

## PUNTA GORDA CONTINUES BLOOMING IN 2021!

Punta Gorda in Bloom (PGIB) Chair Richard Polk reports in January, "We just completed the installation of six light pole planters at the Charlotte County Courthouse. The beautification of Hector House Square Park is complete with the installation of four light pole and six large sidewalk planters." The committee moves ahead with plans for the beautification of Taylor Street and has presented plans to City Council for beautifying Marion Avenue between 41 North and Taylor Street.

PGIB is a local affiliate of the America in Bloom organization. The group was formed under the auspices of TEAM Punta Gorda along with the Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce and the Punta Gorda Garden Club. The committee is composed of interested citizens, including some members of the PGI Green Thumbs, the Punta Gorda Garden Club, and TEAM Punta Gorda volunteers.



The group is dedicated to aiding in the beautification of downtown Punta Gorda. Richard Polk, longtime leader of the Green Thumbs (*pictured left with TEAM board member Tom Cavanaugh*), knew there was an opportunity to extend the work the group does in beautifying the Punta Gorda Nature Park. After witnessing what the America in Bloom program inspired in nearby Venice, he brought the project to TEAM Punta Gorda for help moving it forward locally.

The nationwide America in Bloom (AIB) program

provides member communities with education and shares examples of what can be accomplished by using flowers, plants, trees and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements to build community spirit. While initially focused on horticultural elements, AIB communities have found far broader benefits, including improved business vitality, heritage preservation and environmental enhancement – all forming economic drivers for their communities.



Initial funding for all materials needed has been generously donated by local resident and entrepreneur Alan Schulman. Future project phases are already envisioned. As the downtown beauty unfolds, the group hopes that merchants and citizens will want to participate via donations of funding, and that additional volunteers will join the current core group to assist with the ongoing revitalization of the specially selected, self-watering planters. (Volunteers pictured: Peggy Jensen, Joyce Laubach, Helen Cavanaugh, Richard Polk, Judi Beaumont and Elaine LaWell)

Be on the lookout downtown as the installation proceeds. Anyone interested in finding out more or participating as a volunteer should contact Richard Polk via email at [richardpolk@comcast.net](mailto:richardpolk@comcast.net).

