

## FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT MARKETING & INFORMATION SERVICE

by Fred Landrum

The Directors of the Florida Native Plant Society recently endorsed the concept of the Florida Native Plant Marketing & Information Service (FNPMIS) to help unify and overcome some of the problems of the fledgling native plant industry, and obtain additional revenues for the Society. The FNPMIS will be the focal point for commercial interests in native plants. Operation of the organization will be facilitated through an arrangement with Business Planning Associates, Inc., a management consulting firm, located in Hobe Sound, Florida.

One of the most significant driving factors of the newly emerging native plant industry is the growing recognition that much of the State's greatly altered landscape and natural ecology, brought about by varied economic interests, can be restored through the proper use of native flora. Other factors, perhaps of equal importance, are an increasing awareness of native plant aesthetics, reduced maintenance requirements, drought resistant characteristics, and a host of other attributes which native plant fanciers have known for years. Although the native plant industry is moving forward, positive steps have to be taken by those with commercial interests to sustain or accelerate the demand while ensuring that an adequate supply of quality material is available. Research, education, communication, and standardization is also of vital importance to the industry.

An assessment of the industry indicates that 1) production of native plants is mostly limited to small scale nurseries scattered throughout the State, 2) most landscape architectural firms have little knowledge of native plants and their usage, and quite often those that do have some knowledge are reluctant to specify natives because they do not think the material is available, 3) the industry has only a few qualified professional experts on native plants and their usage, and 4) there is an inadequate amount of research being done with native plants to learn more about such important

aspects as propagation methods, symbiotic relationships, growth habits, and plant characteristics.

The Florida Native Plant Marketing and Information Service will bridge the gap between growers of native plants and seekers of native plants. For these nurserymen, the organization will provide a central outlet where they can sell their plants in a significantly broadened marketplace. For those dealing in professional services related to native plants and their use (i.e. landscape architects, designers, contractors, planners, and other consultants), the FNPMIS will offer a central source from which native plants may be purchased, opportunities to bid on service projects that emerge from the statewide marketing network, and a way to learn more about native plant varieties and characteristics. Specific functions to be performed by the organization include the buying and selling of native plants, the promotion of native plant usage; the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information regarding market trends and inventories of marketable native plants.

The FNPMIS will generate revenues through an annual membership fee of \$165.00, paid by those with commercial interests who wish to take advantage of the marketing and information service. Twelve dollars of the annual fee will be applied toward membership in the Florida Native Plant Society. Additional revenues will be derived from a nominal service charge attached to the sale of native plants and to related professional service contracts. A portion of these revenues over and above expenses, will be used by the Florida Native Plant Society to further its aims and objectives through the funding of technical research as may be related to the preservation and restoration of native plant communities.

For additional information on the FNPMIS, you may contact Messrs Fred or Michael Landrum, at (305) 546-7667, or write the Florida Native Plant Marketing & Information Service, at P.O. Box 1748, Jupiter, Florida 33458.