



## Magnificent Longwings

By Phyllis Makuck

In past years when our eleagnus bush exploded with monarchs or when swallowtails graced the parsley, I would "ooh" and "ah" over butterflies, but this is the year of longwings—Zebra Longwings, to be precise. They have generated expressions of admiration throughout our neighborhood.

These magnificent butterflies may have been here all summer, but I first noticed them at the end of August. I stopped to watch a fritillary hover over lantana blooms when another butterfly I had never seen before landed next to it. Black with bold yellow stripes, this butterfly has wings that are longer and narrower than the wings of most butterflies. It is about three inches long.

Seeing Zebra Longwings in Pine Knoll Shores is unusual. The *National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies* documents their range as being "...from Texas to South Carolina, south through West Indies and Latin America, wandering to S. California, Great Basin, Colorado, and Great Plains." The Zebra Longwing is common year-round in Florida, where it is the official state

butterfly.

Passion vines are the most common hosts for its tiny yellow eggs and for emerging larvae, which are also yellow initially. The larvae molt several times, becoming white caterpillars with black spines. The final molt produces a chrysalis in which a butterfly forms. Passion vine contains a toxin that caterpillars ingest, making the adult butterfly poisonous (not good for cats who sometimes stalk butterflies).

In its butterfly stage, Zebra Longwings are attracted to a variety of flowers—especially those in the verbena family, which includes lantana. I have also seen them on oleander. They feed on pollen as well as nectar. When both are part of the diet, a Zebra Longwing can live several months.

Though I haven't seen more than three or four Longwings at a time, reports indicate they roost together in large groups on tree limbs.

It may not be warm enough for them to stay here year-round, but I'm hoping we haven't seen the last of them.

## Pine Knoll Shores Garden Club

By Clare Winslow

The November 12 meeting of Pine Knoll Shores Garden Club was chock full of plans, schedules, demonstrations and suggestions pertaining to the celebration of the upcoming holidays. Chairman Cherie Range informed members about plans to participate in the Pine Knoll Shores Christmas parade December 6. A holly and poinsettia decorated truck and golf cart will carry a group of garden club gremlins along the parade route.

President Carol McVitty reminded members that the December 10 club meeting will be a holiday luncheon to be held at her home at 11:30 a.m. At this time a gift will be given to Caroline's House by the garden club. She also pointed out that the club's handmade Christmas shell ornaments are still on display in the library and for sale.

Sheryl Woodbury, Donna Belanger and Lois Jean O'Keefe shared their talents for making wreaths and Christmas trees from natural grape vine material and also showed a method of beautifying holiday table settings. Sheryl started with a randomly gathered armful of grapevines and shaped the stubborn vines into a 20 inch circle. After circling 10 to 15 times, a lovely base for a Christmas wreath emerged. Sheryl suggested winding the grape vine wreaths in the summertime when their sap is still flowing and the vines are more supple.

Donna used a medium sized pumpkin instead of a vase for an arrangement of fall flowers and leaves. A hole is poked in the top of the pumpkin for each stem, and no watering is needed because of the moist pumpkin flesh. She also showed how she creates name tags for the holiday table. She starts with a folded four by four inch piece of construction paper and places on it a picture of the special holiday theme with a rubber stamp infused with several colors, leaving space for the names on the card. She even demonstrated a special method of making the picture stand up above the paper fold.

Lois Jean showed a collection of grape vine wreaths in sizes ranging from 15 to 22 inches, all ready for adding holiday embellishments like holly, poinsettias, tinsel, and maybe even Christmas balls, bows or angels. She showed a beautifully decorated 36 inch high Christmas tree and explained how she made it.

With all the emphasis on Christmas, Thanksgiving wasn't forgotten. A tasty repast was arranged by Lois Strube, Mary Heim, and Olga Welsh. The news of several sightings by members of a wild turkey in Pine Knoll Shores in the last few weeks brought Thanksgiving even closer! Every second Wednesday of the month the garden club meets at town hall at 9:30 a.m. Guests and visitors are always welcome.



Lois Jean O'Keefe demonstrates wreath making.