

June
2009



Newsletter of the Palm Beach County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

29th Annual Conference a Huge Success!

Stephanie Brown

More than 375 people came to recharge their passions with all the possibilities presented at the FNPS 29th Annual Conference, which by many accounts was a real barnburner. Were you there when **Dr. Doug Tallamy** spoke to a packed ballroom about the urgent need for homeowners to restore native flora to save imperiled wildlife and greenway connectivity? His charming delivery of science-based data and humorous anecdotes culminated in a standing ovation, and set the stage for what became a remarkable conference. On Saturday, **Dan Austin** showed us that the tropics and the deserts do have plants in common and the native people of both areas used these plants for similar purposes. Conference attendees were delighted that Dan came from Arizona to visit with friends and colleagues.

Nearly 200 people came to evening social and toured our native plant garden. The catering by Café Coconut was outstanding and the band, "**The Weeds**," rocked the house while people danced the night away. I even got a swing dance with **Dr. Walter Kingsley Taylor** who was signing copies of his new book *A Guide to Florida Grasses*. **Rufino Osorio**, **Mike Bodle**, and **Mike Manna** put on a challenging Plant ID contest.

The vendors were busy and happy to mingle with such a vivacious and interested crowd. Despite foul weather, people shopped the native plant sale and vendors were taking orders above the stock on hand. In fact, the hotel banquet captain who is a transplanted gardener from Vermont asked me if the hotel staff could participate in the plant sale, which they did!

The sessions were well attended, especially since more ISA and ASLA CEU credits were offered this conference than ever before. In fact, **Rufino Osorio's** presentation on the horticultural and ecological roles of Florida wildflowers in gardens offered many CEUs and was standing room only! The University of Florida restoration horticulture seminar surpassed expectations as well.

Many "firsts" at the conference showed that innovation comes from interaction. We used online registration for attendees and vendors. The conference postcard notice and email registration confirmations saved roughly 48,000 sheets of paper. **Matt King's** online field trip maps have become the new standard. The conservation panel and **Dr. Harold Wanless** were professionally videotaped. **Ray Miller** expertly launched 20 field trips. I am so proud of everyone who worked on the conference. Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have big hearts and lots of stamina!



FNPS conference icon: "Native plant bed" photo by ???

The Florida Native Plant Society promotes the preservation of our native flora through education and conservation. To attract wildlife, promote water conservation and prevent the further introduction of non-native pest plants, the society encourages the cultivation of



Sneak Preview of Upcoming Events

June Meeting

Selecting, Installing and Maintaining a Healthy Tree

July Meeting

To be Announced

August Meeting

Butterflies in Your Back Yard: Learn to Attract Them in Yours

October Meeting

Recreational Opportunities in the Everglades

November Meeting

Invasive Non-native Species: Can We Predict the Future?

Join us &
bring a friend!

Chapter Representative's Report

Lynn Sweetay

At our last FNPS Board meeting was held May 21, 2009. Several items of interest to the Chapter members were discussed.

Conservation Dollars at Work: The Board approved three conservation grants, each with an award up to \$2500. 1) Restoration on Mariposa Key to include removal of litter as well as invasive species on the coastal berm. Serenoa Chapter & Wilson Miller Consulting. 2) Big Sweetwater Creek botanical survey. Magnolia Chapter & Gil Nelson Associates. 3) Population monitoring and ex situ conservation of *Linum arenicola* in the Florida Keys. Dade Chapter

The **Education Committee** is working on two projects that need members help. The committee is attempting identify and create a state-wide list of all native plant display gardens and interpretation areas open to the public. If you know of a public garden that should be considered, please send me an email (lynnsweetay@hotmail.com), even if you think we already know. The Education Committee is also compiling a list of native plant resources. Books and other educational materials produced both by FNPS and non-FNPS entities. Let us know of any outstanding materials we should include in the list.

The **Communication Committee** is compiling a list of all local community newspapers along with the name of a contact person. These can be sent to **Bob Egoff** (begolf2@verizon.net) or to me.

The **Science Committee** approved four research proposals, each with an award of \$2500. 1) Mating system biology of the Florida native plant: *Illicium parviflorum*. **Nicholas Buckley**, University of Tennessee. 2) Systematics, biogeography, and conservation genetics of two Florida endemics, *Nolina brittoniana* and *N. atopocarpa* (Ruscaceae). **James M. Heaney**, University of Florida. 3) Evaluation and conservation of *Harperocallis flava*: A federally endangered plant in the savannas of the Apalachicola River Basin. **Herbert Kesler** and **Jennifer Trusty**, Folius Consulting. In recent years FNPS has awarded three endowment research grant awards. This year **Stephanie & Ken Brown** donated additional funds to FNPS to give out an additional award in honor of **Dan Austin**. The recommended proposal for the Dan Austin Research Award is: Demographic analysis of the endangered Florida endemic *Conradina glabra*. Alice A. Winn, Florida State University.

Under new business a motion was passed to designate the month of May as **Florida Native Plant Appreciation Month**.

Gardening with the Natives

Spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*)

Why we like it: Here we go. Simple to grow, nearly impossible to kill and impervious to pests the perennial wildflower spiderwort is the ideal starter plant for native plant gardeners. Somewhat succulent grass-like dark green leaves reaching from one to two feet high the spiderwort with age forms large clumps. A fine looking ground-cover on its own, when it is in full bloom from spring to fall it can be delicately beautiful.

The spiderwort's three petal flowers come in blue, pink or white and present themselves during the morning hours. The name spiderwort is derived from the hairs on the sepals that, when laden with dew, resemble a spiders nest of webs. The flowers are fleeting as they tend to wilt as the day progresses. But not to worry, there are so many flower heads that the next bloom is only a morning away!

How to grow it: Construct as a

border or just a mass planting spacing each plant six to nine inches apart for a good look. The spiderwort does self seed

Did You Know?

The stamen hairs of Tradescantia flowers are highly sensitive to radiation and other gene mutating factors. When exposed to radiation, some hair cells turn pink. Many scientist now use Tradescantia to monitor the environment for carcinogens and genotoxic compounds.

readily and soon spreads throughout the immediate planting area. Most soil condi-



Spiderwort petals may be white to pink, blue, or violet.

Photo by Frank Vincentz

tions will do. Plant in full sun to light shade. Dry to somewhat moist conditions are ideal once established. During drought conditions some supplemental watering is recommended.

Where to buy it: This plant is available at local native nurseries. Visit the association of Florida Native Nurseries at www.afnn.org, but don't stop there. The site provides only a snapshot of the offerings at local nurseries, so call around.

-Jeff Nurge

(originally printed in the Palm Beach Post, March 21, 2009)

Gardening with the Natives

Know How to Twitter? FNPS is seeking a **Twitter communications volunteer** to create a social media team, install a blogging module, and register and tie in to Twitter. The Board is also seeking a **merchandizing volunteer** to help develop a marketing strategy for FNPS. Also needed are **chapter liaisons**—experienced members who are willing to help struggling chapters. If you are interested in helping out, please contact **Lynn Sweetay** (lynnsweetay@hotmail.com) or **Karina Veaudry** (executivedirector@fnps.org).

The Answer is 42! A thank you from the Volunteer Committee

Kristina Serbesoff-King

Just how many volunteers does it take to run the annual FNPS Conference? By my count, 42. Could be a coincidence, but this is also the Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything*. I would like to express my gratitude for all of the volunteers who stepped up and became my Answer to fulfilling my duty as the Volunteer Chair for the conference.

I have been with the Palm Beach County Chapter now for over eight years, and I am always impressed with the willingness and capacity of our membership. Through the years, I have always encouraged folks to “do what they can,” after all, we are volunteers. What I have found, though, is that when everyone does what they can, we accomplish a lot. Please note, the following is simply a list of the volunteers that took on the myriad of duties required during the days of the actual conference. It does not include all of the names our amazing conference committee chairs who worked tirelessly for over a year.

My sincere thanks to all of our volunteers:

Palm Beach County Chapter: **Cathy Beals, Kari Bliss, Barbara Bobsein, Mike Bodle, Kay Brennen, Linda Briggs, Ken Brown, Anna Calaveri, Sue Dingwell, Stephanie Duncan, Matt King, Gail Kosowski, Chris Lockhart, Mike Manna, Ray Miller, Brenda Mills, Jeff Nurge, Rufino Osorio, Nan Owens, Edythe Peykin, Cynthia Plockelman, Kat Ralha, LeRoy Rodgers, Shari Rodgers, Chris Schwartz, Kristina Serbesoff-King, Nancy Sloan, Nancy Smoak, Myrna Sossner, Lynn Sweetay, Paulette Szlivko, Judy Tramell, Terry Walker.**

Cocoplum Chapter: **Joan Bausch, Debra Klein, Carol Shaming.**

Other Chapters: **Greg Krolczyk** (Conradina), **Annie Johnson, Stacey Matrazzo** (Rollins College), **Kathleen Patterson** (Marion County), **Mark Sanders** (Serenoa), **Joy Tatenhorst** (Dade-Florida Keys)

**Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Douglas Adams*

April's Auction

April seems like so long ago, but now that the numbers are in, we can all relax knowing that we cleared a healthy \$724.86 after our expenses. The crowd was thin this year, perhaps a reflection of the economic times, but bidding was lively—helped along by a professional auctioneer! **Peter Fields** of **Field's Auction Services** in Lake Park generously donated his time, and offered to repeat the service next year as well. His humorous, well-timed comments really made the evening fun. And as always, those who attended were treated to an extravaganza of entertaining plant education from **Rufino Osorio**, whose commentary on the plants being auctioned was truly a priceless commodity. So thanks to all who bought plants: the auction is our biggest fundraiser. Thanks to **Rob Hopper** for hitting the road to purchase the collections, **Jeff Nurge** who babysat the plants while Rob was in Germany, **Mike Manna** for donating an outstanding *Tillandsia* collection, Rufino, of course, and also, to Peter Fields for the donation of his auctioneering time and talent.



Upcoming Events

Tuesday, June 16

Native Plant Garden Maintenance Volunteer Event

Mounds Botanical Garden Clayton Hutcheson Building 6:30 – 7:30pm

Come join us one hour before the monthly meeting to help tidy up our native plant garden. Bring your hat, gloves, hand tools, and drinking water.

June Chapter Meeting

Mounds Botanical Garden 7:30 – 9:00pm

*Selecting, Installing and Maintaining a Healthy Tree, **Bill Schall***

Florida native plant species generally require less maintenance and care than non-native species, but there are several important steps you must take to ensure that you select, install and maintain a healthy tree. Bill Schall will discuss what to look for in the nursery, how to correctly plant your tree, how to ensure that the tree is properly establishing, and how to properly prune.

Tuesday, July 21, 2009

Native Plant Garden Maintenance Volunteer Event

Mounds Botanical Garden Clayton Hutcheson Building 6:30 – 7:30pm

June Chapter Meeting—Program to be announced

Mounds Botanical Garden 7:30 – 9:00pm

Tuesday, August 18

Native Plant Garden Maintenance Volunteer Event

Mounds Botanical Garden Clayton Hutcheson Building 6:30 – 7:30pm

August Chapter Meeting—*Butterflies in Your Back Yard: Learn to Attract Them in Yours, **Alana Edwards***

Ask an Expert

Have a question about Florida's native plants? Send us your question and we'll find an expert to answer it. Selected questions and answers will be posted in the *Ask an Expert* section each month. Send your question to:



Membership at a glance

Business	10
Contributing	7
Donor	3
Family	27
Individual	98
Library	1
Life	1
Not for profit	3
Student	1
<u>Supporting</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	153

Membership News

Our chapter has 153 members as of May 31. We have 11 new members this month! Warm welcomes to **Alice Bojanowski, Beth Burger, Dennis de Zeeuw, Genevieve Goldstein, Jamie Rothenberg, Karin Layton, Lisa M Shapolsky, Marion Hedgepeth, Pamela Murfey, Patricia Stodd, and William J Skinner.**

Thirteen memberships renewed or rejoined in May. **Mike & Sylvia Jameson** renewed as donors and **Cathie Tonkins** renewed as a contributing member. Renewing family or household members are **Diane Cordeau & Carl Frost, Michael Manna & Karie Bliss, Ann & Phil Weinrich.** Renewing individual members are **Stephanie Duncan, Joe Erhardt, Charles Fredrickson, Mike Gladstone, Renee Rasha, Marian Wells, Herbert Zebuth.** Our renewing business member is **Mesozoic Landscapes, Inc. (Richard Moyroud).**

Promoting the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida



**Florida
Native Plant Society**

Palm Beach County
Chapter

suzdingwell@gmail.com



Visit us on the web
palmbeach.fnps.chapters.org

The **Dahoon** is published monthly except December by the Palm Beach County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. Newsletter subscription is included in membership fees paid to the FNPS.

*PRINTED ON RECYCLED
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PALM BEACH COUNTY CHAPTER

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY MEETS

3rd Tuesday of the month 7:30 P.M.

(doors open at 7:00)

Mounts Botanical Garden Auditorium

531 North Military Tr.

(1/4 mi north of Southern Blvd.)

West Palm Beach, Florida

**Meetings are free and open
to the public.**