

Mandarin Garden Club

**Some Newsletters
2013--2015**



As part of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, a Flower Show was held every year. Belonging to the Federation was costly in time and money. At the Annual Meeting in May 1990, ballots were used to determine whether our club would stay in the Federation or not: 21 voted to withdraw and 12 voted to remain in the Florida Federation. And so it was decided that the Mandarin Garden Club would become an independent club.



Susan Westermann formed Live Oak, a new evening circle during the year 2002-2003.

Sept. 4, 2003

A Brief History of the Mandarin Garden Club, by Kitty McCaffrey

In 1944 when Mandarin was only a rural village with back roads leading to a general store and a post office, the president of the Mandarin Community Club appointed a Beautification Committee. The committee accomplished little that year. So the president the following year asked Carolyn Adams to form a garden club. The Mandarin Garden Club was born in the fall of 1945 with 30 members. The members met at the Mandarin Community Club until their meeting room flooded.

Bert Foshee shared her sadness at the loss of the meeting room with her husband who was a contractor. He told her to find a piece of land suitable for a clubhouse and he would construct the building. She found the current site on Loretta Road. The land was purchased, and the building was completed in 1967. The mortgage was burned in 1987.

Initially the club was interested mostly in preserving and planting trees in Mandarin. Club members planted hundreds of many kinds of trees. Many programs were given on preserving the environment and every aspect of gardening. Over the years the club has sponsored many programs in the schools to educate children to understand and enjoy nature; junior gardening programs have been conducted by club members, and the club has sent many students to summer camp.

The club has sponsored many kinds of service projects and fund raisers over the years. The foremost goal of the membership has always been to educate the members, residents of Mandarin, and the youth in the many aspects of taking care of and beautifying our community.

Profits from fund raising projects have been used for service projects and to maintain and improve the building and grounds.

In 1988 Mary Howe, a garden club member and Master Gardener, suggested that the club invite the Duval County Extension Department to use the grounds for a demonstration garden. This joint venture began the fall of 1988 and continues today. The demonstration garden is behind the building. There is an ornamental section with five beds, a ginger garden, a butterfly garden, a bed of ornamental grasses, a daylily bed, and the beginning of an antique rose bed.

In 1992, Dr. Dekle Taylor, a retired Mandarin physician and avid horticulturist, donated many native plants to the club. These plants along with plants purchased by grant money from FNPA (Florida Native Plant Association) were used by the Master Gardeners from the Extension Department to turn the front lawn into a Native Plant Garden.

Both of these gardens provide pleasant and interesting walks for many visitors. They are open to the public. Both gardens are currently planted and maintained by Master Gardeners from the Extension Department.

The Mandarin Garden Club presently has four groups and is open to membership. We are always involved in community projects and improving the skills of our members. We look forward to having new members who are interested in helping to further the goals of the club.

