

Sabal minor

A bi-monthly newsletter for the members of

THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



VOLUME 8, NUMBER 1

February - March 2006

February

Greater sandhill cranes migrate from Florida northward. Nesting season begins for ospreys in north Florida. Wild turkeys and quail mate in south Florida.

Eastern moles and pocket gophers begin breeding, while gray squirrels are delivering their first litters and bear cubs are being born. American crocodiles begin mating and Leather-back sea turtles begin nesting on sandy beaches along the southeast coast.

Watch for fireflies.

Trilliums and dogtooth violets bloom in Panhandle ravines. Bald cypress trees leaf out in Big Cypress Swamp.

March

Swallow-tailed kites return to Florida. Migrating songbirds, in full breeding plumage, arrive in waves each week. Scrub-jays begin to mate and build nests in scrub oaks

Frogs and toads move to ponds, streams and ditches to breed.

Largemouth bass start to bed in north Florida, as do redear sunfish in central Florida. Horseshoe crabs lay eggs on coastal beaches on the full moon at high tide.

Endangered gray bats return to Florida caves to raise young. By the end of this month, manatees are no longer congregating at warm water sites.

Watch for flowering bromeliads, especially in south Florida swamps.

Florida Native Plant Society 2006 Endowment Grants for Research on Florida Native Plants

Shirley Denton

The Florida Native Plant Society offers grants for researchers investigating the biology, ecology, and conservation needs of plants native to Florida. We encourage you to post this announcement where students and researchers will see it. Additional information is available on our website, <http://www.FNPS.org>.

The Endowment Fund is maintained by the Florida Native Plant Society for the purpose of funding research on native plants. These are small grants (typically \$1000 or less), awarded for a 1-year period, and intended to support research that forwards the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society “**to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.**”

Awardees are required to present the results of their research to the FNPS membership. This is preferably via a talk presented at the next FNPS conference (2007 conference) but may be a brief written summary suitable for publication in *The Palmetto* (FNPS journal) or *Sabal minor* (newsletter).

Eligibility for Grants: Anyone may apply. Preference will be given to FNPS members, but membership is not a requirement.

Application Deadline: March 31, 2006

Award Announcement: Awards will be announced at the 2006 Annual FNPS Conference. Recipients will be notified in advance and need not be present at the conference to receive an award. Attendance is encouraged, as we would like to honor those receiving research grants and to introduce them to the membership.

Application Instructions: A written application is required. This application must be submitted by the deadline by email to our current Endowment Grant contact, Shirley Denton (sdenton@biologicalresearch.com or ecotypes@myrapidsys.com). The application must be either an MS Word file or an Adobe Acrobat (pdf) file.

To simplify and standardize the application process, we encourage you to download the MS Word Application on the FNPS.org site, save it as a Word file, insert your research project information, save it, and email it to the Endowment Grant contact.

The application must contain the following information:

- description of project (three page maximum);
- budget (not to exceed \$1,000); and
- project time schedule (normally one year).

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Species Spotlight

Dawn Sinka

Opuntia spp.
PRICKLY PEAR



Eastern prickly pear is in the Cactaceae family and is described by Austin as an herb with erect or prostrate stems and by Osorio as a succulent perennial. The stems are spreading and well-branched. This plant is found in full sun. The height varies by species, ranging from one foot to three feet or more. Sepals are green and narrow. The springtime flowers have yellow petals that attract many colorful insects. The berry is large, fleshy, obovoid, red to purplish and it contains many small seeds.

Opuntia is naturally found on both sides of sand dunes and throughout scrub sites. As it is found in very well-drained soils, the plant is quite drought-tolerant. The fleshy stems store water. Birds and gopher tortoises eat the fruit and there is evidence that coastal Indians also ate prickly pear. The fruit can be processed into syrup or jelly. In Mexico, *Opuntia* is sliced and steamed as a vegetable. Cattlemen have been known to gather piles of prickly pear and burn off the spines as an emergency fodder. The plant is propagated by seed (often through bird droppings) or by burying a pad partially into the soil.

Descriptions are from Coastal Dune Plants, Dan Austin 1991 and A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants Rufino Osorio 2001. Line drawing by Penelope Honychurch.

What's Blooming in Central Florida*

Tom Heitzman

Wildflowers and vines:

Lyreleaf Sage, *Salvia lyrata*, light blue flowers
Tickseed, *Coreopsis* spp., and Blackeyed Susan, *Rudbeckia hirta*, yellow flowers
Tasselflower, *Emilia* spp., red flowers,
Spiderwort, *Tradescantia ohioensis*, blue flowers in the morning
Coral Honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*
Carolina Yellow Jessamine, *Gelsemium sempervirens*, yellow sweet-smelling flowers
Cross Vine, *Bignonia caperolata*, red to yellow trumpet shaped flowers.

Shrubs:

Elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis*, showy white clusters in wetter areas
Coral Bean, *Eyrthrina herbacea*, bright red flowers
Florida Privet, *Forestiera segregata*, small yellow flowers
Walters Viburnum, *Viburnum obovatum*, light pink buds opening to white clusters, one of our most showy spring shrubs

Trees:

Laurel Oak, *Quercus laurifolia*, many shades of golden yellow
Red Maple, *Acer rubrum*, the red flowers quickly turn into red seeds
Carolina Willow, *Salix caroliniana*, fragrant yellow flowers
Chickasaw Plum, *Prunus angustifolia* and Black Cherry, *Prunus serotina*, delicate white flowers
Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana*, small yellow clusters
Slash Pines, *Pinus elliotii*, so very pollen laden

*This list is for **MARCH-APRIL-MAY**. Reprinted from *Serenoa Notes*, March 2005. Thanks Tom!

Ed's Note: To all of you who responded to the last issue's Wanted ad, offering to create a regular wall-hanging type of calendar: thank you so much for being so ready to help! There is clearly enough interest for FNPS to consider an annual publication of this type. However, the bloom list above is a little closer to the kind of calendar I am hoping to garner. Those of you who have the means to sort your flower photos by date may have a way to help us put such a list together. Several members are already offering to do this. We may be able to create some simple brochures whereby we can help each other know what to look for when we're out in the field, or what to plant if we want year-round blooms.

**NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN
FOR FNPS OFFICERS**

Kim Zarillo has agreed to serve as chairperson for the nominating committee and is now accepting your suggestions for the following FNPS Board Members:

- PRESIDENT
- VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE
- SECRETARY
- 3 DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Those elected this May will serve 2-year terms.

Contact Kim at
kearthwalk@aol.com.

Chapter Tips

The **Broward Chapter** has monthly Native Plant Workshops, where people gather to study native plants in scientific detail. Participants are asked to bring in a few flowering specimens of native or naturalized plants to share with the group to ID. The meeting is in a classroom at the Field Station in Davie, where plant ID literature is handy, as are magnifying implements.

Longleaf Pine Chapter Announces Its Annual Winter Grapefern Survey

On two consecutive Saturdays, February 25th and March 4th, the Longleaf Pine Chapter is hosting field trips to see and to count Florida's rare and unusual winter grapefern (*Botrychium lunarioides*). These trips provide great photo opportunities and have in the past attracted the participation of nationally renowned botanists.

The first Saturday trip, February 25th, is to historic St. John's Cemetery in downtown Pensacola. This site has Florida's second-largest known colony of these plants. This will be the fifth annual survey on this site. The cemetery is located at the corner of Belmont and G Streets near downtown Pensacola.

The second Saturday trip, March 4th, is at Old Milton Cemetery. This is the Chapter's first survey of the winter grapefern population at this historic cemetery. The cemetery is in Milton, south of Berryhill Road, just west of the intersection with Stewart Street.

James R. Burkhalter will lead both trips. The gatherings are free and finish by early afternoon. Don't miss this great opportunity to participate in an historic event of scientific importance.

There are some carpooling arrangements available. Call Jack Jordan at 850/484-5302 if further information is needed.

New FNPS Education Committee Chair

Bob Egolf

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Steve Johnson has agreed to take on the responsibilities of FNPS Education Chair. Steve is an Assistant Professor of Wildlife Ecology at the Plant City Campus of the University of Florida/IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences).

Florida has over a thousand new people arriving every day. Many of these people have little appreciation for our fragile and unique environment. FNPS has a special role to play in educating these people on how to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of our native plant communities. Please join with Dr. Johnson in this important task

The Palmetto Has a New Editor

Marjorie Shropshire, Cocoplum Chapter, has been selected to serve as editor for **The Palmetto** magazine. Marjorie, professional artist, illustrator and editor, is well known in the Society for her contributions in the studio and in the field, especially on projects relating to scrub habitats and *Asimina tetramera*.

Marjorie was born in Miami and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Miami in Coral Gables.

She has designed logos, annual reports, brochures, direct mail campaigns, web sites and sales environments for a variety of clients ranging from Abercrombie & Kent to Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution. She worked in advertising and creative design for over 19 years before starting her own office.

Continued p.4

Considering remembering your
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
in your
will?

Contact Travis MacClendon

travismac@wfeca.net

850.674.4408

FNPS 26th Annual State Conference May 17-21, 2006

**Growing Partnerships: Preserving Florida's Environment
from Backyards to Backwoods**

Book Your Rooms Today

Cindy Liberton

Five good reasons to arrange for rooms at the Shores Resort TODAY!

1. Once the rooms are gone, they're gone!

This hotel has only 240 rooms, and if they sell out, or we fill our conference block, you won't be able to stay with us!

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If you want to come early, or stay late, there are fewer rooms available at conference rates, and they'll go fast!

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4. First come, first served for the room of your choice

-- be it king-sized, doubles for roommates, or ocean view.

5. Support your Society!

The more rooms we fill, the more rooms the Society gets for free. We need "comp" rooms for speakers and scholarships for students.

The FNPS Executive Board toured the facility, and were more than impressed.

Splendidly renovated after hurricane damage, the amenities and furnishings are astonishing. You'll want to stay forever.

Conference room rates are \$115 for this Spa Resort, right on the Atlantic Ocean, with spacious outdoor decks for impromptu meetings. Conference rates are available from May 16 to May 21.

SHORES RESORT AND SPA
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TODAY

New Editor, continued

Marjorie has a deep interest in the natural world, particularly in Florida ecology and the protection and restoration of natural habitats, and actively participates in restoration projects. She particularly loves kayaking in Florida's Everglades.

Her science and art background will certainly serve to maintain the standards and quality of The Palmetto.

**To contribute to the magazine,
contact Marjorie at pucpuggy@bellsouth.net**

Event at Tibet-Butler Preserve

Lillian Maldonado

Tibet-Butler Preserve is having its 2006 Backyard Habitat Fest on Saturday, March 4 from 9:00 am-4:00 pm. This is a special day when visitors can come to the Preserve to enjoy Florida's natural habitats, as well as explore ways they can create a backyard habitat of their own. The preserve is near Orlando, about five miles north of I-4 Exit 27. Call 407-876-6696 for more information.

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