

Sabal minor

A bimonthly newsletter for the members of

THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



VOLUME 12, NUMBER 2

April - May 2009

The *Sabal minor* is now distributed electronically by email. All members without an email address will receive a paper copy. If a member with an email address wants to receive a paper copy, notify us at info@fnps.org or call 321-271-6702.

April - May

Courtship ritual of adult alligators begins; listen for loud and resounding bellows and water slapping. Most bats give birth May through mid-June. Bluegill are bedding during the full moon.

In your yard, prune shrubs to contain their size, especially cut off any freeze-damaged limbs or branches, back to live wood. Beautyberry and firebush can be pruned severely to keep them more compact. Use a horticultural oil and soap on Coontie if there are scale insects and black sooty mold.

Blooms to watch for: Lyreleaf Sage, *Salvia lyrata*, light blue flowers; Tickseed, *Coreopsis spp.*, and Blackeyed Susan, *Rudbeckia hirta*, yellow flowers; Spiderwort, *Tradescantia ohioensis*, blue to purple flowers in the morning; Coral Honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens* and Cross Vine, *Bignonia caperolata*, red to yellow trumpet shaped flowers; Elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis*, showy white clusters in wetter areas; Coral Bean, *Erythrina herbacea*, bright red flowers; Florida Privet, *Foresteria segregata*, small yellow flowers; Walters Viburnum, *Viburnum obovatum*, light pink buds opening to white clusters, show; Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana*, small yellow clusters; Pawpaws, *Asimina obovata* and *A. reticulata*, creamy white to greenish flowers.

A Letter from the FNPS President

What if it was within our means to prevent the introduction of any more invasive, nonnative plant species?

It certainly IS within our means to greatly reduce, if not completely halt, the introduction of destructive nonnative plants. Australia and New Zealand have implemented a screening process that evaluates the likelihood of a nonnative plant species becoming invasive within their borders BEFORE its importation is allowed. The United States might be ready to take a similar commonsense step.

The Nonnative Wildlife Invasion Prevention Act (NWIPA) would establish a risk assessment process for the purpose of preventing the importation of nonnative wildlife species likely to cause environmental harm to the native wildlife and natural ecosystems of the United States.

Yes, the new law would be applicable only to wildlife. As native plant enthusiasts we know that wildlife species are the more frequent recipients of human society's attention and action while plants are often ignored. Our more discerning outlook imparts both an appreciation for flora and a more nuanced recognition of the complex inter-relationships between flora and fauna. So we're able to understand that what's good for conserving native wildlife and natural ecosystems is also good for native plants. The passage of NWIPA could set the stage for similar action to control the importation of plants!

It's too late to put the genie back in the bottle and successfully eliminate such invaders as Old World climbing fern, tropical soda apple, melaleuca, water hyacinth - the list goes on and on. But we CAN put up barriers to help prevent the introduction of new invaders, if only to avoid the inevitable economic impacts of trying to control them. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has estimated that state, federal and local agencies in Florida have spent at least \$250 million since 1980 to control invasive nonnative plants, and that is for our public waterways and on our protected conservation lands alone. Invasive species rank second only to development in causing habitat destruction.

The NWIPA was introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives as H.R. 669 by Delegate Madeleine Bordallo of Guam. The 17 cosponsors include Reps Alcee Hastings and Ron Klein of Florida. There hasn't been a companion bill introduced to the Senate yet, although Florida Senator Bill Nelson has introduced a bill that would outlaw the importation of pythons. A well-intentioned bill by Senator Nelson, certainly, but if you have been following the news about pythons invading south Florida and the Keys then you know the time to prevent the importation of pythons was BEFORE they established reproducing populations across Florida's natural landscape.

The NWIPA is now in the hands of the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife. Please let your U.S. Representative know you strongly support passage of this legislation and consider recommending to Senator Nelson that he introduce similar legislation to the Senate.

Gene Kelly

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Sabal minor is on-line at <http://www.fnps.org/sabalminor>. The on-line version has color photographs and other benefits. Enjoy!

Deadlines for *Sabal minor* submissions: 1/15 for Feb-Mar issue; 3/15 for Apr-May; 5/15 for June-July; 7/15 for Aug-Sept; 9/15 for Oct-Nov; 11/15 for Dec-Jan

Species Spotlight

Asimina spp.
ANNONACEAE

Dog Bananas

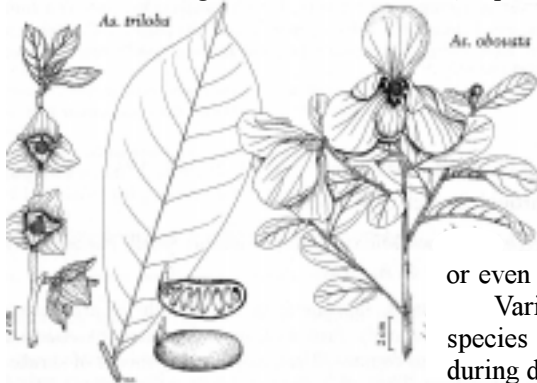
Eleanor K. Sommer

I always wondered why some of the *Asimina* species were nicknamed “dog bananas” until my husband and I began to share our home with a lively yellow Lab. Among his early wild food exploits were the ripe fruits of the local pawpaws. I decided since he was enjoying them so much, I would try them as well.

Not bad actually, but the riper the better. The unripe fruit is not palatable and reported to be an emetic (although I did not eat enough unripe fruit to bear witness to that lore). Native people of the Southeast made liberal use of the pawpaw for both food and medicine, and John Bartram reportedly ate the fruits of *A. pygmaea* when he traveled through Florida in the late 1760s. (Note that the seeds, twigs, and leaves contain toxic alkaloids and are used only *externally*, particularly as insecticides and for eliminating head lice.)

While the fruits of the pawpaw are high in sugar, fat, and carbohydrates, they are lacking in other nutrients. Most species of *Asimina* bear fruit too small to make a meal, and the tree-sized *A. triloba*, while common in northern climates, thrives only in a few panhandle counties. With patience, you can collect enough of the smaller fruits, separate the pulp

from the large seeds, and use it in making bread, custards, pancakes, fruit drinks, or even ice cream.



Various *Asimina* species blossom during different

seasons, and so you will find the drooping white or maroon flowers throughout the year. Fruit may be sparse due to the complicated reproductive nature of the *Asimina* genus. The subtle, or often offensive odor, of the flowers does not attract bees, and the pollinating efforts fall to less productive beetles and flies.

Look for *Asimina* in pine flatwoods, fields, edges of woods, sandhills, and even roadsides. Hearty and perennial, pawpaws make lovely wild landscaping and are resistant to the occasional mower accident, frost, and even playful puppies. Encourage *Asimina* where you find it on your property, and enjoy the tasty fruits.

Ed. Note: Please be sure of identification before using a plant for food or medicine. Consult at least three other reputable sources and be sure you have no allergies to constituents or similar plants.

Zebra Swallowtail

Linda F. Cooper

Zebra Swallowtail, *Eurytides marcellus*, is colored

exactly like its African namesake, the zebra. This black and white swallowtail’s tail length varies seasonally, with the summer form having very long tails outlined in white. Its ventral surface adds a cherry red stripe to enhance the basic black and white.



Zebra Swallowtail feeds on pawpaw in the Custard Apple Family. Its caterpillar ingests the noxious chemicals and is protected from most herbivores. The adult butterfly retains some of these chemicals in its wing and body tissues.

This swallowtail is not easy to attract to home gardens because it prefers intact habitats such as uplands, scrub, sandhills, pine flatwoods and dry prairie. Look for it anytime you find its host plant in natural areas. If you are close to natural areas you may be able to entice it into your garden with Slimleaf Pawpaw (*Asimina incana*), Bigflower Pawpaw (*A. angustifolia*), Woolly Pawpaw (*A. incana*) or any other native pawpaw suited to your area of the state.

It occurs from Florida to southern Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It has been extirpated in southern Florida by habitat loss. It has two to three flights in the south.

Its caterpillars have several color forms. Its pupae overwinter. An excellent book to help identify caterpillars is *Florida Butterfly Caterpillars and Their Host Plants* by Marc C. Minno, Jerry F. Butler and Donald W. Hall, from University Press of Florida.

Tracking Seasonal Effects of Climate Change on Native Species

George Kish

For the first time, a site in Florida has been established where citizens, students and researchers can track the seasonal effects of climate change on Florida's native plants and animals.

The site, at the University of South Florida's Ecological Research Area, is designed for researchers and the public to monitor the timing and duration of natural seasonal events of plants and animals (the study of phenology), such as the first emergence of spring buds and the appearance of insects. These changes could significantly affect the plant communities on which the rest of the ecosystem depends.

The effort is part of the USA-National Phenology Network (USA-NPN). For more information, go to <http://www.usgs.gov/newsroom/article.asp?ID=2151>.

Nominating Committee Presents Slate of Board of Directors Candidates

Elections for several directors' positions are held during the annual meeting of the FNPS, during the General Assembly gathering at the conference, on Saturday morning, May 23, 8:30a.m. Here are the people being presented by the nominations committee:

- Treasurer - Daphne Lambright, Suncoast
- VP Admin - Fritz Wettstein, Magnolia
- At Large - Debbie Springe, Sea Rocket
- At Large - Martha Stewart, Conradina
- At Large - Open

If you have an interest in serving on our board, please contact Shirley Denton, sdenton@entrix.com

FNPS Volunteer Opportunities

Consider taking on these statewide efforts:

- Membership Committee Vice Chair
- Landscape Awards Coordination

Please contact Karina Veaudry, executivedirector@fnps.org, if you think you might be interested.

Chapter Tips & Tricks

The Suncoast Chapter makes its insightful and informational newsletters available for other FNPS members and chapters on the FNPS Forum, under Publications/Newsletter.

Wildlife Gardeners, a new website with a forum about native flora and fauna, offers to share its calendar. Here is another place to post your plant sales and other chapter events. Check out www.wildlifegardeners.org for more information.

Invite your local water management district biologists, master gardeners, master naturalists, Florida Fish and Wildlife conservation commission biologist/ecologists, city environmental planners and science teachers. You would be surprised at the number of these individuals that didn't know a local chapter was nearby, and choose to become members.

The Tarflower Chapter has persuaded some College and University Ecology and Biology professors to give extra credit to their students for attending a FNPS chapter meeting. This has resulted in a few new memberships.

Native Plant Sales - Coccoloba Chapter's Semi-Annual Native Plant Sale is Saturday, April 18, 2009, from 9 to 2, at the Rotary Park & Environmental Center, 5505 Rose Garden Rd Cape Coral, Fl. For info: 239-543-9910

FNPS Member Published

On of our FNPS members, Loran Anderson, along with Robert Kral, recently described a new species of *Xyris*, found in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in the Florida panhandle. The finding was published in the *Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas*, in April 2008, as an article titled, "*Xyris panacea* (Xyridaceae)--a new yellow-eyed grass from the Florida panhandle." Dr. Loran Anderson works with the herbarium at Florida State University in Tallahassee.

FNPS to Appear on *Landscape*

Cindy Liberton

The Florida Native Plant Society will soon be featured as a conservation partner in the Florida pages of the LandScope America website. LandScope, released in Beta version in December 2008, is the result of a long-term initiative by NatureServe and the National Geographic Society to develop the premier online conservation and educational resource for the land-protection community and the public. LandScope America uses an interactive map viewer to bring together maps, data, photos and stories and present them in dynamic and accessible formats. It also provides useful tools and resources for strategic conservation planning and priority-setting.

Through this partnership, FNPS provides access to data and photographs regarding Florida native plants and native plant ecosystems.

Try it out at <http://www.landscape.org/>

GoodSearch\GoodShop Good for FNPS

Shop for the items you were planning to buy anyway -- books, CDs, clothing, computers, camping gear -- and give to FNPS while you do it!

You can automatically give to FNPS as you shop for yourself or purchase gifts for loved ones. FNPS is now registered with **GoodSearch**, which also includes a donation service through its **GoodShop** program. When you use these services, money goes to the Society. Each time you use the **GoodSearch** engine (which you do everytime you go shopping through this program), a penny or two goes into Society coffers. The **GoodShop** merchant list is huge and includes Amazon, Target, eBay, PetSmart, Apple, Expedia, Best Buy, Lands End, to name just a few. The merchants donate a variable percentage of each purchase.

Here's how to get started:

Go to www.goodsearch.com and choose your charity. To do this, in the second box from the top, under "Who Do You GoodSearch For?" type Florida Native Plant Society. (The statewide fund is the FNPS listing for Melbourne, FL). Next, go down to the **GoodShop** box (look for the halo) and click *Shop Now*. From there you select the merchant you want to use. When the page for your merchant opens up, it tells you how much of your purchase they will donate, and they may offer coupons and other goodies. They also will remind you that your cause only will receive a donation if you make your purchases by going through this page.

Have fun! And... *Thank You!*

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Wake up and Plant the Natives!

2009 FNPS Conference

May 21-24, 2009

West Palm Beach Marriott

Hosted by the Palm Beach and Martin County chapters, here are just a few of the conference highlights...

Keynote Speaker Doug Tallamy: With a spectacular set of images, Professor Tallamy will illustrate specific co-evolved relationships between native plants and wildlife, relaying how crucial it is to include indigenous species in our landscape plantings.

Keynote Speaker Dan Austin: Learn about ethnobotany: Plants and People from Swamps to Desert.

Plenary Speaker Hal Wanless: Hear about startling predictions about the impacts of sea level rise on Florida's coastline.

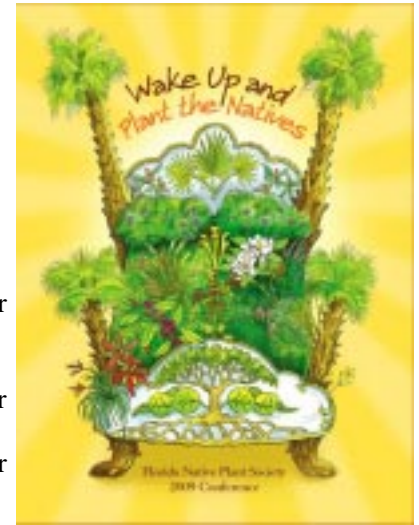
Workshops: Grass Identification Workshop; Beginner and Advanced Digital Nature Photography; Tree Biology, from the Florida Urban Forestry Council; Restoration Horticulture, from the University of Florida; Plant Journaling

Conservation Panel Discussion with Florida Experts from five separate institutions

Presentation by Daryl Morrison, Former Dean of the

Georgia School of Environmental Design. **Learn about...** The Plight of Honey Bees; Restoration Processes and Landscape Design... and, of course, much much more!

Social Events: Don't miss FNPS Jeopardy; or Thursday night music from "The Weeds"; or author's book signing or novice/expert plant ID contests Friday night, or the dinner and dancing banquet on Saturday night.



Silent Auction Items Still Needed

Whether art, a guided field trip, a book or food and beauty products made from plant materials, donate items likely to be of interest to our members and the public who will attending. Contact Brenda Mills, Silent Auction Subcommittee Chair, nativesun_99@yahoo.com.

Take a Trip to Nicaragua's Ecological Areas!

Elston Raimundo Chavarria

A unique trip designed for FNPS and sponsored by Latin American Adventures is an exciting way to join fellow FNPS members on an adventure!

Experience the flora and fauna of the natural areas of Nicaragua. Explore her dry forests, her cloud forests, and even her virgin rainforests. Visit a spectacular, warm crater lake, and tour a historic colonial city.

For a full trip itinerary, pictures of sights and lodging, and the registration form, see the FNPS website. Or you can email me at raimundochavarria@yahoo.com, or call 954-662-1539.

The \$2,995.00 cost includes all meals, lodging, ground transportation, air transportation to Nicaragua, air travel within the country and all activities (entrance fees to parks, reserves, preserves) This trip is Limited to the first 20 people to register! Trip dates are from **July 16th to July 28th, 2009.**

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