

Now 50-years later, the Garden Club of eleven has grown to around 130 members. This is an established organizational structure, a blossoming social calendar, and a full and fruitful list of Community Improvement and Beautification Endeavors.~ Nancy Pinckert, NIGC History video

“The Naples Islands Garden Club is a remarkable organization that has made a tremendous impact on our City for half a century,” said Mayor Rex Richardson. “You have reached this incredible milestone with your passion, dedication and generosity. You have supported horticultural scholarships at the Long Beach City College for two decades, cultivating a brighter future for our students. With the help of your Garden Club, Long Beach neighborhoods shine with stunning projects at Naples Elementary School, La Bella Fontana Park, Naples Plaza, vibrant flowerpots on our busy 2nd Street, and many other areas. Your dedication to nurturing Mother Nature and creating a greener world is inspiring. Thank you for making our City flourish.”

(Photos on this page by Trish Schooley)



LA BELLA FONTANA 2022

Make no mistake, the goals and accomplishments of the Naples Islands Garden Club are heady! Beautifying our islands, maintaining our iconic fountain, enhancing our neighborhood school, honoring our veterans, providing scholarships and funding other projects is what ensures keeping “Naples is Nicer”. While flowers bloom and fade, trees thrive and shed, plants grow and die, the Naples Islands Garden Club has continued to flourish and prosper for 50 glorious years, and it doesn’t show any sign of slowing down. ~ Arleen Tolle, NIGC Celebration Chair

President Deborah Smith reminisced about those early years, “...how two women, and one simple idea planted the seed that raised an award-winning Garden Club. As we walk in their inspirational footsteps, we honor Cassie Mae Curtis and Arv Luce and those who came before, and we celebrate our dedicated members who devote time and resources to keep our islands beautiful.”



2ND STREET PLANTERS 2022



NAPLES PLAZA 2020



NAPLES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2023

DEEP ROOTS TO NEW BLOOMS...CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Naples Islands Garden Club

Naples Islands Garden Club was founded upon and grew like a garden. Friends and founders Cassie May Curtis and Arv Luce were talking over Arv's fence one day when Cassie remarked, "We need to start a garden club!" In October of 1973, eleven women met for cake and champagne, and the Naples Islands Garden Club was launched. From its inception, gardening, flowers and beautification have been a part of the Club's reason for existence. Some of these efforts included beautifying the 7th Street freeway onramp by scattering poppy seeds - perhaps birds were the cause of an unsuccessful result! Other beautification projects included cleaning up alleys and after pets!

(submitted by Trish Schooley, Nancy Pinckert, Arleen Tolle and Deborah Smith)



CLEANING ALLEYS
1975

Harriet Carson, Carolyn Brubaker, Lou Phelps, Bebe Mattson

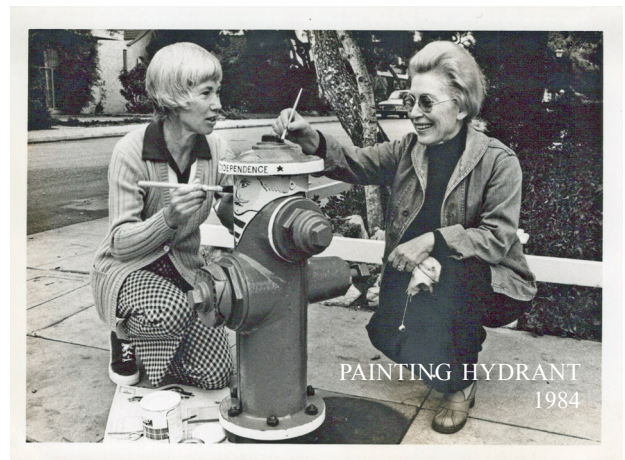


7TH STREET FWY ONRAMP
1976

In 1984, as a patriotic gesture to celebrate the LA Olympics, members of the Garden Club planted red, white and blue petunias around the historic La Bella Fontana, pulled weeds from between cracks on the Davies Bridge and painted fire hydrants in red, white and blue. Planting trees for Arbor Day at Naples Elementary School began in these early years and continues to be an annual Club event to remember lost loved ones.



ARBOR DAY PLANTING
AT NAPLES SCHOOL 1974



PAINTING HYDRANT
1984

The historic park in the center of our islands was first created in 1969, but with the addition of a beautiful fountain, it was dedicated as La Bella Fontana di Napoli in 1971. Originally the design included four (4) half circular raised garden beds, but wind blown chlorine water made it difficult for plants to survive and eventually these rounds were filled in. After the Garden Club's origination in 1973, members rallied to maintain the park's beauty, and this care continues today.



LA BELLA
FONTANA DI
NAPOLI
1984