



Serenoa Chapter - 1981 - 2021

This is our 40th year as a chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. A peek into our history will be included in each newsletter this year. We have members who were here at the beginning! If you have a story to share, contact newsletter editor, Susie Venters. [Contact Susie.](#)



News from Serenoa Chapter

Happy New Year!

Hoping 2022 brings you more Florida native plants to love and an abundance of happiness.

Our meeting this month is Monday, January 17. The Field trip is Saturday January 22.

See below for details.

~ Serenoa Board of Directors



Save the Date!

Our next Native Plant Sale & Festival will be April 23 at Sweet Bay Nursery in Parrish. Volunteers will be needed to spend part of the day with nice people helping others to enjoy native plants. It's a day in the park! FNPS members get a discount. More info to come...





Florida's Rare Biota: the Known, the Lost, the Obscure, the New and the Unknown

Dr. Alan Franck, formerly Curator, Wertheim Conservatory, Florida International University. As of October 2021, he is UF Herbarium Collections Manager, Florida Museum of Natural History

General Meeting on Zoom, 7 pm, January 17

The human impact on Florida's plants and animals dating from our arrival, 14,500 years ago. What's gone, what's new, what remains, plus innovative new ways to protect this treasure house that is Florida.

Dr. Franck will trace the roots of climate change from Florida's pre-history to modern times. "From the late 1800s onwards, Florida has witnessed massive landscape-level changes, significant climatic events, and deliberate removal of native wildlife, in addition to invaluable wildlife conservation initiatives. Conserving, restoring, and realizing the value of Florida's biota requires vigilant effort." As we continue to find new species, the question becomes "How much have we lost over eons, that we will never know?" Don't miss this fascinating talk about humans, biology, botany and climate change.

[Click here](#) to register for the meeting



Field Trip: Saturday, January 22.
**Garden tour, Erica Timmerman's yard, 9am, Braden Run,
Bradenton**

Serenoa's recent past-President will show us how she designed and planted her large landscape. Address and parking information will be sent to those who sign up.



On the left, cabbage palms at Myakka State Park, summer sunset. Photo at right shows a healthy cabbage palm on the left, and one afflicted with LBD on the right, in Susie Venters' yard. The sick tree has since been cut down.

SAVE OUR CABBAGE PALMS

We can all take action to help stop Lethal Bronzing Disease

The information below is copied from an FNPS Policy Brief about Lethal Bronzing Disease (LBD). You have probably seen trees with this disease in your neighborhood too.

Cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*), the dominant species across many wild and domesticated landscapes on the southeastern coastal plain and the state tree of both Florida and South Carolina, is threatened by an introduced pathogen transmitted by a native insect (*Haplaxius crudus*). Larvae of this plant hopper thrive in turfgrass thatch. Lethal Bronzing Disease (LBD) was first observed on cultivated date palms (*Phoenix* spp.) but soon jumped to cabbage palm and at least 16 other species. Now its spread in Florida is rapid and unchecked. When the insect vector sucks palm sap it transmits the pathogen, which multiplies and blocks the vascular system and causes palm death. Dead trees are an eyesore but are no longer a source of infection. LBD infections are indicated by leaf bronzing, inflorescence yellowing, and pre-mature fruit drop.

Ecological Significance

tree frogs and bats, palm boots support golden polypody and shoestring ferns, palm flowers feed bees and butterflies, and its fruits are important food for birds and mammals, from raccoons to bears. If all the cabbage palms in Florida were to die, in addition to losing their free local air conditioning service, more than a million metric tons of carbon dioxide would be emitted to the atmosphere, thereby contributing substantially to global climate change.

Cultural Significance of Cabbage Palms

The cabbage palm, or “tree of life” of the Seminole and Miccosukee Native Americans, shapes the ecological and aesthetic landscapes of Florida. These trees contribute substantially to Florida’s identity and are perceptible markers of people’s connection to a place. There are many ways to measure the value of cabbage palms to the people who live within its range and to the millions who visit annually. The cabbage palms that historically provided food, shelter, and medicine to indigenous people and colonists are now emblematic of Florida. For example, cabbage palms are featured in about half of the Florida landscape paintings in the Vickers Collection (recently presented to the Harn Museum at the University of Florida) and on display in the Cici and Hyatt Brown Museum of Art in Daytona. Cabbage palms are also extremely common along rights-of-way throughout Florida and contribute substantially to the state’s urban forests.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

Refuse to purchase palms unless the vendor can certify them as free of Lethal Bronzing Disease (LBD). Note that infected and infectious plants are often asymptomatic.

When you suspect a palm is infected, contact your local UF/IFAS Extension agent and if an infection is confirmed make sure that the infected palm is speedily removed.

Help raise public awareness about the threat of LBD to our native

Pressure the Florida Department of Agriculture, the USDA[1]APHIS, and the Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association to be responsible and take action to control the spread of LBD.

[Click here](#) to review the complete article.

For more information about cabbage palms, [Click here](#) to see Jono Miller's presentation to us from April 2021. "The Palmetto Book: Histories and Mysteries of the Cabbage Palm."



Check out FNPS' Lunch and Learn Series on YouTube. There is a new one every Friday at noon. Here is a link to an old one, from Friday, Feb 21, 2021. **Companion Planting with Native Plants** [Companion Planting with Native Plants - YouTube](#).

The next one will be Jan 14, 2022: **The Caterpillar Connection** with Deborah Green. If you click on the link to Companion Planting, the entire history of Lunch and Learns can be accessed on the right side of the screen. Topics include Native Florida Landscape Design (3 parts), Milkweeds, Bromeliads, Native “weeds” for Butterflies, and many more.



The Board

Your Board of Directors was elected at the Holiday dinner in December. They are:

President: Erin Schoenberg
Vice President: Erica Timmerman
Treasurer: Leah Wilcox
Secretary: Cindy Watts

Programs: Open. Coordinator in charge of gathering, organizing and announcing speakers/topics and field trips for each month's meeting for Sep 2022-May 2023. Board members will assist.

Field Trips: Open. Facilitate monthly signups and trips.

Membership: Open. Manage and promote our membership

Newsletter: Susie Venters

Website: Yiwen Chow

Zoom Meetings Facilitator: Erin Schoenberg

Assistant Zoom Meetings: Open

Directors at Large: Karen Willey, Ryan Inskeep, Lee Breyer, Cathy Page, Nancy West, Tom Heitzman

[Click here to volunteer or ask for more information](#)



Meet our new President: Erin Schoenberg

My name is Erin Schoenberg and you may not know it yet, but I Love Florida Native Plants and their human advocates (aka you.)

It all started back in 2009 when I began taking note of plants that attracted butterflies. I had grown up in rural Port St. Lucie with many empty lots filled with cabbage palms, pine trees, and wildlife. When I later settled into Palm Beach County to start my family, we moved into a cookie cutter neighborhood. It was great, but it felt sterile. I wanted more butterflies who apparently liked Florida Native Plants (who would have thunk it?) As it turned out, our home was in between TWO nearby native nurseries, Meadow Beauty and Indian Trails. This made it very easy to transform our yard. In no time, I had a yard bustling with butterflies AND many birds! The plants helped bring so much life

Soon after, I discovered the native plant society and my husband bought my first years membership to our Palm Beach Chapter as a birthday gift. The society was so cool! There were so many aspirational and geeked out plant advocates with wonderful stories and precious knowledge to share. The group was right up my alley.

In 2019, we moved to Sarasota and I had a blank slate of a yard to fill. Thanks in large part to availability of Sweetbay Native Nursery, I was back at it in my yard planting some of my favorites and many new delightful plants that come with zone 9. It's still a work in progress, but we like to call it The Schoenberg Sanctuary. To the birds, bees, and butterflies, it's the B, B & B Inn.

When I'm not obsessing over native plants, I'm also a domestic engineer with an artistic flair. I have a background in Psychology and Art. I'm married to my husband Brian. We have two children Robyn & Alex, a dog named Mr. Macaroon, a cat named Honeybun, & a ball python named Sundae. Yes, I also enjoy baked goods and baking.

I've been a member of the Serenoa Chapter since 2019. I just love everything you represent and do. I was happy when asked to join the board back in 2020 and now I'm excited to have been elected President. Thank you for this opportunity to dust off my leadership skills from my college days as student government president. I'm coming to you as an enthusiast with a respect for all things Florida Native Plants and a thirst for more understanding. I look forward to working with you all to keep this great chapter vivacious and strong.



This is the view from inside the coffee corner in Erin's kitchen to the coffee corner at the "B, B, & B Inn ."



**Looks like Manatee County is getting a new state park!
Rattlesnake Key gets funding support**



The below is copied from Jesse Mendoza's article in the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Dec 22, 2021.

The island is located just south of the Sunshine Skyway Bridge and is only accessible by boat. It has several estuarine wetlands and coastal upland habitats identified as conservation priorities by the Tampa Bay Estuary Program.

For decades, local advocates have highlighted the importance of preserving the 830-acre property.

“This parcel was added in 1996 to the state acquisition program,” Manatee County Parks and Natural Resources Director Charlie Hunsicker said. “(It’s) something the environmental community and the state have recognized as a resource for environmental protection.”

Manatee County commissioners voted unanimously earlier this month to contribute up to \$3 million to the effort. The county's ordinance also calls for daytime public access and provisions for camping and other recreation at the park.

The state will consider its own share – estimated at about \$100 million – as a part of its annual budget. Gov. Ron DeSantis has outlined his FY 2022-23 budget proposal, which includes \$100 million for the Florida Forever Program, the state's conservation, and recreation land acquisition program that is run by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

"Protection and access to key habitats present on Rattlesnake Key will directly support ongoing recovery and future resilience of the Tampa Bay estuary," TBEP Director Ed Sherwood wrote in a letter to Sen. Jim Boyd and Rep. Will Robinson on Nov. 24.

In November 2020, voters approved a new tax for the county to purchase properties for environmental protection.

Commissioners decided not to assess that tax until they approve the FY 2022-23 budget but agreed to set aside about \$5.7 million in reserves this year until more solid plans can be put in place.



Winter Gardening Tips for January:

- Do your final clean up (weeding, mulching) before you take your winter break.

and berries. Cut them back to 12-24" height if you want to have your plants bushy and under 5' height. Otherwise, let them go and they will grow to about 8'.

- Plant spring wildflower seedlings
- Transplant trees and shrubs.
- Newly planted trees and shrubs should be watered at least once a week to keep them from drying out. This is the dry time of year here, and even native plants need to be watered until they are well-established for optimum health.

Check out these sources for information about Florida native plants:

[Florida Native Plant Society: Native Plants for Your Area](#)

[University of Florida Gardening Solutions/Native Plants](#)

[Florida Wildflower Foundation](#)

[Treasure Coast Natives](#) This is a blog about flora. Sign your email up for the blog, you will be delighted with the humor and interesting botany of many species of plants.



Years of Serenoa

In the Spring 1998 newsletter, an item requests action to support Ocklawaha River restoration. The February program had been about Marjorie Harris Carr, who began the fight for restoring this river to its free-flowing state, and had died

this program today, and found that the same plea of help restoring the Oklawaha is still being made. An October 1, 2021 Gainesville Sun editorial asks the public to speak out on the need to restore the Ocklawaha. An editorial in the Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville) dated June 13, 2021 makes the same plea. I'm thankful for our North Florida friends and their continued quest to save this river. The fight to save the real Florida that we love never ends. Here's links to those editorials:

[Florida Times-Union June 13, 2021](#)

[Gainesville Sun October 1, 2021](#)

S.V.



***Our Meetings are held the third Monday of the month,
September - May, via Zoom.***

[Click here](#) for this year's amazing [lineup of speakers!](#)

Previous Programs on YouTube:

Nov 15, 2021: [Florida Scrub Life, Archbold Biological Station with Dustin Angell](#)

Oct 18, 2021: [Climate Wise Landscaping with Ginney Stibolt](#)

Sep 20, 2021: [Uncovering the Mysteries of Herbaria with Elizabeth Gandy](#)

Apr 19, 2021: [The Palmetto Book with Jono Miller](#)
Mar 15, 2021: [Old Growth Forests with Kate Borduas](#)
Feb. 15, 2021: [The Clean Water Playbook for SW Florida](#)
Jan. 18, 2021: [Aquatic Gardening with Sean Patton](#)
Jan. 11, 2021: [Climate Change with Tim Ramage & Karen Willey](#)
Nov. 16, 2020: [Florida Native Gardening with Tom Heitzman](#)
Oct. 19, 2020: [Conservation Lands with Debi Osborne](#)



Serenoa Chapter FNPS

The Mission of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

Go Wild! Go Native!

<https://serenoa.fnpschapters.org>

941-704-4325



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Florida Native Plant Society
PO Box 21192
Bradenton, FL 34204-1192

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