

# Sabal minor

A bimonthly newsletter for the members of

THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



VOLUME 11, NUMBER 4  
August - September 2008

The *Sabal minor* is now distributed electronically by email. All members without an email address will receive a paper copy. If a member with an email address wants to receive a paper copy, notify us at [info@fnps.org](mailto:info@fnps.org) or call 321-271-6702.

## August

Sea turtles are still hatching, so watch where you go on the beach. Alligator, gopher tortoise, and indigo snake eggs are hatching, too.

Corals along the coast spawn in conjunction with the full moon.

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

## September

Lovebugs, or Bibionidae flies - mating in the middle of roadways!

Bald eagles return to nest sites and begin courtship. Florida scrub-jay fledglings lose their brown juvenile plumage.

### Want a list of blooms to watch for each month?

The Florida Wildflower Foundation is starting a "What's Blooming" section to promote wildflower enthusiasm. If you would like to contribute, please send a note and a photograph if possible, on what is blooming along roads, trails and yards (make sure to include the date and location) to: [executivedirector@floridawildflowerfoundation.org](mailto:executivedirector@floridawildflowerfoundation.org); also to Rosalind Rowe at [rosrowe@comcast.net](mailto:rosrowe@comcast.net).

## President's Message

My perception of the Florida Native Plant Society has evolved considerably over the last several years. I've *always* been attracted by the shared enthusiasm for conserving Florida's native plants and the easy camaraderie of the membership, which reach a maximum expression at the annual conference. I have been energized by our organization's success and feel even more so having just attended another stellar conference. Being President at this moment in the Society's history makes me feel both humbled and challenged. The challenge will be to maintain the steady rate of progress we have enjoyed thanks to an extended period of thoughtful and dedicated leadership and the exciting projects of our chapters, which have clearly advanced our mission.

As I stated during the conference, FNPS has been launched on a trajectory that now distinguishes us as more than just a Society of native plant enthusiasts. Our past Presidents and Boards have laid a solid foundation for this period of growth, and the additions of Executive Director Karina Veaudry and Lobbyist Sue Mullins have served as an important catalyst.

Evidence of our progress can be measured in many ways: by the addition of seven new chapters; by the caliber of the plant conservation and research projects we are supporting through our grant programs; and by the prominent role the Society played in the Florida Legislature's recent passage of a Florida Forever successor program that will allow the state to continue protecting habitat for our native flora. For the first time in my experience as a member, we can begin to think about what our "legislative priorities" should be for the upcoming legislative session. We are actively preparing policy statements that will help direct our advocacy for native plant conservation and assist chapters when they choose to pursue their own local efforts. The Executive Committee will be updating the FNPS Handbook, which will help all of us become more effective at successfully achieving our mission.

So as I embark on this challenge, I would like to begin by saluting the efforts of our devoted membership, my predecessors, the current members of the Board of Directors, and Karina Veaudry and Sue Mullins. The future looks bright, indeed, for the Florida Native Plant Society. I look forward to working with all of you to keep the Society moving forward, and enjoying the time we share together learning about native plants.

Gene Kelly  
FNPS President

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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: 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

*Portulaca* spp.  
PORTULACEAE

## Uses for *Portulaca*

*E.K. Sommer*

The succulent, cooling *Portulaca* has an extensive history of medicinal and culinary use and is a fine way to beat the Florida heat.

Commonly known as purslane, Florida has two native species: *P. pilosa*, which has pink to magenta flowers and grows abundantly throughout the state, and *P. rubricaulis*, which has a yellow flower and is confined to the coastal southwest.

The yellow-flowered *P. oleracea* is native to Persia and India and is the species most often mentioned in traditional herbals; it has been found in archeological sites in Mexico dating from 6000 BCE, and may have been brought to the New World when the Vikings explored Newfoundland. Europeans considered *Portulaca* protection against magic and placed it around sleeping areas.



In Florida, you will find pink purslane in pinelands, sandy fields, and open hammocks; along sidewalks and emerging from cracks in pavement; and probably in your backyard garden!

By regularly harvesting the tender tips (which are best when harvested before the plant flowers), you can enjoy a continuous supply of this tasty green. Rinse purslane well as it is typically full of sand. Enjoy the sweetly sour tips and stems raw in salads, process them into syrups and beverages, or

even simmer for ten minutes and eat cooked. Purslane thickens soup and can be used as an unusual ingredient in gazpacho recipes. Try preserving the stems using your favorite pickle recipe.

Purslane is high in protein and omega-3 fatty acids. It provides vitamins A and C, and minerals such as iron, calcium, potassium, and phosphorus.

Purslane is cooling and demulcent, and has been used to assist in the reduction of fevers and other “hot” conditions, including inflammation, dryness, and thirst. The Cherokee people used the juice for earaches. Syrup made with the juice was purported to be helpful in treating dry coughs. A poultice of purslane can be used to soothe burns and insect stings.

**Cautions:** Avoid using this plant during pregnancy or in cases of digestive difficulties.

Although there are no poisonous look-alikes to purslane, always exercise caution when using plants for food or medicine. Be sure of identification or ask someone who is familiar with the plant to help you. Before trying it, read about the medicinal use of a plant in at least three reputable sources and be sure that you have no allergies to constituents or similar plants.

### References:

- Brill, S. 1994. *Identifying and Harvesting Edible and Medicinal Plants in Wild (and Not So Wild) Places*. NY: Hearst Books.
- Foster, S. and Duke, J. 1990. *Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants*. NY: Houghton-Mifflin.

## Ode to Walter

*Denny Girard*

Walter Taylor is a plant whiz.  
 (there's no doubt)  
 And he knows a lot.  
 (just ask him)  
 He likes to garden.  
 (he raises okra)  
 The college days are over.  
 (he's getting old)  
 He taught a lot of minds.  
 (just ask them)  
 Was he a good teacher?  
 (just ask him)  
 Wife Karin keeps him straight.  
 (good job, Karin)  
 He has written books.  
 (very well done)  
 His sense of humor is droll.  
 (that means peculiar)  
 Sweet pea is his nickname  
 (and he likes it)  
 We're glad to call him friend.  
 (all of us)  
 Could he be called great?  
 (just ask him)  
 Will he comment on this poem?  
 (you bet your life)  
 Will he really like the attention?  
 (he surely will)  
 Walter Taylor is one of a kind!  
 (there's no doubt)  
 And we're all glad to know him.  
 (Amen!)

## Carolina Satyr

*Linda Cooper*

Not all butterflies are colorful and noticeable. The smallest and most common of our woodland satyrs, Carolina Satyr, is often dismissed as a brown moth as it flies low and slow through wooded areas. It lands and sits with closed wings making it hard to find in the shadows.



Its markings are a series of yellow-rimmed eye spots along the outer edge of the wings along with several dark brown lines on a brown background. When the wings are open it appears even more moth-like with a plain brown dorsal surface.

Rarely nectaring at flowers, it prefers sap and decaying vegetation. Eggs are laid on various grasses. It ranges throughout the southeast. Look for this satyr the next time you are walking in shaded woodlands.

## New Sabal/Palm Disease

*Sabal palmetto* (cabbage palm) in Manatee County have been diagnosed with a lethal phytoplasma disease. *Preliminary* laboratory analyses indicate that this may be the same phytoplasma that causes Texas Phoenix palm decline (TPPD).

This is going to be a difficult disease to diagnose in early stages, as various causes produce a similar symptom as the phytoplasma: cabbage palms not being green all the way to the bottom of the canopy. Over-trimmed palms improperly fertilized palms, and even palms in natural settings with nutritional issues will show similar symptoms.

For more information, see [http://flrec.ifas.ufl.edu/palm\\_prod/pdfs/Sabal-palmetto-Infected-with-Phytoplasma-in-Florida.pdf](http://flrec.ifas.ufl.edu/palm_prod/pdfs/Sabal-palmetto-Infected-with-Phytoplasma-in-Florida.pdf)

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## Requests from Our Executive Committee

Volunteers are needed for the following committees:

**Membership Vice Chair** - one year position, approximately 10 to 20 hours per month.

**Education Committee** - one year position to assist new Education Committee Chair, approximately 5 to 15 hours per month.

**Publications Committee** -one year position to assist new Publications Committee Chair to collect, organize and edit past articles and FNPS publicity, approximately 5 to 10 hours per month.

In addition to the committee work, other volunteers are needed:

**Website Merchandise Coordinator** - one year position, approximately . 6 to 12 hours per month, to create and manage a website-based merchandizing program for FNPS.

**International trip organizer** - one year position, roughly 2 hours per month, plus attend the trip; trip costs for volunteer are covered.

If you are interested in furthering the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society by assisting with these needed organizational duties, please contact Karina Veaudry at [executivedirector@fnps.org](mailto:executivedirector@fnps.org) or 321-388-4781.

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## Upcoming FNPS Board of Directors Meetings

**August 16, 2008** - Saturday, 10am; Palatlahaha Environmental and Agricultural Reserve, Lake County. Also, hike scheduled for Sunday, August 17th.

**October 25, 2008** - Saturday, 10am; joint meeting with Association of Florida Native Nurseries (AFNN), All Native Garden Center and Nursery, Ft. Myers; John Sibley 239-939-9663.

**January 9-11, 2009** - Friday evening through Sunday afternoon retreat; Camp Kulaqua, High Springs. This is a special meeting, where the BOD engages in the analysis and visioning required to create a three-year strategic plan for FNPS.

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## Chapter Tips & Tricks

Stephen Tonjes publishes the **Lyonia** chapter's newsletter, and learned of a real lifesaver for printing and mailing it: let the Postal Service do the whole thing! Through a contract vendor on the web, USPS will print, stamp, and mail various types of publications. Stephen sends them the electronic document for printing and a spreadsheet with addresses. He even gets a break on the postage. It sure beats copying and folding and sealing and labeling and stamping! Check it out: <http://www.click2mail.com/>

The **Conradina** and **Sea Rocket** chapters of Brevard County got involved in the county comprehensive plan update process, which involved the Viera / Duda Family Development of Regional Impact project. Their suggestions regarding critical wetland/upland communities were considered by the county commissioners and heralded by the Department of Community Affairs in Tallahassee, and may be the input that ultimately preserves these areas.

The **Hernando**, **Lake Beautyberry** and **Sea Oats** chapters have been taking action, correcting misinformation on websites and newspaper articles, sending letters to the editor of garden sections that promoted invasive plant material, and working with Lowe's Home Improvement store on their "Plants For Your Area" list.

The **Paynes Prairie** chapter created an educational Florida Wetland Display for the 2008 Kanapaha Spring Garden Festival in Gainesville. The display described types of wetlands found in Florida and Alachua County and included over 100 native trees, shrubs, perennials, ferns and grasses typical in those areas. A special exhibit of live native frogs, newts and salamanders in large tanks were really popular with the kids. Various animal footprints led visitors around the central display which contained a grounded john-boat, a water pond and even a stuffed alligator! Chapter members really used their imaginations and pitched in to plan and build the exhibit. FNPS volunteers were on hand to answer questions on native plants and activities of FNPS locally and statewide. Over 25,000 people visited the Gardens during the 2-day festival.

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## 2009 FNPS Conference Plans for Children

The FNPS Conference Team is planning an outlet where parents can leave their children for educational sessions during the conference.

We are trying to gauge how many members would take advantage of this service during the May 21-24, 2009 conference in West Palm Beach. The cost would be \$55.00 per day, and will include lunch, snacks, half day field trip and instructors' fees.

If you think you may be interested in this service this year, please contact Conference Team Chair Stephanie Brown: [scb17611@hotmail.com](mailto:scb17611@hotmail.com) or 561-575-3991.

## Notes on Native Plant Conference

*Anne Lambrecht*, Master Gardener

The FNPS annual conference was four days in May in Bradenton. Since I am fairly new to FNPS, I thought I'd go for 24 hours. I thought it was wonderful.

The conference, named *Uplands to Estuaries: Celebrating Florida's Native Plant Heritage*, was held at the Manatee Convention Center and consisted of field trips to local environmental jewels, interesting workshops led by professional naturalists, children's activities, and native plant vendors.

Each field trip to area state parks, nature centers and preserves was led by a naturalist guide and a plant expert. By hiking, kayaking, rafting, or ferrying, the participants were able to see native flora and fauna at hammocks, lakes, tidal creeks, pine flatwoods, rivers, estuaries, bays, prairies and marshes in the Sarasota/Tampa Bay areas—19 different community types—over the course of four days.

Workshops were held morning and afternoon. It was hard to choose. Native Plant Communities; Dragonflies, Butterflies and Pine Flatwoods Flora; Ancient Native Americans in Florida; Challenges with Florida Orchid Conservation; Scrub Jay Habitat, the list went on and on. These workshops were headed up by expert biologists, botanists, curators, conservationists, doctors of horticulture and environmental activists.

The keynote speaker on the day I was there was Jon Thaxton, a Sarasota County Commissioner who is a real estate broker, land developer, and, ironically, a nationally recognized environmentalist! He gave us some tips on achieving successful changes, through our political system, to benefit our environment.

Another speaker was the society's lobbyist in Tallahassee, Sue Mullins, who helped fight for the recent successful passing of the Florida Forever bill. She told us how extremely down-to-the-wire this bill nearly wasn't passed.

The Florida Native Society states that "for most purposes, the phrase 'Florida native plant' refers to those species occurring within the state boundaries prior to European contact, according to the best available scientific

and historical documentation. More specifically, it includes those species understood as indigenous, occurring in natural associations in habitats that existed prior to significant human impact and alterations of the landscape."

Growing natives is good. If the plant has been living here for centuries, then it thrives here with little or no attention and water. Native plants also attract native wildlife (beneficial insects, birds, etc.).

You can bet I'll be going to next year's conference. And I'll be there for more than one day!

*Ed. Note: This is essentially the same article Anne wrote for the Ocala Star Banner; she also sent the Banner a photo of the conference poster. Although new to FNPS, Anne serves as Chapter Representative for the Sumter County chapter of FNPS.*

## A Great Loss

*Cammie Donaldson*

On Friday, June 20, a plane crash in Lake Placid resulted in the death of the pilot, third-generation Floridian and agriculture leader Mason Smoak, and conservation biologist David Maehr. They were surveying black bears in Highlands County.

David Maehr was a courageous scientist who spoke openly and did not back off when his views clashed with those of others, whether development interests or environmental groups. His career undoubtedly suffered as a result, but he was greatly respected and his loss is a huge blow to the conservation community.

The author of several important conservation books, David wrote what was probably the seminal article on saw palmetto for our own *Palmetto* magazine some years ago and inspired a lifelong passion for palmetto in me and many other members. He has been at the University of Kentucky for a while and was apparently stationed at Archbold Biological Station this summer as a visiting researcher.

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