



EDISON  
and  
FORD  
winter  
ESTATES

HOMES · GARDENS · MUSEUM  
LABORATORY

MEMBER  
MAGAZINE

APRIL  
2021

# EDISON and FORD winter ESTATES

2350 McGregor Boulevard  
Fort Myers, FL 33901  
239.334.7419  
[edisonford.org](http://edisonford.org)

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## MEMBERSHIP

To become a member of Edison Ford,  
apply at [edisonford.org/membership](http://edisonford.org/membership)

## CONNECT WITH US



## Something Special is Coming

### The Connection of Edison and Baseball

Thomas Edison loved baseball; he enjoyed it so much that he sponsored two semi-pro teams: the Edisons and the Voltas.

While Edison was in Fort Myers, he visited Terry Park during the Philadelphia Athletics' spring training season. During that time, he hit balls with Ty Cobb, posed for photos with the Athletics' general manager, Connie Mack, and entertained the team at this Fort Myers winter estate with refreshments and cigars.

### Fast forward almost 100 years ...

Connie Mack III (Connie Mack's grandson) visited the Estates on March 17 to help us create a new museum exhibit that will feature artifacts that belonged to the Athletics' team and Connie Mack's family. The opening of the new exhibit is scheduled to open later this year.

As we get closer to the exhibit opening date, more of this story will unfold. We hope you will all come see the exhibit and celebrate this special connection with us!

### What we're doing to keep you safe:

- All employees are required to wear masks and practice social distancing.
- Surfaces, such as counters and doors are being disinfected daily.
- Plastic shields have been installed at the ticket counter.
- Sanitizer stations are placed throughout the site.
- Visitors are required to wear masks during Holiday Nights, at events, on guided tours and all indoor locations, such as the museum, laboratory retail areas and the ticket office.
- Masks are available for sale in the Museum Store for 50 cents.
- Signs are posted, alerting visitors to practice social distancing.

**As always, members get in free. We hope to see you soon!**



White Shaving Brush Tree (*Pseudobombax ellipticum*)

## GENERAL HOURS

Open Daily  
9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

## ADMISSION

### Guided Tour:

Edison Ford Members: \$5  
Adults: \$30  
Teens: (ages 13-19) \$25  
Children: (ages 6-12) \$18

Children: (ages 5 and under) FREE

### Self-Guided Tour:

Edison Ford Members: FREE  
Adults: \$25

Teens: (ages 13-19) \$20  
Children: (ages 6-12) \$15  
Children: (ages 5 and under) FREE

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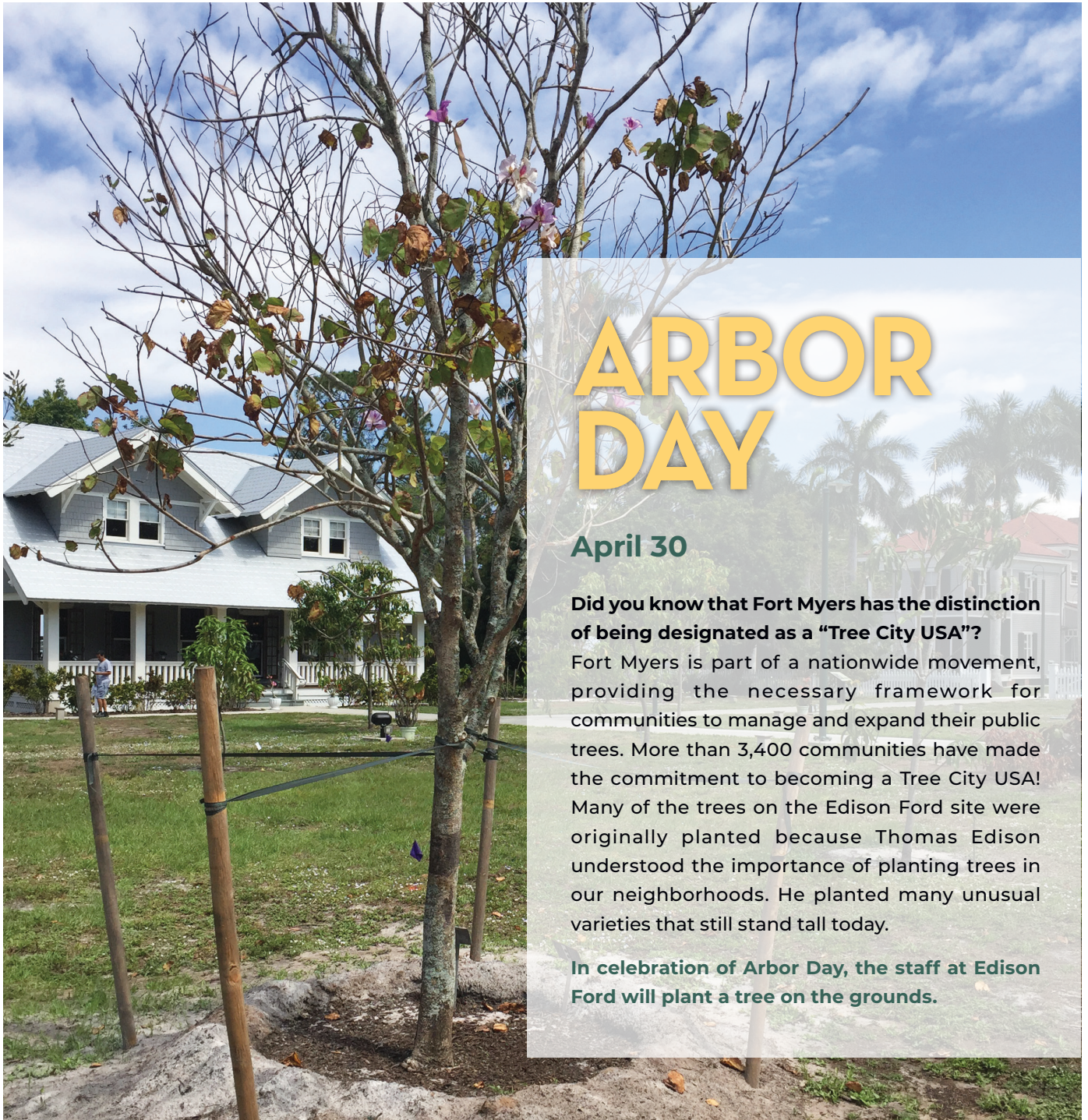
On the cover: A red *Bombax ceiba* that was planted last year on the Ford property. In addition to beautiful flowers, this tree sports impressive thorns along the trunk.

## Drag Queen **BINGO** to Benefit Edison Ford

**JOIN US** at the **Nauti Parrot Dock Bar on San Carlos Blvd.** for Drag Queen Bingo to raise money for a new orchid pergola! Each month, the restaurant selects a nonprofit to benefit and this month, they selected Edison Ford!

Bingo will take place on **April 6, 13, 20, and 27 at 7:30 p.m.**

It costs \$20 to play and 50% of the proceeds will come back to Edison Ford!



# ARBOR DAY

**April 30**

**Did you know that Fort Myers has the distinction of being designated as a “Tree City USA”?**

Fort Myers is part of a nationwide movement, providing the necessary framework for communities to manage and expand their public trees. More than 3,400 communities have made the commitment to becoming a Tree City USA! Many of the trees on the Edison Ford site were originally planted because Thomas Edison understood the importance of planting trees in our neighborhoods. He planted many unusual varieties that still stand tall today.

**In celebration of Arbor Day, the staff at Edison Ford will plant a tree on the grounds.**



## Clara Ford

*“I would not have made it without Clara.” – Henry Ford*

April 11, 2021 marks the 155th anniversary of Clara Ford’s birthday. “The Great Believer,” as Henry called her, supported and advised her husband throughout their long marriage, but her faith in him began in 1885.

The third of 10 children, Clara met her future husband at a dance on New Year’s Day. They were engaged in April of 1886 and married in 1888. They received 40 acres of land from William Ford, Henry’s father, in the hopes the young family would put down roots in the area. Instead, Henry used funds from selling lumber from the land to move to Detroit. Over the next twenty years, Clara kept faith in her husband as he pursued his goal of manufacturing automobiles, had their only child Edsel, and lived in 11 different homes. In 1915, the family moved into Fair Lane, their mansion in Dearborn, Michigan. The home included an indoor swimming pool, a billiards room, bowling alley, and dance floor.

Clara managed the estate staff and enjoyed gardening, birding, and traveling with her husband. This included traveling to Fort Myers, the first time in 1914. Only a few weeks before, Henry had introduced the 40-hour work week and \$5 a day wage, making him immensely popular throughout the nation. When the Fords arrived at the train station in Fort Myers, over 2,000 people and 31 cars, “mostly Ford machines” according to a newspaper account, waited to greet them. Three bands serenaded the family as they travelled to the Edison Estate. Despite this raucous welcome, the private Fords purchased the home next to their friends, the Edisons, in 1916.

While not as active here in Fort Myers, Clara and Henry’s philanthropy was life changing for many in the Detroit area and in Richmond Hill, Georgia, where the family owned extensive property. Some of the charitable work Clara was involved in included:

- Founded and supported the Henry Ford Hospital
- Established Vista Maria, a school and outreach program to help Detroit’s young women
- Founded the Henry Ford School of Nursing and Hygiene, a tuition-free program that taught women nursing skills
- President of the Woman’s National Farm & Garden Association, which aided women who wanted to make a livelihood in horticulture and agriculture
- Founding President of the Dearborn Garden Club
- Financial support helped build the Piney Ridge School & Home to help homeless African-American children in Mississippi

It is believed that the Fords donated nearly 1/3 of their income during the latter half of their lives. The generous Clara Ford passed away September 29, 1950 at the age of 84.



## GROW FORT MYERS PLANT SALE & WORKSHOPS

**SATURDAY, APRIL 24 | starts at 9 A.M. (see website for complete schedule)**

Come spend the day with us and participate in workshops, demonstrations, and of course plants will be available for sale! Learn how to create a native habitat for butterflies and birds, grow vegetables, herbs, and fruit trees, and how to grow orchids from trees. The Garden Shoppe will be stocked with new plants and several vendors will be on site. Masks are required.

Tickets to attend the full day of workshops and presentations are \$15 for non-members or \$10 for Edison Ford members. There is no charge to visit the Garden Shoppe.

### SPEAKER SCHEDULE:

- 9:15-10 a.m.** – “Growing Fruit Trees,” Steve Curcra, Fruitscapes Nursery and Farmer’s Market
- 10:15-11 a.m.** – “Butterflies in SW Florida,” Tony Mauriello, President of the Coccolobba Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and Master Naturalist
- 11:15 a.m.-Noon** – “Summertime Veggies and Herbs,” Adrienne Diaz, Edison Ford Horticulture Specialist
- 12:15-1 p.m.** – “Orchids in the Trees,” Debbie Hughes, Edison Ford Horticulture Director



## SUNSET CELEBRATION FRIDAY, APRIL 16 | 6 P.M. Jeff Feldstein

Visitors are invited to stroll the botanical gardens after regular hours for a special evening of music, refreshments and a sunset view over the Caloosahatchee River. Guests may also walk onto the porches of Thomas Edison's and Henry Ford's winter homes and look inside through the open doors.

Jeff Feldstein plays an eclectic mix of crowd favorites. Refreshments will be available for purchase. Guests may bring a lawn chair or blanket to relax and watch the sunset. Masks are required.

**TICKETS: \$15 for members; \$20 for non-members.**

**Due to COVID-19, all events are subject to change. Please check the website for updates.**

**Masks are required where noted**

SUMMER 2021 • **GRADES 1 - 3** • June 21 - August 6, 2021

EDISON  
and  
FORD  
winter  
ESTATES

HOMES • GARDENS • MUSEUM  
LABORATORY

# INVENTOR'S SUMMER CAMP

Join us as science and history come alive in the “living laboratory” of the Edison and Ford Winter Estates from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily!



## **JUNE 21 - 25 • KITCHEN CHEMISTRY**

Fast-paced chemistry experiments that fizz, bang, and pop will inspire curiosity in young scientists. *Members: \$200 • non-members: \$230*

## **JUNE 28 - JULY 2 • MINI MAKERS**

Design, build, improve, and repeat! Walk in the footsteps of Edison and Ford along the path of innovation. *Members: \$200 • non-members: \$230*

## **JULY 6 - 9 • EAGER ENGINEERING**

Tackle daily engineering design challenges in this fast-paced camp exploring simple machines and physics. *Members: \$160 • non-members: \$185*

## **JULY 12 - 16 • MOVIE MAKING**

Lights! Camera! Action! Every camper participates in learning the secrets and process to making movie magic. *Members: \$200 • non-members: \$230*

## **JULY 19 - 23 • SPACE AND ROCKETS**

The space race is on! Campers explore our solar system and the forces of flight- and launch their own rocket! *Members: \$200 • non-members: \$230*

## **JULY 26 - 30 • RADICAL ROBOTS**

Robots big and small are examined this high-tech camp-- including a functional LEGO Mindstorm robot. *Members: \$200 • non-members: \$230*

## **AUGUST 2 - 6 • ART SMARTS**

Campers fuse imagination with science and design as they expand their tool-belt of creative expression. *Members: \$200 • non-members: \$230*

• Pre-registration at **EdisonFord.org** is required for all programs

• For information regarding safety and health protocols, view our website

Sponsored by:



The school is neither endorsing nor sponsoring this event, product, or service, nor endorsing the views of the sponsoring organization.

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SUMMER 2021 • **GRADES 4 - 6** • June 21 - August 6, 2021

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Fast-paced chemistry experiments that fizz, bang, and pop will inspire curiosity in young scientists. *Members: \$200 • non-members: \$230*

## **JUNE 28 - JULY 2 • CODE CAMP**

Explore the world of code and computer science., coding Minecraft on the Raspberry Pi, making video games on Scratch, and coding a LEGO robot. No experience necessary. *Members: \$200 • non-members: \$230*

## **JULY 6 - 9 • EAGER ENGINEERS**

Tackle daily engineering design challenges in this fast-paced camp exploring simple machines and physics. *Members: \$160 • non-members: \$185*

## **JULY 12 - 16 and 19 - 23 • MOVIE MAKING**

Lights! Camera! Action! Join the wild wizard and learn the secrets and process to making movie magic. Each camper participates in all aspects of movie production from story boarding, directing, acting, working with camera's, lights, and sound. *Members: \$400 • non-members: \$460*

## **JULY 26 - 30 • RADICAL ROBOTS**

Robots big and small are examined this high-tech camp-- including a functional LEGO Mindstorm robot. *Members: \$200 • non-members: \$230*

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## DIGITAL DISCUSSION: BUCKINGHAM ARMY AIRFIELD DURING WWII

TUESDAY, APRIL 13 | 10:30 A.M.

Did you know that Mina Edison visited Buckingham Field in 1945 and invited 25 GIs to Seminole Lodge for lunch and a swim? Join Program Manager, Holly Shaffer, for a free Zoom discussion about Buckingham Army Airfield, a training base in Lee County, Florida, established in 1942. At the time, it was the largest airfield in the state of Florida. Its primary mission during World War II was to train the aerial gunners who defended bombers.

**This is a free virtual lecture. Registration is required. Visit the website to register.**



## SILK SCARF PAINTING CLASS

SATURDAY, APRIL 17 | 10 A.M.

Join artist Marie Dyer for a silk scarf painting class. Participants will make a 14" X 72" silk scarf that can be worn or hung as a piece of artwork. All materials are included in the fee. **Registration is required.**

**Cost:** \$90 for Edison Ford members; \$100 for non-members.

## Garden Talk: Bulbs for the South

**SATURDAY, APRIL 10 | 10 A.M.**

Most people who move to Florida from northern states are disappointed when they realize they won't be able to grow the typical bulbs such as Tulips and Daffodils that require a period of cold weather. Here in South Florida, we are fortunate to have many other bulbs that grow and thrive! Participants will get to see the new tropical bulb garden and learn about the bulbs that will thrive in this region. Many of these bulbs will also be available for purchase in the Garden Shoppe. All participants will receive a 20% off coupon good toward plant purchases in the Garden Shoppe. Registration not required. Masks are required.

**Cost:** \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members.



## Gardening Class: Container Gardening and Introduction to Floral Arranging

**TUESDAY, APRIL 13 | 1:30 P.M.**

This program is one of the most popular and includes materials for participants to make and take their creation. Understanding how plants are conditioned is key to success when working with live plants, as well as how to care for the arrangement. This class takes basic floral arranging up a notch by teaching how to braid plants to add a very interesting highlight. Many of the arrangement techniques taught are displayed in the Art in Bloom event, held semi-annually at the Estates. Important note: Pre-registration is required on or before April 2 to ensure adequate materials for all class participants. Classroom time: 60 minutes; garden time: 20 minutes.

**Cost:** \$45 for members and \$60 for non-members.



## Gardening Class: Growing Roses in Southwest Florida

**TUESDAY, APRIL 20 | 1:30 P.M.**

Mina and Clara Ford both loved flowers and each had their own beautiful rose garden right here in Southwest Florida. In this class, participants will learn all the techniques required to grow a successful rose garden in a semi-tropical climate. Soil, fertilizer, varieties, root stocks, pests, weather conditions, planting times and pruning techniques will all be discussed. Classroom time: approximately 90 minutes.

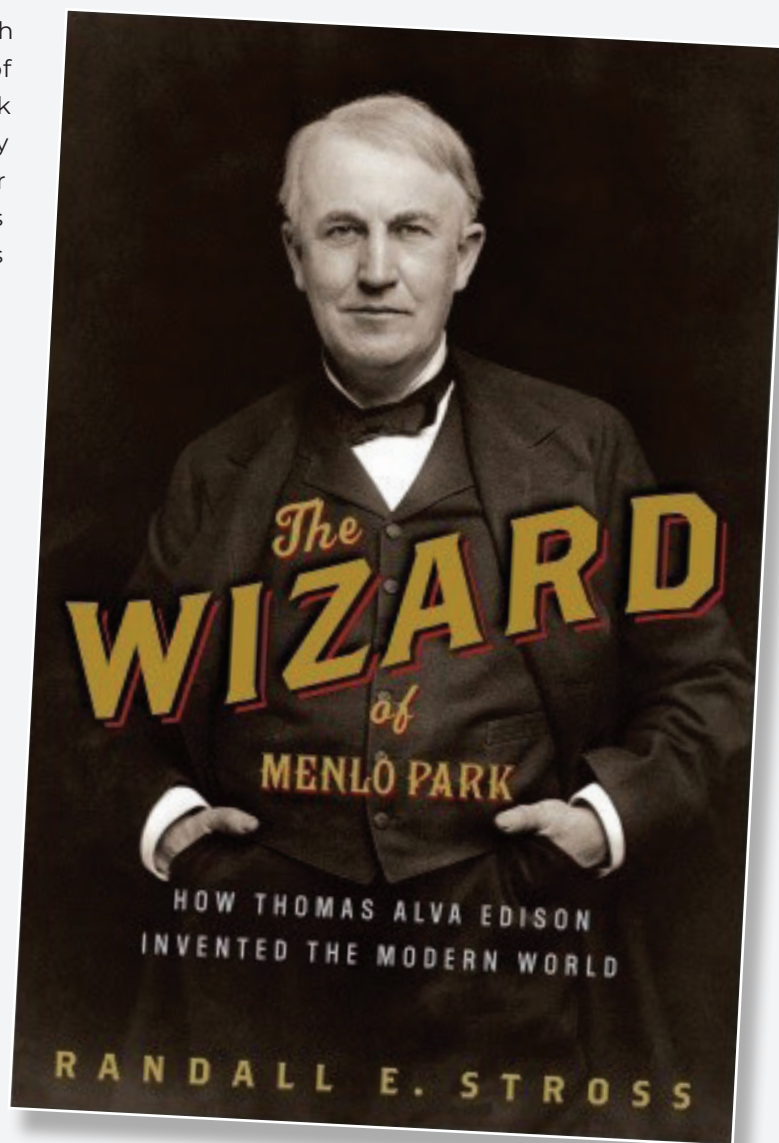
**Cost:** \$30 for members and \$45 for non-members.

Advance registration is required for all classes, as each class is limited to 25 participants. Register online at [EdisonFord.org](http://EdisonFord.org). Masks are required, and participants should bring a notebook, water bottle, hat, sunscreen, garden gloves and comfortable walking shoes. Participants will receive a 20% discount coupon toward plant purchases in the Garden Shoppe. Taught by Karen M. Maxwell, horticultural specialist.

# April Book of the Month: The Wizard of Menlo Park How Thomas Alva Edison Invented the Modern Age

By Randall Stross

Are you looking for a book with a new approach to the life of Thomas Edison? If so, this book is the one for you. After a very brief overview of his earlier years, it starts with his career as an inventor. While it covers his inventions, it focuses more on his approach to work and fame, and analyzes how Edison became the first major celebrity of the modern age. This is a new and thought-provoking approach to the life and inventions of Edison. This book is available in the museum store and members get 10% off each purchase. If you're not in the area, give us a call at 239-334-7419 and we can ship a copy to you.





## TOURS & PROGRAMS

### Daily Programs in the Museum

Throughout the day, join in hands-on presentations to learn about music, sound and the phonograph, how a motor works on Henry Ford's Model T and making movies with animated images. Every day of the week Edison Ford offers visitors historian-led guided tours and self-guided tours in English, German, Spanish, and French as well as museum demonstrations and hands-on science activities.



## Automotive Tour

**MONDAYS | 10:30 A.M.**

Join Automotive Curator James Moss, for a new perspective on the evolution of the automobile. Learn about production and how to operate a vehicle. From the Model T to the Model A, gasoline to electric, the Ford Motor Company and beyond, the Automotive Tour promises to offer a new way to connect with one of our most popular collections. Reservations are not required for this tour.

**Cost:** Edison Ford Members: \$15; non-members: Adults \$40, Teens (13-19) \$30, Children (6-12) \$16.



## Inside-the-Homes Tours

**THURSDAYS | 11:00 A.M.**

This tour is a unique opportunity to take a sneak peek inside normally-closed areas of Thomas Edison's "Seminole Lodge" and Henry Ford's "The Mangoes." Approximate tour time is 90 minutes to two hours. (Allow additional time to view the museum, laboratory, and gardens.)

Limited reservations available for this tour, pre-registration required by calling **239-335-3674**.

**Cost:** Edison Ford members: free (one time); non-members: Adults \$50, Teens (13-19) \$35, Children (6-12) \$20.



## Private Guided Tours Available By Reservation

To accommodate families or small business groups, private guided tours are now available. These tours are for small groups of nine people or less and ensure that families will not be on a tour with other tourists. Two tour focus options are available, including the Historian-led Private Guided Tour, or the Private Garden Tour with a Horticulturist. Masks are required on guided tours. Private tours should be reserved at least 48 hours in advance.

During the private tours, visitors will see the historic winter homes of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, the caretaker's houses, swimming pool complex, Edison's study and the Moonlight Garden, and more than 20 acres of botanical gardens. The Garden Tour provides an in-depth exploration of the hundreds of plants and trees on the property. After the tour, visitors may take extra time to stroll the gardens, museum and botanic research laboratory at their own pace.

**Cost:** Private Guided Tour is \$345, and the Private Garden Tour is \$360.

## MUSEUM MUSINGS

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14 | 11 A.M.**

Site Historian, Phil Chase, will talk about the history of Edison's work with the Electrical Generator Motor.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28 | 11 A.M.**

Curatorial Registrar, Matt Andres, will talk about Edison's Little Monster: The Talking Doll.

***Museum Musings are included with admission.***

# Coconut Grove Construction Corp.



## Tell us about your company and its history in Southwest Florida.

Coconut Grove Construction Corp. is committed to providing full-service construction services to its clients. We are both a State of Florida Certified Class A General Contractor, CGC014408 and State of Florida Certified Roofing Contractor, CCC1326776. We provide professional solutions for our customers, that's what we do. Whether you have a commercial or residential project, we will help you make the choices that give you the best value for your needs. We believe that our customer's satisfaction comes first. Additionally, we believe that a job done right the first time equals customer satisfaction.

We select quality materials, employ skilled tradesmen and use modern equipment and construction methods to achieve high productivity and cost-efficient service delivery. You are our most important customer, and we'll work hard to earn your business and ensure that your experience with Coconut Grove Construction Corp. exceeds your expectations. We want you to think of us first for all of your roofing projects.

## Tell us what you like about partnering/working with Edison Ford.

We have been doing roofing in Southwest Florida for over 18 years and it is our home. The principals of Coconut Grove Construction love being able to take initiative, explore ideas, and empower our team members to do the same. Like Edison and Ford, we find it especially rewarding when our position allows us to turn those ideas into something that can make a difference for the business, our customers, our employees and of course our community. The Edison and Ford Winter Estates is an amazing part of our history and definitely part of the fabric of our community and we are honored to call them friends.

## Is there something special you would like to share about your company?

Licensed since 1979, we meet or exceed all of the requirements for licensing: insurance, training and continuing education. Our President and qualifier, Clark Richards has over 35 years of experience as a licensed contractor in Florida. He also has technical expertise unique in the industry with over 12 years as the Building Official, experience in adopting codes and several public appointments including the Governor appointment to oversee the licensure of Building Inspectors in the State of Florida. Our commitment to quality and customer service has resulted in over 90 percent of our business coming from referral and repeat customers.



# ART in the Gardens Exhibit

APRIL 30 - MAY 30

Students from local schools will participate in the **13TH ANNUAL ART IN THE GARDENS!**

This year, each class from more than 20 schools will create art pieces using wooden fish (approximately 48"x18"). The students may paint or decorate the fish in a creative manner, using recyclable materials that can withstand the outdoors. The fish will be mounted on a fence near the butterfly garden for all visitors to view. There is no charge to see this exhibit.



*(Photos from previous year)*

## PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

*(at time of printing)*

Caloosa Middle, Patriot Elementary, Hancock Creek Elementary, Veterans Park Academy Middle, River Hall Elementary, Harns Marsh Middle, Edison Park, Veterans Park Academy for the Arts K-5, North Fort Myers Academy for the Arts, Trafalgar Middle, Tortuga Preserve Elementary, Lehigh Senior High, J. Colin English Elementary, Mariner High, Pinewoods Elementary, Bonita Springs High, Bonita Springs Middle Center for the Arts, Canterbury, Orangewood Elementary, Skyline Elementary, and the Lee Adolescent Mothers Program.



**Have you ever seen a flower on the TRUNK of a tree?**

Some of the most unusual trees from around the world can be found throughout the botanical gardens at the Estates. The Calabash tree, *Crescentia cujete*, is one that most people have never seen before. This tree produces large, yellowish-green flowers that open at night and grow right on the trunk and branches! The nighttime blooms are pollinated by bats. The tree grows up to 25 feet tall, has a broad crown, and produces large fruits (not edible) that are used for making musical instruments. Native to Africa, Central and South America, the Calabash is just one of the many trees that visitors and members can find while strolling through the gardens.

The Edison and Ford Winter Estates is a National Register Historic Site and a Save America's Treasures site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Edison laboratory is a National Historic Chemical Landmark. It is governed by a private, non-profit organization with a Board of Trustees.

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