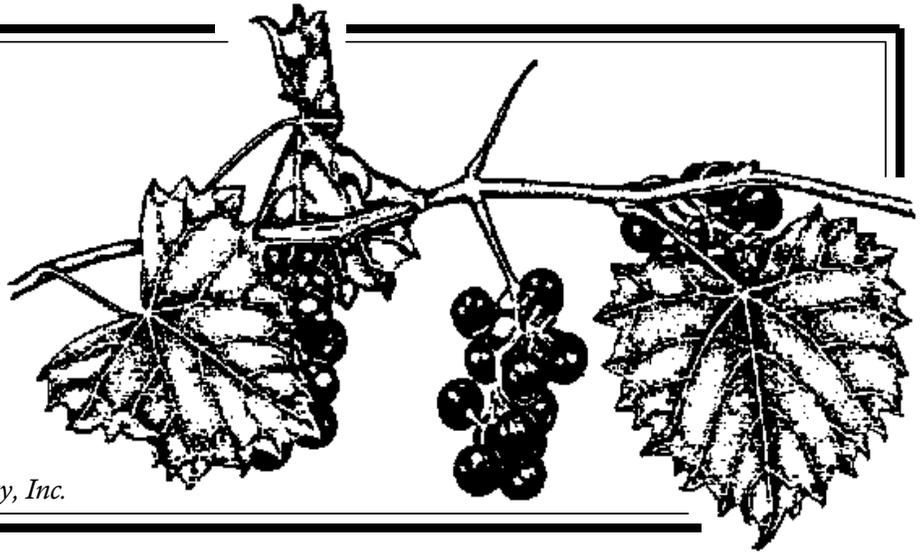


www.suncoastnps.org

The Suncoast Grapevine

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



Volume 27 Number 2

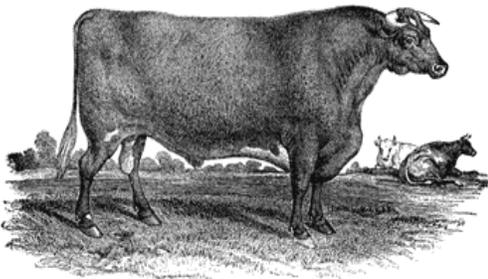
FEBRUARY 2010

Flatwoods Restoration

Presented by Beth Wertchnig
Hillsborough County Extension Service
Wednesday, February 17 @ 7pm

Beth Wertchnig, restoration ecologist and closet Suncoast member, has been responsible for some of the earliest and most successful flatwoods restoration in west-central Florida. These are sites that have been growing for years. She has learned, sometimes the hard way, what it takes to recreate flatwoods from pasture. Beth will show us the process, from preparing a donor site to planting, maintenance, and return of fire. Her presentation includes lots of photographs of the restoration in process and includes interesting slides of the wildflowers, birds, snakes, and other wildlife that now call the sites home.

Beth can claim an extensive track record of successful restoration projects that extends over a period of more than 15 years and ranges from riparian restoration in California (for the USFS), to the initial pasture restoration at the Disney Wilderness Preserve, to restoration of lands mined for phosphate, and restoration of improved pasture to flatwoods.



The projects in the latter category may be one of the most challenging as pasture grasses and nuisance species are constantly poised to claim the sites for themselves. Beth is also a native plant gardener whose own home is an all-native yard. She enjoys watching wildlife, has a burn certification, and is an accomplished equestrian.

- Submitted by Shirley Denton



The Florida Native Plant Society was organized in 1980 to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. For more information about the Florida Native Plant Society, please visit our web site: www.fnps.org

Feb 20: Field trip to Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park



This park protects four miles of pristine coastline along the Gulf of Mexico in western Pasco County. The salt spring looks small, but it is an amazing 320 feet deep!

Native plants include: Pineland acacia, eight species of polygala, and salt marsh plants we aren't accustomed to seeing on our field trips plus a few bonus plants. We will explore the salt flats tide permitting.

Meet at the McDonalds at SR 54 immediately west of the Suncoast Parkway at 9 AM. We can carpool from this location to Port Richey. Bring water & snacks. Leader: Gail Parsons 813-928-1412 cell or email at gailpar1@verizon.net.

- Submitted by Gail Parsons, photo by Mike Fite

USF Learning In Retirement: Natural Hillsborough

Thursday mornings, 10 am – noon

Audubon Resource Center at Lettuce Lake County Park

Literature and Materials charge: \$25.00, cash or check made out to "Tampa Audubon"

Classes will meet at the Audubon Resource Center at Lettuce Lake County Park, at 10:00 am, for nine weeks. Generally, they will involve an hour of lecture followed by a field trip walk on the boardwalk and trails of Lettuce Lake County Park. Participants are requested to bring binoculars. Tampa Audubon Society reserves the right to adjust the speakers' schedule. The tight County Parks' budget threatened closure of Lettuce Lake County Park, but instead there will likely be a daily car fee of \$2/car or an annual pass of \$50/year. Please take this into consideration when you sign up. **Class Coordinator: Ann Paul, 813/624-3149**

February 18: Bluebirds and Boxes, Mary Miller, Flatwood Bluebird Box Trail Coordinator, Tampa Audubon Society, Program Chair, Suncoast Native Plant Society

February 25: Hillsborough's Natural Areas, Robert Heath, Wildlife Fellowship, Inc., Past President, Tampa Audubon Society

March 4: Wetlands and Karst, Mike Mullins, Audubon Resource Center at Lettuce Lake Park, Environmental Education Director

March 11: Snakes, Cindy Shaw, retired teacher, part-time instructor at ARC and Nature's Classroom

March 18: Herons & Egrets, Ann Paul, Biologist, Audubon of Florida, Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries Program, Past President, Tampa Audubon Society

- ED Note: This training is already in progress; past dates have been omitted.

Save the Dates!

- ☼ 2010 Spring Plant Festival at USF Botanical Gardens on April 10th and 11th (Saturday and Sunday)
- ☼ Earth Day at Lowry Park on Sunday, April 18th

Treasurer's Report: SNPS Current Assets (Cash) as of End of Year 2009

- ☼ Checking = \$3814.41
- ☼ Savings = \$4000.00
- ☼ CD = \$6427.61
- ☼ Petty Cash = \$40.00



TOTAL = \$14,282.04

NATIVE PLANTS RESPONSE TO JANUARY 2010 FREEZES SURVEY

An initiative of the Coccoloba Chapter

One way to tell if you placed the right plant in the right spot of your landscape is to see how it survived the recent freezes. Help us gather information about the recent cold weather! We have a unique opportunity to compile data about the effects of the cold snap on native species used in residential and commercial landscaping. It's also an opportunity to assess the damage (or lack of damage) in your own yard. Observations of how plants in natural areas responded to the record cold weather are requested as well. Simply list the native plants in your yard and/or visit your favorite neighborhood nature preserve and record how the plants fared using the following 1 to 5 scale:

- 5 - no visible damage,
- 4 - minor damage, including leaf wilt and/or curled or browned leaf edges;
- 3 - moderate damage, including leaf burn/drop for up to half of plant;
- 2 - heavy damage, complete leaf drop, small branch damage;
- 1 - severe above-ground damage, possible plant death.

Please include the common name, scientific name, and numeric rating for each plant. Scientific names may be found at the Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants website (www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu). Also include your name, zip code, and temperature data (if available) from your property. Please include the latitude and longitude, if known (GPS or Google Earth would be ideal).

As a reminder, you should not prune or remove any plants that you think may be damaged by this cold snap. Wait for several weeks or a few months, as many of our native species will send out new growth from stems where leaves have fallen. Many of our plants stressed by the weather may also regenerate from the roots.

George Kish has graciously offered to compile data for the Suncoast chapter —so please send your information to: gkish@tampabay.rr.com or bring it to the next meeting. Watch for the results in the newsletter; we will print them in a few months once they are tallied. Thanks in advance for your help!

Data for the Suncoast chapter area should be forwarded to:

George R. Kish
15018 Meadowlake Street
Odessa, Florida 33556
Email: gkish@tampabay.rr.com

- Frost photos below, Troy Springer

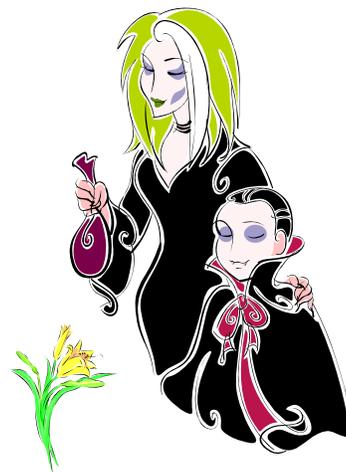


Winter of the Living Dead

According to the National Weather Service, Tampa International Airport experienced 5 days of freezing or sub-freezing temperatures from January 6 – 12, 2010. It was enough to zap most freeze-sensitive plants in our area. After the first frost, I looked outside to see what was damaged. Some tips of wild coffee, firebush, and tropical red salvia had wilted in unprotected areas but everything else looked fine. So we had a frost and a little damage, but everything was back to normal – right?

Wrong, dead wrong! I waited about a week after the last frost date to take stock of the damage. If you do a frost damage check, it is usually wise to wait a few days because some of our plant friends die a slow death. I checked for wilted or brown vegetation and made a list:

<i>Acacia farnesiana</i>	Sweet acacia
<i>Chrysoma pauciflosculosa</i>	Bush goldenrod
<i>Coccoloba uvifera</i>	Sea grape
<i>Conocarpus erectus</i>	Buttonwood
<i>Elephantopus elatus</i>	Elephantsfoot, tall
<i>Gossypium hirsutum</i>	Wild Cotton
<i>Hamelia patens</i>	Firebush
<i>Helianthus debilis</i>	Beach sunflower
<i>Heliotropium polyphyllum</i>	Pineland Heliotrope
<i>Heliotropium angiospermum</i>	scorpionstail
<i>Ipomoea pes-caprae</i> subsp. <i>Brasiliensis</i>	Railroad vine
<i>Ipomoea imperati</i>	Beach morning glory
<i>Nephrolepis exaltata</i>	Boston fern
<i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	Passion Flower
<i>Passiflora suberosa</i>	Passionflower, corkystem
<i>Phytolacca americana</i>	Pokeweed
<i>Pyschotria nervosa</i>	Wild Coffee
<i>Rivina humilis</i>	Rouge plant
<i>Salvia coccinea</i>	Tropical red salvia
<i>Senna ligustrina</i>	Privet wild sensitive plant
<i>Stachytarpheta jamaicensis</i>	Trailing porterweed
<i>Verbesina virginica</i>	Frostweed
<i>Zamia pumila</i>	Coontie



I decided to follow the practice of allowing the brown vegetation to remain on the plants until new growth began. After all, brown is a natural winter color. When I checked the plants after a couple of weeks, I witnessed something very haunting – green leaves were sprouting where only brown death had been! Creepy new growth was inching up from the lifeless limbs. Trailing porterweed, tropical red salvia, wild coffee, and frostweed were rising up from the brown carnage. It won't be long before most of the others are covered with lush growth again.

The silver lining in a winter frost is seeing the green begin anew. Our native plants do not usually die, but they come back, again and again – maybe a Florida winter inspired John Russo to write *Night of the Living Dead*.

- Submitted by George Kish

PLANT PROFILE

Common name: Wiregrass

Botanical name: *Aristida stricta* Michx. var. *beyrichiana* (Trin. & Rupr.)D.B.Ward

Synonyms: Pineland threeawn

Family: Poaceae

Zone: 7 to 10

Plant Habit: Perennial bunchgrass

Habitat: Wet to dry flatwoods, scrub, and sandhills

Size: 2 to 4 feet (h); 2 to 3 feet (w)

Leaves: Narrow, rolled in, wiry leaves

Bloom: Stiff, narrow panicles

Flowering time: Spring to fall

Fruit: Small grain; requires fire to produce fruit

Distribution: Statewide

Growing conditions

Light: Full sun to part shade

Water: Dry to moist

Soil: Sandy, well-drained

Propagation: Seed

Motility: Slowly by self-sown seeds

Maintenance: Annual pruning to a few inches above ground

Availability: Native plant nurseries

Comments: Essential ground cover for longleaf pine restoration



References:

Nelson, Gil, 2003, *Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants*: University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 412 p.

Taylor, Walter Kingsley, 2009, *A Guide to Florida Grasses*: University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 361 p.

Wunderlin, R.P. 2003. *Guide to Vascular Plants of Florida*, second edition, University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 787 p.

Wunderlin, R.P. and B.F. Hansen, 2007, *Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants*: University of South Florida, Institute of Systematic Botany (<http://plantatlas.usf.edu/>)

Information compiled by George Kish

Photos by Shirley Denton

Florida Native Plant Society Membership Application

Membership in the Florida Native Plant Society enables you to receive their wonderful quarterly magazine *The Palmetto*. Joining the SNPS also entitles you to membership privileges in the Suncoast Native Plant Society and a subscription to their monthly newsletter *The Suncoast Grapevine*. Contact the membership chair, Shirley Denton, at 986-6485.

Check pertinent category:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Renewal \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-for-profit organization \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full time student \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business or corporate \$125 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library subscription \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family or household \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Donor \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$75 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$1,000 | |

Make check payable to **FNPS**.

Detach and mail to:

FNPS

P.O. Box 278

Melbourne, FL 32902-0278

New Member Renewal

Name _____

Business name or organization _____

Address _____

City, State and Zip _____

Home phone _____ Email _____

Activities & Committee Chairs

Field Trips

Gail Parsons

Publications

Dick Wunderlin 977-6484

George Kish 920-0853

Librarian

Vikki Sinclair 989-2896

Membership

Shirley Denton 986-6485

Newsletter Editor

Shawna Everidge 659-4298

Mike Fite, Assistant 977-0892

Programs and Publicity

Shirley Denton

Outreach

Fred Mulholland

USF Plant Sale

Troy Springer 967-4538

USF Botanical Garden Liaison

Kim Hutton 974-2329

Chapter Representative

Troy Springer

Webmaster

Shirley Denton 986-6485

Conservation

Ron Chicone

Daphne Lambright

Bob Upcavage

Newsletter Submissions

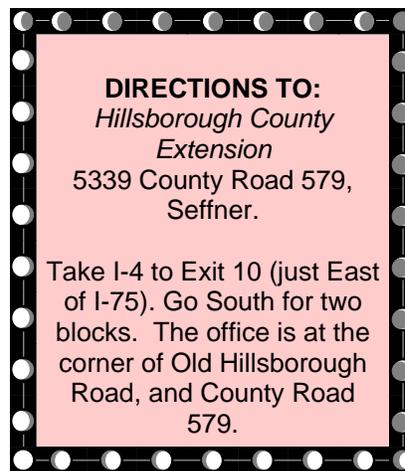
Deadline for the next issue:

MAR 3

Please send articles and original artwork for The Suncoast Grapevine to **Shawna Everidge**, by the **deadline** of this month. Text should be in MS Word; graphics should be in a standard graphic format (.jpg, .bmp, .gif). Previously published artwork should be accompanied by a letter of permission from the original publisher.

Email...

severidge@plantcitygov.com



Meeting Locations

Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc. meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the **Hillsborough Extension office in Seffner.**

SNPS Web Address:

<http://www.SuncoastNPS.org>



Officers & Board of Directors

President

Troy Springer

Vice-president

Shirley Denton

Secretary

Ron Chicone

Treasurer

Daphne Lambright

Board Members

Gail Parsons

Fred Mulholland

The SNPS BOD meets regularly at a variety of locations. If you are interested in attending a BOD meeting, please check the location at a monthly membership meeting or call Troy Springer at 813-967-4538.

Suncoast Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 1158
Seffner, FL 33583-1158

Please deliver to: