

Serenoa Notes

The Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

February 2013

Hickory Lake Scrub –Fran Palmeri

Imagine yourself in a room full of Old Master paintings hung on the walls and strewn around the floor. The experience is the same at Hickory Lake Scrub Preserve in Polk County. You don't have to hike miles to see an endangered plant. From one spot in the sand pine (*Pinus clausa*) scrub many of the Preserve's twelve imperiled plants are within view or underfoot.

"I hardly knew where to put my feet!" said Cathy Page, on last September's Serenoa field trip. On trails provided through this small parcel, we stepped gingerly through papery whitlow wort (*Paronychia chartacea*), spike moss (*Selaginella arenicola*) and reindeer lichen (*Cladonia* sp.). The endemics know no bounds. They spill onto the trails and crisscross the service road. Tread softly (*Cnidosolus stimulosus*) was in evidence too and long spines of prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia humifusa*) impaled anyone within reach. A lubber grasshopper chewed on scrub blazing star (*Liatris ohlingerae*), unaware it was dining on one of the world's most endangered plants. Rare scrub lizards skittered behind the short leaf rosemary (*Conradina brevifolia*) and an eastern cottontail disappeared under a sand pine. Royals and commoners at home with each other. They all used to be common before scrub was destroyed and replaced by citrus groves. Less than 10% of this beautiful habitat remains.

Purchased in 1997, Hickory Lake Scrub was the first of Polk County's environmentally sensitive lands (ESLOC) with a full management plan, Tabitha Biehl, our trip leader told us. She's the County's Environmental Lands Stewardship Coordinator. A former dumping ground purchased from a private owner, it has been transformed into an oasis of five different habitats, including one of the last remaining seepage bogs. Though

Continued on page 4

Monthly meetings at Selby Gardens:

Every third Monday.
811 South Palm Ave. Sarasota.
Doors open at 7:00 p.m,
business meeting at 7:30,
followed by program.
Everyone welcome!

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Hickory Lake Scrub:

Near right:
Florida bonamia

Far right:
Papery whitlow wort



PHOTOS BY FRAN PALMERI



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Visit our chapter on the Florida
Native Plant society website:
www.fnps.org

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Message from the President , Tom Heitzman

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself—or should I say reintroduce myself—and briefly outline my goals as your new president of the Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. Thank you for your support in electing me to take the leadership in running our chapter. I am truly committed to promoting the use and knowledge of Florida's native plants. Being a member of FNPS since 1986 and owning one of our local native nurseries shows my level of interest. During my tenure, one of my goals is to continue to increase awareness of Florida native plants. Another is to increase our chapter membership by enlisting new members and also encouraging past members to rejoin. I would also like to see more membership participation in our meetings and the many public service events we are involved with. Your board of directors works very hard to obtain speakers, schedule field trips and organize events but we cannot do it alone. Participation from you the membership is what makes us a stronger group. I encourage everyone to attend these events and volunteer as needed whenever possible. There is always something new to learn, something new to see and friends to enjoy it with. I look forward to a great year.



PHOTOS BY TOM HEITZMAN



Richard Beaupre's Garden—above, in 2006; below, in 2011

Congratulations to Our Members!

—Fran Palmeri

Richard's Garden

Richard Beaupre's garden has won St Petersburg's "Home of the Year Beautification" award. The award was presented to him by the City Beautiful Commission which was formed in 1961 to further activities to beautify the city. His garden was chosen by two professional landscape architects from outside St Petersburg as an outstanding example of landscaping, unique garden design and maintenance.

Serenoans will have an opportunity to visit Richard's garden on May 11, during the last field trip of the season. Mark your calendars!

Congratulations, Richard! (See photos on page 2.)

Local Nursery Wins Top Award

The Florida Native Plant Society's presented its annual Award of Excellence for Habitat Restoration to the Florida Native Plants Nursery for its back dune restoration project at the White Sands Cabana Club in Sarasota. Landscape experts from across the state decided on the winner.

The three-year project restored one of the last, large back dune ecosystems on Siesta Key, whose crystal white sandy beaches have been designated the Number #1 Beach in the USA by Doctor Beach. It was a twelve-year cooperative effort of private/public entities according to Van Carlise, President of White Sands.

Laurel Schiller, co-owner of the Nursery designed the project and oversaw all the work. The goal was to recreate plantings indigenous to a Siesta Key back dune ecosystem. The work included removal of all invasive tree species, planting native vegetation approved by Sarasota County and supervising during the establishment period and for the three-year maintenance period after establishment.

Congratulations to Florida Native Plants Nursery!

Left: White Sands Cabana Restoration in Progress

Right: Completed White Sands Cabana Restoration

PHOTOS BY FRAN PALMERI



PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI



Scrub blazing star with sulphur butterfly

PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI



Sandlace

Hickory Lake Scrub *continued from page 1*

it's only 57 acres, it has the largest representation of rare plants and animals of Polk's ESLOC lands.

Restoration of the park was a multi-step process. Removal of invasive exotic plants was the first order of the day and then portions were roller chopped and burned in small units. "A sand pine's strategy is to produce cones in huge numbers which give up their seeds in fire. It sounds like popcorn!" Tabitha told the Serenoans. The seeds stored as part of the rare plant conservation program at Bok Tower is the county's "insurance policy" against any catastrophic loss of rare plants.

Burning works! Once I visited the preserve in late winter, to find a whole grove of large leaf pawpaw (*Asimina obovata*) in bloom among charred trunks of saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*). I had noticed the place a couple of years ago driving down County Road 17. A maintenance man mowing at the trailhead said "Not much to see but there's a nice view of the lake" he said, hoping to dissuade me from a lengthy hike. I walked through an area of red maple (*Acer rubrum*), saw palmetto, blueberry (*Vaccinium* sp.), fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*) and bracken fern (*Pteridium* sp.). The "view of a lake" was obscured by cattails (*Typha* sp.). Where's the scrub? I was thinking. I went on to find pink mimosa vine (*Mimosa quadrivalvis*) and grape vines (*Vitis* sp.) slathered over dahoon holly (*Ilex cassine*). Then around the bend wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*) and rusty lyonia (*Lyonia ferruginea*) gave me hope. Such an abrupt change, I thought, but remembered that when botanist John Kunkel Small explored the state in the early 1900's he found that scrub can be separated from pine flatwoods by mere feet.

And so it was. Step by step I moved into scrub with its signature white sand and then suddenly, pink clumps of scrub blazing star and sand lace (*Polygonella myriophylla*), a J. K. Small "discovery," appeared. Stepping in to photograph them I almost impaled myself on prickly pear cactus. Distracted by a dragonfly who obliged me by lighting on a myrtle oak (*Quercus myrtifolia*) I stopped to photograph it.

All this time I was missing the main event. Finally I took in a ground cover of vines running every which way and huge blue blooms of scrub morning glory or Florida bonamia (*Bonamia grandiflora*)—a state and federally endangered plant.

So, on the September field trip I was hoping the bonamia would not let me down. It didn't. The scrub morning glory wowed the group with huge pale blue flowers scattered here and there among many seedpods, harbinger of next year's crop.

If you would like to visit Hickory Lake Scrub Preserve take State Road 64 from I75 east to Avon Park (63 miles). Turn left (North) on State Road 27. Drive 6 miles, crossing into Polk County and turn right on County Road 17 (Scenic Highway) to the Preserve.

Left: Cathy Page in scrub at Hickory Lake Preserve



PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI

A New Exotic Pest Insect: The Sri Lanka Weevil

Myllocerus undecimpustulatus undatus

(There are taxonomic changes with this weevil)

—Nancy West

There has been a lot of information published recently about this weevil, but in case you missed it, here is some more information. This small whitish weevil is originally from Sri Lanka and arrived in Florida in 2000 and has spread rapidly. It is a serious pest in India and Pakistan. It feeds on wide range of plants and has been identified as eating on 81+ species here in Florida. It is here, in my yard, where it has preference for marlberry, *Ardisia escallonioides*, necklace pod, *Sophora tomentosa* var. *truncata*, tough bumelia, *Sideroxylon tenax*, Live Oak, *Quercus virginiana*, and yellowtop, *Flaveria linearis*. Most of the damage is cosmetic but annoying. I have some other native plants listed in the 81+ species above in my yard, but so far, the weevil has not chewed on them. As of right now, there are no good homeowner control measures.

The weevil hides under the bottom of the leaf and when disturbed, drops to the ground. It does fly, even though some articles indicate that they do not. The larvae live in the ground or in pots, which is probably how it spread so rapidly.

There is also a native white weevil with spots called the Little Leaf Notcher, *Artipus floridanus*. For more information and to compare the two species see articles below.

<http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/Hort/GardenPubsAZ/Insects/SriLankaweevil.pub.pdf>

<http://www.freshfromflorida.com/pi/enpp/ento/entcirc/ent412.pdf>

<http://sarasota-hort.blogspot.com/2011/04/sri-lanka-weevils-are-back.html>



PHOTO BY NANCY WEST

Sri Lanka Weevil



PHOTO BY NANCY WEST

Damage by Weevil, left to right: Marlberry, necklace pod, tough bumelia

Reminder: Stay Involved with Invasives

Please don't forget that there are two Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMA's) within the four-county area our Sere-noa Chapter represents. The Suncoast CISMA includes Sarasota, Manatee, Hillsborough and Pinellas counties while the Heartland CISMA includes the central ridge and Hardee and Desoto counties. Please be sure to visit the website www.floridainvasives.org for up to date information on what these public/private partnerships have to offer in the way of education, workshops and workdays to combat invasive exotic species here in the Florida. We can't afford to be complacent about how serious the threat of invasive species is to our native plants, animals and natural communities. Stay current and stay involved!

Species Spotlight—The Pines of Southwest Florida

—Elizabeth Gandy

For our last fieldtrip, our Serenoa chapter was treated to a hike through Sarasota County's Curry Creek Preserve. Jeff Weber, land manager and botanist expertly guided us through portions of the 80-acre preserve to highlight the population of longleaf pines (*Pinus palustris*) that has been protected there. While pines are not uncommon in Sarasota County, though becoming more rare every day, longleaf pines are a rarity. The pines most commonly seen in our area are south Florida slash pines (*Pinus elliottii* var. *densa*).

Call for Photos!

It seems the website for our local chapter does not have any photos of our chapter happenings. If anyone has any photos of fieldtrips, events that our members have participated in or special places in our four-county area, please send them to Nancy West at ncywest@mac.com. Please be sure to include photo credit and when and where the photo was taken.

There are several reasons for the rarity of longleaf pines in our area, such as logging, lack of appropriate habitat and development. Longleaf pine yields excellent wood so has always been very desirable for timber. Once longleaf pines were removed from an area, if the right conditions for germination and persistence of longleaf such as the correct fire regime and hydrology were no longer there, the trees would not re-establish. Development has historically targeted the highest and driest sites in any area first which is where longleaf pines typically like to grow. South Florida slash pines are not quite as specialized in their needs so they have often grown in where longleaf once were or have persisted in areas where they have always been more prevalent.

The question we all had on our fieldtrip was the same one most people in this area often ask when craning their necks to admire a beautiful pine—which one is it—slash or longleaf? Well, if you made the fieldtrip, you got to see some textbook examples of the two giants side by side. This is really the best way to learn I think, but is rarely possible. To help us in our lofty quest to answer which one is which, Jeff Weber was kind

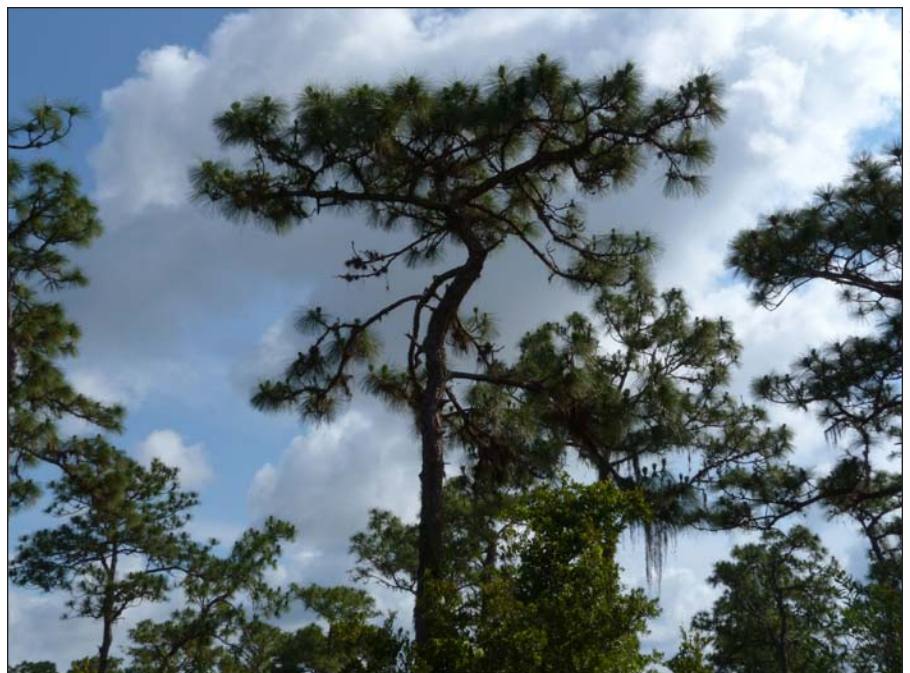


PHOTO BY ERAN PALMERI

Mature longleaf pine



Mature slash pines

enough to provide us with a table to compare the attributes of each side by side. So, next time you hit the trails, take it as a guide to help you decide for yourself—slash or longleaf?

	Longleaf Pine	Slash Pine
Terminal bud	Stout, white “candle” covered with silvery-white scales	Slender and covered with silvery-brown scales
Needles	8-18” long, in bundles of 3, (rarely 4 or 5) arranged in round tuft at ends of twigs	8-12” long, in bundles of 2 or 3; arranged along twigs
Twigs	Very stout (thumb-width)	Slender, noticeably thinner than longleaf
Seed cones	6-10+ inches long	2-6 inches long

Education Materials

While everyone is encouraged to visit the statewide FNPS website regularly, be sure to stay up to date on what resources are available there. Click on the “Resources” tab at the top of the page to access information on natural communities, native plants best suited for landscaping in our area, interpretive trail sites, recommended reading and an entire page of downloadable documents. The documents page has a section of presentations put together by the education committee of information on specific native plants. These can be viewed online as well as downloaded. These are a must-see for very specific info on culture, life-history, ethnobotanical uses and photos. Check it out at <http://fnps.org/resources/resources!>

Florida's Water and Land Legacy –Elizabeth Gandy

As many of you may already know, funding for land conservation and preservation programs like Florida Forever has been routinely diverted into the General Revenue Fund for the last several years by the state legislature, essentially leaving them defunded. These critical programs have historically provided funding to purchase, improve and maintain public conservation lands in Florida. In an effort to provide dedicated funding for protection of our natural areas, a coalition of conservation groups in Florida like Sierra Club, the Trust for Public Land and Florida Wildlife Federation have united to get a constitutional amendment on the ballot for 2014 that would do just that.

It is called the Florida Water and Land Conservation Amendment. The amendment, if passed would require that the Land Acquisition Trust Fund would receive no less than 33% of the net revenues from document excise taxes (“doc stamps” as they are often called) for a period of twenty years. These revenues would not be able to be diverted anywhere else. They would be solely for the purpose of purchasing, protecting, restoring and maintaining public conservation lands and waters. Sounds great doesn't it?

There is a catch—to get the amendment on the ballot 676,811 verified signatures have to be gathered. Apparently that translates to about 1 million signatures to ensure that the correct number of verified ones is reached. Whew! That is a lot! The effort is already underway and help is being sought not only for your signature, but for help with gathering signatures. Please certainly sign the petition but if you are able to lend an extra hand and volunteer to gather signatures from others, please consider doing so. This amendment would go a long way toward protecting what natural treasures we have left in Florida. For more information, please visit the website at www.FloridaWaterLandLegacy.org.

Your Support is Needed!

The Sarasota County Commission has recently voted to revisit Sarasota 2050, a plan approved in 2002 to outline requirements for large, higher density developments in rural parts of the county. It requires certain amounts of open space, certain housing types and requires that the developments pay the full cost of government services they receive. Developers have complained to the commission that the plan in its current state is unworkable, i.e. not profitable enough for them in the current economic climate. There will be an opportunity for public involvement at several meetings before the commission votes on this. They are not official public hearings, but Preliminary Public Engagement Meetings. They will be at Twin Lakes Park in the Green Building Conference Room, 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota, FL 34241 on Wednesday, March 13, 2013 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm and Wednesday, March 20, 2013 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. We are pleased to see these are in the evening when more people are likely to be able to attend. Please make an effort to attend to show our support for smarter, greener development in Sarasota County.

Call for Volunteers!

The board of the local Serenoa Chapter (that's us) is looking for help from volunteers interested in joining the board to chair the following committees:

CONSERVATION—It is the responsibility of the Conservation Committee to report conservation, restoration and preservation related issues to the Board of Directors and, when directed, to create communications to appropriate agencies for transmission by the Serenoa Chapter president.

HISTORICAL RECORDS—It is the responsibility of the Historical Records Committee to maintain copies of all official documents and publications produced by the Serenoa Chapter after receiving them from the Serenoa Chapter Secretary.

INFORMATION/INTERNET TECHNOLOGY BACK-UP—This person would serve as a back-up to our current Internet Technology Boardmember, Bruce Holst, to assure the timely electronic transmission of Chapter announcements and materials. Bruce does an excellent job but as he is very popular and in demand around the world as an extension of his position at Selby Gardens, an alternate person would be helpful.

If you think you are interested, please contact Tom Heitzman at tom@sweetbaynursery.com.

The purpose of the Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. Please be sure to regularly visit the website at www.FNPS.org for current information about statewide projects, grants and issues that may need your support to address. There are also numerous ways to stay involved and further the message and the mission of the Native Plant Society. Be sure to attend monthly meetings and fieldtrips of our local Serenoa chapter to learn about our local plants and stay current on issues that affect them. Information on our local chapter is available at <http://serenoa.fnpschapters.org/>.

See page 10 for all upcoming events—both ours and those sponsored by like-minded organizations!

FNPS Membership Enrollment

Serenoa Chapter Newsletter

Name _____ E-mail _____ Phone (day) _____
Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Membership number, if renewing _____ **Dues:** ___ Life: \$1,000 ___ Donor: \$250 ___ Business or corporate: \$125
 ___ Supporting: \$100 ___ Contributing: \$75 ___ Not-for-profit organization: \$50 ___ Family or household: \$50
 ___ Individual: \$35 ___ Full-time student: \$15 ___ Library subscription: \$100
Payment: ___ Check/MO ___ Visa ___ MC ___ Discover
Check/Money Order # _____ Please do not mail cash. Make Checks payable to FNPS
Credit Card # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ Exp. Date _____ 3-digit CV code on back _____
Name on card _____
Billing address and zip code if different from above _____

Credit card payments can be faxed to (815) 361-9166; or mail this form to: FNPS, PO Box 278, Melbourne, FL 32902-0278

Florida Native Plant Society Membership benefits: *Serenoa Notes* newsletter, Member discounts at events, subscription to the quarterly magazine *Palmetto*, Bi-monthly newsletter *Sabal Minor*

Join Now! Come to the meetings and field trips—learn about conservation, and native habitat

Events Calendar

Monthly general meetings at Selby Gardens: Every third Monday, Sept. through May at 7:00 p.m.; speaker begins at 7:30. Selby Botanical Gardens Activity Center, 811 South Palm Avenue, Sarasota. Everyone welcome!

Carpool Meeting Points: BRADENTON: Twelve Oaks Plaza, Bank of America building, on SR 70, 1/4 mile west of I-75.
SARASOTA: DaRuMa in Sarasota Crossings shopping center (5459 Fruitville Road).

- Mar 2** SATURDAY, 10AM–2PM—FLORIDA FRIENDLY FAMILY FESTIVAL. Sutton Park, Palmetto. Come enjoy the Florida friendly vendors, landscape demonstrations, science and education displays, food and get a tour of Florida's first green street. Serenoa Chapter will have a booth and native plant sale. Volunteers needed!! Free Event.
- Mar 3** SUNDAY, 6:30 PM (*film screening begins at sunset*)—FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR FILM PREMIERE Tampa Bay History Center, Cotanchobee Park, 801 Old Water Street, Tampa, Florida 33602. Bring your chairs and picnic blankets and join the Florida Wildlife Corridor team as they celebrate the premiere of Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition: Everglades to Okefenokee, a film by Elam Stoltzfus. Visit TampaBayHistoryCenter.org or call 813.228.0097 for more information. Visit www.FloridaWildlifeCorridor.org to learn more about the Florida Wildlife Corridor project and expedition.
- Mar 9** SATURDAY, 9 AM–12 PM—BAY GUARDIANS VOLUNTEER NATIVE PLANTING. Jiggs Landing, 6106 63rd St E Bradenton, FL 34203. Team up with Manatee County Natural Resources Department and Around the Bend Nature Tours for a native planting. Registration is required! Contact Sara Kane at sara@sarasotabay.org or 941-955-8085.
- Mar 18** GENERAL MEETING 7 P.M.—A LA CARTE. Ever wonder what gopher tortoises and scrub jays EAT? Nancy Edmondson, Land Manager of Manasota Scrub Preserve will lay out their vegetarian menus for us.
- Mar 23** FIELD TRIP 9 A.M.—MANASOTA SCRUB PRESERVE. Sarasota County. Nancy Edmondson will lead a walk through scrub which has one of the few stands of rosemary in Sarasota County; take a side trip to a maple swamp.
- Apr 4-5** THURSDAY–FRIDAY: THE NATIVE PLANT TRADE SHOW—Hosted by the Florida Association of Native Nurseries (FANN) www.thenativeplantshow.com Kissimmee, FL. This is a Trade Show, the first all native plant trade show. It is open to everyone but targets Florida native plant growers and green industries and landscapers. Continuing Education Credits are available in certain fields. Entry is \$10 by March 1, \$25 thereafter
- Apr 5-6** FRIDAY 2-6, SAT, 8–2: FIRST ANNUAL CENTRAL FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SALE—Osceola Heritage Park, 1875 Silver Spur Lane, Kissimmee. Central Florida chapters of FNPS (Pine Lily, Conradina, Tarflower & Heartland) plant sale open for the public. They will have over 1000 plants for sale and all proceeds benefit the chapters.
- Apr 15** GENERAL MEETING 7 P.M.—A WILD PLACE IN THE BIG CITY. We'll learn how Boyd Hill Nature Preserve, a 245 acre park with five ecosystems in St. Petersburg came to be.
- Apr 21** SUNDAY, 2–6, SATURDAY, 8–2—EARTH DAY CELEBRATION. Oscar Scherer State Park, Osprey. Come celebrate Earth Day at Oscar Scherer State Park with live music, kids activities, environmental booths and lots of other great activities. Entry is free. Visit website for more info at www.floridastateparks.org.
- May 11** FIELD TRIP 9 A.M.—SPRING FLING IN ST. PETE. Pinellas County, A ranger-led tour of Boyd Hill Nature Preserve will be followed by a visit to Richard Beaupre's beautiful garden, followed by lunch in the garden.
- May 13** GENERAL MEETING 7 P.M.—Conserving "Paradise." Dr. Mary Jelks will talk about her many years as a conservationist in Sarasota and what the future for the state looks like.
- May 16-19** THE 33RD ANNUAL FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY CONFERENCE—University of North Florida in Jacksonville, Ixia Chapter, host. <http://www.fnps.org/conference/2013> Field trips will be held on Thursday May 16th and on Sunday May 19th. The heart of the conference is on Friday and Saturday with keynote speakers, educational sessions, book signings, and networking with fellow native plant enthusiasts. Native plant nurseries will also offer their beautiful natives for sale on Friday and Saturday.