

HOUSE CONSULTANTS AUGUST, 2025

REPORT – 2025 HOUSE TOUR

Over the winter, we learned that there would be seven houses on this summer's tour, "A Scenic Sconset Stroll" to take place on Wednesday, August 6. Seven is probably two more houses than the NGC usually has on tour with recent tours having five houses and a garden only. On the one hand, how fortunate to have seven lovely homes on Baxter Road, but, on the other hand, staffing seven houses might be challenging. We could not have the tour without the generosity of the homeowners. The House Consultants become the "face" of the club and of the tour itself so their job is extremely important.

Merriellou and Bonnie contacted seven members to ask if they would be a House Consultant and received positive responses from each member. To assign the member to a house, we relied on Kathleen Poole who knew the homeowners and the consultants to match them. If a member was responsible for making the "ask", that is, getting the house for the tour, then usually that person becomes the consultant. This summer, that was true of only one of our consultants – Linda Kelly with the Simmons' home. Martha Polachi asked for the Johnson's home as she was familiar with the house and the family. It is important to try and match the consultant with the homeowner, if possible. Interestingly, of the seven house consultants, six of the members had chaired the tour but had not been consultants before.

After assigning the consultant to a home, we sent, digitally, the list of house consultant responsibilities (see attached) to each consultant.

Planning ahead: Many of the consultants began to think about which NGC Members they would ask to be docents and/ or flower arrangers even though they had not yet walked through the house. Generally, most houses require 5 to 6 docents per shift and 4 flower arrangers. Once the consultant visits the house, these numbers can be refined. These volunteers should be communicated to the person setting up the Sign Up Genius so that the names can be pre-populated. This was a problem this year as the SUG was sent out so early (May 1) that some of the volunteers forgot they'd agreed to volunteer by the time summer rolled around and did not put their names in the SUG and other members signed up online taking their spots.

The Consultant is asked to contact the homeowner and introduce themselves and emphasize they would be their liaison for the tour so any questions or concerns should be addressed to them. Attached is a note one of the consultants sent to their respective homeowner.*

The House Consultant should inquire as to when the homeowner expects to be on island for the summer in order to set up an appointment to meet one another, to see the house, to establish the "route" through the house, etc. Often, this is late June or early July – the sooner, the better. There may be a printing deadline for the program so the person writing the house descriptions also needs to see the house and interview the homeowner. That person has already sent a questionnaire about the house and garden to the homeowner which they will have in hand before visiting the house in person.

House Consultant should ask the homeowner if there is a space that could be set aside for the volunteers to use the bathroom, if necessary, and to have a snack.

Flower Arrangements: Be sure to speak with the homeowner regarding possible locations for flower arrangements provided by our members. They may have preferences regarding containers, colors, etc. The House Consultants used to take the flower arrangers to the house to see the locations (sometimes after a general meeting) and this was very helpful. Now, many of the Consultants are simply taking a photograph of the location. One suggestion from a HC this summer was to be sure to take the flower arrangers to the home – better than taking pictures.

The timeline for the day of the tour should be discussed. Generally, the house consultant arrives in plenty of time to ribbon-off doorways and to receive the flower arrangements and provide the NGC tent cards for the arrangers to describe the materials they used. It's also a good time to set up the snack/refreshments for the volunteers.

Art in the Garden. The homeowner will be asked if they would like an artist in the garden during the tour (Some prefer not to have an artist). A club member will be in charge of selecting artists and assigning the artist to a home. Consult the chair of the Artists if there are questions.

NO PHOTOGRAPHY. There was some confusion this summer as to whether tour goers could take pictures of the flower arrangements. No photography is allowed.

Booties. The Bootie Chair will bring a basket of booties to the house. Properties will be sure there are two white folding chairs at each home for the guests to sit and put on the shoe coverings and take them off. There should be a basket for booties at the back of the home also in case guests want to take off their booties and leave them at a house. The House Consultant should be prepared with the phone number of the bootie chairs in case they need additional booties at their house. NO BARE FEET.

NO STROLLERS

THE NGC TOTE BAGS given to each House Consultant contain supplies needed for the day of the tour and include ribbon, tape, scissors, folded notecards, green pens, blue tape for marking potential hazardous thresholds, and a green folder with house descriptions laminated for each volunteer to use, an Incident Report Form, an Insurance Certificate (Provided by the Club President and issued by the GCA), Rain Procedure Description and the phone numbers of the tour co-chairs in case of emergency.

Docents are not allowed to leave the house during their shift to visit other houses!

Trash will be collected at the end of the tour and should be placed on the curb in front of the house at the end of the day.

Doors close at 4 pm when we welcome the homeowners back to their homes!

NGC Totes should be brought to the next meeting following the tour.

Respectfully Submitted

Bonnie Ford

Merriellou Symes