

# Sabal minor

A bimonthly newsletter for the members of

THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



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October - November 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](mailto:info@fnps.org) or call 321-271-6702.

## October - November

Fall is a great time to visit more closely with our wondrous composites -- learn the different species of the goldenrods (mostly the *Solidago* genus), the asters (mostly the *Symphyotrichum* genus), the *Liatris* and *Carphephorus*.

Take a walk and bring with you at least these two books: *The Guide to Florida Wildflowers* by Walter K Taylor, and the *Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida* by Wunderlin & Hansen.

Before you set out, take a moment to put place markers in the books for easy reference. In *The Guide to Florida Wildflowers*, which is organized by flower color and then by family and genus within each color, put a post-it tab in the yellow and purple sections where the Asteraceae start. In the *Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida*, which is organized alphabetically by family, then by genus and species, put one marker at the beginning of the Asteraceae section, then put one at each genus you think you'll be studying this trip.

This way, when you find a picture in *Wildflower* book that's close, you can go to the *Vascular Plants* guide at a point where the dichotomous key might be less intimidating to tackle.

Now, go forth and botanize!

## In Praise of Advocacy at the Chapter Level

Have you noticed that FNPS has been increasingly active in advocating for the conservation of native plants and native plant habitat? It's a natural role for the Society and one the Board of Directors takes very seriously, since we are presuming to speak for the entire membership when we engage in an issue and stake out a position.

It can be difficult to decide when it's appropriate for FNPS to engage at the state level. First and foremost, of course, there has to be a clear nexus between our mission and the issue at hand. The issue should also either be statewide in its scope, or at least, extend beyond the "local".

That's why it's so important for our chapters to engage in local issues relevant to native plants! While our actions at the state level can be very constructive, they cannot by themselves prevent the painful "death by a thousand cuts" we sometimes feel we are witnessing in Florida.

Please don't doubt the success our chapters can have in local advocacy.

By working cooperatively with the Brevard County Natural Resources Management Office, our Brevard Chapters (Conradina and Sea Rocket) recently won important concessions, expanding the preserved land area within a large local development project. Member Vince Lamb told Executive Director Karina Veaudry "...I strongly encourage other FNPS chapters to become involved. It gives the chapter a significant purpose and forwards the mission of the Native Plant Society on a level that really makes a difference."

The Nature Coast and Hernando County chapters of FNPS worked with The Gulf Coast Conservancy (GCC) in opposing a land use amendment that would allow the development of 2,500 homes, a golf course and a marina on a sensitive coastal site, and a couple weeks ago the Florida Department of Community Affairs officially objected to the land use amendment on grounds consistent with those voiced by these partners. Hats off to the GCC and all the partners, including the FNPS chapters, who stood with them in the name of conservation!

That second example of chapter engagement helps to illustrate the power a coalition of like-minded organizations can exert. The Pinellas Chapter is a longstanding member of the Alliance for a Livable Pinellas and can vouch for the effectiveness of such coordinated action.

I know other chapters are also members of such organized groups and that there are many other success stories. Indeed, in honor of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of FNPS, we would like to compile a comprehensive history of the FNPS and I invite each and every chapter to provide us with a complete historical account of its community involvement. But I also know that our best years and greatest successes still lie ahead of us. Please continue to advocate for the conservation of native plants and don't be afraid to fight the good fight! And let us know if there resources we can provide to support your efforts.

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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

*Monarda punctata*  
LAMIACEAE

## Wild Florida Tea

By E. K. Sommer

Look around this time of year for the lovely flowering stalks of spotted bee balm (*Monarda punctata*) that attract the intense attention of their insect namesake. Stretching high over the summer weeds, these aromatic perennials have dusty purple bracts that are often mistaken for the flowers. The actual flowers—yellowish tubular, two lipped, and dotted with purple—form in tufted whorls around the stem. This member of the Lamiaceae family, often called “horsemint,” can be found in disturbed fields, near woodland edges, and along roadsides.

Colonial settlers used bee balm as a substitute for tea. During World War I, when commercial thyme fields were destroyed in Europe, *Monarda* was cultivated in the United States as a source of thymol, which had numerous medicinal uses including as a vermifuge, digestive aid, carminative, and antiseptic. Natural thymol also was used to flavor soft drinks. The synthetic version has long since replaced natural sources.

Native American people, including the Creek, Chickasaw, and Osage, recognized numerous healing properties for *Monarda*, including strong antiseptic action, pain relief, and fever reduction (it produces perspiration while cooling the core body). Poultices of *Monarda* treated skin infections and minor wounds, and the tea was used to treat mouth and throat infections caused by dental caries and gingivitis.

Sometimes called “Oswego tea,” herbalist Matthew Wood tells us that the native people call *M. fistulosa* “sweet leaf,” which he deems a most appropriate and beautiful name for *Monarda*.

The most common use today is to soothe bronchial conditions, mild colds and flu symptoms. The minty leaves add zip to conventional tea, zest to salads, or flavor soups, vegetables, or meat. Choose young leaves, as they will be more tender and flavorful. And as with many native edible plants, you can make jelly, wine, or herbal vinegars with bee balm.

Remember, always cross-check with several references for the identity of plants before using them. If you are at all unsure, consult with experienced foragers and herbalists before eating or using plants from the wild.



## Long-tailed Skipper

Linda E. Cooper

*Urbanus proteus* is one of the most common skippers in Florida. It ranges north to New Jersey and during fall millions migrate southward into our state.



It is one of the spread-winged skippers. While many skippers perch with wings folded over the body, this skipper has a green/blue-green back that usually shows when the skipper is perched. It occurs in most habitats including home

gardens.

Many vegetable gardeners are dismayed when they find “worms” eating their garden beans, *Phaseolus vulgaris*. These “worms” cut and fold the leaf over themselves, making a nice tent shelter, but they are actually the caterpillar of Long-tailed Skipper. The difference between a worm and a caterpillar is that a worm is earth bound and has no lofty ambitions while a caterpillar has very lofty ambitions... to become a butterfly!

Long-tailed Skipper will also use *Clitoria mariana* and *Centrosema virginianum* as well as other species in the Pea family. There is another tailed skipper, the Dorantes, that is also fairly common, but its caterpillars usually prefer *Desmodium* for a host plant. The adult Dorantes has a brown back and rarely perches with its wings open.



All photos by Linda E. Cooper

## Just Because a Plant’s for Sale...

Rosalind Rowe

... does not mean it’s OK to buy it and take it home.

We lose natural habitat to development, yes, but also to the invasives that have spread from our gardens. Hundreds of thousands of acres in Florida are lost to problematic non-native plants.

Very few horticulturalists or nursery workers are also botanists. Even aware and well-intentioned nurseries occasionally pass on plants that they acquired believing them to be native or at least “well-behaved,” only to discover much later that this was incorrect.

Many plants do not show a tendency to “invade” at first. Pemberton and Liu published a study this year that positively correlated the length of time an exotic plant was available for sale in Florida to its invasiveness. Beware of “new” plants!

If you are shopping for plants, first go to FLEPPC.org to learn the currently known invasives, and then arm yourself with good references, such as Osario’s *A Gardener’s Guide to Native Plants*.

## FNPS Directors Meeting Highlights

Board of Directors Meeting August 15, 2009

*Karina Veaudry*

Gene Kelly announced that FNPS will be inviting Native Plant societies from the Southeast United States to the 2010 FNPS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, for a summit meeting to discuss national issues. The conference is May 20-23, 2010 at the Leon County Civic Center in Tallahassee. The conference section of the FNPS website will be updated over the next couple of months.

FNPS will pursue proposing to the Florida legislature that they pass a resolution making the month of May officially known as 'Native Plant Appreciation month'.

FNPS is a member of EarthShare, which is part of the United Way giving network, and **a volunteer is needed** to publicize and campaign to chapter members and government employees to choose the Florida Native Plant Society when donating through EarthShare/United Way.

Cindy Liberton is updating the FNPS Handbook so that it is more of a resource for chapters. The current handbook is on the website. If chapters have any suggestions for what information to add to the handbook contact Cindy at [Liberton@nextstepscollective.com](mailto:Liberton@nextstepscollective.com)

**Other Volunteers needed:** Social marketing director, Public Relations Director, Land Management Subcommittee members. Contact Karina Veaudry, her email is on the website.

FNPS Education Committee Chair, Kari Ruder, is **looking for native landscape photos**. Please send your photos to [kari@naturewiseplants.com](mailto:kari@naturewiseplants.com)

Membership Committee Chair, Shirley Denton, **needs each chapter's list of people who are responsible for Membership**. Contact Shirley at [ecotypes@myrapidsys.com](mailto:ecotypes@myrapidsys.com)

The Florida Native Plant Society has joined the Florida Native Plant Partnership as a founding member. The "Native Plant Partnership" is a collaboration between the Executive Directors of the Florida Native Plant Society, the Florida Wildflower Foundation, the Association of Florida Native Nurseries and the Florida Wildflower Seed and Plant Growers. These individuals will work together on objectives and projects pertaining to the similar overlap in the organizations' mission for the use, promotion, conservation and protection of Florida's native plants and wildflowers and their habitats.

Raise money for FNPS by using the Internet search engine **GoodSearch**. From GoodSearch.com, just select FNPS, Melbourne from the pull down menu and complete your Internet search. Each time you search, a penny is donated to FNPS!

Also, when purchasing office supplies, gifts, household goods, please use **GoodShop**. From GoodShop.com, first select FNPS before you shop online; a percentage of the purchase price goes to FNPS. All brand name stores are a part of the GoodShop network!

## Chapter Tips & Tricks

In addition to putting a chapter ad in the Association for Native Plant Nurseries (AFNN) guide, the Coccoloba chapter has donated funds to assist AFNN with educational publications.

## 2010 is the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of FNPS!

*Karina Veaudry*

I am compiling historical data that I will put in a slide presentation for the 2010 conference. I will then send copies of the presentation to all the chapters.

I could use your help.

Please send me:

- The date your chapter became a chapter.
- The names of the chapter's founding members.
- Pictures from the history of your chapter – past and current.
- A timeline or list of significant projects with dates.
- Any other historical information or stories you think would be good to have shared or documented.
- Any state-level or overall FNPS history that chapter members can contribute to this anniversary celebration.

Please send all information to:

[executivedirector@fnps.org](mailto:executivedirector@fnps.org) by January

15, 2010 -- the earlier the better, though! If you have questions, feel free to call (321) 388-4781.



## Gardening with Native Plants is About Knowing

*Candy Weller*

It is knowing what you have, what it does, how it can be used, why it is here. It is about appreciating what this area has to offer. It is learning of the beauty, the use and the necessity of plants that admit life.

It is not about miles and miles of homogenous landscapes. It is not about hiring people with tractors, mowers, weed whackers, blowers, edgers and hedge trimmers. It is not about watering because it is allowed. It is not about monthly services for chemicals, which are "preventative" - if it isn't there you can't prevent it. If it is there, you can prevent it in the area that it does exist. The rest is money, chemicals and fertilizer down the drain, or in our area, down the bay.

This is our part of the world. What we do in our yards impacts the entire region. It is about knowing what this region has to offer.

## *Taking the Pulse of our Planet.* Volunteers Needed

Volunteers across the nation are being recruited to get outdoors and help track the effects of climate on seasonal changes in plant and animal behavior. Changes in these patterns, caused by climate change or other factors, can significantly affect human economies and health.

"This program is designed for people interested in participating in climate change science, not just reading about it," said USA-NPN Executive Director and U.S. Geological Survey scientist Jake Weltzin. "We encourage everyone to visit the USA National Phenology Network Web site and then go outside and observe the marvelous cycles of plant and animal life."

To hear more about how to help track seasonal signs of climate change, go the podcast, "Help Us Keep an Eye on Climate Change," at <http://www.usgs.gov/corecast/>

## Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program

As part of Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission manages Florida's State Wildlife Grants Program. This is a federally-funded matching grants program, which provides financial support for projects that address conservation needs identified in Florida's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy.

This year's criteria are focused on priority habitats and filling data gaps on Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Preference will be given to projects that focus on both data gaps and priority habitats, and that address multiple SGCN, partnerships, and climate change issues for Florida's fish and wildlife and their habitats.

Please visit:

[myfwc.com/WILDLIFEHABITATS/Legacy\\_ApplyForGrant.htm](http://myfwc.com/WILDLIFEHABITATS/Legacy_ApplyForGrant.htm)  
to view the formal announcement and obtain more information, including application and submission instructions,

## Mark your calendars!

The 2010 FNPS Conference  
will be held at the  
Leon County Civic Center  
Tallahassee  
May 20 -23rd



<http://www.fnps.org/pages/conference/>

## Call for Scientific Papers and Poster Presentations

**Florida Native Plant Society 2010 Conference.** The FNPS annual conference will be held at the Leon County Civic Center, Tallahassee, Florida, May 20-23, 2010. The Science Track of the Conference will include presented papers on Friday, May 21 and Saturday, May 22. Posters will be on display on Friday and Saturday and the poster session will be on Saturday afternoon.

Researchers are invited to submit abstracts on research related to native plants and plant communities of Florida, including preservation, conservation, and restoration. Presentations are planned to be 20 minutes in total length (15 minute presentation, 5 minutes questions).

Abstracts of not more than 200 words should be submitted as a Microsoft Word file by email to Paul A. Schmalzer [paul.a.schmalzer@nasa.gov](mailto:paul.a.schmalzer@nasa.gov) by **February 1, 2010**. Include title, affiliation, and address. Indicate whether you will be presenting a paper or poster

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