

Sabal minor

A bimonthly newsletter for the members of

THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



VOLUME 10, NUMBER 4
August - September 2007

August

Shorebirds and blue-winged teal arrive to winter on Florida wetlands and lakes. Yellow warbler migration begins.

Short-tailed shrews are beginning a second round of breeding for the year. Deer are breeding in southern Florida.

Gopher tortoises are hatching. Bass are foraging in shallows in early morning, late evenings and nighttime.

A few blooms to watch for: goat's rue, *Tephrosia virginiana*; cranefly orchid, *Tipularia discolor*; various elephantsfoot, such as *Elephantopus carolinianus* and *E. elatus*; fireweed, *Erechtites hieracifolius*; grassleaf roseling, *Callisia graminea*; sawgrass, *Cladium jamaicense*.

September

Bald eagles return to nest sites and begin courtship. Florida scrub-jay younguns lose their brown juvenile plumage and get completely blue heads.

Lovebugs, or Bibionidae flies, mate in the middle of roadways. Late in the month, gray bats migrate to north Alabama for winter hibernation.

Atlantic sturgeon begin fall migration from the Suwannee and Apalachicola Rivers to the Gulf of Mexico.

Blooms aplenty now! Here are just a few: waterspider false reinorchid, *Habenaria repens* (technical name's easier than the common one!); the gayfeathers, *Liatris* spp.; Florida paintbrush, *Carphephorus corymbosus*; rabbit tobacco, *Pseudognaphalium obtusifolium*; forked bluecurls, *Trichostema dichotomum*; coastalplain milkwort, *Polygala setacea*.

President's Message

This has been an exciting several months. We had an absolutely fabulous conference. Our membership is up, with an unprecedented jump in the past year. We have our first officer from north Florida in many years (Ann Redmond, from the Magnolia Chapter, Tallahassee). We just signed a two year contract with Karina Veaudry, so she's now contracted as our Executive Director again. And we have two new chapters: Pine Lily (Osceola County) and Sweet Bay (Jackson County).

Karina and I spent a very long weekend doing something I've longed to do — scanning old minutes. We spent nearly eight hours scanning and making PDF files of the notes from 1982 to 1996, and I spent nearly 12 hours more reading them and uploading them to the Forum. The reading was incredibly interesting. We even found approved policies that we'd long forgotten that we had (especially one on invasive species). We also found the origins of many standing procedures whose origins had become murky. Did you know that the FNPS wrote to the governor supporting a bottle law for Florida? (back in the early 1980s before FNPS even had a mission statement!) Altogether a very long but rewarding weekend. Ameer Bailey (Heartland Chapter, and our FNPS Secretary), has been scanning new minutes, and Karina and I plan to scan the remaining ones sometime in August.

These minutes are available on the FNPS Forum....go to www.FNPS.org and follow the menu to the Discussion Forum. If you haven't already done so, you'll need to register for the Forum to see them.

We have lots of new officers and Chapter Representatives on the Board of Directors. Some bring skills that we've never had.

Overall, I'm looking forward to this year being an incredible and productive one.

Shirley Denton
FNPS President

FNPS Membership Retreat Weekend

October 6 & 7, 2007

SIGN UP NOW!!! This informal retreat will give members from around the state an opportunity to mingle, learn something new, and enjoy the beautiful ecosystems of Central Florida. Activities will include hiking, paddling, workshops, guest speakers, nature crafts and family programs. The FNPS Government Policy & Legislature Committee will also hold an Advocacy Workshop.

Go to FNPS.org and fill out the registration form TODAY!!



Photo from Pine Lake Retreat Website

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Sabal minor is on-line at <http://www.fnps.org/sabalminor>. The on-line version has color photographs and other benefits. Enjoy!

Deadlines for *Sabal minor* submissions are: 1/15 for Feb-Mar issue; 3/15 for Apr-May; 5/15 for June-July; 7/15 for Aug-Sept; 9/15 for Oct-Nov; 11/15 for Dec-Jan

Species Spotlight

Apios americana
FABACEAE

Paul Willis

The tubers from a common native vine found from Florida to New England are just waiting in the wings to be chosen as a kitchen vegetable.

Commonly called the groundnut—not to be confused with the peanut—this vine of moist, rich woods carries the botanical name *Apios americana*. It is a legume, with odd, brown-purple flowers that lead to edible pods like small green beans.

But the plant's major food value lies underground. Many tubers the size of small chicken eggs grow along buried stems like beads on a string. The tubers resemble potatoes in texture, but taste something like boiled peanuts and are tasty and very nutritious boiled or roasted. They are 13 per cent protein, three times that of the potato or any other common root vegetable.

The vine has compound leaves, somewhat resembling native wisteria, and is fairly common in North Florida. I found it in my own wooded yard at Tallahassee and sometimes dug and cooked a few tubers.

The groundnut was widely eaten by the Indian tribes of America, and helped feed the starving Plymouth Rock pilgrims in the vicious winter of 1620. English writer Samuel Purchas noted then that the tubers were abundant, sometimes as many as 40 strung along on a single underground stem. Later, explorers from the eastern states to the Rocky Mountains made the wild food part of their diet.

Considering the head start the groundnut had as an early food, it is somewhat remarkable that it did not join the Irish potato as a common food. But it may yet, for it thrives in marshy ground where potatoes won't grow, and agriculture research has given it some study, using sample vines from Florida, Louisiana and other states.

Anyone searching moist woods for groundnuts should look for a smallish, perennial vine with milky juice and thin, compound leaves of 5 to 7 leaflets. In mid-summer, its clusters or racemes of brown-purple, pea-like blooms may have a faint violet fragrance. Look for the tubers a couple of inches under the ground, away from the root.



Milkweed Butterflies

Linda Cooper

Most people are familiar with the Monarch - the long-distance migrant. It is but one of our butterflies dependent on milkweeds; we also have Soldier and



Queen. Soldier is restricted to southern and central Florida while Queen, shown here, is commonly found statewide. All are orange and black and all use a wide variety of native and non-native milkweeds, those herbs and vines in the Dogbane family or *Apocynaceae*, as host plants. Their caterpillars eat the leaves of these plants and store the plant's poisonous chemicals to deter predators, protecting their entire life cycle - caterpillar, chrysalis, adult.

Board of Directors Meeting Summary

July 14, 2007

The meeting began with a Chapters Discussion session to share what is working best. Discussion of member plant raffles raised concerns for those Chapters under 501(c)3 status: as "gaming" is prohibited, plant raffles tickets cannot be sold; you can, however, suggest a donation for a ticket.

Next were the Committee Reports and the approvals of relevant committee chairs or other members. Some changes to the Conference Committee standing committee definitions were approved; also, Ray Wunderlich III (Pinellas) and Karen Fraley (Serenoa) were approved as 2008 Conference co-chairs. The Government Policy committee will soon be providing vetted policy statements and supporting documentation on a number of FNPS issues; they also will be looking for a lobbyist.

After extensive discussion about contract wording, the Board voted to approve a contract with Karina Veaudry to serve as the Society's Executive Director for two years. To date, she has been paid for a part-time (roughly 60% of full time) position. The new contract allows for Karina's paid hours to increase as she increases the Society's successes.

To simplify subsequent discussions of contracts, a new temporary committee was created to pen a template FNPS contract. Ann Redmond (FNPS VP Admin Committee) was appointed the chair, with Ray Miller (Palm Beach) and James Wheeler (Suncoast) assisting.

Another temporary committee was created to revise the FNPS handbook and have a working draft for next BOD-Bob Egolf (FNPS Past President), Shirley Denton, with Society historians Debbie Butz (Suncoast), and Candy Weller (pending their consent).

Two new chapters were approved, Pine Lily (Osceola County) and the Sweet Bay (Jackson County). Also, the Chapter grant was renamed the Teddi Bierly Chapter Grant Program.

FNPS Grant Program Awards for 2007

Cindy Liberton

Conservation Grants 2007

The FNPS Conservation Committee launched a competitive program in 2004 to grant 3 awards annually of \$2500.00 each for applied native plant conservation work throughout the state. FNPS Chapters submit proposals for grants for native plant conservation work in their communities, targeting small nonprofit or other types of organizations that need seed money to get a project off the ground. In 2007, twelve high-quality proposals were reviewed, and the Conservation Committee reports that it was difficult to award only three. Here are the three:

□ **Strap Fern Reintroduction.** This two-phase project will reintroduce two species of endangered strap fern -- the narrow strap fern (*Campyloneurum angustifolium*) and tailed strap fern (*C. costatum*) -- to Timms Hammock in Miami-Dade County. Neither species has been observed there since the 1930s, and both are now known from only a couple of sites. This project is especially exciting because it represents a partnership between Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and the Institute for Regional Conservation. Spores collected from Fakahatchee Strand will be cultured at Marie Selby Gardens to produce a genetically diverse collection of new sporophyte plants. The second phase of the project will reintroduce sporophyte plants to Timms Hammock.

□ Restoring Hooded Pitcherplant Habitat Within the Wekiva River Basin State Parks.

The hooded pitcherplant (*Sarracenia minor*) is the only pitcher plant species native to central Florida. This project was proposed by Melanie Brodhead and will also receive \$2,000 in financial support from the State of Florida. Several different approaches for restoring vitality to existing pitcher plant sites in the Lower Wekiva River State Preserve and Rock Springs Run State Reserve will be investigated.



□ **Propagation of Florida Mayten.** This project by the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation's Native Plant Nursery seeks to identify methods for effectively propagating the Florida Mayten (*Maytenus phyllanthoides*). This threatened species, which is native to a restricted range within Florida's mangrove community, would then be included in restoration and mitigation projects, and ultimately be made available for use in home landscapes. Initial plants produced by the project will be used at the Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge and on other conservation lands within the area. Native seed collected on Sanibel Island will be used.

Chapter Tips & Tricks

The **Pawpaw Chapter** gets together in a local park during the summer for a "Late afternoon plant swap, native Plant ID, and picnic." Members bring plants to swap and to identify, ID books, water, and a sack dinner.

The **Lakela's Mint** chapter was given a donation of land for a native plant demonstration garden. The annual insurance cost for the property was too expensive so they coordinated with the donor and the St. Lucie County Conservation Trust. The Conservation Trust will own the property and the Lakelas Mint chapter will have specific use rights.

Here are a couple of Chapter activities, procedures and ideas being shared across the table at the last state BOD meeting:

- Find out whether your chapter is a "Garden" chapter or a "Field Trip" chapter: take a simple but thorough survey of your member preferences! How many of your people want to focus on gardens and growing plants? Do they want to keep this focus at home and with friends, or do they want this to include Plant Rescue work and maybe public gardens? Or, how many want to be out amongst native plants in their natural environment? Do they want to be like Birders, only of the plant world -- getting to know what plants Florida has, how to identify them and where to find them? What a delightful opportunity for discussion such a survey could provide your Chapter, not to mention the guidance it would provide for the Chapter Meeting schedulers.

- Send a special postcard to welcome a new member, a different one to welcome back a lapsed membership, and yet another to tell members who haven't been seen in a while that they are missed!

Endowment Research Awards 2007

The Florida Native Plant Society maintains an Endowment Grant program for the purpose of funding research on native plants. These are small grants (typically \$2500 or less), awarded for a 1-year period, and intended to support research that forwards the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society. Awardees present the results of their research to the FNPS membership either through presentation at the annual conference or a summary for publication in the Palmetto. The FNPS Endowment Fund is created and maintained through the donations of members.

□ **Effects of Fire on Nutrient Availability in Scrub.** Jennifer Schafer, Department of Botany, University of Florida. Effects of time since fire on nutrient limitation of plant productivity in Florida scrub ecosystems: Does disturbance shift nitrogen vs phosphorus limitation?

Specifically, this work will test whether nitrogen (N) or phosphorus (P) is most limiting to plant growth at different times since fire. Altered fire frequencies and nutrient loading from agriculture and the atmosphere are threats to remnant scrub ecosystems. This information will be useful in managing and restoring scrub.

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FNPS Research Awards, *continued*

▣ ***Jacquemontia reclinata* Population Study.** Dr. John Pascarella, Valdosta State University, and Dr. Joyce Maschinski, Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden. Population structure and dynamics of restored and natural populations of the federally endangered Florida endemic *Jacquemontia reclinata* (Convolvulaceae).

Jacquemontia reclinata (beach jacquemontia) is a rare plant of coastal South Florida. To reduce its risk of extinction additional populations have been established by planting. This project will collect demographic data from four restored populations to compare to four natural populations that have been studied since 2000. Such data are needed to determine if these populations will function to reduce extinction risk.

▣ **Conservation Genetics of Three *Harrisia* Cacti.**



Alan Franck, Biology Department, University of South Florida. Conservation genetics of three endangered Florida endemic *Harrisia* cacti.

Three endemic, endangered species of *Harrisia* are found along the coasts of Florida: *Harrisia aboriginum*, *H. fragrans*, and *H. simpsonii*. All are threatened by coastal development. The taxonomic treatment of these species has varied and needs clarification. This project will use genetic techniques to help clarify the

taxonomic status of these plants, to identify unique populations that should be managed, and to provide genetic information useful to the conservation of these plants.

Starrush Notes

Could the person who sent me the letter about white-top sedges please resend it to me. It's best if you put it in an email somehow - paper copies I have to put in a Safe Place, which at my age is a dangerous thing to do! I very much want to do a short article about your comments and get members to keep an eye out. Thanks. -RR

Book Review

Rosalind Rowe

Natural Florida Landscaping

Dan Walton and Laurel Schiller.
Pineapple Press, Sarasota, Florida
(c)2007. ISBN: 1-56164-388-2



This book is about “Using native plants for a beautiful, life-supporting and environmentally sensitive landscape.” It’s written as if you’d walked up to Dan and Laurel and asked, “I’d like to have a more environmentally sensitive yard, what should I do?” The book reads like a conversation with these practiced experts.

The basic tenet in this book is “Put the right plant in the right place.” Become sensitive to what is natural to Florida. If a plant needs fertilizer, or a sprinkler system, or pesticides, or herbicides, it’s not the right plant in the right place and it’s probably not native to your area.

There is a minor deviation from this tenet: gardeners are encouraged to have food plants in their yards (they give suggestion lists for this), as the reduction in transportation energies may balance the few additives such plants might require.

Essentially, though, we are told that to begin the journey towards having a more environmentally sensitive yard, get out and explore the real Florida. At the same time, start your work at home by getting rid of your turf, removing the invasives, and keeping your houseplants inside. As you do these things, use the plant lists and instructions in the book to be thinking about what plants you want in your yard and how to start growing them. Overall, a great starter book!

Silent Auction – 2008 Conference

Keep those items coming!

Contact Christine Holyland, Silent Auction Committee Chair
christineholyland@comcast.net or (941) 964 -2491
if you have any questions or items to donate.

Thank you !

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