

www.suncoastnps.org

The **Suncoast Grapevine**

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



Volume 30 Number 8

August 2013



Photo by Steve Backes

Hummingbirds

Presented by Steve Backes

**Wednesday, August 21, 2013 @ 7PM
Hillsborough County Extension Office**

Steve Backes will be our August speaker. Since attracting wildlife to our yards is often part of the reason that a person plants native plants, it is always interesting to learn about different birds that can be seen in your yard. Being a birder for most of his life, Steve always wanted birds in his yard. After seeing a Rufous Hummingbird in a friend's yard, Steve was determined to attract one to his yard. While researching information on attracting hummingbirds he found a lot of misinformation being offered by "trusted" sources. Joining Listservs and forums as part of his research allowed for great learning opportunities as well as a way to promote a better understanding of Florida's hummingbirds through his posts.

Steve met many licensed hummingbird banders on the Listserv including one who would come annually to his yard to band hummingbirds. Seventy-five hummingbirds have been banded in his yard since 2002.

Steve created websites to educate others on Florida's hummingbirds and to find potential birds for banding. He currently runs floridahummingbirds.net that includes a forum for all types of hummingbird discussions as well as for reporting sightings of hummingbirds. He also hosts a Hummingbirds In Florida Facebook Group.

- submitted by Cliff Brown



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

July 20 Field Trip to Cypress Creek Preserve



Photo by Bunny Worth

Seven dauntless hikers braved impending rain to hike the flatwoods and hydric hammocks of the preserve. The standing water on the ground more than made up for the rain we didn't get from above as we waded through or bypassed around extensive mud puddles. However, we were rewarded with late summer flowers of many colors and grasses and sedges of all descriptions.

We paused along the flatwoods to photograph the beginning blooms of Tarflower and tried to identify the many shrubs surrounding it. The stems and leaves of Tarflower were very hairy and the branches were sticky to the touch - hence its name. One shrub had newly emerging leaves that were a rusty color; this was

one of the Staggerbushes so named because it's hard to walk through them in the rough. Another shrub had leaves that were a chalky green color with a network of veins. Examining the leaves with a hand lens we saw the definitive gold-colored glands of Huckleberry covering the leaf undersides.

Bunny found the plant of the day, *Asclepias pedicillata*, Savannah Milkweed, not uncommon but difficult to spot because of its yellow-green color. It differs from most other milkweeds because its petals are straight up instead of bent over backwards.

In spite of the interesting walk, we were glad to get back to our cars because our sweaty faces and arms were attracting a following of large mosquitoes and the air was very humid (but it didn't rain).

-submitted by Carmel vanHoek



Photo by Mike Fite

Note from SWFWMD website - *'Purchased to provide flood protection and serve as a public water supply, Cypress Creek's floodplain helps filter nutrients in runoff waters.'* *'Cypress Creek is a tributary of the Hillsborough River.'*



Thanks for helping with the July meeting to -

Fred Mulholland, & Cliff Brown for providing plants for the auction.

Gar Reed for collecting money at the joint meeting

Note from the Editor

Our joint meeting with the Audubon and Sierra groups is always a good time and this year was no exception. It was great to see a large group of people interested in saving and restoring natural places and the species that belong there. SNPS had our seeds and books available for sale and talked with some non-members interested in planting natives.

I was out of town near Asheville, NC for a week and was abruptly reminded about how quickly your yard can change from seemingly under control to a massive jungle of green stuff and soggy spots. I enjoyed seeing the different plants in NC and getting some cooler temps in the evenings. Fireflies, turkeys and bears were among the wildlife we encountered.

I am watching a plant in my yard (that I think is a sunflower species) and it is now over 6 feet tall with lots of branching. I can't wait to see the flowers! What's blooming in your yard?

- Janet Bowers, Grapevine editor





The dog days of summer are upon us! And if your yard is anything like mine, you are wearing your muck boots and watching for ants that are just waiting for anything dry, including your ankle, to latch on to. Last spring I never dreamed I would be complaining about too much rain, but every day I check the rain gauge and sigh. I liken our summers to the winters up north. It's a time when I tolerate (barely) the weather and look forward to fall when the mosquitoes are subsiding and you can step outside without your glasses fogging up. Let the north have their summers. We have fall, winter and spring!

So I find myself surprisingly excited about the upcoming FNPS Board Retreat this month at Jonathan Dickinson State Park, just south of Stuart. It has been about 30 years since I've been there but I remember it as one of the outstanding state parks in Florida. Checking out their website, I envision a whole host of plans....bring my bike, take the boat tour, rent a kayak, take a hike, etc. Oh, and attend the board meetings, lest I forget. After all, it's business first, then pleasure.

That 30 year mark keeps coming up again and again. About the time I was first visiting Jonathan Dickinson, SNPS was just starting up, following the 1983 Florida Native Plant conference in Naples. Debbie Butts our current board member, attended that conference and took a field trip to Fakahatchee Strand, a trip that led to her life-long involvement in native plants. "We formed the Suncoast chapter just after that conference. Wunderlin would lead fieldtrips and you had to stay really close to him because he spoke so softly".

Carmel vanHoek remembers meeting in the auditorium at USF in the early days. "Bruce Hanson was the Curator of the Herbarium and he announced he could use volunteers and to stop in, so I did. I would mount plants from all over the world and Botanists would stop by, people I had read about. It was an exciting time".

Jonathan Dickinson should be an exciting time as well. I promise a full report when I return!

Devon Higginbotham



Hillsborough County Releases Beetles To Combat Air Potato At Two County Parks

Three hundred Air Potato Leaf Beetles (*Lilioceris cheni*) have been released into Alderman's Ford County Park and Rhodine Scrub Nature Preserve to combat the non-native invasive air potato plant. Conservation Services' staff anticipates that the beetles will act as a biological control and feast on the vines to help control it. The beetles were supplied from the Florida Department of Agriculture - Division of Plant Industry.

Air potato vines can grow to more than 20 meters in length, and have the ability to take over areas of natural vegetation where they completely smother, shade and choke out native plants. They could potentially cause collapse of native vegetation if left unattended. A common control method is to spray and cut the non-native invasive air potato plant as part of natural habitat management. But the aggressive growth of the vines (reported growing up to one foot in one day) makes it very challenging to keep up with.

The Florida Extension Service - <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/IN/IN97200.pdf> - offers a resource on the air potato leaf beetle. The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council - www.fleppc.org/Manage_Plans/AirpotatoManagementPlan_Final.pdf - offers a resource on an air potato management plan.

Note: Sheryl Bowman, Environmental Scientist for Parks, Recreation and Conservation Department coordinated the Air Potato Beetle release project and provided information for the Hillsborough County News report.

Hillsborough County News July 15, 2013 Contact: Kemly Jimenez Green, Communications and Digital Media Services, 813-276-2677

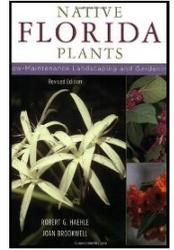
-submitted by Mike Fite



Read any good books lately?

Native Florida Plants: Low-Maintenance Landscaping and Gardening by Robert G. Haehle and Joan Brookwell has been my companion from the start of my native plant adventure. As the SNPS book ordering person, I got a couple copies of this book to offer to other newbie native plant lovers. My own copy of the book is well used and may need replacing someday (my daughter offered to punch holes in it and put it in a binder but somehow that hasn't happened yet.)

I like the one page per plant format and found most of the natives that I was interested in planting within the book. After considering the available spots in my yard, I made my notes and list of desired plants from this book before the local native plant sales. I recommend this book.



-submitted by Janet Bowers

Hernando Chapter Meeting

The September 9th meeting of the Hernando Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will be about Plant Communities. Shirley Denton, PhD is a plant ecologist who has been working with Florida ecosystems and wetlands since 1986 is the speaker. Shirley gave this talk at the SNPS meeting recently and it was well received. Shirley Denton will talk about the basics of what a plant community is and how it relates to other terms such as natural community and ecosystem. She will explain the concept of a plant community, provide some examples and help us understand why plants are important in all of this.

Our regular monthly meetings are held at 7:00 PM, on the first Monday of the month at the Hernando County Mining Association Enrichment Center, 800 John Gary Grubs Blvd., Brooksville, FL 34601. Come as early as 6:30 for a bite to eat and a bit of socializing. Questions should be directed to hcfnps@gmail.com.

-submitted by Mark Hutchinson

Pinellas Chapter news

Space is limited for a plant propagation workshop, which will be on Saturday, Sept. 7th, from 10 am to 2pm at Moccasin Lake Nature Park, 2750 Park Trail Lane, Clearwater. Visit Pinellas Chapter's website, www.pinellas.fnpschapters.org, to register with PayPal. Cost is \$10, which includes \$3 park entrance fee.

- from chapter website



Dates to remember



Aug. 10-13 Perseid meteor shower before dawn

Aug. 13 Nature Coast chapter meeting - Jaret Daniels - Pollinator talk from the 2013 conference

Sept. 28 National Public Lands Day

Sept 28 Plant City Garden festival

Oct 4-6 2nd Annual Wings and Wildflowers Festival in Tavares, FL

Oct 5 Pinellas Chapter- 7th Annual Native Plant Landscape Tour

***** **Oct 12-13 USF Plant Sale** *****



August 24 - Upper Tampa Bay Park

Location: 8001 Double Branch Rd., Tampa

Time: 9:00 AM , Meet outside Nature Center building

Entry fee: \$2 per vehicle up to eight people and \$1 per each additional person.

At 596 acres on the shores of Old Tampa Bay, UTBP habitats include coastal flat woods, fresh water ponds, maritime hammocks, salt barren, coastal marsh and mangrove lined channels. Nature trails and newly rebuilt 700 ft. boardwalk make habitats easily accessible.

- ☆ Facilities include restrooms and shelters where, if you bring a lunch, we can adjourn afterward and eat.
- ☆ Remember to bring mosquito repellent!
- ☆ For more info go to: www.hillsboroughcounty.org/parks

Field trip co-chair - Shirley Denton 986-6485

NOTE- Due to the recent heavy rain, several parks are temporarily closed, please check with Shirley, Suncoastnps.org or Meetup (<http://www.meetup.com/Suncoast-Native-Plant-Society/>) to verify the location of upcoming fieldtrips.



Future Fieldtrips

(Field trip info is also listed on suncoastnps.org and Meetup!)

Sept 21 Bell Creek Preserve. We will be looking for blooming pine lilies. We will also keep our eyes open for early fall bloomers. Florida golden aster is found at this site and there is the potential that a few may be in bloom (primary bloom time is October).

Oct 19 Lake Dan. There are excellent xeric uplands on this site as well as Lake Dan. This is a new addition to the Hillsborough County preserve system.

Oct 25-27 Overnight Camping Kissimmee Prairie State Park Camping. Reservations required. This weekend was chosen both for anticipated fall wildflowers and for dark skies. The park is noted for being a wonderful place for stars, and we are planning to be there at the new moon. The park features a broad expanse of dry prairie. **Please contact Shirley Denton, be prepared to pay for a campsite.**



Nov 16 Green Swamp— Fall wildflowers should be at their best. We will plan the specific location based on where recent burns have been conducted. **This trip is a week earlier than usual to avoid Thanksgiving week.**

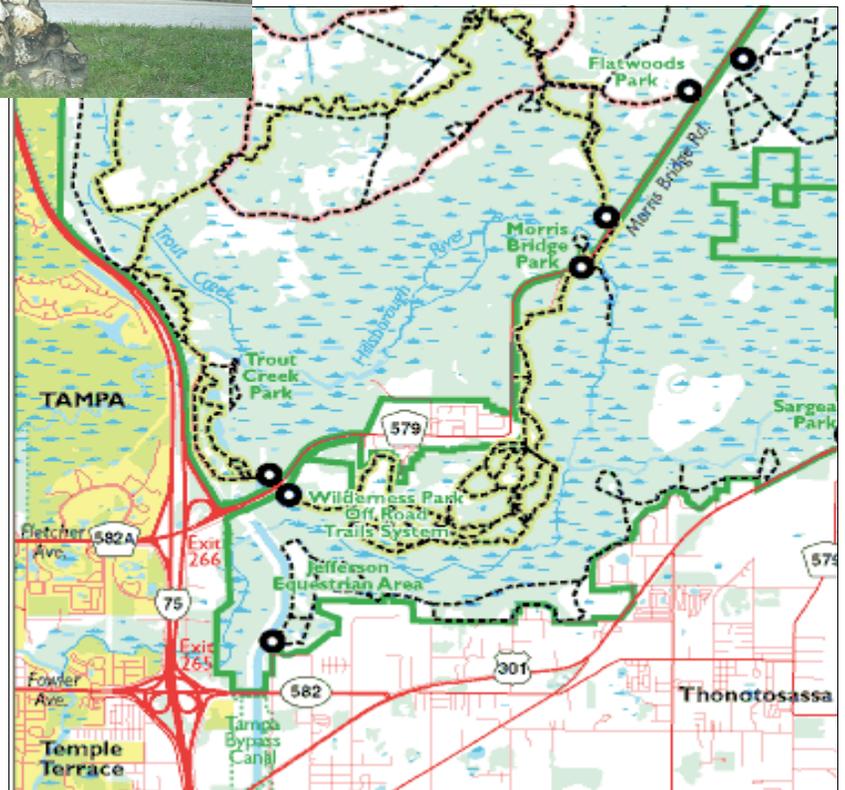
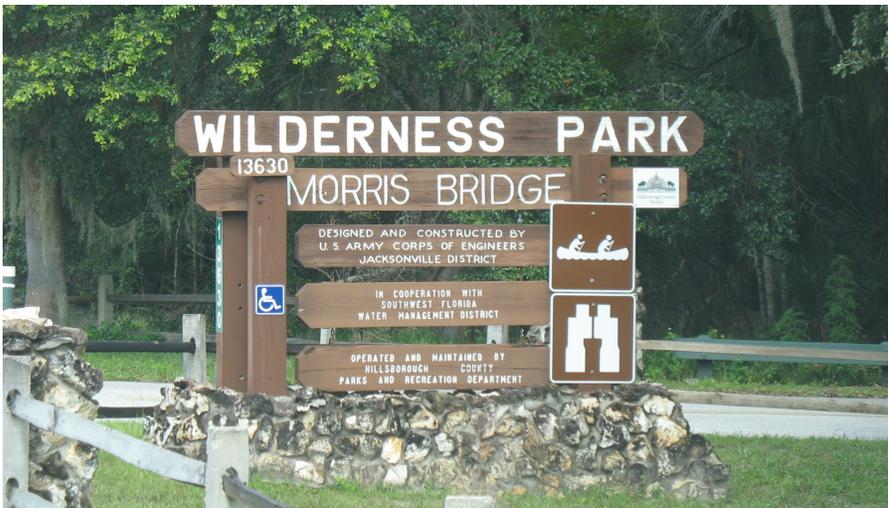
Native Gardens at County Wilderness Parks Come Alive

Suncoast Native Plant Society members have risen to the occasion with plant donations for the native gardens at the three County Wilderness Parks – Flatwoods, Trout Creek, and Morris Bridge—all located on Morris Bridge Road in northeast Hillsborough County. Members who responded to my request for plant donations were Fred Mulholland, Ruth Scalera, JoAnn Hoffman, Janet Bowers, Marci Wilcox, Nancy Dunlin and Ron Huston. Thanks to all of you for your generous donations.

These plants were needed to fill in empty spots that appeared once the native gardens were cleaned up by Rangers Clint Perigard and Dixie Morgan, with the help of SNPS members Mike Fite and Mary Miller. The native gardens and signs, expounding the virtues of planting natives, were installed several years ago by the County, with a grant from SNPS.

It is in the best interest of Hillsborough County and SNPS to make sure these gardens are maintained so we can showcase native plants at their best. Therefore, in an effort to properly maintain the gardens, I have volunteered to help the Rangers once a month on an ongoing basis. I am seeking any SNPS members who would be willing to help with this endeavor. Anyone interested in volunteering a couple of hours each month, or just a couple of hours now and then, please contact me at limpkin1945@verizon.net.

-submitted by Mary Miller



From <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/recreation/areas/lowerhillsborough.html>

Plant Profile - Common name: Spotted Bee balm; Horsemint

- Botanical name: *Monarda punctata* L.
- Family: Lamiaceae (mint family)
- Plant Habit: Erect to spreading tap rooted annual or short-lived perennial, sometimes biennial
- Habitat: Sandy fields, disturbed areas
- Size: 1 ½-3 feet, occasionally to 4 feet
- Leaves: Opposite, oval to lance-shaped with toothed edges and a pleasantly pungent, oregano-like scent
- Flowering time: Late spring through early autumn
- Bloom: White or pale pink flowers spotted purple on elongated spikes with conspicuous, leafy bracts, of white, pink or rose and blooming over a long period
- Distribution: Pennsylvania south to Florida and Texas; also in California. It occurs nearly throughout Florida except the southernmost counties. Zone: 8-10A
- Growing conditions: Well-drained soil
- Propagation: Seed, cuttings, division of clumps
- Motility: Sometimes forms clumps by self-layering; occasionally self-sown
- Maintenance: Yearly pruning of older plants; removal of dead plants
- Availability: Generally available through native plant nurseries



• Light: Light shade to full sun

References:

- Haehle, R.G. & Brookwell, J. 1999. *Native Florida Plants*. Gulf Publishing Co., Houston, TX.
 - Osorio, R. 2001. *A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL.
 - Taylor, W.K. 1992. *The Guide to Florida Wildflowers*. Taylor Publishing Co., Dallas, TX.
 - Taylor, W.K. 1998. *Florida Wildflowers in Their Natural Communities*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL.
 - Wunderlin, R.P. and B.F. Hansen. 2003. *Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL.
 - Wunderlin, R.P. and B.F. Hansen. 2005. *Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants* (<http://plantatlas.usf.edu/>).
- Information compiled by Shirley Brown and Dick Wunderlin

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 SNPS also entitles you to membership privileges in the Suncoast Native Plant Society and a subscription to their monthly newsletter *The Suncoast Grapevine*. Contact the membership chair, Shirley Denton, at 986-6485.

New Member

Renewal

Name _____

Business name or organization _____

Address _____

City, State and Zip _____

Home phone _____ Email _____

Check pertinent category:

Individual/Renewal \$35

Full time student \$15

Library subscription \$15

Family or household \$50

Contributing \$75

Life \$1,000

Not-for-profit

organization \$50

Business or

corporate \$125

Supporting \$100

Donor \$250

Make check payable to **FNPS**.

Detach and mail to:

FNPS

P.O. Box 278

Melbourne, FL 32902-0278

Activities & Committee Chairs

Field Trips

Shirley Denton 986-6485
Steve Dickman 326-0221

Publications

Dick Wunderlin 977-6484
George Kish 920-0853

Librarian

Vikki Sinclair 989-2896

Membership

Debbie Butts 754-7374

Newsletter Editor

Janet Bowers 759-2822
Mike Fite, Assistant 977-0892

Programs

Cliff Brown 810-3211

Publicity/ social media

TBD

Outreach

TBD

USF Plant Sales

Troy Springer 967-4538

USF Botanical Garden Liaison

Kim Hutton 974-2329

Chapter Representative

Devon Higginbotham 478-1183

Webmaster

Ron Huston 951-0946

Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for the next issue:

September 1 2013

Please send articles and original artwork for The Suncoast Grapevine to **Janet Bowers**, by the deadline above. **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-

jbowers27@yahoo.com

DIRECTIONS TO:

Hillsborough County
Extension
5339 County Road 579
Seffner

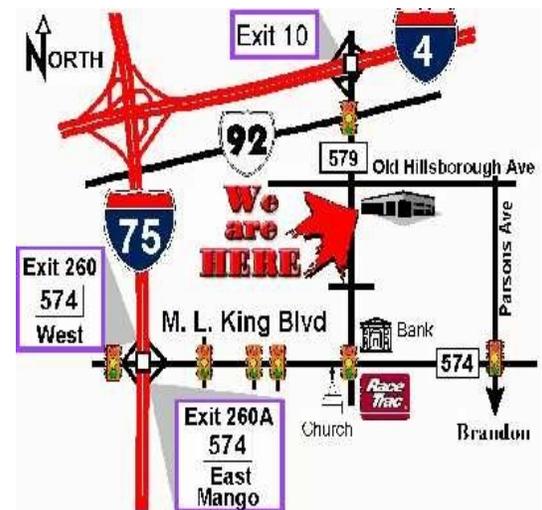
Take I-4 to Exit 10 (just east of I-75). Go south for two blocks. The office is at the corner of Old Hillsborough Road and County Road 579.

Meeting Location

The Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc. meets the third Wednesday of the month @ 7pm @ the Hillsborough County Extension Service office in Seffner.

SNPS Web Address

<http://www.SuncoastNPS.org>



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