FEBRUARY CHAPTER MEETING
At the Hillsborough County Extension Office
Species Ranges – Implications for Landscaping
Making Practical and Ethical Landscaping Choices
Presented by Shirley Denton, PhD
Wednesday, February 21, 7 PM

Dr. Denton will talk briefly about the factors that have led to the current ranges of Florida species. These include climate, isolation (which can result in speciation), broad-scale patterns of soils and drainage, and interactions with other species (competition, dispersal agents, diseases, etc.). The talk will move on to discuss what about these mean for landscape choices. The ability to grow a species successfully outside of its current range depends on more than climate. And success may be in the eyes of the beholder – for example, a plant that cannot reproduce in your area may be fine to grow in a suburban yard but totally inappropriate for a restoration project.

There are also important conservation considerations. The most serious is the potential to cause introgression between closely related species and subspecies whose ranges are naturally disjoint. Another potential issue is that there is the potential that a species that is appropriate inside of its range could become a pest if it is planted where a natural limitation on its spread does not exist. The talk will include specific examples relevant to the Hillsborough County area. Members are invited to ask questions about species of interest to them.

About the Speaker:

Shirley Denton has been a member of the Suncoast Chapter since 1988 and a member of FNPS since 1987. During that time period, she has served FNPS as its Science Advisory Committee Chair, as its president, and is currently Communications Committee Chair. She has served as president, vice president, and field trip chair of the Suncoast Chapter. Professionally, she is a plant ecologist, and has been acting professionally in that capacity since 1986.

Light refreshments are served and a native plant auction follows the presentation.

- submitted by Shirley Denton
TRAIL MIX #2  By John Lampkin

“Do you like my hair?”

The snowy mop that covers a Southern Flannel Moth caterpillar from head to tail is a stunning “do,” evoking Albert Einstein or Doc Brown in “Back to the Future.” And the common name “Puss Caterpillar” is likely from “pussy cat,” a most loveable creature if there ever was one. But appearances are deceiving. DO NOT TOUCH THIS CRITTER! Venom glands at the base of the hairs secrete toxins engineered to make life very unpleasant for incautious native plant enthusiasts and curious children. How unpleasant? Think pain, excruciating pain as in multiple bee stings.

It was while exploring a trail in August that I saw what appeared to be a fluffy piece of bird down. Then my alert companion noticed that it was moving! We both knew enough not to touch, so I snapped pics like the one above by coaxing the venomous crawler onto a leaf and holding that up to the light.

Caterpillars molt many times before pupating and each developmental stage is called an instar. The more mature flannel moth late instars are a much duller brown, less wispy and more flannel-like, so this is a middle instar. If our booby-trapped beauty survives pecking birds, parasitic flies and a gauntlet of geckos, it will munch on oak or holly leaves and molt a few more times. Then it will pupate as a cocoon and emerge as a small but rather stunning moth. Females mate soon after emerging and lay eggs the next day, thus continuing the cycle.

Donald W. Hall at the University of Florida has studied, photographed and written about the life cycle here: http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/Creatures/MISC/MOTHS/puss.htm complete with a photo of a fecal pellet about to be launched. Yes, launched. As cited in “National Geographic,” some caterpillar species propel their waste pellets away a distance of up to 40 times their body length to deter predators.

Wow, a doo-flinging caterpillar with a toxic do! What are the odds?! “So yes, Puss Moth Caterpillar, we indeed do admire your hair, but from a safe distance!”

UPCOMING SPEAKERS-

March 21 – John Lampkin – Happy Trails to You
April 18 – TBD
May – Open Mic (date may change)
June 20 – Rachel Arndt – Tampa Bay Watch

Thanks for helping with the January meeting - Virginia Overstreet for bringing snacks

Special Thank Yous -
Lutz-Land O'Lakes Woman's Club sent a $200 donation to SNPS. Barbara Jackson is a member and Joel has given presentations and advice to the club.

George R. Kish donated plant books from his personal library to SNPS. Those not needed to replenish our library may be auctioned at meetings.

Bunny has (finally) given up her job as refreshments coordinator. Linda Steele-Green will be replacing her.
Volunteers!

Hello SNPS members. As secretary of the Suncoast chapter, one of my jobs is collecting and reporting our volunteer hours to FNPS. The state uses this data in promoting the organization and writing grant proposals or soliciting donations. Volunteer hours gauge the activity level of our chapter.

From May to December of 2017, I reported over 1400 hours contributed by Suncoast members! This does not include members who self-report directly to the state or those of you who are not yet sending your hours to me. Please do!

Volunteering can be as simple as attending a meeting or going on a field trip. These count as education hours because we are learning about Florida’s native plant communities and the wildlife that depend on them.

Volunteering can be a way to enjoy the outdoors and serve the community. Mike Fite and Mary Miller have spent many hours maintaining native plantings in county parks. Joel Jackson leads native plant walks at Lettuce Lake and is making informational signs for several county parks. Jean Waters works in the butterfly garden at HRSP and Carmel VanHoek works with state parks and the USF herbarium collecting specimens and cataloging them. Janet Bowers has led in restoring and cleaning up the native plant area in the HCC Community Garden. Many others have done volunteer work for community groups or parks removing invasive species and planting natives.

Volunteers reach out and help inform non-members about our mission, presenting to schools, clubs and government organizations. Joel Jackson, Devon Higginbotham, Shirley Denton and Virginia Overstreet have all given talks or acted as advisors.

Suncoast needs volunteers to keep our society strong. Sign up for a 2 or 4 hour shift at the Spring Plant Sale at USF. Help man the Native Plant booth at the county fair. Bring refreshments to a meeting. Attend a field trip or garden workday.

Best of all, volunteer to serve in a leadership position. We need your ideas and effort to help Suncoast grow and thrive. Everyone can contribute in some way.

Winter got you down? Soon it will be time for our spring plant sale at USF. April 14-15 are the sale dates.

How can you get involved? Volunteer for a shift - we need people Friday to Sunday, from setup to break down.

We will have a great selection of natives to make your yard a pollinator magnet. Come and help, then take home a few plants for your yard. Even if you don’t have a yard, a large pot can provide color for you and nectar for butterflies. See you there!
FNPS News…. The Nature Coast chapter is again looking for volunteers at the booth for the State Fair in February. Contact Jonnie Spitler at jspitler1120@gmail.com for more information.

The 2018 Annual Conference will be held at the Miccosukee Resort in Miami, Florida (500 S.W. 177th Avenue, Miami, FL 33194), May 17-20, 2018.

SNPS News

- Don’t forget to send Tina any volunteer hours so that she can enter it on the FNPS website
- We need new Board members - please let Tina or Virginia know if you can help.
- If you are interested in attending a Board meeting please check with Tina or Virginia to get more into

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Bioblitz at the Schultz Preserve January 20

Our January field trip was an invitation from Tampa and Sun City Audubon to join them in a Bio-Blitz at Fred and Idah B. Schultz Preserve on the bay north of Big Bend. The 134-acre tract is restored from dredge deposits and contains coastal and upland areas and fresh and saltwater marshes.

We joined a group looking for plants and insects at 9 am, when the birders were already returning from their early morning hikes. Steve Dickman provided surveys from 2006 and 2007 for us.

Although the day was cool and cloudy, our group found 15 butterfly species and numerous moths, wasps and flies. Many of these were observed on the Florida privet trees (*Forestiera segregata*) which were blooming vigorously and attracting crowds of insects and photographers. We never spotted the Julia that had been seen here recently but saw lots of the passion-vine which is its host plant.

Audubon plans to repeat the event later in the year. The preserve has so much variety and is worth visiting at any time but it was especially exciting to travel with experts who were able to point out interesting features in the plants and insects we encountered.

- submitted by Tina Patterson

Photos from Joel Jackson

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Plant City HCC Garden - Workday February 18, 9 AM

We will be trimming the dead branches off the native area, raking and laying edging on the path through our area by the ditch. It is likely the redbud tree will be blooming as it did last year in February.

Please come and help for a couple hours. This will be our spring tidying up. Bring gloves, hat, sunscreen, pruners and water. There is a restroom and water fountain available. The garden is at 2001 E Cherry St, Plant City, across from the Plant City HCC building.

~Janet Bowers

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Mark Your Calendar

- Feb 18 - HCC Garden Workday, 9AM - 2001 E Cherry St, Plant City
- Feb 24 9:00 Lettuce Lake Walk, meet by the Audubon Resource Center building
- March 3, 10 & 17 Advanced Plant ID at Brooker Creek Preserve www.brookercreekpreserve.org
- March 9-12 Coastal Dunes Tour call Devon at 813-478-1183, email indigotravelcompany@gmail.com
- March 10 Munn Park Plant Sale - downtown Lakeland, Heartland Chapter will be selling natives
- April 14-15 USF Spring Plant Sale - SNPS’ biggest fund raiser
Fieldtrip February 24
Brooker Creek Headwaters Preserve

Where: Parking at 18102 Ramblewood Rd, Odessa, FL
When: 9:00 AM

There are no facilities available, so plan accordingly. This walk will be about 3 hours. There may be some spring blooms such as violets, milkworts and blueberries. The hiking trail is through oak/holly hammock, mesic flatwoods, Cypress swamp, and pastures of Andropogon. We should see the hooded pitcher plant (*Sarracenia minor*).

We recommend wearing a hat, long pants and close-toed shoes. Don’t forget drinking water and sunscreen.

Contact for trip - Shirley Denton 813 625-5031

Lettuce Lake Update
From Tina Patterson

- The next walk is February 24 at 9 AM.
- The walk is free but there is a $2 per car entry fee.
- There should be birds, alligators and a few plants blooming by the boardwalk. The lyonias will be blooming in the garden and on the flatwoods path. The Coral Bean in the garden may be in bloom.

See you there!

SNPS Survey questions -

We want to make sure our members have the opportunity to attend our meetings and field trips. If we have enough interest, we will consider having an occasional weekday field trip and an occasional weekend meeting. Some of our members don’t like driving at night and might enjoy having a meeting during the day.

Please let us know if you would be interested in attending a week day field trip or a weekend meeting. We’d also like to hear any suggestions you have to improve our chapter. We want to make sure we’re doing the best we can to educate each other and the residents of Hillsborough County.

1. Are you interested in a Weekday fieldtrip?
2. Are you interested in a Weekend meeting?

Please email your answer to voverstr@tampabay.rr.com or let Virginia know at the February meeting.

2018 Field Trip schedule

March 24 - Green Swamp - East tract - possibly walk a short section of the Florida trail that goes through nice flatwoods with seasonal ponds. We may also drive around a nice loop and/or drive into a pool in the Withlacoochee River that attracts huge numbers of alligators (depends on road conditions).
April 21 - Duette Preserve, Manatee County - we plan to get permission to drive into the preserve
May 17-20 - FNPS conference in Miami
June -- Hillsborough River Paddle
July - possible buying trip to local native nursery
August - no fieldtrip
September - Polk county sites
October 19-21 - Silver River camping
November - Blackwater Creek Preserve
2018 - A Year of Great New Books!

As an avid Native Plant and Book lover, I am anticipating a wonderful 2018 full of new books and learning opportunities. Several well known authors have new books coming out soon. As a member of SNPS, you will be able to check out some of these after we acquire copies for our library.

I will start with a book that isn’t about native plants but is definitely about Florida. Jeff Klinkenberg was a speaker at the Plant City FNPS conference and I fell in love with his story telling of past Florida and the out of way places that still exist. His new book ‘Son of Real Florida’ is due out from University Press of Florida in April. Jeff will be speaking at the Florida state fair about one of his previous books - Tue, February 13, 11:00am – 12:30pm. He will be speaking in St Petersburg in March.

Ginny Stibolt and Marjorie Shropshire are co-authors of the new ‘A Step-by-Step Guide to a Florida Native Yard’ coming on 3/27/18. Ginny has provided practical advice in the past on planting and maintaining native plants and I’ve enjoyed her past books. Ginny will be our speaker in October at our monthly meeting. Both authors are active FNPS members that have made important contributions in promoting Native Plants. You have likely seen Marjorie’s name on the quarterly FNPS Palmetto publication.

More technical in nature, Reed Noss is the author of ‘Fire Ecology of Florida and the South-eastern Coastal Plain’. Dr Noss is a past speaker at our monthly meeting and is an UCF retired professor. He is well known as a conservation scientist and has written several scientific books and articles.

Roger Hammer has a new Florida Wildflower identification book being published in 2018. Roger has spoken at past FNPS conferences and SNPS meetings. His humorous talks are always well attended. He grew up in south Florida and continues to go on trips to the Everglades to photograph orchids and other swamp plants. Roger and the next author, Craig Huegel have been co-leaders of spring and fall walks at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park which are fundraiser events for the Friends of KPPSP.

Craig Huegel, author of several books that SNPS offers for sale, has a new book coming soon. Dr Huegel lives in Pinellas county and is well known in our area. He has a small native plant nursery, Hawthorn Hill, and normally hosts an open house twice a year to sell the plants that he has raised. Craig also has a Hawthorn Hill blog as well as posting information and pictures on Facebook. He previewed the Roots chapter of the new book at the last FNPS conference, the working title of the book was ‘How Plants Work’ but I think the details are yet to be finalized. Some of his past books include-
Plant Profile - Coral Honeysuckle

*Lonicera sempervirens*

**Family** - **Caprifoliaceae**

Coral honeysuckle is a long living, perennial vine that can be deciduous in colder areas. It can grow up to 15 ft long and is a relatively well behaved vine. I have not found it to take over my yard like passion vine does. I have seen it planted on a trellis and grown as a mound on the ground. It likes medium to dry soil and can tolerate shade to sun. It is a fairly easy plant to grow and enjoy.

It attracts humming birds and the seeds are eaten by other birds. It is a host plant for butterflies and is readily available at native nurseries.

Plant Atlas link -
http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Plant.aspx?id=3861

FNPS link -
http://www.fnps.org/plants/plant/lonicera-sempervirens

~Janet Bowers

Terrace Community Middle School Update

Mike Fite checked out the TCMS site to see how it was going and found some issues with invasives. SNPS had already approved a second $500 grant and Mike worked to make sure they got some accurate information about what native plants would be good to plant in their area. He accessed the TMC site by the Jefferson Equestrian Area. There's a walk thru in the wooden split rail fence on the Tampa Bypass Canal side. Take this short, easy walk along the canal’s bank towards Fowler Ave and the school’s north’s chainlink fence line. From this point, walk “down” to the SWFMD flood detention area. Several nature trails have been created by the students, staff and volunteers. https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/recreation/areas/lh-jefferson.html.

Mike returned to the school and Meichelle Long of Temple Terrace Community Middle School took him on a tour of the school’s campus. The campus is adjacent to a SWFMD drainage area which also serves as an outdoor classroom for the children to learn about plants—both native and exotic. Common exotics found are Rosary Pea, Skunk vine, Caesar weed, Japanese climbing fern, Mexican petunia and Ardisia. The Mexican petunia and Ardisia seem to be the most troublesome. Ardisia has been misidentified as shiny leaf Wild Coffee and is deeply entrenched. Meichelle and Mike discussed ways to remove the Ardisia. Currently there is an ongoing program that the children use to remove exotics. They also talked about the plants chosen to be purchased with the SNPS grant.

Giving money to a school seems like a no brainer but it is important to follow up with information and make sure they have a maintenance plan. Planting a garden is only the tip of the iceberg of ongoing upkeep.

Join FNPS on-line - http://fnps.org/participate/membershipinfo

When it comes time to renew, FNPS will send you an email with a link in it. Your information will already be filled out, but you can edit it if it is out of date. This link is unique to you and not to be shared with others.
Newsletter Submissions
Deadline for the next issue: March 1, 2018
Please send articles and original artwork for The Suncoast Grapevine to Janet Bowers, by the deadline above- jbowers27@yahoo.com

SNPS Web Address
http://www.SuncoastNPS.org

Meetings are normally the third Wednesday of the month at 7 PM. (no December meeting)

DIRECTIONS TO:
Hillsborough County Extension
5339 County Road 579
Seffner

Take I-4 to Exit 10
Go south on 579 for two blocks. Turn left on Old Hillsborough Ave and park on the North side of the office.

2018 Board of Directors

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