

# FNPS Landscape Awards

by William Bissett  
Landscape Awards Chairman

For a project to be successful, innovative, functional, and cost effective, designers, contractors, sub-contractors, and even agency personnel need to share a goal and know their place in the attaining of that goal. But even with the best of cooperation, one person must have the vision, desire, determination, and drive to make the project excel.

## Overall winner.

While characteristics are found in all FNPS award winners, Dennis Carmody, the overall winner, best exemplifies that driving force needed to achieve something special.

When Dr. Carmody looked for a site for his new dental office, he found a wooded commercial lot off U.S. 1 in Rockledge. Over the next year and a half, while dealing with the demands of medical office design, he learned all he could about the natural systems on the site, hired the people who could help him preserve as much as possible, and personally did whatever it took to see his vision to reality. William F. Bissett was the landscape architect, and The Natives installed the design.

"Whatever it took" occasionally meant throwing his body between a bulldozer and the beautiful arborescent blue serenoa (saw palmetto) that was to be the entrance landscape focal

point. Over and over, when the expedient thing to do was to cut down a tree or bulldoze more of the xeric oak hammock vegetation, Dennis would fight for a way to do otherwise. The site plan



Carmody office: looking over palmetto to gazebo.

was redrawn several times to accommodate changes to that effect.

To make sure that his patients could fully experience the natural buffer outside the examining rooms, floor to ceiling windows were planned with full length mirrors on the adjoining walls. The fire code, however, required walls with this much glass to be ten feet farther from the property line than the site plan showed. Repositioning the building would in turn move the parking lot right into the beautiful pines,



Carmody office: butterfly garden.

oaks, and sabal palms in the front of the site.

Dr. Carmody worked out a deal with the neighboring doctor (who had cleared his property for grass) to acquire 15 additional feet of property, giving him more than enough clearance to satisfy the code.

Now a patient can sit in the chair and watch cardinals and hummingbirds come to the feeders and birdbaths among the serenoa on one side of the office, and butterflies to the extensive butterfly garden on the other.

The final product of Dr. Carmody's perseverance is a site that, even with a large building and the attendant parking, still has much of the pre-existing habitat, native vegetation in the replanted areas, almost no runoff (due to the use of previous concrete paving) and, other than the road right-of-way, no turf grass. The landscape is full of life and his patients feel part of it.

## Residential.

In the residential category, the three top winners all started from the typical turf grass lawn, and proceeded to change the properties into wildflower meadow, hammock, or scrub vegetation.



Across the Gordanier's wildflower garden in front yard.

SECOND PRINTING

## FLORIDA WILD FLOWERS and Roadside Plants

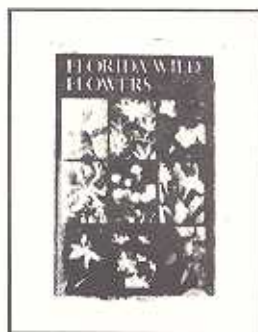
by C. Ritchie Bell and Bryan J. Taylor

Special 10% Discount for  
FNPS members  
(includes postage, prepaid only)

Hard cover \$18.00

Soft cover \$13.50

Order direct from  
**LAUREL HILL PRESS**  
P. O. Box 16516  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516-6516



**First place.** Don and Mary Jane Gordonier of Satellite Beach won first place for their habitat. Bill Bissett and The Natives designed and installed this landscape also. The Gordoniers have been active in the Conradina Chapter of FNPS for many years, and had already started a sand scrub restoration of a corner of the back yard. The new landscaping involved removing the rest of the turf grass and planting a wildflower meadow in the front yard, and adding scrub plants and a pond and bog garden in the back.

**Second place.** Gary Patterson's landscape was awarded second place residential. Gary has been gradually returning his yard into dense subtropical hammock. What once had been sand scrub ecosystem many decades ago had been changed over the years by previous owners to a more organic soil. The property was exposed on all four sides to neighbors and was open and sunny. Now one can stand in the middle of the back yard and feel nothing but forest and enclosure. Included are a wood deck, a garden pool, a vegetable garden, and a wildflower and native grass garden.

**Third place** went to Steve Riefler who designed his lot as an experimental/demonstration garden for native plants. The previous landscape had consisted of pittosporum, Korean boxwood, pampas grass, and bahia grass. It appeared that the only natives left on the site were one longleaf pine, one palmetto, and one dahoon holly. But on closer inspection Steve found that the entire subdivision had been built on a population of the rare endemic *deeringothamnus pulchellus*. After having been cleared, sodded over, and continuously mowed, it was still coming back from the roots. Steve has found a few other sites in the area containing this plant, but none are being protected except the ones in his yard. More than 90% of the turf grass has been eliminated, and as many plants as possible have been jammed onto the property, grouped according to soil requirements.

#### Commercial.

**First place** in the commercial category was awarded to Highlands Ridge, a development in Highlands County. John and Diane Juve have spent time and effort educating their maintenance personnel, their sales staff, and their home-buyers about the value of scrub. The winning project was

the restoration of a piece of disturbed land across from their sales office to the wildflower and shrub layers of the former scrub. Many pawpaw (*Asimina obovatum*) and *Bumelia tenax* regenerated from the roots. As the planting began, many other species were discovered, including the rare pygmy fringe tree (*Chionanthus pygmaeus*)



Highlands Ridge

and Curtis' milkweed (*Asclepias curtissii*).

**Second place** was awarded to the Windsor Polo Club Nature Trail, which is a section of buffer strip along A1A that has been transformed, by Allan McCarthy and Lee Rathbun of Native Habitat Landscaping, from a dense layer of weeds five feet tall to a natural area of oaks, wax myrtles, and stoppers.

**Third place** went to Lyon's Gate in Coconut Creek for their treatment of retention ponds in a residential development. Post Landscape Services designed and planted the ponds to make them natural wetlands and to give the homeowners privacy. Plants in-

stalled among the existing isolated pines included cypress, wax myrtle, blue flag, and canna lily, making a continuous natural landscape.

#### Institutional Winners.

Tree Tops Park in Broward County took top honors in the Institutional



Tree Tops Park: restored drainage outfall.

Category for transforming an existing park with a borrow pit and overrun with noxious exotics into an upland hammock and fresh water marsh with nature and equestrian trails, and observation platforms. Over 12,000 hammock trees and understory plants, and over 170,000 wetland plants were used in the recreation.

**Second place** went to Cocho-Okee (Seminole for "star water") Park at Post Village, renewed by Post Landscape and Post Properties. A six-acre lake was cleared of noxious exotics, and a nature trail, picnic areas, boardwalks, and native plant species were installed.

Laurel Press donated autographed copies of *Native Trees and Shrubs of the Florida Keys* to award winners.

NOW a Second Edition of a Definitive Field Guide  
**NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS**

**OF THE FLORIDA KEYS** by J. Paul Scurlock

•With 491 Full-color Photographs• (\$32.95 Retail)

Send \$26.95 (Postage Free) x \_\_\_ copies to:

LAUREL PRESS, INC.\*  
Holly Hill Drive  
P.O. Box 25  
Bethel Park, PA 15102

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Only Prepaid Orders.

\*Organizational Member FNPS

