

Florida Native Plant Society. Sam was very involved in the establishment of the Tarflower Chapter of FNPS. He served as the initial vice-president and later as field trip committee chair, and he gave many talks, especially concerning the identification of native plants. An early precursor of "What's Blooming" was "What You Always Wanted to Know About Natives, but Were Afraid to Ask," in which Sam discussed a single plant with specimens, slides and cultural notes. In addition, along with fellow FNPS members Dick Deuerling [interviewed in Spring Issue, Vol. 20, No. 1] and Dr. Eliane Norman, Sam was part of a segment called "Name That Plant," in which members brought plants to the meeting for identification. Later in the development of FNPS meeting topics, both Sam and Dick Deuerling began a monthly series relating to the cultural and botanical history of certain native plants and plant families. Throughout the years, Sam has given lectures on many topics, including native ferns, trees of Central Florida, plant identification, and landscaping with native plants.

Sam doesn't get out and around as much as he used to, but he still gets to the FNPS meetings. We'll always know "What's Blooming" in Central Florida as long as Sam Hopkins is at the slide projector.



Grace Iverson

Grace Blanchard Iverson

Charter Member, Palm Beach Chapter

Personal statement given to Cynthia Plockelman

I'm a field ecologist since birth, was brought up on field trips, have studied biology, geology, and ecology at four universities, and am still researching. Two areas of special interest for me are ecological succession (the natural change in southern Florida ecosystems over time), and ecology of a single species, for example beach peanut, *Oakea hypogaea*, and the Florida scrub jay, unique to the state and threatened. The Florida scrub jay occurs at the southern extension of its range in Palm Beach County. My scrub jay research spans more than ten years, using color "bracelets" that uniquely identify each bird.

For 41 years we have lived in southeastern Florida: in Miami from 1958-1973, in Boca Raton from 1973-1996, and in Hobe Sound from 1996 to the present. I'm a founding member of FNPS and especially interested in research, education, and conservation. Most of my effort has addressed two goals of the society:

- 1) Promoting the understanding of native Florida ecosystems and the ecology of their plant and animal species, and
- 2) Preserving native Florida for itself and to allow people, now and in the future, to appreciate its wonderful variety, to study its qualities, and to make discoveries of their own.

We must understand personally and explain to others that mankind can't build a native ecosystem! Through field experiences, we can promote an ever-improving understanding among people of all ages and all professions, pointing the direction for thinking in terms

of both whole ecosystems and the individual species that are part of the system.

Florida is ecologically unique on the continent of North America. FNPS needs to pursue its goals vigorously, for the benefit of people as well as native species. How can we move toward these goals? I see two priority approaches: (1) inviting a sense of Florida's unique place on the earth by establishing ecosystem preserves, and (2) planting suitably selected and arranged native plants as the major landscaping.

Especially within urban areas, there is a human need to protect native Florida in historic wilderness islands. Purchase does not end citizens' responsibility. Watch to see that all wilderness values of your public preserves are maintained. We must focus on ecosystems in planning for human presence and for management decisions – conceive of the whole native landscape. Let's demand and reward private and public planting of appropriate native plants arranged so they support and protect populations of native plant and animal species within native Florida preserves, as well as in parks, and other public lands.

We should invite and seek funding for future study of Florida's native ecosystems, and their species, including the microscopic life.

We should admit that we know relatively little so far, and management is experimental.

We should insist that preserve planning be based upon sound science. We should insist on appropriate and repeatable surveys, monitoring the effects of any management, and particularly the effects of hundreds of human visitors. At the same time, we must understand that counting people who enter our preserves does not measure the uses and values thereof. The reason is that thousands of others feel relief as they drive by these "islands," and millions more benefit from the preserves by knowing they are still there! Do you value preserves in Wyoming? Alaska?

We should prohibit landscaping with known introduced aggressive species by initiating political actions within the jurisdictions of all governmental levels. If possible, existing weed species should be removed from public property. We must continue encouraging landscaping predominantly with native plants, for their beauty, variety, and ability to support animal life, including birds, butterflies, dragonflies, lizards, and frogs.

My most significant influence has been envisioning a new lobe of urban land use planning. I conceived of and still further am establishing "wilderness islands" preserved and maintained in perpetuity as natural historic sites, used and enjoyed by residents and visitors for the features these sites protect. Living, breathing, ecological history is especially valuable in an urban environment such as is found in Broward and Palm Beach Counties. My first effort was in Broward County, then in Palm Beach County.

As a consultant to Palm Beach County, I surveyed the county for surviving "islands" of wild Florida, ranking them for potential purchase based upon quality as representative of sub-tropical southeastern Florida before urbanization. Dan Austin and I field checked each location, agreed on all evaluations, and both donated much time to make the report a reliable account. As governments continued to grant increased development, I and many others spoke to governments and interested groups on behalf of a future that included preserves of wild Florida. Continually, I have sought to have biologically sound preservation of the Natural Area Preserves in Palm Beach County, areas which resulted from the efforts of many people and numerous organizations coming together in support of this land use planning.

FNPS has brought our native plants to the attention of citizens and visitors! We have brought into being Wilderness Island Preserves in Palm Beach County, advocated planting beautiful, intriguing natives which, beyond their aesthetic qualities, attract butterflies and birds that enhance our yards, at the same time saving us time and water, and sometimes avoiding a lawn. We have pointed out the danger of plant and animal weeds that were introduced to transform the land, decorate our yards, or came with us accidentally as we moved ourselves and our cargoes around the planet. We have explained the need to control future weed introductions that could add to the millions of dollars we now spend on weed control.

By observation in the wilderness islands themselves, we can introduce people of any age to the components of wild Florida: the plants, animals, microbes, soil, sounds, life cycles of individual spe-

cies, a shrub, a frog, a spider, a bird, and the seasonal change in the different ecosystems. This experience can be the source of caring, and caring is the foundation for choosing to protect.

A museum can be anywhere, but we have little wild land. The contents of museum buildings or slide programs cannot teach caring, fascinating though the exhibits, collections, and lectures may be. Caring usually develops from firsthand experience outdoors.

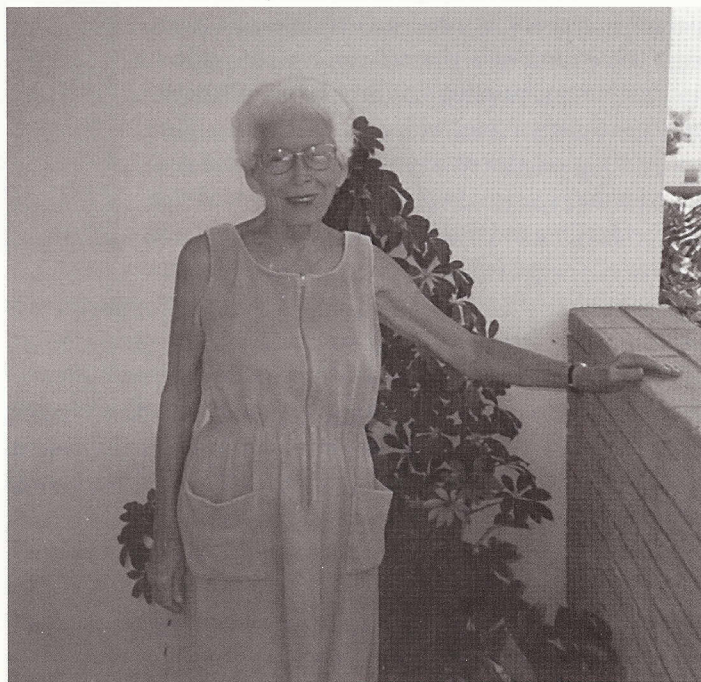
Imagine if the action and reactions within an ecosystem produced sound we could hear. We would hear Wild Florida humming, singing, and thundering with thousands of interactions within each plant and animal, among their lives, in the soil, air, and sunshine of an historic Wilderness Preserve, an "island of living history"!

Somehow those who are making decisions on our behalf need to step back from the moment, think of the region, and perceive these values. The future is a very long time!

Cecil Kilmer

Longtime Member, Palm Beach Chapter

Interview by Barbara Liberman



Cecil Kilmer

This recently turned 90-year-old was born with a "green thumb" and grew up on a Kansas farm. Close to the land, Cecil developed a deep love, respect, and appreciation for all growing things. She laughingly recalls how her father teased her about growing flowers indoors in tin cans and then having to carry them outside to be watered. After business school training, Cecil, the farm girl, moved to the big city, Washington, D.C., where she had a successful career working for the federal government. But even in D.C., there was room for a windowsill garden.