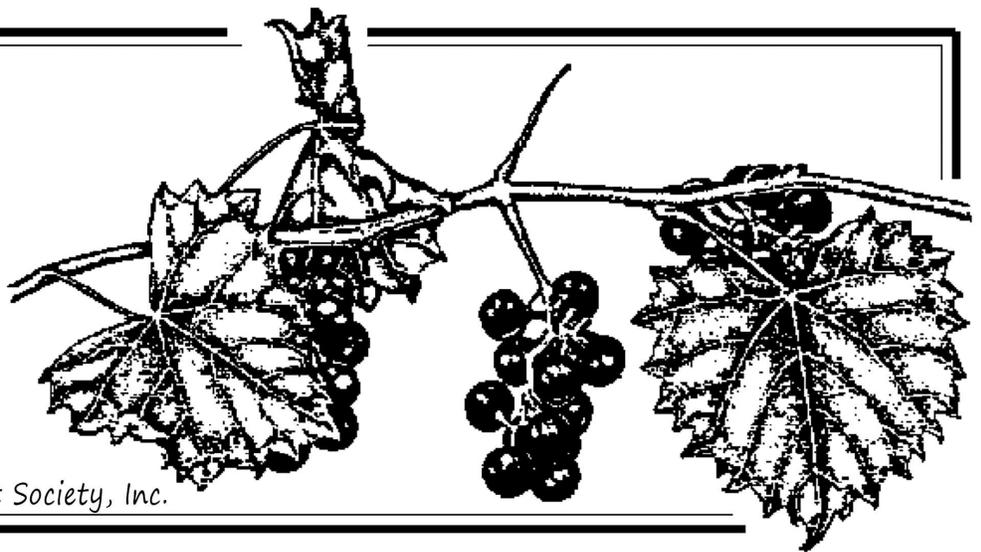


<http://SuncoastNPS.org>

The Suncoast Grapevine

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



August 2020

Volume 37, Number 8

No Meeting This Month

Introducing a new feature – An educational video from an institution whose mission is consistent with the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society

Creating Pollinator Pathways in the Built Environment

by Dr. Jaret Daniels

Published July 7 by the Florida Wildflower Foundation

Dr. Jaret Daniels explains how all landscapes, large and small, are critical to sustaining native wildlife populations in human-dominated spaces. These landscapes include urban parks and neighborhoods, utility and transportation corridors, and home gardens and yards.

Such landscapes can contain rich flora that contribute significantly to biodiversity. That is of extreme importance as we seek to reverse recent insect declines, which have gained substantial media attention due to the potential serious repercussions for people, agriculture and ecological systems.

The video discusses how minor changes in built landscapes can help support wildlife, where changes are needed most, and what actions are most beneficial.

Dr. Daniels is a University of Florida associate professor of entomology and director of the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity at the Florida Museum of Natural History. His research focuses on insect ecology, population biology and conservation, with particular emphasis on butterflies and other native pollinators. He also serves on the Florida Wildflower Foundation board of directors.

To view, visit

<https://flawildflowers.org/pollinator-pathway-webinar/>



Middleton High School FFA & Agriculture Studies

Middleton High school has a long and important history. It was a segregated high school for black students from the 1930s to 1971. Its agriculture program then was known as the New Farmers of America (NFA) instead of today's FFA. As was common at the time, it became an integrated middle school with bussing in the following decades. After much work by alumni and community members, it reopened as a high school in its current (new) location in 2002 . Middleton High School serves east Tampa neighborhoods and includes magnet programs in technology, computers and engineering.

Virginia Overstreet and I met with Middleton HS instructor Kenny Gil about a grant for a native plant garden. Kenny is the FFA (Future Farmers of America/Spanish teacher) at Middleton. He is a high energy person and heads its agriculture program. Kenny had provided us with a list of possible native plant choices for the proposed garden. Virginia and I suggested that a drawing of where the plants would be installed be included with his grant application. We stressed keeping the planting manageable and perhaps doing it in phases. We also talked about drip/micro irrigation installation and using on campus oak leaves for mulch. Students and hopefully their parents will provide “sweat equity” for weeding, mulching and plant installs. Kenny mentioned that the art department wanted to make plant ID markers and also the school’s video production department wanted to do filming. This has the potential of being a very exciting project.

----- Submitted by Mike Fite

Joint Meeting Wrap-up

The July joint meeting with Tampa Bay Sierra Group and Florida Audubon went well. There were about 55 participants on the meeting call with the number varying during the call – but clearly our largest numbers to date. Valerie Anderson did a nice job of presenting the challenges at Split Oak, and there were many questions and suggestions at the end.



On the meeting, plants were donated by Virginia, Mary McCahon and Steve Dickman and prizes went to Christopher Lizardi, Vikki Sinclair, Nancy Stevens (membership renewal) , Holly Jaeger and Junior McGovern.

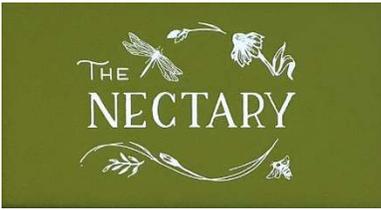
Joel Jackson won and donated his prize back. Niki Cribbs did a wonderful job of being Master of Ceremonies for the call. Thank you to all who made this a success.



Garden report

Little Red Wagon Nursery donated two corkystem passionvines (*Passiflora suberosa*) and two swamp milkweeds (*Asclepias perennis*) for the Lettuce Lake garden. The grasses and sedges are slowly being evicted from the tickseed “meadow,” all spring plants are in , and partridge pea has spread to many new areas in the garden. The bumblebees love that. All garden volunteers are happy that we are finally getting regular rain after a very dry June and early July.

----- Text and Photo submitted by Tina Patterson



The Nectary

An Update by Steve Dickman and the Owners of the Nectary

Images by Nannette O'Hara

Suncoast had a buying trip to the Nectary in July. Steve Dickman followed up on that with this question-answer session with the owners, Michelle Sylvester and Kathryn Adeny.

1. What made you decide to open a Florida native retail plant nursery?

We knew there was a need for Florida native plant nurseries and Polk County was specifically lacking in retail outlets. Each of us had independently been driving more than an hour each way to obtain native plants from the nearest FANN-affiliated retail nurseries, which seemed unsustainable. We wanted native plants to "catch on" as a residential landscaping option in Lakeland, but we didn't think it could happen without a consistent local source - so we made the spontaneous decision to become that source!



2. How long has The Nectary been open?

We started selling at the Lakeland Farmers Market in June of 2019, but we have been at our permanent location on Main St. since December.

3. How did you become interested in FL native plants?

We both purchased homes that had the "builder grade basic" landscaping. For Michelle, it was after reading that she realized the complete lack of life those landscapes harbored. She stopped using pesticides and the amount of activity immediately increases. She then started gardening for birds and butterflies. It was through her reading that she learned that native plants were the absolute best for attracting the wildlife she desperately wanted. For Kathryn, it was living in Seattle for more than a decade that had convinced her that a landscape of native plants was a more environmentally-sensitive (and more interesting!) choice than a green lawn.

4. Have either of you worked at or managed a retail nursery before?

No, neither of us has any experience as a nursery owner or employee. We both have science degrees and have worked in healthcare and public health research. We were both gutsy enough to believe that our combined skills and passion for making native plants more accessible in our community would make up for our lack of experience in the nursery industry.



Social distancing – Janet Bowers and Steve Dickman

5. Anything else?

We hope to present native plants in a beautiful, user-friendly shopping experience that appeals to both knowledgeable and "newbie" customers. We want to see substantially more Lakeland homeowners choosing native plants for their landscapes.

2020 Mini-Meadow Install

By Janet Bowers

It has long been my goal to remove enough turf grass in my acre of yard that I could easily mow edges and paths through the yard without having a riding mower. With the help of Troy Springer and Springer Environmental, phase 1 of a 'meadow' was installed in June. The area between 2 existing beds was targeted. First the sod was removed with a sod cutter, then plants and pine straw were installed. June is the beginning of the wet season – right? Not this year. I was out there watering every day for weeks. Luckily, rain has been more regular lately, and I am enjoying the progress as the plants get bigger and start to flower.



Troy flagged the bare ground to indicate where plants would be



In July, -after the planting was done and the plants were thriving



2020 Mini-Meadow Install - continued

My meadow has lots of purple love grass, lots of muhly grass, some lopsided Indian grass and a few river oats. Darrow's blueberry and green palmettos are sprinkled throughout. There were a couple slash pines already. Wildflowers include – Joepyeweed, giant ironweed, lakeside sunflower, rosinweed. I've added some Chapman's goldenrod, rayless sunflower, elephant's foot, tropical sage and *Eryngium yuccifolium*.

And at the end of July, a Joepyeweed celebration!



Resources for Suncoast Chapter Members

Plants for Hillsborough County Gardens – you can create a list for your garden including sun exposure, drainage, soil type, plant characteristics and use by birds and butterflies --

<https://fnps.org/plants/refinelist/Hillsborough>

Native Plant Society Events in Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco Counties --

<http://www.suncoastnps.org/calendar/>

Historical Palmetto Articles available on-line for download -- <https://fnps.org/palmetto>



Tentative Schedule		
August	---	No Meeting, no Field Trip
September	16	Program: Troy Springer- Lessons Learned
	19	Field Trip:
October	12-13	USF Plant Sale
	21	Program: TBD
	22-24	Camping Trip: Kissimmee Prairie State Park --contact Tina for camping info
November	7	Field trip: Conner Preserve
	18	Program: Member Sharing & Elections
December	?	Holiday Party in a Park

Hardscaping and Lots and Lots of New Plants

By Shirley Denton

Apparently, Janet and I have been keeping Springer Environmental well supplied with work.

In May, I discussed making some landscape changes with Troy Springer, and before long, we had concocted a scheme both to fix my landscaping and drainage challenge (a very steep hill held in place by rotting landscape ties and covered with a mixture of Carolina jessamine and nasty weeds) and to replace an absolutely awful set of stairs that led from my carport to the bottom of that steep slope.

As time went on, the work expanded to fix some other weed patches and to encourage my “freedom lawn” to morph in the direction of a casual meadow as it was, and is filled with sunshine mimosa.

And then, not one, but two dead palms decided that they had had enough of being standing poles. One was covered with trumpet vine and was a known hummingbird attractor. The other had simply been a bare pole. During a big wind, down came the one covered with vines, right across some of my new plantings. Before we could remove it, the other one crashed down on the hill below.

I left for a month in central New York with new stairs, new plantings that had only been watered for two weeks, and two downed palm trees. I had serious worries about how big a mess I might come home to.

The picture below shows what I did come home to. Needless to say, I’m pleased!



And, this week, this is the only place in the yard that I have not been weeding. Yesterday, a hummingbird paid a visit to a firebush as I was weeding around it. So, it looks like I still have plenty of hummingbird attractants. A black swallowtail was also enjoying the firebush. And I have attractive stairs that won’t break ankles.

Overall, this slope will eventually become dominated a coonties. The overall setting will have saw palmettoes, *Baccharus dioica*, muhly grass, some existing shrubs and trees (cabbage palms, an *Asimina obovata*, beautyberry, firebush, sunshine mimosa, dune sunflower, *Tradescantia ohiensis*, shiny wild coffee, *Erythrina herbacea*, gaillardia, etc. Enough trumpet vine is still here to keep the hummers coming.

The mission of the Florida Native Plant Society is to preserve, conserve, and restore the native plants and native plant communities of Florida

Frogfruit, turkeytangle

(*Phyla nodiflora*)

Data compiled by George Kish and edited by Shirley Denton

Family: Verbenaceae (Vervain)

Zone: 5-11

Plant Habit: Trailing perennial herb, 4 inches tall

Leaves: opposite, stalked, obovate to spatulate, 3/4 in. long, toothed near apex

Bloom: Small, purplish to white, in long-stalked heads of 2-lipped, lobed flowers

Flowering time: All year

Distribution: Throughout Florida

Natural Habitats: Beaches, hammocks, disturbed areas

Light: Full to part sun

Water: Moist to moderately dry

Soil: Average

Propagation: Stem cuttings, division and seeds

Maintenance: Low

Availability: Occasionally from native plant nurseries

Comments: Larval food source for Phaon Crescent and White Peacock butterflies; mat-forming with prostrate, hairy stems;

Landscape uses: Can be used as a ground cover and grass substitute

KEY REFERENCES

Colvin, D.L., R. Dickens, J.W. Everest, D. Hall, and L.B. McCarty, undated, Weeds of southern turfgrasses: Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Gainesville, FL, 208 p.

Florida Native Plant Society. Plants for Your Landscape. <https://fnps.org/plants>.

Minno, M.C., Butler, J.F., and D.W. Hall, 2005, Florida Butterfly Caterpillars and Their Host Plants: University Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL, 341 p.

Phyla nodiflora



Frogfruit used as a grass substitute. Photos above by Marjorie Shropshire.



Flower head. Photo by Shirley Denton

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Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for September Newsletter: August 25

Send contributions to Shirley Denton at ecotypes@outlook.com.

Contributions should be original, with references where appropriate. Photographs and drawings should belong to the submitter or submitted along with written permission from the owner, and be of appropriate resolution for printing (a width of 1000 pixels is generally adequate for this newsletter, but err toward larger so that they pictures can be cropped if needed). All submissions should be in formats standardly used in documents and readable on Windows PCs.

Submissions will be reviewed for accuracy with preference for being relevant to the FNPS mission and local environmental events.



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