

# Beauty abounds in native plant garden at Miami Shores' Brockway Library

BY CHRISTINA MAYO  
ChristinaMMayo@gmail.com



When Mary Benton looks around at grass lawns and “manicured gardens” she thinks of how those spaces could be turned into beautiful sanctuaries for bees, butterflies, beetles, dragonflies — and people — to enjoy.

Founding director of Bound by Beauty in Miami Shores, Benton decided to bring that inspiration to the Brockway Memorial Library to help her community of 30 years understand how everyone can make a difference.

“What better place to do this than the beating heart of our village: Brockway Library. I think many people want to do something positive, but they don’t know how. They need education and an example, which is what this garden provides,” she said.

Filled with native plants that attract native species, the Brockway Library Native Garden Project transformed a space “from a thirsty sod monoculture with an invasive Surinam cherry box hedge to a sanctuary that pro-



MARSHA HALPER MARSHA HALPER PHOTOGRAPHY

The native plant garden at Brockway Library was funded with donations from the community and Bound by Beauty’s Mary Benton. Many were made in memory of Miami Herald Opinion Editor Nancy Ancrum, who loved books, plants and butterflies.

protects our drinking water and preserves biodiversity.”

After planting day in the spring, Benton watered the new plantings every morning until they were established.

“Every passerby stops to say how beautiful it is and how happy it makes them feel. We just installed plant ID markers for the plants in phase I. The markers tell passersby all they need to know about the particular plant species,” she said.

She was amazed at how many residents, many with kids, showed up on phase I planting day to volunteer.

“My favorite photo is the one of the little girl, fearlessly digging a hole dressed in her Easter finery,” Benton said.

“This garden is for her future, along with all the other children in the village. And for the future of beautiful native bees, like the metallic green sweat bee that showed up in the garden recently. Both are worth fighting for.”

One of the young people Benton has mentored is Ceci Ise, 17, who received her Gold Award from the Girl Scouts of Tropical South Florida for her Pollinator Patch Project. Ceci attends the School for Advanced Stud-



Miami

Gold Award Girl Scout Ceci Ise teaches children about native plants at Bound by Beauty's booth at Green Day in Miami Shores.

ies, Wolfson.

"She is a remarkable young woman, with an incredible ability to connect with children, who is taking college courses along with her high school classes.

"Ceci has been coming to my garden since she was 5 years old for birthday party tours and just to explore. She is the embodiment of our Bound by Beauty motto: Connect, Educate, Transform, Replicate," Benton said. "Now, she has developed a fun and educational program to open people's eyes to the importance of pollinators."

Benton said she is awed by those who donate their time and expertise, as well as materials, to create native plant sanctuaries.

"One example is Dan

Arguelles of ArteZanos, who owns a roof tile and paver factory in Colombia and has not only agreed to donate all the pavers to make this garden wheelchair accessible, but he has also agreed to donate a new gate ... and he doesn't even live in Miami Shores. But he understands the need for and the potential of this project.

"I am also thrilled that this library project has the unanimous support of the village council, village management and the Brockway Library board of trustees," she said.

"This would have been unthinkable a few short years ago, which shows that you can transform entrenched attitudes, which Bound by Beauty works hard to do. We use

beauty and awe and wonder as agents of transformation."

She also collaborates with Corime Mariposa of Miami Seed Share, who helps tend the garden at Brockway, harvests seeds and, when the plants have matured and cooler weather arrives, will host propagation workshops.

Benton's own garden is where Bound by Beauty began. Her Butterfly Circles include the one in Constitution Park that inspired Ceci.

"I love the idea of spreading the word about native plants," Benton said. "This project has been a community effort from the beginning."

"We consider the garden to be an extension of the library itself, bringing education outdoors. Imagine if every library had such a beautiful and inspirational space."

To learn how to start your own native plant garden, create a Butterfly Circle, or to volunteer, visit [www.boundbybeauty.org](http://www.boundbybeauty.org)

**BECOME AN AUDUBON AMBASSADOR**

South Floridians who love the natural world and would like to foster "conservation through community" can now become more engaged, educated and effective environmental advocates by signing up for the 2024 edition of the Tropical Audubon Ambassador Program.



ELAINE FIORE

A student from the Whiddon-Rogers Food Forest Club participates in a Bound by Beauty 'Wild Plant Scavenger Hunt' in Miami Shores.

This award-winning, free education series takes place Sept. 12 through Oct. 24 and is designed to activate ambassadors who want to help raise awareness and preserve South Florida's unique and increasingly endangered ecosystems.

Field trips are back by popular demand, and the fall interactive virtual sessions will offer the option of participating in either English or Spanish.

Our region's cornerstone ecosystems are The Everglades, Biscayne Bay, Pine Rocklands and Tropical Hardwood Hammocks. Program participants will receive comprehensive advocacy training from environmental experts and gain in-depth

knowledge on all of them.

The virtual Zoom format allows for remote flexibility and ease of engaging in Q&A during online sessions. Recorded versions will be available

to registered participants. All virtual sessions feature a Spanish-language interpreter.

The 2024 Tropical Audubon Ambassador series is open to anyone 18 and older, newcomers and past graduates. Registration deadline is Aug. 30. Sign up at [tropicalaudubon.org/ambassador](http://tropicalaudubon.org/ambassador)

**BEACH HIGH ALUMS PLAN 70TH REUNION**

The 70th reunion luncheon for the Miami Beach High School Class of 1954 is planned for noon Oct. 19 at the Capitol Grille in Boca Raton.

"It's the first 70th reunion in the school's history," said organizer Stu Blumberg. For more information, contact Blumberg at 305-978-4444 or [hotelier@msn.com](mailto:hotelier@msn.com)

Write to [ChristinaMMayo@gmail.com](mailto:ChristinaMMayo@gmail.com) with news for this column.

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION ADVERTISEMENT**

Pursuant to Section 33-310.1(A)(V) of the Code of the Miami-Dade County, the Assistant Director of the Miami-Dade County Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources has approved with condition(s) the following request for Administrative Modification to modify the conditions # 6 and # 7 of Resolution 4-ZAB-133-82 passed and adopted by the Metropolitan Dade County Zoning Appeals Board 12 on May 12, 1982.

**M202400015: Hearing & Speech Center of Florida, Inc. Located at: 7430 SW 72 Street, Miami-Dade County, Florida.**

1. Hearing & Speech Center of Florida, Inc. requests the modification of Condition No. 6 and No. 7 of Resolution No. 4-ZAB-133-82, as follows:

FROM: "6. That the use be restricted to children in the age group of from three to seven years."

TO: "6. That the use be restricted to children in the minimum age group of one and half (1.5) years old to seven (7) years old."

FROM "7. That the hours of operation shall be from three to 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M."

TO "7. That the hours of operation shall be from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M."

The purpose of the Administrative Modification is to modify the age group level of children from 3 years old to 1.5 years old.; and extend the hours of operations in the Center from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., and from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Any property owner in the area may appeal a decision by filing an appeal application on or before September 24, 2024. Additional information may be obtained by contacting 305/375-2640.

For legal ads online, go to <http://legalads.miamidade.gov>

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE**

**GOVERNMENTAL FACILITIES HEARING**

THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS will hold a Public Hearing on the following zoning applications on September 17, 2024, at 9:30a.m. in the Miami-Dade County Commission Chambers, located on the 2nd Fl, Stephen P. Clark Center, 111 NW 1st St, Miami, FL 33128

Applicant: Department of Transportation and Public Works  
Location: 12805 Biscayne Drive, Miami-Dade County, Florida.

GF24-002 Department of Transportation and Public Works South Dade Transit Operations Center with Temporary Access from a Private Street (Biscayne Drive)

Request: Approval of the South Dade Transit Operations Center with Temporary Access from a Private Drive.

Objections may be made in person at the hearing or filed in writing prior to the hearing date. Mail objections at least 5 business days prior to the hearing to the Department of Regulatory & Economic Resources, 111 NW 1st ST, 11th Floor, Miami, FL 33128. For further information, contact The Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources, (305) 375-2615. Sign Language Interpreters are available upon request; call (305)375-1244 at least 5 days prior.

For legal ads online, go to <http://legalads.miamidade.gov>