

# Sabal minor

A bimonthly newsletter for the members of

THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



VOLUME 9, NUMBER 5

Oct - Nov 2006

## October

In northeast Florida, look for migrating Peregrine falcons, especially along the coast as they follow shorebird prey. In south Florida, it's peak time for chimney swift migrations.

Black bears are on the move, gathering food. If you live in bear country, drive slow and be sure your garbage cans are bear-proofed.

Flatwoods salamanders breed during the first heavy rains of the month.

Marlberry and myrsine will be blooming still, as will some *Carphephorus*. This is a good time of year to compare many of our acorns.

## November

Greater sandhill cranes arrive to winter. Watch for northern harriers gliding low over the marshes.

Peak month for roadkills of black bears. Florida manatees start to head south to warm water sites when temperatures drop and the seasonal Speed Zones change on Florida's waterways in hopes of protecting them.

Seed cones of *Taxodium* this time of year are used by gray squirrels, ducks, sandhill cranes.

Leave a conservation legacy.  
Help contribute to the stability  
and long-term growth of the FNPS.  
*Remember us in your will.*

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## Message from Our Executive Director

During the past three months, I have met many of you and rekindled old friendships while attending chapter meetings. The projects, discussions and interesting speaker topics within our chapters are impressive. Discussing chapter issues and concerns in person has generated ideas of how I may personally assist individual chapters. I am now assisting with membership recruitment, outreach projects, grant research, municipal communications, and securing meeting relocation sites.

I am not going to be able to meet with all chapters by the end of the year, considering logistics and deadline requirements. If something comes up that your chapter can use assistance with, please contact me.

I recently read the first FNPS **Palmetto**, published in February 1981. Dick Workman, of the Cocoloba Chapter, wrote:

We are digging up the plants that are native to Florida, throwing them away and replanting with exotic plant material. We need to create an awareness of what is happening to our native ecosystems and suggestions on what to do about it. Here are recommendations:

- \* Educate officials in municipal and county governments, developers, the public at large and school children.
- \* Develop guidelines for community ordinances to encourage the use of and protection of native plants
- \* Develop resources of information about where to find native plants and how to relocate native plants that will be destroyed.
- \* Develop guidelines for the management of public lands, wildlife areas and private property.
- \* Lobby for (preservation and conservation) legislation and for funds to support the legislation.
- \* Create a slide show of native plants for educational use.
- \* Work with developers to promote preservation (of a percentage) of the existing native landscape as part of large developments.
- \* Promote new chapters throughout the state for local membership, education and participation in the FNPS mission.

As I read these words that were written 25 years ago, my thoughts were two-fold: We have many accomplishments to be proud of over the years, having worked on each of these recommendations mentioned, and we still have important endeavors in front of us to pursue the goals of preservation, conservation and restoration of, and education about, the native plant ecosystems that represent the biodiversity of Florida.

As I continue to contribute to the public relations, chapter needs, education and conservation goals of the society, I look forward to your input and our furthering the FNPS mission together.

- Karina Veaudry

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*Deadlines for Sabal minor submissions are the 15th day of each of the odd-numbered months (5/15, 7/15, 9/15...)*

# Species Spotlight

*Metopium toxiferum*  
Poisonwood; Florida Poison tree  
Family Anacardiaceae

## Late Summer Birding in the Keys

*Jim Duquesnel*

Watching nature is one of the country's favorite pastimes, so it is no surprise that one reason many of us love native plants is because they attract wildlife. Here in the Keys, summer (August - October) is probably the time when the largest number of trees and shrubs are producing fruit.

Probably the all-time champion wildlife food in the Keys is poisonwood, and its fruiting peaks in late spring and early summer, just as our resident birds are raising young. This is probably no accident — like human children, young birds have special nutritional needs. If you watch carefully, you will notice many adult birds, of species that ordinarily dine mostly on seeds and fruits, bring a lot of insects to their nestlings. Growing birds require more proteins and fats in their diets than adult birds.

Poisonwood fruits have high concentrations of fats known as lipids, and one brave friend of mine claims they actually taste buttery. As all dieters know, fats are calorie packed. They are also where fat soluble vitamins, such as A and E, are stored. The high metabolism of nestling birds, especially during the growth spurt that occurs between hatching and leaving the nest, requires just such a nutritional powerhouse.

In the landscape, poisonwood is a mixed blessing. Many are allergic to it and the contact dermatitis produced results in an itchy rash on sensitive individuals. But, if placed in an out of the way corner of the yard, this plant is a magnet for birds, including White-crowned Pigeons, Woodpeckers, and Gray Kingbirds, as well as squirrels.

By early August, most Keys resident birds are finished

nesting and youngsters are following parents around the neighborhood, learning where and what to eat. Families of Mockingbirds, Grackles, Cardinals, and Jays are conspicuous visitors to backyards with feeders, water and the right plants. Less conspicuous Vireos and Prairie Warblers flit unnoticed through the foliage, seeking out insects and small fruits.

Though some plants, such as firebush and strangler fig, produce fruit at almost any time of year, most trees and shrubs have a peak in production that lasts just one to three months. From August through October, blolly, willow bastic, Spanish stopper, black torch, and others will present branches arrayed with colorful fruits.

These are mostly small fruits, and valuable primarily for their carbohydrate content. Their small size makes them ideal energy sources for southbound warblers that begin passing through in August. By the first week of August, American redstarts and Yellow-throated warblers had visited my plantings.

Landscaping diversity is the key to attracting wildlife. While massed plantings are aesthetically pleasing, a variety of plants in the landscape are needed. Birds need food all year. P.B. Tomlinson's book *The Biology of Trees Native to Tropical Florida* is probably the best source on the time of fruiting of native plants. Consult with your local nurseryman and veteran FNPS members at chapter meetings about what plants will work best in your area.



## Ceraunus Blue

Ceraunus Blue (*Hemiargus ceraunus*) is the most widespread blue butterfly in Florida. The male is more intensely blue than the female on the dorsal wings. The wings are rarely seen open unless the butterfly is sunning.

It uses many plants in the Pea family (Fabaceae) as its host. The caterpillars eat flower buds and immature seeds of Partridge Pea, Sensitive Pea, Alicia, Carolina Indigo and others and also exotics such as Hairy and Trailing Indigo.

Its habitat includes uplands, scrubs, sandhills, flatwoods, and weedy disturbed sites. Three or more generations are produced each year. This small blue is easily overlooked because it flies low to the ground and sits most of the time with its wings folded.



*Linda Cooper*



Photos by Linda Cooper

## More Conference Reminiscences...

*Sid Taylor*

Four hundred and forty people attended our 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida Native Plant Conference, May 18-21, at Daytona Beach shores in Volusia County. Thanks to the Lyonia and the Pawpaw Chapters for sponsoring *Growing Partnerships: Preserving Florida's Environments from Backyard to Backwoods*. This theme will be hard to beat!

I will share some knowledge I acquired while in attendance.

**Gary Schultz**, Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), has collected and recorded the Okeechobee Gourd, *Cucurbita okeechobeensis*, on the NE shore of Lake Monroe. This rare, endemic and ancient plant has been documented for Volusia, Lake, Seminole, Glades and Palm Beach counties. I believe this is the plant that draped the tops of all other Everglades vegetation when the MacIvey men approached the Seminole camp in Patrick Smith's *The Land Remembered...* Gary took Shirley Denton and me to the City of Deltona boat ramp and we indeed, found one. The fruit was broken and all the seeds were sprouting up in the same spot.

**Gary Knight** has been with FNAI since 1990 and director since 1995. It is his opinion that Florida has one of the best Heritage Programs in the US, with many agencies working together to protect our precious natural resources. FNAI receives contract funding and works closely with the Departments of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Transportation (DOT), the Division of Forestry (DOF), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), the Water Management Districts, and various Federal agencies. In 2001, the legislature moved FNAI under Florida State University (FSU), where it now has financial stability and computer support. Natural history data is collected, filtered and housed at FNAI. DOF says we are losing 240 acres of Florida forests to development daily. Gary says we are headed for a non-sustainable future, yet he has hope for our biodiversity (ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in US currently). The Florida legislature created "Century Commission for Florida" to address needs for preservation in our 82 distinct natural communities. Presently, FNAI, with their staff of 30 has documented 471 rare species (233 vertebrates and 258 invertebrates with over 24,000 specific locations) and 5000 sites of invasive species. For more information on rare plant species or how to help, go to [www.fnai.org](http://www.fnai.org).

**Dr. Bud Mayfield** warned us about the approach into

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## FNPS Contact Information

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## Earth Share

*Bob Egolf*

Again this year, the Florida Native Plant Society is participating with Earth Share and the Florida State Employees Charitable Campaign (FSECC). Earth Share and FSECC review the financial records of member charities to assure that they make responsible use of donor dollars.

Earth Share gives many Floridians the opportunity to contribute to eligible charities using payroll deduction. This provides a relatively convenient and painless way of giving an amount one can feel good about.

If your employer uses Earth Share or FSECC, we hope you will include FNPS in your charitable gift. Contributions are tax deductible.

## New Ixia Chapter Brings FNPS to Northeast Florida

*Cindy Liberton*

Bartram's ixia (*Calydorea caelestina*) is a delicate wildflower in the Iris family that is endemic to seven counties in northeast Florida. It is thus fitting that Jacksonville is now home to the new Ixia Chapter of the FNPS.

Under the leadership of Ann Arthur, President, the chapter is already thriving. Before the ink was dry on the bylaws, their October 7 "Gardenfest 2006" event was published in *Organic Gardening's Gardening Events in Florida* (see <http://www.organicgardening.com/events/1,7525,s1-3-15,00.html>). The Chapter's first meeting as an "official" Chapter was September 21 at the Regency Square Library in Jacksonville, where they solidified plans for the Gardenfest.

This festival event features author Gil Nelson presenting to the public on landscaping with Florida native plants, along with plants for sale and refreshments. Co-sponsor IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences) has supplied the Extension Office auditorium for the day's activities.

Also in October they team up with Duval Audubon for a Crosby Sanctuary field trip in Orange Park.

For more information, see their webpage under Chapters > Ixia at [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org), or contact Ann at [begonia3223@hotmail.com](mailto:begonia3223@hotmail.com).

## Palmetto Magazine Deadlines

November 1, 2006

February 1, 2007

June 1, 2007

August 15, 2007

November 1, 2007

Conference, *continued from page 3*

NE Florida of the Redbay Ambrosia Beetle, which kills *Persea borbonia* and maybe other *Perseas*. See [bugwood.org](http://bugwood.org) or email [mayfiea@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:mayfiea@doacs.state.fl.us)

**Dr Ed Gillman** recommended pruning tips sites: [hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/pruning/](http://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/pruning/) and [treesolutions.net/knowledge.htm](http://treesolutions.net/knowledge.htm).

**Chris Lockhart** taught the “poodle cut” for treating exotic vines: grab a handful of upwardly mobile vines and cut off their tops, treat the remainder with your plant specific herbicide. See [fnai.org/invasivespecies.cfn](http://fnai.org/invasivespecies.cfn) or [fleppc.org](http://fleppc.org).

The **West Palm Beach FNPS Chapter** provided this ditty to help distinguish between the Mangroves, which are all from separate families and only linked by their habitat preferences:

*Red, red, a pointed head (leaf shape)*

*Black, black, salt on back*

*White... a dimple pimple*

*It is so simple.*

**Bill Belleville's** most recent book was *Losing It All to Sprawl: How Progress Ate My Cracker Landscape*. He showed great slides of all his favorite Florida haunts, which brought home to us a sense of place. Bill said the headwaters area of the St. John's River is the second Everglades; Welaka means River of Birth; and to meditate upon “Nature predates thought.”

**Dr. Cindy Bennington**, Department of Biology at Stetson in Deland, demonstrated leadership by ripping up 123 years of misguided landscape on their sixty acres. [www.stetson.edu/plants](http://www.stetson.edu/plants)

**Gil Nelson** told us to visit [Gilnelson.com](http://Gilnelson.com) for his new book and for an explanation of savannas. He discussed how orchids and many other flatwoods savanna plants respond to prescribed burning. Contact your land managers for burn schedules and visit the areas one to two weeks after for best wildflower displays. Gil's favorite: Jennings State Forest.

Watch your **Palmetto** for notes I took during the panel discussion on **Biodiversity and Plant Genetics** and the great questions your membership brought up.

Any misrepresentation here you can blame on me, Sid Taylor.

## Tim Cash Memorial Dedication

Tim Cash, president of the Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (1990-1991) and pioneering owner of the Florida Scrub Nursery in the Myakka area, passed away on October 3, 1993. Since that time donations were made for a memorial fund, which has been applied to the construction and installation of a trellis in the garden area of the Fruitville branch of the Sarasota Public Library.

A dedication of this trellis will occur on

**Saturday November 4, 2006 at 3PM.**

All are welcome.

Time will be allocated for anyone who wishes to speak.

Refreshments will be provided.

The Library is located at the corner of Coburn and Fruitville Road (SR780), approximately one half mile east of Exit 210 off I-75 in Sarasota, Florida.

For more information, contact Dave Feagles, [druhtra@msn.com](mailto:druhtra@msn.com).

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