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The Suncoast Grapevine

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



Volume 18 Number 7

July 2001

July 18 Meeting

Backyard Herpetology

By Kristin Wood

Backyard Herps??

"Herp" is short for herptile, a name that refers to both reptiles and amphibians. The Greek word herpeton means "creeping thing" and if you are lucky, various species of herps will have crept into your garden. Our July speaker, the herpetologist Kristin Wood, will talk about some of the herps commonly seen in central Florida backyards. She plans to fill us in on the natural history of some of our lizards, frogs, snakes, and turtles, and if weather conditions are favorable for their capture, she will bring a few animals to show us.

Kristin earned her master's degree in wildlife at Texas A&I, and has been with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission for ten years. Currently she is the director of the Chinsegut Nature Center near Brooksville. Of the many herp studies she has done in central Florida and in the Big Bend area, several either have been published or will be soon.

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Upcoming Programs for SNPS Monthly Meetings

- **July 18** – Kristin Wood (Backyard Herpetology)
- **August 15** – Craig Huegel (Brooker Creek Preserve)
- **September 19** – Dr. Wunderlin (Endangered Asters)
- **October 17** – Debbie Butts and Joe Sumner (Plant-Animal Connection)
- **November 21** – Paul Martin Brown (Orchids)
- **December** – no meeting

ARC at the Park Seminars

ARC at the Park (Audubon Resource Center at Lettuce Lake Park) will have a seminar each month through November. The cost of each seminar is \$10. The money will help in the design and/or installation of a "Healthy Habitat" for backyards, schoolyards or workplace. The seminars will be held at the ARC at the Park, 6920 E. Fletcher Ave. The first seminar entitled "Butterfly Gardens - for your backyard, school yard, or patio" is scheduled for Saturday, July 28, 2001 at 2 PM. The seminar will be presented by Nicole Gonzalez, Environmental Educator at ARC at the Park, and former curator of the Bioworks Butterfly Garden at MOSI. She will discuss selecting host and nectar plants and attracting specific butterfly species to your garden.



Book review of *A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants*

By Sally Sun

Recently, the Florida Native Plant Society unveiled its' newest addition of Florida native plant guides. *A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants* is written by Rufino Osorio, past president of the Palm Beach chapter of the FNPS and proprietor of Wildflower Nirvana, a rare plant nursery. The book is 345 pages; the first 47 pages discuss things like site assessment and preparation, obtaining native plants, planting the garden, maintenance, propagation, counterfeit natives (fun!), wildlife in the garden, pests, diseases, and conservation.

The rest of the book is devoted to plants - 350 plants are detailed in eleven chapters: ferns, short-lived wildflowers, long-lived wildflowers, grasses, palms, shrubs, conifers and cycads, trees, vines, aquatic plants, and epiphytes. In addition, the book is illustrated with 359 full-color photographs, all taken by the author. The book is definitely written for the novice gardener; it is written in plain English! This must-have book retails for \$26.63 (with tax); we are selling it at the FNPS member discount of \$22.50. Of course it is offered for sale at our monthly meetings, or you can contact Sally Sun at 935-1312 if you can't make it to a meeting.

Suncoast Calendar

July 14-15 Tropical Plant Fair. USF Botanical Garden. Call 813-974-2329 for information.

July 18 7 p.m. Monthly membership meeting. Program on backyard herpetology by Kristin Wood. Combined meeting with the National Audubon Society and the Sierra Club.

July 21 Composting: Getting back the Gardening Gold. USF Botanical Garden. Call 813-974-2329 for information

July 28 Butterfly Gardens - for your backyard, school yard, or patio at ARC at the Park, Lettuce Lake Park. Contact Ardell O'Neal for information at 813-949-2412.

July 28 Rain Barrel and Water Wise Workshops. Hillsborough County Extension Service, 5339 County Road 579, Seffner. Call 813-744-5519, x145.

August 15 7 p.m. Monthly membership meeting.

Philippe Park Planting Event

The Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society received a mini-grant from the Tampa Bay Estuary Program to plant native plants on the ceremonial Indian Mound in Philippe Park. This is an excellent opportunity to expose the public to native plants. Philippe Park has over 1 million visitors (many from Hillsborough) a year. Please come and join us on our next planting date.



Where: Philippe Park, 2525 Philippe Parkway, Safety Harbor, FL (call or e-mail for directions) (727) 669-1947; pffraas@aol.com.

When: August 18th, 8:00 am to 12:00 pm.
 8:00-8:30: Sign up and yummy refreshments.
 8:30-11:30: Plant, mulch (Free drawing for neat prizes every hour)
 11:30-12:00: clean up and final free raffle drawing.

At around 11:45 am, as a special treat, there will be an interpretive talk on the Tocobago Indians by a state archeologist. Remember to wear close-toed shoes, bring a shovel and your favorite gloves. Water and snacks will be provided. Most planting will be in the shade. Please won't you help?

Call or e-mail to volunteer:
 (727) 669-1947 (Leave message with name, phone number and e-mail if no answer)
 pffraas@aol.com

Grass Cutting Beats Driving in Making Air Pollution

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, May 29, 2001 (ENS) - The air pollution from cutting grass for an hour with a gasoline powered lawn mower is about the same as that from a 100 mile automobile ride, according to a new study from Sweden. The report, which the authors say is the first to compare lawn mower pollution with auto mileage, recommends using catalytic converters on mowers.

From the ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE <http://ens-news.com>

Contributed by Sheila Gobes-Ryan



Florida Native Plant Society Membership Application

Membership in the Florida Native Plant Society enables you to receive their wonderful quarterly magazine The Palmetto. Joining the FNPS also entitles you to membership privileges in the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc. and a subscription to their monthly newsletter The Suncoast Grapevine. Contact the membership chair, Nona Elder at (727) 815-3479.

detach and mail to address given below

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Check pertinent category:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-for-profit organization \$50 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Family or household \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Donor \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$40 | |

Suncoast Native Plant Society
 P.O. Box 82893 Tampa, FL 33682-2893
 Make check payable to **FNPS**.

PLANT PROFILE

Common name: Gopher apple

Botanical name: *Licania michauxii*

Family: Chrysobalanaceae (Cocoplum)

Type of plant: Native perennial semi-evergreen shrubby groundcover of low-growing stature, 1 foot tall or more. Spreads by underground stems to form large colonies (clonal habit). Will cover up to 8 feet width. Note: Gopher Apple is deciduous in north Florida, semi-evergreen in central Florida, and evergreen in south Florida.

How to identify:

Leaves: 0.8 to 4 inches long, 0.4 to 1.6 inches wide, alternate on the stems, simple, leathery, smooth and shiny above, prominently veined, with smooth or slightly wavy margins (entire) and somewhat oblong in shape with apex wider than the base (oblanceolate or obovate), oak-like in appearance.

Flower: Small, creamy-white to whitish-green, five-petaled, in spike-like clusters (panicles) at the ends of stems and in the upper axils of the leaves. Covered with soft hairs (pubescent). Calyx 5-lobed; stamens 15.

Flowering time: March to August.

Fruit: White, egg-shaped, one-inch long, fleshy, reddish-tinged, or purplish when ripe and called a drupe (fleshy fruit in which the inner wall is hardened into a pit and surrounds the seed or seeds). Edible, but nearly tasteless; it is favored by wildlife.

Note: Sometimes called Ground Oak; however, Gopher Apple is distinguished by the conspicuous terminal flower clusters.

Habitat/distribution: Commonly found in dry, sandy habitats – coastal dunes, scrubs, sandhills, and dry pine flatwoods and ridges, and roadsides throughout Florida and the Keys, Zones 9 to 11.

Landscape use: Attractive and useful as a low-growing semi-evergreen, shrubby groundcover with conspicuous blooms and an extended flowering period for dry, sandy soils in a very sunny or partially sunny location. Prevents erosion. Will tolerate occasional mowing. Also useful in coastal landscapes as it is very drought tolerant as well as salt tolerant.

Wildlife benefit: Gopher Apple is popular for wildlife habitat plantings as the fruit (the “gopher apple”) is a favorite food for the native gopher tortoise and many native mammals.

Cultivation:

Soil: Sandy, well-drained, acid to alkaline. Tolerates poor soil.

Light: Full to part sun.

Water: Dry to average. Drought-tolerant once established and will survive on natural rainfall.



Miscellaneous: Moderate salt-tolerance. Will tolerate occasional mowing. Very difficult to transplant.

Propagation: By seed – plant 2 inches deep on site, not in a container for best results. Very difficult to propagate from the underground stems.

Availability: Some native plant nurseries.

References:

Bowman, Sheryl, Debbie Butts, Betsy Davis, John Marsh, Ann Nord, and Carl Strohmenger, 1997, *The Right Plants for Dry Places – Native Plant Landscaping in Central Florida*: Great Outdoors Publishing Co., St. Petersburg, Florida, 112 p.

Haehle, Robert G., and Joan Brookwell, 1999, *Native Florida Plants*, Gulf Publishing Company, Houston, Texas, 360 p.

Nelson, Gil, 1996, *The Shrubs and Woody Vines of Florida*, Pineapple Press, Inc., Sarasota, Florida, 391 p.

Taylor, Walter Kingsley, 1998, *Florida Wildflowers in Their Natural Communities*, University of Florida Press, Gainesville, Florida, 170 p.

Taylor, Walter Kingsley, 1992, *The Guide to Florida Wildflowers*, Taylor Publishing Company, Dallas, Texas, 320 p.

Plant profile by Peggy A. Gretchen, Nature Coast chapter, reprinted from the Nature Coastline, March 2001 with permission.

Illustration by Sharon Raymond LaPlante

Landscaping with Natives in Hillsborough County for July

By Sally Sun

For the month - Average temperature range: low of 74° to high of 91°

Average rainfall: 6.58 in.

Flaunting flowers:

Asclepias incarnata, swamp milkweed; rose purple
Asclepias perennis, white swamp milkweed; white
Asclepias verticillata, whorled milkweed; white
Bacopa caaroliniana, lemon bacopa; blue
Bacopa monnieri, water hyssop; white
Berlandiera subacaulis, green eyes; yellow
Bidens alba, Spanish needles; white
Borrichia frutescens, bushy seaside oxeye; yellow
Calamintha ashei, Ashe's savory;
Calamintha coccinea, scarlet savory; red
Callicarpa americana, American beautyberry; pink
Canna flaccida, canna; yellow
Cephalanthus occidentalis, button bush; white
Chamaecrista fasciculata, partridge pea; yellow
Clematis crispa, swamp leather flower; purple
Commelina erecta, dayflower; blue
Conoclinium coelestinum, blue mistflower; blue
Coreopsis leavenworthii, tickseed; yellow
Crinum americanum, string lily; white
Dyschoriste oblongifolia, twinflower; purple
Eleocharis interstincta, spikerush; white
Equisetum hyemale, horsetail; mustard yellow
Eryngium yuccifolium, button snakeroot; white
Erythrina herbacea, coral bean; red
Gaillardia pulchella, blanketflower; red with yellow tips
Glandularia maritima, beach vervain; purple
Glandularia tampensis, Tampa vervain; purple
Hamelia patens, firebush; red
Helianthus angustifolius, narrowleaf sunflower; yellow
Helianthus debilis, beach sunflower; yellow
Heliotropium angiospermum, scorpion tail; white
Heliotropium polyphyllum, pineland heliotrope; white, yellow
Hibiscus coccineus, scarlet hibiscus; red
Hibiscus grandiflorus, swamp hibiscus; pink
Hymenocallis sp., spider lily; white
Hypericum hypericoides, St. Andrew's cross; yellow
Ipomoea hederifolia, scarlet morning glory; red

Juncus effusus, soft rush; brown
Justicia angusta, water willow; purple
Kosteletzkya virginica, salt marsh mallow; pink
Lobelia glandulosa, glades lobelia;
Lonicera sempervirens, coral honeysuckle; red
Mimosa strigillosa, powderpuff; pink
Nymphaea odorata, fragrant water lily; white
Passiflora suberosa, corksystem passionflower; green
Phlox nivalis, trailing phlox; pink-purple
Phyla nodiflora, fog-fruit; white
Phytolacca americana, pokeweed; white
Pluchea rosea, saltmarsh fleabane; pink
Polygonum punctatum, dotted smartweed; white
Pontederia cordata, pickerelweed; purple
Psychotria nervosa, shiny wild coffee; white
Rhexia mariana, pale meadow beauty; pink
Rivina humilis; rouge plant; white
Rudbeckia hirta, black-eyed Susan; yellow
Ruellia caroliniensis, wild petunia; pale purple
Sabatia grandiflora, marsh pinks; dark pink
Salvia coccinea, tropical sage; red; pink
Sambucus canadensis, southern elderberry; white
Scutellaria integrifolia, rough scullcap; pale violet
Sophora tomentosa, necklace pod; yellow
Stachytarpheta jamaicensis, trailing porterweed; purple
Tillandsia recurvata, ball moss; violet
Tradescantia ohimensis, spiderwort; blue
Trichostema dichotomum, blue curls; blue
Tripsacum dactyloides, eastern gama grass; brown
Tripsacum floridanum, dwarf fakahatchee grass; brown
Teucrium canadense, wood sage; pale pink-purple
Uniola paniculata, seaoats; green
Utricularia subulata, bladderwort; yellow
Vernonia gigantea, ironweed; purple
Xyris sp., yellow-eyed grass; yellow
Zephyranthes atamasco, rainlily; white

Bearing berries:

Acacia spp., acacias; brown pods
Ardisia escallonioides, marlberry; black
Ostrya virginiana, eastern hophornbeam; green catlin

Passiflora suberosa, corksystem passionflower; black
Rivina humilis, rouge plant; red
Uniola paniculata, seaoats; tannish green seedheads

Wildlife to watch for: (no migration activity this month) (Bird information supplied by Dave Bowman)

Most parent birds are fledging the second batch of youngsters; so they will be catching bugs to feed their nestlings. As the nestlings leave the nest, the parents will be following them around to feed them.

- Red admiral, cassius and ceraunus blue butterflies flitting
- Giant swallowtail caterpillars munch citrus family members
- Gulf fritillary and zebra long wing caterpillars munch passion flower
- Black swallowtail caterpillars munch carrot family members
- Sulphur caterpillars munch partridge pea
- White peacock caterpillars munch water hyssop

What's happening in your yard? Please give us your input. Call Sally Sun, 935-1312, with additions to this list.

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Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for the next issue:

July 25

Please send articles and original artwork for The Suncoast Grapevine to the editor, George Kish, by the **deadline** of each month (earlier, please, if not typed). Text should be in MS Word; graphics should be in a standard graphic format. Previously published artwork should be accompanied by a letter of permission from the original publisher.

Mail:..... SNPS, Inc.
P.O. Box 82893
Tampa, FL 33682-2893

Email:...gkish@tampabay.rr.com

Meeting Location

Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc. meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Westside Conference Center, first floor, located on the USF campus at Banyan & Cypress. Entrance is at the north end of the building.

SNPS Address

The main address for communication is:

Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 82893
Tampa, FL 33682-2893

Any correspondence sent to this address will be forwarded to the appropriate officer or committee member.

The SNPS web address is:

www.fnps.org/chapters/suncoast

Grapevine Subscription

You may subscribe to the Suncoast Grapevine (not including membership in the SNPS or the FNPS) for \$10 per year. Contact George Kish at 920-0853.

Stamp

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