

Sun Lakes Garden Club

April 2024 Newsletter

“Cultivating gardens and friendships”



APRIL 16TH MEETING:

Our speaker this month is Darrell Grossen. He’s known as “that crazy guy that makes ice cream out of EVERYTHING!”. Or, “that crazy guy who loves to grow LOTS of bananas” . . . in Arizona...very successfully...using only drip irrigation.

Darrell will share his story, what he's learned, and some great feedback about his favorite and most successful varieties he’s tried in his yard.

Why Did Darrell Go Bananas?

“In December 2016, I had a major foot surgery that was supposed to be a 6-8 week healing time. However, it was much more intense than I originally thought and I ended up being down for 12 weeks.

After driving the family crazy and watching everything possible on Amazon Prime and Netflix, I found the Arizona Rare Fruit Growers and the Phoenix Fruit Growers group on Facebook. I found out they had a sale going on. I talked my wife into driving me there to buy some of the leftover bare root trees. We met a bunch of the members and found this crazy guy with banana pups. I thought he was out of his mind. I thought there was no way that they would grow here. After talking to him for a while, I found out that he lived about 1.5 miles from me. I asked if we could come by and see his garden, as I was still skeptical. When I saw his yard and tasted his bananas I was hooked”.
Fast Forward 7 years later.

Fast-forward 7 Years...

I am now trying to grow 25 different banana varieties in my yard. I have gotten fruit on several of them. I don't have flood irrigation, so I am watering them using driplines. I have different challenges in my yard with rocks and other landscaping challenges. I dug up over 36 oleanders, killed the Ruellia 6 times, and pulled up the Russian sage.

We have now turned our backyard into a tropical oasis. We not only have bananas, but we have mango, guava, passion fruit, papaya, starfruit, loquat and many other trees in the yard.



I'll be discussing what I have done to plant, water, feed and grow these wonderful fruits in Arizona. The AZ Rare Fruit Growers club has taught me a lot about growing bananas. My kids love to grow them and their friends love to go outside and wander around our yard. It's fun to see the next generation get excited about growing things in the yard.

I just might inspire you to "Go Bananas" like I did.

I'm looking forward to speaking to your club on April 16th"

Thanks, Darren

APRIL 26TH FIELD TRIP: OMG! Who would think that there are thousands of varieties of AFRICAN VIOLETS! And each one has a name, like roses and orchids do. This is a photo of only a few identified on their website that start with the letter "E"! (This writer thought there were only a few variations, like Geraniums.)

We thought it would be fun to see what the National Association of African Violet members do for a convention and it's open to the public on Friday, April 26th 9-5pm.

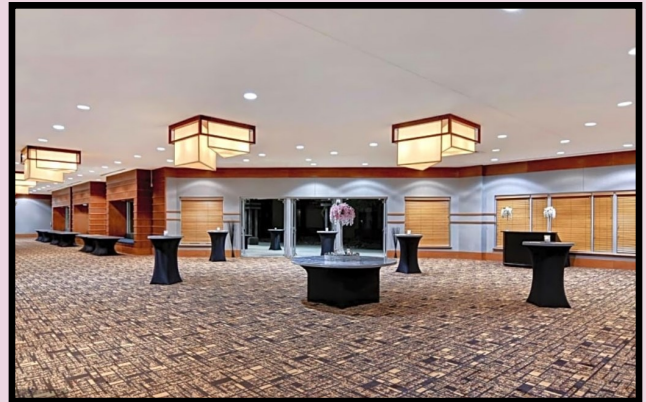
We thought it would be fun to see what the National Association of African Violet members do for a convention and it's open to the public on Friday, April 26th 9-5pm.



CONVENTION ADMISSION IS \$5.

We'll gather at our new carpool location at the Flagpole area near Subway Sandwiches on Riggs Road, near Glenburn Dr. at 9:15 AM on **FRIDAY** April 26th. Departure is 9:30 AM sharp.

The National African Violet Convention will be held at the DoubleTree Hilton at 2100 S. Priest Drive, Tempe.



Afterward, we'll gather for lunch at Pita Jungle at 1850 W. Southern Avenue in Mesa (across the street from the Mesa Rose Garden near Dobson.)



Our March Field Trip was a private tour by Chuck, at Desert Horizon Nursery in Queen Creek. He's been in the business for 50 years and this is his post-retirement gig.



Chuck answered SO MANY of our questions and taught us about each section: Succulents, Cacti, Stone Fruit Trees, Citrus Trees, House Plants, Shade trees and their imported pots from Viet Nam that last 50 years.

The members enjoyed a gourmet lunch in a private dining room at SAGE & BARREL Craft Eatery in Queen Creek after the nursery tour.



"THANK YOU PAT McCLINTIC FOR ANOTHER FUN FIELD TRIP!" (Pictured in aqua stripes on the far right.

Below: Members awaiting the introduction of our speaker on March 19th. Tony Sarah spoke to a full house. He had a great slide presentation and answered a variety of gardening questions from our members. He created "Tony's Magic Flower Mix"



V.P. Barbara Kiley & Tony Sarah

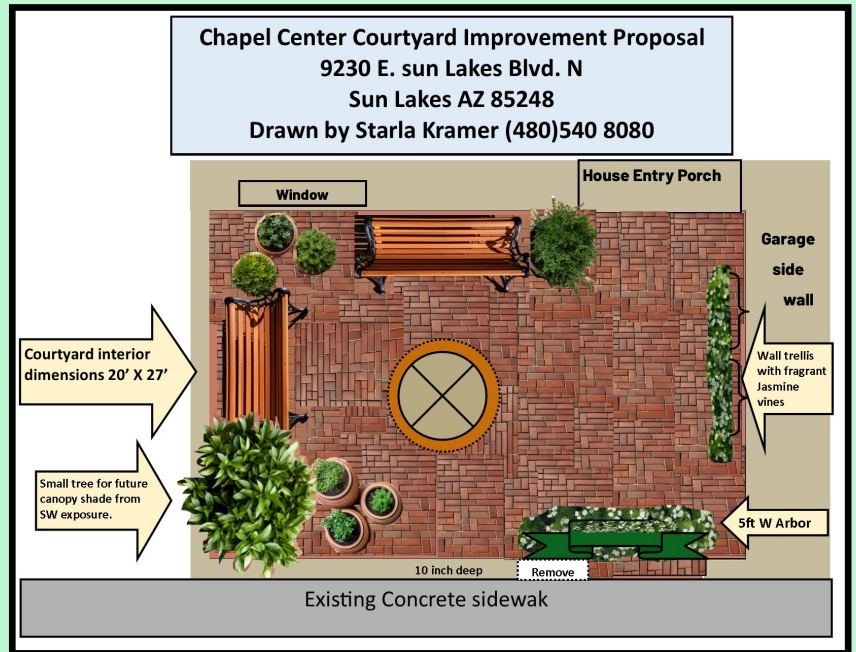


Be Creative
Anything Can Be a Planter

- What can you think of?



Our club is pleased to donate \$1,000 toward the CHAPEL CENTER ENHANCEMENT Project. We have received \$2,500 in total donations, so far. Many from our generous members and the Weeder's Garden Club donated \$200 to show their support!



I can help you sign up for our March field trip to Desert Horizon Nursery and lunch at "Sage and Barrel".

I'm hosting the club Pizza Party on my patio after the 2024 Members' Garden Tour. Sign up here. It's \$15 for Pizza, Salads, brownies & lemon bars, and Iced tea!



NOTE: Our new Carpool location is by the flagpole near Subway Sandwichs on Riggs Road near Glenburn ..



Pat McClintic & Sonja Walcker

on

I'd like to thank all of the members that prepared lovely refreshments for us today.

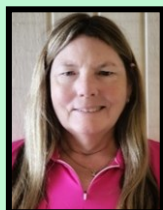


Lelia Hall, Our Refreshment Coordinator, set up another lovely table for our March meeting.

She's hoping someone will fill in for her to organize the volunteers and set up the table this summer while she's visits her mum in the UK.



Nancy Sjolín brought a big fresh fruit platter



Sonja Walcker (Our Photographer) brought Fresh Squeezed Orange Juice.



Kim Rector baked 2 kinds of cookies (1 was Gluten-Free!)



Renee' Simpson baked a batch of Lemon Bars



Renee's sister, Denise Haynie, baked Banana Nut bread and a batch of Brownies.



Patrice Reis baked Chocolate Chip Banana nut muffins shaped like little butterfly's! Too cute. She also brought a big bowl of fresh fruit.





**Valerie Bishop & Ginger Voltmer
Raffle Queens**

I love my St. Paddy's Day themed basket. I got some green gardening gloves and a beautiful framed needlepoint picture of a little barrel cactus. I hope the Raffle Queens know that I appreciated all of the many gifts inside my basket.

Congratulations to our winners and "Thank You" to all of the members that purchase tickets to help us pay our \$100 professional speakers fee each month.



Corrine Gresen, Renee' Simpson, Barb Kull and Mary Sample.

Everyone paid their dues for 2024 except a few people that moved away or had other activities.

Karen is showing me how to enroll our new members, so she can retire.

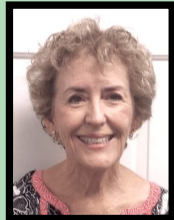
We have 145 members! I'm pleased that Candace Cox has volunteered to be Kat's "Membership Team-mate."



Ginger Voltmer-Treasurer



Kat Karpinen & Karen Downing



Candace Cox

SNEAK PEEK FOR JUNE 20th FIELD TRIP.



The Lavender Farm at Chateau De Vie. 1220 N Kyrene, Chandler

We'll gather at our new carpool location at the Flagpole area near Subway Sandwiches on Riggs Road, (near Glenburn Dr.) at 9:15 AM on THURSDAY, JUNE 20TH. (They're not open on Tuesday)
Departure is 9:30 AM sharp.



ENTRANCE FEE FOR THE 30 MINUTE TOUR IS \$20.

We'll have time to check out their gift shop and then gather for lunch.



440 W. Warner Road Tempe/Chandler
(Highly recommended by Kim Rector)

Welcome New Members



Ellie Smith “I love to garden! I’ve spent the last 52 years gardening in Georgia and was in a garden club there.” Ellie also loves to read all kinds of books and she enjoys traveling.



Chris Woodring
I’m a ‘Newbie’. New to the Southwest, new to Sun Lakes, and new to gardening. I recently retired and am looking forward to new opportunities.



Kerry Schafer

“When I grew up in Iowa we had a large vegetable garden every year. Then I lived in Arizona from 1988-2011. During that time I had a small vegetable garden and a beautiful bed of roses. I moved to Georgia from

2011-2020. I belonged to a garden club there and was the president for a few years. I learned a lot about growing on the red GA clay. I’m excited to get back into gardening now that I’m back in the desert.” (Kerry, We have clay here too, but it’s brown)



New Members Continued



Gloria Williams

One of the things Gloria enjoys is dancing. She heard about the garden club from Diane Beatty.

Gloria came to the March meeting with her friend Linda Dural and they both decided to join! Gloria was able to go to lunch after the meeting and she fit right in! Linda and her husband Mike have lived in Sun Lakes for 6 years.



Linda Dural

“ I enjoy gardening, card games, scrabble and spending time with friends. I came to the March meeting with my friend Gloria and we liked the meeting so much, that we both decided to join. We’re looking forward to meeting new people while getting gardening tips from experts.”



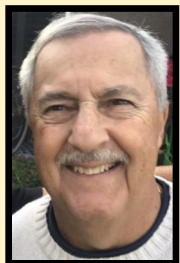
Beverly Johnson

“ I enjoy cooking and gardening. I saw your publicity in the Sun Lakes SPLASH and thought it sounded interesting.

I came and I joined! “

Member Submission:

from Vince and Vicki Sciberras



FRANK AND ERNEST THAVES



Alice Traeger and Annette Overholt have volunteered to complete the last half of 2024 as our new Field Trip Coordinators, starting this summer. They shared several fun ideas at the recent board meetings and Pat McClintic and Debbie Amato will be helping them with the transition. Pat & Debbie have done an amazing job and we appreciate the many interesting trips they planned for us over many months.



It's time to head back to Schnepf Farms again.

Our last trip was 4 years ago.

24810 s. Rittenhouse Rd. Queen Creek.

Mark your Calendars for
Thursday May 23rd.



We'll gather at our new carpool location at the flagpole area near Subway (sandwich shop) on Riggs Road, near Glenburn Dr. at 9:45 AM **on Thursday May 23rd (They don't offer Tuesday Tours)** Departure is 10:00 AM sharp.

Arizona Treasure Tour and lunch \$24

Experience one of Arizona's top Agritourist locations and hear about this fourth generation family farm while enjoying a ride through the organic orchards and gardens, visiting the Farmhouse Museum and Country Store & Bakery. Tour Begins at 11:00am to 1:00pm. (We'll have approx.30 minutes to browse their Country Store before the tour) .

- Our group will be Greeted by a tour host
- Train rides (wheelchair accessible) through gardens and orchards
- Guided Tour on a covered hay wagon around the farm as you hear about the 80 plus year history of this unique family farm.
- Stops at the Schnepf Family Museum housed in the 100 year old family home.
- Lunch includes Bottled Water, Garden fresh grilled chicken salad with warm dinner rolls, topped off with a slice of peach pie.
- (Vegetarians can pre-order chicken-Free salad.)

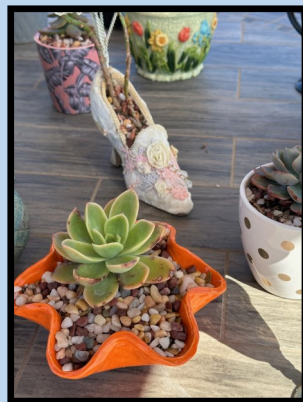
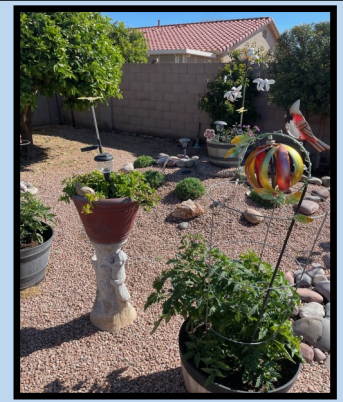
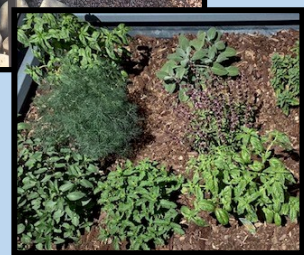


IF YOU WANT TO RESERVE A PEACH PIE TO TAKE HOME OR SCHEDULE TO U-PICK PEACHES,

VISIT THEIR WEBSITE SchnepfFarms.com

House # 1 of the Members' Garden Tour 2024

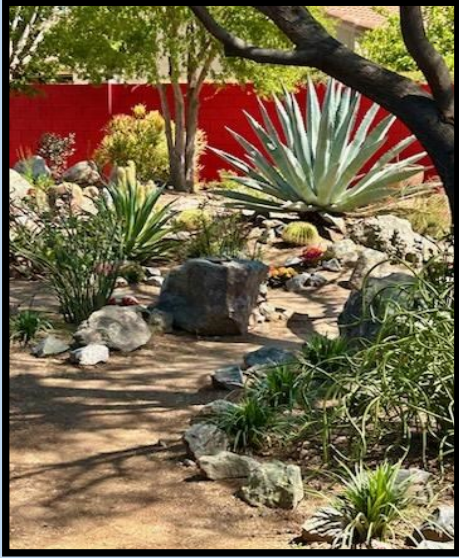
Home of Valerie Bishop



Valerie's daughter creates these fun succulent dish gardens and they are available for purchase. Call Jill (775) 544-8682 for info. (They make great gifts!)

House # 2 of the 2024 Members' Garden Tour.

John and Teddi Holzemer



Do you see the "Annoyed Face" on this Totem pole Cactus in the front yard?

"The privacy screen is made of Lodge Pole Pine with bark. A Lumber company in N. Phoenix brought it in from Colorado and Utah. It's been up for 12 years and still standing strong. "Teddi

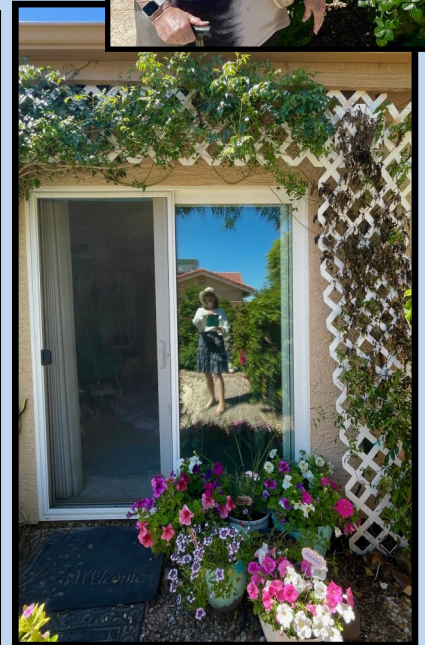
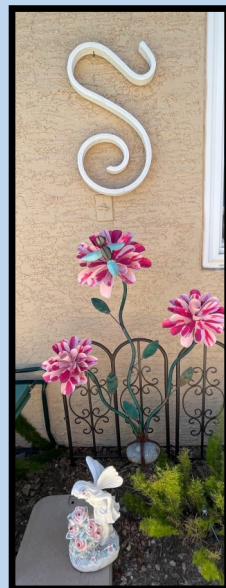
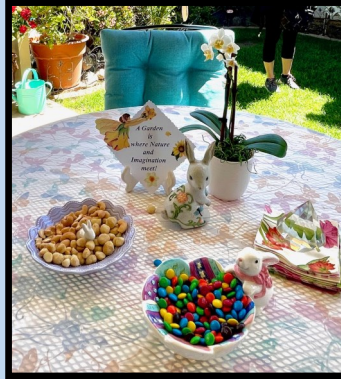
House # 3 on the 2024 Members' Garden Tour. Tom Gartner & Lori Regni



Next Month we'll share the "Before & After" transformation including the front yard designed by Jamie from Brown Dog Landscaping. She'll be our May meeting speaker!



Garden # 4 on the 2024 Members' Garden Tour. Home of Brad and Patrice Reis





The 5th stop on the Garden Tour is the patio of Barry & Sonja Walcker, who hosted the Pizza luncheon.

“The calm before the storm”. All set-up and ready for a party!

60 people. . .


13 pizzas, salads, lemon bars and brownies!



Happy Birthday to our new member Cinda Sue.

★ HAPPY ★ BIRTHDAY!

CHAPEL CENTER COURTYARD ENHANCEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

THE BAD NEWS IS: The Greater Sun Lakes Community Foundation denied the grant request in March due to a rule that they won't donate for any construction or labor. The grant request had been re-written for their April 3rd meeting, and the foundation President requested \$5K for 2 benches, 1 arbor, 1 trellis, a shade tree for the SW corner and some plants. It was still voted down 3 to 4, stating that it was still considered construction.  This was very disappointing, because they didn't even offer to purchase 1 bench.



THE GOOD NEWS IS: We received \$2,500 in donations, from Patrice & Brad Reis, Teddi & John Holzemer, The Weeders Garden Club, Netta Shively, Shirley Niles, Butch Hall, Starla Kramer, Barbara Kiley, and \$1,000 from the Sun Lakes Garden Club. We also had some free labor from Butch and Starla and 3 big pots donated by Gigi Mannheimer! SO WE GOT STARTED with what we had. We now have a brand new irrigation system, a wider wall opening with a lovely arbor, 2 benches (hold 800lbs) lots of pots and plants! No more outdated scalloped cement dividers. No more porch screens or ashtray can. **WE STILL NEED A**



**SHADE TREE
AND BRICKS
REPLACING
THE CON-
CRETE
WALKWAY.**

NEED HELP? CONTACT A BOARD MEMBER



Starla Kramer
Pres. /Newsletter
(480) 540 8080



Diane Beatty
Past President
(480) 895 3687 Home



Barbara Kiley
Vice Pres./Speaker
Coordinator
(813) 390-2710



Bonnie Jandak
Secretary
(520) 247-0839



Alice Traeger & Annette Overholt
Field trip Coordinators
(907) 244-9590 (206) 240-6744



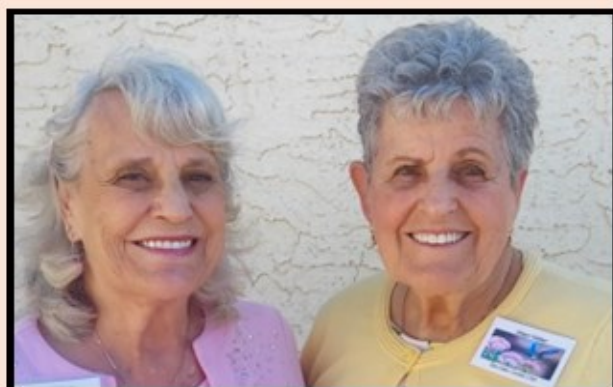
Lelia Hall
Refreshment
Coordinator
(941) 780-3576



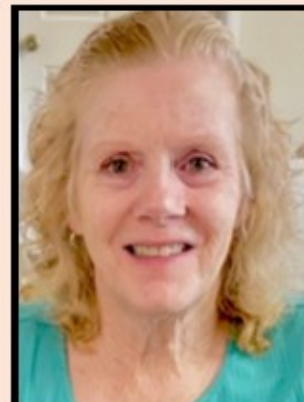
Barb Kull
Librarian
(845) 392-5933



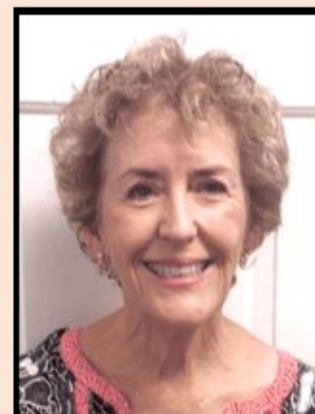
Sonja Walcker
Photographer &
Name Badges
(303) 564 4118



Valerie Bishop & sister Ginger Voltmer
Raffle Queens and Ginger is our Treasurer
(415) 606-7304 (602) 369-2765



Kat Karpinen & Candace Cox
Membership Team/Friendly Greeters
(515) 556-6825 (480) 277-7592





Be sure to forward this to your friends who may want to visit us or become a member. Members may join from any town.

We meet all year on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. We greet visitors and enjoy refreshments from 9:30am-10:00 am. We have a featured speaker and a club meeting until Noon. After the meeting, we invite everyone to join us for lunch (optional) at a selected restaurant nearby.

We meet in the Chapel Center at 9230 E. Sun Lakes Blvd. N., Sun Lakes, AZ 85248. It is next door to Sun Lakes All Faiths Church and across the Street from the Sun Lakes Country Club.

Go to SunLakesGardenClub.org for more information.

Sun Lakes Garden Club

"CULTIVATING GARDENS & FRIENDSHIPS"

HOME

THE CLUB

MEMBERSHIP

CALENDAR

RESOURCES

NEWSLETTERS

GALLERY

INFORMATION FOR SPEAKERS

CLUB ROSTER

