



# LEAF NEWSLETTER

Apollo Beach Garden Club, Inc 2017

March 2026 - Edition #74

"Just Keep on Planting"



## President's Message



*Happy March* to you all!

Whether Irish or not get ready to have some fun and maybe corn beef & cabbage you grew in your garden bed for dinner that day!



The Plant sale day was lovely, the plants looked their best in spite of Mother Nature's cruel cold weather. Teresa did a great job keeping the young plants warm and sale day worthy. The vendors were fun and the young ones in the Kids Entrepreneur Market were such fun to visit with. Each enthusiastic about their product and wanting to share how they made it. I got to visit almost all.

We still have some plants if needed for your garden. I also brought 4 trays of flowers from the Riverview Garden Club Flower Plant Sale last weekend. They are ½ price of what is on pot.

**Reminder** that the Florida Federation of Garden Club-District VIII **Plant Auction fundraiser** is this **Saturday March 8<sup>th</sup> starting at 10 AM** with *speaker Pamela Callander, of the Florida Native Plant Society to discuss Native Plants in your Landscape.* Following her presentation, the bidding on some really outstanding plants & other garden related items will begin. There is a beautiful birdhouse done by Diane and 2 raised beds made by Josh (a 2' and a 4' x 8') *Only cash or check with be accepted.* There is something for everyone's needs whether indoor, lanai, or landscape.

*Come join in the fun of an auction.* There will be light refreshments to enjoy. Doors of the **Ceramic/games building (on left) open at 9 AM.** Come early to view the selection.

If you want some fresh salt air and feeling of helping our environment at the Apollo Beach Nature Preserve then join us Sunday March 8<sup>th</sup> at 9AM, and many other volunteers to plant 400 - 2' Mangrove plants into the rocks on the edge of the water. It will be low tide. Its to the left as you drive in. Gloves and 'how to' will be provided. Wear suitable footwear, boots, sneakers, water shoes. **NO OPEN TOED** as we want you safe. Hat. This is part of the Jane Goodall Action of Hope called Breach the Beach. Come and join us!

Have fun in the garden, remember, although tempting, do not prune your plants until mid month. They are recovering from the cold stress so give them time to recover. Yes, they don't look very pretty, but check closely you will see new buds emerging.

Keep on planting it's our spring!



*Paula*  
**Paula Olesen,**  
President  
813  
512-1389

# Going...Going...Gone



## Plant Auction Saturday March 7th 10 AM

**Join us as we raise funds to replenish the grant fund budget available to local community gardens from North Pasco to South Sarasota Counties.**

**Guests will enjoy a light brunch offering with refreshments while Pam Callender from the Florida Native Plant Society presents "Growing Florida Native Plants in Your Landscape" before the Auction.**

**The Auction will consist of rare and exceptional specimen plants and highly coveted garden related items. Everyone loves the rare and unusual and we will have it.**

**Event is Open to the Public and there is free parking available. Come prepared to bid with CASH or CHECK only for payment.**

**Apollo Beach Garden Club 664 Golf and Sea Blvd  
(813) 512 - 1389**

## Garden Calendar of events

**Riverview Garden Club Garden Tour**  
**March 20<sup>th</sup>, Friday, 11:00 am**  
at Valerie Baptiste's home, 16728 Mooner Plank Circle. Wimauma, Fl. Cell 617-794-2533. She is going to show us how she does Hydroponic gardening. Bring a dish to share. Directions – Take 301S to 674 (Sun City Center Blvd), turn left on 674, then right on Lagoon Shore Blvd, turn left at Avid Reed Way, then right on Mooner Plank Circle. 16728 will be on your right



[Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota](#) features major art

exhibitions through its "[Jean & Alfred Goldstein Exhibition Series](#)," with the 2026 highlight being [Alexander Calder: The Nature of Movement](#) (Feb 8 – May 31, 2026).

# Plant Your Plate: Tomatoes

Free hands-on workshop on growing tomatoes for new gardeners

Participating Garden

**Apollo Beach Garden Club**  
Thursdays Starting 3/5 at 9am

### How it works

- Six weekly hands-on demonstrations
- Garden themed freebies on select events
- Choose a location and date convenient for you

Scan to register

**UF** IFAS Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

*Homegrown*  
Hillsborough

Hillsborough County Florida

An Equal Opportunity Institution.

Visit [www.FFGC.org](http://www.FFGC.org) to see the District's Winter Newsletter, other events such as the up-coming Convention April 14-17<sup>th</sup> in

**USF Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Festival**: April 11–12, 2026, featuring 40+ local growers, rare plants, and food trucks.



**Teresa Hall**  
ABGC Plant Sale & Marketing

### Spring Plant Sale Debrief

In addition to welcoming the Children's Entrepreneur Market as a fantastic induction to our vendor section just for optics alone, we surpassed our gross sales from the 2025 Spring Sale by a healthy margin. February 2025 gross sales came in around \$2,100. February 2026 gross sales are currently over \$2,600 and still climbing as patrons continue to stream in and purchase plants from our now functioning nursery area. This is a 23.8% YoY increase in revenue for our Spring Plant Sale and that margin is still rising rapidly with residual sales.

We had less foot traffic than in sales past, possibly due to the sale falling on the Valentine's holiday. I don't

like to hang out in the land of speculation, so we are not going to debate the choice or sale dates or reinvent a wheel that we've already reinvented a few times to land on the second Saturday in February for our Spring Sales and the second Saturday in November for our Fall Plant Sales. For this sale, we executed our best marketing campaign for a plant sale since I have been a member leading and participating in our plant sale events. Although volunteers may have felt the sale was a bit slow, it was a successful year-over-year growth event for the garden. Thank you to everyone who helped make this such a big WIN for the garden and our community.

One hot item to sell out quickly was the new Katrina Cucumbers we seed sourced because they produce primarily female flowers that will self-pollinate to grow prolifically in humid zone 10A. Seasoned gardeners were quite excited to try one out, as are we. Our hardcore followers all made a straight beeline for the Champion II tomatoes and I'm glad we made 3 times as many of those tomatoes as all the

other varieties. Those Champions carried our sale and made me proud. The new variety of REAL Spinach that will actually grow here was also a big hit, even if it didn't sell out completely. (We made a lot of it that is now in one of our community beds for us to share and seed harvest from because the seeds are hard to source and incredibly valuable).

I actually started a second batch of Katrina Cucumbers because now is their time! If you didn't get one, you still can. They should be ready by the 15th.

Working this event and talking with patrons was so rewarding. It was inspiring to hear the feedback about how well our plants have produced in home gardens, and it reassured me that we are most



definitely on the right path in how we now create all the plants for our sales. It is such a joy to be THE

garden with the most unique, the rarest, the most "plant hunted" plants available in Tampa Bay; all in order to help our fellow gardeners find success they can eat where others fail with an empty plate. It's FUN to be a leader. Sometimes scary, but mostly fun.



Thank you so much to everyone who helped make all these plants we're selling and trialing. Thank you for showing up and being such a magical part of what we are and what we can become every single day.



*January Minutes*

**TREASURER'S REPORT: Kathleen Willis**

Beginning Balance	\$ 9,185.04
Income	\$ 538.87
Expenses	\$ - 1,150.43
<b><u>Ending Balance</u></b>	<b><u>\$8,588.42</u></b>

Motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Jeanette Doyle and seconded by Megan Mcoldrick. The report was accepted unanimously.

**COMMUNITY FOREST GARDEN: Ev Barnes/Paula**

**Olesen**

Raleigh is in Costa Rica, will return Friday, January 23rd. The gardens look lush. Blueberry plots have been reworked and new blueberry plants added with refreshed soil.

**EVENTS AND MARKETING: Teresa Hall**

Started the Home School Academy on January 14, 2026 went well; 12 students attended. Will run 2 x per month 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday. Classes are full with a wait list.

Plant sale on Saturday, February 14, 2026. Will run classified ads 2 weeks before. Currently have 6 - 7 confirmed vendors. Any plant donations for the plant sale can be brought to the garden early as we have dedicated nursery space available to us.

Planting parties to resume Tuesdays and Saturday mornings.

Campaign with promotional fundraising event for Vego bed donations planned

Summer Learning and planting parties planned

**WEBSITE: Josh Thomas**

Website traffic from 2024 - 2025 saw an increase of 28% in views (3,400 up from 2,654) and 39% in unique visitors (1,600 up from 1,100).

We upgraded our domain to a paid WordPress plan last month. This allowed us to remove the ".wordpress" extension from our URL. This upgrade also allows set up of professional email forwarding, such as *contact@apollobeachgardenclub.com*, which establishes better trust with our community and partners.

The new digital Membership form and the availability to pay online was launched over the weekend.

Next Step: More Website redesign.

**MEMBERSHIP:** 31 paid members as of before Raleigh Barnes out of country. 3 available table beds.

**PROGRAMS:** Welcome new Programs Chair Lee Sutherland

**NEW BUSINESS: Tracy Osborne:**

Researching sites to redo our shirts. Looking at a dri-fit in both ladies and men's sizes, v-neck and crew neck styles.

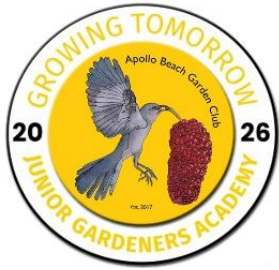
Other suggestions for new merchandise: tote bags, pins, magnets, car window clings, coffee mugs,

Teresa Hall made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ev Barnes. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Speaker Alyssa Vinson, Forestry Agent for Hillsborough County introduced. Trees for Central Florida's Landscape.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tracy Osborne

# Junior Gardeners Academy



Let's talk about a resilient group of little humans that are something seriously extra to learn from. Our Junior Gardeners Academy took their January freeze

losses in stride to make new plants for their garden bed, pronto! Many of them took initiative and just planted new seeds they wanted to grow and brought their new plants to put in their garden bed. They just knew to do it and surprised me with plant sale worthy quality starts they brought with them, beaming with pride. The Academy is rockin and rollin in their garden bed with Watermelon Radishes, different varieties of corn, one popcorn corn plant, zucchini, cucumber, carrots, romaine lettuce and Daikon Radish. And one very rare Champion II tomato that Skyla started and brought during the plant sale to plant.

We intend to submit what they are able to grow in a 4H Competition though UF/IFAS in April, so we are helping them try to grow things fast and furiously. I had the students plant some Daikon seeds Raleigh gave out at last year's Coalition of Community Gardens Annual event. I chose these seeds because the plants grow MASSIVE and FAST. When a little person can grow something quickly that they can yank out of the ground at half their height, it is beyond a powerful experience to witness and document in photos! I personally can't wait. We even taught them how to thin last week so they can get a bigger root that WINS.

Our parents are beginning to tell us their littles wake up too early on class days because they are so excited to come to class, bring their plants and plant them in their garden bed. They always get to explore our garden and learn from our guest speakers and our teachers. Despite the "no running in the garden" rule, they RUN through the gate, excited to come greet, learn and grow with us. How utterly magical and a sight to behold even if have to regularly bark as kindly as possible, "no running".

On Feb 11th, garden member Lee led our class in how to "smell the flower and blow the bubbles" to develop deep breathing exercises that help us through powerful emotions. Lee also had our students make their own special take home art bouquet from the garden; called Garden Art. She had them draw a vase on cardboard and then run around the garden to collect live flowers to make the vase. Everyone loved her class and asked when she could come back.

On Feb 25th, Paula led our class on how to make a worm farm! She brought her own worm farm to demonstrate so the kids could see how a colony of worms lives. She brought supplies so the kids could make their OWN new worm farm and Mary Bruce from UF/IFAS brought the worms, take home activities, print outs and more. For gardens that haven't yet partnered with UF/IFAS, make a phone call. Make new friends. Fill your garden with people who want to be there and value what you offer.

This month on March 11th, Sam the King Bee will be teaching on how bees help us grow food, how we can protect them, guide a hunt through the garden to identify them, educate on how we can help them and students can try on a bee suit for photo-opus.

On Mar 25th, Paula will be teaching everyone about our butterfly pollinator friends. She has a butterfly house cage to use and will be taking over a new table bed in the garden to demonstrate what needs to be planted JUST for our butterflies.

We are so grateful to offer unique educational opportunities in our local area. We've only just begun. Come learn with us.

Teresa Hall  
Instructor  
Junior Gardeners Academy

# Junior Gardeners Academy





## Apollo Beach Community Forest Garden

Raleigh Barnes: Garden Forest Coordinator, Membership & Scholarship Chair

# EDIBLES TO PLANT IN *March*



	North	Central	South
 <b>EASY TO TRANSPLANT</b>	Arugula, Boniato, Eggplant, Kohlrabi, Peppers, Swiss Chard, Tomatillo, Tomatoes	Boniato, Chinese Cabbage, Gingers, Kohlrabi, Peppers, Roselle, Sugarcane, Tropical Spinaches	Boniato, Chinese Cabbage, Endive, Gingers, Roselle, Sugarcane, Tropical Spinaches
 <b>TRANSPLANT CAREFULLY</b>	Spinach, Sweet Potatoes	Amaranth, Calabaza, Long Squash, Luffa, Papaya, Pigeon Pea, Pineapple, Seminole Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes, Yucca	Amaranth, Calabaza, Papaya, Pineapple, Seminole Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes, Yucca
 <b>USE SEEDS</b>	Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupes, Carrots, Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Onions (bunching), Peanuts, Peas (English, southern), Radish, Squashes, Watermelon	Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupes, Chayote, Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Onions (bunching), Peas (southern), Radish, Squashes, Watermelon	Beans (bush, lima, pole), Cantaloupes, Chayote, Corn, Okra, Onions (bunching), Peas (southern), Radish, Squashes, Watermelon



For more information, please visit [GardeningSolutions.ifas.ufl.edu](http://GardeningSolutions.ifas.ufl.edu)



## Review of Raised Bed Lease process

Many approach members during Volunteer Work Days inquiring about the rental of a raised bed. Here is a refresher of the simple 3 step process!

### **Step 1.**

Volunteer at least 10 hours on Tuesday and/or Saturday mornings. This will help us get to know each other and coach you on the basics of how the garden operates, where tools are and how to use them. During this time, you will also learn a bit about the [Lease Agreement](#) which you can download on the

website. It is your responsibility to be familiar with its contents before you are assigned a raised bed. \*\*Don't forget to sign-in the White Binder every time you come to volunteer so we can track your hours together.

### **Step 2.**

Once the 10 hours have been completed, you are ready to fill out a [Membership Form](#) which can be downloaded from the website. You will bring this form together with corresponding payment to the following *Membership Meeting* on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm.

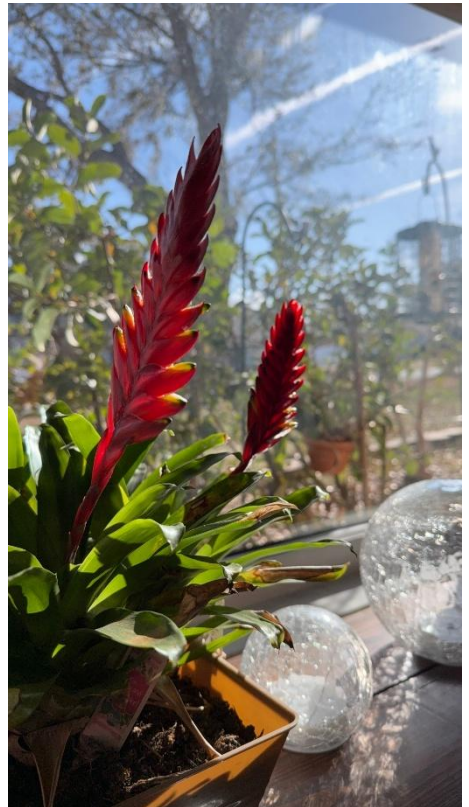
### **Step 3.**

At the Membership Meeting, you will be assigned a raised bed after a brief quiz on the Lease Agreement. You are ready to garden away!

*"Every weed you pull might be medicine. Every bug you see could be a pollinator. Look closer – nature never makes mistakes."* (Author unknown)

**"The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies." -Gertrude Jekyll**

# Member's Photos



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## Volunteer to help always needed!!



### Garden Visitor Hours -

Open to the Public

Tuesday and Saturday from 9 to 11

Garden is closed on Holidays

To schedule a tour outside regular hours email

[apollobeachgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:apollobeachgardenclub@gmail.com)



### *Object and Mission of the **Apollo Beach Garden Club, Inc.:***

**The Object** of the corporation is to enrich outdoor garden experiences through education programs, public awareness, and oversight of the Apollo Beach Community Forest Garden.

**The Mission** is for residents of Apollo Beach and the South Shore Community to learn about various common edible and Florida-friendly plants; and to also understand the significance of local environmental issues, opportunities and regenerative efforts.





## 2025-2026 Elected Board



**President:** Paula Olesen

**Secretary:** Tracy Osborn

**Treasurer:** Kathleen Willis

**Community Forest Garden Coordinator:** Raleigh Barnes

**Director of Marketing & Events:** Teresa Hall

**Past President:** N/A



### Committee Chairs

**ABGC Leaf Newsletter Editor Chair:** Jeanette Doyle

**Facebook:** Teresa Hall

**Membership Chair:** Raleigh Barnes

**Webmaster:** Josh Thomas

**Program Chair:** Leah Sutherland

**Scholarship Chair:** Raleigh Barnes



Board meets ***the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday evening at 6 pm*** at the Recreation Center

*Our meetings are open and may be attended by any member.*

*Membership Meetings quarterly*

All inquiries to be sent to: [apollobeachgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:apollobeachgardenclub@gmail.com)

