



the Tarpaper

The Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

Volume XX • May 2013



MAY 7 PROGRAM:

Prem Subrahmanyam presents "A Year in the Bog with Florida's Wild Orchids"



In his presentation, Florida native and native orchid expert, Prem Subrahmanyam will follow through a calendar year the blooming habits of terrestrial orchids that inhabit moist, acidic bogs found in and around pine flatwoods in the state of Florida.

Combining scientific information, personal anecdotes, and a wealth of stunning imagery of Florida's orchids, this is a presentation designed to educate, entertain, and introduce the audience to some of the wealth of Florida's native orchid species.

Prem Subrahmanyam has been studying and photographing Florida's native orchids for more than a quarter century. To learn more about Prem and his work, visit his website, www.flnativeorchids.com.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

JUN 4 – Sister Pat Siemens, Center for Earth Jurisprudence

JUL 2 – Catherine Bowman and Marc Godts discuss Landscaping your Dry, Sunny Yard with Native Plants

AUG 6 – Randy Mejeur: How To Identify Plant Species

Florida Forever! by Jim Erwin

April has been intense for The Florida Water and Land Legacy (FWLL) campaign to renew funding for Florida Forever conservation land purchase, with volunteer signature gatherers working hard to cover multiple events each weekend, and a breakthrough full endorsement of the FWLL campaign from the State Conference of the League of Women Voters.

Volunteers covered everything from a huge heavy metal concert to a bluegrass festival to Earth Day events all over the place. Partial results from the weekend of April 20–21 alone include 1200 signatures from Orange County and 400 from Seminole. Perhaps more important long term, local organizers are beginning to make contact with active religious groups who include "stewardship of the Earth" as part of their faith. Groups who may be ready to field volunteers include Summit Church, Christ Church Unity, Northland Community Church, and the Sunshine State Interfaith Initiative.

Earlier in the month, after vigorous debate, the State Conference of the League of Women Voters broke with 30 years of tradition to fully support the FWLL campaign and the constitutional amendment restoring Florida Forever funding. This key endorsement might not have been possible without gentle but relentless behind-the-scenes campaigning by Chuck O'Neal, chairman of the Orange County League of Women Voters' Natural Resources Committee.



Plant Rescue for Mead Garden Workday! Sunday, May 5

We're doing something a bit different for this month's Mead Garden workday—an exciting plant salvage! As you may know, one of the ways that we are working with Mead Garden is to get some typical plants of our longleaf pine–turkey oak sandhill community re-introduced into the longleaf pine upland areas (where the picnic tables are). We hope to have a plan approved by Mead Botanical Garden, Inc. (MBG) in time for plants to be installed in a couple of small, starter areas during the 2013 rainy season (August/September). Some of the species that we plan to install in appropriate areas include winged sumac, beautyberry, lopsided Indian grass, gopher apple, *Yucca filamentosa*, and some other shrubs and trees that will provide seasonal color and wildlife value. We and/or MBG will need to purchase some plants such as chickasaw or flatwoods plum. However, we hope that some others can be salvaged and hardened off between now and planting time.

To that end, we have received approval from a local landowner to salvage a site that will be developed in the near future. So, in lieu of a work day at Mead Garden, we will have a work day for Mead Garden.

On **Sunday May 5**, we will meet at Mead Garden and caravan to the salvage site in south Orange County. Please bring any spare 1- and 3-gallon pots you may have, shovels, a hat, sunscreen, gloves (if you choose), water for yourself and for the plants. Bring a field lunch or snacks, too. Because we have about a half hour drive and several hours of digging, we will meet at 9 a.m. rather than 10 a.m. We will pot up the plants using their native soil and take them to Mead Garden to be cared for until we are ready to plant.

Special Notes: The site ranges from scrubby to wet pine flatwoods that have not burned for quite a while, so there are areas of dense saw palmetto and sand blackberry. If you have boots, please wear them and wear jeans or densely woven pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Bring a machete if you use one. Don't worry if you do not have boots or are concerned about rattlesnakes: the property owner recently conducted a humane relocation of gopher tortoise from the site so there are newly opened, more easily walkable areas as a result of the backhoe work. As with all of our plant salvages, you are welcome to take a few plants for your own garden if you would like, however, our focus this time is for the target species of plants to go to Mead Garden.

Because it is private property, we need to know who will attend. Please contact Catherine Bowman (email: garberia08@gmail.com, phone: 407-761-7109) regarding your attendance or with any questions you may have.

Sawgrass Island Preserve *by Phyllis Gray*

Recently, I attended the Audubon Academy held at the Lakeside Inn in Mount Dora. One of my reasons for joining the Orange Audubon Society was to venture out among the plants with the birders in Florida's natural areas.

I arrived early for the meeting and decided to head out on my own to the Emerald Marsh, a site renowned for its birds and one of the planned field trips. I was without a detailed map and had a flawed memory of where the sites were located, but I ventured up Highway 452 all the way to Marion County. Since I did not see the brown sign I sought, I reversed back and saw Emerald Island Road, which I followed through willows and a small community. Still not seeing a sign, I decided to give up and return with the planned field trip on Saturday.

On my way back, I saw a brown sign for Sawgrass Island Preserve and decided to substitute that property for my morning ramble. The roads lead through rural areas and homesites with horses, pigs, goats, dogs, and vehicles of an outdoor type in the yards, to the parking area for the walk-in preserve. This is a property managed by the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) and an information kiosk and brochures with maps were provided. Since Lake Yale was shown to the south, that was the direction I walked. Immediately, the white sandy trails, pines, and blooming pawpaws were subjects for photographs. When I reached the edge of the property, I discovered that there was no access to Lake Yale from the preserve. There was a fence, and a clay road, and walking on the road were three wild turkeys! What a beautiful and unexpected sighting.

It was still a long walk to return to the parking lot, so I chose to walk back not on the remainder of the loop trail, but by the shorter service road. That was when I spotted the explanation for the cleared land—a Scrub Jay Restoration in progress. I had earlier spooked two birds with the telltale flight pattern, but the habitat was not the scrubby oak I associate with that species. Evidently the mantra, "If you build it they will come" was applying to this endemic bird.

Near the marker sign was the plant I spotted that was unfamiliar to me—and the purpose I am writing this article. There were only a few specimens of this thin-leaved, feathery plant with white star-shaped flowers, and it was totally new to me. I took several photographs to aid in later identification.

Back home on the computer, I tried to find the plant—unsuccessfully. Thinking a plant list from the Site Management Plan would help me, I searched for that—unsuccessfully. Then I emailed LCWA and sent a picture. The 2-word reply solved the puzzle: *Amsonia ciliata*. Also called fringed bluestar, this is an occasional plant of sandhills, occurring in Florida's northern counties and the central peninsula. Other photographs by Craig Huegel confirmed that this was the same species I had photographed.

This will always be associated in my mind with my first trip to Sawgrass Island Preserve. This would be a worthy field trip for the chapter, particularly if trucked around the service road to hike into special sites. This is a rather large area for a single walk!

The next morning, I changed field trips and ventured out with the group led by site managers for the Emerald Marsh. We saw the very special hybrid bird—a tricolored heron x snowy egret. Nice, but the plant memory of the trip remains the *Amsonia ciliata*. If we plant folks kept life lists, this could be another check-off on a long list of Florida's native plants.



FANN Plant Sale Success! *by Cecilia Catron*

The FANN plant sale was held outside at the Silver Spurs Complex in Kissimmee on Friday and Saturday, April 5-6. Friday was a warm, windy Spring day under a wide, cloudy sky. Right at 2pm, small wagons full of cup size to 25 gallon size plants began rolling out of the building. About 50 people were there to get the best picks. They made groups of plants they wanted and set them off to the side. There were decorative grasses, bushes, trees, and colorful flowering annuals like *Coreopsis*, *Salvia*, and *Liatris*. Prices were not cheap—about what you would expect to pay at any nursery. The selection surprised me as there were some plants I had never heard of, even after all these years. A number of trees were tropical species from south Florida and some from the coasts, and I'm not familiar with them. There were about two dozen native plant nursery booths inside the building.



There was no hog plum (*Ximenia americana*), and almost no scrub plants for sale. But there were plants from every other Florida habitat including flowering bushes like pinxter azalea (*Rhododendron canescens*) which grows from about Leesburg north, fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), and Jamaica capertree (*Capparis cynophallophora*) from south Florida.

I bought a 1-gallon *Garberia* plant for \$4.00. It's a bush with pale lavender flowers that grows in pine flatwoods such as in east Orange County where it's dry, yet wet. When I got home yesterday morning, it had been gnawed off to an inch above the ground! Overactive squirrels... It's the subtropics, it might grow back.



I also bought two books by Ginny Stibolt who was onsite: *Organic Methods for Vegetable Gardening in Florida* (with Melissa Contreras, 2013) and *Sustainable Gardening for Florida* (2009), both published by University Press, which sells well-researched books. I talked to Ginny for about an hour, getting answers to questions I've had for a long time. These books show how to integrate natives into a garden ecosystem in Florida with minimal pesticides and no synthetic fertilizer. They recommend planting flowering plants such as spotted beebalm (*Monarda punctata*) next to the vegetable garden to attract pollinators and beneficial pest controllers such as birds, frogs, insects, and bats. And she sent me away with a native, organic meadow garlic (*Allium canadense*) plant to start a perennial crop next winter.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

NO Tarflower field trip in May! Join us on one of the many FNPS Annual Conference field trips!

JUN 8 – Butterfly Orchid hike with Prem Subrahmanyam at Tosohatchee WMA

JUL 13 – Plant Specimen preservation process with Dr. Harris, UCF Herbarium

AUG 10 – Plant ID Workshop at Mead Garden with Randy Mejeur

April field trip to Morman Branch by Tina Richards

On April 13, a group of Tarflower members gathered for the long haul up to Ocala Nation Forest. The morning was perfect for a long day in the field, slightly overcast with a light breeze and hints of sunlight. Once we were ready to depart we figured out the carpooling situation and piled in two cars. I was very excited that we had an official permit to collect specimens from the National Forest with about 47 plants that we were interested in sampling! Catherine and Ron briefed me about the various traits of the native plants we would be searching for so I had a slight understanding of what we were pursuing.

When we started to enter the National Forest, the calm of a rural atmosphere began to creep in and take over. All of the sudden, we had arrived—a pull off on the side of the road. You would never know it unless you had been there before, or had a sort of secret treasure map! We all piled out of the car and started to lather on the sunscreen. As we stood in a circle next to the fine, fresh smelling habitat, we talked about our plans for the day and our goal to collect the specimens for the herbaria. I could tell this would be an interesting ecosystem because we had already seen some interesting plants on the perimeter: the rare scrub holly (*Ilex opaca* var. *arenicola*), along with the scrub hickory (*Carya floridana*). I thought the scrub hickory was especially interesting because you usually find hickories in moist lush areas—the antithesis of scrub!

Florida scrub habitat is high and dry; many of the species are smaller than their relatives and have other interesting adaptations like waxy leaves. We leisurely set out on the trail, and Catherine taught Amanda and me about *Vaccinium staminium*, a species of the blueberry family named after its protruding stamens. I always have a natural curiosity for edible natives so I knew between its name and its berries, *Vaccinium staminium* and I were already friends! We then came across another native edible, the persimmon. I insisted that the persimmon was astringent and seedy, but everyone else on the trip promised me that I had sampled an unripe fruit, and that I should give it another try. I agreed I would, given the next opportunity. The next beauty we saw was a blooming bigflower pawpaw (*Asimina obovata*). The flowers reminded me of the Chinese lanterns that people set off on the 4th of July or at weddings, but these cute little white flowers were surely better for the environment!

A little further down the trail, we reached the creek. It was a deep ravine

with a small water flow in the middle. Of course we found some interesting species there including groundnut (*Apios Americana*), another edible! This plant has edible tubers and bean pods. A few yards past the creek we saw the LARGEST sand pine I had ever seen. We knew it was a sand pine (*Pinus clausa*) because of the classically small cones. Usually sand pines tend to have a shorter life span (perishing in fires), yet produce a large number of offspring. This differs from other species of pine like the longleaf, which has a longer lifespan and survives fires.

The sand pine was the end of the road so we made our journey back to the cars. I was a tad disappointed because we had not found one species on our collection list! But I took comfort in the fact that I had met many new plant friends and that we still had a whole other trail in front of us. We got into the cars and proceeded to our next destination just up the road. When we got there, Pete reminded us that we would be wading in the water, so no “chickening out!” When we reached the Atlantic white cedars (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*), we stood in their grace for a few minutes, then Pete insisted we all go in the creek to see the magical Grass-of-Parnassus (genus *Parnassia*). It is a rare plant that was nestled on the bank of the large creek. Though it was not in bloom, it was explained that its beautiful white flowers arise from the basal foliage (that actually look nothing like a grass). We also saw many other amazing species making their home by that creek including liverworts and

Florida willow (*Salix floridana*). We waded in the creek for a while, and then dried ourselves on the bank under the white cedars. Since we were all getting hungry, we decided to see a couple more plants and then head to lunch by the river. We saw an interesting specimen of fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*) that was very small and had white flowers! (They’re typically pink!) We also saw the vanilla plant (*Carphephorus odoratissimus*)—not a vanilla orchid, it’s simply called the vanilla plant because the smell is very similar. We ended up finding Pete (he got a little turned around) and headed to lunch by the river. Though we didn’t end up finding any plants on the list, I was happy to leave with a very special cutting of *Vitis cinerea*, a native grape used for its edible leaves!

Remember, there is **no field trip** in May, but we encourage you to attend the Florida Native Plant Society Conference in Jacksonville! Please join us for a trip to Tosohatchee Wildlife Management Area on June 8.



Vaccinium staminium



Grass-of-Parnassus



bigflower pawpaw

IT'S ELECTION TIME!

The slate of nominees for the 2013 Tarflower Board of Directors is listed below. Voting on the slate of nominees will take place at the Annual Meeting on May 7, 2013. We will continue to take nominations from the floor at that time. Please come out and vote for the candidates.

President

Nominee Amanda Martin
Nominee _____

2nd Vice-Pres. (Events)

Nominee Jim Erwin
Nominee _____

Treasurer

Nominee Mark Katelli
Nominee _____

1st Vice-Pres. (Programs)

Nominee Kay Hudson
Nominee _____

Secretary

Nominee Jackie Rolly
Nominee _____

Note: The immediate past President shall be the FNPS State Chapter Director and as such shall also be an automatic member of the Executive Committee of this corporation. State Chapter Director attends quarterly State Board meetings representing and voting for Tarflower Chapter's interest and reports back to the Tarflower Chapter on State Board findings.

SOCIETY NEWS

Chapter Meetings — Chapter meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month at **HARRY P. LEU GARDENS** (1920 N. Forest Ave., Orlando). For directions, call 407-246-2620, option 1). The next meeting is **Tuesday, May 7 at 7pm**. See you there!

Executive Committee — The next board meeting will be **Tuesday, May 14, 2013 at 6pm**. For more information, contact Catherine Bowman. Members are welcome to attend.

The Tarpaper Online! — Current and past issues of *The Tarpaper* can be viewed online by accessing the Newsletters tab of the chapter website at <http://tarflower.fnpschapters.org/>.

Contribute to *The Tarpaper!* — Send your articles, event listings, photos and suggestions to Stacey Matrazzo, Editor, at stacey@impactpress.com. (Please do not reduce or compress photos before sending; a size of 3x4 at 300dpi is preferred.) **The submission deadline for the May 2013 issue is May 19.**

BECOME A MEMBER

Make checks payable to:

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P.O. Box 278
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To join online or for more information, visit www.fnps.org or call 321-271-6702.

\$35	Individual
\$50	Family/Household
\$15	Full-time Student
\$15	Library
\$50	Non-Profit
\$75	Contributing
\$100	Supporting
\$125	Business/Corporate
\$250	Donor
\$1000	Life

FNPS 2013 Annual Conference Celebrating *La Florida, the Land of Flowers* Jacksonville, Florida • May 16–19, 2013

This year's conference theme commemorates Ponce de Leon's naming of the greater Florida region when he landed here 500 years ago.

Join us for exciting field trips, inspiring keynote speakers, educational sessions, workshops and the best plant sale featuring growers from around the state.

The 2013 conference will be held at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. Check out www.FNPS.org and click on "Events" for details. Online registration ends May 4!

Don't miss this unique "Real Florida" celebration!



Passiflora incarnata
Large Passion by Jim Draper (Jacksonville, Florida),
oil on canvas, 48 by 60 inches.
Use of this image generously donated
to FNPS for the 2013 Conference by Jim Draper.



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