



EDISON
and
FORD
winter
ESTATES

HOMES · GARDENS · MUSEUM
LABORATORY

MEMBER
MAGAZINE

JANUARY
2022

EDISON and FORD winter ESTATES

2350 McGregor Boulevard
Fort Myers, FL 33901
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edisonford.org

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Edison and Ford Winter Estates will be open New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, so we hope you'll start the year off by coming to see us. If you didn't get a chance to see Holiday Nights, the lights will be lit through January 2, so there is still time to visit during this magical season!

We have a lot of events and programs planned for the year, so remember to visit our website often to get the latest information. We also send out a weekly eblast about our upcoming events and send out the member magazine via email. If you're not getting emails from us, let us know.

Upcoming Events and Programs at a Glance:

Jan. 1	Silk Scarf Painting
Jan. 1-2	Holiday Nights
Jan. 4	Emerging Inventors (for kids)
Jan. 8	Zen Drawing in the Succulent Garden
Jan. 8	Garden Talk: Wicked Plants
Jan. 11	Digital Discussion: Harriet Beecher Stowe
Jan. 11	School Break Camp (for kids)
Jan. 12-13	Homeschool Program
Jan. 14-May 29	Sustainable Conceptions Art Exhibit
Jan. 15	Etiquette Class (for kids)
Jan. 15	VIP Tour to Everglades City
Jan. 18 or 22	Intro to Florida Gardening Part I
Jan. 19 or 26	Yoga in the Moonlight Garden
Jan. 25 or 29	Intro to Florida Gardening Part 2
Jan. 28	Strictly Sinatra Concert
Feb. 12-13	Garden Festival

*More details on each event and program are included in the
following pages and also on the website.*

EdisonFord.org



GENERAL HOURS

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

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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: The Brazilian Cloak, growing near Edison's study is blooming in all its glory.



THANK YOU AGAIN TO OUR 2021 HOLIDAY NIGHTS SPONSORS!



OPEN THROUGH JANUARY 2



Yoga in the Moonlight Garden

**WEDNESDAY, JAN. 19 AND 26
10-11 A.M.**

Although yoga has been around for more than 5,000 years, it has become increasingly popular during the past decade. Aside from the health benefits, it offers us a deeper connection to our inner self, nature and to the community. This one-hour yoga class allows you to step away from all the 21st century gadgets and focus on the moment. Yoga helps to recharge the body, mind, and spirit. Class will be held in the Moonlight Garden.

All skill levels welcome. The class is taught by Bonnie D'Angelo, a certified yoga instructor. Bonnie started her journey as a yoga teacher to further support her own spiritual growth. Her yoga practice was a game changer and she knew that she wanted to share the experience with others who were looking for that special something. She is RYT200 certified with Yoga Alliance and working toward RYT300. She is certified in Reiki 1 and Reiki 2 and will continue the path toward Reiki Master & Energy Worker. Her favorite quote is "Yoga is not a work-out, it is a work-in. And this is the point of spiritual practice; to make us teachable; to open up our hearts and focus our awareness so that we can know what we already know and be who we already are." — Rolf Gates

Cost: Edison Ford members: \$15; non-members: \$20 per class (Tickets may be purchased online or at the ticket counter). Bring a yoga mat, water and towel. Admission to the site is not included.



Ringling Art Musuem

VIP Tours

JANUARY 15, 2022

EVERGLADES CITY

Tour to Collier County Museum, Lunch, Smallwood Museum and Everglades Airboat Ride
9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Call to see if space is still available.

FEBRUARY 19, 2022

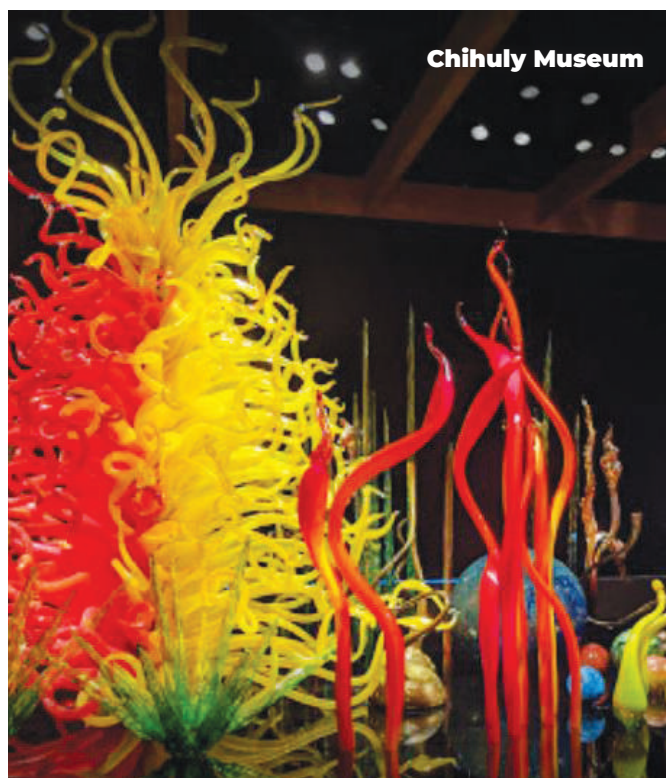
SARASOTA

Private tour of the **Ringling Art Museum**, Ca' d'Zan, lunch at the Ringling Grillroom and tour of the circus museum.

MARCH 12, 2022

SAINT PETERSBURG

Dali Museum, lunch, glass blowing demonstration at the Morean Art Center and Chihuly Museum tour.



Chihuly Museum

Cancellation Policy – Cancellations must be made 14 days prior to the tour date to receive a full refund, unless the vacancy can be filled. Cancellations made by Edison and Ford due to unforeseen circumstances will warrant a full refund or credit for another tour in the same season.

All tours are subject to change and are based on availability. Spaces are limited. Pre-paid, advance registration is required. Join the membership program and take advantage of the discounted price. Please note all tours include a lot of walking, bus stairs and sometimes maneuvering in tight spaces. Please plan accordingly.

Tour Cost for members is \$135, non-members \$150.

For questions or to make a reservation for this or any tour, please contact Sherri Muske at 239-335-3677 or smuske@edisonford.org. Tours fill up quickly, so reserve your space early.

Silk Scarf Painting Class

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1 • 9 A.M.

Marie Dyer will teach participants how to paint a 14" X 72" scarf that can be worn or used as a piece of artwork. All materials are included in the fee.

Advance registration is required at EdisonFord.org.

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



ZEN DRAWING IN THE SUCCULENT GARDEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8 • 9:30 A.M.



Join award-winning nature artist, Megan Kissinger, to learn the basics of meditative drawing. She will demonstrate how to use "Pitt" ink pens to create simple, patterned, drawings called "Elemental Strokes" with lines, curves and dots that are inspired by forms in nature. The class will take place in the succulent garden, one of the lesser-known areas on the property. Drawing experience is not required. Participants are encouraged to bring a lunch.

Cost: \$40 for Edison Ford members; \$60 for non-members (all materials are included).

DIGITAL DISCUSSION:

Harriet Beecher Stowe in Florida

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11 • 10:30 a.m.

Famed author and abolitionist, Harriet Beecher Stowe moved to Mandarin, Florida during the winter of 1867 – 18 years before Thomas Edison first came to Fort Myers. Stowe and her husband, Calvin remained winter residents for 17 years. Though her home is no longer standing, the impact she had on the area remains. Join Program Manager, Holly Shaffer for this free virtual lecture.

Registration is required.



ROBERT HALGRIM

By Alexandria Edwards

Robert C. Halgrim was an influential figure who worked very closely with Thomas Edison and made lasting impacts on important organizations throughout Fort Myers. He was born on September 9, 1905, in Humboldt, Iowa, and moved to the City of Palms – Fort Myers' nickname – with his family as a young boy. His father, Conelius Halgrim, decided to move the family to Southwest Florida to grow castor beans, which yielded castor oil needed for airplane lubrication. Conelius obtained a contract from the Government and bought more than 1,000 acres of land at \$1.25 per acre for his plantation during World War I. Today, this is the location of the Lee County Civic Center, which is used to host a variety of public events.

Col. Halgrim also owned and operated the Court Theater, located in the Patio de Leon in downtown Fort Myers. As a teenager, Bob Halgrim worked at the theatre collecting tickets, where he met Thomas Edison for the first time. According to the Fort Myers Press, the world-famous inventor would attend showings of silent films two times a week during his winter vacations after the theatre opened. Halgrim would inform Edison when a new feature arrived, and the inventor typically brought groups of friends and family members to the first screening. Edison would sit in the first row by himself eating peanuts and his guests sat further back in the middle rows.

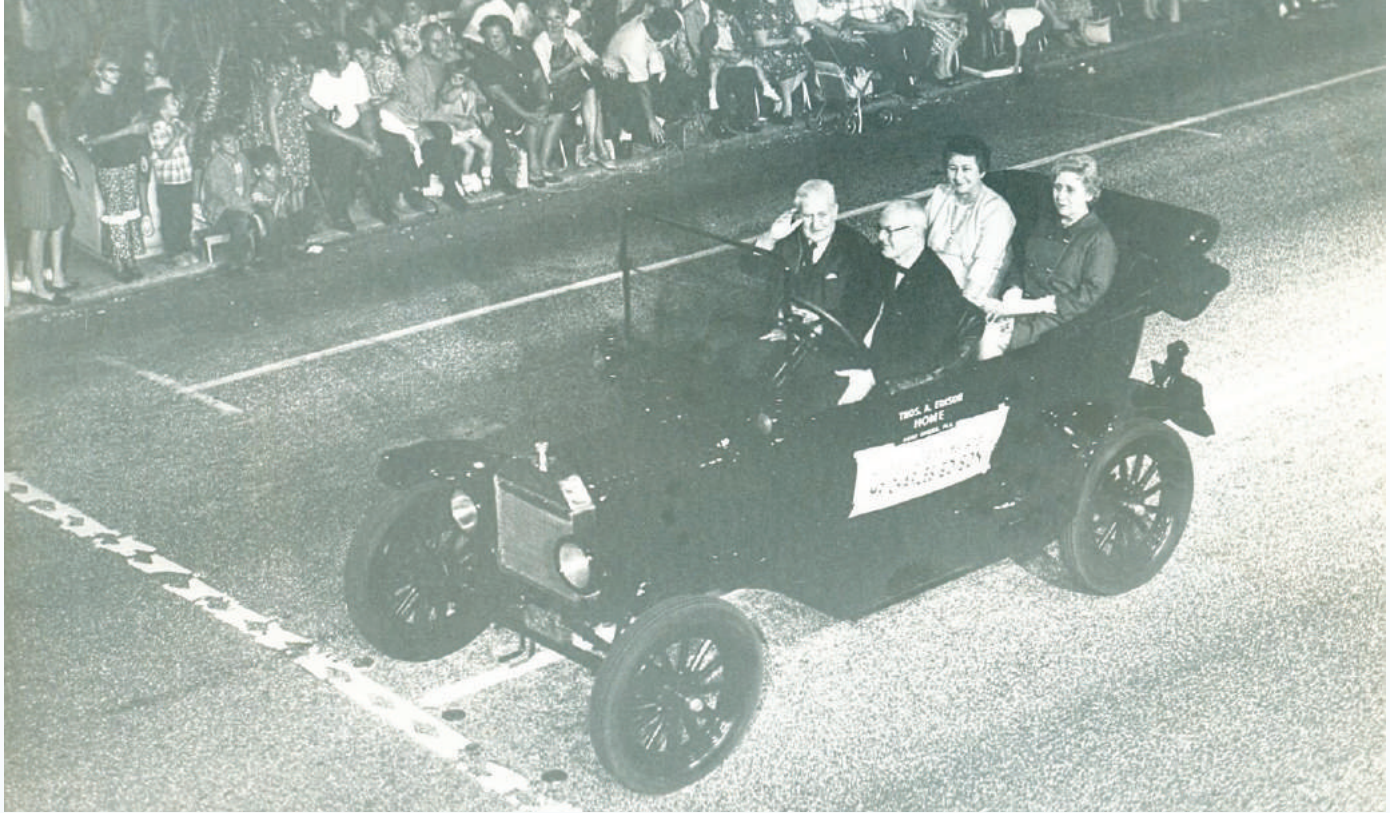
Halgrim began working for the Edisons in 1926. Two of Thomas and Mina Edison's grandchildren, Jack and Ted Sloane, accompanied the couple on a trip. Mina Edison anticipated their stay with the two boys (ages 9 and 7), so she contacted the local Scoutmaster of Troop 1 to hire a young man to look after them. The Scoutmaster gave Mina the names of two well-known men in the community he thought would be a good fit, Robert (Bob) Halgrim and John Woolslair. Halgrim was a former counselor at Camp Jungle Wild (later Camp Ropaco) in Alva near the Caloosahatchee River. Edison was also very impressed with the young scout when he met him at the theatre, so they hired Robert to look after the boys. They did many activities together at Seminole Lodge, including fishing off the pier, sailing and canoeing in the Caloosahatchee River, and exploring Yellow Fever Creek.



Charles Edison and Bob Halgrim stand in front of Goldenrod, the plant Edison found the most success with during his search for a natural source of rubber in the United States.

On a nice warm day, the teen spent time giving the boys lifesaving and swimming lessons at the Edison's pool, one of the first residential pools constructed (in 1910) in the City of Fort Myers. Not only did Halgrim spend time with the Edisons in Fort Myers, but he traveled with the family to the Sloane's summer house at Fisher's Island. At the time, Thomas Edison was searching for a natural source of rubber that could be produced in the United States. The world-famous inventor's goal was to produce an emergency supply of rubber that could be used for military equipment. Halgrim assisted with this project and collected plant specimens that were tested for rubber content at the Edison West Orange New Jersey lab.

After Halgrim graduated from Fort Myers High School in 1926, he continued conducting research at the Edison Botanic Research Laboratory in Fort Myers, the headquarters



Charles Edison is driven by Robert Halgrim in a Model T through the streets of Fort Myers during the 1967 Edison Pageant of Light Parade.

of the rubber project. Mina Edison placed a high value on education and wanted Robert to attend college; however, Edison preferred that he work for him fulltime. The young man later attended Cornell University with Mina Edison's help, where he studied horticulture. While he was at Cornell, Robert frequently visited Thomas and Mina's Glenmont estate and stayed in their son, Theodore's room.

According to an oral history conducted by Florida Gulf Coast University, Mrs. Edison gave the young man \$200 to help him feel better about this decision since Edison was not in agreement. In 1929, Edison convinced Halgrim to return to his lab in Fort Myers and develop a rubber plantation on the east side of the property. The former student recalled that Edison made his employees feel at ease, calling them by their first names. Many of the staff did not feel like they were working with a living legend and appreciated that they could share a couple of laughs together on occasion. While Edison spent countless hours on his research, Halgrim took the time to care for his mentor, bringing him meals every few hours.

After Thomas Edison passed away in 1931, Mina Edison searched for ways that she could honor her husband's legacy in Fort Myers. She arranged to donate Seminole Lodge to the City of Fort Myers in 1947 for \$1 in Edison's honor and to educate the public on how he impacted the community. When she made the agreement with the city, Mina requested that Bob Halgrim be selected

as the first curator of the property. Halgrim agreed and a few months later, the estate was open to the public.

As Curator, Halgrim made the decision to develop a museum filled with artifacts and historical collections related to the Edison family. He wrote to and visited many sites across the country that could possibly loan items to display in the exhibits. Some pieces they acquired were donated, and others were bought by Robert Halgrim and the City, including antique phonographs and cars. The Museum officially opened on February 12, 1966, and Edison's son Charles had the distinct privilege of being the guest speaker at the event. When the site first opened, no more than 30,000 people visited a year – compared to more than 220,000 visitors annually now.

Although he never graduated from Cornell University, Robert Halgrim received an honorary certificate from the college in April, 2005 for his achievements and dedication to developing Edison and Ford Winter Estates into the site that it is today. Throughout his life, he was also an active member of the Ft. Myers Chamber of Commerce, Edison Pageant of Light, Lions Club, and founding member of the Fisherman's class at the First Presbyterian Church.

Today, visitors can see thousands of artifacts in the museum and can take a tour to learn more about the history that makes this cultural gem so unique!



Tours And Programs

Throughout the month, presentations are offered for visitors to learn about music, sound and the phonograph, how a motor works on Henry Ford's Model T and making movies with animated images. Historian-led guided tours and self-guided tours of the site are offered daily. Through the new app, narration is available in English, French, German, and Spanish. Site maps are available in English, French, German, Spanish and Chinese.

Guided tours in German are available on Wednesdays at 11 a.m.
Cost: \$30 per person



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

TUESDAYS • 11:00 A.M. (first come, first served)

THURSDAYS • 11:00 A.M. (pre-registration required)

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**. Tours on Tuesdays offered on a first-come, first served basis.

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



Guided Garden Tour

Available by appointment for groups of five or more.

The Edison and Ford Winter Estates botanical gardens contain more than 1,700 plants from six continents including flowering plants and trees, fruit trees, palms, bamboo, cycads, vines, roses, orchids, and Florida natives. On this tour, an experienced horticulturist leads visitors through the 20-acre site and highlights the different types of plants and their importance to the Edison and Ford families. Visitors will see the Moonlight Garden, many rare plants and get to go behind-the-scenes in the propagating nursery. Some of the plants in the gardens are available for sale in the on-site Garden Shoppe. Call today to book your tour 239-334-7419..

Cost: \$40 per person.

Private Guided Tour

Available By Appointment for groups with a maximum of nine people.

To accommodate families or small business groups, private guided tours are now available. These tours are for small groups and ensure that families will not be on a tour with other tourists. Masks are recommended on guided tours. Private tours should be reserved at least 48 hours in advance. During a private tour, visitors will see the historic winter homes of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, the caretaker's houses, swimming pool complex, Edison's study, the Moonlight Garden, and more than 20 acres of botanical gardens. After the tour, visitors may take extra time to stroll the gardens, museum and botanic research laboratory at their own pace.

Cost: \$345 per group.



Emerging Inventors

JANUARY 4 • 9 A.M.

Edison and Ford Winter Estates Emerging Inventors programs are designed for children ages 18 months to 5 years old, and include opportunities to socialize with other children, educational activities, science experiments, and exploration of the property. These sessions will take place in our new Wizard's Workshop gallery space, and children will learn how electricity is generated, using kid friendly materials such as conductive clay, how sound works, and so much more. Classes will run from September through May. Includes one adult and one child.

Edison Ford members: \$10; non-members: \$15.

School Break Camp: Animation Station

JANUARY 11 • 9 A.M. – 4 P.M.

School Break camps are designed for students ages 6 to 12 when school is out. Campers explore Edison's living "living laboratory" while our educators, called "Wild Wizards," teach topics in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math), history and the natural world. Campers will imagine, illustrate, and animate during this fast-paced one-day camp.

Edison Ford members: \$45; non-members: \$50.



Support from private donors make it possible for the Estates to offer one scholarship for each camp. A committee will determine scholarship eligibility based on financial need so that underprivileged children can experience camp. The deadline to apply for a scholarship is two weeks before the desired camp. Parents or guardians can apply through the website at www.edisonfordwinterstates.org/education/camps/.



Homeschool Science Scholars: Animation and Game Design

GRADES 1-3: JANUARY 12 • 10 A.M.

GRADES 4-6: JANUARY 13 • 10 A.M.

Homeschool Science scholar programs are designed for children in grades 1-6 and are typically held in an outdoor classroom environment (weather permitting). Our education staff, called "Wild Wizards" will challenge student's minds and foster collaboration in this science and engineering series. Classes are a combination of instruction and hands-on activities that are designed to facilitate homeschool or virtual science education. In this session, students will use the code platform Scratch. They will learn the foundational logic used in various code languages as they design their own characters and simple games. .

Edison Ford members: \$15 each or \$105 for series; non-members: \$25 each or \$185 for series



Etiquette Class (Lessons in Manners for the Generations)

JANUARY 15 • 11 A.M. TO 1 P.M. • AGES 6-12

Historical records in the Edison archives show Mina Edison, wife of legendary inventor Thomas Edison, as a gracious hostess and interested in the well-being of children and the community. Following in this tradition, this class teaches lessons in timeless etiquette and social skills.

Cost: Edison Ford members: \$75; non-members: \$85



GARDEN TALK: WICKED PLANTS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8, 10 A.M.

Plants employ many tactics to protect themselves from humans and animals to insure they may grow and reproduce. In this fun Garden Talk, we will explore many of the strategies employed by plants to do just this. In many cases, it may be obvious, but their self-preservation means may not always be readily visible. Be prepared to walk with us around the gardens after a brief overview, to see and understand Wicked Plants. Comfortable shoes, a hat, and sunscreen are recommended, along with drinking water.

Cost: members \$10; non-members \$15

GARDENING CLASSES

INTRODUCTION TO FLORIDA GARDENING – PART I

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1:30-3:30 P.M. [OR](#)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 10 A.M. – NOON

New to Florida gardening? Part I of this two-part class provides a foundation of how plants work, their nomenclature, and understanding of unique weather patterns and unusual soils found only in Florida, zone 10. This class will educate participants with identification of both Florida native and non-native plants, and how to recognize invasive plants. We will also discuss palm trees and spend the last 20 minutes in our Palmetum. Please bring a notebook, pencil and drinking water. Hats, sunscreen and good walking shoes are recommended for the outdoor portion. Each class includes handouts, a recommended reading list, and additional resources to help the Florida gardener succeed. Advance registration is required and limited to 25 participants. The class will be held at the Garden Council building, located across the street from the Edison Ford parking lot (on Larchmont). At the conclusion of class, each participant will receive a 20% discount coupon for plant purchases in the Garden Shoppe.

Cost: members: \$35, non-members \$50



INTRODUCTION TO FLORIDA GARDENING – PART II

TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1:30-3:30 P.M. [OR](#)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 10 A.M. – NOON

In Part II, we will introduce participants to the concepts of “Florida Friendly Gardening,” understanding Florida soil and learning the proper use of fertilizers and soil amendments. Plants have unique pests and their identification will be covered as well as when to use chemical versus biological controls as recommended by the Green Industries Best Management Practices concepts. We will also cover common weed identification and diseases, then wrap up with a discussion on selecting plants for your Florida landscape, followed by a question-and-answer session. The last 20 minutes of class will be held in the Butterfly Garden. At the conclusion of class, each participant will receive a 20% discount coupon for plant purchases in the Garden Shoppe. Advance registration is required. Limited to 25 participants. Class will be held at the Garden Council building, located across the street from the Edison Ford parking lot (on Larchmont). Note: Though not required, taking Part I will be beneficial to understanding the content covered in Part II.

Cost: members \$35; non-members \$50

CLERODENDRUMS

By Karen Maxwell, Horticultural Specialist

In the array of tropical plants we grow, a most fascinating group is the family **Clerodendrum** and though it still hasn't found its way into many southern gardens, *Clerodendrum thomsoniae** has been at the Edison and Ford Winter Estates for at least 90 years, based on the plant inventory for Seminole Lodge, dated 1931. In the Moonlight Garden, we grow seven varieties, most of which bloom throughout the winter months and several that bloom almost year-round, which speaks highly of its value for seasonal gardeners who desire gorgeous flowers during the winter months.

The family includes shrubs, small trees and vines, some of which are aggressive enough to be used to create a colorful border fence, but because the grouping is so diverse, there is probably a *Clerodendrum* perfectly suited for your garden or planter. It's not only gardeners that should be excited by this plant group, but scientists around the world have recently focused more closely on the potential medicinal value of several species of *Clerodendrum* as it is indigenous to some of the most heavily populated regions of our planet – Africa, China and Pacific rim countries as well as Australia.

According to the "Journal of Traditional and Complementary Medicine," an international forum for medical researchers, there is growing excitement to expand exploration of the 280 chemical constituents of this family, including 43 flavonoids which have been isolated (things in fruits and vegetables that keep us healthy). *Clerodendrum* compounds have been widely used in traditional Chinese medicine and the international medical community is looking to understand and evaluate the merits of research that indicate these plants may be able to play a significant role in the treatments of inflammation, cancer, bacterial infections, obesity and much more.

Clerodendrum are classified in the Lamiaceae (mint) family, making them cousins to lavender, basil and rosemary whereas they were formerly part of the Verbenaceae family (lantana, porterweed, and verbenaceae). Now this makes no sense to me, as I once learned that plants in the mint family were easily identified by their square stems, aromatic qualities and often medicinal uses. The very name *Clerodendrum* breaks down from the Greek -- klero for *chance* because no one was previously sure if these plants had any medicinal value and dendron, meaning *tree*.

Sometime during the 1990s, taxonomists decided to re-classify the genus *Clerodendrum* and at the same time,

reduce the number of known species from 400 to about 150 and re-group many former *Clerodendrum* to the genus *Rothea* – plants known for a stinky quality when the stem is crushed. The purpose of pointing this out, is that many books upon which we horticulturists rely on for identification, still erroneously call some of these beauties *Clerodendrum*. In the end, it was not merely the physical characteristics that are easily observed, but it is the plant's DNA that has the final say. In the count of seven *Clerodendrum* in the Moonlight Garden, at least two are now *Rothea* (the Blue Butterfly Bush and the Musical Notes, which are discussed further below).



Blue Butterfly Bush



Musical Notes

Why grow *Clerodendrum*? Because they have spectacular flowers! When not in bloom, most *Clerodendrum* do not offer much in the way of plant structure or foliage – for that reason, when they are added to our gardens at Edison Ford, they are often placed behind more attractive foliage or blended well into the landscape where the sometimes deciduous shrubs can hide until they are ready to burst forth with a symphony of flowers. *Clerodendrum* have origins in tropical Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and for the most part, the species share the same care regimen and are right at home in 9b-11 USDA zones. They will flourish in rich soil, but it must be very well drained as they require

lots of water, particularly during our dry winter months. Morning sun in Southwest Florida is fine, but they should be protected from direct, western sun, especially during the summer.

Many Southern gardeners are already familiar with the Starburst Clerodendrum or Fireworks Clerodendrum (*Clerodendrum quadriloculare*)*. Reaching the size of a small tree, its distinctive foliage with dark green on top and purple underside is enhanced when it's bright pink starbursts open in early spring. If your garden can support a small tree-sized Clerodendrum, then Starburst, a favorite of hummingbirds and butterflies should be included. We do recommend that you give it a good pruning after the completion of flowering to prevent this handsome shrubby tree from becoming top heavy.



Starburst Clerodendrum

Both Flaming Glory Bower* (*Clerodendrum splendens*) with its bright red blooms and red Bleeding Heart Vine,* (*Clerodendrum x speciosum*) which has dark glossy foliage and a rich combination of red and pink flowers can sucker easily and spread rapidly in their happy place. According to Leu Gardens in Orlando, the red Bleeding Heart Vine is found in many old landscapes in South Florida but is not commonly offered for sale. It is believed that Mina Edison may have initially planted this vine here at the Edison homestead and it is presently in bloom along the southern wall of the Moonlight Garden where it pairs beautifully with a Brazilian Red Cloak* shrub (*Megaskepasma erthrochlamys*).

As tropical plants, many Clerodendrum species may appear to die to the ground in the event of a frost, though they will return in the warmer summer season. If you would prefer a less vigorous Clerodendrum for your landscape, there are several other species worth considering that are small shrubs or gentle vines, all with stunning flowers. The Bleeding Heart* (*Clerodendrum thomsoniae*) is an excellent perennial to grow in a large pot, especially with a trellis. Like many fast-growing plants, it loves water, a well-drained pot, and for best blooms, regular feeding. Prune after blooming to shape your plant, and a light prune throughout the season will keep it attractive. This Clerodendrum does

well when slightly pot-bound and is not known to have any toxic effect on people or pets. The Northern version of Bleeding Heart, (*Dicentra spectabilis*) cannot be grown as a perennial in Southwest Florida. Pagoda Clerodendrum* (*Clerodendrum paniculata*) is another good choice for a planter. With bright red, pyramidal shaped flowers, this Clerodendrum can be aggressive in the ground, but is easily controlled in a pot. Blooming from spring to fall, and featuring very large leaves, this is a sure conversation starter.



Bleeding Heart Clerodendrum



Pagoda Clerodendrum

Clerodendrum produce their flowers in a raceme form, also called a panicle, akin to a cluster of individual flowers. They may be upright or pendulous and their common names frequently refer to the flower's appearance before blooming or after blooming. For example, *Clerodendrum minahassae*, can be called Fountain Clerodendrum* based on the appearance of its flowers and Starfish Clerodendrum, for the remaining starfish of sepals with a dark blue center seed pod after the petals have all fallen. The size of a large shrub, the Fountain Clerodendrum is found just outside the back door of Thomas Edison's study. Originally brought to the United States by David Fairchild from Minahas Province in China in 1940, this Clerodendrum is also known as Fairchild's Clerodendrum.

continued on next page ▶



Fountain Clerodendrum



Starfish Clerodendrum

With the intention of the Moonlight Garden to feature lots of white flowers, the inclusion of Bridal Veil* (*Clerodendrum wallichii*) was a must in this garden, as it is the site of many intimate weddings. In the far corner of the garden, there is a high reaching vine which has entangled itself beautifully with the pink Bougainvillea and purple Queen's Wreath and is one of a few plants in nature with a true-blue color – the Blue Butterfly Bush* (*Rotheca myricoides Ugandense*, formerly *Clerodendrum ugandense*) named more for the shape of its flowers than as a butterfly attractant. It is a lanky vine that best blends into a landscape, rather than be featured as a stand-alone plant. Its beautiful panicles of dark and light blue flowers will burst through, most of the year, except during the coldest weeks. Musical Notes,*

another white species, receives its common name from the appearance of its unopened flowers; and again, it is now *Rotheca microphylla* (formerly *Clerodendrum incisum*). No doubt all these names can clog the brain, but we aim to provide the most accurate information we can – especially when our gardeners visit nurseries and growers and will encounter both names being used interchangeably.

Henry Ford liked to visit his friend and often joined in celebration of Edison's birthday on February 11. So, it is quite fitting, that from December through June, there is a curtain of cascading racemes that resemble hanging light bulbs before reaching a full bloom along the exterior east wall of the Moonlight Garden. Known by many common names, such as "Indian Beads," or "Chains of Glory," we prefer to know *Clerodendrum schmidtii* (interchangeably called *Clerodendrum smithianum*) simply as the Lightbulb Clerodendrum.* This tall shrub border is just beginning to develop its flowers, so be sure to visit us this month and bring your camera!

*Indicates plants in the Edison and Ford Winter Estates gardens.



Lightbulb Clerodendrum



WINTER GARDEN FESTIVAL

SATURDAY & SUNDAY • FEBRUARY 12-13 • 9 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

MEMBERS ONLY PREVIEW ON SATURDAY • 8-9 A.M.

(Enter at the corner of McGregor and Larchmont;
membership ID required)

If you're looking for a really unique plant – perhaps one that your neighbor doesn't have – then, don't miss this event! More than 50 vendors will have butterfly plants, herbs, fruit trees, flowering exotics, orchids, and more! There will be food trucks and live music too, so come out and spend the day with us! A limited number of garden carts will be available, so if you have one, bring it along to transport plants. This is a free event (does not include admission to the museum, lab or riverside of the property).

ART EXHIBIT OPENING

FRIDAY, JANUARY, 21

Did you know that Henry Ford repurposed wooden crates as floorboards for his automobiles? Or that Thomas Edison purified chemical solvents to be reused while working on his rubber projects in his Fort Myers laboratory? While the Green Movement was not popular during their lifetimes, Edison and Ford both recognized the importance of recycling and reusing materials. This exhibit showcases art inspired by Edison and Ford's efforts to reuse products and their abilities to work toward a sustainable future. Artwork will be on display in the Edison Caretaker's House through May 29. Included with general admission.



Photo of previous art exhibit in the Edison Caretaker's House.

RHYTHM ON THE RIVER

MICHAEL DUTRA & THE STRICTLY SINATRA BAND

FRIDAY, JANUARY 28 • 6-8 P.M.

Back by popular demand! This Sinatra tribute band has been performing all across the country since 2002. They opened for Howie Mandel at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City, and performed at the Governor Chris Christie inaugural event in 2010. Michael shares many similarities to Frank Sinatra: both are left handed, both born on December 12, they are the same height and both of their fathers were boxers at one time.

Come spend the evening along the river with us and enjoy the music, a beautiful river view, and refreshing beverages. Bring your favorite lawn chair and a sweater if the weather is chilly. Food and beverage vendors will have refreshments available for purchase. No coolers permitted.

Concert starts at 6 p.m.; doors open at 5:30 p.m. Parking is available in the Edison Ford lots only. Purchase tickets online: Edison Ford members \$30; non-members \$35; tickets at the door: \$40

A new VIP seating area will be open and may be reserved by the table for \$225. Each table holds up to 5 people; table ticket price includes the use of table and chairs.



Rachel At The Well

At the entrance to the Edison Park historic neighborhood, hundreds of people drive past the sculpture of a Grecian maiden pouring water from an urn while on their way to work or to visit the Edison and Ford Winter Estates. Local developer, James Newton hired German sculptor Helmuth von Zengen to create the sculpture, which was dedicated in a widely publicized ceremony in 1926. Mina Edison unveiled the maiden on April 8 of that year and reportedly, Thomas insisted on attending even though he was quite ill. That sculpture has been greeting visitors and residents alike for almost a century.

A few years ago, a neighborhood committee was formed to restore the landscaping around Rachel. The Edison Park Neighborhood Association adopted the landmark through the Adopt-a-Median Program. The neighborhood successfully raised funds and paid for the landscaping project.

Today, additional funds are needed for ongoing maintenance and to add lighting. Residents and visitors wishing to help with fundraising efforts can purchase Rachel At The Well merchandise in the museum store at Edison and Ford Winter Estates.

For more information, visit Rachelatthewell.com.



BOOK OF THE MONTH: Native Plant Gardening for Birds, Bees & Butterflies: Southeast

By Jaret C. Daniels

This is a great book if you would like to turn your yard into a native habitat to attract pollinators and birds. It begins with an overview of native pollinator species in the Southeast United States, followed by a field guide section to more than 100 native plants – some of which are available in the Garden Shoppe. These plants tend to be easy to care for and provide benefits for birds, bees, and butterflies. The species are organized by the amount of sunlight needed and then by plant types. Each species includes color photographs and information about hardiness zones, what they are most likely to attract, and soil requirements.



This book is available in the museum store, or you may call 239-334-7419 and we can have it shipped to you. Members receive 10 % off the purchase price.



Myles' Message

SPECIAL VISITORS

December was a busy month and we had a lot of special visitors! While we are a non-profit and rely on the community's support, we also try to give back to the community whenever possible.

The **Southeastern Guide Dogs' organization** leaders reached out to us to see if they could bring some puppies in training, so that the dogs could get experience being around more people. Who doesn't love puppies? That same night, the Visitor and Convention Bureau's manatee mascot was also visiting, so the puppies got the chance of a lifetime to meet a manatee! **For more information, visit guidedogs.org/puppy.**



Southeastern Guide Dogs

We also teamed up with the founders of **Myles' Message** and got to meet some wonderful families who came to see the lights. We were happy to spread some holiday cheer and make Christmas a little brighter for a few children. Myles' Message is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that empowers parents by providing accurate resources and a supportive community so that their child with Down syndrome may reach their fullest potential while celebrating each child's worth so they may thrive in a world without limits. **For more information, visit mylesmessage.com.**



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NEW YEAR ... NEW BEGINNING

Have you made a New Year's resolution?
Perhaps you want to eat healthier, or grow your own
food? Our Garden Shoppe has lots of vegetables and
herbs, as well as fruit trees available for sale. Why not
make this the year that you start your own food forest?

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.

EDISON
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winter
ESTATES

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