



Dade Chapter

# TILLANDSIA

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

## JULY - AUGUST 2016

### MONTHLY MEETING

(Not at Pinecrest Gardens this month)

**Annual evening yard visit and social meeting**  
**Saturday, July 23, 2016, 5-8 p.m.**

**Home of Richard and Lisa Warren**  
FNPS members and their guests are welcome. Rain or shine.

**Address:** 8260 SW 96 Street (Continental Park area)  
**Directions:** From SW 87 Ave go east on 96 St., or from Kendall go south on SW 82 Ave. Park diagonally along 96 St. (near the house or across the street) or parallel along 83 Ave. Walk around to the back yard (SE corner house of 96 St and 83 Ave). 305-323-2511 for questions.

#### What to bring:

- Dish to share (drinks provided)
- Chair, if possible (a few are available)
- Raffle donations (**IMPORTANT - label with the plant name**)
- Mosquito repellent
- A trowel and pot if you would like to dig up seedlings

The Warren's large yard is an inviting, attractive combination of native and non-native plants, including pine rockland and hardwood hammock areas, orchids and an edible garden within a lawn. The landscape (begun in 1989) was largely destroyed by Hurricane Andrew but now contains large native trees, shrubs and wildflowers that attract many butterflies and birds. Come enjoy a beautiful setting and delicious dishes, learn about native landscape plants, and get to know your fellow chapter members!

- **September 27: Joy Klein**, Environmental Resource Supervisor with Miami-Dade DERM, presents on **pine rockland education and restoration** (meeting at Pinecrest Gardens).

### DADE CHAPTER and FNPS NEWS

**Chapter board election.** At the annual meeting in May, the following board members were elected:

President: **Kurt Birchenough**

Vice President: **Amy Leonard**

Directors at Large: **Devon Powell, Surey Rios, Ted Shafer**

Continuing in the second year of their 2 year terms are **Gita Ramsay** (Secretary), **Susan Walcutt** (Treasurer), and **Jennifer Stine, Vivian Waddell, Eric von Wettberg** (Board members at large. There are no new members on the board. Thanks to these members who are have been keeping the chapter going!

### CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

**July 23 (Sat.): Evening Yard Visit & Social meeting**

**Aug. 20: Chapter Workday**, Everglades Nat. Park  
*There is no chapter meeting in August*

**Welcome new members:** Shane Phelps, Barbara Whitlock

#### Chapter Workday: Everglades National Park.

**Coe Visitor Center. August 20, 2016 - 9 a.m. – noon.**

Help the chapter enhance the entrance to ENP. We will be doing pruning and weeding. Cold water is provided; bring snacks to share if you care to. Gloves and hand tools are available. **There might be mosquitoes (we have repellent and a few head nets, if needed).** New helpers are encouraged to come! Everyone in your car gets into ENP free after the workday. Contact Patty 305-255-6404 or [pharespl@gmail.com](mailto:pharespl@gmail.com), if you have questions (305-878-5705 cell, for the morning of the workday).

**Butterfly & Bird Day. September 17, 2016 at Castellow Hammock Park.** *Please save the date to help at the DCFNPS table. (Contact Patty, [pharespl@gmail.com](mailto:pharespl@gmail.com)), 305-255-6404.*

Hosted by Miami Blue NABA, Tropical Audubon Society and Miami-Dade Parks. Rick Cech, noted butterfly and natural history author and photographer, Roger Hammer and others will be presenters. Plant sales and activities. See <http://miamiblue.org/> for more information as available.

**The July/August 2016 Sabal Minor newsletter** is now at [http://fnps.org/assets/pdf/sabalminor/sabalminor18\\_4\\_2016.pdf](http://fnps.org/assets/pdf/sabalminor/sabalminor18_4_2016.pdf) Remember that it is no longer sent by postal mail.

**“Planting a Refuge for Wildlife”** - now available in the **chapter book sale** (save the postage charge). Newly revised and updated, this 40-page booklet provides the tools for homeowners to create pleasing landscapes where wildlife can find food, water and shelter. From the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. Also at <http://myfwc.com/viewing/habitat/refuge/>

### Also in this issue:

- **News and announcements**
- **Remembering Don Keller and Karsten Rist**
- **My Friend Don** – by Roger Hammer
- **The Royal Palm** by Martin A. Roessler

## REMEMBERING:

### Don Keller & Karsten Rist

We recently learned of the passing of two former members of the Dade Chapter FNPS. Both were devoted to Florida's environment as amateur naturalists who became immensely informed and were generous in sharing their knowledge and time. Both served on the DCFNPS board. But they might have been polar opposites in demeanor!

**Don Keller** was our trusty (and sometimes crusty) "go-to guy" when it came to ferns, bromeliads, orchids and wildflowers. He shared his plants and yard and wrote articles for *Tillandsia*. Roger Hammer remembers him in this newsletter in "My Friend Don."

**Karsten Rist** and his wife Carol were among the founding members of FNPS, joining before 1982. Karsten was born in Germany and came to the U.S. in 1957. He was a mining engineer and businessman who worked with computers and plastics. He wholeheartedly loved the American outdoors and was an environmentalist dedicated to protecting natural areas from development. He served as president of Tropical Audubon Society (and previously of Broward's) and Chairman of the Board of the Florida Audubon Society. For many years he tended to the tree pruning at the Mary Krome Sanctuary near Homestead and the arboretum at Bill Sadowski Park, and shared his knowledge of the Everglades with Elder Hostel. In 2010, Karsten and Carol moved to North Carolina, and we have missed him as a gracious and delightful friend and ceaseless defender of the environment. Karsten died on June 21, 2016.

## WHAT OUR FRIENDS ARE DOING

**Dade Native Plant Workshop:** MDC Kendall Campus Landscape Technology Center. 3rd Tuesdays at 7 p.m. See <http://nativeplantworkshop.ning.com> or contact Steve Woodmansee at [steve@pronative.com](mailto:steve@pronative.com). Bring at least three cuttings (especially in flower/fruit), which need not pertain to the topic. **Novices and experts alike are welcome.** *Join on the website (free) to receive an email reminder or post plant photos.*

**July 19 topic:** Vitaceae (Grape Family)

**August 16 topic:** Commelinaceae (Dayflower family)

**Broward Chapter FNPS.** <http://coontie.fnpschapters.org/>.

• **Aug 13, 2016, 9 am – 1 pm: Go Native PLANT SALE**  
Secret Woods, 2701 W. State Rd. 84, Dania Beach, FL 33312  
Multiple groups and nurseries join together for this sale.

**Adopt-A-Tree 2016.** Miami-Dade homeowners may receive two free trees per year from the county, **including some natives.** See <http://www.miamidade.gov/environment/adopt-a-tree.asp> for complete information and schedule. Check back for updates. Contact: [adoptatree@miamidade.gov](mailto:adoptatree@miamidade.gov) or 305-372-6784.

• **Saturday August 27, 9 a.m. – noon:** West Kendall Baptist Hospital, Staff Parking Lot, 15755 SW 96th St, Kendall.  
**Natives (subject to availability): inkwood, firebush**

**Miami Blue Chapter, North American Butterfly Association.** (<http://www.miamiblue.org>; 305-979-9623).

• **August 7, 2016, 1-3 p.m.: Quarterly meeting** at Castellow Hammock Park, 22301 SW 162 Ave. Butterfly (and native plant) expert and author **Marc Minno** will speak.



• **July butterfly counts. Please consider helping!**

**South Florida National Parks Trust.** SFNPT was established in 2002 to support the four national parks in South Florida. **See the new website** <http://www.southfloridaparks.org/> for events and news. Scroll to the bottom to **sign up for the newsletter** with the latest news, events and volunteering opportunities.

**Food Forests - fall course at FIU** (beginning Aug. 22, MWF 1-1:50 pm). "Food forests are resilient agroforestry systems characterized by multiple canopy layers of fruit and nut trees, nitrogen-fixing woody species, shrubs, vines, herbs, and perennial and annual crops. This traditional farming method results in a self-sustaining woodland habitat that can provide food, medicinal plants, and animal fodder, as well as promote other ecosystem services." **The class will also highlight native perennials that can be planted in food forests and emphasize responsible landscaping with regards to invasive species.** More info: Cara Rockwell, PhD (305-348-8140, [crockwel@fiu.edu](mailto:crockwel@fiu.edu)) or the Dept. of Earth and Environment (305-348-1930, 305-348-2365)

## MY FRIEND DON (1924-2015)

Roger L. Hammer

I don't recall when I first met my dear friend Don Keller but it was sometime in the early 1970s. We hit it off marvelously and would spend many hours on the phone or in person talking about plants, both native and exotic. Don had a fondness for native ferns and bromeliads but also shared an addictive interest in native orchids, too. I look back very fondly of the days spent with him in the field, from wallowing around out in the Fakahatchee Swamp looking for orchids and rare ferns, to hiking out into the pine rocklands of Long Pine Key in Everglades National Park to see what we could find. We'd also take my flats boat out fishing together on occasion and he was always willing to show me his secret spots where he'd spent his younger years fishing with his sons. And one time in the late 1980s we spent Thanksgiving camping on Middle Cape Sable with friends, and I grilled a turkey on the campfire for dinner. What fun.

Once when I took Don out to see a new species of orchid that I'd discovered far out in the Fakahatchee Swamp, we came upon a tram road that we had to traverse on our hands and knees. I was in the lead and when I saw a big cottonmouth moccasin coiled up just a few feet from us, I alerted Don while I kept crawling beneath the overgrowth. As Don passed by the snake it decided it was time to leave, and all Don did was hold still as it slithered between his arms and legs to the other side of the tram.

And Don was a good fisherman, too, and whenever he caught a bragging fish he'd bring it home for dinner but, before cleaning it, he'd hold it up against the wall of his breezeway and trace it with a marker, and then later he'd paint it and write the date he caught it beneath the drawing. The wall of his breezeway became a shrine to his fishing escapades.

Don liked to curse but that didn't bother me one bit because I offered way more than my share of curse words during our conversations. I even heard Don curse a few times while giving talks at garden clubs and could hear the ladies in the audience go "OH DEAR!" It was just his nature. One time when we were together in Everglades National Park, I guess we looked suspicious as we hiked out of a glade onto the main park road, so a law enforcement ranger stopped to investigate. Don had a walking stick and when the ranger told him to put it down he was met with a tirade of curse words that would make a drunken sailor blush. And Don never did put his walking stick down.

Don also hardly ever had one nice thing to say about Democrat politicians, and I hardly ever have one nice thing to say about Republican politicians, but that never got in the way of our close friendship. He'd curse about a Democrat, and I'd curse about a Republican, and then we'd tip a beer and agree to disagree. It didn't much matter because we both preferred to talk about plants and fishing anyway, politics be damned.

Don grew an impressive array of native and exotic ferns, bromeliads, orchids, and countless other things in the backyard of his home in the Whispering Pines development of Cutler Bay. Most of his plants were on benches in a makeshift shade house and there were so many that they seemed to be growing on top of one another. A conservative estimate would be many hundreds, and Don knew the names and history behind each one along with exactly where each was located in his collection.

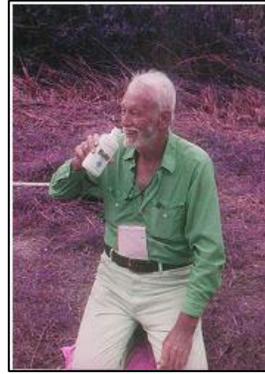
Don spent 20 years in the Air Force and was stationed in Florida twice – once at Patrick Air Force Base in Brevard County, and once at Homestead Air Force Base here in Miami-Dade County. All of his four children were born while he was in the military. Don was predeceased by his son Larry and his daughter Patty, and is survived by his oldest son Greg and his oldest daughter Nancy.

Don was born in New York on April 18, 1924, the same year my mom was born, and he passed on August 28, 2015, the year after I lost my mom. If there is such a place as Heaven, I can hear Don explaining to the angels about a big fish he once caught, filled with colorful adjectives, and the angels collectively sighing "OH DEAR!"

## NATIVE PLANT QUIZ

By Don Keller

*(Excerpt from Tillandsia, May, 2002. Don wrote many articles recounting botany adventures and discoveries, but he also loved to collect "fun facts" or to explain botanical terms.)*



### ~~ PROCLAMATION ~~

#### Whereas Don Keller ...

- shares freely of his vast knowledge of Florida's native flora,
    - has contributed significantly to the understanding and perpetuation of native epiphytes and ferns,
    - provides an unparalleled backyard haven for native birds and butterflies,
  - has an unlimited supply of colorful stories about South Florida's people, past, places and plants, and
    - is one of the orneriest Old Coots we know,
- the Dade Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society hereby declares him to be the first

#### "Old Coot" Member of the Florida Native Plant Society

with all the rights and privileges awarded thereto,  
including a lifetime of appreciation from the Dade Chapter.

September 26, 2000

#### Q: What Florida native plant originally provided the flower for sarsaparilla soda pop?

A: The roots of greenbriers (*Smilax* spp.). The strong fibers of the stems of this plant were used by the Vikings to lash the planks to the frame of their boats — no nails were used.

#### Q: What group of Florida native plants provides the largest number of species of critters with food?

A: The many species of oak trees in the U.S provide food for 96 animal species from bears and deer to tiny songbirds and mice.

#### Q: What common south Florida plant has no leaves?

A: Cactus (except *Pereskia* genus). What appears to be leaves are really cladophylls, flattened stems that function as leaves.

#### Q: What common green vascular plant has neither roots nor leaves?

A: The whisk fern, *Psilotum nudum*, consists of stems only — with a few rhizoids to absorb water. It is the oldest known plant on earth today.

#### Q: What useful commercial product was once obtained from red mangrove trees?

A: Tannin, a substance used to tan leather. The Manetta Co. cleared red mangroves from the Miami River and Miami Beach. They then started to clear them from the Shark River (in ENP) but a series of hurricanes wiped out the enterprise.

**Q: What Florida native tree ranges the farthest north in the U.S.?**

A: The red maple grows in the eastern U.S. all the way to Canada.

**Q: What Florida native plant has the longest north-south range of any plant on earth?**

A: *Tillandsia fasciculata* ranges from Georgia to southern Argentina.

**Q: What south Florida native tree has become as outrageous pest in Australia?**

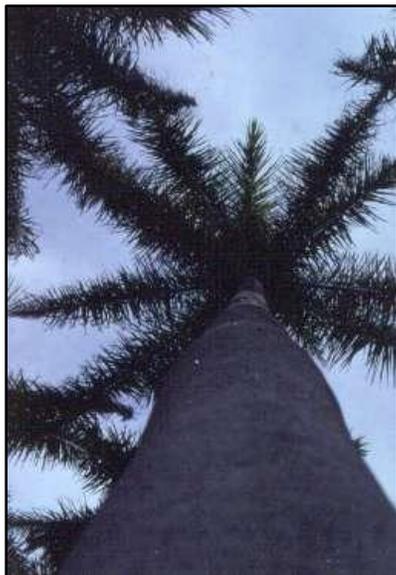
A: The pond apple tree has invaded riverine areas in northern Australia much as the melaleuca has invaded our wetlands.

## THE ROYAL PALM

By Martin A. Roessler  
Photo Roger Hammer

On our field trip to Collier-Seminole State Park on 15 May 2016, we were fortunate to see the state endangered royal palm. These stately palms can grow to about 100 feet in height and have gray-white trunks about 16 – 18 inches in diameter. The leaf segments are attached to the leaf stem in several ranks at divergent angles, providing a feathery appearance. The flower spike is about 3 feet long. Individual flowers are white with pinkish anthers. Fruit ripen from green through red to purplish black at maturity.

**TAXONOMY:** Today the royal palm bears the scientific designation *Roystonea regia* (Kunth) O. F. Cook. The palm was probably first recorded in the European world by Ovideo in the 1500's in Cuba. William Bartram described the "Florida" royal



palm from Lake and Volusia counties of Florida in 1791 in his *Travels in Florida*. He called it *Palma elata*. "Cuban" royal palms specimens were described by C. Kunth in 1816 as *Oreodox regia*. The palms were later placed in the genus *Roystonea* by Orator Fuller Cook in 1900. *Roystonea* was named in honor of General Roy Stone, an American Army engineer in Puerto Rico. Usually this first official

description, *Palma elata* by Bartram, would be the basis for the official name, but after the monograph on the genus *Roystonea* by S. Zona (1996) placed the Florida (*elata*) populations in synonymy with the Cuban (*regia*) populations, the broad usage of *R. regia* in the common literature and horticultural trade

resulted in granting a partition for its conservation by the official botanical naming body.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Henderson, Galeano and Bernal (*Field Guide to the Palms of the Americas*) report *Roystonea regia* as occurring in Florida and Mexico in North America, in Belize and Honduras in Mesoamerica and in the southern Bahamas, Cuba and the Cayman Islands in the Caribbean. They are widely planted as an ornamental tree. In Florida the only naturally existing populations of this palm occur in Collier-Seminole State Park, in the Fakahatchee Big Cypress area and in Everglades National Park. The northern population mentioned by Bartram no longer exists. Some believe the northern disjunct trees were planted by the Seminoles who used the fruits as food for themselves and for pigs. They were lost to cold spells, especially the freezes of 1835 and 1894. Other possible reasons for their extirpation include fires set by early settlers, over exploitation for feed, lumber and walking sticks.

**USES:** As mentioned above the Seminoles and early Spanish colonists ate the fruit pulp and fed the fruit to pigs. The terminal bud is edible but harvesting kills the tree. An edible oil is also extracted. The leaf base is a source of thatch. The wood was used as lumber and for craft items. In Cuba the roots were made into a diuretic medicine.

*Martin Roessler is a retired environmental consultant who has spent about 60 years in Florida and worked from Pensacola and Jacksonville to Key West. He is an original member and past president of the Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society.*

### DADE CHAPTER FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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### TILLANDSIA

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**Staff needed for general assistance.** Please contact the editor.

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

### FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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**FNPS is on Facebook and Twitter:** FNPSonline  
**Dade Chapter – FNPS Council of Chapters:** vacant – contact the president  
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