

UPDATE ON *Garberia fruticosa*

by Eve Hannahs

An article appeared in the February '83 issue of **The Palmetto** concerning the progradation of *Garberia fruticosa*.



Bryan J. Taylor

Seeds collected in December of 1981 were refrigerated until February, 1982, when they were planted in flats of scrub sand. The seeds were barely covered, kept moist, and covered with newspapers. Germination was almost 100%. Those started in commercial medium had poor germination and soon succumbed to the rich life.

Six-inch plants were established along the edges of the woods of a sand pine scrub situation (as they grow in the wild) with 100% survival rate. At this date, October, 1984, plants range from a foot to a meter in height, and two taller individuals are blooming!

Garberia is classified as threatened on the Florida Endangered Plant List, but as it chooses areas along the upper edges of swales, it is lost when habitat is "improved" and sodded. Rescue has proven unsuccessful because of the usual deep roots of plants found in sandy areas.

This fall, hundreds of plants were observed along the edges of the woods in Ocala National Forest. It

was noted that in one area where resurfacing was done and brush removed on both sides of the road that *garberia* was missing. Woodland populations were apparently destroyed in pine plantation plantings, while the surrounding open natural communities supported *garberia* in profusion.

The handsome shrub is a valued addition to the native plant garden not only for its beauty, lack of natural enemies, and ability to thrive on neglect, but also as a "hot spot" nectaring station for many species of migrating butterflies.

We often hear, "There used to be a lot of that around." There still can be a "lot of that around," if plants are introduced into natural areas less likely to suffer the rigors of "improvement."

MIGRATION, 1984

The year of 1984 does not appear to be the Year of the Butterfly. Except for a few species, the usual populations were not observed on the central Florida coastal region. Cloudless sulphurs appeared in great numbers, but the usual clouds of great southern whites did not appear. Few monarchs passed through on their southward journey; those that did, stopped to lay their eggs on tropical milkweeds introduced into the garden.

Reports were received that the Panhandle monarch migrations have been unusually sparse this fall and last year. A report from their flyway in Texas noted a great decline in numbers this season. A memorandum from World Wildlife Fund-U.S. stated that, in mid-February of 1984, "nearly 51 million monarchs have come to winter in Mexico this year from the U.S. and Canada (east of the Rockies). This number is substantially down from last year!"

• E. Hannahs