



Monthly meetings at Selby Gardens:

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

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Elizabeth Jensen
discussing saltwort
on Don Pedro Island,
Charlotte Harbor
Estuary field trip.

Serenoa Notes

The Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

September, 2007

Following in the Footsteps of Andre Michaux —Bob and Trish Egolf

One of our favorite luminaries, whom we have had the honor of meeting in the Florida Native Plant Society, is Walter Kingsley Taylor. He's a real character—very down-to-earth and friendly. In 2006 he was awarded the highest honor FNPS can bestow, the Mentor Award. His book on Florida wildflowers, *The Guide to Florida Wildflowers* (1992, Taylor Trade Publishing, \$26.95) is a color-coded collection of photographs and descriptions. His earlier book, *Florida Wildflowers in Their Natural Communities* (1998, The University Press of Florida, \$24.95) is a "must have" if you're on a field trip. A few years ago we were on a field trip in search of the Red-Cockaded Woodpeckers of the Withlacoochee State Forrest. We were in a sandhill community. Just about every plant we encountered was in that section of his book. It was like having a program and score card of the forest. We were able to identify plants we didn't even expect to find.

At the Daytona conference, we heard Dr. Taylor mention that we might want to find some information on Andre Michaux. At his year's conference we bought a copy of Dr. Taylor's *Andre Michaux in Florida*,

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Congratulations to Serenoa Members Recognized at the FNPS Conference

Go to the following website to see photos of landscape awards:
http://www.fnps.org/pages/programs/programpg_no_pic.php?key word=Landscape

Commercial Landscape Award Ugarte & Associates, Inc.; Allen Garner & Associates—designers; Charlie & Patsy Ugarte—owners; Tom Heitzman, Sweetbay Nursery—contractor.

Ecosystem Restoration 2nd Place—Felts Audubon Preserve. Felts Audubon Preserve Restoration, Manatee County Audubon Society and Florida Department of Environmental Protection—designers; contractors & maintenance; Manatee County Audubon Society—Owner Ecosystem

And the best of Awards:

FNPS Mentor Award MIKE KENTON received the 2007 Mentor Award. This is the highest award a member can receive from FNPS.



Officers & Committees

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Margaret Dahl
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Dave Feagles
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Visit our chapter on the Florida
Native Plant society website:
www.fnps.org

Add your email address to the
FNPS eco-action alert list by send-
ing an email to info@fnps.org

Websites

Shop Online and Raise Funds for FNPS The next time you would like to shop online for books, movies, music, electronics, house wares, gifts or any other item, check out [Giveline.com](http://www.giveline.com). Giveline.com is an online store created for the community-minded shopper. When you purchase a needed item, a portion of your purchase (an average of 16%) will be donated to FNPS. Review the store by clicking on the following link: http://www.giveline.com/default.asp?v=V0226_26901 (This link notifies the Giveline to record your purchase for FNPS)

Florida Plant Selection Website Want to know what will grow in your specific yard, shade, sun, wet, dry, etc., then this the site for you. You can also design your yard interactively. Has non-natives, but you can select for natives only. <http://www.floridayards.org/>

Things NOT to worry about: No Brown Recluse Spiders in Florida
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN576>

Evil Weevil biocontrol update: <http://news.ifas.ufl.edu/story.aspx?id=1236>

Worse than kudzu—Cogon grass: <http://news.ufl.edu/2007/07/05/cogongrass/>

Toxicity of Coral Bean, *Erythrina herbacea*—whew! Not as bad as we thought <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/poison/Erythhe.htm>

“Botany in a Day, The Patterns Method of Plant Identification” Thomas J. Elpel http://www.hopspress.com/Books/Botany_in_a_Day.htm

The Muscadine Grape— *Vitis Rotundifolia*

—Paul Wills

The native muscadine grape can make its own way in the world without human help, thank you. In untold thousands, it grows in wooded areas, on roadsides, stream banks, fence rows and other wild places, defying our heat, humidity and spectrum of diseases. But this grape (*Vitis rotundifolia*) pays off well when brought into home landscapes and given a little attention. Then, look for it to shine.

Because of its delicious fruit—much different from store-bought bunch grapes—the best wild vines have been crossed and recrossed into a huge family of cultivated vines. For landscaping, the wild ones and the cultivated kinds are interchangeable.

The fruit of the wild ones will be dark purple and likely somewhat sour. The cultivated ones were chosen by plantsmen mainly for the large size, heavy crops and good taste of the fruit. These come in purple kinds, called muscadines or bullaces (after an English plum which they resemble) and bronze types, often called *scuppernongs* from the language of the North Carolina Indian tribe where they were discovered by English colonists.

No matter the color and whether called scuppernongs, bullaces or muscadines, all are equally *Vitis rotundifolia* grapes. In the wild, they grow only in the South, from about Maryland to the tip of Florida, able to resist the heat, humidity and diseases that make it hard to impossible to grow the bunch grapes of New England and California.

The fruit skins are thick, the seeds large and the taste delicious and undescribable. The grapes don't grow in bunches, but in small clusters or even singly. They are so delicate to harvest that rarely are they found in markets, and then only at ferocious prices.

In the wild, the muscadine (*Vitis rotundifolia*) produces dark purple fruits that are likely to be somewhat sour. But here and there, a vine may be found with delicious fruit, produced in acceptable quantity. Dozens of these have been found over the years, and from them plantsmen have produced many named cultivars.

The muscadine vine is suitable to screen backyard fences, provide windbreaks and shade, block out unsightly views and produce the marble-sized fruit eagerly harvested by wildlife, unless the homeowner gets there first. In our own backyard, I have two bronze cultivated vines to shade an outdoor bench, and two wild ones to be formed into an adjoining trellis. I fully expect a variety of birds, plus squirrels and especially raccoons, to get most of my grapes, which ripen in July and August.

The vines, once trellised, don't demand much care—just a bit of pruning to keep them in bounds, a bit of fertilizing and if aphids attack fresh, new growth, a hard spray of water to wash them away. The leaves drop before winter—with a small show of yellow fall color—leaving bare vines



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada. Vol. 2: 509.



continued on next page

Gardening for Wildlife Homescape Tour—2007

All About the Birds and the Bees

Saturday, November 17th, 9-4

Cost is \$10.00 per carload; proceeds go to participating environmental groups. Pick up maps to homes and wildlife gardening information the day of the event at Cedar Point Environmental Park's Nature Center, 2300 Placida Road Englewood FL 34224.

Two South Sarasota County and two North Charlotte County homeowners have opened their yards to the public. Jean and Jerry Becker's and Jack Taylor's properties could qualify as micro-parks, both with different approaches. Linda Wilson's smaller yard's focal point is a pond with koi. Marly Watko's house is a good example of how to fit a larger home into the landscape rather than clearing, building and leaving just a few specimen trees. Some of these yards are Backyard Wildlife Habitat certified by the National Wildlife Federation, which means they provide food, water, cover and a place to raise their young.

For more information, contact Laurel Schiller at the Florida Native Plant Nursery, (941) 322-1915 or Bobbi Rodgers at Cedar Point Environmental Park (941) 475-0769.

Does Martha Know About This?

—Joe Pyeweed

My first native plant project was a bird garden planted at least 12 feet from the house, in front of a nice size window. Over the years, it has grown to provide a complete privacy screen. There is a path between the foundation plantings and this area. The real bonus is the entertainment provided by the birds, butterflies, snakes, dragonflies and multitude of insects. The original anchor plants were three yaupon hollies, a christmas berry and a few spartina. Its present day state includes a saltbush, muhly grass, goldenrod, ironweed and a coral bean.

Recently, after removing a valance to have a window repaired, I thought—why bother to replace the valance, privacy is not an issue. Now, this window lets the outdoors in.

Next time you're trying to decide on a window treatment, use Mother Nature as your designer and consider a living window with a grouping of our fabulous natives! It's a good thing.

The Muscadine Grape, *continued*

to form an interesting net over your patio, garden bench or back porch.

The bronze scuppernong has its own interesting history. Only one bronze type has ever been found in the wild. This discovery by Europeans occurred in the 1500s when Sir Walter Raleigh brought a shipload of English men and women to start a colony on Roanoke Island off the North Carolina coast. They noticed and began growing the particularly delicious bronze grapes.

All the English in the Roanoke colony vanished for reasons still not certain, but the bronze grapes were bred into many improved varieties that we have today. And the "mother vine" that supplied the original cuttings to propagate the bronze vine was said to be still producing fruit in the Tarheel state 20 years ago, some 350 years after its discovery.

As already noted, the muscadine is one tough vine.

Serenoa Chapter Fall Plant Sale

The Serenoa chapter's annual fall plant sale is just around the corner! This year we are doing things a little differently, in the hope of boosting sales and increasing awareness of native plants to a broader audience.

The location has changed from Longwood Run Park to the Tropiflora's Fall Plant Sale in North Sarasota, 3530 Tallevast Road, just up the road from Longwood Run Park. The Tropiflora Sale is a three-day event that is very well attended, and we feel that by being a vendor here will increase our success. This great sale hosts lots of vendors and many different kinds of plants. Native plants will be a welcome addition to the mix.

The dates are October 5th, through 7th; 8:00AM to 5:00PM Friday and Saturday; 10:00AM to 3:00PM on Sunday.

We will need lots of volunteers to help out with sales and distribute information. Please consider giving two hours to help. We will need people on Thursday to set up and unload plants, and on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. You do not need to be a plant expert to volunteer. Please contact me to volunteer: ncywest@mac.com or call 748-14637. We look forward to this new venue as we continue to spread the word, "go native."

NATIVE PLANT SALE



FRIDAY Oct. 5
SATURDAY Oct. 6
8am - 5pm
SUNDAY Oct. 7
10am - 3pm
at

Tropiflora

3530 Tallevast Road,
Sarasota, Florida 34243

Presented by
Serenoa Chapter
Florida Native Plant Society
and the
Sarasota Bay Estuary Program

Large selection of
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The Florida Master Naturalist Program

Excerpt from "Florida Master Naturalist Program", newsletter vol 7, no. 1

FMNP Instructor Spotlight: Randy McCormick, Rookery Bay NERR, www.rookerybay.org

How did you get involved in Environmental Education?

I've been exploring nature since I learned to walk. In my 40s, I left a business career and obtained an M.S. in environmental education at the Audubon Expedition Institute. My education philosophy includes the premise that information without experience is trivial. The combination of the two is powerful. My job is to facilitate a connection between people and places. When you do that well, you are doing something that matters.

What is your most memorable EE moment?

I treasure small moments. Like the time when the little boy held my hand at the end of our nature walk. Or when a high school senior said, "Look, the Gulf of Mexico! I've never seen it before."

What is your vision for Florida's future?

Aldo Leopold said, "The penalty of an ecological education is the realization that we live in a world of wounds." I see Florida's wild

places becoming smaller, fragmented, managed "units." I hope that the people living around these lands will learn to love and care for them like their lives depended on it (indirectly, it does). Rachael Carson said, "Those who dwell as scientists or laymen among the mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. Those who contemplate the beauty of earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts."

An Eighteenth-Century Botanical Journey (co-authored by Eliane Norman, 2002, University Press of Florida, \$39.95). You can read a review of this book as well as view Dr. Taylor in his “Andre” suit at <http://news2.ucf.edu/FY2001-02/020426.html>. (Al Squires and Denny Girard of the Magnolia Chapter are working on Dr. Taylor’s wife to have him appear as Andre at the 2008 FNPS Conference in Palmetto.)

Michaux was the botanist to the King of France. He was sent to North America to collect plants and seeds and send them back to France for commercial exploitation and to re-forest parts of France. He traveled the St. Johns area in 1788, roughly following the path that John and William Bartram had done in 1766 and William did alone in 1774. Dr. Taylor claims Michaux was more observant and a better botanist than the more famous Bartrams. He calls Michaux a “tiger in the woods.”

We recently spent some time in the St. Johns River Water Management District to try out our State Park Annual Family Pass and visit some of the places visited by Michaux. We began in Palatka at the Ravine Gardens State Park. This park is a strange hybrid. It’s a cross between a depression era WPA beautification project and a unique geological feature. It was planted with azaleas in the late Thirties as a tourist attraction. But its geological claim to fame is that it’s a steephead ravine. These ravines are not formed by Grand Canyon-type surface erosion. Springs seeping underground water undercut the ravine’s banks from below. The result is a 120-foot gape surrounded by a two-mile road that you can drive around or hike. It’s a great place for a picnic. The ravine is full of hardwoods, pines, cypress and plenty of invasives. We’ve seen a similar steephead ravine about 15 miles northwest of Palatka at Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park, and we understand there are several other steepheads along the Apalachicola River.

The next park we visited was Anastasia State Park on a barrier island across from St. Augustine. The Bartrams described the coquina quarry pits dug in 1672 to build Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine. Michaux documented and collected several species on the island including coontie, Carolina silverbell, mangroves, red bays, loblolly bay, loblolly pines and ziziphus.

Next we visited Faver-Dykes State Park and Flagler County’s Princes Place Preserve. Both of these areas are relatively pristine and connected by several historic waterways. We saw both the Pellicer Creek and Matanzas River. Michaux used these water routes as his version of I-95 to haul seed and plants. It’s interesting reading how he used the water. We recall reading in *Cross Creek*, Marjorie Kinnan Rawling’s tale of a trip on the St. Johns she took with a friend in the Thirties. It struck us how similar their two trips were, even though they were taken 150 years apart. Now only 60 years from Rawlings’ trip on the St. Johns, We’d be afraid to use a boat or canoe on St. Johns, preferring the security of I-95 or Route A1A. Progress!!

But we’re not done yet. We still need to chase Michaux down to New Smyrna Beech and follow William Bartram over to the Suwanee.

Notes on Serenoa Chapter Field Trips

Please check our website, www.fnps.org for maps, changes, and more information: Look under chapters and then use the drop-down menu to Serenoa. We invite you to bring a bag lunch, trail snacks and water. We usually picnic after our hike, depending on its length. Directions will be given as each of the trip dates approaches. If you cannot attend the prior general meeting, please contact Brooks or Nancy Armstrong at 863-993-3966, 863-558-1588, or pinelilywind@yahoo for directions and carpool information.

Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference

May 15-18, 2008 Manatee Convention Center, Palmetto, FL

(AKA Manatee Civic Center, near Bradenton)

Hosted by the Mangrove, Pinellas, Serenoa & Suncoast Chapters

Volunteer Opportunities

Sarasota County's Environmentally Sensitive Lands. Opportunities include: Guided Nature Walks, Trail Maintenance, Wildlife Monitoring, Exotic Plant ID and Treatment, Public Education at Special Events. Contact Debby Zellman, Natural Resources, 941-861-5000

Sign up Now to Receive Sabal Minor Electronically

We are trying to encourage members to receive the Sabal minor newsletter in electronic form so that we can cut down on printing and postage expenses and save some trees in the process. If you would like to be on the list for email notification that the *Sabal minor* is available, and be taken off the hardcopy snail mail list, please send email to info@fnps.org and provide the following:

Your membership number (*if you know it*)

Your first and last name and your email address

Welcome New Members

Due to editor oversight, some of our new members were not recognized in previous newsletters.

Tami McNally, Ellenton
Elizabeth Jensen, Osprey
Emma Mason, St. Petersburg
Shawn McCarty, Venice
Carol Smith, Bradenton
Kathy Faught, Sarasota
Bob & Peg Andrews, Ellenton
Peter Bennett, Bradenton
Wanda Blackburn, Sarasota

Join now! Come to the meetings and field trips! Learn about conservation, restoration of native habitat, and landscaping with native plants.

Florida Native Plant Society Membership benefits: *Serenoa Notes* quarterly newsletter • Member discounts at events
• 1 year subscription to *The Palmetto*, a quarterly magazine • *Sabal Minor* bi-monthly newsletter

FNPS Membership Enrollment

Serenoa Chapter Newsletter

Name _____ E-mail _____ Phone (day) _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

☐ Full-time student: \$ 15 ☐ Individual/New or Gift Membership: **\$ 25** ☐ Individual/Renewal: **\$ 30** ☐ Family: **\$ 40**

☐ Library: \$ 15 ☐ Nonprofit: \$ 50 ☐ Business: \$ 100 ☐ Contributor: **\$ 50** ☐ Supporter: \$ 100 ☐ Donor: \$ 250

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Credit card payments can be faxed to 815-361-9166, or mail this form to: FNPS P.O. Box 278 Melbourne, FL 32902-0000

Chapter Programs and Field Trips see further note on page 6

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, ¼ mile west of I-75. SARASOTA: Durango's Steakhouse, in the mall on the NE corner of Fruitville Road & Honore Avenue.

Sept. 17 **General Meeting Laurel Schiller—"Home Landscape Gardening with Natives"** Laurel is co-owner of Florida Native Plants, Inc. and has recently co-authored a book, *Natural Florida Landscaping*.

22 **9 A.M. Field Trip Hillsborough River State Park, Hillsborough County** We will mix a canoeing, hiking with a picnic/potluck. Bring your own canoe or kayak or rent a canoe (\$?). Those who do not want to canoe can go on a hike. Swimming is also available. We will provide burgers and hot dogs. Suncoast FNPS members and Manatee Audubon members will be joining us. Carpool: Manatee 7:45 am, Sarasota 7:35 am. <http://www.floridastateparks.org/hillsboroughriver/default.cfm>

Oct. 5-7 **Serenoa Fall Plant Sale** 8:00AM to 5:00PM, Friday & Saturday, 10:00AM to 3:00PM on Sunday, at Tropi-flora's Fall Plant Sale in North Sarasota, 3530 Tallevast Road. See page 5 of this newsletter for more info.

5-7 **FNPS Members' Retreat** Pine Lake Retreat near Clermont, FL. An opportunity to mingle, learn something new and enjoy the beautiful ecosystems of central Florida. Activities will include hiking, paddling, workshops, guest speakers, nature crafts and family programs. The FNPS Government Policy & Legislature Committee will also hold an Advocacy Workshop. Look for additional information at www.fnps.org or contact Karina Veaudry, executivedirector@fnps.org or 407.895.8446 for a registration form.

15 **General Meeting Rosalind Rowe—Old Miakka Preserve** Rosalind, a Serenoa member, works with Marie Selby Gardens to survey plants in Sarasota County Environmentally Sensitive Lands Preservation Program. She will discuss basic survey procedures, plant communities, basic plant keying ID and photos of plants found in SRQ.

19-28 **FNPS Amazon Jungle Safari** Coordinating with Explorations, Inc., we have created a trip to the Peruvian Amazon. You will stay in jungle lodges located deep in forest reserves where great flora and fauna viewing is the most abundant during this rainforest adventure. For more details and to register for the trip, check out www.fnps.org or contact Jo Anne Trebatoski at plantnative@earthlink.net or call 800-466-9660.

20 **9 A.M. Field Trip—Old Miakka Preserve, Sarasota County.** Explore a cross-section of real Florida plant communities, from pine flatwoods and scrubby flatwoods to bottomland forest. This County Preserve is mostly unscathed by invasive exotics and has a few special endemic plants. Bring water and a hat. Carpool: Manatee 8:20AM, Sarasota 8:30AM



**The Serenoa Chapter
of the Florida Native
Plant Society**

P.O. Box 564
Sarasota, Florida 34230

www.fnps.org