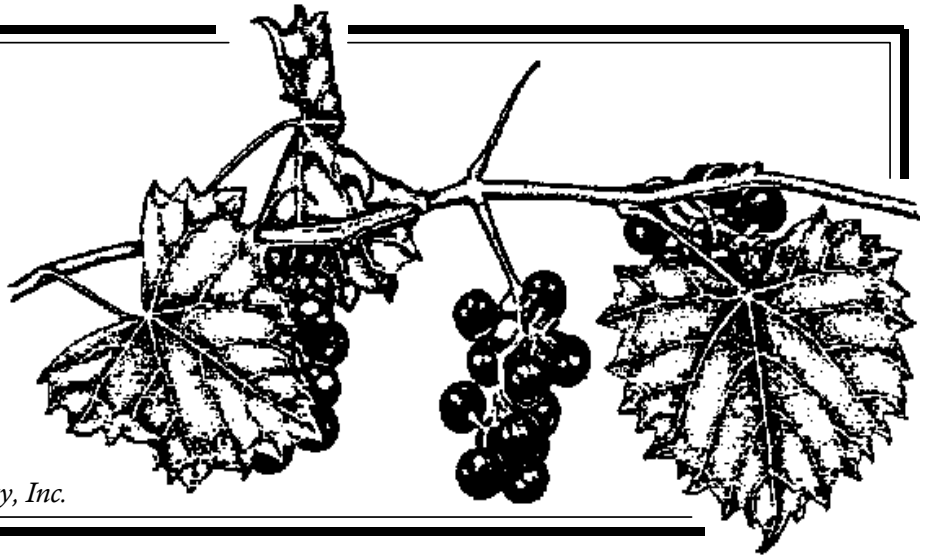


www.suncoastnps.org

The Suncoast Grapevine

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



Volume 29 Number 10

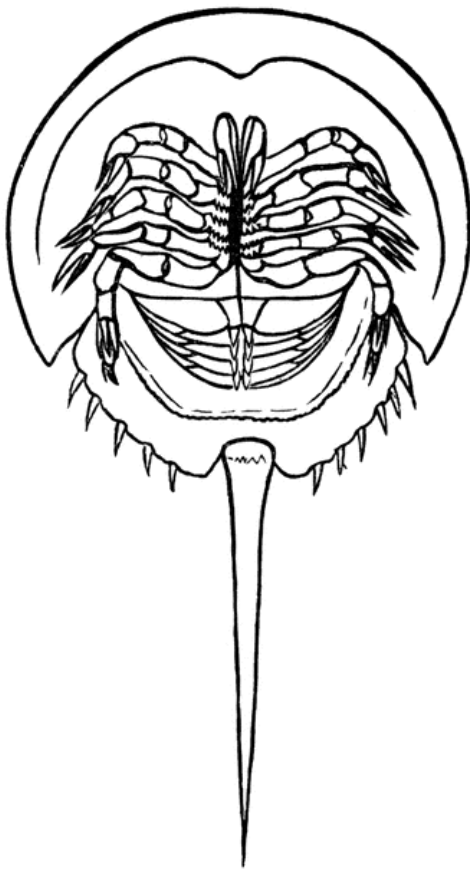
OCTOBER 2012

Cockroach Bay Restoration Project

Presented by Richard Sullivan

Wednesday, October 17th @ 7pm

Hillsborough County Extension Service



Twenty-one years ago, the 651 acres in south Hillsborough County was farmland and deep mining pits. Today, it is lush wetlands and vibrant uplands with fish, crabs, shrimp and more than 300 species of birds on this restored stretch of shoreline connecting to eastern Tampa Bay.

The project was a joint effort of Hillsborough County Parks, SWFWMD, 2,500 volunteers and more than 28 government agencies and environmental groups. Richard Sullivan, an environmental scientist and the manager of Cockroach Bay since 1999, will present what and how it was accomplished - and how it affects you, native plant communities and the wildlife of west central Florida.

- 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

Tampa Audubon Seeks Donations of Hummingbird Plants

The topic of the November 1, 2012 Tampa Audubon Society meeting is "Attracting Hummingbirds to your Yard." The speaker, Steve Backes, has several species of hummingbirds in his yard year-round and will be showing meeting participants how to create a hummingbird friendly environment.

To encourage this, TAS is asking for donations of hummingbird plants that can be given to participants to begin hummingbird gardens in their yards. If you have hummingbird plants that you would be willing to donate, please contact either Sandy Reed at seareed99@gmail.com or Mary Miller at limpkin1945@verizon.net.

You are also invited to attend the Nov. 1 meeting held at the same location as the Suncoast Native Plant Society, at the Hillsborough Extension Office on CR 579 in Seffner. Meeting begins at 7:00 pm.

- submitted by Mary Miller

The Cockroach Bay Project

Multiple species of ducks and white pelicans float in a saltmarsh that was once "a nasty green pond," said Richard Sullivan, an environmental scientist, manager of Cockroach Bay, and employee with Hillsborough County Parks. "It's not just for birds; it's not just for the fish. It's for the people," he continued.

The restoration project started in 1991. It involved scientists studying a 1938 aerial photograph of the coastal areas along the bay to get the land contours, water flow and plant life just right. The marsh is connected to the bay at four points, balancing salt and fresh water to create the perfect nursery conditions for baby fish.

In addition to replenishing the natural beauty, the Cockroach Bay Project restoration cleans polluted storm water runoff through a series of ponds connected through weirs. The water sits in the ponds, allowing pollutants to settle out. When the first pond fills up, the water flows out of the weir to another pond. By the time the water reaches the bay, it is 99.9% pure.

Today, the 641 acre project is complete but this is only half of the more than 1,000 acres that make up the Preserve. Just a few miles away is the Bahia Beach habitat restoration, a 148 acre project near Ruskin that has just started. The county purchased this property in 2001 with ELAPP funds and in 6 or 7 years the area residents will have a preserve similar to the Cockroach Bay Project to enjoy.



- Submitted and rewritten by Devon Higginbotham from a Tampa Tribune article dated March 4, 2012, "In Land's Future, Old Florida Returns"

Suncoast Grapevine Gets New Editor

During Halloween, we celebrate the macabre and the frightening by carving pumpkins, donning horrific masks and decorating our abodes with all things spooky... though for most of us, nothing is more scary than the thought of change. Unfortunately, all good things must come to an end – and my time here as the honorable Editor of the *Suncoast Grapevine* has come .

I became the Editor of this wonderful publication in 2005, succeeding Shirley Brown. I had recently started my job as the City of Plant City's Environmental Education Coordinator, and I had learned that native plants were essential to keeping Florida's ecosystem healthy... but that was the extent of it! A few phone calls later, I found myself sitting in on board meetings; I was honored to be in the company of Harriett Wright, Troy Springer, Mary Miller and JoAnn Hoffman. Shortly thereafter, I met Mike Fite; he and his wife Barbara have become very dear to me during my experience with this publication, and if I could give them a million "THANK-YOU's!" for all of their moral support and dedication to helping me succeed it still wouldn't be enough! George Kish was also instrumental in helping me find cool graphics to share with you.



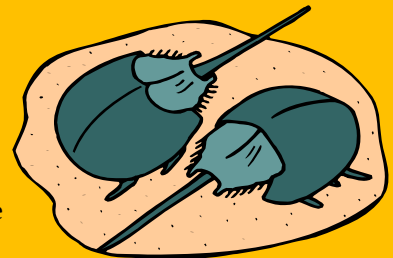
I hope you've enjoyed sharing in my creativity each month as much as I have enjoyed working with this newsletter. I believe our chapter has one of the best in the state, and the dedicated board members and others who contribute have made it enjoyable to be a part of! I have learned so much and I appreciate all of the knowledge that has been shared with me.

I will be relocating to St. Paul, Minnesota to begin another chapter of my life and start a new journey... albeit a much colder one. *The Suncoast Grapevine* will now be edited by Mrs. Janet Bowers, who has graciously stepped up to the plate. I am going to try to make the October meeting to say good-bye to everyone then... See You Soon!

- Shawna Everidge, outgoing Editor

Cockroach Bay Fieldtrip Saturday, October 27th @ 8am

This month's fieldtrip will take us to Cockroach Bay for a tour of the restoration area with Richard Sullivan, the county's Environmental Scientist. Mr. Sullivan has been living at Cockroach Bay since 2000 and coordinating the project.



We have the option to bring bag lunches and go for a canoe tour of the bay and some of the canopied areas at a cost of \$25/canoe (canoes provided).

The County will need to be paid ahead of time, so reservations are required.
Contact Devon at archiveproperties@gmail.com if you're planning on joining us.

Quarterly Membership Information June—August 2012

New Members – Welcome!

- ☼ Donna Carty
- ☼ Margaret Clay
- ☼ Hal Hart
- ☼ Emily Keen

Renewed and Rejoined Members:

- ☼ Barbara and Tom Aderhold
- ☼ Janet Bowers
- ☼ Dan Duerr
- ☼ Frank & Lucy Fuchs
- ☼ Todd & Marie Greer
- ☼ Jay R. Heidt
- ☼ Linda & Lee Hewitt
- ☼ Devon & Allen Higginbotham
- ☼ Loretta Hodgdon
- ☼ Ron & Nancy Huston
- ☼ Rachel Longstaff
- ☼ Michael McDuffie
- ☼ John & Mary Miller
- ☼ Keith & Jan Moyer
- ☼ Virginia Overstreet
- ☼ Ruth Scalera
- ☼ Vikki Sinclair
- ☼ Troy Springer
- ☼ Amy Swancar
- ☼ Merrilee Wallbrunn
- ☼ Martha (Bunny) Worth



Discover the Island 2012 :

Egmont Key

Mark your calendar and head to Egmont Key on Saturday and Sunday, November 10th and 11th for "Discover the Island" to visit and learn about one of Tampa Bay's gems!

The charming 154-year-old lighthouse is still working to guide ships into Tampa Bay. Come see its majestic spiral staircase and participate in the activities sure to enlighten all ages.

See Civil War re-enactors, stroll the island on the self-guided walk with interpretive sites along the way, including nature, military history, and even a fossil pit!. There will be children's games, a silent auction, and much more. The Friends of the Tampa Bay NWR will have wildlife displays and presentations in the restored Fort Dade Guard House.



Food, drinks, and souvenirs will be available for purchase. Shuttle ferries will be leaving Fort DeSoto Park from 9am to 2pm, with the last ferry returning to Fort DeSoto at 4pm.

Day passes include the cost of the ferry: Adults \$18, Youth 6-11 \$5, and Children 5 and under are free. Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more adults. Individual Passes can be purchased online or at the ferry departure site on the beach between the Gulf Pier and Fort Museum.

Discover the Island is the 15th annual fundraiser for the Egmont Key Alliance, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, Citizen Support Organization of Egmont Key State Park, dedicated to protecting, restoring, and preserving the island. To purchase passes or get more information, go to www.EgmontKey.info.

If you still need additional information, call 727-813-2627.

Click on this link for a view: [Discover the Island Flyer](#)

Upcoming Events & Announcements

USF Fall Plant Sale – Oct 13-14

We could use 2 more people to help on Saturday (9-4) and 1 or 2 on Sunday (9-3) as well as a breakdown/pack up helper for Sunday 3-4. If you can only help for a couple hours, please let us know, it would give other volunteers a chance to eat lunch or take a break. We have a pretty good list of volunteers to help with the sale this year, but if you didn't get a chance to sign up, you can reach Janet at jbowers27@yahoo.com, 813 759-2822.

Troy Springer will be gathering the plants and setting up on Thursday and Friday. Janet Bowers is coordinating volunteers for Saturday and Sunday and will be contacting people that signed up to remind them - please mark your calendars now. We have new plant sale pot labels, profile stakes, laminated profiles and a few other improvements from last year. We are looking for a couple people with I-phones or android phones so that we can accept credit cards (contact Daphne for details on this - daphne.lambright@verizon.net).

All volunteers will get a free 1 gallon plant as a "thank you". The plant sales are our big fund raising events for the year, please stop by and lend your support to the cause!

- Thanks, Janet

Thank you to our September plant donors:

- ☼ Marge Masek
- ☼ Fred Mulholland
- ☼ Mary Miller
- ☼ MS Anonymous

Thank you to Debbie Butts for doing the refreshments!

Calendar Items

October 13-14th: USF Fall Plant Sale

October 20th: Boktoberfest @ BokTower, Lake Wales

October 27th: Lakeland: Munn Park Plant Sale



- Submitted by Janet Bowers

Plant Profile

Common name: Muhly grass

Botanical name: *Muhlenbergia capillaris* (Lam.) Trin.

Synonyms: Hairawn muhly, hair grass

Family: Poaceae

Plant Habit: Perennial bunchgrass

Habitat: Flatwoods, marshes, dunes

Size: 1 to 4 feet (h x w)

Leaves: Dark green, wiry leaves

Bloom: Pinkish to reddish flowers

Flowering time: Fall

Fruit: Small, inconspicuous grain

Distribution: Statewide

Wetland status: Obligate wetland (FDEP); facultative upland (NWI)

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

Availability: Most nurseries

Comments: Under-used in the residential landscape; attractive as mass plantings mixed with wild flowers or as a border; attractive right-of-way accent plant

Wunderlin and Hanson (2003) describe 3 varieties in our area: *Muhlenbergia capillaris* var. *capillaris* (hairawn muhly), *Muhlenbergia capillaris* var. *filipes* (Gulf hairawn muhly), *Muhlenbergia capillaris* var. *tricopodes* (cutover muhly).

References:

Osorio, Rufino. 2001. *A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants*: University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 345 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, 2012, *Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants*: University of South Florida, Institute of Systematic Botany
<http://plantatlas.usf.edu/>

Information compiled by George Kish, Photo by Shirley Denton

Muhlenbergia capillaris

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**.

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Melbourne, FL 32902-0278

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USF Botanical Garden Liaison

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Shirley Denton 986-6485

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Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for the next issue:

Nov 1

Please send articles and original artwork for The Suncoast Grapevine to **Janet Bowers**, 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...

jbowers27@yahoo.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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