



the Tarpaper

The Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society



Volume: XVII July, 2005 ISSUE

JULY PROGRAM: "From Eden to Sahara: Florida's Tragedy" Book Signing and Presentation

Join us for an exciting evening as Randy Mejeur, contributing author of "From Eden To Sahara: Florida's Tragedy", takes us back in time on a journey with world- renowned Botanist John Kunkel Small. First published in 1929, this non-fiction book, which has now been brought back into print by the Seminole Soil and Water Conservation District with updated forewords, annotated glossary and photographs, was the first public warning to the long-term consequences Florida would suffer if historic draining and channelization continued unabated. Small, the first curator and head curator of the New York Botanical Garden, had been making regular collecting trips to Florida for almost three decades. During that time he witnessed an alarming loss of wetlands, groundwater and the rare plants he found in swamps and hammocks. Although the overwhelming sentiment during the growth "Boom" of the 1920's was that drainage was to be encouraged, Small was the lone voice warning otherwise. His pleas ultimately led to an awareness of the value of wetlands and to the movement that would culminate in the founding of the Everglades National Park. Randy Mejeur has a thought-provoking Power Point Presentation to discuss Small's predictions, observations, and insights.

Upcoming Field Trips Paul Eisenbrown

July 9 - Lake Norris & Black Water Creek Canoe and Kayak Trip – Lake County

The Lake Norris Conservation area is 2,352 acres and was acquired by the St. Johns Water Management District to help protect the hardwood hammocks along the western shore of the lake, and Black Water Creek. The lake shore is home to a large population of Osprey, as well as other bird life. Recreation on the property is managed by the Lake County Water Authority and recreational opportunities include hiking, camping, biking, horseback riding and canoeing. On **Saturday, July 9th** the Tarflower and Beautyberry chapters of the Florida Native Plant Society will host a canoeing and kayaking trip.

See "Field Trips" page 2.

Events Daniela DeBiase

Saturday, July 16 – ONP Workday Join Tarflower chapter at the Oakland Nature Preserve as we continue working on our plot and pruning the area around the Jack Amons Trail Shelter. Meet at 9'ish at the Amon Trail Shelter on the West Orange trail. Bring a shovel, work gloves, bug spray and water. Before you head out, call 407-340-8316 to coordinate the exact time. While I was there last month I spotted a young gopher tortoise, and *Clematis* sp (probably *reticulata* or *crispa*).

Butterflies And Bats Trip Paul Eisenbrown

Dolly Parton, that famous contemporary philosopher, once said, "If you want the rainbow you gotta be willing to put up with the rain." And this is exactly what



Group Photo by Lubee Bat Conservancy

25 people were doing as they drove to Gainesville on Saturday morning, June 11, through clouds and rain. Alas, Dolly was right; the rainbow appeared in the form of all those



Owl Butterfly

colorful butterflies mixed in with a few hundred fruit bats and several thousand free-tailed bats. We had a good time!

The butterflies were out in full force, all shapes, sizes and colors. A large

screened-in enclosure has been

added to the UF natural history museum with a tropical rainforest inside. As you walk through this lush, tropical paradise the butterflies are everywhere. Some even land on you. An ID pamphlet and knowledgeable See "Butterflies and Bats" page 2.

Field Trips *Continued from page 1.*

We will be starting from the property's parking area off of Lake Norris Road at 9:00 a.m., and the trip will go until about 1:00. We will launch into Black Water Creek near the parking lot and go upstream to Lake Norris, spend some time on the Lake paddling amongst the cypress, and then come back down Black Water Creek to the parking area. Please dress appropriately and bring water, bug spray and a lunch. There are a limited number of boats that will be provided by the Lake County Water Authority, so you must call and reserve your spot! If you wish to bring your own boat, we request that you still sign up and please mention that you will bring your own canoe/kayak. For additional information or to sign up please call Paul Eisenbrown at 407-876-5191 if you are a Tarflower member and Lavon Silvernell at 352-357-7536 if you are a Beautyberry member.

Directions: From Mount Dora, the intersection of Hwy 441 and N. Donnelly St. (becomes CR 44B). Go north on CR 44B. Turn right (east) onto SR 44. Turn left (north) on CR 437. Turn right (east) CR 44A. Turn left (north) onto Lake Norris Road. Go 2.5 miles and the parking area will be on your left. If you go over the bridge on Black Water Creek, you have gone too far.

Don't Forget to Bring: Water, bug spray, sun screen, hat, dry bag, field guides, camera, binoculars, and lunch.

Butterflies and Bats *continued from page 1.*

volunteers help you identify the species and answer any questions. I was told there were even some finches in there, but I missed them. If you haven't done this, then you need to put it on your calendar. The rest of the exhibits in the museum are also worth seeing. We really didn't have time to see it all.

In the afternoon we headed to the Lubee Bat Conservancy, which is a private facility about 15 miles north of



Fruit Bat Feeding on Watermelon

Gainesville, where they promote worldwide bat conservation and research on fruit bats, also called flying foxes. These are big bats from Old World countries that have tropical climates. The 300 or so bats are kept in these unique circular buildings where they can fly if they want. Most were hanging from the wire ceiling of the facilities, living in an upside down world. A few had some young ones nursing under the

mothers' wings. All the bats had names and different personalities according to Lesa, our guide. We also learned that there is a bat diet for those that overeat. It's actually pretty simple. The heavier bats are put in feeding areas with more aggressive feeding bats. They end up with the leftovers and lose weight along the way. The fruit for the bats is hung on chains and the bats hang from the ceiling and pull the chain up to get their food. They also put weights on some of the chains to make the bats exercise while they eat. Maybe they are on to something here. We also saw a glider, a little flying squirrel-like marsupial from Australia. It had big bulging eyes like a lemur.

Pete, Bill, and Jim then headed to the Devil's Millhopper for a quick tour. This is a 120 foot deep sinkhole with wooden steps down to the bottom. It is an example of what happens after growth reestablishes. They indicated the rain provided a lot of little waterfalls. They also stopped by Payne's Prairie and saw a King Rail. The rest of us headed back to the butterflies for a last view before they closed. All we had to do was show our hand stamp. Good for the entire day.

Ben and I then went to Carrabas and successfully got two large tables for the sixteen of us that ate together. It was delicious and of course we ate too much. Somehow Jackie and Rod got a free dinner because they ran out of lasagna. Free is good. We even sang happy birthday to Phyllis. It was time to head to Lake Alice at UF to see more bats of the smaller Florida variety. This isn't Carlsbad Caverns, but it is really interesting. They have a colony of about 100,000 or so free-tailed bats that depart each night after sunset. They head across to Lake Alice for a drink of water and then hunt insects for the night.



Bat House at UF Lake Alice

As you watch some go zipping by just over your head.

After a long day some of our group headed home. Others stayed the night with friends, camping or in hotels. Phyllis and Carol hiked the Salt Springs Trail in the Ocala National Forest on their way home Sunday and were rewarded with a rainbow of butterflies nectaring on button bush at the end of the trail. Charlotte, Ron, Lynda, and Frances checked out the shops in Micanopy and then stopped off at Jim's Barbeque for lunch on the way home. I camped at Paynes Prairie. The first thing Sunday morning I went See "*Butterflies and Bats*" page 4.

PALATAKA TRIP by *Sam Hopkins and Carol Palmer*

The trip started out early on Saturday morning for us. We left Orlando to fight with the crowd for the races at Daytona as far as the cut-off at Deland and then we went to Route 17. We followed 17 all the way into Palatka, having no trouble with the crowds. Knowing that we were running about the limit, we hurried to the location of our field trip at the Etoniah Creek State Forest. There we met the representatives of the Florida Department of Forestry. Since we were the only ones on the trip, we were outnumbered by the Forestry people.

The leader of our group was the head of the Etoniah Forest. He knew all of the problems that they were having with the place as well as the good things that we were to see. His name was Scott Crosby, a Senior Forester. With him were two well-selected men from their Wacassa Forestry Center in Gainesville: Terry Sheehan, Recreation Coordinator, who kept busy with his camera, and Charles Pederson, Biological Scientist II, who kept us advised of the technical aspects of the plants. A picture that I took turned out so well I am including it next in the write-up. You probably recognize Carol Palmer, my partner, as the only girl in the group. We were very select!



Carol Palmer with Field Trip Guides

Most of the trip we were plainly out-numbered by our givers but the information was good and always kept coming. We were told of the steps being taken to make the rest better and the methods that they used to make them successful. There is a lot in the forestry field that we do not understand or appreciate.

We did appreciate the acres of forest that were allowed to grow without a great deal of interference, such as the pines which we see to the left along the road. The cleared area just on the east was an example of the methods used by these modern day sculptors of the forest.

This was the road on the west side of the cleared area, showing the pines along the road and the cleared area to the east. The



pinus, in fact all of the vegetation, had been cut off as shown in the following picture.(S)

This was the right side of the above picture showing how all of the vegetation was removed from the land allowing it to re-grow in a matter that would be more beneficial. Generally, the land was replanted in pine trees. (S)



Just on the side of the area pictured above, we found a whole field covered with Blue Toadflax (*Linaria canadensis*), a member of the *Scrophulariaceae* Family. This is a slender, herbaceous biennial from 8



Blue Toadflax
Linaria canadensis

to 24 inches tall with narrowly linear, alternate leaves scattered along the flowering stem, measuring 1/3 to 1 inch long. Flowers are violet and white with 3 rounded posterior lobes. It blooms from February through May in the fields and roadsides from Florida to California, north to



Blue Toadflax
Linaria canadensis

British Columbia and Nova Scotia.(C)

The most important spot in the forest was the location of the Etoniah Rosemary (*Conradina etonia*) which occurs only in the Etoniah Forest. This is a member of the



Etoniah Rosemary
Conradina etonia

mint family (*Lamiaceae*) and is an aromatic evergreen shrub which has legal status as a Florida and United States Endangered plant. It has square twigs and leaves 0.5-1 inch long which are narrow and densely hairy on both surfaces with leaf margins in-rolled. It has two-lipped tubular flowers about 1 inch long in clusters along the upper half of the stem; flower tube white,

tinged with lavender or rose, sharply bent above the middle and with lower lip of the flower with purple spots. Etoniah Rosemary is found on road edges and openings in white sand scrub with sparse over-story of sand pine and under-story of scrub oak and palmetto. It is known only in Etoniah Creek State Forest and vicinity, with a total of fewer than a thousand plants.

The Etoniah Rosemary (*Conradina etonia*) we found in the forest had no blossoms since this was in February and its usual flowering time is in the summer and fall, mostly October and November. (S)

This is another picture of Etoniah

Rosemary by Scott Crosby, Senior Forester, taken in the time of its blooming. The species is now in cultivation at Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales.



Etoniah Rosemary
Conradina etonia

Butterflies and Bats continued from page 2.

to the viewing tower giving a really panoramic look at the prairie. I saw some bison grazing, including some young ones. There were also a lot of deer throughout the park.

We had a good active group, which included families with their children. We also got to know each other a little better. Thanks to everyone who came to make it happen.

P.S. Do you know why they have that little bat emblem on bottles of Bacardi rum?

St. Augustinegrass - A Florida Native?

Daniela DeBiase

In the mood for an animated discussion? Mention St Augustinegrass to a group of FNPS people. Then listen to arguments on how St. Augustinegrass is siphoning potable water from our finite water supply. And how the liberal use of fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides, necessary to maintain a green, uniform turf are equally bad for our environment. However these arguments are less against using this grass of choice in the landscape and more against how it is being used. Perhaps, don't fault the grass. Fault a sense of aesthetics that has been nurtured by an established sod industry that efficiently produces its



product, by the "wide spread installation of fixed irrigation systems", and by an array of glitzy power gadgets that have been developed solely to maintain that uniformly green flat look.

But the plant that an entire industry is based on, *Stenotaphrum secundatum*, is native to Florida. Refer to Richard Wonderlin's *Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida*, 1998; and <http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu>. Since it is somewhat salt tolerant, it may have emerged along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts where to this day it is useful as a soil stabilizer. The type specimen for *Stenotaphrum secundatum* was collected in the Carolinas in the late 1700's. By the early 1900's two distinct types could be identified. 'Florida Common' had long, purplish internodes along the stolon and purple stigmas. 'Texas Common' of the Gulf Coast Group had green stolon internodes and white stigmas. An alternative hypothesis places St. Augustinegrass' nativity somewhere in the West Indies. However none of the specimens from this area of Pan-America match those of the Gulf Coast Group.

St. Augustinegrass was first used as forage for cattle. Though older leaves are not particularly palatable to cattle, it forms dense mats that can withstand trampling and heavy grazing. In nature it grows in disturbed sites, along river banks and in hammocks, and will adapt to a wide range of soil types (from sandy to rich), pH (5.0 - 8.5), and light intensity (it will grow in the shade). This grass is even found growing in remote areas of Everglades National Park - perhaps left over from a time when Native Americans lived there with their cattle?

St. Augustinegrass was first used as turf in 1880 at A. M. Reed's Plantation near Orange Park, FL. By 1920 St. Augustinegrass lawns were common from Davie to Miami, FL. And the first sod farms that supplied these areas were probably the surrounding pastures.

In the mid 1930's sod growers introduced the 'bitterblue' cultivar which formed denser growth and had a deeper color than 'Florida Common'. Concerns about product quality control led to the development and release of the 'Floritam' cultivar by the University of Florida and Texas A&M University in 1973. And to this day there is no stopping the research and development going into improving the performance of St. Augustinegrass as a turf grass.

Some of this research and development is being done on other continents and then the product is introduced here. Would this make that particular cultivar an exotic?

Some of the other turf grasses used in Florida are exotic. Centipedegrass and Zoysia are from Asia. Bermudagrass is from Africa. And drought tolerant See "*St. Augustinegrass*" Page 5.

St. Augustinegrass *Continued from Page 4.*

Paspalum notatum, Bahiagrass is native to tropical America.

In my opinion, because it's native to Florida, use St. Augustinegrass. But be judicious. If a home is built on a site that was formerly scrub, sandhill, or scrubby flatwood, consider limiting the turf to a small entertainment or child's play area and irrigate this only. And let's "refocus our sense of aesthetics" to view biodiversity and utility as beautiful.

This article was developed with information from www.floridaturf.com. The web article referred to several publications by P. Busey.

HURRICANES by Chuck Roux

The panel at the June meeting gave out much important information and answered audience questions well, but there is too much to report here. I want to add my personal opinions (from experience) that may help in some areas that were not major topics. Too bad that we didn't have more time.

About tree locations near drain fields, keep in mind that the major root problem occurs at the source of water which is at the input end and the other end may never have any water, especially in the over sized drain fields that they now make based on the number of bedrooms. Accordingly, a tree should be placed farther away at the input end, but I'm not going to put a number on it.

I have essentially all centipede grass. Many cemeteries in north Florida and south Georgia have it where low maintenance would be desirable. I have heard several times that centipede requires a lot of water but I don't believe it to be nearly as much as St Augustine. Although centipede is not bothered by chinch bugs, it does have problems. I have had small patches of army worms, but the major problem is that weeds have a better chance to grow and I do not poison weeds, I pull them. I am told that poisoning weeds in centipede is risky. I am not recommending it.

As was stressed at the meeting, Florida has many areas with porous sand and water soaks in fast (if it doesn't run off because of the pavement and roofs). Florida plants that live in such areas have adapted to have deep roots to reach well below the surface. Shallow root systems are created when we irrigate our suburban plants (mostly grass) in dry areas and during dry season. That is part of the problems with the laurel oaks, but they have other undesirable characteristics. Specifically, physically weak crotches of limbs trap bark and stay wet which causes rot. Many laurel oaks still exist that are well beyond the age that they should have been removed for safety reasons. They were the major source of debris in the hurricanes.

Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is developing a statewide Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. This kind of comprehensive effort has never been done before in Florida and there is an opportunity for you to play an important role. The Strategy will enable Florida to qualify for funding through the federal "State Wildlife Grants Program." This program provides matching funds to support proactive and cost-effective conservation aimed at preventing wildlife from becoming imperiled and keeping common species common. Florida's strategy will update and integrate 30 years of existing conservation plans into a single state strategy with funds available not only to the commission but to other entities including non-profits and individuals. The Draft Strategy is available for your review now on the Wildlife Commission Web site at <http://www.MyFWC.com/wildlifelegacy>. For more information call or email Pat at the Florida Office 727-823-3888, patk@defenders.org.

KEEPING BEES by Jean Vasicek

A recent article, "Honey of a Hobby" by Mark Binker, in the *High Point Enterprise* points out that Nationwide we lost about half our honeybee colonies last year due to diseases and parasites. In the article "David Tarry, an assistant professor at N.C. State and the N.C. Extension apiculturist said 'It's been a real agricultural crisis'... because honeybees pollinate fruit and vegetable crops..." North Carolina is so worried about the loss of bee populations that they are giving bee hives away free.

I keep bees in my back yard here in *residential* Central Florida and I've found it to be a wonderfully interesting hobby. In the several years that I've had my hives, I've only been stung a handful of times and I'm grateful to every bee that died to bring me better health. Bee stings are said to cure all kinds of medical ailments from MS to arthritis, but after the bee stings, the bee dies.

During bee swarm season, I am called almost daily to capture swarms. If anyone is interested in keeping bees, perhaps the next swarm can be yours.

The Florida

Beekeepers Assn.

is a great place to get information on how to care for bees. They have an active email list and their web page is floridabeekeepers.org.



Moving a Swarm from my Owl House to a Standard Hive

SPECIAL EVENT

Mark Your Calendar!

On September 6, the Tarflower Chapter will host a Pioneer Day Covered Dish at 6:00 P.M. The dinner will be in honor of the founding members of the Tarflower Chapter. Anyone having photos from the original members, field trips, memorabilia, etc. please bring items to the July meeting for Rick Ehle.



CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

Florida Wildflower Education

The Florida Wildflower Advisory Council and the Florida Wildflower Foundation, Inc. announce their new Wildflower Grant Program which is available for downloading in PDF format at <http://www.floridawildflowercouncil.org>. This new grant program combines the three legislative directives of the Council's endeavors of Education, Research and Community Planting Grants. Anyone or any organization may apply. Please click on the web site and look it over, tell everyone you know, the Council and Foundation members are looking forward to the first years submittals and awards! Contact GARY HENRY (see below) if you have any questions.

Gary L. Henry, L.A., Executive Director
Florida Wildflower Foundation, Inc.
1126 Brandt Drive
Tallahassee, Florida 32308
(850)877-7101

Oops!- Corrections to June 2005 Tarpaper

The Lake Norris Conservation Area is owned full fee by St. Johns River Water Management District, not by Lake County Water Authority. Lake County Water Authority manages recreation on the property for St Johns River Water Management District. Lee Mackin is City Forester for Winter Park

\$25 Individual - \$30 Family
\$50 Non-Profit
\$100 Business
\$100 Supporter
\$15 Full-time Student
\$15 Library or School

Make Checks Payable to:
FNPS
Florida Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 278
Melbourne, FL 32902-0278
Phone: 321-271-6702

SOCIETY NEWS:

Chapter Meetings

Chapter meetings are held the first Tuesday each month at

HARRY P. LEU GARDENS, (1920 N. Forest Avenue, Orlando). The next meeting is **Tuesday, July 5** promptly at 7:00 P.M. Refreshments 6:30-ish. See you there! (For directions, call 407-246-2620 option 1)

Executive Committee

The next board meeting will be July 22 at Phyllis' office MACTEC Engineering. For more information contact Rich Ehle or Phyllis Gray for directions. Members are welcome to attend.

President - Rick Ehle 407-349-0502
Vice President (Program) - Liz Block 407-963-6344
Vice President (Events) - Daniela DeBise 407-423-3554; evybaby@juno.com
Secretary - Beatrice "Bea" Stein 407-876-8122
Treasurer - Jackie Sward 407-647-5233
Field Trips - Paul Eisenbrow 407-876-5191
Memberships - Phyllis Gray 407-253-5462
Director - Gregg Walker 407-359-0506
Plant Rescue - Marge Holt 407-679-6759
Editor - Jean Vasicek 407-363-9061; jean_fmpe@yahoo.com
WebMaster - Daniela DeBise 407-423-3554; evybaby@juno.com
Mailing - Chuck Roux 407-851-8889; chroux@bellsouth.net
WEBSITE - <http://fmpe.org/chapters/tarflower/main.html>

Tarflower Chapter
Florida Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 536021
Orlando, Florida 32853-6021
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

