



# Serenoa Notes

The Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

September 2013

## From Our Chapter President, Welcome Back! –Tom Heitzman

I hope all our Serenoa members are enjoying the summer break from meetings and field trips. It has been a wet summer and all the native plants are flourishing in response. How nice it is to not have to water every day. I did get to see many of you at our annual summer picnic in July. We had lots of good food and interesting conversation, a nice time to visit with friends that you do not always see at the meetings. Now our first meeting on September 16th is upon us. Fran Palmeri has put together another great season of talks and field trips you will not want to miss. Check out the schedule for the full line up.

Your board of directors has continued to meet over the summer as there are always matters requiring action on our member's behalf. The most important this summer was to counter a motion in Manatee County to change the comprehensive plan to favor more waterfront development. A letter was written to the county commissioners by the board that went on record as part of the hearing. Thanks to both Karen Fraley and Nancy West who spent many hours putting together a power point presentation on mangroves and the benefit they provide. The commission meeting went almost thirteen hours with Karen there for the duration and Nancy almost as long but we got our point across. In the end the commissioners approved the rezoning for the project but turned down a request for a change in zoning for the entire county.

On the horizon are two more proposals that we could use some help. One is to develop the south end of the skyway bridge and the other is to sell off two 'surplus' parcels of state owned land in Manatee County, one being Terra Ceia Preserve and the other Lake Manatee State Park. We need letters to support our parks and oppose these land sales. Please contact Karen should you like to help.

I want to also thank Selby Gardens for their support and also for allowing us the use of their facility for our meetings. How lucky we are to meet in such a beautiful setting! The business meeting starts at 7:30 every third Monday, but come early to chat it up and find out what's new. We always have some great plants to raffle off and this is a great time to catch up with friends. I look forward to the coming season and hope to see you at the next meeting.

### 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!

### In this Issue:

- Species Spotlight—Pine Lily 2
- Gardening—Pot Rings 3
- Good News for Borrowing Owls 4
- Puc Puggy or Poacher? 5
- Sneak Preview, Membership  
Enrollment Form 7
- Events Calendar 8



PHOTO BY CHRIS BECKER

Pine lily—see page 2



## Officers & Committees

President: **Tom Heitzman**  
941-776-0501

Vice-President: **Fran Palmeri**  
941-544-6148

Secretary: **Erica Timmerman**  
941-727-8807

Treasurer: **Helga Man**  
941-531-4262

Chapter Rep: **David Feagles**  
941-371-5045

Education: **Karen Fraley**  
941-704-4325

Editor: **Elizabeth Gandy**

Graphics: **Charlotte Thomas**

Historian: Open

Web Site: **Bruce Holst**

Membership: **Peter Price**  
941-488-0528

At Large: **Steve Black**  
**Lee Breyer**  
**Cathy Page**  
**Betsy Roberts**  
**Nancy West**

Visit our chapter on the Florida  
Native Plant society website:  
[www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org)

Email: [srepens@gmail.com](mailto:srepens@gmail.com)

## SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

### Pine lily, *Lilium catesbaei* –Elizabeth Gandy

If you have never had the privilege of seeing a pine lily (*Lilium catesbaei*) in bloom, get your walking shoes ready because the time to see them is upon us. We don't have a lot of "look-at-me-red" wildflowers in our area so when you see them, you can't miss them.

The pine lily is a true lily and though unscented, has the largest flower of our North American lily species. The six tepals (sepals and petals that are alike) are a rich red to orange red, distinctly clawed (having a very narrow base) and have yellow nectar guides with red spots. The flowers can be nearly two feet tall with leaves tightly appressed to the stem, becoming smaller near the flower. The plants arise each year from a small bulb and produce seed capsules that can be about two inches long.

Pine lilies in our part of Florida are found in moist pine flatwoods and open prairies in late summer/early fall. They don't typically compete well with dense shrubs so look for them in pockets of herbaceous vegetation. Myakka River State Park is well known for its pine lilies so that is always a reliable place to look. Others like Oscar Scherer State Park, Wingate Creek State Park and Deer Prairie Creek Preserve are also good places.

One of the best times to see pine lilies is in the season after a fire. Take note of where you see them and be sure to check your spots again after prescribed burns have been done or wildfires have occurred. You can check with land managers of our state and county parks for what areas have been recently burned.

Pine lilies are always a treat so whether they are a new discovery for you or like greeting an old friend, get out there and find some. You will be glad you did!



PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI

Pine lilies

## GARDENING

# Pot Rings for Newly Planted Plants –Nancy West

It is recommended when you plant a new plant in the ground, that you form an earthen dam around the plant to hold enough water to deeply soak the root zone. My experiences with earthen dams, is that the rains break down the dam and neighborhood cats think the soft sand is good for a sand box. I have to thank Mary Foster for this idea for a longer-term solution for plant dams.

1. Use a fairly large pot for this. The width should be twice as wide as the pot that the plant came in.
2. Drill a hole about every 4 inches, top to bottom, in the sides of the pot (Photo 1). Use a hole saw or a utility shears to cut around the pot and then cut out the bottom. The pot used here had a broken bottom. With the size pot in Photo 2 you will have 3 pot rings.



PHOTOS BY NANCY WEST

Photo 1



Photo 2

3. Plant your plant in the ground and slide the plant ring over the plant. Bury the ring no more than 2 inches in the ground leaving 2 inches above the soil (Photo 3).
4. You should remove the dam when the plants have become established.

You should be able to get large broken pots from the native nursery where you buy plants. Most nurseries will also take back your good one- gallon and larger pots for reuse at their nursery.



Photo 3

# Good News for Burrowing Owls

–Teresa Good, Park Service Specialist, Myakka River State Park

PHOTO BY [HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/BURROWING\\_OWL](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burrowing_Owl)



Burrowing owl

## Reminders

- The FNPS *Serenoa* Chapter Board meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30. Everyone is welcome so please contact any board member for location or general information.
- The board is always looking for new members. If you think you may be interested, your contribution is welcome! Please contact Tom Heitzman for more information.
- Our board is very active and involved in promoting the mission of the Native Plant Society and promoting our local chapter at events. Volunteers are always needed at these events so please consider donating some of your time to helping and getting our message out.
- Please be sure to regularly visit the website at [www.FNPS.org](http://www.FNPS.org) for current information about statewide projects, grants and issues that may need your support to address. Information on our local chapter is available at <http://serenoa.fnpschapters.org/>.

It seems that all the hard work that goes into restoring and maintaining Myakka River State Parks' natural resources is paying off. All the years of prescribed fire, roller chopping, hydrology restoration, mixed with seasonal flooding is producing the outcome we've been striving for. What was once thousands of acres of overgrown palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) and invading hardwoods, due to fire exclusion and other man-made alterations, is now returning to the Florida dry prairie that historically covered much of central Florida. At Myakka, we still have a long way to go, but we are making progress. More native grasses including wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*), split-beard (*Andropogon ternarius*), and lopsided Indian grass (*Sorghastrum secundum*) and wildflowers including slender goldenrod (*Solidago stricta*), marsh fleabane (*Pluchea rosea*), paintbrush (*Carphephorous corymbosus*), and a variety of blazing stars (*Liatris sp.*) can now be seen in between smaller patches of palmetto and other shrubs, which is what Florida Dry Prairie should look like. In the past few years, there have been increasing Crested Cara-Cara (*Caracara cheriway*) sightings in the park which is a good indication that our natural resource is returning to what it should be. The latest good news is that a pair of Florida Burrowing Owls (*Athene cunicularia floridana*) has recently been seen on our property, after ten years of absence. Ranger, Jeremy Johnson spotted the birds while roller chopping (a mechanical method used to thin out palmettos, making room for grasses and wildflowers) and snapped a picture for verification. We hope to see more, as our dry prairie continues to be restored to the healthy ecosystem it was 200 years ago.

The Florida Burrowing Owl is a small bird, about nine inches tall with sandy brown plumage, white speckles and bars, long legs, a round head, no ear tufts and bright yellow eyes. These characteristics seem to apply to many birds, but there are ways to distinguish this bird from the others, especially other owls common to the area. Unlike other Florida owls, burrowing owls are active during the day and night. They eat beetles, grasshoppers, crickets, crayfish, frogs, lizards, snakes, rodents and various species of birds. They live in burrows, usually dug by themselves, but will occasionally use gopher tortoise burrows, armadillo burrows, manholes, sewer drains and concrete pipes. They line their burrow with grass clippings, feathers, paper and manure. During the day, they are usually seen standing at the mouth of their burrow or on a nearby post. They inhabit open habitats with short ground cover and very few trees. Since much of Florida's native prairies are gone, they have turned to pastures, agricultural fields, golf courses, airports, schools and vacant lots in residential areas. Many of these areas, however, are not monitored or eventually get developed, which furthers their decline.

Once plentiful throughout the state, the burrowing owl has been in

*Continued on page 6*

## Puc Puggy or Poacher? –Fran Palmeri

I am sitting on a bench on the Myakka River appreciating the verdant growth brought on by heavy summer rains. The *Serenoa repens* (saw palmetto) reminds me of William Bartram who collected it during his four-year journey through the southeastern coastal plain down into Florida.

Florida was long from becoming a state when William, just 26, first came to Florida in the 1760's with his father John, the Philadelphia nurseryman. The King's Botanist—yes, that king—John was instructed to identify natural resources and collect plants. It was a time of worldwide exploration. The New World was considered an especially rich area.

Under the sponsorship of Lord John Fothergill, an avid gardener and collector, William returned to Florida in the mid 1770's. He made drawings of plants and animals he encountered and recorded daily events in a journal which he later converted into *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*, the story of his four year odyssey which was published in 1791 and is still in print. In the Alachua Savannah William met Cowkeeper, a Seminole chief who gave him the name "Puc Puggy" (Flower Hunter). William sent plants to his father, who had established a garden at Kinsessing outside Philadelphia and to Fothergill in England who had created one of the finest gardens of his time.

So it's a long way in space and time from the explorations of Puc Puggy to a park in Sarasota County when I see three people toting out armfuls of bromeliads which most likely they collected from the oaks.

Plant poaching goes way back in Florida's history. Mike Owen, the biologist at Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park east of Naples, talks about early settlers driving wagons out into the swamp on a Sunday afternoon to strip orchids off the trees. These days poachers are more discrete. But they are still around. Mike is very protective of the park, which has been called the "Amazon of North America". He does not disclose the location of the orchids, of which there are 46 native varieties in the

*Continued on page 6*

### **Note the following exhibition at the South Florida Museum:**

"Following in the Bartrams' Footsteps  
—Contemporary Botanical Artists  
Explore the Bartrams' Legacy"

201 10th Street West, Bradenton, FL  
September 19 – December 30, 2013  
[southfloridamuseum.org](http://southfloridamuseum.org)



PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI

Myakka River

**Borrowing owl...** *continued from page 4*

PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI



**Cabbage palm, *Sabal palmetto*, the subject of our November meeting and field trip.**

steady decline since the 1800's when Florida's native habitats were first starting to be developed. The Florida Burrowing Owl was listed as a Species of Special Concern by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission in 1979. The owls and their nests are protected by FWC rules and also under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In addition to being protected, FWC has recently developed a Species Action Plan for the Florida Burrowing Owl. This plan includes objectives such as maintaining a stable or increasing population within the next ten years, protection and management of burrowing owl habitat to ensure long-term population viability, education and awareness programs and minimizing impacts of development.

Here at Myakka, we will continue to improve, manage and protect the natural resources within our boundaries, and hopefully we will start seeing more burrowing owls in our park. For those living outside government managed areas, there are some things you can do to help. If you have burrowing owls near you, install perches near owl burrows, maintain burrows by keeping tall grasses and weeds trimmed near the burrow, restrict the use of pesticides, encourage your community to protect burrowing owls and report destruction or harassment of burrowing owls or their nests. Together, we can ensure the burrowing owl's survival for future generations to enjoy.

**PucPuggy...** *continued from page 5*

PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI



**Prairie Shell Creek, the subject of our September meeting and field trip.**

Park, some of which grow only there and in nearby Big Cypress Preserve. Along with loss of habitat and fire suppression, it's one of the major causes of extinction.

One way to stem the tide is to never buy native plants from anyone other than a native plant nursery, a plant sale put on by the Florida Native Plant Society or a fellow native plant gardener. Also, never remove native plants, seeds or propagules from anywhere without the proper permissions.

*Editor's Note: Unfortunately imperiled plant species enjoy very few of the same protections that imperiled animals do. With very few exceptions, land owners are free to do with the plants on their property as they please. The Preservation of Native Florida Flora Act (Florida Statute 581.185) charges the Florida Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services with the protection of imperiled plants but really only provides for enforcement in cases of possession or transport for purposes of commercial sale without proper permits. Poaching of plants from public lands typically carries additional enforcement due to the specific protections for all plants on these sites (Example is Chapter 62D, Florida Administrative Code for state parks).*

*If you witness poaching, whenever possible contact the land manager immediately and notify them of what you have seen. If you don't have a contact or the site is not staffed, contact local police or Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission law enforcement at \*FWC or #FWC or call 1-800-404-FWCC. For your own safety, do no attempt to confront poachers! Just observe and report what you can, SAFELY!*

## Sneak Preview –Fran Palmeri

Prairie Shell Creek Preserve in Charlotte County on Route 17 is an unusually rich area of scrub, hammocks and pine flatwoods. A South-west Florida Water Management District property, it narrowly escaped being put on the Governor’s list of “surplus” lands. A diversity of plants and the stars of the place—Florida scrub jays –should make for a wonderful field trip on September 21st led by Stephanie Green, the land manager. Stephanie will talk about the Preserve on September 16th at Selby Gardens at 7 p.m.

October 26’s trip to Florida’s Ridge will be a great opportunity to see some of the rarest plants in the state, many of them endemic, and learn about what goes on above and below ground in the scrub. Dr. Mark Deyrup, a leading authority on Florida’s insects—will give us a tour of the scrub at Archbold Research Station in Lake Placid where he has worked for many years. On Monday October 21st at Selby Gardens Mark will fill us in on scrub plant and insect interactions.

Sabal palms in habitat will be the focus of our November 30th field trip at Myakka River State Park in Sarasota. It will be led by ecologist Jono Miller, New College Professor and authority on these native palms which are not only beautiful in themselves but serve as tree communities for many species of wildlife and other plants. At the General Meeting on November 18th Jono will talk about our state tree, its history, and many uses and how it can fit into in our landscapes.

**See page 8 for all upcoming events—both ours and those sponsored by like-minded organizations!**



PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI

**Scrub blazing star, *Liatris ohlingerae*, one of the rare plants we may see on our October field trip.**

---

## 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!

- Sept. 16** GENERAL MEETING 7 P.M.—PRAIRIE-SHELL CREEK PRESERVE. This 609-acre Southwest Florida Water Management District conservation land contains scrub plus mesic flatwoods and a tidal marsh. Land manager Stephanie Green will tell us how SWFMD properties conserve habitat and provide water to millions of Florida residents.
- Sept. 21** FIELD TRIP 9 A.M.—PRAIRIE-SHELL CREEK PRESERVE, CHARLOTTE COUNTY. Fall brings a rich array of wildflowers—some of them rare—in the scrub, flatwoods and wetlands of this preserve in Punta Gorda. Florida scrub jays should be on hand to greet us. Led by Stephanie Green.
- Sept. 28** SATURDAY 9 A.M. TO 3 P.M.—NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY OSCAR SCHERER STATE PARK, OSPREY. Come enjoy great food, music, and activities and give back by helping with a work project. Admission is free. Volunteers are needed for FNPS booth. Call 941-650-4679 for info and participation requirements. Visit <http://www.floridastate-parks.org/thingstodo/events-southwest.cfm?viewevent=>.
- Oct. 12** FNPS SERENOA CHAPTER/SARASOTA BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM PLANT SALE 9 A.M. TO 3 P.M.—SWEET BAY NURSERY, 10824 ERIE ROAD, PARRISH, FL 34219, MANATEE COUNTY. <http://www.sweetbaynursery.com> Volunteers needed!
- Oct. 21** GENERAL MEETING 7 P.M.—ANTS AND PLANTS. Often we see anthills and animal tracks in scrub and other areas. Dr. Mark Deyrup Senior Research Biologist at Archbold Research Station who has a lifelong interest in ants will talk about them and some of the other animals that live in the scrub and how they interact with the plants.
- Oct. 26** FIELD TRIP 9 A.M.—ARCHBOLD RESEARCH STATION, HIGHLANDS COUNTY. We'll explore the connections between the aboveground/ underground plant and animal species at Archbold Research Station with Mark Deyrup.
- Nov. 2** SATURDAY, 10 A.M. TO 5 P.M.—SARASOTA BAY WATER FESTIVAL. KEN THOMPSON PARK, CITY ISLAND, SARASOTA. Join the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program and local sponsors at this annual festival highlighting the importance of Sarasota Bay. Enjoy music, food and exhibitors promoting sustainability and nature-based activities. FNPS Serenoa Chapter will have a booth and volunteers are needed! For more information, visit <http://sarasotabaywaterfestival.com/>.
- Nov. 18** GENERAL MEETING 7 P.M.—SABAL PALMS IN THE WILD AND IN THE GARDEN. Ecologist and New College professor Jono Miller talks about our state tree's history, uses, and how it fits into our landscapes.
- Nov. 23** OPTIONAL HIKE 9 A.M.—COKER PRAIRIE TRACT, EDWARD W. CHANCE RESERVE, MANATEE COUNTY. Enjoy the last of the year's wildflowers on a group hike to Coker Prairie in Manatee County.
- Nov. 30** FIELD TRIP 9 A.M.—MYAKKA RIVER STATE PARK, SARASOTA COUNTY. Led by Jono Miller, we'll look at sabal palms in habitat and find out what lives with/on these beautiful natives.
- Dec. 16** ANNUAL HOLIDAY POTLUCK DINNER 6 P.M.—ST. ANDREW UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, SARASOTA. Bring a dish to share, your own dinner plate and utensils. The Chapter will provide turkey, ice, iced tea and water. If you want to participate in our Yankee Raffle, please bring a nature-oriented present (approximately \$15.)

www.fnps.org  
Sarasota, FL 34230  
PO Box 564  
Plant Society  
of the Florida Native  
The Serenoa Chapter

