

FNPS Member Wins National Landscape Award

by Peggy S. Lantz

Central Florida Native Flora, Inc., of San Antonio, Florida, received special recognition in a formal ceremony and reception at the White House on May 19, 1988, when Mrs. Ronald Reagan presented Brightman S. Logan, owner of C.F.N.F., with the first award ever given to an all-native plant landscape project.

The 29th Landscape Awards program, sponsored by the American Association of Nurserymen and begun in 1952, honored seventeen other environmental and community improvement projects, as well.

The executive vice president of AAN, Lawrence E. Scovotto, says that the objective of the landscape awards program is to "inspire industrial and commercial firms, private and public institutions, and municipalities to participate actively in community improvement" through excellence in landscape design.

Central Florida Native Flora received the award for their role in the development of the Tampa Bay Office Park. C.F.N.F. was the landscape contracting firm for the project, Florida Land Design and Engineering (Ed Czynscon, Landscape Architect) was the landscape architectural firm, and Landmarks Group of Atlanta was the developer.

The landscaping of the approximately 19 acres of lakes that surround the office buildings used only plants native to the Tampa Bay area and were installed out into five feet of water as well as on the banks.

Brightman Logan of C.F.N.F. says the Tampa Bay Office Park "was originally a peat bog with some surrounding high ground. The developer wanted to build an office park on the site, but because of the natural wetland area the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation was hesitant on just what to allow them to build. DER finally agreed that if the peat bog was dug out and the resulting lake area was restored to a natural lake setting, they would allow development on the surrounding upland areas.

"Florida Land Design and Engineering, specifically Edward Czynscon, got with us (C.F.N.F. — William Carey, Richard Callahan, and myself) to see what plants we could put in that would add color and aesthetic value to the project as well as comply with the DER requirements.

"The plants we chose for the site were pickerelweed (*Pontederia* sp.), arrowhead



Brightman Logan of C.F.N.F. and Mrs. Ronald Reagan

(*Sagittaria lancifolia*), soft-rush (*Juncus effuses*), flat-sedge (*Cyperus odorata*), white water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*), spatterdock (*Nuphar luteum*), cordgrass (*Spartina bakeri*), water lotus (*Nelumbo luteum*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar straciflua*), pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*), wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), loblolly bay (*Gordonia lasianthus*), and tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*).

"All of these plants occurred naturally on the site as well. Mr. Czynscon constructed a landscape plan that blended all of the plants, was pleasing to the eye, and served as a native habitat for many birds, fish, and invertebrates. The 19-acre project used over 30,000 plants and took C.F.N.F. almost a month to complete. There were natural islands left in the lake that had been taken over by vines and weeds which we had to clean off and spruce up with more plants. We also had to start a regular maintenance program to clear out any undesirable weeds, such as primrose willow, cattail, etc., until the plants could fill in their respective areas.

"The site is now a viable wetland habitat with many nesting birds and other animals. It is also recognized as one of the most successful mitigation sites in the state of Florida. It shows that natural areas can be reconstructed in an urban environment that will function as a viable ecosystem."

The First Lady has presented the AAN awards on 13 occasions, nine times at the

White House, and Mrs. Reagan has chaired the awards program four times. AAN Vice President Scovotto said, "We are grateful to Mrs. Reagan for her personal interest in this landscape enhancement program, as the national attention which comes as a result of it has encouraged many others to make the same sorts of investments in their own communities. Through her example, countless others are discovering the pleasure of plants."

The awards ceremony was held in the east room of the White House with the developer, architect, and landscape contracting firm for each project receiving awards. After the ceremony, Mrs. Reagan hosted a reception for all the recipients in the State Room at the other side of the White House. Mr. Logan says, "We were allowed to walk around all of the rooms on that floor which are not open to the general public." The AAN then held a reception at the Hotel Washington, with Rep. Kika de la Graza, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, and other U.S. representatives and senators in attendance as well.

At the time of the project, the owners of C.F.N.F. were Richard Callahan, William Carey, and Brightman Logan. Logan is now sole owner of C.F.N.F., a 25-acre wholesale native plant nursery specializing in freshwater habitat restoration and native plant landscaping. Callahan and Carey now own Biological Research Associates in Tampa and do mitigation work.