

ENDANGERED PLANT CONFERENCE

Recently Bok Tower Gardens hosted a conference of plant conservationists to explore rare plant management techniques and points of view. Several FNPS members were in attendance and addressed the conference, including President Dick Wunderlin and Science Committee Chair Jack Stout. There was a consensus on the critical need to preserve rare plants as a part of Florida's diverse biological heritage.

The following resolutions and recommendations were endorsed by the conference participants:

...that the State of Florida vigorously defend rare plant populations through land acquisition and management, growth management, information gathering, and strengthening and enforcement of plant protection laws.

...that preservation of existing wild populations of rare plants in their natural habitat *in situ* is the first priority.

...that off-site conservation collections be established for rare species, as a complement to *in situ* preservation.

...that the United States Fish & Wildlife Service establish a Florida plant recovery team.

One solution to the long-term preservation of these rare species is the establishment of new populations in the wild on secure sites where they were not known to have grown before. This may be particularly important for those species which are not on protected land. The long-term scientific implications of plant introductions

were discussed at length at the conference. Many expressed concern that indiscriminate "Johnny Appleseed" planting in natural areas would be inadvisable and the following guidelines were suggested for further consideration:

1. Plant introduction projects should be considered on a case by case basis since the critical needs may be different for each species.

2. If possible, the new site should be within the known ranges of the species in question. However, many known ranges are extremely small and often the historic ranges cannot be determined because of the extensive land use changes, such as planted pine plantations and citrus groves, that have already occurred. As a compromise, the new site should be as close as possible to known sites, preferably within the same land form.

The new site should be a suitable habitat with familiar soil, water, and plant community characteristics, and have a management regime compatible with the needs of the introduced species.

The site should be secure from development, either publicly owned or privately held and dedicated to preservation.

A long-term monitoring program should be planned from the beginning of the project and careful records kept of the success or failure of the introduction.

A site that has already known some human disturbance is preferable as an introduction site to a natural, pristine site.

• Susan R. Wallace