

# HEATHCOTE BOTANICAL GARDENS MID-YEAR 2024 UPDATE

Summer 2024

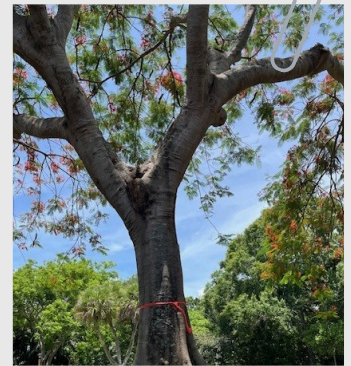


Dear Friend,

It's Summer and I couldn't be more excited to bring you a mid-year update on activities here at the gardens.

Our Summer Explore & More children's program kicked off on June 7th to children learning about Insects & Butterflies. The program continues for a total of eight Fridays offering a different garden theme every week, fun art projects, and so much more.

The plant signage project continues. We have a wonderful team of dedicated plant enthusiasts in the garden taking on the identification of plants which will lead to the smart identification signage for garden visitors. If you walk in the gardens, you'll see red tags hanging off trees and plants. These plants and trees have been identified and are being entered into our database. A seasoned volunteer is helping to facilitate origin, biology and history for inclusion on our website. To date, we've identified 200+ plants in our unique collection.



*Royal Poinciana tagged*

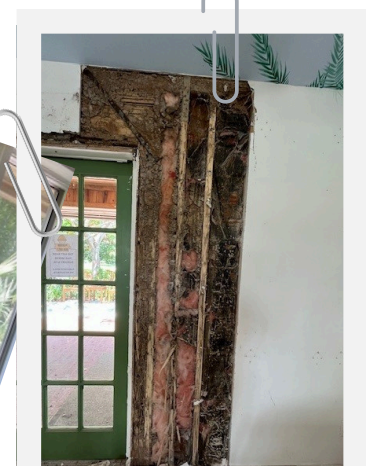
We're also excited about the momentum on the remediation of the termite damage in the Gift Shop/Welcome Center. As you know, it took some time to acquire quotes from qualified commercial contractors. We are so thankful to be partnering once again with long-time local professionals R.K. Davis Construction to oversee this project. On June 10th & 11th an exploratory surgery, of sorts, was undertaken to verify the extent of the termite damage behind the walls. We shouldn't have been shocked, but we were, at just how destructive these pests are. The process to bring this to completion is not a quick venture and I personally am learning patience. The next steps are City approvals, permitting, and then actual construction. We're not anticipating any hiccups and hope the construction will start in late August. The timing of the entire project will get us completed and restocked by the start of the 10th Annual Garden of Lights. During construction, we'll be moving the Gift Shop to the main floor of Heathcote House. We believe this will be an added treat for those interested in seeing this building firsthand and will keep a loss of revenue to a minimum.



*Upper wall damage*



*Interior wall damage*



*Exit wall damage*

# MID-YEAR 2024 UPDATE CONT.

As we look to really bring this unique Gift Shop building with its cypress paneling back to life, we've noticed as well that the roof has lived a good life. Toward the close of construction, we will be replacing the roof to help further extend the life and safety of the building.

Did someone say roof? Yes, that was our insurance carrier. Earlier this month, our insurance provider notified us that the roof on the Heathcote House will need to be replaced or we will forfeit our coverage. We are currently entertaining bids from licensed roofing contractors. Replacement of the roof and soffit/facia repairs were not in our financial plan for this year, yet here we are hoping to rectify the situation this summer.

One thing this year has taught us is that being proactive rather than reactive is the best way to get to sustainability. Likewise, the Board of Trustees has launched a new Retention Committee, charged with evaluating Heathcote assets, asset longevity, and subsequent replacement values, so that capital reserves are increased and maintained. Their planned evaluations should be complete by the end of the calendar year.

So where does this leave you and me? We've been through a lot together and I hope "we" never part. Heathcote Botanical Gardens has a rich history here in Ft. Pierce and holds a special place in so many hearts. The financial obstacles the garden is faced with this summer are difficult pills to swallow. It's my hope that you will once again consider what Heathcote means to you and to the community and step up to help us meet the financial obligations we have in getting the Gift Shop and the Heathcote House roofs replaced. These unplanned expenses will be an estimated \$29,000.

As you can see, we're taking steps to update the property and enhance the visitor experience and safety for our staff and volunteers. These necessary corrective actions, will bring value to this treasured place in St. Lucie County. I hope you will consider partnering with us once again. We can't do it without you.

*Vicki*

Vicki Hoyos  
Executive Director



**Please donate now. Spread the word. Tell your friends.**

PS: Your gift will literally keep the doors to Heathcote open. Gifts in addition to project expenses will be used for general operations.

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\_\_\_\_\_ \$100    \_\_\_\_\_ \$250    \_\_\_\_\_ \$500    \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000    \_\_\_\_\_ My Best Gift \$\_\_\_\_\_

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Enclosed is my check for: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ You may also consider using the QR code to make a secure online donation.

