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The Suncoast Grapevine

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



Volume 29 Number 9

SEPTEMBER 2012

OPEN MIC NIGHT

Presented by YOU!

Wednesday, September 19 @ 7pm
Hillsborough County Extension Service



September will be our ever popular **Open Mic Night** where you will have the opportunity to take the stage and share your native plant challenges and triumphs. What have been your most vexing problems and how were you able to solve them? Or, are you still seeking a solution that our members may hold the answer to?

The signup sheet will be at the front door when you arrive. Each speaker will have approximately 5-10 minutes. If you have photos on thumb drive or CD, we will have the laptop so you can share them with the group.

This is your opportunity to share your yard or garden and what you have learned!

- Submitted by Devon Higginbotham

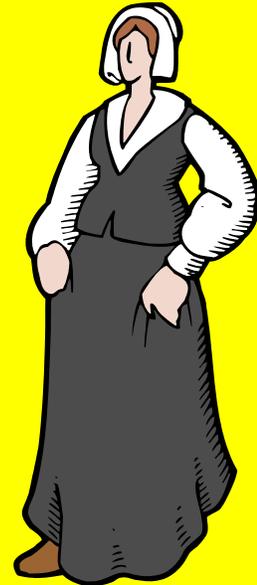


The Florida Native Plant Society was organized in 1980 to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. For more information about the Florida Native Plant Society, please visit our web site: www.fnps.org

A Walk through Gardening History

A book review by Devon Higginbotham

When it comes to landscape design, every property poses its own challenges and its own attributes. But where do you start when your parcel is larger than a quarter acre? The answer to this question is what I was seeking when I discovered Michael Weishan's book, [The New Traditional Garden](#). What I found was a wonderful history of American gardens, starting with the very first, Plymouth Plantation, when the starving immigrant's only concern was subsistence, but they laid out their garden plot on the strict geometric grids they brought with them from Europe. Historically, our gardens forked from our homelands as we sought to tame the ever present wilderness as we pushed west. Europe was running out of virgin forest but America was just beginning to explore ours.



Weishan takes us on a tour of the classic historical gardens of our country like Colonial Williamsburg, Washington Irving's "Sunnyside", The Gardens of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, The Longfellow House, Salem, North Carolina, The Glebe House in Connecticut, and Monticello all the while explaining how our concept of gardens changed, complete with original diagrams of design layouts and explanations of what Americans were thinking at the time.

For a Harvard graduate, trained in the Classical and Romance Languages envisioning a life in the Foreign Service, you might ask yourself, "How did a nice guy like him end up in Landscaping"? As we all know, sometimes life holds hidden surprises. But this guy is clearly equipped to know what he is talking about. He started the magazine *Traditional Gardening* and is the host of public radio's *The Cultivated Gardener*. Don't go looking for the attributes of native plants because this guy is all about cultivars. Fortunately, most of the plants he raves about will never grow in Florida with our hot, humid weather.



It's all about design. How do you lay out the driveway, walkway, garden area and potting shed? What materials should you use for the walkway? What is the line of vision, focal point, cohesion, order, balance and symmetry? For all these answers, he reverts to history and how our forefathers solved these dilemmas.

Of particular interest is the history of "lawns" and how gardens were never the sea of mowed grass we see today but rather a necessity in the game of croquet - all the rage in the Victorian era - and then just a small part of the overall landscape. He rails against the modern obsession with manicured lawns:

The current American obsession with the flawless, weed free lawn is a good example of how impractical modern gardening has become. This passion for wide expanses of unblemished grass is a disease that strikes people (especially men!) of all ages and stations and causes them to spend huge amounts of time, money and resources attempting to create the perfect lawn. The only way to accomplish this of course (and then only for a while) is to load the turf with massive quantities of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. It's all just modern madness.

For a truly fascinating read for those horticulturally inclined, I highly recommend [The New Traditional Garden](#). I read it twice!

Last week, the Suncoast Native Plant Society gave a presentation on "Going Native" to the Plant City Christian Women's Club at the Walden Lake Country Club. Devon Higginbotham was the guest speaker at the luncheon. We now have a Power Point and talking notes for each slide for any members that would like to make a presentation to another group!

— Devon Higginbotham

Gathering Wisdom from a Flower:

Medicinal Florida Natives

with Willow LaMonte

Thursdays, September 13, 20 & 27, 10am – Noon

Potent healing herbs await us in our yards, empty lots, trails and parks. Numerous humble Florida natives are considered "weeds" by many, but these herbaceous plants as well as native bushes, trees and even Spanish moss generously share their healing properties. Learn to identify them and what parts of the plants can be safely used in which circumstances. From mosquito control to hay fever relief to first aid tropical salves, our Florida native medicinals have a deserved place of respect in the landscape.

Suggested donation \$10 – \$25. Fresh herb tea served. Feel free to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy in the shade. Dry / canned goods collected for local food banks.

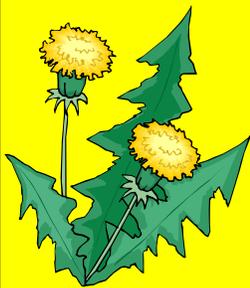
Wild Edible Plants

with Willow LaMonte

Tuesday, September 18, 10am – Noon

Abundant edible wild plants abound in yards, gardens, and naturalized areas. Nutritious salad greens, crunchy sweet tubers, purple beauty and elderberries, and first aid tropical medicinals generously share their gifts, growing easily in our local conditions. See and smell how to identify them safely and enjoy free Florida food! Suggested donation \$12 – \$25.

Folk Herbalist Willow LaMonte is a long-time organic gardener and wild crafter. She is a member of the American Herbalist Guild, the Florida Herb Society, and United Plant Savers. Amidst oak trees in Valrico she grows a small organic herb nursery and botanical gardens, Willow Herbal Delight Gardens, using Permaculture methods. She loves to dream in Neolithic.



Willow Herbal Delight Gardens is an Organic Herb Nursery at the end of Ray Road in Valrico, off of South Miller Road, 1/3 mile south of Lumsden; the Valrico Church of Christ will be on the corner of Ray Road and Miller Road. There is no parking available on Ray Road; please park in the wide driveway or on the lawn to the left side of the yard. Handicapped parking is available.

Please call the nursery for more information at 813-643-7285.

Upcoming Events & Announcements

- ☆ The BOD has been working on improvements to the USF Plant Sale process and equipment. We have invested time and money in laminating the frequently used profiles to prevent water damage. We have purchased some new profile holders/stakes, colored tags for easy pricing, and will be accepting credit cards using an iPhone.
- ☆ For the fall sale Oct 13-14, Troy Springer will be gathering the plants and setting up on Thursday and Friday. Janet Bowers is coordinating volunteers for Saturday and Sunday. Please sign up to help! You can reach Janet at jbowers27@yahoo.com, 813 759-2822 or at the next SNPS meeting.
- ☆ The BOD approved joining the Florida Wildflower Foundation and the USF Botanical Garden. It is important to support our partners as they support us also in their publications, calendar of events, etc. The Florida Wildflower Foundation has provided seeds and handouts for us to use in outreach efforts and the USF Botanical Garden continues to support us and provide outreach opportunities for SNPS.
- ☆ Thank you to our August plant donors, Fred Mulholland, Mary Miller and Janet Bowers!
- ☆ Thank you to Devon Higginbotham for taking over the Grapevine during the month of August. Shawna Everidge will be doing the publication thru October.

September 22nd: Plant City Gardenfest, 9am – 3pm

September 28 – 30th: Wings and Wildflower Festival - Lake County: birds, butterflies, wildflower talks, walks, demos:

http://www.lakecountyfl.gov/bird_watching/wings_and_wildflowers/?utm_source=gowildshortcut&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=2012%2Bbirding%2Bfestival

October 13-14th: USF Fall Plant Sale

October 20th: Boktoberfest @ BokTower, Lake Wales

October 27th: Lakeland: Munn Park Plant Sale

- Submitted by Janet Bowers

Mammoth Lakes, California is just outside Yosemite National Park and they have a local newspaper called the "Mammoth Times". The recent publication had an article under "Upcoming Events" that read:

California Native Plant Society, Bristlecone Chapter

What: Mammoth region plant sale. Bring a box to transport your new plants. Cups are \$4, small tree pots are \$5. Plants include Alpine Columbine, Sierra Angelica, Snowberry, Davidson's Penstemon, Wallflower and more! All proceeds go to the Native Plant Society, Bristlecone Chapter.

Where: 107 Sugar Pine Drive, Mammoth When: 9 AM - 11 AM.

Imagine Native Plant Societies all across American and, hopefully, the world doing the same things we are doing to preserve the native plants of their area or country and the future impact of these conservation efforts!

-Devon Higginbotham

Plant Profile

Common name: Elliott's lovegrass

Botanical name: *Eragrostis elliottii*

Family: Poaceae

Plant Habit: Perennial bunchgrass

Habitat: Flatwoods, Sandhill, dry hammocks

Size: 1 to 2 feet (h x w)

Leaves: Light green to grayish green, fine-leaved

Bloom: Tan, wispy panicles

Flowering time: Late summer and fall

Fruit: Small inconspicuous grain

Distribution: Statewide

Growing conditions

Light: Full sun or light shade

Water: Dry to moist

Soil: Sandy, well-drained

Propagation: Seed

Motility: Slowly by self-sown seeds

Maintenance: Annual pruning to ground; occasional trimming to maintain tufted shape

Availability: Native plant nurseries

Comments: Underused in the landscape; attractive along borders or as mass plantings mixed with wildflowers

Eragrostis elliottii
Photo by George Kish



References:

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, 2007, *Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants*: University of South Florida, Institute of Systematic Botany

(<http://plantatlas.usf.edu/>)

Information compiled by George Kish

Photo by George Kish

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:

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Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for the next issue:

OCT 1

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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