

# Sabal minor

A bimonthly newsletter for the members of

THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



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October - November 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.

## October

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.

Look for migrating Peregrine falcons in natural areas, especially along the northeast coast as they follow shorebird prey. In south Florida, watch for chimney swift migration.

Blooming: *Gaillardia* spp., *Palafoxia feayi*, *Polygonella polygama* and *P. fimbriata*, *Rhynchospora tracyi*, *Eragrostis* spp. *Callicarpa* berries are becoming deep purple.

## November

Sad statistic: this is the peak month for road kills of black bears! Another motorway note: seasonal manatee Speed Zones change on Florida's waterways.

White pelicans begin migrating south to Florida. Bald eagles begin their nesting season - look for spectacular aerial courtship displays.

This is a perfect time to add plants that provide food for wildlife in your yard.

Fall colors showing up in the *Taxodium* (Cypress trees) and the *Polypremum procumbens* (rustweed). Look for blooming *Garberia heterophylla* and *Lobelia glandulosa*.

## Executive Director's Message

Florida has made strides towards conservation of its natural resources, but we need to encourage our local and state decision makers to continue to raise the bar. Florida's native plant communities face continued threats from development, pollution, climate change, and human population increase - making conservation issues more challenging than ever. I would like to share with you some important opportunities for individuals and chapters to actively promote more conservation and preservation of native plant communities.

1. Get to know your local government officials personally. Chapters or individuals with good working relationships with their city and county commissioners are poised to share science-based information or to sit on an advisory committee when conservation or environmental issues arise. Many landscape ordinances are being updated right now, a good time to promote the FNPS Landscape Ordinance guidelines or other conservation measures for native plants. Don't forget to compliment these officials publicly when they take actions that advance our mission!

2. FNPS has been invited to assist with the Land Management Review Process for the state. Coordinating with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Anne Cox (Cocoplum) is chairing this effort, with Daphne Lambright (Suncoast) assisting. FNPS volunteers knowledgeable in Florida ecology and listed plants are needed from around the state.

3. Look for community TV and radio stations and ask about their free public service announcement arrangements. Sherry Friend (Cocoplum) and Jackie Rolly, (Tarflower) submit bimonthly announcements for their respective government television stations. Chapter meetings and field trips, interesting quotes, outreach events, and native plant photographs are scrolled on the screen continuously.

4. Let your local nurseries and garden centers know you are interested in seeing more native plants for sale by commenting continuously, even providing a little literature, on specific plants that you believe would be good, marketable landscape plants for your region of the state.

5. If your chapter does not already have a relationship with your local newspaper, develop one. Ask if the chapter can have the opportunity to review the plant articles they publish (often invasive plants are promoted). Also, write native plant articles with photographs and submit them on a continuous basis.

6. Learn about the new statewide data and mapping system, Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project (CLIP). All state agencies will work from CLIP when considering impacts from future changes in land use; cities and counties will need to do so, also. A companion project is the Cooperative Conservation Blueprint, which seeks to engage landowners and others in conservation of important lands and waters in Florida. (See <http://www.centurycommission.org/>.)

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Executive Director

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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

*Serenoa repens*  
ARECACEAE

## Saw Palmetto - A Multi-talented Member of the Palm Family

*Eleanor K. Sommer*

If you were stranded on an island, which plant would you want growing there? The multipurpose *Serenoa repens*, a scrubby member of the Arecaceae family, might be a sensible choice.

Ethnobotanical uses of various plant parts include food and medicine; oil; wax; paper; roofing materials; and items such as baskets, dolls, and rope. A Jacksonville based company produced a soda from the berries and marketed it under the name "Metto," and a Cedar Key company made scrub brushes.

Saw palmetto berries provide sustenance and habitat for a variety of Florida wildlife. Even deer use it for cover, and scrub jays retrieve the "threads" for nesting materials.



Found abundantly in pinelands, hammocks, sandy prairies, and coastal dunes, this highly flammable

plant is fire-adapted and new leaf growth begins as early as a few days following a burn. The fragrant tiny white flowers have three to five petals borne on showy, branched inflorescences. They bloom late spring through mid-summer, attracting swarms of bees. The black, oblong, berries mature in mid to late fall.

The bitter and astringent berry is highly nutritional and was an important dietary adjunct for native people living in the southeast, including the Calusas who ate them fresh and the Choctaw people who dried them for winter use.

*S. repens* is useful in the treatment of urinary and reproductive complaints, for men and women, including cystitis, and for upper respiratory irritation and infection. The most popular use in modern times is for prostate issues. The seeds, high in fatty acids, can be ground and blended into food, although it may be more efficient to use standardized extracts for medicinal purposes.

Although saw palmetto is not endangered, it has come under assault as "wild crafters," spurred by large commercial production of herbal extracts, overharvest the berries.

**Cautions:** Saw palmetto is generally safe; however, people with digestive issues may experience gastric distress or loose stools from eating the berries. Always cross-check the identity of plants before using them. If you are at all unsure, consult with experienced foragers and herbalists before eating or using plants from the wild.

## Palmetto Skipper - *Euphyes arpa*

*Linda Cooper*

Though its host plant Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) is widespread in the state, Palmetto Skipper, *Euphyes arpa*, is uncommon.

This large skipper is one of the foldwing skippers. When it lands, its wings are folded over its back so you see the ventral side of the wings. The sail-like wings are a rich orange to red-orange in color and the wing fringes are white. The skipper's head and mantle match the wing color and the face is white. Its preferred habitats are sandhills, flatwoods and prairies. A good time to look for Palmetto Skipper is when wildflowers are abundant in fall. It is drawn to the nectar of *Liatris* and *Carphephorus* where its color makes a statement that orange and purple really do complement each other.



## Native Plants and our "Quality of Life"

From an article by *Mark L. Johnson, RLA, MLA, ASLA*

Surveys taken in communities almost anywhere in the United States would probably indicate that people are concerned about their "quality of life."

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a live canary meant "quality of life" for coal miners. As long as that little canary was conscious, the mine workers had confidence that they could survive. We know of other indicator species, such as the American dipper, the subalpine gray jay, or the Florida scrub jay, which provide scientists and naturalists with a warning about the health of various ecosystems and ecological niches. But most of us don't use these indicators to reflect upon the quality of our own daily existence.

While the plants around us reflect the quality of our lives, we usually take them for granted. Many people get involved with native plants because they want butterflies and birds in their back yards. But as long as we see butterflies and birds as ornaments hanging on our plants, it is only happenstance that we are being environmentally responsible. After all, there are some non-native, ornamental plants that also host butterflies. We can miss the significance of the thousands-year-old relationships between locally native plants and many species of insects and animals.

While we focus on tomatoes from Chili or peaches from Georgia, we no longer relate to the bush or animal on the roadside or in our back yard as important to our dinner table. We are out of touch with the resulting costs -- not just the rise in oil prices in the US, but the costs of watering, fertilizing, and maintaining the plants in our yards.

Learning about and protecting native diversity locally, in our own yards, is part of protecting our true Quality of Life.

## FNPS Members Getting Published

**Craig Huegul**, a longtime member of FNPS and a Senior Ecologist with Biological Research Associates, with newer member **Kathleen McConnell**, Senior Ecologist and independent contractor, have published a paper on their recent discovery and study of a new population of a very rare terrestrial native orchid - *Sacoila paludicola*. This species was formerly considered to be only an aberrant variety of the more common *S. lanceolata* and was known to naturally occur only in Fakahatchee. Their discovery, their interactions with Paul Martin Brown, and their subsequent field work makes the case that this is a separate species. These findings are written up in the July issue of the **North American Native Orchid Journal** (Vol 14(3)), in "General Notes on the Ecology of *Sacoila paludicola*, Sarasota County, Florida." Craig and Kat are very excited about their find and hope to continue their research next year.

Also, in the same journal issue, **Paul Martin Brown** further explains the genus *Sacoila* in his article "The Genus *Sacoila* (Orchidaceae) in the Continental United States and a New Combination." (Ed. Note: The electronic version of *Sabal minor*, at [fnps.org](http://fnps.org), has a link to the full article in PDF format.)

**Susan Cerulean** researched and wrote for The Nature Conservancy about the redbay (*Persea borbonia*) and the Asian fungus that threatens it, in a superb online journal called **Terrain.org**. The link is <http://www.terrain.org/articles/22/cerulean.htm>. She is hoping to have many, many people honoring the redbay and its associates, each in their own way: spending time getting to know them in our river floodplains, writing poetry or prayers, making photographs or songs to honor them, weaving blankets or painting pictures of the irreplaceable green of Persea -- providing opportunities for others to understand what we are losing with this specific tree, as we pursue our globalized lifestyles.

## Requests from Our Executive Committee

Volunteers are needed for the following:

**Landscape Awards Committee** - two year position (only February to May each year), approximately 8 hours per month; publicize, judge, and create conference presentation.

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

**Education Committee** - one year position to assist new Education Committee Chair, Kari Ruder, 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.

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

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.

## Chapter Tips & Tricks

**Palm Beach** County Chapter has Open Yard Day.

Several of the yards visited this year are works in progress, and as any gardener/landscaper/plant enthusiast knows, yards seem to always be in a continual state of flux. Some yards have natives rescued from construction sites. Some property owners on the tour provide comprehensive plant list will make shopping for natives so much easier. As many as 65 people have visited any one of these homes. Volunteers helped sign folks in and guide them around the yards.

At their meeting last week, the newly formed **Sea Oats** Chapter registered their 50th member!

## Science Contacts Database Started

*Karina Veaudry*

Two of our Directors At Large, Anne Birch and Sue Dingwell, completed a project serving our Science Committee that took a lot of time and effort. They created a data base of college and university contacts - statewide. Initially, this project commenced so that we could have a larger audience base when we sent out announcements regarding the research and conservation grants. But the entire Society will benefit from the ability to communicate with the university-based science contacts for review purposes, inviting speakers to chapters, sharing research and working closer to the academic community. In my opinion Anne and Sue have catapulted the FNPS into a higher functioning Society.

### FNPS Conservation and Research Grant Applications Due March 6, 2009

The Florida Native Plant Society provides up to three conservation grants and up to three research grants annually, awarding up to \$2,500 for each grant. Please see FNPS website, [fnps.org](http://fnps.org), for more details.

## Upcoming FNPS Board of Directors Meetings

**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. In addition to its regular meeting, the BOD will be analyzing and visioning toward creating a three-year strategic plan for FNPS.

## FNPS Land Management Partners Sub-Committee Update

*Daphne Lambricht*

October 2008. FNPS has been an active partner in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (FDEP) land management reviews since 2001. These reviews determine whether conservation, preservation, and recreation lands owned by the state Board of Trustees are being managed properly.

Historically, land management reviews are scheduled for 12-month periods at locations throughout the state (<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/oes/landmgmt/maps/default.htm>). However, the land management reviews for 2008-2009 have been postponed until February 2009 while FDEP revises the Land Management Review process to incorporate an objectives-based review.

While the review process is being revised, the FNPS Land Management Partners (LMP) subcommittee is soliciting a representative from each chapter. The LMP chapter representative would serve as the local contact person and distribute information about upcoming public land management reviews in their region to their FNPS chapter.

Please contact an LMP subcommittee member, Anne Cox ([annecox@bellsouth.net](mailto:annecox@bellsouth.net)) or Daphne Lambricht ([dlambrig@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:dlambrig@tampabay.rr.com)), for more information about FNPS Land Management Partners activities.

## Are You a Landscaping (or Other) Professional Who Designs with Natives?

Occasionally individuals, Florida municipalities, and private firms contact FNPS Executive Director, Karina Veaudry, to locate landscape design and installation professionals in their area for their projects. If you are such an individual -- landscape designer, arborist, botanist, biologist, ecologist, stormwater engineer, etc.-- please send your contact information to Karina, [executivedirector@fnps.org](mailto:executivedirector@fnps.org).

## Call for Scientific Papers and Posters

The Florida Native Plant Society annual conference will be held at the West Palm Beach Marriott, May 21-24, 2009. The Science Track of the Conference will include the presentation of papers Friday, May 22nd and Saturday, May 23rd. Posters will be on display Friday and Saturday, and the poster session will be on Saturday afternoon.

Researchers are invited to submit abstracts on research related to native plants and plant communities of Florida, including preservation, conservation, and restoration. Presentations are planned to be 20 minutes in total length (15 minutes presentation, 5 minutes questions).

Abstracts of not more than 200 words should be submitted as an MS Word file by email to Paul A. Schmalzer, [paul.a.schmalzer@nasa.gov](mailto:paul.a.schmalzer@nasa.gov), by February 15, 2009. Include title, affiliation, and address. Indicate whether you will be presenting a paper or poster.

## Lake County Has Mobile Irrigation Lab

From an article submitted by *Christopher Patton*

Started two years ago through an agency partnership, the non-regulatory lab helps the agricultural community by visiting groves, nurseries and greenhouses to offer a free, unbiased and confidential evaluation of irrigation systems. Based on the recommendations from the professional lab team, agricultural operations have the opportunity to conserve water -- and run their diesel pumps less.

Call (352)343-2481 ext.6 for more information.

## National Native Plant Conservation Campaign

The Center for Biological Diversity has kicked off a native plant conservation campaign, and is providing a lovely and informative brochure to explain the importance of native plants across the country. You can get a copy of the brochure at [www.biologicaldiversity.org](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org) or [www.plantsocieties.org](http://www.plantsocieties.org).

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