

Sabal minor

A bimonthly newsletter for the members of

THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



VOLUME 8, NUMBER 3

June - July 2006

June

Most animals are nesting, including red-cockaded woodpeckers, alligators, southern flying squirrels, and black-necked stilts.

Indigo snakes lay their eggs, sometimes in gopher tortoise burrows. "Lights Out!" continues for beach areas, to protect sea turtle hatchlings.

This is a peak month for wildfires, which rejuvenate many Florida plant communities.

Many plants in bloom now! Watch for blooming tarflowers in flatwoods.

July

Look for magnificent frigatebirds flying overhead in south Florida; they'll be around on the Southwest coast through August, at least. Mulch your garden to conserve water but leave patches of soil exposed for dusting by birds.

Scrub morning glory and butterfly weed bloom in July. Sea oats are flowering on Atlantic beaches.

Ed. Note: I have a correction for last issue's March and April watch lists (information for which is mostly gleaned from Audubon's website): I gave March as a time to watch for Schaus' swallowtail butterflies, but it turns out that their peak flight period is more likely to be late April to mid June. My thanks to Linda and Buck Cooper in Haines City for their information on this; they said that this species' peak flight time is probably tied to precipitation and that usually begins in May in the Florida Keys. They also noted that Schaus' host plants are Wild Lime or Torchwood.

Optimistic About the Future of FNPS

I'm writing this a few days before our 26th Annual Conference and general membership meeting. Right now, I'm optimistic about the future of FNPS.

First, our new president Shirley Denton is a high energy individual with enormous talent. How she gets so much done is amazing.

In April our Executive Committee proposed to recommend to the full Board a one-year pilot contract for an Executive Director. Again, we have a high energy, dedicated individual in Karina Veaudry, anxious to take on this challenge.

One of my frustrations has been trying to make a statewide organization become effective in promoting our mission. The Board only meets four times a year, with Executive Committee meetings in between. During my term, Hurricanes Charlie and Wilma managed to cancel two of these meetings, while Dennis held down attendance at another. We have made progress communicating using the Internet and our discussion forums, but face-to-face communications seems more powerful to me.

However, the opportunities for improved communications with chapters, local governments, horticultural interests, and other environmental organizations are exciting. For example, I've had conversations with local planning organizations that are anxious to get good scientifically-based information on the use of natives in county and municipal landscapes.

Our Executive Committee was excited by the possibility that the Executive Director position could pay for itself by successfully seeking grant money to take on projects that further our mission. I think FNPS is poised to make a big step forward.

Good luck to Shirley and Karina and the whole new 2006/2007 Board!

Bob Egolf

A Note from the New Interim Executive Director

Having been a member of FNPS since 1986, and working in the fields of landscape and ecology, I am excited to have the opportunity to lead the organization into this new chapter as your Interim Executive Director. I believe the society can reach new levels of effectiveness with this position. During June, goals and objectives for the next year will be placed on the website. Most importantly, I will serve as a resource and information base for all Chapters. More to come!

Karina Veaudry

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Deadlines for Sabal minor submissions are the 15th day of each of the odd-numbered months (May 15, July 15, September...)

Species Spotlight

Katherine and Judith Kuester

Vaccinium stamineum Deerberry

This native shrub blossoms in the spring and its beautiful white, bell-like blossoms distinguish it from other blueberries by the “bell-clapper” extending below the bell of the blossom.

Dark blue edible berries ripen in the summer, after the flowering time has completed. They are food for wildlife as well as people and will serve in the home garden as a “Cottage Garden” fruiting shrub -- as ornamental as it is food producing.

Deerberry thrives and is found in natural areas on very dry sites given some protection from direct sun exposure, such as shade from trees’ shifting shadows.

In autumn, leaves of the deerberry turn various shades of deep scarlet and burnt gold.

So many Floridian’s homes are located on dry, sterile sands, and the residents cannot spend long hours in the garden. Why not try planting deerberries? They yield so much in return for a minimum of maintenance.

Encourage your local native plant nurseries and garden centers to stock the wonderful Florida native, Deerberry.




Planting for Zebras

Linda and Buck Cooper

Our state butterfly, Zebra Heliconian (*Heliconius charithonia*) is totally dependent on Passionvine (*Passiflora spp*) for its reproductive success. Any of the native passifloras, such as *Passiflora suberosa* or *P. incarnata* are a welcome addition to your garden, especially if planted in partially shaded areas preferred by this ‘sunshine and shadow’ butterfly.

Gardeners in south Florida may also be visited by its cousin, Julia Heliconian (*Heliconius julia*). Other butterflies also use passifloras in their reproductive cycle, but we will cover those another time.



Dear Society Member:

Your Florida Native Plant Society has been in existence for 26 years. It is time for us to take the next step.

Toward this end, we have established an Estate Giving program. Imagine the following:

- A full time salaried Executive Assistant and conference planner.
- A bonifide office building and the wherewithal to operate the business of FNPS complete with a secretary.
- Major advertisements across the state to promote the mission of our Society.
- An on-going program of membership recruitment.

No doubt you can think of additional projects that will... “promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida”... which is our mission.

We are asking you to contribute to the growth of the FNPS by making us a beneficiary of your estate. Talk to your lawyer or do it on your own. Consider gifts of cash, stocks or mutual funds, and real estate.

You may remain completely anonymous if you wish. If you contact me for further discussion, no record of any information regarding your plans will be maintained, unless you should agree otherwise.

You can make a difference and establish a lasting legacy. I already have.

Sincerely,
Travis
 Travis MacClendon
 Vice President of Finance, FNPS
 Blountstown, FL 32424
 850.674.4408, travismac@wfeca.net



Linda and Buck Cooper

Greetings -

Taking on the responsibility of representing you, the members of the Florida Native Plant Society is both exciting and somewhat scary. I hope that I will be able to follow well in the footsteps of our past presidents – they are big steps to follow!

I hope each and every one of you takes the time to thank Bob Egolf for his leadership. Some of the major steps that I've seen during his term have included "visioning" sessions facilitated to help us clarify the goals of the society and to recognize the common threads among our widely diverse interests, the hiring of a consultant to help us keep the Society aware of political events that affect FNPS during the Florida legislative sessions, steps to expand our membership and capabilities, and the hiring of an Executive Director. I am especially excited about the Executive Director since the person who fills these shoes can provide us with internal coordination and a voice that can continuously speak for FNPS. Thank you Bob!

I would like to see FNPS continue to develop and grow in membership and effectiveness. As an organization, we include a very diverse mix of people with equally diverse interests in native plants. Our membership includes scientists, university professors, regulatory agency staff, consultants, managers of conservation lands, researchers, gardeners, newcomers to Florida who want to learn about our environments, landscape architects, nurserymen, people involved in land restoration and water management, and many others. This diversity is both our strength and our weakness.

We have to carefully stick to our mission: The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the protection, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

Within this mission, I hope that we can learn to speak ever more clearly and to have the voices of the Society heard. I'd like to see us publish the policies that the Society developed in past years so that members and policy makers will know where FNPS stands on important issues. In this regard, it is critical that we carefully vet issues that we address, to ensure that they are addressed specifically from our mission and that any stance is clearly supported by current botanical and ecological knowledge.

Our stances should also be ones that can be supported by the vast majority of our members. Issues that have come up recently that seem appropriate for FNPS to express a voice include the logging of cypress swamps to make cypress mulch, and governmental policies that allow shifts in management responsibilities and strategies for public lands from an agency knowledgeable and sympathetic to management for rare plants to an agency with potentially conflicting goals. I believe that FNPS should avoid taking on issues that could polarize our membership, and that if we can't clearly relate an issue to the mission of the Society, that we should not have an FNPS stance.

That said, I also hope that we can make our "action alert" methods more effective, so that both on issues where we can agree, and on ones where there may be no clear single voice, we can keep members aware of the issues and facilitate their making policy makers aware of their opinions.

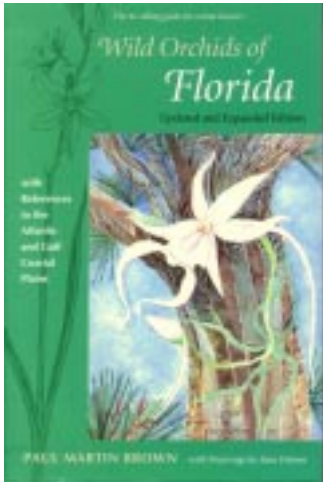
An exciting development led by Anne Cox, Daphne Lambright, and Charlie Perderson has been FNPS participation in land management reviews for publicly owned conservation lands and parks. I hope that we continue to participate in this process and expand our effectiveness in the reviews.

Another effort that we have completed, but not yet made readily available, is our model Landscape Ordinance. This model ordinance is part of our voice as a Society, and making it available to communities to use as they develop landscaping policies is one way that we can forward the goals of the society.

Many of you are my friends. I look forward to getting to know many more of you over the coming years.

Shirley

Book Reviews



Rosalind Rowe

Wild Orchids of Florida

Paul Martin Brown, drawings by Stan Folsom, (c)2005. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

A lovely book! From its illustrated key, to the presence of multiple photos for each species, to the excellent binding, this book is a dream reference to bring into the field. The preface tells us that the “state of Florida has 118

species and varieties of orchids growing within its borders, of which 106 are truly native... in addition, six named hybrids and 26 color and growth forms are found.” This is a “do-able” number to learn, and they are all discussed in this book. Use the great checklist at the back of the book to keep track of your progress. Soon you will be a Florida native orchid specialist!

Your Florida Guide to Perennials Selection, Establishment, and Maintenance

Sidney Park Brown and Rick K. Schoellhorn, (c)2006. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

This is a well-organized and easy-to-read book for gardening with perennials, with plants listed in alphabetical order by genus. The back of the book has a great section of lists --Perennials with Rounded Form, Perennials with Upright Form, Perennial with White (or Pink, or Red, etc.) Flowers, Perennials for Cut Flowers, and so on.

However, I cannot recommend this book to Florida natives devotees, for three reasons: less than a third of the listings are of native plants, nine of the listings are of invasives, and when it comes to gardening care the authors are too matter-of-fact about using fertilizers.

Send in Your Conference Comments or Notes

Please share your own experience with this year’s Conference.

Who was your favorite speaker? What was your favorite new fact? What was the funniest incident you experienced? What new piece of knowledge are you excited about bringing back to your community?

Last year, several people sent brief descriptions of each of the programs they attended. It made for a wonderful recap of the event!

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Send your entries to:
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