



Dade Chapter

TILLANDSIA

Newsletter of the Dade Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, Inc.
- For Miami-Dade County and the Florida Keys -

JANUARY 2015

MONTHLY MEETING

Tuesday, January 27, 2015, 7:30 p.m.
Pinecrest Gardens, 11000 SW 57 Ave. (Red Road)
Free and open to the public

Refreshments begin at 7:15 pm. Merchandise sales are before and after the program (cash, checks and credit cards). The plant raffle follows the program. **Please label your raffle plant donations** with the plant name. *Your contributions to the raffle and refreshments are always needed and greatly appreciated.*

"The Florida International University Nature Preserve: Cultural and Ecological Restoration" – Ryan Vogel, Program Coordinator, FIU Office of Sustainability

The FIU Nature Preserve is a 15 acre urban forest which is meant to educate FIU students, faculty and staff as well as the community about the Florida Everglades. Since its establishment in the mid-1970's, little has been invested into its management, thus it had very low visitation for a multitude of reasons – until recently. This presentation will discuss some of the notable management changes and accomplishments that have occurred within the past few years to positively affect the biological composition as well as cultural perspectives regarding this fragmented remnant of the Florida Everglades. See more about the preserve at <http://gogreen.fiu.edu/>.

Ryan Vogel is the Program Coordinator in charge of managing the FIU Nature Preserve through the FIU Office of University Sustainability. He holds degrees from FIU in Park Management and Environmental Studies and is pursuing a career in urban forestry. He has transformed 15 acres of untamed, underutilized natural forest land into a widely popular, valuable campus resource that the community will enjoy for many years to come. While growing up in New York City, Ryan learned to appreciate the importance of nature in changing people's lives for the better. Before working at FIU, he was a Backcountry Park Ranger at Yosemite National Park and interned at Everglades National Park and Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden and has worked with impoverished communities in Brazil, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru.

In this issue:

- Native Plant Day, March 28, 2015
- "Some Native Plant Landscape Misconceptions" by Steven W. Woodmansee

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

Jan. 24 (Sat.): Field trip (John U. Lloyd Beach State Park)
Jan. 27 (Tue): Meeting at Pinecrest Gardens

Feb. 7 (Sat.): Homestead Environmental Fair – volunteers needed for Chapter table

Feb. 22 (Sun): Field trip (TBA)

Feb. 24 (Tue.): Meeting at Pinecrest Gardens

Feb. 28 (Sat): Chapter workday, Everglades National Park

Mar. 24 (Tue.): Meeting at Pinecrest Gardens

Mar. 27 (Fri.): Set up for Native Plant Day

Mar. 28 (Sat.): Native Plant Day

Field trip TBA

May 28-31, 2015 in Tallahassee.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIP

If the weather is very bad, call Patty at 305-255-6404 to confirm. Field trips are for the study of plants and enjoyment of nature by FNPS members and their guests. Collecting is not permitted. Children are welcome.

Time, address and directions are in the newsletter mailed to members. Please join to enjoy all the activities of the chapter!

• **Saturday, January 24, 2015: John U. Lloyd Beach State Park.** This park is between the Intracoastal and the Atlantic Ocean in Hollywood and contains highly disturbed dredge fill areas, mangrove, coastal hammock, beach strand and interpretive trails. Interesting or rare native strand plants include baycedar (*Suriana maritima*), beach peanut (*Okenia hypogaea*) and inkberry (*Scaevola plumieri*). Large stands of Australian pines have been removed and the area revegetated with plants native to the habitat.

Meet: 9:30 in the parking lot to the right of the toll booth.

Difficulty: Easy

Bring: Park entrance fee (\$6/vehicle, \$4 single occupant), sun protection, drinks, lunch is you would like to picnic afterward.

Can't find us? Try Patty's cell, 305-878-5705.

20TH NATIVE PLANT DAY

Saturday, March 28, 2015

A.D. Barnes Park Natural Area

3401 SW 72 Avenue (Bird Road & SW 72 Ave.), Miami

Co-sponsored by:

The Dade Chapter FNPS and Miami Dade County Parks

Save the date and share with your friends now!

FREE and open to the public

As always, we will have interesting activities, programs and walks for all. Great plants and merchandise in a wonderful setting for birding and butterfly watching!

How can you help now or before the event?

• **Pot up plants for the chapter to sell or raffle.** We hope you'll have your best specimens for us, but they don't have to be picture-perfect. Please prep or pot up plants as soon as possible so that they are well-established in their pots.

Special request:

Do you have some little plants that little native plant enthusiasts might enjoy? We would love to initiate a children's plant sale/distribution to get kids in on the enjoyment of everything native plants bring. Annuals and shorter-lived shrubs are ideal - wildflower, rouge plant, small corkystem passionvines, etc. So, in addition to your usual great donations, non-poisonous, non-thorny species in small pots are MORE than welcome!

• **Set aside other non-plant raffle items:** Nature or gardening-related items (books, art, tools, decorative items, etc.)

• **Suggest a speaker or offer to conduct a walk** (contact Ted Shaffer, tedshaffer@bellsouth.net).

• **Volunteer a few hours to help organize the event** (contact Amy Leonard: 305-458-0969, aleonar74@yahoo.com).

• **Stick address labels on postcards** (date TBA, contact Amy or Gita to volunteer). We anticipate doing this before a regularly scheduled meeting, as in the past, most likely in February)

• **Deliver a stack of postcards** to a local business - they'll be available at the February meeting (please contact Amy in advance so we are sure to cover as many locations as possible).

• **Plan to help set up on March 27** - contact Amy.

• **Assist in contacting and scheduling volunteers** (contact Gita Ramsay: gita.ramsay@gmail.com, 786-877-7168)

• **Volunteer to raise (or find in you garden) butterfly or moth caterpillars feeding on native plants** (contact Patty Phares to find out how to help with this: 305-255-6404, pphares@mindspring.com).

Thank you for any and all help you provide to make this the BEST Native Plant Day yet!

- Amy Leonard

DADE CHAPTER NEWS

The City of Homestead's Environmental Fair, Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015, 11a.m. – 4p.m. - DCFNPS volunteers needed.

If you can help staff a DCFNPS table or have an idea for an easy table-top display, please contact Patty Phares (pphares@mindspring.com, 305-255-6404).

The fair is in Losner Park, 104 N. Krome Ave. It will let residents and visitors connect with environmental groups or related interests and promote the free National Parks Trolley service, which offers **free guided tours and admission to Biscayne and Everglades National Parks** on weekends through April 26, 2015. For more information on the Trolley: <http://www.cityofhomestead.com/index.aspx?nid=357>

Welcome new Dade Chapter members: David Ardelean, Suzanne Lasseigne, and Titan Florida LLC/Audrey Becnel (business member) all in Miami-Dade.

Thank you to all who have renewed their membership recently. Your support helps make it possible for FNPS to strive to conserve and promote Florida's native plants.

Sailboat excursion – stay tuned! The auction for this fun opportunity to sail Biscayne Bay with John and Jeanne Rothchild was announced at the last minute (by email only) for the November meeting. It has been postponed to allow for more time to plan ahead. You haven't "missed the boat" – more word to come.

More ways to donate to DCFNPS. Please contact Susan Walcutt (walcutts@bellsouth.net, 305-297-7757) for details of these tax-deductible donations.

• **Do you have an iPad you no longer need?** DCFNPS would like to use the "point of sale square stand with iPad system" for merchandise sales. Treasurer Susan Walcutt has generously donated the square stand, but we need a working iPad to make the system run. (Some older iPad will not work for this.)

• **Support conservation of native plants with a donation in January to the chapter's Gann Conservation Fund.** This fund supports the FNPS Conservation Grant Awards and honors our founders, Joyce and Don Gann. Last year we were able to sponsor two awards, and would love to be able to do the same (or better) in 2015 with your help. Please contact Susan (above), donate at a meeting, or mail a check to DCFNPS to the chapter address (note "Gann Conservation Award" in the memo line).

FNPS NEWS

A penny saved ... easy ways to help FNPS be thrifty.

FNPS President Anne Cox and VP Finance Devon Higginbotham suggest ways that we members can help FNPS save funds for the *important* stuff:

• **Renew early.** Renew at the beginning of the year, or when you register for conference. You might never receive another renewal notice in the mail, thereby saving FNPS printing and postage costs. And one less piece of mail for you to open!

• **Pay by check.** While FNPS always welcomes check or credit card, the costs of processing credit card payments (~3% of the total payment) can really add up. While FNPS is working hard to make it easier than ever to join or renew online, and this service will continue to improve, checks in the mail are always welcome. **Put "membership" in the memo field and mail it to FNPS, PO Box 278, Melbourne FL 32902.** Contact FNPS if you have questions (see contact box on the back).

FNPS Awards and Grants. Submittal deadline March 6, 2015. See www.fnps.org, click on "Participate/ Grants and Awards" for information about **Endowment Research Grants, Conservation Grants and Landscape Awards.** To enter your landscape, take photos now of your native (or mostly native) landscape or restoration at home, business, school, park ... anywhere. Your project must be at least 2 years old. If it won't qualify now, take photos for later. Be proud of your handiwork and help inspire others to use natives!

Broward Chapter FNPS. See www.npsbroward.org. Meetings are at Secret Woods, 2701 W. SR 84, Dania Beach.

OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

Dade Native Plant Workshop. MDC Kendall Campus Landscape Technology Center. 3rd Tuesdays at 7 p.m. See <http://nativeplantworkshop.ning.com> or contact Steve at steve@pronative.com. Bring at least three cuttings of plants (especially flowering/fruitlet), even if they do not pertain to the topic. **January 20 topic:** Vitaceae, the grape family.

Friends of the Gifford Arboretum, University of Miami. Feb. 4, 2015, 7 p.m. Program: "Everglades Tree Islands: Kinds, Origins, Ecology, and Problems" - Dr. Tom Lodge, author of *The Everglades Handbook*. Cox Science Center, Room 166. UM. Directions to the arboretum (adjacent to Cox): www.bio.miami.edu/arboretum > visits or 305-284-1302. Free parking in the Purple Lot, south end of the Arboretum.

Miami Blue Chapter, North American Butterfly Association (www.miamiblue.org; MiamiBlueEvents@bellsouth.net; 305-979-9623). **Feb. 1, 2015, 1-3 p.m.:** Quarterly meeting at Castellow Hammock Park, 22301 SW 162 Ave. "**Native Larval Host Plants of South Florida Butterflies**" – Roger Hammer, retired Miami-Dade County naturalist, author, photographer, and native plant aficionado. The 2nd edition of Roger's book *Everglades Wildflowers* comes out soon, so bring it along if you want to have it autographed.

Environmentally Endangered Lands Program Volunteer Workdays. Help make a difference in protecting our natural areas. **Please pre-register** at EEL@Miamiidade.gov or call 305-372-6611. Info: <http://www.miamidade.gov/environment/endangered-lands.asp>

Jan. 10: Arch Creek Park, 1855 NE 135 St.

Jan. 16: East Greynolds Park, 16700 Biscayne Blvd.

Jan. 24: Deering Estate- North Addition, 16701 SW 72 Ave.

Feb. 7: Hattie Bauer Park, 26715 SW 157 Ave.

The 24th Annual Lecture Series: *The Delicate Balance of Nature 2015.* Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, MM 102.5 Overseas Highway. Gate opens at 7 p.m. Free, seating is limited. Bring a cushion for comfort. Info at 305-451-9570 or <http://www.floridastateparks.org/pennekamp/events.cfm>.

Jan. 7: Earthquakes and tsunamis: impacts on the Florida Keys

Jan. 14: Conservation of rare butterflies in the Florida Keys

Jan. 21: Herons on the flats: contrasting the habitats of two species in the Lower Keys - Dr. Dale Gawlik, FAU

Jan. 28: Sooty terns of the Dry Tortugas - Professor Stuart Pimm, Duke University

Feb. 4: Honeybees: European, Africanized and natives; and how to create a native pollinator habitat – Kim Gabel, UF/IFAS

Tropical Audubon Society. For info on TAS activities and conservation issues: <http://tropicalaudubon.org/tashome.html> or 305-667-7337. 5530 Sunset Dr., Miami, 33143.

• **Follow conservation issues with TAS.** Read the monthly TAS newsletter on the home page to stay informed and learn how to take action. Click on "Join Our Mailing List" to receive updates by email. Join or donate to support conservation.

• **Jan. 28: Conservation Meeting.** All are invited to attend these meetings at 7:30 p.m. on 4th Wednesdays.

• **Jan. 31: The 2015 Conservation Concert series launches.** Proceeds support conservation efforts of TAS. See the website for the performers and all the details.

Miami-Dade College Kendall Campus Environmental Center. Nature lovers - come to free "Second Saturdays", 9a.m. - 2p.m. Explore the 9 acre nature preserve with Tropical Hardwood Hammock and Pine Rockland. Feed the fish and turtles in a crystal clear lake, take a guided or self-guided tour, bring the camera, kids and lunch. Info: 305-237-2095, skaufma1@mdc.edu, <http://www.mdc.edu/ce/kendall/env/>

Miami Pine Rocklands Preservation Coalition

There has been much disturbing news about the proposed developments in the Richmond Pine Rockland tract near Zoo Miami. These include a large development with a Walmart, other businesses and residences, and the Miami Wilds theme park. The Richmond Tract is the largest piece of the last 2% of Pine Rocklands left outside of Everglades National Park, with a large biodiversity of plants and animals. Alterations to this fragile ecosystem will cause havoc with some rare animals and plants. The Miami Pine Rocklands Preservation Coalition has recently formed to address this crisis. Information on how you can participate will become available. Contact Sandy Koi at sandykoi2009@gmail.com to receive updates and information about the coalition and the "Rally for the Rocklands" being planned for January 17, 2015. More information is also at <http://www.savethepinerocklands.org/>

SOME NATIVE PLANT LANDSCAPE MISCONCEPTIONS

By Steven W. Woodmansee

After years of experience talking to gardeners and native plant enthusiasts, combined with my own time spent in my and other people's yards, I've come across some common misconceptions on landscaping with natives. Below are seven common misconceptions I have observed, there are others, which I may expound upon in another article.

Misconception #1: Florida Native means it is native to my yard

This is a big one, and it is a complicated one on several levels, but I find that some people think that once a plant has been rubberstamped as native to Florida, it is okay to landscape it as a native in their yard. Native plants landscaped outside their native range can cause problems in our natural areas, as they can invade in similar fashion to exotic pest plants. For example, West Indian Mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni*, a species restricted to the Upper Keys and Florida Bay, has spread from cultivated material into natural areas of the Lower Keys, Naples, Broward, and West Palm beach. Fortunately, it hasn't become a major problem (yet).

1. Native species restricted to the coast naturally don't belong inland. Beach dune sunflower and sea grape are nice, but they aren't native a mile or more inland from the coast. If you want such restricted coastal species in your yard, that's okay, but realize, it isn't really native there.

2. Florida is a big place, and ecologically speaking, Tallahassee is very different from Key West. In fact, it might be more biologically correct using a species native to the Bahamas (50 miles away), than something say, from Orlando (over 100 miles away). This is not an endorsement for planting non-native species, but a point to elucidate that Florida is an artificial boundary, and different regions of the state (there are 3 or 4) can greatly differ ecologically. Introducing species outside their native ranges could have unforeseen consequences. If you don't know whether a species is native to your area, there are books and resources online such as Natives for Your Neighborhood (www.regionalconservation.org) and the FNPS website (www.fnps.org). You can also get advice when you purchase your plants from many nurseries that specialize in native plants.

Misconception #2: Planting should be done in the wet season

In my experience, there isn't a huge benefit to planting in May or June (the beginning of the wet season). Although there is more rainfall in the wet season, the days are longer, and there is more transpiration (water evaporation through the plants leaves). It is true that in the dry season, you likely will have to water your newly planted material more often, but you should be able to wholly stop after 8 weeks. Sometimes in the summer, due to unforeseen droughts, you may have to water anyway rather than rely on the rainfall. Sure, planting in the winter runs the risk of the very rare freeze (killing your newly planted material). On the flip side, in 2005, due to late summer hurricanes, some of my newly planted trees were ripped out of the ground. In my experience, there are fewer pests such as aphids during the cooler months of winter, which may help your newly planted tree or shrub survive better. Some plant species, such as native palms, may indeed benefit from being planted in the early summer. Otherwise, in my opinion, planting in South Florida should be done as soon as you want.

Misconception #3: All Wetland plants won't grow well where it is dry

Some native plants more typical of wetlands can grow very well in soils that never have standing water. Some examples include Bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), Red maple (*Acer rubrum*), and Creeping Charlie (*Phyla nodiflora*).

Misconception #4: Native Plants require no maintenance

In many cases, native plantings require less maintenance than non-native plantings. However, you will need to maintain any planting, including native landscapes (depending on the type of yard you want). I can go on and on about the reasons for this, but there are so many that the subject could fill a book. In fact, FNPS member and author Ginny Stibolt has just finished writing a book entitled *The Art of Maintaining a Florida Native Landscape*; hopefully it will be out soon. That being said, I will share some tips. In order to minimize maintenance be sure and select the right plant for the right place, this is a big one. Don't be afraid of removing something if it is in the wrong place. In addition, be prepared to spend some time watering newly planted material, and annually mulch newly planted trees and shrubs for the first several years until the form a closed canopy, and leaf drop replaces the mulch. In all likelihood, you will have to weed in areas where there is a lot of sunlight. Many native plants will reproduce in your yard, and you may wish to move or remove them. Finally, Pine Rockland gardens require no mulch, and more frequent weeding. Which leads to...

Misconception #5: Pine Needles should be used in Pine Rockland gardens

Pine Rockland is a critically imperiled ecosystem unique to The Bahamas, Miami-Dade County, and some of the Lower Keys. In Miami-Dade County, most of the Pine Rockland has been destroyed by development, and many of us are trying to create our own Pine Rockland gardens in our yards. It is a plant community that is characteristically low in organic humus. Many like to use pine needles in lieu of mulch. As mentioned previously, one should never use mulch in Pine Rockland gardens, but I also think pine needles should be avoided as they too can add too many nutrients to the system. If you ever walk around a healthy Pine Rockland, you will notice that there are almost no pine needles. That is because fire, a necessary component of the Pine Rockland vegetation community, burns it all off. In healthy pine rocklands, fires occur every 3-7 years, and pine densities are low. Pine Rockland grasses and wildflowers are adapted to fire, and have a difficult time germinating in pine duff. In addition, many beneficial insects, such as spiders, stingless wasps, and bees, often need bare soil in order to build their underground nests. I do realize however that this necessitates more frequent weeding. Rather than pulling weeds, thereby disturbing the soil and promoting weed germination, try cutting weeds at ground level.

Misconception #6: Native Plants will live forever once planted

Plants die, especially herbaceous species like wildflowers and some vines. Don't think that you can bring home all plants, stick them in the ground, and expect them to look glorious for the next 20 years or so. Most native perennial wildflowers live 3-4 years tops. Skyblue clustervine (*Jacquemontia pentanthos*) has a similar lifespan. Some shrubs such as Wild Sage (*Lantana involucrata*) live for about 4-6 years. If you have the right conditions in your yard, young plants may pop up elsewhere in the yard, and you can move them to where you want them, or just leave them. Maybe there is a reason they popped up, and are happier, elsewhere rather than where you put its parent. Sometimes mortality occurs mysteriously, due to disease, or

maybe your yard doesn't have the soil conditions required for that species. You can try and treat the symptoms, or mitigate the causal factors, but perhaps it is time to think about landscaping with some different natives. You may find that in the long run it is cheaper to buy a new plant than try and fix the old one. Hurricanes can also be a causal factor in plant death. Look at it as an opportunity to put in something new.

Misconception #7: Lawns are bad for the environment and do not attract wildlife

It is true that the standard practices of lawn maintenance, herbicide and pesticide treatments, and watering are a waste of resources, but who says you have to do all that. Some of you may have been to some of my talks on this, and you know that I am a big fan of lawn weeds. In fact, my lawn supports more species of butterflies than most butterfly gardens. If you want a freedom lawn, or what I like to call "urban meadow", stop watering and fertilizing your existing lawn. Mow less frequently. Embrace droughts which will kill some of your St. Augustine grass, and you will see a plethora of insects, including bees and butterflies, in your yard. Remember that insects are key to supporting other wildlife such as reptiles and mammals, but especially birds. If you live in an area where you may be fined for an overgrown lawn, consider leaving a portion of it unmowed (even if it is only a square meter). You will need to mow it eventually, so to reduce your carbon footprint, consider purchasing a push reel mower.

**Do you enjoy the articles in *Tillandsia*?
Please tell our contributors thank you!**

Over the course of the year, we strive to have something for everyone, whether your main interest is landscaping your yard, botanizing in the woods, saving natural areas or "everything". We also hope to broaden your horizons.

Let's all thank our faithful regular contributors **Gwen Burzycki, Roger Hammer, Chuck McCartney and Steve Woodmansee**, who each gives us a unique window into something interesting or important to know. **Richard Brownscombe** (from the Broward chapter), **Leon Howell, Dave King, Lauren McFarland** (now in North Florida), **Mary Rose, Ybis Sanabria** and **Bill Shores** have also shared delightful articles and wonderful photos of plants and field trips. (My apologies to any recent contributors I have missed!)

Remember that *you*, too, can contribute. Please do!
Patty Phares – *Tillandsia* editor

DADE CHAPTER FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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TILLANDSIA

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Articles, announcements and news items are invited for *Tillandsia* from Dade and Keys members. Please submit items for consideration by the 15th of each month. Advertising rates from \$12 per month.

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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The Mission of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

If you aren't a member of FNPS and are reading this newsletter, please consider joining or donating! Your support will help FNPS and the Dade Chapter continue to provide this newsletter and other publications, activities and information about native plants to the public, as well as to support efforts to preserve native plant and our natural areas. See www.fnps.org or the contacts box above. It doesn't cost much to make a difference.