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The Suncoast Grapevine

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



Volume 28 Number 2

FEBRUARY 2011

Conservation Lands Program

Presented by the Southwest Florida Water Management District
Wednesday, February 16 @ 7pm
Hillsborough County Extension Service

This month's program will be about conservation lands operated and maintained by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), and how these lands provide quality recreation possibilities for the public as well as protecting our water resources and preserving plant and animal communities.

SWFWMD has a total of 54 conservation lands spread across an area that contains all or part of 16 counties. Combined, the conservation lands total area is approximately 360,268 acres. The largest tract is the Green Swamp East Tract at 51,149 acres, and the smallest is Wysong Park at 5 acres. Hillsborough County has 32,609 acres (not including the Tampa Bypass Canal) of conservation lands that are owned and managed by the district.

As an addition to our regular field trip to Bok Tower on Feb 19th, SWFWMD has invited Suncoast (along with other chapters) to participate in a field trip to the Little Manatee River - Southfork Tract the following week on Feb. 26th. This field trip will be led by Will Vangelder, Senior Land Management Specialist. The tract is 970 acres, located in northern Manatee County. The tracts' finest features are restored scrub and scrubby flatwoods. Suncoast has participated in the planting and monitoring of *Chrysopsis floridana* on this site, which is adjacent to other properties owned and managed by other agencies. This makes the combined natural area a wonderful place for recreation and provides valuable pristine habitat for the region!

- Submitted by Troy Springer



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

January Meeting Recap: Living With a Florida Yard by Troy Springer January 19, 2011

I attended the January SNPS meeting and enjoyed the talk so much that I wrote down a few key points to share with everyone who missed the meeting. Since we are a native plant organization, this talk was very pertinent to the SNPS's goals and an excellent overview of native plant philosophy for the beginner or experienced gardener.

Troy shared things that he has learned from years of planting natives and observing the results. Troy listed the #1 step in starting to evaluate and plant natives as "Remove the Exotic Invasives". He said that even skunk vine can be reduced or eliminated by diligent removal. I am somewhat skeptical of that, but it gives me hope that I may be able to reduce it in my yard.

Self sustaining sounds like it might be easy but it involves good planning, flexibility to change as the yard evolves, and some strategic maintenance. Keeping the "natural" feel of a yard or developing it from scratch means that you don't try to "box in" your yard with straight hedges or rows of closing planted pine trees. Troy thinks about how the yard will fit into the neighborhood and community, how others will see and enjoy his yard—not just about what he would like. He mentioned flying over areas and seeing all the tiny little squares of individual yards instead of a flowing natural landscape. This reminded me of the plan to connect and protect a green corridor in Florida and also Doug Tallamy's idea of connecting yards to make places where native diversity of plants and animals can flourish.

Troy recommends using no chemicals in your yard since even Roundup® can reduce the natural propagation of the natives that you have planted and kill delicate insects that you are trying to attract.

He suggested embracing volunteer natives that 'just appear' in your yard. Though it can be difficult to identify some seedlings, it can be well worth the thought and effort of keeping some plants that sprout up in your yard without any help. Letting some area of your turf grow long can benefit many species of life, a meadow is full of species that you might not even realize are there.

I thought that Troy's talk was excellent and appreciate that he took the time to proactively share his knowledge with the group!

- Submitted by Janet Bowers



Loving Florida to Death: Part 1

Thursday, February 10, 2011, 6:30 – 8:30pm

Poynter Institute for Media Studies, 801 3rd Street S, St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Program is free and open to the public

Join Craig Pittman, environmental journalist for the *St. Petersburg Times*, as he holds a fascinating discussion with individuals on the current state of Florida's ecology. Participants include Laurie MacDonald, Florida Program Director of Defenders of Wildlife; Peter Clark, President of Tampa Bay Watch, and Dick Jacobs, *Disappearing Florida* photographer.



The FNPS Online Store is Now Open!

Purchase FNPS Merchandise and support FNPS and FNPS Chapters!

Go to <http://floridanativeplantsociety.mybigcommerce.com/>

For information, or to sell merchandise, contact Sue Dingwell at sue@dingwell.net

Registration is now open for the Florida Native Plant Society 31st Annual Conference

May 19-22, 2011

Sheraton Orlando North

Patios, Preserves and Public Spaces: Making Connections



Over 50 expert speakers, researchers and workshops focused on the connection between native plants and conservation of Florida's native habitats to the landscapes that we create in our personal and public environments.

The keynote speakers include Dr. Rutherford H. Platt, Professor of Geography and Planning Law Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Sustainable Cities and Rick Darke, a widely published author, lecturer and consultant who focuses on native regional landscape design, planning and conservation. Also speaking will be Mari Margill from the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund who will be introducing the concept of **Earth Jurisprudence** – the emerging field that promotes the idea that nature has a right to exist in a court of law.

Evening social events, field trips led by experts, vendors, exhibitors and the native plant sale will round out the comprehensive four day event and make this an unforgettable experience.

If you have an idea for a FNPS Conference Sponsorship opportunity, please contact executivedirector@fnps.org or (321) 388-4781.

For additional information, program schedule, field trip descriptions, social event information and to register go to <http://www.fnps.org/pages/conference/>

- ☼ New this year: Carbon Offset Program
- ☼ BYOB Competition (Bring Your Own Bag) - Bring your own bags to the conference. Check in at registration if you would like your bag entered in the competition for the oldest bag, most environmental bag, etc.
- ☼ Keep checking the FNPS Blog, fnpsblog.blogspot.com. There will be interviews with keynotes and other conference details featured over the next several months.

- from an email sent out by Karina Veaudry

Loving Florida to Death: Part 2

Thursday, March 10, 2011, 6:30 – 8:30pm

Poynter Institute for Media Studies, 801 3rd Street S, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Program is free and open to the public

Join a lively panel discussion led by Gary Mormino, USF History Professor and author of *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*.

Topics include societal and cultural changes in Florida over the last few decades. Participants include writer Peter Meinke, writer and documentary filmmaker Bill Belleville, and photographer Carlton Ward from the Morean's *Disappearing Florida* exhibition.

- Presentation notice, pages 2 & 3, courtesy of Tampa Bay Watch Update, 31 January 2011



February Field Trip

Bok Tower Gardens and the Rare Plant Conservation Program

February 19th, meet in the Visitor Center @ 9am
1151 Tower Blvd, Lake Wales 33853

Cost: \$10, unless you still have your free pass given out at the February 2009 SNPS meeting when our speaker was from Bok Tower Gardens. Those passes are still being honored.

Field trip leader: Gail Parsons, 813-920-2730

The Gardens is one of 28 nationwide that participate in the Center for Plant Conservation. They have helped to conserve 38 rare Florida plant species, of which 29 are federally listed. Cheryl Peterson, Conservation Program Manager, will be our guide for an insider's look at what this program is all about.

Other things to do:

- 🔔 ¾ mile hike through Pine Ridge Nature Preserve
- 🔔 Guided garden tours at noon and 2pm
- 🔔 Lunch in the café with sandwiches, salads, drinks & ice cream among other things.
- 🔔 Gift shop where you can buy plants
- 🔔 *Discovering Beauty in Gardens and Wild Places*, a digital photography exhibit in the Visitor's Center. The photographer is Al Rokach, Senior Photographer for *Southern Living Magazine* and the Director of Photography at the New York Botanical Gardens.

- Submitted by Gale Parsons

Upcoming Events & Announcements

- 🔔 Next SNPS Meeting on March 16th * Plan to attend
- 🔔 USF Spring Plant Sale is April 9th and 10th * Volunteer to help before or during the plant sale
- 🔔 April SNPS Meeting on April 20th * Plan to attend
- 🔔 May SNPS Meeting on May 18th * Plan to attend
- 🔔 FNPS 2011 Conference is May 19th - 22nd in Maitland, FL * Plan to attend
- 🔔 USF Butterfly, Herb & Native Plant Fair is June 11th and 12th * Volunteer to help at the SNPS booth
- 🔔 FNPS 2012 Conference (hosted by Suncoast, Hernando, and Pasco chapters) in Plant City at the Trinkle Center from **May 17th-20th, 2012** * Volunteer

THANK YOU for our January meeting refreshments and plant donations!

EXTRA INK CARTRIDGES: Shawna Everidge's stash has finally run out. PLEASE bring empty ink cartridges to the meetings if you can. They are worth \$2 each at Staples, and the chapter uses them to help defray printing costs. It's a great way to donate to our chapter, even in these economic times when it's not so easy to do!

SWEETWATER ORGANIC COMMUNITY FARM has issued a **Call to Action** and is in need of some neighborly support to help with their rezoning application. Even if you aren't a member, this farm is a jewel to have in our area! <http://sweetwater-organic.org/around-the-farm/sweetwater-members-and-supporters-call-to-action/>

- Submissions by Daphne Lambright, Mike Fite, Ron Chicone & Shawna Everidge

PLANT PROFILE

Common name: Carolina yellow jessamine

Botanical name: *Gelsemium sempervirens* (L.) Aiton f.

Family: Gelsemiaceae

Zone: 8-9B

Plant habit: evergreen, climbing or trailing, woody vine

Mature size (h): up to 20 ft. or more

Habitat: Well-drained woodlands, hammocks, pine flatwoods

Leaves: Opposite, simple, evergreen, lanceolate to oblong-lanceolate, pointed at tip, entire margins, up to 3 inches long and 1 inch wide on short stalks

Flower: Yellow, up to 6 inches long in the axils of the leaves

Flowering season: Late winter to early spring

Fruit: Small, elliptical capsules

Growing conditions:

Light: Sun to shade

Water: Drought tolerant after establishment

Soil: Any soil, prefers organic, well-drained

Salt tolerance: None

Propagation: Seed, stem cuttings, layering

Florida zones: N, C

Landscape uses: Ground cover or vine to cover fences, arbors, trellises, or mailboxes

Availability: Retail nurseries, native-plant nurseries

Comments: All parts of the plant are poisonous; Swamp jessamine (*Gelsemium rankii*) prefers wetlands, swamps, and bogs.

References:

Nelson, Gil, 2003, *Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 411 p.

Osorio, Rufino, 2001, *A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 345 p.

Wunderlin, R.P. and B.F. Hansen, 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 R. Kish, photo 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.

New Member Renewal

Name _____

Business name or organization _____

Address _____

City, State and Zip _____

Home phone _____ Email _____

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

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Activities & Committee Chairs

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Conservation

Open

Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for the next issue:

MARCH 2

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

DIRECTIONS TO:

Hillsborough County
Extension
5339 County Road 579
Seffner

Take I-4 to Exit 10 (just east of I-75). Go south for two blocks. The office is at the corner of Old Hillsborough Road and County Road 579.

Meeting Location

The Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc. meets the third Wednesday of the month @ 7pm @ the Hillsborough County Extension Service office in Seffner.

SNPS Web Address

<http://www.SuncoastNPS.org>



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