![Pine Knoll Shores Garden Club logo]

PINE KNOLL SHORES
GARDEN CLUB

By Deb Frisby

The Garden Club beautifies and preserves

When the town of Pine Knoll Shores was incorporated in 1974, the Garden Club was formed by a group of volunteers "to beautify and preserve chosen areas within the town." Over the years, the number of chosen gardens grew to nine and includes the Hereth Memorial garden in front of town hall, the Roosevelt garden at the corner of Pine Knoll Boulevard and Roosevelt Boulevard, the Pine

Garden Club members Stacy Bagley, Donna Fountain, Gina Harris, Deb Frisby and Linda Langheld work in town gardens.—*Photo by Michele Hicks*

Knoll Boulevard garden, the Blue Star Memorial garden on Highway 58, the butterfly garden on Arborvitae Drive, the Mimosa garden, the Oakleaf Drive garden, and gardens on Dogwood East and West. Club members also trim the crepe myrtles along Pine Knoll Boulevard.

In addition to planting new annuals and perennials, constant weeding, periodic fertilizing, mulching and pruning, club members decided that picking up trash was an important part of maintaining an aesthetically pleasing appearance along the roads. Each month you can find volunteers removing trash from the main roads in town.

Holiday decorations of swags and bows on street signs are created and installed by club members. Holiday trees in town hall and in the library are also provided and decorated by Garden Club volunteers, and Arbor Day and Veterans Day celebrations are orchestrated in conjunction with the town.

The club is a volunteer 501(c)3 organization funded and sustained by the work of volunteers, annual club dues, a donation from the town ($500 every year as well as free mulch and repairs to our sprinkler systems) and the yearly holiday wreath sale. In years past, the club also held plant sales as part of its fundraising. According to the Pine Knoll Shores history blog, those were discontinued when big box stores moved into the area with their large selection of plants—but one will be held this spring to coincide with the 50th Anniversary celebration of the incorporation of Pine Knoll Shores.

That leaves the wreath sale that started in September and ends in November as the main source of income for the Garden Club. Please support the volunteers who keep our town gardens and streets beautiful by ordering a wreath or two—or three—to decorate your home during the holiday season. Wreaths are pre-sold when they are ordered. The price is $30, which is only a $2 increase from last year, despite the fact that the Garden Club purchasing price from the grower in the mountains has increased by $4. Volunteers will make bows for $6 that can also be ordered. Fresh, fragrant evergreen wreaths will be available to pick up at town hall on November 30.

In the garden

A few puss caterpillars (also called asp caterpillars) have been spotted recently in our neighborhoods. Be aware of this fuzzy caterpillar. It delivers a nasty sting if touched. The "fur" is actually made up of tiny hollow spines filled with urticating fluid that produces a painful hives-like rash which can last for several days. Other symptoms, according to the cooperative extension website, can include fever, itching, abdominal distress, chest pain, difficulty breathing, numbness and vision problems.

Puss caterpillar—*Photo by Linda Langheld*

Two generations of these caterpillars usually occur each year in July and October. The caterpillar feeds on deciduous trees and shrubs, especially oak, elm, hackberry, maple and sycamore trees. They spin cocoons that have a noticeable bump on the back and a round hatch cover at one end through which the mature puss moth, so named because they resemble furry cats with wings, emerges two and a half months later. A YouTube video called "Metamorphosis of the Asp Caterpillar" demonstrates the spinning of a cocoon and the emergence of the moth.

The Garden Club meets the second Wednesday of each month at town hall with a social time at 9:30 a.m., followed by a program at 10. A short business meeting follows the program. Guest are always welcome. Send any questions to PKSGardenClub@gmail.com.