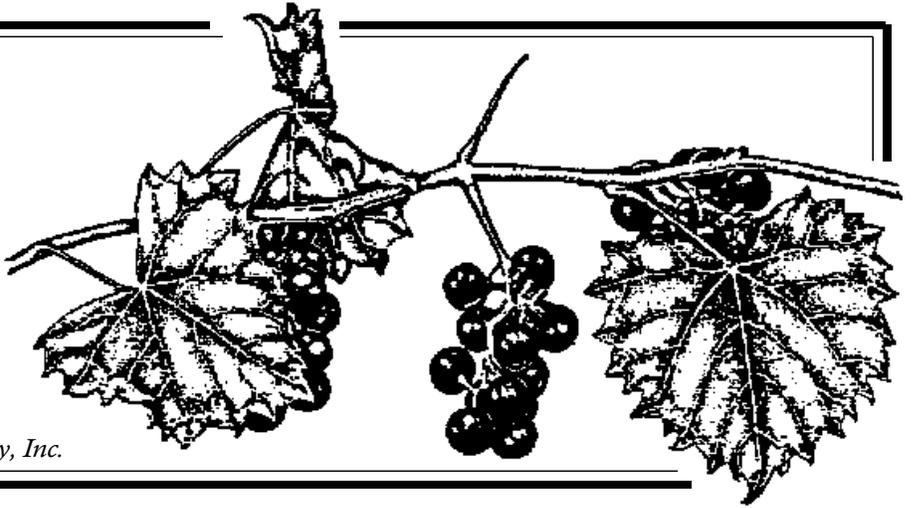


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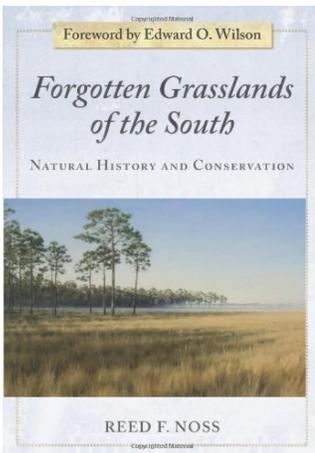
The Suncoast Grapevine

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



Volume 32 Number 3

March 2015



Forgotten Grasslands Presented by Dr. Reed Noss Wednesday, March 18 2015, 7 PM

Dr. Reed Noss, a highly acclaimed conservation scientist and author, will be discussing his book, *Forgotten Grasslands of the South: Natural History and Conservation* (Island Press, 2013) at our monthly meeting.

Forgotten Grasslands of the South is a literary and scientific case study of some of the biologically richest and most endangered ecosystems in North America. Eminent ecologist Reed Noss tells the story of how southern grasslands arose and persisted over time and addresses questions that are fundamental for conserving these vital yet poorly understood ecosystems.

Reed Noss is Provost's Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Central Florida and President of the Florida Institute for Conservation Science. He received an M.S. degree in ecology from the University of Tennessee and a Ph.D. in wildlife ecology from the University of Florida.

He currently conducts research on vulnerability of species and ecosystems to sea-level rise; climate adaptation strategies; disturbance (e.g. fire) ecology; road ecology; ecosystem conservation and restoration; and changes in ecological processes and species assemblages along urban-rural-wildland gradients. He has more than 300 publications, including seven books, and is rated as one of the 500 most highly cited authors in all fields worldwide. He is currently writing a book on the fire ecology of Florida and surroundings and a more general book on disturbance ecology.

Our meetings include light refreshments and a native plant auction after the speaker. Please come and join us.

- submitted by Donna Bollenbach



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



USF Plant Sale - April 11 & 12

As usual SNPS will have over 100 species of Natives!

- Setup** - Friday April 10 starting at 9 AM.
- ◆ Saturday, April 11 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
 - ◆ Sunday, April 12 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Our annual USF Spring Plant Sale is just around the corner. There is going to be a very big change this year. Troy Springer, the chair for the last several years, will be unable to lead the Friday setup because of a business related function that he must attend. We will need the volunteers to take it upon themselves to set up as much as possible on their own.

This is a good opportunity for other volunteers to start taking on this task. Troy will be retiring as chair of the plant sale at the end of this year, and we need others to take the lead. Troy will continue to procure plants for future sales unless someone else decides to take on this task as well. For this year's Spring Sale, Troy will deliver plants and supplies on Wednesday and Thursday the 8th and 9th, and will be at the Plant Sale Saturday morning the 11th to finish setting up, and to lead the efforts for the entire day.

We still need volunteers to help all three days. If you are available to help, please call Troy directly at 813-967-4538 or e-mail him at troy@springerenvironmental.com.

The USF Plant Sale is SNPS's biggest fundraiser, and is the most important outreach effort we do. We are counting on you to help us continue this great event for years to come. Thanks for your continued support.

USF Plant Sale Committee

UPCOMING SPEAKERS-

April 15 – Corey Walk – Forester with Florida Forest Service, talking on Florida Champion Trees. The Champion Tree Program was created by the American Forests organization in 1940, to recognize the largest known tree of each species in the United States. The 2012 edition of the Register includes 111 Florida species, many of which are only found in the tropical region of the state.

May 20 – Open Mic – Members share information about their yard, favorite plants, questions. Each person will have 5–10 min to present their pictures or questions to the group. Always interesting and fun!

June 17 – Tom Palmer – Lakeland Ledger columnist, Ridge Ranger , topic TBD

July 15 – Joint meeting with Sierra and Audubon at Nature's Classroom– more details to come

Thanks for helping with the February meeting -



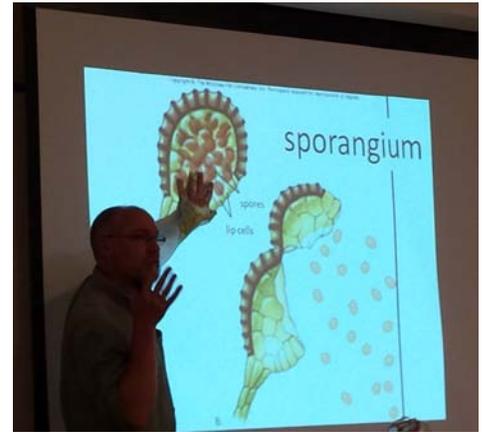
Tina Hamilton for providing a plant for the auction

The Heartland Chapter for providing free Gaillardia seeds

Janet Bowers for bringing the refreshments

IDing Native Plants

Thanks to Bunny, I have been attending the Advanced Plant ID class in Pinellas County and the light bulb is finally going on. Carmel has often offered me helpful tidbits and her wonderful articles in the Grapevine but I never took time to digest and organize the information in my head. Now our instructor, James Stevenson, is making things a little easier by giving us bite-sized pieces of info (along with bite-size chocolate to keep our attention) and I am making progress assimilating what I had heard before and what I have in my text book and handouts. The vocabulary words are daunting but can be conquered by spending a few minutes a couple times a week to get some of the key words in memory along with reviewing the diagrams provided. Last month, Carmel provided a great article on Flowers and that was our first Plant ID class topic. The second class explained Inflorescences which means a group of flowers, that topic was featured in the January Grapevine article from Carmel. Some of the terms are similar and confusing so our teacher often reminds us that he did not construct the awkward vocabulary that is used to pick between plant characteristics and therefore we can't blame him. I now understand why we often hear on fieldtrips - 'that is in the Aster family' and what that signifies. It means that the pretty flower we observe is actually a group of flowers, often disk flowers in the middle and ray flowers around the edge looking like petals. There are about 30 people attending the class and it's a diverse group of young and old, each seeking knowledge for their own reasons but coming together for 6 sessions of fun and challenge.



Learning what family a plant belongs to will narrow down the list of possible suspects by quite a bit, so taking the time to understand the characteristics of the different families is well worth the investment. This fact makes clearer the purpose of listing the family on our plant sale profiles which previously seemed like an arbitrary waste of time. I know I will struggle with avoiding the easy path of asking the SNPS experts about a plant on our next hike but I am on the road to being capable of figuring out some of the plants by myself using the tools I have acquired in class and over the years of listening to our resource people. Even before my class, Carmel helped me key out my Seaside Goldenrod that grows in my yard so I know that I can do it! I am looking forward to our October speaker, Bobby Hattaway, who will be speaking about how to ID plants when the experts aren't there.



By the way, Bunny and I sold 17 SNPS loupes at the plant ID class, and I am enjoying looking at anthers and stigmas with mine. Just like learning the names of the plants makes a hike more fun, knowing about the parts of plants makes seeing them with a loupe more like a learning adventure. Don't forget that Life is a Journey - take time to look around, enjoy the ride and after you smell the flower, check it out with a loupe!

Respectfully,

Janet Bowers

Need a Speaker for your group or class?

Need a speaker for your civic group, gardening club or homeowner's association? The Suncoast Native Plant Society has speakers with a wide range of knowledge, eager to speak about the virtues of native plants.

Contact Devon Higginbotham (archiveproperties@gmail.com).





The Tidiness Dilemma

By Devon Higginbotham

They were driving me nuts! I have a couple dead Pecan trees in my yard and periodically they drop large dead limbs onto my yard with gobs of moss. It's been a long time since I have seen a green leaf on either of them. The wood is decayed and crumbly so it's not difficult to collect the fallen limbs (there are no branches left) but I was dying to chop them down.

Last month, as I lugged another fallen limb to the trash, I looked at one trunk that had slowly dwindled down to 20 ft in height. There is a hole at the base of the tree large enough for a family of hobbits to pass through. The interior is dark and mysterious and I envisioned a raccoon charging out, obviously very inconvenienced by my snooping into his home, but all I saw was darkness. No one seemed home. I suppose it's time to get rid of them. My neighbors had been quietly asking the same question. "Why is she keeping those behemoths? What an eyesore!"

So I thought, "It's time to take them down!" I made a mental note to call my neighbor, Jerry, the next day and have him push them over with his tractor and drag the hulking masses of decaying wood to the trash. I would be rid of them! My yard would be tidy once again.

But, the next day, while walking past one dead trunk (that's all that's left), I heard the rat-a-tat of a Woodpecker. Looking up I saw the shy creature as he slipped around to the backside out of view. I suppose the Woodpeckers are still finding insects in the wood, but the trunks look so dead! The Woodpeckers will find food in other trees!



Last week, as I listened to Shari Blisset-Clark talk about Florida Forest Bats, she described how bats spend the day in hiding in hollow trees and craggy bark and I thought about the Pecan snags in my yard, ideal habitat for sleepy bats. "Maybe", I thought, "I should let them linger". The bark was perfect for slumbering creatures and the gaping hole in the trunk must already be home to multiple species of wildlife, even though I don't see them.

Then today, as I tidied my yard, I heard the distinct call of the Red-shouldered Hawk. Looking up I caught a glimpse of two hawks mating at the very top of one of the snags! "Yeah", I thought, "the snags are staying"!



Mark Your Calendar

- March 14** Spring plant sale at Munn Park in Lakeland, Heartland Chapter event
- March 26-29** Camping at Suwannee River State Park
- April 11-12** **USF Spring Plant Sale**
- April 25** Kissimmee Prairie Preserve - Huegel and Hammer walk
- May 28-31** FNPS Conference in Tallahassee - 'Born to Burn'



Looking for Native news between issues of the newsletter?

- ☆ Check out Suncoast chapter of FNPS on Facebook or at Suncoastnps.org
- ☆ Get fieldtrip info and pics on Meetup
- ☆ FNPS has a great website (FNPS.org) with plant info, blog and many other features
- ☆ Florida Wildflower Foundation has places to see natives, flower profiles and more flawildflowers.org



Sweetwater Organic Farm Workday

On March 1, several people came to help clear invasives and non-natives from an area slated to be a native plant walk. We dug up trees, raked the debris and hauled away about 7 wheelbarrow loads of stuff. We worked on years of rosary pea accumulation and yanked other vines out of bushes. It was very rewarding to see the difference and if that wasn't enough, we stayed to eat some excellent pizza and veggie burgers! We are planning to do another workday in April - stay tuned for more information.



2015 Field Trip schedule

March 26- 29 Suwannee River State Park - Cabin and tent camping. We should see lots of plants that aren't found in our area. Look for more details to come on potluck meals, hikes and more. Our camping trips are a lot of fun, come join us. (FNPS Members only please.)

April 18 - Duette Preserve - arrangements to get a permit are in the works

May 24 (Sunday) - Florida Botanical Garden in Largo - <http://www.flbg.org/> More than 30 acres of cultivated gardens and 90 acres of natural areas. Our focus will be on the native plant areas, and those are huge. Starting with the parking lot plantings, it is entirely native. There is a wide array of natives around the extension office building, all labelled. For more info: http://fnps.org/natives/garden/fl_bot_gar_largo. Free admission, we will likely meet for carpooling.

June 20 - TBD

July 18 - Buying trip to a native nursery



August 22 - Kayak trip (FNPS members only please)



Sept 19 - Depends on what area is blooming, maybe pine lilies

Oct 23-25 - Kissimmee Prairie campout (no cabins at this park)

Nov 15 - Rhodine Scrub Preserve



Did you know?

Bats Are Beneficial

Submitted by Donna Bollenbach

Shari Blissett-Clark's entertaining and highly informative presentation on *The Forest Bats of Florida* at the February SNPS meeting was inspiring. I believe that many of us, including myself, left with a new appreciation of bats. Perhaps some of us will try to attract bats to our backyard habitats. If we have no natural places for bats to roost, we may buy a bat house. We will also join forces to protect and preserve natural bat habitats, just like we would birds and butterflies.

For those who were unable to attend the February meeting, Shari Blissett-Clark will be speaking again in July at our joint meeting with the Audubon society and the Sierra Club. You won't want to miss it, but meanwhile I want to share some of the fascinating facts about bats* in hopes that you, too, will develop a passion for these cute and beneficial mammals. (Yes, I said CUTE!)



Did You Know...

- 1. Bats are principle pollinators?:** Bats love to drink flower nectar, so they move from flower to flower they pick-up and drop-off pollen. They pollinate and disperse seeds for countless trees and shrubs. This makes them very beneficial to worldwide agriculture. Some plants, such as bananas, mangoes, cashews, dates, avocados, peaches, cloves, and figs rely on bats for pollination.
- 2. Bats help in the control of insect populations?:** Bats typically eat their weight in insects each night, this could be up to 1000 insects an hour, depending on the size of the bat. Because they eat so many insects, including gnats, crickets, locusts, mosquitoes, and fruit flies, bats lessen the need for chemical pesticides in agriculture. They also help control viruses spread by mosquitoes.
- 3. Bats are the only mammal that can truly fly?:** Bats belong to the mammal order Chiroptera, which means "hand-wing." The wings of bats are supported by the bones of the arms, hands and fingers. Wing membranes are thin, living tissue. They usually extend down along the bats' sides and are connected to their hind legs and at least part of the tail.
- 4. Bats are NOT blind?:** As nocturnal mammals, Bats are adapted for seeing in dim light. In addition to sight, they use echolocation to guide themselves. Echolocation is the use of sound waves to detect objects. Bats emit high-pitched sounds and listen for them to echo back. The length of time it takes the echo to return tells a bat how far away it is from an object. This augments the bats sight and allows them to hunt successfully in complete darkness.

**In addition to Shari-Blissett-Clark's talk, information for these bat facts were found on various websites, including the Florida Bat Conservancy, the US Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management and the IUCN Red List of Threatened species. Above image courtesy of Shari Blissett Clark.*

5. **Bats have a long life-span?:** Florida bats live 17 - 20 years, a long time considering their small size. Some bats have been documented to live nearly 30 years!
6. **You are less likely to contract rabies from a bat then get hit by lightning?:** Less than 1/2 of 1% of bats have rabies, less than foxes, skunks or raccoons. But, this does not mean you should handle a bat in the wild, and if you are bit by a bat you should report it to your doctor right away. People who handle bats for research keep up with their rabies vaccines.
7. **Vampire bats may save your life some day?:** The saliva of the vampire bat contains an anticoagulant (prevents blood clots from forming) which could be used to treat human heart patients in the near future.
8. **The endemic Florida Bonneted Bat is a critically endangered mammal?** It is Listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List because its population size is estimated to number fewer than 250 mature individuals, with no subpopulation greater than 50 individuals, and it is experiencing a continuing decline. Like most bats, the major threat is habitat loss (in urban and forested areas), habitat alteration (removal of old trees with cavities, or buildings with spaces suitable for roosting), and pesticide spraying for mosquitoes.



Contrary to many people think, bat house should be installed in the sun, not on a tree. Bats like very warm roosts.



9. **You can help protect bats?** Be aware of where bats roost. They can be found in cracks, crevices, or hollows of trees, under dead fronds of palm trees and in Spanish moss. Bats also use manmade structures including buildings, bridges, culverts, tile roofs, and bat houses. Do not use insecticides around bat roosts and avoid disturbing them. Also, help dispel rumors about bats, and educated people on the benefits of healthy bat populations.

10. **Bats are CUTE?** Yes, they are! And if you don't believe me, when Shari Blissett speaks at the joint meeting with Audubon and Sierra Club in July, she will introduce you to some *very cute bats*.

Spring Prairie Wildflower Walk

April 25, 2015, Kissimmee Prairie Preserve

Celebrate Earth Day witnessing the beauty and biodiversity of the Kissimmee Prairie Preserve with two of Florida's most recognized wildflower experts: Roger Hammer and Craig Huegel. Roger and Craig will introduce you to both the obvious and less conspicuous flora of the Prairie, while entertaining you with their renowned wisdom and wit.

Kissimmee Prairie Preserve is alive with color in the spring. You will be transported to locations in the prairie that have been burned at various times to maximize the number and diversity of wildflowers you can see. Scheduled spring burns will offer a very good chance to see the threatened orchid species *Calopogon multiflorus*, commonly called Manyflowered Grasspink.

Choose from a 9:30 am walk or a 1:30 pm walk. Cost is \$24 for Friends of Kissimmee Prairie Preserve members and \$34 for non-members. A \$4 per vehicle entry fee is also required and must be paid at the gate when you enter the park. Each walk is limited to 20 participants. Participants may also sign up for a free 45 minute buggy ride in the Prairie. Visit the [Friends of Kissimmee Prairie Preserve](#) website for more information.

As of this writing, there were only 4 slots available on the 1:30 pm walk and 12 on the 9:30 am walk., so don't wait, reserve your spot today!





Places to see natives:

Upper Little Manatee River Nature Preserve

Submitted by Donna Bollenbach

From left to right.: *Asclepias tuberosa*, Butterflyweed; *Pink Rosling*, *Cuthbertia graminea*; *Lynx spider on Polygala rugelii*, *Yellow bachelor's button*; *Portulaca pilosa*, *Pink Purslane*



Meadowbeauty, Rhexia spp.



Commelina erecta, Whitemouth dayflower

Like so many of my favorite nature preserves, the Upper Little Manatee River Nature Preserve was acquired by Hillsborough County through the Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program (ELAPP) with assistance from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Preservation and management of the lands along the Little Manatee River Corridor is essential to protect the Tampa Bay watershed. The river itself is an Outstanding Florida Water, the highest State water quality designation possible. There are a variety of natural plant communities within its 3,400 acres, including palmetto-pine flatwoods, oak scrub, sand pine scrub, hardwood hammocks and ephemeral ponds along the river's edge.

The hiking trail is about two miles. Most of it is in and out, but there is a small loop on the far eastern end. Make sure you explore the side trails to the river and it's tributaries, but if you go off trail, use a compass or GPS.

These images were all taken in June, 2010, when my companion, Dillon (see below) was still with me. Every time I look at images from the preserves, I see at least one picture of Dillon with his goofy smile and I miss him. He waited so patiently as I stopped to photograph nearly every flower along the path. There were lots of native wildflowers to photograph and admire that day too.



Chrysopsis spp.



Upper Little Manatee River Nature Preserve is located in Wimauma, east of Hwy 301. Take SR 674 and go approximately 5 miles to CR 579 on the right. (South side of road.) Then Turn right (Southbound) on CR 579 and go approx. 3.8 miles. The Parking lot is located approximately 1/4 mile south of the river on the left side of the road. (Note: The last intersection is Saffold Rd on the North side of the river. If you reach Packinghouse Rd, you've gone too far.) Parking lot address: 3398 CR 579 Wimauma, Florida 33598

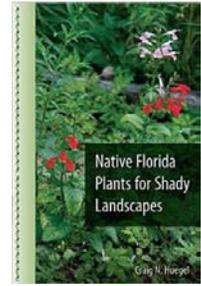
Alicia, Chapmannia floridana



Dillon, canine magnifico

New Books

Craig Huegel's third book on what to plant in your yard is out, it focuses on shady areas and I'm sure will be a great addition to your library of native plant books! SNPS will be getting copies to sell so look for it in April or May.



Also coming from the University Press of Florida - **Attracting Hummingbirds and Butterflies in Tropical Florida: A Companion for Gardeners** by Roger Hammer.

Roger was our speaker at the 2014 joint meeting in July and has many books and reference cards published. He is an excellent photographer with a wealth of knowledge accumulated over many years spent exploring the wild areas of South Florida!

Some West Central Florida Native Plant Nurseries

Green Isle Gardens Native Plant Nursery

www.greenislegardens.com

321-436-4932

See website for retail hours

Sweet Bay Nursery

www.sweetbaynursery.com

941-776-0501

See website for retail hours

The Natives, Inc.

www.thenatives.net

863-422-6664

Retail by appt.

Wilcox Nursery

www.wilcoxnursery.com

727-595-2073

See website for retail hours

For more retail plant information - www.PlantRealFlorida.org

Florida Association of Native Nurseries

Join or Renew FNPS on-line - <http://www.fnps.org/participate/membershipinfo>



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 SNPS membership chair, Devon Higginbotham, at 478-1183.

New Member Renewal

Name _____

Business name or organization _____

Address _____

City, State and Zip _____

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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 | |

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Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for the next issue:

April 1, 2015

Please send articles and original artwork for The Suncoast Grapevine to **Janet Bowers**, by the deadline above- jbowers27@yahoo.com

SNPS Web Address

<http://www.SuncoastNPS.org>

We're on Meet Up & Facebook



Meetings are normally the third Wednesday of the month at 7 PM. (no December meeting)

DIRECTIONS TO:
Hillsborough County
Extension
5339 County Road 579
Seffner

Take I-4 to Exit 10 (just east of I-75). Go south on 579 for two blocks. Turn left on Old Hillsborough Ave and park on the North side of the office.

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



Please deliver to: