

September
2010



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

Garden Maintenance Party

Saturday, Sept 25, 2010

9am—12pm

Clayton Hutcheson Building



Come help us tidy up our native display garden. Bring your hat, gloves, water, and hand tools.

Sneak Preview of Coming Attractions

Sept 26 — *Field Trip: Royal Palm Beach Natural Area*

Oct 19 — *Native Wildflowers*

Oct 31 — *Royal Palm Beach Pines Natural Area Field Trip*

Nov 16 — *What's Cooking in South Florida?*



September Chapter Meeting

Tuesday, September 21, 2010

7:30 – 9:00 pm (doors open at 7)

Mounts Botanical Garden (UF/IFAS Extension)
531 North Military Trail, West Palm Beach, FL 33415

Notice: The September meeting will be jointly held with the Loxahatchee Group Sierra Club!

Keeping your native yard beautiful

Jeff Nurge, Florida Native Gardening, Inc.

Are your plants suckering, growing crooked, or falling down? Do they have yellow leaves, brown leaves, or even black leaves? Are your plants chewed up? Do they refuse to grow, grow too much or appear to shrink? I hear about so many symptoms or strange native plant behaviors, typically followed by "Is it normal for the plant to do this?" In terms of cultivation, not all native plants are created equal. Some require a bit more care than others in the residential landscape to "conform" to the surroundings. We'll take a look at some best practices for managing numerous species growing together as well as the treatment and care of individual plants in the garden.

*Free Admission • Refreshments • Native Plant Raffle
Public Welcome • No Reservations Needed*

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 nursery-propagated Florida native plants and promotes their use as ornamentals in public and private landscapes.

Chapter Nominations

We have a wonderful slate of nominees for our FNPS Chapter! **Brenda Mills**, our current Vice-President is excited to step up and take the President role. In addition, our current Chapter Representative, Conservation Chair and three Directors-at-Large have all agreed to stay on for another year. Nominated to join this seasoned cast as Vice-President is **Lindy Cerar**, and as Treasurer, is **Stephanie Duncan**. Both Lindy and Stephanie have been active members of our Chapter, we welcome them to these new roles.

The following slate will be presented for a vote at our annual membership meeting, held during the September program. Nominations will also be taken at this meeting or by contacting our current president, **Sue Dingwell**.

President - Brenda Mills
Vice President - Lindy Cerar
Secretary - Cathy Beals
Treasurer - Stephanie Duncan
Chapter Representative - Lynn Sweetay
Conservation Chair - Michael Manna
Director - Alyssa Dodd
Director - Carl Terwilliger
Director - Mary Jo Agerstoun

Save the Last Berries for Me

by Ann Weinrich

After spending two months at Trillium Woods in Western North Carolina, we returned to an overgrown forest at Palmway Hammock in Lake Worth. Who was it that said, "You can't let Nature run wild"? After whacking things back for several days, I finally made it to the firebush, gone leggy but still dripping with fat fruit. I always hate to prune something if it still has fruit on it. We are growing food for the birds, aren't we? But the time was right.

I hadn't seen any birds eating the berries. If birds had wanted to eat them, they'd be gone by now, right? So I decided once and for all I'd trim it way back. I'd wait until early tomorrow morning when it was cooler to do the job. Wait a minute. What's that bird? Where's it going? Oh no! It's a mockingbird. You guessed it. Landed right smack dab in the middle of the firebush and started scarfing down berries. Boy, that was close. Another hot job deferred.



A cluster of firebush berries in various stages of ripening.

© Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute

AFNN Begins Florida Native Plant Promotion

by Philip S. Weinrich

The Association of Florida Native Nurseries is engaged in two important native landscape education and promotion projects, including:

* **Statewide media campaign including televised public service announcement and new website** for homeowners seeking to incorporate Real Florida into their landscape.

* **New ecosystem-based landscape guide (update to existing Xeric Landscape Guide and website)** providing users the ability to browse and search for plants by region and ecosystem -- e.g., show me a Central Florida pine flatwoods and tell me where I can get those plants.

We need high quality visuals for these projects -- without great visual images in film & photography, we can't convince Floridians that native landscapes are real, viable, attractive alternatives.

As you probably already know, we're looking for sites to FILM this fall. If you haven't already told me about your perfect landscape to put on TV, please do so ASAP. I'll need to develop a set of sites to visit and se-

lect from in September.

We are also seeking to photograph landscapes that have used native plant associations as a design model, in whole or in part -- so, for example, if you have even a corner of your landscape that echoes "pine flatwoods" or "sandhill," we'd like to see it and possibly get photos for our new landscape guide & website. Specifically, we're looking for installed landscapes (ornamental or restoration) that look like one or more of the following, from anywhere in the state:

Beach dune • Cabbage palm forest • Freshwater marsh • Hydric hammock • Mangrove swamp • Maritime forest • Pine flatwood • Pine rockland • Prairie • Rockland hammock • Saltwater marsh • Sandhill • Scrub forest • Upland mesic hardwood forest • Upland mixed forest • Wetland swamp forest

Please let me know ASAP if you have photos or know of a place that would be perfect to photograph.

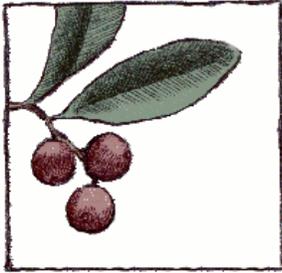
Cammie Donaldson, Executive Director
Association of Florida Native Nurseries (AFNN)
Phone: (321) 917-1960

Group of "Natural Gardeners" Seeks FNPS Member Wildflower Seed Contributions

Inspired by Masanobu Fukuoka's "natural farming" technique, a West Palm Beach group, concerned with neglected vacant lots proliferating in the wake of our economic downturn, are seeking partnership with FNPS members. Specifically, they are seeking donations of native Florida wildflower seeds from FNPS members' gardens to help bring these sad sites to life with color, butterflies and bees. The intent is to follow Fukuoka's recipe, in which small balls of seed, clay and humus, are dried then dropped in fallow un-tilled ground. The group has purchased a seed ball making machine that can produce 1,000 seed balls an hour. The first seed ball distribution is scheduled for (around, not on) Halloween, and prizes will be awarded in several costume categories to participants whose costumes most closely express the spirit of the seed ball distribution.

To participate as a seed provider, costume wearing seed ball distributor, or to contribute funds to purchase the non seed materials needed to create several thousand seedballs, please email MJAA-GERSTOUN@MATHISNET.COM

Masanobu Fukuoka author of "[*The One-Straw Revolution*](#)", was a soil scientist who promoted organic farming and gardening and created the concept of "permaculture natural farming" with seed balls.



Upcoming Events

Friday, September 24

Grassy Waters Preserve

Moonlight Paddle

5:30- 8:30pm Experience the sunset over the Grassy Waters marsh; watch birds fly home to roost; paddle back under the moon's glow. \$18/adult; \$6/child. For information call 561-804-4985.

Saturday, September 25

American Red Cross "Wilderness First Aid Basic" Course Grassy Waters Pavilion

8:00am — 5:00pm Val Wilson, ARC instructor in wilderness backcountry first aid, instructs this course on emergency response practices. PRE-REGISTER at the American Red Cross-Greater Palm Beach Area Chapter, 825 Fern St., WPB, 561-650-9110 by September 23.

Sunday, September 26

Field Trip to Royal Palm Beach Pines Natural Area Royal Palm Beach

9:00am — 12:00pm Join us for a golden opportunity to enjoy and learn about fall color at Royal Palm Beach Natural Area. This trip will be led by wildflower expert, Carl Terwilliger, owner of Meadow Beauty Nursery. If the weather cooperates, Carl expects the flowers to be putting on a good show so bring your cameras and come on out.

Monday, September 27

Book Signing: Mariposa Road: The First Butterfly Big Year Pine Jog Center

7:00pm — 9:00pm Dr. Robert M. Pyle, author of *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies* will sign copies of his latest book, *Mariposa Road: The First Butterfly Big Year*, at the Audubon Society's monthly chapter meeting. Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, 6301 Summit Blvd., West Palm Beach, 561-686-6600. Contact Please RSVP to Lana Edwards at atala613@bellsouth.net if you want to purchase a copy of the book.

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:

Dahoon@mindspring.com

Membership at a Glance

Business	9
Contributing	8
Donor	1
Family	23
Individual	98
Library	1
Life	2
Not for profit	4
Student	1
Supporting	3
Total	150

Membership Update

Our chapter has 150 members as of August 31. We have three new members this month. A warm welcome to **Diane Bradley** (moving in from another FNPS chapter) and **Kathy & Tim Walters!**

Seventeen memberships renewed or rejoined in July and August. Renewing or rejoining individual members are **Steve Bass, Charles Beck, Terrence Brown, Anna Mae Cavaleri, Alana Edwards, Charles Fredrickson, Linda Hauernt, Ava Hickerson, Brad Jones, Susan Lerner, Chris Lockhart, and Robert Smith**. Our renewing family members are **Carmine & Judith Porrazzo** and **Bob & Barbara Reiner**. The **Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension (Allen Sistrunk)** renewed as a non-for-profit member. Our renewing business members are **General Landscaping Corporation (Clint Oster)** and **Meadow Beauty Nursery (Donna Leone & Carl Terwilliger)**.

Thank you all for your continued support of FNPS!

Gardening with the Natives

by Jeff Nurge

SEAGRAPE (*Coccoloba uvifera*)

Of all the native plants in southeastern Florida, one would be hard pressed to name one as numerous in the residential landscape as seagrape. This coastal plant has been planted in every neighborhood from the beach to the edge of the Everglades, and with good reason. Seagrape can be shaped into nearly any desired form—a dense bush, a full hedge or a wonderful specimen tree. When allowed to grow in open areas, seagrape can reach up to 35 feet high with a spread of over 50 feet! Its leaves are large, rounded, and are deep-green with dark red veins. The result is a very attractive and interesting leaf that can be admired up close and a coarse, contrasting foliage texture that stands out from a distance.



Photo by Jeff Nurge

The greenish-white flowers are small and remain inconspicuous unless you are looking closely for them. However, a number of native butterflies know they are there and take advantage of their sweet nectar. Seagrape derives its name from the dangling rows of green to purple grapes that hang from the end of the branches. These “grapes” are edible and also make a fine jam.

Seagrape thrives in full sun but will tolerate light shade. It is accustomed to growing in poor soil and is totally at home at the edge of beaches. Needless to say it is very salt and drought tolerant. Yet in landscapes with irrigation, seagrape will grow much faster. The only situation that seagrape will not tolerate is periodic to frequent standing water.

While it is an evergreen plant seagrape sheds numerous numbers of leaves in the spring and periodically throughout the year. Its “messiness” is a small

price to pay in maintenance for such a versatile and beautiful plant. A related native with a smaller leaf that makes a nice medium size columnar tree is pigeon plum (*Coccoloba diversifolia*). There are naturally occurring hybrids between seagrape and pigeon plum, which produce shorter plants with smaller, rounded leaves and with all the tolerant and tough attributes of both plants. They periodically find their way into cultivation usually under the name of “seaplum” (*Coccoloba uvifera x diversifolia*).

This plant is available at 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.

Unlike the berries of Vitis (grapevines) from which the common name “seagrape” is inspired, the interesting fruits of Coccoloba uvifera are actually drupes. This type of fruit has a fleshy outer layer that surrounds a pit or stone containing a single seed.

Planthoppers Make Good Food for Migrating Birds

by Carl Terwilliger

Our sabal palms (*Sabal* spp.) and saw palmettos (*Serenoa repens*) support planthoppers (Fulgoroidea) that migrating birds feast on. Hiding under the leaves in small to large groups are light blue colored planthoppers which look like folded quarter inch pieces of leaves. After multiplying during the summer, these insects become quite abundant as they hide under the leaves while sucking its juices. Fortunately for the plants, arriving blue gray gnat catchers (*Polioptila caerulea*) and redstarts (Muscicapidae) will soon pick these insects off.

It is fun to watch, and listen to these birds as they spend several minutes at a time flying under palm leaves and catching the startled insects in mid air with an audible snap. Keep your ears tuned to the sounds of other migrating birds which will soon be passing through the area and for some, staying the winter.

Along with not pruning the leaves of your palms, but instead waiting until they can be snapped off easily, it is important to leave as much dead wood as possible on your trees. Woodpeckers (Picidae) love to feed on the grubs within rotting pine branches and a dead tree that won't fall on someone is a great feeding ground and site to peck out a nest cavity.

The diet of most birds is at least 90 percent insects. Exotic plants are not fed upon by insects because our local bugs just don't recognize them and can't get around their chemical defenses. It takes many hundreds of years for an insect to evolve to this point. Our native plants have hundreds of different caterpillars, beetles, ants and other bugs feeding on them, yet with little noticeable damage.

So don't run to the spray can when you notice in-



Above: This planthopper (*Oormenaria rufifascia*) is commonly found near sabal palms and saw palmetto. Below: This Rob Hopper (*Homo sapiens*) is also commonly found near cabbage palm and saw palmetto.



sects on your native plants. The planthoppers, grubs, caterpillars, beetles and spiders are all part of our songbirds' diet. Introduced insects, though, may be another story when they severely damage our natives, yet may be a blessing, think ficus whitefly (*Singhiella simplex*), when they devastate exotics.

Best Wishes to Gloria

Gloria Hunter, local native plant enthusiast and good friend to many, is currently recovering from knee surgery in Texas. Our Chapter wishes her a speedy recovery. She will certainly need the new and improved knee to deal with all the weeds that are no doubt thriving in her absence! Get well wishes may be sent to 14122 Heathfield Drive, Houston, TX 77079

FNPS State Board Meeting Minutes

Summary FNPS State Board Meeting 8/14/2010

New Officers:

President	Ann Redmond
VP Administration	Jackie Rolly
Secretary	Peg Lindsay

New Committees:

Communications	Sue Dingwell
Conservation	Annie Schmidt
Policy	Gene Kelly
Land Management Partners	Anne Cox
2011 Conference	Jenny Welch

New Chapters:

Lake City/Branson (The board asked them to choose a plant name)
 UCF This is our very first student chapter. Reed Noss is Faculty Advisor

Current memberships = 3000 (including individual, family and business)

For the third year in a row, FNPS is operating in the red! We desperately need ideas for fundraising especially large sponsorships etc. Think Big. Everyone knows a business, foundation or individual that could be interested. You do not have to ask them yourself just send your names and ideas to our Board or to Karina Veaudry our executive director. From the treasurer we take in about \$31 per member but spend \$39 for each member so we need about 700 new members to make up our shortfall.

Things individuals can do to help:

- Upgrade your membership.
- You can donate to FNPS through Earthshare via your employer.
- Download the goodsearch/shop tool bar and use it for all your searches and internet shop-

ping. Choose FNPS Melbourne as your charity. Go to www.goodsearch.com

FNPS AT WORK

Our request for a proclamation declaring Native Plant Appreciation Week every May has still not been signed by Governor Crist, and no response has been received from his office. We will resubmit after the new governor is elected.

At the 2011 Conference in Tallahassee, President Gene Kelly's plan to form a coalition of native plant societies in the Southeastern US came to fruition. Representatives of native plant societies from Texas, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Virginia joined us to establish the Southeastern Native Plant Society. This group will address common issues such as invasive plants, biofuels, endangered species and risk assessment tools. There is more strength in numbers.

Gene Kelly as our new policy chair also tackled the Suwannee River Water Management District. It came to his attention that they were selling surplus land that may have conservation value. FNPS objected to selling these lands after their management policies were reviewed by Mr. Kelly. Since his original letter was ignored, he was able to gather support from Eric Draper, Executive Director Audubon of Florida, Manley Fuller III, President Florida Wildlife Federation, Laurie McDonald, Florida Program Director Defenders of Wildlife, and Janet Bowman, Director of Legislative Policy & Strategies The Nature Conservancy. They were successful. You can read the letters on FNPS home page.

Be sure to read Sue Dingwell's blog at fnpsblog.org

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



Florida Native Plant Society

Palm Beach County
Chapter

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Visit us on the web
palmbeach.fnpschapters.org

Or come Tweet with us....

twitter.com/palmbeachfnps

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Membership Renewal
(complimentary)

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FNPS, Administrative Services
PO Box 972
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Newsletter of the Palm Beach County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

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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 Trail
(1/4 mi north of Southern Blvd.)
West Palm Beach, Florida

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