



# Serenoa Notes

The Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

May 2012

## The FNPS Annual Conference— Preserving the Natural Heart of Florida —is Right Around the Corner!

—Nancy West & Raneve West-Singh

### 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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It's that time of year again! A lot of interesting, like-minded people are coming together to talk about our favorite topic: Florida Native Plants!

Please, please consider coming to the conference! It is our society's biggest fundraiser, and we need the funding to continue to protect our native plants. On top of helping with funding, it is a very fun and exciting place to be. There is so much to do and see with great plants to buy. What could be more fun than that? They even have some good plant jokes.

Saturday's Keynote speaker is Doug Tallamy, who wrote *Bringing Nature Home*. He is a professor and the chair of the Entomology and Wildlife Ecology department at the University of Delaware. His research focuses on the impact of alien plants to native ecosystems.

If you're not able to make the whole 4-day event, come for a day and listen to some of the great speakers or go on a field trip! The conference this year is in Plant City, which is a relatively short drive. Other members of our Serenoa Chapter will be going and we can carpool. Contact me at [ncywestt@mac.com](mailto:ncywestt@mac.com) and I will try to coordinate drivers and riders.

This will be an exciting and fun conference, so please sign up!

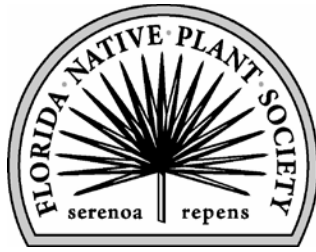
The Florida Native Plant 32nd Annual Conference

May 17-20, Plant City, FL

sign up here: [www.fnps.org/pages/conference/index.php](http://www.fnps.org/pages/conference/index.php)



FNPS Conference logo.



# Springtime Gardening

—Tom Heitzman

It seems we have had an early Spring this year. Most trees, shrubs and perennials got off to an early start with our mild winter and beautiful weather. Here are some tips for keeping your native garden thriving.

## Officers & Committees

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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)

1. Stay on top of the weeds. Hand pull regularly or use a heavy mulch to keep them suppressed. If you get them out before they go to seed you keep yourself way ahead.
2. If needed give your plants a basic organic fertilizer. If you have the right plant in the right place no fertilizer should be needed but for that extra boost many good organic fertilizers are available. Try using seaweed, free at most boat ramps. Use that compost you have piling up. It works. Use lime to make a soil more alkaline or pine needles or pine bark to acidify your soil.
3. Mulch your flower and plant beds. Mulch not only gives your garden a fresh look it helps control the weeds. It also helps keep your soil shaded, retains more moisture and keeps the soil temperatures cooler. Recycled mulch is readily available as is pine straw, pine bark, eucalyptus and Florimulch. A thick layer gives all the mentioned advantages as well as adding organic matter to our sandy soils.
4. Prune as needed. Now is a good time to cut back and thin out trees and shrubs. Beautyberry can be pruned very hard so that it will flower through the summer and then fruit in the fall. Most shrubs if pruned hard in the Spring will then grow to a manageable size through the summer, requiring only periodic, light pruning. Trees can be thinned out or top pruned. Always trim back to another branch rather than just a random cut. Dead head any flowers that are finished blooming. Most will reward you with additional blooms.
5. Water only as needed. We are in our yearly dry period and installed plants do get stressed until they are firmly established. Water rings are good around trees and shrubs to keep the water over the root zone. Encourage deep rooting by giving plants a good soaking once or twice a week. Use rain barrels if possible. Rain water tends to have more nitrogen in it than well or municipal water sources.
6. Sit back and enjoy the beauty of your achievements. Soon it will be hot and if you get these tasks completed now it will be easier to maintain your garden through the summer.

# Tracking Florida's Wild Clematis

—Fran Palmeri

On a steamy morning at Sleeping Turtles Preserve in Venice, the sabal palms and live oaks drip with moisture though the rains stopped hours ago. I'm accompanied by clouds of mosquitoes but no matter. For a few hours I can escape to the old Florida where hardwood hammocks, pine flatwoods and swampy areas offer the promise of wildflowers.

I'm on the outlook for clematis. Florida has seven species. Six of them are native. Pine hyacinth, *Clematis baldwinii*, is endemic. Over the years in my treks they cropped up here and there. I'd look down and there would be a beautiful pink and white *C. baldwinii* at my feet. They're scattered here and there in my photo album.

When I started looking for Clematis it seemed the only places I could count on seeing them was on line in the Atlas of Vascular Plants of Florida and in the writings of naturalists like William Bartram who collected them during his travels in the 1770's and John Kunkel Small, director of the New York Botanical Garden, who botanized the Florida peninsula in the early 1900's, reported finding patches of Viornia (*C. reticulata*) in recently burned areas of pine flatwoods.

ELUSIVE is how I would describe these plants—not rare, not listed species (only one of Florida's species is) just particular about where and



PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI

*Clematis baldwinii*

*Clematis crispa* along the Myakka River

PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI





*Clematis baldwinii*

when they will grow. I started wondering if invasive exotics, fire suppression, hydrological alteration and the ongoing destruction of native habitat had something to do with it.

*C. crispata* grows on floodplains and once when I visited Hillsborough River State Park I found only a few along the river along with huge patches of taro. Exotics drive out natives. Taro was introduced into Florida as a food crop for slaves when the perils of non-native species were little understood. In summer in Sleeping Turtles Preserve in Venice you may find it along the trail leading to the Myakka River. It's perfect white blooms are unmistakable amid the tangle of undergrowth.

*C. baldwinii* the only erect species here seems to prefer the pine flatwoods a fire dependent ecosystem so suppression of burning may inhibit their growth of wildflowers. We know that fire shapes the land as much as sun and rain. Fire rejuvenates the soil and areas which have been burned recently undergo an explosion of growth. Until recently the importance of fire was little understood. Charles Torrey Simpson wrote that fire was "the friend of the piney woods" but his views didn't convince land managers. In the 1930's the Civilian Conservation Corps in Florida's parks put out fires. Smoky the Bear ruled. Controlled burns in state parks were not put into practice until the mid-nineteen seventies.

Elizabeth Gandy believes that, "both fire suppression and even hydrologic alteration have resulted in fewer occurrences of some of the once more common clematis species. *C. crispata* seems to thrive in floodplains, but when the stream or river flow is changed, how long will they persist? Without fire or disturbance, *C. baldwinii* will not show its beautiful face!"

Tracking the wild Clematis is ongoing. On another morning, alerted by a phone call from Nancy Edmondson, Sleeping Turtles Preserve land manager, I'm in the flatwoods looking for *C. baldwinii* in an area has been not been burned but opened up by mechanical means. It has paid off. Diminutive *C. baldwinii* poke up here and there through the pine needles.

Sometimes I get to a place reputed to have them but all that's left are the seed heads which are beautiful in their own way. I am having a wonderful time traipsing about and finding other new plants along the way.

## Things To Do This Summer

### **Wrack Line Hike—May 23, 6:30-7:30 P.M., Robinson Preserve**

Walk the shoreline and explore the wrack with a park naturalist. Plan to get a little wet and muddy. Reservations required. Call (941) 748-4501, ext 4616. Information from website at [www.manatee.org/home/government/departments/natural-resources/nrd-headlines/edu-program.html](http://www.manatee.org/home/government/departments/natural-resources/nrd-headlines/edu-program.html)

### **Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program sponsored wading trips**

Learn about the beauty and wonders of our estuaries with a local organization. Check website for updated information at [www.chnep.org](http://www.chnep.org). Registration required.

### **Cedar Point Park in Englewood... at 9:00 A.M.**

Call CHEC Cedar Point Environmental Park at (941) 475-0769.

- Thursday, May 17, 2012
- Saturday, July 14, 2012
- Tuesday, June 12, 2012
- Wednesday, August 1, 2012

Information from website at [www.chnep.org/WadingTrips.html](http://www.chnep.org/WadingTrips.html).

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# Species Spotlight— Our Native Coreopsis

## *A Patch of Yellow Means Slow Down and Enjoy!*

—Elizabeth Gandy

Would you ever have thought that a place known as “Land of the flowers” would be able to choose just *one* as its state flower? Its mascot, if you will. With so many to choose from, the delightfully simple, whimsically eye-catching, unassuming tickseed got the honor. In 1991, by statute, coreopsis as a group, were chosen to floristically embody the image that is Florida. And who could argue, as all it takes is one happening upon a field, a ditch, a wetland, a wild roadside covered with a blanket of Coreopsis, the so called tickseed, the embodiment of sunshine at ground level and it will stick in your memory and touch you with a warm smile when conjured up.

Coreopsis is a genus in the Asteraceae, native to the Americas. There are currently 15 species documented in Florida, all of which are native, except three that are likely escaped from cultivation. Of the 12 native species, only three are in our area, the rest occurring in northern Florida and the panhandle. Two of these are the most widespread in Florida,

*Coreopsis explosion*

PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI



PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI



*Coreopsis floridana*

PHOTO BY FRAN PALMERI



*Coreopsis lanceolata*

Florida tickseed (*C. floridana*) and Leavenworth's tickseed (*C. leavenworthii*). Both species are also endemic to Florida. The third species, coastalplain tickseed (*C. gladiata*), seems less common. All three are very similar in appearance. They have dark brown disk florets and gorgeous yellow ray florets with toothed margins. They can grow tall, on thin stems with narrow leaves.

Coreopsis tend to be found in moist habitats, often growing in great profusion, especially in spring. They typically spread readily from self sown seed so it is not unusual to find large areas given over to a veritable sea of yellow during the spring wildflower flush. Once the initial flush is over, plants can still flower all year in favorable conditions.

The two most common coreopsis species I have seen in cultivation are Leavenworth's and lanceleaf tickseed (*C. lanceolata*). Leavenworth's is usually very easy to find at our local native plant nursery. Lanceleaf can also be found but is native quite a ways north of here. If you plant it, do not permit it to escape your cultivated area. Both will grow quite happily in any moist soil and seed themselves just about anywhere the conditions are right. The yellow of the disk florets is so rich in color you will find yourself anxious for them to spread anywhere they care to.

When you find coreopsis in the wild, don't pass it by as common or mundane, but rather appreciate it for its simple beauty and be glad it is so common. Let the golden yellow flowers bring you some always needed sunshine!

## Notes

Even though the annual meeting season of the FNPS Serenoa Chapter is ending this month, please be sure to join us again for the next meeting season starting in September. Next season is sure to be exciting with lots of great meeting topics to help you learn about natural Florida and get out there and enjoy with people that love it just as much as you.

Be sure to keep your membership current as FNPS always needs your support. Talk to your friends and neighbors about joining FNPS as there is sure to be something for everybody!

Remember to be a good steward of natural Florida by taking any opportunity you can to promote native plants, water conservation, reduced chemical and fertilizer use and enhanced landscapes for wildlife to your friends, family and neighbors. By setting a good example yourself, they will come to see the benefits to all that come from planting and preserving natural Florida.

## Things To Do This Summer continued

### **Guided Insect Identification Walk—May 25, 9:30–11:30 A.M., Manasota Scrub Preserve**

Join entomologist Dr. Fred Santana on a guided walk to discover and identify the insects in the scrub, pine flatwoods, and other habitats at the preserve. Space limited and reservations are required. For more information and registration, visit website at [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net). Information from website [www.scgov.net/calendar/view\\_event.asp?CalendarID=18459](http://www.scgov.net/calendar/view_event.asp?CalendarID=18459).

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# Local Hidden Treasures—Myakka Wild and Scenic River

—Natalie Cole

Designated as the only State Wild and Scenic River by the Florida Legislature in 1985, the 34-mile long Wild and Scenic segment of the Myakka River flows through Sarasota County. The Wild and Scenic designation provides for the preservation and management of the river's outstanding resource values which are unique in the state. Today, approximately 30 miles of the Myakka Wild and Scenic River corridor is in public ownership due to acquisition of land and conservation easements adjacent to the river by the State, local governments and private organizations. Many recreational opportunities are waiting to be explored while taking in the beauty of the winding channel, lush marshes, shallow lakes and diverse wildlife by canoe or kayak, or enjoy the beauty of the river from land, and hike one of the many riverside trails on one of the public properties adjacent to the river.

Twelve miles of the Wild and Scenic River flow through Myakka River State Park. The park is famous for its diverse wildlife. You can see alligators, wading birds, deer, turkey, and hogs from the park drive year-round. In the winter, ducks and shorebirds feed in the shallows as bald eagles and ospreys fish from above, and sandhill cranes nest along the water's edge.

Prominent among the picturesque features in the park, are the Upper and Lower Myakka Lakes, and the extensive marshes between them. The Lower Myakka Lake lies within the park's Wilderness Preserve south of SR 72, and a permit is required for access. At the southern end of the Lower Myakka Lake there is a geologic feature in the river known as Deep Hole, an old sinkhole over 100 feet deep and a favorite alligator hangout.

From Lower Myakka Lake, the river courses for several miles through a narrow, serpentine channel, bordered by Spanish moss-laden branches of live oaks and graceful, arching trunks of sabal palm trees. Miles of solitude and undisturbed banks are ideal for canoeing and kayaking. Near the south boundary of the park there is a privately owned dam, which



PHOTO BY NATALIE COLE

*Wood stork with chicks on rookery in lower Myakka Wild and Scenic River*



PHOTO BY NATALIE COLE

**Alligators and black vultures at Deep Hole—where the Big Boys hang out!**



**Rookery in lower Myakka Wild and Scenic River**

prevents boat access during periods of low water. To continue a trip by kayak or canoe down the river, outside of the park, portages are often required around the dam and through shallows.

As one travels south, most of the narrow, meandering, channel, is lined with oak trees and cabbage palms, but in places the river cuts through higher ground, where high banks are exposed that have pine trees and saw palmettos. South of Snook Haven County Park, the vegetation along the shore reflects the saline influence of tidal waters. Narrow, tree-lined banks give way to a vista of spreading marshes. Towards Charlotte Harbor, mangrove trees appear with increasing frequency and manatees may be seen year round. A mangrove island south of US-41 supports a nesting colony of wading birds, including the endangered wood stork.

Boating is a favorite pastime on the river but shallow depths, speed restrictions and potential hazards often limit navigation. Public boat ramps are located at Snook Haven County Park (fee required), Myakka River State Park and on Myakkahatchee Creek. If you're looking for great saltwater fishing, head to the southern portion of the river where snook and redfish can be caught along the many miles of mangrove shoreline. The Upper Lake at Myakka River State Park is a good location for freshwater fishing.

Rent a canoe or kayak or take a guided scenic cruise to experience an up-close view of the river's abundant wildlife and picturesque scenery. Portaging of canoes and kayaks may be required in low water conditions. Call Myakka River State Park at (941) 361-6511 or Snook Haven County Park at (941) 485-7221 for details. Additional launches for canoes and kayaks are located at Venice Myakka Park and T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Memorial Reserve.



**Alligators along the bank of the Myakka Wild and Scenic River**



**World Oceans Day Family Festival—June 2, 11 A.M.–2 P.M.,  
Mote Marine Aquarium**

Bring the whole family to enjoy games, crafts, learning green practices, environmental stewardship and celebrating all things ocean. Free with aquarium admission. Information from website at <http://asoft201.securesites.net/secure/mote/index.php?src=gendocs&ref=World%20Oceans%20Day>.

**Discovery Kayak Trip—June 29, 8:30 A.M.–12 P.M.,  
Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center**

Join a park naturalist for a guided kayak trip through Lemon Bay to enjoy and learn about the seagrass, mangrove, and other coastal habitats. Space is limited and registration is required. For more information and to register, call the Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask for either Jennifer Rogers or Kenya Leonard; or send an email to [jrogers@scgov.net](mailto:jrogers@scgov.net) or [kleonard@scgov.net](mailto:kleonard@scgov.net). Information from website at [www.scgov.net/calendar/view\\_event.asp?CalendarID=18214](http://www.scgov.net/calendar/view_event.asp?CalendarID=18214).

**Join the local Sierra Clubs for several outings:**

- Nature Walk-May 19, 8 A.M., Myakka River State Park  
Join members for a 4-6 mile hike. Wear sturdy shoes, carry water, sunscreen, bug spray. Bring lunch if your time allows. Reserve with Sally (941) 484-4113.
- Kayak Trip- May 20, 9:30 A.M., Robinson Preserve  
Join members for a kayak trip starting at Palma Sola Bay and exploring Perico Bayou and Robinson Preserve. Group will stop for lunch. Make reservations with Mike Lehner at (941) 365-1073 or [mklehn@hotmail.com](mailto:mklehn@hotmail.com).
- Kayak Trip-May 27, 9:30 A.M., Shell Key Preserve  
Join members for paddle along beautiful shell key for some fabulous bird watching and exploration. Reserve with Don Kirkley at (941) 493-3085.

All information from chapter website at <http://florida.sierraclub.org/sarasota/outings.htm>.

**Volunteer!**

May 26, 8:30–10:30 A.M., Ungarelli Preserve, Manatee County. This is a “sneak peek” workday. Get a chance to visit all the great new changes at the preserve and help contribute to those positive changes by participating in a trash pickup. For more information and to RSVP, call 941-748-4501 ext. 4613. Information from website at [www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/natural-resources/nrd-headlines/edu-program.html](http://www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/natural-resources/nrd-headlines/edu-program.html).

July 14, 9 A.M.–noon, North Lido Park. Sarasota Bay Estuary Program Bay Guardians native planting project. For more info contact Sara Kane at [Sara@sarasotabay.org](mailto:Sara@sarasotabay.org) or (941) 955-8081.

**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

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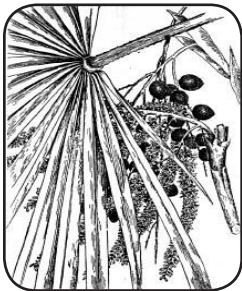
**Monthly general meetings at Selby Gardens:** Every third Monday, Sept. through May at 7:00 p.m.; speaker begins at 7:30. Selby Botanical Gardens Activity Center, 811 South Palm Avenue, Sarasota. Everyone welcome!

**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).

**May 12** FIELD TRIP: ECOGARDENS IN SARASOTA AND MANATEE COUNTIES. Led by Laurel Schiller we'll see different approaches including an award-winning native landscape with a mimosa driveway & green rooftop garden on Siesta Key.

**14** GENERAL MEETING—AMPHIBIANS IN TROUBLE. Jason Rohr, Assistant Professor of Biology, USF will talk about how parasites, pollution and climate change create a dangerous brew for frogs, toads and other amphibians and their aquatic communities.

**17-20** FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY CONFERENCE, PLANT CITY, FLORIDA.



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

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