ground brick labyrinth was the first of its kind to be constructed in Citrus County. Another known local labyrinth is at the site of the Unity Church of Citrus County in Beverly Hills.

Labyrinths are not limited to Citrus County. The Labyrinth Society states that as many as 61,000, including a few mazes, can be found in more than 85 countries. This international organization provides the location of all labyrinths that have been listed with them.

The Labyrinth Society supports all who create, maintain and use labyrinths. To view their website, visit labyrinthsociety.org.

A labyrinth is distinguished from a maze in the fact that it is a continuous path while a maze has dead ends. The labyrinth is a tool which once formed the heart of Christian spiritual practice.

One of the early Christian labyrinths is in the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France and dates from 1194 AD. During the crusades, when the journey to Jerusalem was too dangerous, Christians traveled to a pilgrimage cathedrals that contained a labyrinth.

The labyrinth contains the path, the center, the labrys and the lunations.

The path represents creation. It has 11 concentric circles and a 12th formed by the center. This number signifies the apostles, tribes of Israel and months of the year.

The center is a rose-shaped area and is symbolic of love. The six petals are symbolic of the six days of creation and one for each element: mineral, vegetable, animal, human, angelic and the unknown.

The labrys are the ten areas between the turns and the symbol of creativity, fulfillment, perfection and the commandments. When viewed from above they form a large cross.

The lunations are the outer ring of partial circles. In this design, these 30 lunations represent the monthly cycles of the year and the four quadrants of the labyrinth mark each quarter.

It is said that the labyrinth may mirror relationship themes. One moment you may be walking alongside someone and then in a flash, their path will turn and they will disappear from view.

The metaphors are endless and every venture into the labyrinth can harvest a different experience.

The Memorial Garden in the heart of Floral City is free and open 24 hours.

On Nov. 13, the annual Citrus County Walk Aware for Alzheimer's will be held in historic Floral City. Docents in period costumes will be on hand in the Memorial Garden from the Floral City Garden Club to provide more information.

During the summer, members continue to maintain their other community gardens in town and look forward to their next meeting at 11 a.m. Sept. 10 in the Floral City Community House in the town center.

For more club information and for the monthly horticulture hints, visit floralcitygardenclub.weebly.com or contact President Carol Wood at president@floralcitygardenclub.com