

Sabal minor

A bimonthly newsletter for the members of

THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



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Aug - Sept 2006

August

Yellow warbler migration begins. Blue-winged teal and shorebirds arrive to winter on Florida wetlands and lakes.

Short-tailed shrews are beginning a second round of breeding for the year.

Bass are foraging in shallows in late evenings, early morning and nighttime.

Sebatias and rhexias are still blooming. Check your vacciniums for berries; there may still be some. *Clematis crispa* is still in bloom.

September

Bald eagles return to nest sites and begin courtship. Florida scrub-jay fledglings have lost their brown juvenile plumage and have completely blue heads. Hawks begin migrating.

Atlantic sturgeon begin fall migration from the Suwannee and Apalachicola Rivers to the Gulf of Mexico. Loggerhead turtles leave Florida shores to begin their migrations.

First signs of leaves changing color in the northern parts of the state. Many liatris and dicerandra are blooming, as are the palafoxia. Watch for *Habernaria repens*, too.

Leave a conservation legacy.
Help contribute to the stability
and long-term growth of the FNPS.
Remember us in your will.

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News from the Interim Executive Director, Karina Veaudry

The Florida Native Plant Society has completed an application to become a member of The Everglades Coalition and the Florida Forever Coalition, is in the process of completing two grants, and has a new Chapter to be voted on and approved at the August Board of Directors meeting.

Last May, several new officers and committee members came on board.
Meet your new officers:

Shirley Denton, Ph.D., President, was originally a Virginia native raised by a long-distance hiker Father and an amateur botanist Mother. Experiencing nature and studying plants and flowers was a large part of her childhood. Shirley eventually moved to Michigan where she received four degrees from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Two of the degrees are in Natural Resources and Plant Ecology. Shirley moved to Florida in 1986 to accept a post-doctoral fellowship at the Archbold Biological Station. Scrub, scrubby flatwoods, and flatwoods were new experiences and part of her research. It was at this point that Shirley initially joined FNPS. She has been in Tampa since May of 1988 working at Biological Research Associates as a plant ecologist. Shirley is now a Vice President and Senior Ecologist for this firm. Her hobbies include photography (subject matter is mostly plants, but also wildlife and natural landscapes), paddling, web programming, and hiking.

Lauren Day, Director at Large, is a Gainesville native and has been the Executive Director of Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) since 2003. At ACT she works to protect the area's natural, scenic and historic heritage by purchasing and obtaining donations of land and conservation easements. She has a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from Eckerd College and a master's in Real Estate from the University of Florida. Before working for ACT, Lauren was coordinator for "Greening the University of Florida." When she is not enjoying the outdoors, Lauren works on restoring an older home.

Steve Johnson, Ph.D., Education Committee Chair, is an Assistant Professor of Urban Wildlife Ecology and holds a 60% teaching/40% extension position in the Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at the University of Florida Lake City Campus. Before joining UF, Steve worked as the State Sea Turtle Program Coordinator in North Carolina, and as a research wildlife biologist with the US Geological Survey. At the USGS, he coordinated efforts for the national Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative in the southeastern United States. Steve's area of expertise is natural history and conservation of amphibians and reptiles, and he has worked extensively with imperiled species. He is an associate editor for the journal *Herpetological Review* and member of the Society for Conservation Biology, Herpetologists League, and The Wildlife Society.

George Kish, Director at Large, is an exotic transplant "who escaped from cultivation and has become naturalized in the former Pine Flatwoods in northwest Hillsborough County." Earlier in life, while an undergraduate student, he spent much

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Deadlines for Sabal minor submissions are the 15th day of each of the odd-numbered months (5/15, 7/15, 9/15...)

News from Karina, *cont'd*

time in the New Jersey Pinelands and in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park identifying plants. George earned a B.S. in Biology from Drexel University and a M.S. in Environmental Science from Rutgers University. He is a hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Tampa where he studies the quality of surface water and ground water. George is also an adjunct professor in the USF Department of Environmental Science and Policy along with being a Doctoral student. He is the past president of the Suncoast chapter and frequently gives talks to garden clubs and community groups about native plants and native plant landscape design. He recently collaborated with Dick Wunderlin to prepare a second edition of the book, *The Right Plants for Dry Places*. George spends a large amount of time in his backyard ecosystem garden.

Laurel Schiller, **Director at Large**, has a Bachelor's in wildlife biology from Oregon State University and a Master's in systematics and ecology from Indiana State University. She has completed the Florida Garden Club National Landscape Design Critic and the Florida Master Gardener Programs and is co-owner of a nursery. Since moving to Florida 14 years ago, Laurel's interests have been channeled into preserving the local natural environment. Laurel is Vice-President of the Association of Florida Native Nurseries, Chair of the State Education Committee for the Association, a board member of the Sarasota Tree Advisory Council, and President of the Friends of Oscar Scherer Park. She has recently been reappointed to serve on the Sarasota County Planning Commission. In addition to her work at the nursery, Laurel enjoys designing and restoring native landscapes and speaking about Florida native plants at Selby Gardens and many other groups throughout Southwest Florida.

Paul A. Schmalzer, Ph.D., **Science Committee Chair**, received a B.A. in biology from Western Maryland College and a M.S. and Ph.D. in ecology from the University of Tennessee. He is a plant ecologist with the Dynamac Corporation at the Kennedy Space Center and his current research interests include the effects of fire on vegetation and soils, restoration of scrub ecosystems, distribution of rare scrub plants, and composition and dynamics of barrier island plant communities. Paul's previous research included studies of vegetation and flora of the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee and habitat use by gopher tortoises. He has received certification as a Senior Ecologist by the Ecological Society of America and is a member of the Society of Wetland Scientists, Association of Southeastern Biologists, Southern Appalachian Botanical Society, and other professional societies. He served as editor for *Castanea* (2001-2004) and as Vice Chair, Secretary, and Chair of the Southeastern Chapter of the Ecological Society of America. He serves on the Environmentally Endangered Lands Selection and Management Committee for Brevard County and is the author or coauthor of 44 published papers and technical reports.

Eileen Szuchy, **Publications Committee Chair**, is president of the Sea Rocket chapter. Her degrees are in Environmental Science and Administration and she was certified as a Florida Master Naturalist Instructor in 2005. As the Volunteer Chair for the 2005 FNPS conference, she recruited and coordinated efforts that resulted in more than three hundred volunteer hours. Currently employed by Brevard County, she provides education on marine life in the Indian River Lagoon region, is an eco-tour guide on the St. Johns River and assists the Department of Environmental Protection with plant identification and water quality monitoring for the Coastal & Aquatic Managed Areas program. Eileen worked as Project Manager for Marine Resources Council where she specialized in identifying and acquiring ecologically significant lands. A Florida resident for forty years, Eileen grew up riding horses, going to the beach and sailing, all activities that helped develop her passion for nature's beauty.

In addition to our officers, we have a few new people in supporting roles for the statewide doings of the FNPS:

Paul Rebmann, **Webmaster**, has been a network administrator for the Root Company for ten years, following a twenty-year career as a broadcast radio engineer. Originally from Tennessee, after a brief stint in the Midwest he moved to Florida 23 years ago. Paul is married to Virginia Atkins and they live in Ormond Beach with three spoiled cats. He joined the FNPS about five years ago, is currently Vice-President of the Pawpaw chapter and is also a member of Halifax Audubon, participating in the seasonal bird counts. Paul recently renewed an interest in photography focusing on nature, and enjoys hiking, camping and canoeing. Paul created a website – www.wildflphoto.com – to showcase his photographs and provide information about the flora and fauna of Florida. Nearly 300 plant species are now included on his website, including many that are rare or endemic.

Rosalind Rowe, **Sabal Minor Editor** Rosalind is a currently recovering botany amnesiac (with native plant propensities), who is self-medicating by participating in some vegetation Coarse Filter Surveys for Sarasota County's Environmentally Sensitive Lands Preservation Program, by serving as Plant Records Keeper for Selby Botanical Gardens, and by doing plant descriptions research for the Flora of Virginia Project. She has more desktop publishing experience than is healthy given her condition, and the degree in Information Systems Management may have only made it worse. Rosalind has been in Florida for 10 years now. She wants very much for the *Sabal minor* to be a *newsletter* from members to members and strongly encourages all members of FNPS to submit articles.

Marjorie Shropshire, **Palmetto Editor**, is a native Floridian and has been intrigued by Florida's ecosystems and fauna since childhood. Most of her early years were spent around South Florida's coastal areas, the Florida Keys and the Everglades. Marjorie began painting seriously at an early age and by her college years was focusing her art on birds and natural history subjects. After graduating from the University of Miami, she moved to central Florida, and eventually back to the coast in Martin County. Marjorie has been an advertising Creative Director for more than 20 years, and now owns her own graphic design firm, Shark River Creative. In addition to providing graphic design services, she creates glass mosaic, oil and watercolor paintings, all with themes relating to the natural wonders of Florida. In her spare time she enjoys sailing, collecting books on natural history subjects and sketching. Marjorie is a member of the Florida Society of Botanical Artists, is on the Board of Directors of Audubon of Martin County and volunteers her time to work on several conservation projects including a study of the Federally endangered pawpaw, *Asimina tetramera*.

Some Friends We Have Lost

--but their gifts stay with us...

University of Miami professor **Robert L. Kelley** died Saturday of complications from acute leukemia at the University of Miami Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center. He had lived with leukemia for more than a decade. Bob Kelley, an associate chair and professor in UM's mathematics department, was best known in the community for his work as a conservationist. "Whatever he was doing, he was always celebrating the marvels of mathematics and nature. He sparked an interest in people that had a long-lasting effect," says longtime friend Mary Ann Wilson. He served as president of the Tropical Audubon Society, president emeritus and founder of the Miami Blue Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, and was an active member of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, the Mayan Society and the Dade Native Plant Society. Kelley also took special interest in the University of Miami, where he improved the Otto G. Richter Library's Math Research Library; the John C. Gifford Arboretum, and programs within the Frost School of Music. He remained active until his death, at age 69.

A celebration of life is planned for 3 pm August 20, at the Tropical Audubon Society, 5530 Sunset Drive, Miami.

Dr. Kathy Burks, passed away peacefully at her home on Thursday, June 8th, after an all-too-brief, three month fight with cancer. A dear, cherished friend admired by many of us, Dr. Burks was an active FNPS member and botanist who contributed immensely to native preservation efforts and invasive non-native plant eradication efforts in Florida. A Memorial Service was held in Tallahassee at 11 am on Wednesday, June 14th.

If you would like to view the notice of Kathy's passing on-line or review or sign her guestbook, go to <http://www.legacy.com/tallahassee/DeathNotices.asp> and search by the date June 10th or by her last name.

A is for Asclepias, or Tales from Native Conversions

Beda Kantarjian

Last October, we planted a "Topical Milkweed" that by April had hosted three generations of monarch butterflies each time getting stripped down to its stems. I wanted to highlight this lovely plant in the Species Spotlight, and learned some surprising facts as I prepared to write my article.

My adventure began when the first Monarch deposited her eggs within days of planting my *Asclepias*. Milkweed is the only plant monarchs can eat. Caterpillars rely on the leaves for sustenance, and as butterflies, extract nectar from the blooms. The leaves contain toxins that don't hurt the caterpillar, but make it and the butterfly poisonous to most predators. About a week after finding tiny, white eggs on the leaves, we had striped caterpillars munching on them. In December, with the caterpillar count at twenty-two, I took some to a friend with a milkweed plant. There simply wasn't enough left of our milkweed to feed them all.

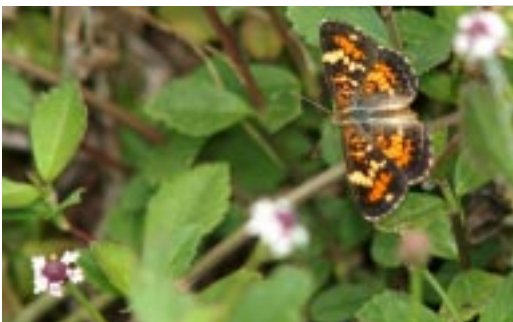
Milkweed also entices swallowtails, painted ladies, American ladies, red admirals, fritillaries, and hairstreaks for nectaring.

It is not only butterflies that make use of this versatile plant. If you are lucky, hummingbirds and hummingbird clearwing moths will also pay visits to your garden. The fluffy, buoyant part of the seed was used by Native Americans to insulate moccasins and by the military during WWII to stuff life jackets. Pioneers used sap as a cure for warts and the seedpods as Christmas tree decorations.

Tropical milkweed [*Asclepias curassavica*?] does well in Central Florida and is incredibly resilient. However, since I started writing this article about my favorite Florida native plant, I have learned that it may not fit the definition of a native. New to the native plants world, and perhaps over-enthusiastic, I relied on the Floridagardner.com website at <http://www.nsis.org/garden/family/milkweed.html>, which lists this plant as a Florida native. Only later did I discover the FNPS definition at <http://www.fnps.org/pages/plants/definition.php>, and was a bit shocked to find my favorite milkweed was not on their list.

On the plus side, while there I found several lovely, vigorous, true native plants that will soon go alongside my scarlet milkweed.

Ed. Note: Every one of us has experienced this, putting our hearts into sponsoring a native plant only to discover it was not! Thanks for sharing this with us, Beda -- and for becoming an FNPS member. -RR



Phyciodes phaon Favors *Phyla*

Linda and Buck Cooper

Phaon Crescent (*Phyciodes phaon*) is a small sprite of a butterfly, easily overlooked. It is widespread in Florida and closely tied to its host plant *Phyla nodiflora*. This native plant has a lot of names - Creeping Charlie, Fog Fruit, Match Plant, Capeweed, Frog Fruit, Turkey Tangle Fog Fruit, Matchheads - take your pick! Phaon Crescent flies low to the ground and uses *Phyla* as both a nectar and larval source. Many other small butterflies also find it an attractive for nectar. The plant is easily transplanted and is a very nice groundcover.

One Tarflower Member's Recap of the 2006 State Conference

Daniela DeBiase

The Annual FNPS Conference is always a highlight of the year. This year's programs focused attention on developing partnerships so as to preserve Florida's environment, from back yards to backwoods.

For our Thursday field trip, Jean Vasicek and I chose Lyonia Preserve. One scrub jay perched on my baseball cap, jumped down to my arm and started pecking my thumb. Scrub jays can live to be 25 years old. Did this one remember being fed by me a few years back? Perhaps a thumb resembles a peanut? Since I was last here, the practice of feeding the jays has been discontinued because of the problems it caused for the jays and for people. For instance, as we ate our lunch under a picnic pavilion, we watched one group of jays defend the area from all other birds and swoop down like gulls to pick up any scrap that didn't make it into one of our mouths -- and some of those scraps probably had nutrients that shouldn't be part of their diet. Though this population of scrub jays, the largest in the state at around 170, was the main attraction, it was pointed out that this site was part of the relic sand dune named the Lake Wales Ridge, which extends from Ocala to Lake Wales.

We spent Friday and Saturday trying to be in three places at once. Here are a few points that stuck with me:

1. From *Scale Insects: Pests of Ornamental and Native Plants*; there are at least 12,500 insect species in Florida. 8% are invasive and they invaded Florida with an appetite! (In the U.S., there are 90,000 species, 2% are invasive.) Also, an oil concoction of 2 tbs of vegetable oil to 1 gal water works well on scale insects when applied 2 times within 2 ½ weeks.

2. I learned the difference between conservation easement and "pay as you go." (Ask me if you also would like to know.) Also, Ernie Cox, a lawyer with his heart in the woods, helped develop an incentive-based system that encourages voluntary preservation of natural areas, where credits are given to land owners who have listed species on property zoned for agriculture. So instead of punishing offenders, this system rewards conservation, and the one with the most listed species on his land wins! The result? Planned growth in rural areas and family heritage remembered. (Good for FNPS members also.)

4. Dr. Ann Cox, Ernie's mother, gave an update on the Warea Tract, a small parcel of land in Lake County managed by the Division of Forestry. When the Tarflower chapter took a field trip there last summer, there were hundreds of *Warea amplexifolia* blooming in clumps between patches of *Paronychia rugelii*. This year there were none! So Ann has more questions than answers.

5. During *General Ideas on Plant Nutrition and Fertilizer Use*, Dr. Terrence Fullerton stressed the judicious use of fertilizers and manures in agriculture to improve crop production and minimize pollution. He also warned us that it is necessary for less-developed populations to eat. As I began wondering what this had to do with native plants, he made the connection -- a starving population will ravage the land in an attempt to feed itself, so conservation of native plants in those areas can only happen if we help the people learn about site-specific fertilizers, pesticides and crop management.

6. Richard Louv, a newspaper columnist for the San Diego Union Tribune and author of *Last Child in the Woods*, made us remember a time when children played and rode bikes in the woods. There's something almost primordial about "the woods" that we need to be communicating to the next generation, not our pessimism. As they are the generation that will inherit the job of fixing things here, they cannot consider the task hopeless beyond repair.

7. A panel discussion on *Plant Genetics and Biodiversity* concluded that there will probably be more discussions before any conclusions are reached. David Drylie, AFNN Board Member, with a native landscaping business in Christmas, FL, stressed a need to balance the needs of landscapers and home owners with the concerns of genetic scientists. I'm not sure, but I think a consensus was reached that there is less need for concern if rare or endemic native plants are out of their range and in urban yards that don't interface with natural areas?

8. Dr. Gil Nelson's talk was a kaleidoscope of color and colorful anecdotes. What a pleasure to sit back and enjoy the scenery!

9. Dr. Walter Taylor received the 2006 Mentor Award; this is the highest award a member can receive from FNPS. Sid Taylor of the Hernando Chapter received a 2006 Green Palmetto Award for education. If you handed in your paper, you were considered for a prize in the Plant ID Contest; a scientist with FNAI won first place and Dr. Taylor won second prize.

Thanks Paw Paw and Lyonia Chapters for a great conference and a fantastic time. Too bad it ended so soon!

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