

Beautification of the South Miami / Coral Gables Elks Lodge Grounds

The South Miami Garden Club adopted the SM/CG Elk's Lodge as part of their beautification of the community. Kenneth Cook one of SM/CG Elk's new members was asked to help in this project, he met with Mari Arnold, Suzie Brawner, and Annie Goodrich in the very initial planning stages of the project. (Ken was asked to draw a plan) he became so excited he enlisted the help of one of the Open Mic participants Bruce Howarath of Emerald Tree Farms, and Lu of Personal Landscaping to help in this project. Ken is a conceptual planner, meaning he doesn't put plans on paper, they are in his head and they become very acquiescent as he works. Ken invited members of the South Miami Garden Club, President Linda Keyes, Susie McMillian and Annie Goodrich to his place of work and home, Plant Creations in South Dade, to see the type of landscaping and the scope of his experience and talent. Ken also entertained the ladies with several of his musical compositions; those that know Ken, know that he is a very integral part of the Open Mic group and know that he quite talented musically.

As the plan progressed, and Ken became even more excited and was donating plants and labor; The South Miami Garden Club decided that all of this grand work should be protected if we had a hurricane, so they hired an arborist (an expert in the cultivation and care of trees) to prune and cut back the beautiful Oak trees in the back of the Elks Lodge which is the main entrance of the lodge. This allows the new plants to receive the proper light and air. The glass doors that open from the Florida Ballroom sometimes created a problem, with dirt being brought into the ballroom; as part of the plan it was decided to create a walkway from the doors and behind the plants, to the sidewalk and to the barbeque. The garden club paid for the pea rock and stepping stones and the installation.

The South Miami Club theme is, Let's grow through community involvement! They certainly live up to their theme. Ken is certainly living up to his personal theme which is to make a difference and bring beauty to all in his path through foliage and song. Thank you to all involved in the creation of this work of art and the beginning of making the SM/CG Elks Lodge as beautiful as its members.

