

The Suncoast Grapevine

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



Volume 25 Number 12

DECEMBER 2008



THE POINSETTIA

Many native plant enthusiasts will probably soon find that they are sharing space with a certain very seasonal non-native. Since we will not be meeting this month, here's some interesting facts about the Poinsettia, taken from the University of Illinois Extension Service. For more, log on to <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/poinsettia/facts.cfm> !

Poinsettias are native to Mexico. *The Aztecs called the poinsettia *Cuetlaxochitl*. *They made a reddish purple dye from the bracts. *Chile and Peru called the poinsettia the "Crown of the Andes. *Poinsettias are part of the *Euphorbiaceae* family. Many plants in this family ooze a milky sap. Some people may have skin irritation from the milky sap. *In nature, poinsettias are perennial flowering shrubs that can grow to ten feet tall. *The showy colored parts of poinsettias that most people think are the flowers are actually colored bracts (modified leaves). *Poinsettias are priced according to the number of blooms. The more blooms, the more expensive the plant. *The flowers or cyathia of the poinsettia are in the center of the colorful bracts. *Poinsettias have been called the lobster flower and flame leaf flower. *Poinsettias are not poisonous. A study at Ohio State University showed that a 50 pound child who ate 500 bracts might have a slight tummy ache. *A fresh poinsettia is one on which little or no yellow pollen is showing on the flower clusters in the center of the bracts. Plants that have shed their pollen will soon drop their colorful bracts. *Poinsettias represent over 85 percent of the potted plant sales during the holiday season. *Ninety percent of all poinsettias are exported from the United States. *Poinsettias were introduced into the United States in 1825 by Joel Poinsett. *Poinsettias are commercially grown in all 50 states. *California is the top poinsettia producing state. *The Paul Ecke Ranch in California grows over 80 percent of poinsettias in the United States for the wholesale market. *Ninety per cent of all the flowering poinsettias in the world got their start at the Paul Ecke Ranch. *There are over 100 varieties of poinsettias available. *\$220 million worth of poinsettias are sold during the holiday season. *Seventy-four percent of Americans still prefer red poinsettias; 8 percent prefer white and 6 percent pink. *Eighty percent of poinsettias are purchased by women. *Eighty percent of people who purchase poinsettias are 40 or older. *Poinsettias are the best selling flowering potted plant in the United States. *In 2004 over 61 million plants were sold. *Poinsettias are the most popular Christmas plant even though most are sold in a 6 week period.

Water Restrictions Tightened to Conserve our Water Supplies

By Neil Combee, SWFWMD Governing Board Chair

The Tampa Bay region continues to suffer from the effects of a three-year drought, moving from a "severe" to an "extreme" status. We need your help to conserve water and protect the environment.

This summer's rainy season was not enough to refill our lakes and rivers. We are just beginning our eight-month dry season, yet many water levels are where they'd normally be at the end of the dry season. This month, the Hillsborough River reservoir, the main water supply for the city of Tampa, is as low as it normally is in May. The Alafia River is so low that it is no longer able to provide water to meet public supply needs. The C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir has about five billion gallons left in storage, compared to a capacity of 15 billion gallons, and water supply officials predict it could be dry by late April or early May, well before the start of the annual summer rainy season in mid-June. Weather forecasters are predicting below-normal rainfall conditions this coming winter and spring.

With seven months of the dry season still ahead of us and demand for water spiking, we face many challenges. If we don't reduce the amount of water we use, increased withdrawals will result in further impacts to our lakes, wetlands, streams and estuaries. In an effort to reduce demand for water, Tampa Bay Water, the region's wholesale water supplier, requested the District increase its watering restrictions for Tampa Bay Water's member governments in Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties.

On Oct. 28, the District Governing Board increased its water shortage designation for the Tampa Bay area from severe to extreme. The additional water shortage measures include restricting hand-watering and micro-irrigation for non-lawn landscaping to before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m.; ordering the postponement of turf grass renovations (including sod replacement and vertical mowing); reducing the hours that aesthetic fountains and waterfalls may operate from eight hours to only four hours per day; and requiring water utilities and other local enforcement officials to increase their education and enforcement efforts, including issuing citations for a first offense rather than a warning. These additional measures apply to all areas of Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties.

The Governing Board is asking residents and business owners to do their part by following the tightened one-day-per-week watering restrictions and by conserving water whenever possible both indoors and outdoors.

We're asking you to:

- ☘ Only water on your watering day and only if your lawn needs it.
- ☘ Skip your watering day if the soil is already moist or within two days of a heavy rain.

The District appreciates everyone's efforts over the last two years to conserve water during the drought. However, we must be vigilant and continue working together to protect Tampa Bay's fragile water resources and natural environment over the next seven months. Let's all pitch in and do our part.

For more information and free materials about the tightened water restrictions, the drought and how you can conserve water both indoors and outdoors, I encourage you to visit the District's web site at www.WaterMatters.org/drought.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 2009 Annual Conference of the Florida Native Plant Society will be held at the West Palm Beach Marriott, May 21-24, 2009. The Science Track of the Conference will include presented papers on Friday and Saturday, May 22nd and 23rd and the poster session will be displaced Friday and Saturday and presented on Saturday, May 23rd.

Submit abstracts by February 15, 2009 related to native plants and native plant communities of Florida including preservation, conservation, and restoration of not more than 200 words in an MS Word file attached to an email to [Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D., FNPS Science Advisory Committee](mailto:paul.a.schmazler@nasa.gov) (paul.a.schmazler@nasa.gov).

Presentations are planned to be 20 minutes in total length (15 min. presentation, 5 min. questions). Please include your title, affiliation, and address and whether you will be presenting a paper or poster. See the conference section of the FNPS website for conference schedule after January 15, 2009.

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—Nanette O'Hara:**
Eyes on the Bay
- ♣ **September 17—Shirley Denton:**
The Zen of Native Plant Photography
- ♣ **October 15—Terry Zinn:**
Florida Wildflowers
- ♣ **November 19—Miki Renner:**
Relevance of Native Plants to Smart Growth and Low Impact Development
- December—No meeting.**

Thanks to Our Newsletter Editor –
Shawna Everidge

Each month we eagerly await and enthusiastically read our Suncoast Chapter newsletter, *The Suncoast Grapevine*.

However, it does not just magically appear in our mailboxes or online with no effort.

Please let Shawna Everidge know how much you appreciate her effort and how wonderful it looks. –Suncoast BOD

Fall Plant Sale - Thank You!

By Sally Sun

The fall USF Botanical Garden Plant Sale took place October 11 and 12. Twelve members volunteered their time to help make this a successful event. Cypress Acres Nursery delivered plants on Thursday, October 9, and Friday, October 10 – about 650 in all. On Friday, October 10, the set-up crew – **Mike Fite, Ken Kwo and Sally Sun** – assembled at USF Botanical Garden around 9:30 a.m. We set up the tables and arranged plants, hung the banner and pounded the plant stakes in; and had the area ready-to-go in a couple of hours. There were a couple of more deliveries during the day. We had a very nice selection of plants, about 750 in all, and about 80 species of trees, shrubs, ground covers, wildflowers, ferns and vines.

On Saturday, most of the volunteers arrived between 7:30 and 8 a.m. The last of our deliveries arrived at 7:30 and we scurried to get the plants off the truck and into position. The Botanical Garden members started arriving at 9:30 a.m., and the public at 10 a.m. On hand to assist were **Kim Friedland, Margo Funk, Ron Gilbert, Jane Halil, Kristina Herz, Mary Miller, Fred Spriggs and Sally Sun. John Miller and Troy Springer** were on hand to sell books and solicit new members. Fall always has fewer crowds than the spring, but this fall the crowd was smaller than it usually is; we still had lots of plants left by the end of the day, which was not a good sign.

Assisting on Sunday were **Debbie Butts, Sally Sun and Diane Willis**. Troy was back selling books and soliciting new members. The afternoon crew also had to disassemble our area, and **Ron Gilbert** returned to help. The crowds were less this day. We netted about \$704 for all our efforts.

The various events throughout the year, and especially the semiannual plant sales, are vital to SNPS. Part of the purpose of SNPS is educating the public about of native plants. The earnings from these sales help to pay for grants, special speakers' expenses, the newsletter, and educational projects throughout the area. If you can find a few hours to volunteer next spring, your help would be appreciated. It's a great way to learn about Florida's native plants; and it's even fun!! "Y'all come out and join us."

**Note—Due to some technical errors last month, this article was omitted. We would like to recognize both Sally Sun and the excellent work of our volunteers! -Ed.*

PLANT PROFILE

Common name: Yaupon holly
Botanical name: *Ilex vomitoria* Aiton
Family: Aquifoliaceae (Holly)
Plant Habit: Stiffly-branched, densely-leaved shrub or small tree
Zone: 7-10
Habitat: Hammocks, swamps, floodplains, dunes
Size (h x w): 25 ft. by 10 ft.
Leaves: Alternate, simple, 1-inch long leaves; oval to elliptical, evergreen, dark green above, pale green beneath
Bloom: Tiny white flowers
Flowering time: March to May
Fruit: Red berries in the fall and winter
Bark: Whitish-gray
Distribution: Central peninsula of Florida, west to Texas and north to New Jersey

Growing conditions

Light: Full sun to part shade
Water: Drought tolerant after establishment
Soil: Well-drained soils
Salt tolerant: Yes
Propagation: Seed, stem cuttings
Motility: Low
Maintenance: None
Availability: Native nurseries and some garden centers

Comments: Female trees require nearby male trees for pollination; may form a thicket; provides excellent cover and nesting sites for birds; native Americans made a tea from the leaves of this plant; several cultivars are available in the nursery trade: 'Pendula' (a weeping form to 25 ft.), 'Schellings' and 'Nana' are dwarf cultivars growing to about 3 ft. Bright red berries can be used for holiday decorations – unless the birds get to the berries first.

References:

Nelson, Gil, 2003, *Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants*: University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 411 p.
U.S. Department of Agriculture, No date, *Southern Wetlands Flora: Field Office Guide to Plant Species*, USDA Soil Conservation Service, South National Technical Center, Fort Worth, Texas, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center home page, Jamestown, ND, www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/1999/soutflor/soutflor.htm.
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 Shirley Denton, Dan Tenaglia



Wildlife Calendar: December

- ⊗ Annual [Christmas Bird Count](#) begins mid-month.
- ⊗ Buy live Christmas trees for later planting - red cedar, holly and pine are nice.
- ⊗ [Great horned](#) and [barred owls](#) are courting; listen for their hooting.
- ⊗ During cold spells, [manatees](#) congregate at natural springs and industrial warm water sites.
- ⊗ [Bears](#) are still on the move. Watch out for them in Lake, Collier, Marion, Highlands, Jefferson, Gulf, Volusia and Hernando counties.
- ⊗ [Belted kingfishers](#) become more common as winter migrants join resident populations.
- ⊗ [Right whales](#) appear off east coast north of Sebastian Inlet.
- ⊗ [Snail kites](#) in south Florida begin courtship this month.
- ⊗ Goldfinches are plentiful in north Florida.
- ⊗ Nesting season begins for [ospreys](#) in south Florida.
- ⊗ December and January are best times for watching waterfowl on wetlands, lakes, and prairies.
- ⊗ In north Florida, bald eagles start hatching about Christmas day.
- ⊗ Opossum breeding now through mid-summer.




-myfwc.com

MEMBERSHIP

New
Bob Williamson, Tampa

Renewed
Wilderness Park, Thonotosassa
Michael and Barbara Fite, Lutz
William Hand, Tampa
Susan F. Johnston, Wesley Chapel
Jan and Jeff Means, Lutz
Fred and Barbara Mulholland, Tampa
Mary Serina, Tampa
Cy and Joanne Spurlino, Odessa



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:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <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 SNPS.
Detach and mail to:*
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Seffner, FL 33583-1158**

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Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for the next issue:

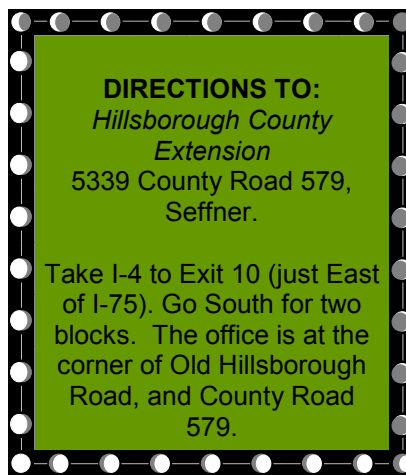
JAN 2

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



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



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Treasurer

Daphne Lambright

Board Members

Shirley Denton

Ron Chicone

The SNPS BOD meets regularly at a variety of locations. If you are interested in attending a meeting, please check the location at a monthly meeting or call Shirley Denton at 813-986-6485.



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Seffner, FL 33583-1158

Please deliver to: