

The **Suncoast Grapevine**

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



Volume 25 Number 4

APRIL 2008

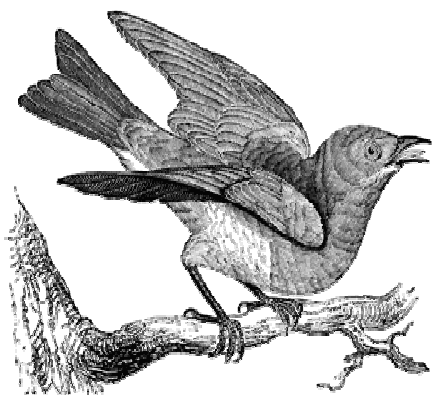
April 16, 2008

7:00 pm

Hillsborough Extension Office

Bluebirds and Boxes

Presented by Mary Miller



The North American bluebirds are cavity nesters and were almost wiped out when the English house sparrow was introduced in 1851 and took over their nesting cavities. This presentation tells of the remarkable recovery of the bluebird through conservation efforts of individuals and the American Bluebird Society, which instituted the concept of bluebird trails. The Tampa Audubon Society maintains 41

bluebird boxes at Flatwoods Park along the walking/biking/skating trail. Even though the trail has been there for 20 years, it has just been monitored for the last three years and this presentation will give you the very encouraging results.

Our speaker, Mary Miller, is a Missouri native, University of Missouri and University of South Florida graduate and has lived in Panama, Delaware, and Puerto Rico before settling in Tampa 30 years ago. Mary began her professional career as an elementary teacher and ended as the Recycling Coordinator for the Pasco County School District. She lives with her husband, John and granddaughter, Liz, and eagerly jumped at the chance to monitor the Flatwoods Park Bluebird Trail when she retired three years ago. She is vice-president of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, a volunteer at the Lettuce Lake Park Audubon Resource Center, a Friends of the Library bookstore volunteer, and loves to travel, garden, and read.

Submitted by Mary Miller



The Florida Native Plant Society was organized in 1980 to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. For more information about the Florida Native Plant Society, please visit our web site: **www.fnps.org**

Bluebirds and Flatwoods Field Trip

Join us on Saturday, April 26, at Flatwoods Park for our Bluebirds and Flatwoods field trip. We will meet at 8:00 am at the Ranger Station inside the entrance of Flatwoods Park at 14302 Morris Bridge Rd. We will be able to peer into one or more of the bluebird boxes along the Bluebird Trail and hopefully see eggs and/or babies. In addition, we'll hike one of the trails to view the native vegetation, much of which will be in bloom. We should also see some birds, possibly some mammals, and perhaps a gopher tortoise or two. So join us for an easy 1- 2 mile hike through some great vegetation. Bring sunscreen and lots of water.

Flatwoods Park is located about 7 miles east of I-75 where it crosses Fletcher. Fletcher becomes Morris Bridge Road east of I-75 and the park is at 14302 Morris Bridge Rd. Contact either **Shirley Denton** (813) 986-6485 or **Mary Miller** (813) 960-8132 for more information. -Mary Miller

FIELD TRIP REPORT: JOHNSON POND

A group of 15 intrepid members set out to explore 2.5 miles of trails wondering if we'd melt before we got back to our cars. Luckily, most of the rain waited until we were well on our way back!

We explored the Johnson Pond trail north of Hernando. We had great examples of the effects of land management on plant communities (effects of fire suppression on sand hill and scrub, old drainage features), got to see a great blue heron on its nest, and climbed to the bottom of a deep sink hole where water from the Floridan aquifer was flowing across white sand. Along the way, we saw numerous members of the blueberry genus (sparkleberry, *Vaccinium arboreum*; deerberry, *V. stamineum*; shiny blueberry, *V. myrsinites*; and Darrow's blueberry, *V. darowii*). Along the way, we were treated to flowering dogwoods - in full flower. The poser of the day was a small white flower with linear leaves -- I couldn't remember the name until we were almost back at the car - long after most people had forgotten about it! *Amsonia ciliata*.



When we did get to the cars, we took count to see if any of us had melted. Most left quickly for drier environs. A few took an additional side trip through mesic hammock down to the Withlacoochee River.

The group had many thanks for John and Mary Miller who organized the trip and hosted us to donuts and coffee at their vacation home in Hernando. **THANK YOU AGAIN JOHN AND MARY!**

-Shirley Denton



Camp Bayou Open House

Saturday, April 19, 2008

8am-2pm

Three miles south of SR 674, end of 24th Street SE, Ruskin.

www.campbayou.org



Great American Clean-Up begins at 8am, with a family naturalist program, *What is a Watershed?* at 9am. Learn about native plants at 10am, play Butterfly Bing-OH! at 11am. \$10 fundraiser Spring Barbeque at noon (vegetarian option available), with a 1pm Wetland Walk and Wade. Other on-going activities throughout the day include a fossil museum, a fossil pit dig, a nature center, three trails through varied habitats, nature arts in classroom, guided walks every half hour, native plants for sale and more. For more information, call 813-363-5438. -Dolly Cummings

SUNCOAST CALENDAR

To submit information to the Calendar, email Mary Miller: limpkin1945@verizon.net

Programs for 2008

- ♣ **January 16—Jennifer Roberts:**
Hillsborough County Invasive Species Task Force
- ♣ **February 20—Laurel Schiller:**
Landscaping With Natives
- ♣ **March 19—Rob Northrop:**
Forest Sustainability: Tampa Bay Watershed
- ♣ **April 16—Mary Miller:**
Bluebirds and Boxes
- ♣ **May 21—Phil Compton:**
Restoring the Hillsborough River With Native Plants
- ♣ **June 18—Sylvia Durrell:**
Dealing With Florida's Drought
- ♣ **July 16—Jeff Klinkenberg:**
Preserving Old Florida
- ♣ **August 20—To Be Announced**
- ♣ **September 17—Shirley Denton:**
The Zen of Native Plant Photography

July 4 – 6 – Fakahatchee Strand. In addition to viewing ghost orchids in bloom in Fakahatchee Strand, spend one day at Corkscrew Swamp. Details to be announced.

August 24 – Alderman Ford County Park. A moderate 2 mile hike to see floodplain and xeric habitats. Details to be announced.

September 20 – Photography Workshop. Practice your photography skills in an area where native wildflowers are in full bloom. Details to be announced.

October 11 – 12 – Fall Plant Festival, USF Botanical Gardens. SNPS will sell native plants. To volunteer, call Sally Sun at (813) 935-1312.

Field Trips and Events

April 12 – 13 –Spring Plant Festival, USF Botanical Gardens. SNPS will sell native plants. To volunteer, call Sally Sun at (813) 935-1312.

April 26 – Bluebirds and Flatwoods. View bluebirds in nesting boxes and native plants at Flatwoods Park at 14302 Morris Bridge Road, Thonotosassa, FL. Meet at 8:00 am at the Ranger Station. Contact Shirley Denton (813) 986-6485.

May 15 – 18 –Uplands to Estuaries: Celebrating Florida's Native Plant Heritage, Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference, Manatee Convention Center, Palmetto, Florida. Register online at www.fnps.org.

May 24 –Crystal Springs. View examples of native restoration at this once public park. Easy walk. Details to be announced.

June 14 – 15 –Butterfly, Herb & Native Plant Fair, USF Botanical Gardens. Call Kim Hutton at (813) 974-2329.

June 21 – Native Plant Buying Trip to Sweet Bay Nursery (near Parrish). Buying trip also includes easy tour of nearby forest habitat. Details to be announced.

2008

Butterfly, Herb, & Native Plant Fair

- ☼ Outreach opportunities
- ☼ Sell plants
- ☼ Promote native conservation and gardening
- ☼ Attract new members

We need volunteers!

Contact
Troy Springer
813-967-4538



Plant Profile

Common name: Virginia creeper

Botanical name: *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* (L.) Planch.

Synonyms: Woodbine

Family: Vitaceae (grape)

Plant Habit: Climbing vine with tendrils

Zone: 3-11

Habitat: Hammocks and floodplain forests

Size: Up to 50 feet

Leaves: Alternate, palmately compound with 3-5 leaflets; brilliant red in fall

Bloom: Small, reddish clusters

Flowering time: Spring

Fruit: Round, blue to black berry

Distribution: New England to the Keys

Growing conditions

Light: Shade to sun

Water: Drought tolerant

Soil: Poor to average

Propagation: Cuttings

Motility: Suckers from roots occasionally

Maintenance: Can be significant

Availability: Most native nurseries

Comments: Food source for bluebirds; often confused with poison ivy; requires maintenance in a small yard; grows quickly in very poor soil



References:

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.

Wunderlin, R.P. and B.F. Hansen, 2003, *Guide to Vascular Plants of Florida*, second edition, University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 787 p.

Wunderlin, R.P. and B.F. Hansen, 2007, *Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants*: University of South Florida, Institute of Systematic Botany (<http://plantatlas.usf.edu/>)

Information compiled by George R. Kish

Photos by Allen Boatman, Betty Wargo, Michael Drummond

Got Pots?

Those who donate to the plant raffles and auctions are in need of some extra gallon pots. If you have any extra, please bring them to the next meeting. Thank you!

-Harriett Wright



In the Woods and on the Beach This Month...

- ☼ **Whooping crane babies** become more noticeable as they begin foraging in open fields.
- ☼ **Bobcat kittens** are born.
- ☼ **Wood storks** begin courting and nesting.
- ☼ **Wild turkey** hens are nesting.
- ☼ **Alligators** begin to move about, seeking new territories and mates.
- ☼ **Florida soft shell turtles** lay eggs now through July.
- ☼ **Loggerhead sea turtles** begin to nest on Florida sandy beaches.

- MyFwc.com

Monthly Plant Auction



Going Once!
Going Twice!

At April's meeting, you may notice that we're switching things up a bit. Rather than raffling off the plants, **Joel Jackson** has volunteered to help us auction them. We still need native plant donations, and would graciously like to thank the donors for March:

*Harriett Wright, Mary Miller, Fred Mulholland,
Bob Scheible, Sally Sun*

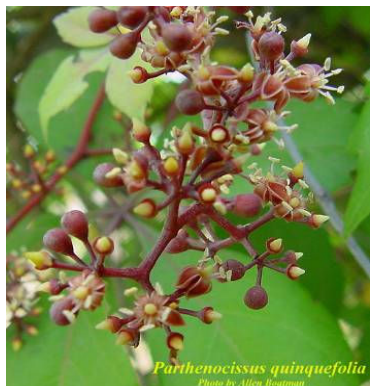
MEMBERSHIP

New

Suzy Saraceno and Dale Deford, Riverview
Ron and Janida Thuemler, Tampa

Renewed

Patricia Alexander, Wimauma
Mark Bossard, Odessa
Joel Cleveland, Tampa
Carl Crosson, Brandon
Dolly Cummings, Ruskin
Michael Elswick, Bradenton
Diane Harm, Tampa
Lucy Hoyt, Tampa
Alyssa Getzoff and Michael Sutton, Tampa
James Wheeler, Riverview



Parthenocissus quinquefolia
Photo by Allen Routman



Parthenocissus quinquefolia
Photo by Allen Routman



Parthenocissus quinquefolia
Photo by Emily Hargis



Parthenocissus quinquefolia
Photo by Michael Drummond

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 Florida Native Plant Society and a subscription to their monthly newsletter *The Suncoast Grapevine*. Contact the membership chair, Harriett Wright, at 908-9398.

Check pertinent category:

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

Name _____

Business name or organization _____

Address _____

City, State and Zip _____

Home phone _____ Email _____

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member/Gift \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-for-profit organization \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Renewal \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business or corporate \$125 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full time student \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library subscription \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Donor \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family or household \$50 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$75 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$1,000 | |

Make check payable to FNPS.

Detach and mail to:

**Suncoast Chapter of
Florida Native Plant Society, Inc
P.O. Box 1158
Seffner, FL 33583-1158**

Activities & Committee Chairs

Field Trips

Shirley Denton 986-6485

Publications

Dick Wunderlin 977-6484

George Kish 920-0853

Librarian

Vikki Sinclair 989-2896

Membership

Harriett Wright 908-9398

Newsletter Editor

Shawna Everidge 757-9289

Mike Fite, Assistant 977-0892

Programs and Publicity

Mary Miller 960-8132

Education

Troy Springer 967-4538

Book Sales

Sally Sun 935-1312

USF Plant Sale

Sally Sun 935-1312

USF Botanical Garden Liaison

Kim Hutton 974-2329

Chapter Representative

James Wheeler 571-5865

Webmaster

Pat Clouser 662-7222



Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for the next issue:

APRIL 30

Please send articles and original artwork for The Suncoast Grapevine to **Shawna Everidge**, by the **deadline** of this month. Text should be in MS

Word; graphics should be in a standard graphic format (.jpg, .bmp, .gif). Previously published artwork should be accompanied by a letter of permission from the original publisher.

Email...

severidge@plantcitygov.com

DIRECTIONS TO:

*Hillsborough County
Extension*

5339 County Road 579,
Seffner.

Take I-4 to Exit 10 (just East of I-75). Go South for two blocks. The office is at the corner of Old Hillsborough Road, and County Road 579.

Meeting Locations

Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc. meets the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the **Hillsborough Extension office in Seffner.**

SNPS Web Address:

www.fnps.org/chapters/suncoast



Officers & Board of Directors

President

Harriett Wright 908-9398

Vice-president

Mary Miller 960-8132

Secretary

Margo Funk 654-5611

Treasurer

John Miller 960-8132

Board Members

Mary Miller

Harriett Wright

Margo Funk

John Miller

James Wheeler

Troy Springer

Shirley Denton

*The SNPS BOD meets regularly.
Call Harriett Wright for exact locations.*



Suncoast Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 1158
Seffner, FL 33583-1158

Club logo:
"Beach Sunflower"
Helianthus debilis

Please deliver to: