

THE GARDEN

MCKEE BOTANICAL GARDEN | SPRING 2022



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MCKEE 17TH ANNUAL
WATERLILY FESTIVAL

■■■■
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BOTANICAL GARDEN
www.mckee garden.org

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MUCH TO ROAR ABOUT!

A Message from Christine Hobart, Executive Director

During the past one hundred years, from the Roaring 20s to 2022, the Garden has had a great deal to roar about. It was in 1922 that Arthur McKee and Waldo Sexton formed the McKee-Sexton Land Company to purchase and preserve the original 80-acre tract of land from development into an orange grove. Thus began McKee Jungle Gardens and its longstanding history in our community. Through the years, animal displays helped to attract visitors from all over. Roars could be heard from the exotic monkeys and Napoleon the Chimp, elephants, Doc the dancing grizzly bear, alligators, and macaws. Upon reopening in 2001 as McKee Botanical Garden, roars could be heard from the crowd attending the opening ceremony.



While much has changed over the century, McKee Botanical Garden continues to ROAR, both literally and figuratively. The roars we hear from the Garden today are quite different than in the past. Most recently, visitors enjoyed hearing roaring engines during the *12th Annual Motor Car Exhibition* and visitors

continue to delight in the roars from the animatronic dinosaurs on display in the *Dinosaurs Around the World Exhibition*. While walking through the Garden, roars of laughter from children playing in the Children's Garden will tickle your ears, as well as roars from staff dressed in dinosaur costumes during Storytime.

THE GARDEN



In this issue of *The Garden*, we are pleased to present interesting articles about the Garden's amazing waterlily collection, past and upcoming special events, a visit by The Rt. Hon. Theresa May MP, information about McKee's Legacy Society and Team McKee's dedicated staff and volunteers. We hope you enjoy this digital version of *The Garden* newsletter.



In the spring, the Garden is especially beautiful with many plants in full bloom. While visiting McKee, take time to smell the roses...metaphorically speaking. The magic and beauty of McKee Botanical Garden surrounds you and is not always just in front of you. Be sure to look up at the beautiful orchids in the trees and Jade Vine blooming in the pergola.



We look forward to seeing you in the Garden for a roaring good time! ■

Sincerely,

Christine Hobart
Executive Director

IN RECOGNITION OF OUR PAST BOARD MEMBERS

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MCKEE LEGACY SOCIETY

We thank the members of the McKee Legacy Society for their generosity, vision, and commitment to ensuring the Garden thrives for generations to come.

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*DECEASED

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to our mission.

To discuss making a planned gift to McKee that is aligned with your individual estate planning goals, please contact Christine Hobart, Executive Director at 772.794.0601 or hobart@mckeegarden.org



MCKEE LEGACY GIFTS BENEFIT YOU AND THE GARDEN

Explore how you can make McKee Botanical Garden part of your legacy and, in doing so, help this historic Garden thrive for generations to come.

By making a gift to McKee Botanical Garden through your will, trust, or other legacy plan, you can make an extraordinary difference in our community. Your gift will help McKee's endowment flourish and ensure this enchanted Garden thrives for generations to come.

With simple planning, your generosity will demonstrate your commitment to McKee's future, helping to provide resources that support programs and the care of McKee's lush 18-acre landscape.

Planned gifts offer you the opportunity to combine your charitable interest in McKee Botanical Garden with estate planning options that often feature favorable financial and tax benefits.

We invite you to partner with us to create a lasting, meaningful legacy. The *McKee Legacy Society* recognizes those who have made a generous offering through their will, trust, insurance policy, or other legacy gifts to preserve the beauty and vitality of this historic Garden. If you already have included McKee in your estate planning, please let us know so we may celebrate your commitment and legacy of environmental stewardship. ■

LEGACY GIFTS MAY ALSO ALLOW YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO

Generate income now and into the future

Reduce taxes

Avoid capital gains taxes

Preserve wealth for your family

Honor a family member or friend by making a tribute gift

THE GARDEN



*“Almost any garden, if you see
it at just the right moment, can
be confused with paradise.”*

~Henry Mitchell

McKEE SPRING APPEAL 2022

We are deeply grateful for the unwavering dedication of our members. In 2021, together, we accomplished much for our Garden and community.

- Increased attendance from 20,000 in 2002 to almost 100,000 in 2021
- Grew membership to 6,500+
- Launched a Horticultural Revitalization to enrich areas within the Garden and enhance the guest experience
- Hosted a series of special events, including a holiday favorite, *Festival of Lights*, which attracted 15,000 visitors!
- Invited artists, speakers, and other professionals to provide innovative and educational programming for all ages
- Provided scholarships to underserved children to attend Camp McKee
- Received TripAdvisor Travelers Choice Award for “One of the Top 10 Attractions in Florida”
- Celebrated 20 years of offering a safe and tranquil environment accessible for all to enjoy

McKee Botanical Garden strives to inspire creativity, pique curiosity,
and foster environmental stewardship to all who visit.

McKee Botanical Garden is a destination where people, nature, and culture meet—a tropical oasis in the heart of our beloved community.

Home to more than 10,000 tropical and native plants, and several restored architectural treasures, this 18-acre wonderland has delighted generations of visitors over the past twenty years.

Our thought-provoking exhibitions, popular special events, and enriching education programs inspire families and individuals of all ages.

Our Children’s Garden is an indispensable resource in our community that provides a safe place for young imaginations to soar while discovering the simple joys that come from connecting to nature.

Your support makes this possible.

As a non-profit organization, we depend on annual gifts to sustain the vitality and beauty of this enchanted Garden. Gifts to the Garden enable McKee to continue to be a source of inspiration and education, a place where the beauty of the natural world can help you relax, rejuvenate, and lift your spirit.

Please donate today:
mckeebotanicalgarden.org/donate

With your support, McKee Botanical Garden will continue to thrive and grow, making unforgettable experiences possible for all who walk through its gates.

*Thank you for
preserving the magic
of McKee.*

THE GARDEN

IN RECOGNITION OF OUR GATEKEEPERS OF THE GARDEN DIRECTOR'S CIRCLE—\$10,000

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MCKEE WELCOMES FIRST WORLD LEADER

By Marion de Vogel, McKee Board Member

On Tuesday, January 18, a cool day with crystal blue skies, McKee welcomed its first world leader, The Rt. Hon. Theresa May MP and her chief of staff, Emma Willis, for a tour of the Garden.

Theresa May served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Conservative Party from 2016 to 2019, during an extraordinary time in global affairs. She is currently the Member of Parliament for Maidenhead—a position she's held for over two decades.



Mrs. May was in Vero Beach at the invitation of Riverside Theatre's Distinguished Lecture Series and alerted the organizers to her interest in seeing McKee. Marion de Vogel and Kate Freeman, both McKee Botanical Garden Board Members, escorted Mrs. May, Ms. Willis and their security detail through the Garden. Of particular interest to Mrs. May was the way in which botanical features have been incorporated into the native landscape.

The Children's Garden particularly impressed Mrs. May. She dwelled on her view that children must be encouraged to spend more time in nature, both playing and discovering. This, she felt above all, is important for the mental health of children now more so than ever.

The Garden Café was the last stop on their Garden tour. Mrs. May, Ms. Willis and her security detail enjoyed lunch under the oaks before they departed to Miami for their return to the UK. ■

THE GARDEN



CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Demonstrate your company's commitment to the environment as you achieve high visibility with Vero Beach's most sought-after audience. McKee Botanical Garden offers a wide array of corporate sponsorship opportunities year-round, including our *Annual Exhibit*, the *Annual Motor Car Exhibition* and *Festival of Lights* events.

ANNUAL MOTOR CAR EXHIBITION

McKee's single largest one-day event—Over 3,000 attendees!

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

15,000 visitors from along the Treasure Coast and beyond!

For more information, please contact Triana Romero at development@mckee garden.org or call 772-794-0601.

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS

\$1,000

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§ DENOTES NEW GATEKEEPER
REVISED MARCH 2022

THE GARDEN



THE HOLIDAYS

MAGIC OF MCKEE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS WELCOMES MORE THAN 15,000 VISITORS

The highly anticipated Magic of McKee Festival of Lights returned in full swing in December, bringing holiday cheer and joy to all who attended. McKee members and visitors alike were thrilled with this magical event that over twelve nights welcomed more than 15,000 visitors!

Team McKee members worked together tirelessly to transform the Garden into an enchanted winter wonderland complete with snow flurries and festive holiday pajamas. Illuminated with thousands of professionally installed LED lights, including shimmering hanging spheres, twinkling snowflakes, an array of colorful cherry blossom trees, an illuminated photo frame, and candy cane lane in the Royal Palm Grove and flamingo alley, the entire Garden was beyond magical.

Education Coordinator Amy and her dedicated volunteer elves transformed The Hall of Giants into a giant gingerbread house adorned with brightly colored cupcakes, hanging hard candies, miniature gingerbread houses and gingerbread boys and girls.

McKee's talented horticulture team created a spectacular festive display in the Spanish Kitchen based on memories of a child celebrating the holidays in Russia. They also created and placed all the bright and whimsical lantern displays of pandas and flamingos, waterlilies, lotus, and other holiday decorations throughout the Garden.

Gift Shop Manager Michele Carvell and her team created beautiful and festive handmade ornaments and decorations for the Education Building and Café.

Visitors were able to enjoy classic holiday movies on a giant outdoor screen, entertainment by local talent groups and individuals, and a visit with the jolly old man himself and Mrs. Claus.

Over in the Garden Café, our Café elves were busy baking hundreds of gingerbread cookies and special holiday treats.



CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR NEXT YEAR'S EVENT.

For more information, please contact Triana Romero at development@mckeegarden.org or call 772-794-0601.

THE GARDEN

WERE BRIGHT!

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS



An annual tradition that never disappoints, the large-scale model train display created by the dedicated Train Guys once again thrilled visitors. The Train Guys spent countless hours assembling this amazing, nostalgic miniature display that featured a drive-up diner, toy shop, Texaco gas station, burger stand, leather goods store, fire station, antique automobiles, alpine village, hilltop farms and locals enjoying each other's company. Awe and wonder was seen in the smiles of young and old alike who admired the display.

Not to be missed and another *Festival of Lights* tradition was the familiar sound of the 1924 Wurlitzer Band Organ. Bill Hall has been entertaining McKee visitors for many past holiday events and the Organ is still a crowd favorite.

As we welcome spring, it may seem hard to believe, but plans are already underway for next year's *Magic of McKee Festival of Lights*. We always strive to make this event memorable, and we look forward to welcoming you back during the next holiday season. ■



THANK YOU TO
OUR SPONSORS

POLAR EXPRESS
THE UELTSCHI FAMILY

JINGLE BELLS



DON'T BE A GRINCH



NORTH POLE
ANONYMOUS

WE COULDN'T
HOST THIS EVENT
WITHOUT YOUR
SUPPORT!

THE GARDEN



12TH ANNUAL MOTOR CAR EXHIBITION

European Cars Featuring the Ferrari and Other Italian Exotics

On Saturday, February 12, McKee Botanical Garden hosted its *12th Annual Motor Car Exhibition* showcasing “European Cars Featuring the Ferrari and Other Italian Exotics.” Sponsored by Wilmington Trust, this popular

annual event was hosted by McKee's Car Show Committee: Richard Kesler, Bill Maule, Dave Prossick, Norm Ridgely, Chuck Roberts, Wayne Sandlin, and Committee Chair John Schumann, Jr.

The Garden was bustling with over 3,200 car and motorcycle enthusiasts who came to enjoy this year's event and the beautiful weather. The spectacular array of 34 cars on display included 18 striking Ferraris, ranging from a rare 1968 Ferrari Formula 1 to a 2021 Ferrari Portofino, as well as a 1957 Ferrari Grand Prix Race Car (Pedal Car).

In addition to the Ferraris, the show featured a 1957 Jaguar XK140 SE Drophead Coupe, a 1963 Alfa Romeo Guilina Sprint Speciale, a 1956 Austin-Healy 100-4 BNS, a 2004 Maserati Cambiocorsa Spyder, a 2020 McLaren Speedtail and a 2021 McLaren Elva, just to name a few.



THE GARDEN



SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 13TH ANNUAL MOTOR CAR EXHIBITION

Car Collectors Favorites

Saturday, February 11, 2023

**CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE
FOR NEXT YEAR'S EVENT.**

For more information, please
contact Triana Romero at
development@mckeegarden.org
or call 772-794-0601.



In addition to the cars, the show featured 15 motorcycles, including a wide range of Ducatis, BMWs, a 1970 Moto Guzzi, and a 2005 Vespa PX150.

In between listening to the roar of the engines, visitors also enjoyed chatting with the car and motorcycle owners. The roar of car engines wasn't the only attraction of the day as the crowd also had an opportunity to enjoy the roar from McKee's *Dinosaurs Around the World Exhibition*, which is still on display through May 1.

Next year's event will take place on Saturday, February 11, 2023 and will feature Car Collectors Favorites. ■



THE GARDEN



4,000 VISITORS ATTEND THE 3RD ANNUAL GARDEN & ANTIQUE SHOW AND SALE

McKee's *3rd Annual Garden & Antique Show and Sale* was a great success. This highly anticipated 3-day show and sale welcomed over 4,000 visitors! Twenty-four vendors travelled to McKee from across the U.S. to showcase a wide array of exquisite antiques, jewelry, vintage furniture, paintings, garden accessories and statuary. Many McKee members and visitors from near and far enjoyed the opportunity to peruse and purchase the treasures on display, and to mingle with our exceptional vendors.

Valkaria Gardens, one of the plant vendors, offered a beautiful variety of bromeliads, orchids, bougainvillea, trees and more for sale. The event was blessed with beautiful weather, allowing our visitors a great opportunity to spend their entire day immersed in nature while seeking sought-after treasures, as well as enjoying each other's company while eating an outdoor lunch at the Garden Café. The Garden Gift & Book Shop also had a very successful weekend, setting up a tent with specially selected items available for purchase. As an added bonus to this popular event, thanks to the amazing teamwork of staff and volunteers, McKee enrolled a total of 141 new members! ■



115,000 LBS OF PLASTIC SAVED



79 KG REDUCED CARBON EMISSION



7 REDUCED GALLONS OF PETROLEUM

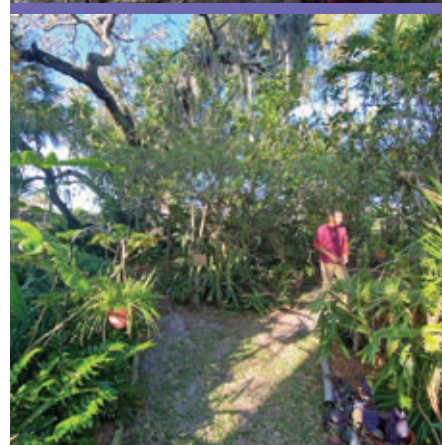


\$5,600 AVOIDED IN ECONOMIC DAMAGES

PLANTSWITCH AT THE GARDEN CAFÉ

McKee Botanical Garden continues to make the Garden an eco-friendly environment through our recycling efforts and products. The Garden Café uses all eco-friendly packaging and utensils. Through our ongoing efforts in 2021, we were able to save 115,000 pounds of wasted plastic, evade 79 kg of carbon emissions, reduce seven gallons of petroleum, and avoid over \$5,600 in economic damages.

THE GARDEN



GADDY GARDENS IS A “MINI” MCKEE

McKee Horticulture Department staff member Kevin Gaddy loves to share and talk about his own “mini” McKee Botanical Garden he has created at his home and calls “Gaddy Gardens.” Tucked behind a wall of thick green foliage, bushes and trees there is a beautiful secret garden one would never know exists. Kevin’s garden began in 1994 as a conventional garden with solid grass throughout and a variety of palms, bromeliads, succulents and other plants and trees. As the trees grew taller and taller, direct sunlight diminished and he needed to rethink the types of plants that would grow through the filtered sun.



Gaddy Gardens is situated on .75 acres and features over 950 different plant species, including 60 different kinds of palm trees, 300 different orchid species, and hundreds of different bromeliads, succulents and tillandsias. Whenever Kevin is not working at his full-time McKee job, he is busy in his own garden. Kevin spends about 25 hour a week tending to his special garden, including eight to nine hours a day on the weekends. Kevin explains, “It is just what I love to do. I have always loved gardening and working at McKee. So, I thought why not create a smaller version for myself that I can enjoy every day.” When asked if he had to choose his favorite among the thousands of different species, he said, “The Tree of Life is my absolute favorite, and though it is so hard to choose, another favorite is the Red Feathered Palm.” Kevin has been working at McKee Botanical Garden for the past ten years and simply loves what he does. Prior to working at McKee, he owned his own travel company, which he also enjoyed until the Internet made it much easier for travelers to plan their own trips. Kevin plans to continue to expand and enhance Gaddy Gardens, stating, “Every time I walk through the garden, there is always something else to do.” ■

THE GARDEN



A BUSY VOLUNTEER SEASON AT MCKEE!

By Anne McCormick, Volunteer Coordinator

As McKee eased back into our normal seasonal events and activities, our volunteers also returned with enthusiasm and dedication—ready, willing and eager to help in every way!

The season kicked off during the *Magic of McKee Festival of Lights* weeks with eager volunteers jumping in to assist. From making snow as children AND adults squealed, “More, more,” to checking in thousands of guests, playing Santa and Mrs. Claus, and so much more, these truly hardworking volunteers contributed over 800 hours to this one event that saw more than 15,000 visitors



from the Treasure Coast and beyond!



In February the *20th Annual Gardenfest* was held in Riverside Park. Our booth and volunteers representing McKee Botanical Garden were also there for the 20th year! What great exposure for McKee as event attendance both days was outstanding. During Gardenfest our volunteers distributed membership information, answered questions, and even signed up new volunteers! It was a perfect opportunity to make new friends and share what a wonderful asset McKee is to the community!

As the season has rolled on, our volunteers came out strong to assist with the five weeks of *Dinosaur Saturday Celebrations*. They helped over 500 children create make-and-take crafts, applied temporary dinosaur tattoos, and lent a hand with the special guest entertainers each week.

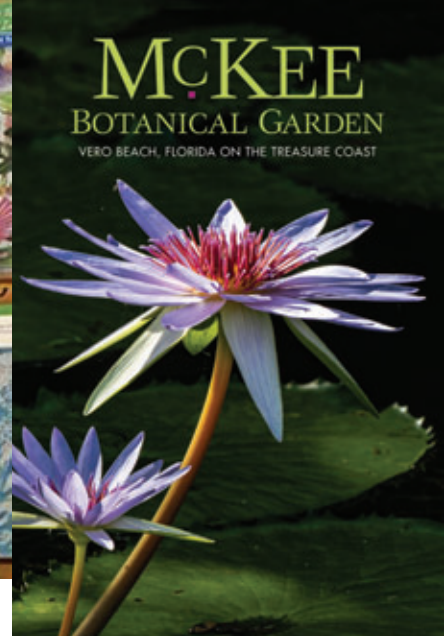
In February our enthusiastic volunteers showed up to support the *12th Annual Motor Car Exhibition*. This tremendously successful exhibition could not have happened without our tireless team of hardworking McKee volunteers.

Volunteers generously give their time and talents at our special events, but they also contribute many hours each week as horticulture and grounds volunteers, office volunteers, garden greeters, tour guides, and mailing assistants. ■

HATS OFF TO OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

For the fiscal year 2020-2021 our amazing volunteers “worked” **4,229 hours!** The current estimated national value of each volunteer hour is calculated by Independent Sector (<https://independentsector.org/>) to be \$28.54. This brings the total dollar value our volunteers contributed to McKee this past year to **\$120,695!!**

Volunteers are vital to the ongoing success of McKee Botanical Garden and their support to McKee is unparalleled! We are very thankful and appreciative for this team that gives so freely of their time, talents and energy!



VISIT THE GARDEN GIFT & BOOK SHOP OFTEN

by Michele Carvell

What a fantastic year at the Garden Gift & Book Shop. We love seeing our members and guests visit, as well as our seasonal members, who we miss during the summer months. We remind all of you to take advantage of this guilt-free shopping experience because each purchase you make helps support our lovely garden.

This past season, we have enjoyed watching the success of our new products that have been flying off the shelves and out the doors. We are currently featuring *inis*, a fabulous fragrance from Ireland, which comes in both a cologne and lotion. We always strive to offer products that are made in America. Some of these made-in-America products include: a wide array of garden flags that come in two sizes and mailbox covers by Custom Décor; wooden signs that have Vero Beach on them made by Sincere Surroundings; and our personalized McKee soaps and lotions—made with shea butter and wrapped in sleeves that include photos of McKee, which are made by Turtle Tracks in Ipswich, Massachusetts. Our new greeting cards from Leaning Tree are extremely popular! We enjoy watching people huddled together reading the cards attempting not to laugh too loudly, as some of the cards are hilarious. Other favorite selections are the books by Sue True. They are not only educational, but they also have adorable stuffed animals that pair with them, which the children love. Even children from non-coastal areas love to bring home a turtle or manatee to help them remember their visit to Vero Beach.

Stay tuned for new items coming this fall. We will be featuring new ball caps with an embroidered McKee logo, which many of you have been requesting, and we have also ordered navy-blue t-shirts with a white McKee logo. Stop in often, as there is always something new in the Garden Gift & Book Shop! ■



GIVE THE GIFT OF A GARDEN MEMBERSHIP

A McKee membership makes a wonderful and unique gift for any occasion—Mother's Day, Birthday, Anniversary, or even a special thank you.

MEMBERS OF ALL LEVELS RECEIVE:

FREE daily admission to the Garden and Children's Garden

FREE access to ongoing attractions, including our exhibits and popular special events

Discounts and priority registrations to our dynamic roster of classes and seminars

10% off at the Garden Café and Garden Gift & Book Shop

FREE admission and/or additional benefits at 300+ gardens throughout North America and the Cayman Islands through the American Horticultural Society Reciprocal Admissions Program.

To purchase a gift membership, visit mckee garden.org/membership or call 772.794.0601.

We appreciate your help in bringing new friends to McKee!

THE GARDEN



HORTICULTURE TEAM MEMBERS PICTURE LEFT TO RIGHT (BACK ROW): KEVIN GADDY, KEITH FARR, NATALIA INYAKINA, RICH VEIT; (FRONT ROW): GLORIA TEAGUE AND NIKKI STOLZE. (BELOW): ASHLEY BOYLE

MCKEE'S DEDICATED HORTICULTURAL STAFF

Under the expert direction of Andreas Daehnick, Horticulture Director and Research, Team McKee's dedicated horticulture staff members work together to expand our plant collections, enhance the beauty of the Garden, and maintain the facilities—just for starters!

Andreas Daehnick has been a Certified Arborist since 2006, and a Certified Wildlife Protector since 2014. He holds multiple degrees, including a BS degree in Marine Biology and Chemistry, excelling in taxonomy (the ability to differentiate small differences in plants and animals) used to positively identify one species from another; and a master's degree in Aquatic Biology, with expertise in the use of electron microscopy. Andreas acts as the Garden's project coordinator, construction liaison, plumber, event setup manager, Café repairer, and tree mover. He oversees five gardeners and one maintenance worker who are responsible for keeping the garden in its pristine condition by replanting and pruning, clearing dead plants and debris, cleaning the ponds and waterways, planting aquatic plants, and much more.



Nikki Stolze and Gloria Teague are the Garden's aquatic gardeners and are most often found in their waterproof overalls within in the ponds and waterways at McKee tending to the Garden's most prized possession, our waterlily collection. This dynamic duo thrives in the water tending year round to these precious gems so that during the warmer summer months when they are at the peak blooming period, their beauty, fragrance and vibrant colors are perfectly showcased.

THE GARDEN



Constantly seen with a smile on his face, Kevin Gaddy is known as McKee's "Yes" man because his answer is always "yes" no matter what the question is. Another of his favorite responses is, "No problem." KG arrives before sunlight to begin his long day clearing dead plants and debris, planting, replanting, and pruning all of McKee's plant collections. Joining Kevin are Richard Radcliff and Keith Farr. These dedicated men work year round, through the extreme heat of spring and summer and occasionally in bitter cold temperatures during our brief winter, to keep the Garden looking its best for our visitors. You'll often see Kevin, Richard and Keith transporting piles upon piles of debris in their golf carts to the dumpster.



Natalia Inyakina is responsible for all the beautiful floral displays throughout the Garden. She enjoys creating the mythical creatures in the ponds and pathways at McKee.

Rich Veit, known as "Mr. Fix It," is a newer member to the McKee Horticulture team and is responsible for the facilities and ground maintenance. Rich can be found building shelves or creating wooden decorations for our special events, repairing electrical outlets, golf carts, and overall general maintenance.

We recognize this amazing team for the dedication and love they display in their positions, as well as their ability to work well together. They are always willing to lend a helping hand...with smiling faces...and they have even been known to go beyond their normal duties to dress as dinosaurs to excite and thrill our visitors. ■



THE GARDEN



**BE SURE TO ATTEND
OUR APRIL PIRATE AND
FAIRY CELEBRATION
SATURDAYS AT MCKEE**



A LIVELY SEASON OF SOLD-OUT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND WORKSHOPS

By Amy Shoemaker, Education Coordinator

This season's educational programming has been remarkably successful. Out of the twenty-six workshops we have held so far, seventeen have been sold out! Our 20th anniversary Saturday Morning Historical Tours were all sold-out events. Led by Marion De Vogel, Lala Maresi and Susan Schuyler Smith, these guided tours offered our visitors an opportunity to learn about our past and all the hard work and planning that went into the Garden's reopening 20 years ago.



Our Children's Weekly Programming is still going strong. Families genuinely enjoy Music and Story Times as well as Pond Investigations. Our new Mommy and Me classes on Wednesday mornings and our Homeschool Program on Fridays have growing audiences. Children are learning about fish, aquatic plants, birds, bugs, air plants, earthworms, trees, and so much more.

McKee's educational programming also includes helping our Monarch Butterfly population grow. We have started collecting eggs and caterpillars for our small butterfly house. Come take a peek and maybe you will be in the Children's Garden at just the right moment to see a butterfly emerge. The butterfly house is on display after each daily program in the Children's Garden.

THE GARDEN

Dinosaur Celebration Saturday activities were enjoyed by many families. We had multiple organizations join us to share their knowledge of dinosaurs and other creatures that lived during prehistoric times. Many thanks to The Learning Alliance's Moonshot Reading Rocket, Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital, Coastal Connections, Inc., and Paleo Discoveries.



April will find McKee full of young pirates and fairies during our Pirate and Fairy Celebration Saturdays. The schedule includes crafts, fairy house building, live music, fairy hair applications, balloon twisting fun, and magic. The beloved pirate Captain Jack Sparrow will also make an appearance every Saturday.

Camp McKee summer camp is just around the corner too. We are offering camps for ages 6–12. This year's themes are: Outdoor Discovery Week for ages 6–7, Sharks and Other Ocean Animals for ages 8–9, and Adventure Week for ages 10–12.



I am currently planning McKee's workshops for the remainder of this year and for 2023. I am pleased to announce that we have a new instructor who will be teaching a few acrylic painting on wood workshops. I am extremely excited about these new classes.



Thank you to everyone who has participated in our educational programming! I am looking forward to the rest of 2022! See you around the Garden! ■



THE GARDEN



MCKEE'S WATERLILIES BRING EXTRAORDINARY BEAUTY AND SUSTAINABILITY TO THE GARDEN

By Nikki Stolze, McKee Horticulture Staff Member

While there are four distinct seasons in Florida, there are many different blooming seasons at McKee. During the warmer spring and summer months, McKee's waterlilies begin to bloom and adorn the ponds and waterways with vibrant colors, fragrance and texture. Even the lotuses agree that the temperature is just right. Goldilocks season has arrived!

Plants emerge where there was only open water, out of the magical mud. There is a lot of history in that mud. Fallen leaves from decades of growth along the shores of a single integrated waterway system have produced sections that are knee deep in nutrient-rich debris. About half of the waterlily collection here grows freely in that lovely silt, needing little care besides the occasional grooming.

Grown from seed each year, the Victoria lilies take a bit of encouragement, producing four-foot leaves in just a few months. Eurayle ferox, with its equally large and thorny leaf pads, competes for space among the night bloomers.

Members have become accustomed to these seasonal changes, but what's new this year?

THE GARDEN



This year's *Victoria cruziana*s are from seeds collected on site at McKee and are left to germinate on their own in McKee's waterlily nursery. These are the lily pads that look like deep dish pizza pans, with tall bright green sides. The mother plant, which is visible from the bridge to the Children's Garden, was perhaps inspired by the pitter-patter of little feet.



Evelyn Randig, a tropical waterlily, has joined the list of McKee standards. Created by Martin Randig in 1931, this hybrid has green leaf pads and is heavily mottled with maroon and bright pink flowers. Not all tropical waterlilies survive Florida's frigid winters, but Evelyn has bloomed every day since arriving last fall.

Underneath the lilies, the gar are fattening up, the bass are breeding, and the ghost shrimp are looking for places to hide from the bowfins.

McKee's Annual Waterlily Celebration takes place on Saturday, June 18 from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm and will feature plein air artists, plant vendors, plant experts as well as the Annual Waterlily Photo Contest, which will be on display in the Hall of Giants. While photographers have ample opportunity to photograph McKee's

THE GARDEN

17TH ANNUAL WATERLILY CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, JUNE 18
8:30 AM — 2:00 PM

WATERLILY REPOTTING
DEMONSTRATIONS

PLANT SALES

PLEIN AIR ARTISTS

ANNUAL WATERLILY
PHOTO CONTEST



waterlilies throughout the season, each year many seeking to capture the essence of the striking night blooming varieties through their lenses look forward to this annual event that allows them to visit early, taking advantage of the Garden's special 8:30 am opening hours. For more information about entering in the photo contest, visit www.mckee garden.org.

McKee Botanical Garden's official photographer, Pat Rice of JPR Images, has provided some helpful information about photographing waterlilies at McKee to assist those wishing to enter the contest.



PHOTOGRAPHING IN MCKEE BOTANICAL GARDEN

By Pat Rice, JPR Images

I really enjoy the relaxing nature of the Garden and especially like taking photos of the many wonderful plants, waterlilies and exhibits. I find early morning or late afternoon provides the best lighting for photographing.

THE GARDEN



When taking a photo of a waterlily I try to fill my viewfinder with the lily by using a longer focal length lens or by getting closer. Utilizing several of the bridges in the Garden will allow you to get closer and sometimes give you an overhead view. Be on the lookout for reflections and lighting that adds interest to the image.

Don't be afraid to experiment with your camera settings such as using a slow shutter speed (1/30 of a second) to blur water movement or high shutter speed to freeze the action. I will often use a tripod, which allows me to use a slow shutter speed and allows me to better compose the image. Consider varying your perspective by not always photographing from eye level—try taking photos from a toddler's perspective.



Photography is meant to be fun and in the digital age you can try different settings, techniques and easily delete the images you don't like. Pay attention to your background—sometimes moving a little one way or another will give you a more pleasing background, which will put the emphasis on your subject matter.

There are many insects that can be photographed at McKee. I enjoy trying to capture images of dragonflies. Pay attention to your focus when photographing smaller objects.

I hope these tidbits will inspire you to visit McKee with your camera in hand and have fun. ■

THE GARDEN

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

ROSAMOND ALLEN & PAUL LANDRY

Just a few years before Paul and I moved to Vero Beach in 2005, the remains of McKee Jungle Gardens had been rescued from a developer, thanks to the efforts of the newly formed Indian River Land Trust, who had purchased the land and restored it to what we all know as McKee Botanical Garden. From the start, we were fortunate to be introduced to Patty Morse, a McKee Board Member, who became a great friend along with her husband Tom, a prominent surgeon. These friends made all the difference to our new lives in Vero Beach. We immediately were hooked on the Garden, becoming involved as volunteers, ambassadors, supporters of wonderful exhibits and restoration projects, and Gatekeepers of the Garden.

Loving gardens as we do, we were captivated by the beauty of the tropical vegetation, along with the Garden's fascinating history. I personally love to tell the story of how Waldo Sexton, a citrus grower from Indiana, partnered with Arthur McKee, an Ohio industrialist and lover of orchids and flowers, to create the original McKee Jungle Gardens in 1932. McKee Botanical Garden, along with so many other imaginative landmarks in Vero Beach, like the Ocean Grill, contributes to our town's unique flavor.

Paul and I have made many other like-minded friends at the Garden over the years, including Earl Morgan, President of the Board, and Suzan Phillips, a pioneer of the Garden, who wrote the wonderful book *The Miracle of McKee*.

We have enjoyed watching the Garden grow, most recently with the addition of the tremendously successful Children's Garden, which has brought many young couples and children to the Garden and helped to double its membership!!

The Garden Café, with its in-house management and innovative menu, is a delightful place to bring family and friends for a delicious lunch under the Live Oaks. And don't forget to stop at the wonderful Gift & Book Shop to take a memory of McKee home with you.

McKee Botanical Garden is truly flourishing and greatly appreciated by people of all ages who want a stimulating place of beauty and tranquility to re-connect with nature.

We are looking forward to exciting years ahead! ■

ROSAMOND ALLEN IS AN ALUMNI BOARD OF DIRECTOR AND SHE AND HER HUSBAND PAUL LANDRY ARE GATEKEEPERS OF THE GARDEN



PHOTOS IN THIS ISSUE: ©JPR IMAGES AND ©MCKEE ARCHIVES

MCKEE

BOTANICAL GARDEN

350 US HIGHWAY 1 | VERO BEACH, FLORIDA 32962 | 772-794-0601

ADMISSION: \$15 ADULTS | \$13 SENIORS (65+)/YOUTH (13-17) | \$10 CHILDREN (2-12) | MCKEE MEMBERS AND CHILDREN UNDER 2 FREE

HOURS: TUE-SAT 10 AM-5 PM | SUN NOON-5 PM | LAST ADMISSION TICKET SOLD AT 4 PM

CHILDREN'S GARDEN CLOSES 4:30 PM | CLOSED MONDAYS AND MAJOR HOLIDAYS

www.mckee garden.org

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