



Dade Chapter

TILLANDSIA

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

JUNE 2017

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, June 27, 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Pinecrest Gardens, 11000 SW 57 Ave. (Red Road), Miami

Free and open to the public

Refreshments begin at 7:15 pm., merchandise sales before and after the program. The plant raffle follows the program.

Contributions of **raffle items** and **refreshments** are always greatly appreciated. Please label your raffle plant donations!

"Horticultural Resource Management for Home Gardens: the Balances between Fertilizer, Water and Health for Natives and Exotics"

– Craig Morell, Director, The Kampong of the National Tropical Botanical Garden

Craig will speak on using native species in a mixed landscape, with particular emphasis on using the right plants for the right location. Even some of the most stalwart native species can be planted in the wrong place. There are excellent resources and learning gardens nearby, so use those resources and ask the right questions to get the most out of your native plantings. So often, native species are planted with the assumption that any native species will grow anywhere. Basic horticultural practices are still needed to grow plants, native or not. Native does not equal zero-care!

Craig is a career horticulturist, starting to grow plants over 40 years ago. He is the Director of The Kampong Botanical Garden in Coconut Grove, one of the five gardens of the National Tropical Botanical Garden. He worked at Pinecrest Gardens for 11 years before starting work at The Kampong in 2016. A 10 year stint at the Boca Raton Resort preceded Pinecrest Gardens. Long of a fan of the right plant for the right place, he favors epiphytes and palms in his own collection.



Does your monthly DCFNPS email have an incorrect link to *Tillandsia*?

Some people receive an email with the link missing a period before "pdf". This only affects a few people. The fix is not yet clear. (It's correct for most people!) Please copy and paste the address into a browser and insert the missing period, if needed.

Chapter Activities

June 10 (Sat.): Chapter workday Everglades National Park

June 27 (Tue.): Meeting at Pinecrest Gardens

July: Annual Evening Yard Visit and Social meeting

Host needed! Date TBD

Additional summer workday and field trip TBA.

Could you host our July "Evening Yard Visit and Social" meeting?

Each July, instead of a program, we enjoy a garden and a pot-luck dinner. **It is usually at the home of a member, but a non-residential garden works, too.** The landscape does not need to be all native or "fancy", but something you'd like to share. We could expect perhaps 30 people and need shelter in case of rain. **The date is flexible** (usually a Saturday evening), the chapter provides drinks, plates, etc., and members can help out with chairs and any other needs. (We can eat on our laps!) It's a very casual, relaxed occasion. **If you might be interested or have a place to suggest, please contact Amy Leonard** (aleonar74@yahoo.com, 305-458-0969) as soon as possible.



Dade Chapter and FNPS News

- **June 10, 2017, 9 a.m. - noon: Chapter workday at Everglades National Park, Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center.** Help the chapter enhance the entrance to ENP. We will do maintenance – pruning and weeding. Cold water provided; bring snacks to share if you care to. Gloves, hand tools, bug repellent and a few mosquito head nets are available if needed. **New helpers are encouraged to come!** Everyone in your car gets into ENP free after the workday. Contact Patty 305-255-6404 (305-878-5705 cell) or pharespl@gmail.com, if you have questions.
- **DCFNPS and Earth Day**
 - **Your Dade Chapter of the Florida Native Society was recently honored by the City of North Miami at their Earth Day Festival on April 22, 2017.** This is recognition for the partnership we have had for the last 10+ years that includes work on Native Plant Day and other events that our volunteers have been a part of to spread information about native species and their many benefits. A special thank you to Donna Hanley for accepting the award on behalf of the Chapter. – Amy Leonard

◦ **DCFNPS joined the Earth Day celebration on April 21 at Baptist Hospital West Kendall.** Our table included a bouquet of native flowers, seeds, and information about FNPS and native plants. Many people were very excited to receive seeds of privet senna (*Senna ligustrina*). The fair was attended primarily by Baptist's staff, some of whom had yards and expressed an interest in native plants. Many people took information on butterfly gardening, the benefits of native plants during times of drought, and the nursery list. - Gita Ramsay

◦ **Pinecrest Gardens Earth Day on April 23** was cut short due to heavy rain. A huge thank you to Susan Walcutt and Cheryl Solomon who braved the weather to spread the word about native plants and FNPS to any adventurous visitors.

• **Welcome new members!** Andy Kearns (Jose Marti MAST 6-12 Academy), Jorge Zaldivar

• **Broward Chapter FNPS.** See coontie.fnpschapters.org/. Meetings at Secret Woods, 2701 W. SR 84, Dania Beach. **June 14, 2017, 7 p.m.: Join them for a potluck** in their last activity until September. See the website for details.

DCFNPS Board Election

At our Annual Chapter Meeting on May 23 the following members were elected to the board:

Secretary: **Gita Ramsay**

Treasurer: **Susan Walcutt**

Director at large (2 years): **Janeen Feiger, Jennifer Stine, Vivian Waddell**

Director at large (1 year): **Lydia Cuni, Hernan Martinez**

Continuing on the board in the second of their 2-year terms are: **Kurt Birchenough** (President), **Amy Leonard** (Vice President), **Ted Shaffer** (Director at large)

We extend our deepest thanks to Eric Bishop-von Wettberg, Dade Chapter board member since 2011. Eric's extensive network of professional contacts has given us the wonderful programs you have enjoyed at chapter meetings. Recently he has also served as the Dade Chapter representative on the FNPS Council of Chapters. Eric is a conservation geneticist with a joint appointment as an associate professor in FIU's Biology Department and Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden's Center for Tropical Plant Conservation. We wish him all the best as he leaves Miami for a position at the University of Vermont.

Welcome to our newest board members!

• **Lydia Cuni.** A native of Hialeah, Lydia unearthed her passion for all things plants during her undergraduate studies at Florida International University (FIU). She continued on to gain hands-on experience as an intern at Zoo Miami and the National Park Service's South Florida/Caribbean Inventory & Monitoring Network. When not in the field collecting data towards her Master's thesis at FIU, Lydia may be found reading, painting, baking, or tending to her mostly native plant garden.

• **Janeen Feiger.** Janeen's love of plants developed early as she grew up on a small farm in Northern Michigan exploring her natural surroundings every chance she could get. She received a B.S. in Botany from Northern Michigan University before moving to Miami nearly 20 years ago to further her studies in

tropical plants and ethnobotany. She worked at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden as a nursery assistant before leaving to devote her full attention to her Graduate Studies at FIU. After receiving her Master's degree in Anthropology, she found herself working for Miami-Dade Parks, working alongside the infamous Roger Hammer for 6 ½ years before he retired. She has been with Parks for 13 years, the last two of which have been with Natural Areas Management where she strives to advocate for conservation and research of South Florida's amazing ecosystems.

• **Hernan Martinez.** Hernan is the Horticulturist at the newly opened Frost Science Museum. He was born in Caracas, Venezuela, but was raised in Miami. His interest in the outdoors and our environment began at a young age with the Boy Scouts of America. He initially became involved with DCFNPS as he completed his Eagle Scout project, a native butterfly garden restoration. Since then FNPS has served as a great resource as he has developed professionally, holding several different job titles; Arborist, Naturalist, and Grounds Manager. He hopes to continue teaching and engaging the community about the wonders of nature. Locustberry is his favorite native species.



NATIVE PLANT SALE

by The Falls (SW 136 St.)

Everything must go! • All plants priced below wholesale
Nurseries, Landscapers welcome

- **Lignumvitae** – 1 to 45 gal. *Grown naturally, not staked.*
- **Buccaneer palm** – 20 gal. *Full.*
- **Coontie** – 1-7 gal.
- **plus other rare plants!**



By Appointment Only Please.

Call 305-235-7701 (leave message if necessary)

Cash only • 10% of proceeds to benefit FNPS

VEBER'S Jungle Garden

LESLIE VEBER

By Appointment Only
24605 SW 197 Avenue
Homestead, FL 33031
305-242-9500

www.vebersjungle.com

Retail • Wholesale Nursery
Landscape Design and Installation
Natives • Wildflowers • Bamboo • Palms • Bird and Butterfly Plants

FNPS Conference Report

If you didn't attend, you missed a fine time among sandhill cranes (wandering on the grounds), cows, and the peace and quiet of the country. The conference next year is being planned by the FNPS conference committee to be



held in the Miami-Dade to Palm Beach region.

• **Congratulations to DCFNPS member Lydia Cuni**, Florida International University MS student in Environmental Studies, who received a Research Grant. Her project is:

“Drivers of species composition and diversity in the pine rockland-hardwood hammock ecotone: Implications for restoration efforts of fragmented communities”

The imperiled ecosystems of hardwood hammock and pine rockland have experienced fragmentation, altered fire regimes, and invasions from exotic flora and fauna. Previous studies in these habitats have demonstrated an influence of these factors on plant composition and diversity. Arguably, they may also have an influence on the pine rockland-hardwood hammock ecotone, an ecological boundary where the potential for high plant diversity and density of native plant species is increased. To date, few studies have focused on the transitional community between pine rockland and hardwood hammock. This absence of empirical data may limit our ability to integrate the ecotone’s restoration efforts with those of hardwood hammock and pine rockland fragments. Questions concerning ecotonal characterization, including those that address drivers of species composition and diversity, remain unanswered. We suggest that our proposed research will highlight this plant community junction as an important feature in a highly fragmented and fire-suppressed landscape.

(See Lydia’s bio above as a new Dade Chapter board member.)

• **The Dade Chapter** scored highest in total points of all chapters in the plant ID contest. **Mary Rose** took home the novice category second place prize of an annual pass to Florida State Parks. Good going!

What Our Friends Are Doing

Dade Native Plant Workshop: *Please note the new time of 5 p.m. for now, unless a new location is found or things change. Contact Steve if you have suggestions.*

MDC Kendall Campus Landscape Technology Center. 3rd Tuesdays at **5 p.m.** See www.nativeplantworkshop.com or contact Steve Woodmansee at 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 email reminders or to post on the site.* **June 20, 2017 topic:** Hurricane resistant natives

Peninsular Florida Landscape Conservation Cooperative: Marine/Estuarine Priority Resource and Conservation Identification Workshop, June 20-22, 2017

Ft. Lauderdale Research & Education Center in Davie, FL

The goals of the free workshops are to gather input on potential conservation targets for each priority resource, and to conduct initial review of these targets using PFLCC criteria. During these workshops the marine and estuarine priority resources sessions will focus on identifying conservation targets. Conservation Target discussions and brainstorming will be addressed in half-day sessions. Attend any or all of the sessions. See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/marineestuarine-conservation-target-identification-workshop-fort-lauderdale-tickets-32888702996?ref=ebtn> for more information and registration.

(Anne Cox of FNPS says: *These workshops are very interesting. FNPS members have attended and helped provide data and information to the PFLCC as well as made some excellent connections with other conservation folks.*)

Adopt-A-Tree 2017. 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 when available for July 8 (Harris Field, Homestead), September 16 (Amelia Earhart Park) and maybe late October at Miami-Dade County Fairgrounds. Contact: adoptatree@miamidade.gov or 305-372-6784.

Miami Pine Rocklands Coalition, June 22, 2017, 7-9 p.m. Meets at Tropical Audubon Society, 5530 Sunset Drive, Miami. Get an update on the latest developments surrounding Walmart/Coral Reef Commons Development plans to develop imperiled habitat. Learn about plans to Save the Pine Rocklands, and how you can participate by helping ramp-up "Save it, Don't Pave it" efforts all the way to Washington D.C. <https://www.facebook.com/events/906872479455425/>

Pine Rocklands Update

• **Trinity Pineland.** On May 18 the Miami-Dade County Commissioners voted to **deny the large chapter school** which could have negatively impacted Trinity Pineland, a county Environmentally Endangered Lands preserve near Sunset Drive and SW 73 Ave. Martha Singleton, who brought the issue to our attention, thanks those who wrote letters or attended meetings in support of the pineland!

• **Coral Reef Commons.** Attend the Miami Pine Rocklands Coalition, June 22 (see above) to stay on top of this issue.

Wild Basil (*Ocimum campechianum*)

by Patty Phares

At our chapter tent at Native Plant Day last March, we displayed



Roger Hammer

a potted specimen of **Wild basil or Wild sweet basil (*Ocimum campechianum*)**. It’s an herbaceous native with tiny, pretty flowers. Visitors enjoyed rubbing the leaves to release a strong, spicy version of the scent of its cousin, the sweet basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) we love in sauces and salads.

Soon some 6-legged visitors joined in: two iridescent metallic-green bees later identified from our photos by Adrian Hunsberger, Entomologist with the UF/IFAS Miami-Dade County Extension.

They were **green orchid bees** (*Euglossa dilemma*), now-common exotic bees native to the New World tropics. For a couple hours, the two bees were completely disinterested in the flowers as they used their legs to thoroughly work over the basil leaves.



Richard Brownscombe

Besides having interactions with orchid flowers resulting in pollination, the male green orchid bees collect fragrant volatile compounds from their environment with their front tarsi and transfer the compounds into their enlarged hind tibiae, presumably to present to females. Apparently this is what our entertaining apian visitors were engaged in. (Read more in the UF/IFAS “Featured Creatures” reference listed.)

O. campechianum is a state-Endangered species found in the U.S. in the Monroe County Keys, Miami-Dade and Collier counties in pine rocklands and rockland hammock edges. In Miami-Dade it occurs in Long Pine Key in Everglades National Park north to the Richmond Pine Rocklands. It is also found in the West Indies, Central and South America, and Mexico, thus the specific epithet “*campechianum*.” (Note that there are other species also called “wild basil” that are not native to Florida or even in the same genus.)

It can grow to 4 feet, but in cultivation in my yard it has stayed much shorter, less than 18 inches. They grow rapidly and quickly bloom with small lavender/purple flowers in terminal spikes. It is edible, but I have haven’t found any specific recommendations for its use. According to Craig Huegel, in tropical Latin America “it is used as a culinary herb or as a ‘cooling’ tea. It is also sometimes used to ward off mosquitoes - hence its other common name of ‘mosquito plant.’”

Wild basil is an annual but can reseed readily in a favorable location. And that brings us to another interesting aspect of this plant. **The seeds (small, black “nutlets”) are “mucilaginous” – they produce a gel around the seed when they are exposed to water.** (Thanks to Peter Vrotsos, Conservation Horticulturist at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, for explaining this.)



Seeds of culinary herbs such as arugula, basil, chia, cress, flax, mizuna and some mustards also are mucilaginous.

Sweet basil, *O. basilicum*, seeds and surrounding gel - photo from: <http://www.just4growers.com/stream/propagation/quick-grow-guide-basil.aspx>

I blithely sprinkled about 30 seeds I had collected onto the surface of the soil in one small pot, and within a day I noticed strange balls that turned out to be natural “gel-packs.” In a few days the pot was full of seedlings. Unfortunately, basil seedlings

have long, thin tap roots, so transplanting into separate pots damaged many.

Maybe Wild basil isn’t particularly interesting to eat by our standards, but it has been interesting to learn about it.

References and more reading:

Natives For Your Neighborhood. The Institute for Regional Conservation, Delray Beach.

<http://regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/plantdetail.asp?tx=Oci mcamp>.

Native Florida Wildflowers blog by Craig Huegel

<http://hawthornhillwildflowers.blogspot.com/2012/05/wild-sweet-basil-ocimum-campechianum.html> (May 9, 2012)

Newsletter issued from Hacienda Chichen Resort beside Chichén Itzá Ruins, central Yucatán, Mexico

<http://www.backyardnature.net/yucatan/wildbasl.htm>

University of Florida/IFAS, “Featured Creatures”

http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/MISC/BEES/green_orchid_bee.htm.

[Editor’s note: I’m not a botanist, not even an amateur one, or expert in anything else plant-related. But we are all experts in our personal experiences and can share them in Tillandsia (we don’t have a chapter blog.) We encourage your contributions.]

DADE CHAPTER FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

President: Kurt Birchenough (kbirc001@fiu.edu, 202-905-3921)

Vice President: Amy Leonard (aleonar74@yahoo.com, 305-458-0969)

Secretary: Gita Ramsay (gita.ramsay@gmail.com, 786-877-7168)

Treasurer: Susan Walcutt (walcutts@bellsouth.net, 305-297-7757)

At Large: Lydia Cuni, Janeen Feiger, Hernan Martinez, Ted Shafer,

Jennifer Stine, Vivian Waddell

Dade Chapter – FNPS Council of Chapters: Eric Bishop-von Wettberg

Refreshment coordinators: Cheryl & Ben Morgan (ckmorg@bellsouth.net)

General chapter information: 305-985-3677

DCFNPS website & social media: <http://dade.fnpschapters.org/>

DCFNPS e-mail: dadefnps@gmail.com

Mail: Dade Chapter FNPS, 6619 S. Dixie Hwy, #181, Miami FL 33143-7919

TILLANDSIA

Editor: Patty Phares (pbarespl@gmail.com, 305-255-6404)

Staff needed for general assistance or co-edit. Please contact the editor.

Articles, announcements and news items are invited for *Tillandsia* from Dade and Keys members. **Advertising rates** from \$12 per month.

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

FNPS office: info@fnps.org, 321-271-6702

FNPS website, blog, social media: <http://www.fnps.org>

© 2017 Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society, Inc.

Support the Dade Chapter FNPS by using Amazon Smile! Always start at <http://smile.amazon.com> - Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases.



Variegated Fritillary butterfly on *Bidens mitis*

Polk County, Florida, on a field trip of the FNPS Annual Conference, May 2017.

Photo: Mary Rose