

[www.suncoastnps.org](http://www.suncoastnps.org)

# The Suncoast Grapevine

*Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.*



Volume 27 Number 8

AUGUST 2010

## Attracting Birds to Your Central Florida Backyard

**Presented by Peg Urban & Peg Lindsey**  
**Wednesday, August 18th @ 7pm**  
**Hillsborough County Extension Service**

Peg and Peg are Florida Native Plant Society members from Leesburg. They have developed a tag-team presentation that uses their photographic skills to provide an entertaining and educational program on attracting birds to our home landscapes. They'll focus on food plants and habitat needs for roosting and breeding.

You'll remember Peg Urban from our latest Palmetto – it starred some of her wonderful photographs. Peg Lindsey provides the voice of the duo. Both have been involved in an extensive chapter project to restore sandhill at Pear Lake – a massive native plant gardening project. Both provide the technical skills and botanical and avian knowledge for the project.

*- Submitted by Shirley Denton*



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](http://www.fnps.org)

## Field Trip Report: Discovering The “Super” Ghost Orchid in Corkscrew Swamp Saturday, July 17th

A group of seven native plant enthusiasts and guests piled into two vehicles at the extension office on Saturday morning, July 17 and headed south to Corkscrew Swamp to find the rare and endangered Ghost Orchid. Upon arrival around noon, we decided to eat our sack lunches on the picnic tables outside the entrance before taking the two mile trek along the boardwalk into the swamp. Nearly half way into the swamp, we spotted an unmanned Swarovski spotting scope sitting on the boardwalk, and I knew we had reached our long awaited destination!

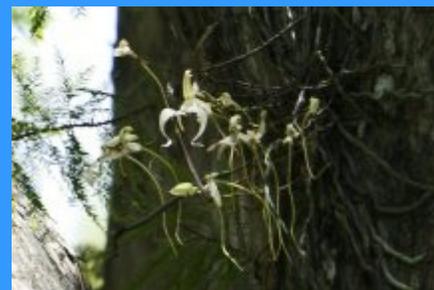
### Some facts we learned about this particular Ghost Orchid and why it's called the “super” Ghost Orchid:

- ✧ It's growing nearly 50 feet high on an old bald cypress tree, whereas 23 feet was the highest previous recorded in south Florida.
- ✧ It is estimated to be at least 35 years old, even though it was only discovered in 2007.
- ✧ It was discovered by a woman watching a barred owl land on the cypress tree and then the orchid came into view and she reported it to staff.
- ✧ This year the orchid had 14 blooms, whereas it's uncommon for a Ghost Orchid to have more than a few.
- ✧ In 2007 it had 12 blooms and 10 blooms in 2008 and 2009.
- ✧ Corkscrew has 34 native orchid species, 11 are designated by Florida's Department of Agriculture as endangered, and 6 are considered rare.
- ✧ Common host plants for the Ghost Orchid are the Pop Ash and Pond Apple, of which we saw many.

On the way back we stopped at the Linger Lodge on the Braden River in Manatee County for super, and everyone had a taste of frog legs and alligator bites (well, just about everybody!) Mariella Smith saw the orchid the next day and reported that a grasshopper was eating the remaining petals, which explains the cutoff appearance on the petals in Joel's image. Rave reviews for this field trip!

*Submitted by field trip leader, Gail Parsons; photos also by Gail, except the Ghost Orchid, by Joel Jackson.*

*Photos from top right to lower left: Saltmarsh Mallow, Ghost Orchid, Longstrap Fern, participants at Corkscrew Swamp, Swamp Hibiscus, Spurred Butterfly Pea, Pond Apple. Want more photos? Check out Joel Jackson's photos at the following link: <http://www.dropbox.com/gallery/3354487/1/Corkscrew%20Swamp%20Photos?h=286fb5>*



**The following is an address to the City of Plant City Commission about the Florida Native Plant Society, by chapter president, Troy Springer. Troy gave the presentation during the July 19, 2010 Commission meeting.**

My name is Troy Springer, and I am the President of the Suncoast Native Plant Society or SNPS, which is a chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, or FNPS. And today I am here to inform the City about FNPS and the work that we do for the community.

The motto of our organization is *to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and the native plant communities of Florida.*

FNPS is a scientific organization that spends a lot of time identifying plants of Florida, and where they belong, where they do not belong, and their frequency in the diverse array of plant communities all across Florida. You do not have to be a scientist to join FNPS, and I certainly can not be identified as one. However, the insight that I have gained by being associated with the many scientific minds of FNPS, and their knowledge, has completely changed the way I look at natural communities - as well as manmade communities - of Florida.

There are many reasons to protect and restore native plant communities in our region. Plant communities are the very base of which our entire fragile ecosystem depends on. There is a lot of pressure from development, landscaping, agriculture, and other man made activities that impact our plant communities. Many plants, and even whole plant communities, are in perilous danger of being lost. This has a huge impact on the entire food chain, and puts other wildlife that inhabits Florida at risk.

I can go on and on about the environmental reasons to learn about, protect, and use native plants, however, there is another good reason that native plants are so important, perhaps more important to some of our community members than just the environmental reasons, and that is about the identity of our community. I would like to give a quick specific example. A very enthusiastic and active member of our chapter James Wheeler would often say to people when doing community outreach programs, "Why would you be planting crape myrtles from Communist China? Use plants that symbolize America!" There is so much truth to that statement. I did a little research on crapes, and was amazed at how many communities have the crape myrtle as their official shrub. You see, you can find crape myrtles as well as many other landscape plants not only in Florida and Texas, but in California, Mexico, Africa, Australia, South America, China, and many others. As a result, our communities are fast becoming faceless, monotonous places with the same landscaping all across the world!



The natural native plant communities in our town are like no other place on Earth, even when you travel just a little bit North, south, east, or west - the natural landscape changes. Because of the surrounding plant communities, Plant City is truly unique. As we continue to expand our town, the choices we make will determine if Plant City continues to be unique. With proper planning of our community and strategic conservation of the surrounding natural areas, we can ensure that visitors will continue to see the real Plant City.

This is where the Florida Native Plant Society can help. As an organization we teach the public to appreciate native plants and how to protect and restore native plant communities. You maybe surprised how much our chapter has been involved with community affairs of Plant City!

In May of 2007, past SNPS president George Kish with the assistance of Marina D' Abreau reviewed the landscape plans for the new Utilities Operations building that was completed when the City of Plant City expanded the Water Reclamation Facility. They suggested changing the landscape plans by using more native varieties, such as swapping Queen palms for Sabal Palms, and Drake elms for Winged elms.

In September of 2007, in support of the *Wildflowers for the Community* grant from the Florida Wildflower Council, SNPS recommended three species for the seed request and provided planting information. A portion of the seeds were used in SNPS's outreach programs.

In June 2009, there was the *Summer Invaders!* contest grant. SNPS awarded the City's Environmental Education Program with a \$100.00 grant, which covered the printing costs of the coloring contest. The coloring contest focused on teaching children about invasive species, both plant and animal.

In November 2009, the City invited SNPS to attend the Non Native Pet Amnesty Day event held at Busch Gardens. SNPS provided outreach and information of non native invasive plants and their destructive role to the environment.

Lastly, because of a generous donation by the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), FNPS will have their annual conference which will be held at the Trinkle Center at HCC. This event will be held in May of 2012. I am proud and nervous to be the committee chairman of this particular conference, and I hope that the City of Plant City will share in the enthusiasm and be a proud supporter as well. This will be an opportunity for those in our community to see what the Florida Native Plant Society is all about, and learn about what we do to help manage our precious resources.

If you can not wait that long to go to an FNPS conference, the 2011 conference will be held in Orlando. You can go to [www.FNPS.org](http://www.FNPS.org) for more info.

# Calendar of Events

Occasionally compiled by Shawna Everidge, please send submissions to [severidge@plantcitygov.com](mailto:severidge@plantcitygov.com)

## Upcoming Suncoast Native Plant Society Meetings...

- August—Peg Lindsey and Peg Urban.  
*Attracting Birds to Your Central Florida Backyard.*
- September—Ann Paul.  
*Florida Herons and Egrets.*
- October—John Miller.  
*Florida Geology as it Relates to Native Plants.*
- November—Shawna Everidge.  
*Exotic Pets.*
- December—*No meeting.*  
*- Submitted by Shirley Denton*

## New column coming September 2010...

Ask a Florida Native Gardener!

**Got a question?  
Interested in sharing  
your knowledge?**

Email Ron Chicone at  
[rchicone@yahoo.com](mailto:rchicone@yahoo.com).  
Questions and answers  
may be edited for space.



## Buying Trip to Sweetbay Nursery Saturday, August 21st, 2010

10824 Erie Rd  
Parrish, FL 34219  
941-776-0501

Tom Heitzman, owner



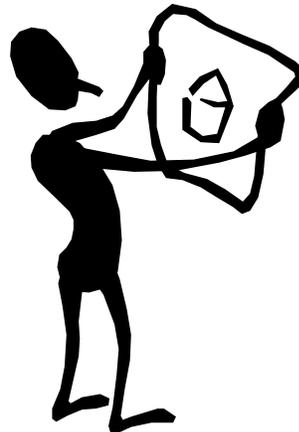
Meet at Extension office (same place as Wednesday night meeting place) at 8:30 AM. Please shoot me an email if you plan on attending: [gailpar1@verizon.net](mailto:gailpar1@verizon.net). Thank you!



USF Botanical Gardens  
Fall Plant Sale  
Saturday & Sunday  
October 9 & 10

Volunteers needed! Sign up at an  
upcoming meeting or by emailing  
Troy Springer at  
[troy@springerenvironmental.com](mailto:troy@springerenvironmental.com)

## 2012 Conference Committee Meeting



Meeting is on August 21st  
at 10:00 AM at the  
following location:

New Tampa Regional  
Library  
10001 Cross Creek Blvd  
Tampa, FL 33647  
813-273-3652  
(library contact)

## PLANT PROFILE

**Common name:** Pokeweed, inkberry

**Botanical name:** *Phytolacca americana*, L.

**Family:** Phytolaccaceae (Pokeweed)

**Zone:** 2 - 11

**Plant Habit:** Upright herbaceous perennial

**Habitat:** Understory plant in hammocks, disturbed areas

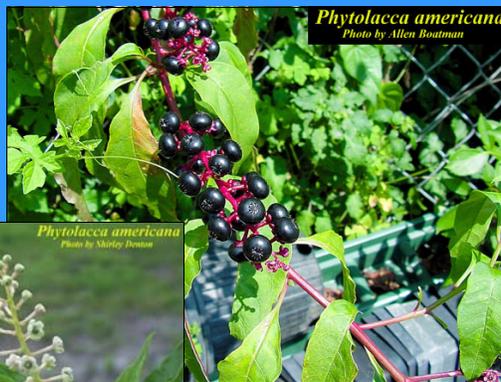
**Size:** 4 to 10 feet (h)

**Leaves:** Large, alternate, lance-shaped; petioles and stems reddish

**Bloom:** Whitish-green flowers on long reddish stalks

**Flowering time:** Spring through fall

**Fruit:** Black berries



### Growing conditions

**Light:** Full sun to part shade

**Water:** Drought-tolerant

**Soil:** Average

**Propagation:** Seed

**Maintenance:** None

**Availability:** Occasionally available from native plant nurseries or home grown by gardeners

**Comments:** Excellent food source for song birds through most of the year;

**all parts of the plant are poisonous;** subject of a 1969 song; facultative upland plant.

### References:

Peterson, Roger Tory, and Margaret McKenny, 1968, **A Field Guide to Wildflowers of Northeastern and North-central North America:** Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 420 p.

Wunderlin, R.P. 2003. **Guide to Vascular Plants of Florida, Second Edition.** 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 George R. Kish**

**Photos by Shirley Denton, Allen Boatman**

## 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.

### Check pertinent category:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Renewal \$35   | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-for-profit organization \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full time student \$15    | <input type="checkbox"/> Business or corporate \$125      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library subscription \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$100                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family or household \$50  | <input type="checkbox"/> Donor \$250                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$75         |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$1,000              |   |

New Member  Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business name or organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to **FNPS**.

Detach and mail to:

**FNPS**

**P.O. Box 278**

**Melbourne, FL 32902-0278**

## Activities & Committee Chairs

### Field Trips

Gail Parsons

### Publications

Dick Wunderlin 977-6484

George Kish 920-0853

### Librarian

Vikki Sinclair 989-2896

### Membership

Shirley Denton 986-6485

### Newsletter Editor

Shawna Everidge 659-4298

Mike Fite, Assistant 977-0892

### Programs and Publicity

Shirley Denton

### Outreach

Fred Mulholland

### USF Plant Sale

Troy Springer 967-4538

### USF Botanical Garden Liaison

Kim Hutton 974-2329

### Chapter Representative

Troy Springer

### Webmaster

Shirley Denton 986-6485

### Conservation

Ron Chicone

Daphne Lambright

Bob Upcavage

## Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for the next issue:

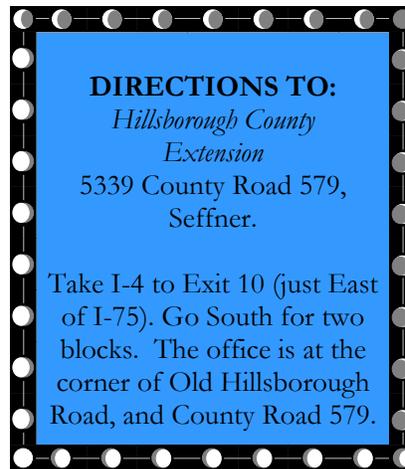
**SEPT 1**

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](mailto: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:

<http://www.SuncoastNPS.org>



## Officers & Board of Directors

### President

Troy Springer

### Vice-president

Shirley Denton

### Secretary

Ron Chicone

### Treasurer

Daphne Lambright

### Board Members

Gail Parsons

Fred Mulholland

*The SNPS BOD meets regularly at a variety of locations. If you are interested in attending a BOD meeting, please check the location at a monthly membership meeting or call Troy Springer at 813-967-4538.*

**Suncoast Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 1158**  
**Seffner, FL 33583-1158**

**Please deliver to:**