



Dade Chapter

TILLANDSIA

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

JANUARY 2016

MONTHLY MEETING

Tuesday, January 26, 2016, 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. Contributions of **raffle items** and **refreshments** are always greatly appreciated.

“Creative Natives”

Ian Simpkins, Chief Horticulturist
Vizcaya Museum and Gardens

We often think of natives as being relegated to the sidelines to serve as our primary materials for habitat restoration or broad monocultural swaths of highway median plants. The beauty of South Florida native plants can indeed be subtle, but there is a world of texture and color available and many of these plants adapt well to conventional landscape uses. Some of them are quite striking and well suited to occupy prime spots in the landscape. We'll look at some of these plants and explore how they've been used creatively at Vizcaya and other places in South Florida.

Mr. Simpkins is Deputy Director for Horticulture and Urban Agriculture at Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, where he is responsible for the horticulture and urban agriculture programs,



including restoration and interpretation of the gardens and natural areas. Prior to 2007, he was the Executive Director at Shofuso Japanese House and Garden in Philadelphia. Ian is the owner of Garden Elevations, a boutique horticulture company, Vice Chair of the Historic Landscapes Section of the American Public Gardens Association and serves on the Horticulture Advisory Committee of The Kampong, National Tropical Botanic Garden.

- **February 23:** “Florida Ethnobotany: Uses of Plants by Early Settlers in Southern Florida” - Dr. Brad Bennett, FIU
- **March 22:** "Seagrasses of South Florida, Their Importance, and the Influence of Urbanization" - Jennifer Sweatman, PhD Candidate, FIU

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

JANUARY

- 16 (Sat.): **Field trip** - Broward scrub sites
- 26 (Tue.): **Meeting** at Pinecrest Gardens

FEBRUARY

- 6 (Sat): **Homestead Eco Fair** – DCFNPS table *
- 13 (Sat.): **Chapter workday** – Everglades Nat. Park *
- 23 (Tue.): **Meeting** at Pinecrest Gardens
- Field trip** – TBA

MARCH

- 19 (Sat.): **NATIVE PLANT DAY** *
- 22 (Tue.): **Meeting** at Pinecrest Gardens
- Field trip** – TBA

** Please Volunteer – see announcements for details*

Inside this issue:

- **Native Plant Day** – *pot up plants and volunteer to help now!*
- **Remembering Marjorie Brown**
- **What Our Friends Are Doing** – *more events and activities*
- **“Shady Circumstances”** - by Steve Woodmansee

UPCOMING FIELD TRIP

If the weather is very bad call to confirm (Patty, 305-255-6404). We are joining the Broward Chapter's trip. Also see <http://coontie.fnpschapters.org/index.php?id=calendar>.

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

Saturday, January 16, 2016: Broward Scrub sites. Coastal scrub was once common along coastal Broward inland from the mangroves and dunes. It has shrubs and sand pines and a surprising number of interesting small species that survive in sand. **Crystal Lake Sand Pine Scrub** (24 acres) and **Deerfield Highlands Scrub** (34 acres) are critically important as remnants of this once-common habitat and interesting for the adaptation of species that survive in this low-nutrient sand and sun. You can learn plants with lists provided by Richard Brownscombe and Mariana Yi (90 species!), or just enjoy the wildlife and scenery.

- **Bring:** Water, sun protection, lunch if you care to picnic later.

DADE CHAPTER and FNPS NEWS

Welcome new members: Amir Khoddamzadeh (Department of Earth and Environment, FIU, and new member of the FNPS Education Committee); Sue McCord-Belzer

FIU Nature Preserve – 2015 Landscape Award of Excellence.

The award from FNPS was presented to the 16-acre Florida International University Nature Preserve at the May 2015 annual conference. **See the latest Palmetto magazine (Vol. 32:3, 2015) for the whole story and photos.** Congratulations to FIU staff and students! You can visit this beautiful place any time.

2016 Homestead Eco Fair, Saturday, February 6, 2016.

Noon - 4 p.m. at Losner Park (104 N. Krome Ave. Homestead, FL 33030). DCFNPS and other environmental and nature groups will have tables. **If you can volunteer or contribute plants, caterpillars or other display material, contact Patty 305-255-6404, pharespl@gmail.com**

Tillandsia staff and content invited. Are you good with words or layout? Put your skills to work in *Tillandsia* as **assistant or co-editor**. Or **contribute an article** (short note or long), **photos** or **artwork**. If you might enjoy these rewarding endeavors, please contact the editor.

Dade Chapter workday - Everglades National Park February 13, 2016. 9 a.m. - noon.

Forget your back yard - help the chapter enhance the entrance to our national park (much more exciting)! We will do our usual wintertime maintenance. A jug of cold water will be provided; bring snacks to share if you care to. Gloves and hand tools are available but you may prefer your own. Everyone in your car gets into ENP free after the workday. Contact Patty Phares if you have questions (305-255-6404, pharespl@gmail.com) or 305-878-5705 (cell, the morning of the workday).

Support conservation of Florida's native plants with a donation to the chapter's "Gann Conservation Fund".

This fund supports the FNPS Conservation Grants and honors DCFNPS founders, Joyce and Don Gann. We have sponsored awards since 2013 and will continue with your help. Please donate at a meeting, mail a check to DCFNPS at the chapter address (note "Gann Conservation Fund" in the memo line), or contact Susan Walcutt (walcutts@bellsouth.net, 305-297-7757).

FNPS Awards and Grants – deadlines March 4, 2016

See <http://fnps.org/participate/awards> for more information.

- **Conservation Grants** support applied native-plant conservation projects involving rare or imperiled native plant taxa and plant communities.
- **Research Grants** support research that forwards the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society and is funded by donations to the FNPS Endowment Fund.
- **Landscape Awards** are given for high quality native plant landscapes in the categories of residential, commercial, institutional, transportation, preservation, restoration, mitigation and wildflower/butterfly garden - using primarily native plants.

Please share the word about this great program and encourage others to apply (including non-FNPS members). Your own landscape may be a great advertisement for natives!

21st NATIVE PLANT DAY

Saturday, March 19, 2016

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Bill Sadowski Park at Old Cutler Hammock
17555 SW 79 Avenue, Palmetto Bay, 33157
(1/2 mile west of Old Cutler Road on SW 176 St.)

FREE and open to the public

Co-sponsored by:

The Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society
& Miami Dade County Parks

Save the date and share with your friends now!

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

How can you help now or before the event?

- **Pot up plants now for the chapter to raffle or sell.** We hope you'll have your **best** specimens for us! Please prep or pot up plants as soon as possible to get them well-established by March. (We can figure out how to get them there if you can't come.)

- **Additional special request: Pot up little plants for little native plant enthusiasts.** Our children's plant sale or distribution will get kids in on the enjoyment that native plants bring. This was a HUGE success last year! Annuals and shorter-lived shrubs are ideal - wildflowers, rouge plant, corksystem passionvines, etc. (non-poisonous, non-thorny species in small pots).

- **If you need small (or any size) pots, contact Patty Phares (305-255-6404, pharespl@gmail.com).**

- **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 as soon as possible.)**

- **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). This will *most likely* be done in February in advance of the chapter meeting.

- **Deliver a stack of postcards to a local business and institutions** - available at the February meeting (contact Amy in advance so we are sure to cover as many locations as possible).

- **Plan to help set up on March 18** - contact Amy.

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

- **Help raise (or find in your garden) butterfly or moth caterpillars** which feed on native plants (contact Patty to find out how to help with this).

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

- Amy Leonard

REMEMBERING MARJORIE BROWN



Photo by Mary Rose

Dr. Marjorie Brown joined the Florida Native Plant Society in 2001. Jan Kolb smiles at recalling Marge's self-introduction as a newcomer at a meeting: "I'm Marge Brown and I brought *brownies*." - which pretty much sums up her modesty and good humor. You would never have guessed that she was a pediatrician, retiring as the Medical Director of the Miami Dade Health Department, was accomplished at many pastimes, well-traveled and a volunteer in student programs at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.

It wasn't long before we learned of her "second career" at age 80 in botanical watercolors (a surprise even to herself) and her growing passion for using her art to promote native plants. At Marge's suggestion, her Tropical Botanic Artists group embraced native plants. The proceeds of sales of many of her paintings and notecards was donated to the Dade Chapter FNPS. Her poster describing why we should plant native plants was used in school programs at Fairchild. Marge and fellow artist and FNPS member Margie Bauer also took their efforts to promote native plants to a Native Plant Society state conference where they sold their original works. Their paintings are beautiful just as art, but also provide a close-up look at plants that is informative in a way that sometimes a photo cannot be.

Marge became interested in the grounds of East Ridge in Cutler Bay, where she lived in her later years. She worked on ways to improve and use the community's nature preserve and sought help from her FNPS friends. She also supported restoring their pineland, which had become overgrown after Hurricane Andrew. She was always promoting the use of native plants in landscaping, the preservation of natives and simply *learning* about them.

Gary Bremen, Biscayne National Park ranger, tells about another endeavor: "*While most of the native plants we are familiar with are 'dirt bound', Marge played an important role in getting*

some credit for the 'juicier' natives out there! Sitting on the porch of Biscayne National Park's Dante Fascell Visitor Center one afternoon, she beckoned the park ranger outside to ask about the Tropical Botanic Artists having a show in the park's gallery. The ranger suggested that perhaps a show of macroalgae would have some appeal. Rather than cringing, Marge embraced the concept, brought it to the others in the group and the resulting show 'Macroalgae: Colors of the Sea' was a visually stunning show that traveled the state to 8 or 9 venues. That relationship further blossomed into shows featuring diatoms and a forthcoming show on plant/animal interactions."

Several of her macroalgae watercolor paintings are in a permanent display at FIU's Glen Hubert Library. She also illustrated several plants for *The Big Bad Book of Botany*.



"Resurrection Fern" - by Marge Brown
(*Pleopeltis polypodioides* var. *michauxiana*)

Watercolor on paper, 12 x 16 in, 2012

Printed with permission of the Brown family

Marge passed away one day short of age 92 on December 2, 2015. We will miss her as a member of FNPS and friend of native plants and of all of us. But she is still giving! The Tropical Botanic Artists will share images of her paintings with DCFNPS at the request of her family.

- Patty Phares

WHAT OUR FRIENDS ARE DOING

Broward Chapter FNPS. See <http://coontie.fnpschapters.org/>. Meetings are at Secret Woods, 2701 W. SR 84, Dania Beach.

● **Jan. 13, 7 p.m.:** Chapter meeting. "Natives for Landscaping" -- Scott Bryan

● **Feb. 6, 9 a.m.- noon:** Anne Kolb Nature Center Plant Sale, 751 Sheridan St., Hollywood, FL 33019.

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. Bring at least three cuttings (especially in flower/fruit), need not pertain to the topic.
Jan. 19 topic: Native vines

Citizens for a Better South Florida.

- **Jan. 30: Anti-Poverty Summit: Building Climate Resilience and Social Equity**
- **Jan. 31: Habitat Restoration Day**, Virginia Key. Educational booths, food, free entrance. More info and RSVP: <http://www.abettersouthflorida.org/> <https://www.facebook.com/abettersouthflorida> laura@abettersouthflorida.org, 305-648-0000

Miami Blue Chapter, North American Butterfly Association (www.miamiblue.org; 305-979-9623).

Feb. 7, 1-3 p.m.: Quarterly meeting at Castellow Hammock Park, 22301 SW 162 Ave. A panel of FIU and UM graduate students will discuss “**Mosquito Abatement and Butterfly Conservation: Subtropical Dry Forests in the Florida Keys**”. Bring your questions and comments. Come early to butterfly.

Friends of the Gifford Arboretum, University of Miami.

- **Feb. 3, 7 p.m.** “**Palm Care and Culture**, Including Some Important Differences of Which You May Not Be Aware” - Leonard H. Goldstein. **Location:** Cox Science Center, Room 166. See <http://www.bio.miami.edu/arboretum> > visits or 305-284-1302. Free parking, Purple Lot, south end of arboretum.

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

- **Jan. 25: Arch Creek Park**, 1855 NE 135 St.
- **Jan. 30: Crandon Park**, 7200 Crandon Blvd

The 25th Annual Lecture Series: *The Delicate Balance of Nature 2016*. Wednesdays, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m., John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, MM 102.5 Oceanside Overseas Hwy. Gate opens 7 p.m. Free, seating limited. Call 305-451-9570 for more info and topics of weekly programs through March.

- **Jan. 13: Sea Level Rise and Peat Collapse** - Stephen Davis, The Everglades Foundation.
- **Jan. 20: Shipwrecks in the 21st Century** - Charles Beeker, Indiana University Center for Underwater Science.
- **Jan. 27: The Key Largo Woodrat** - Jeremy Dixon, Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge
- **Feb. 3: Snakes and Lizards of the Florida Keys** - Adam Emerick, Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge

The Institute for Regional Conservation.

- <http://www.regionalconservation.org/>
- **Join the email list for current news, interesting articles** and opportunities to participate in restoration activities.
 - **Jan. 30, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.:** **Atlantic Dunes Park Restoration Volunteer Day**, Delray Beach. Contact Cara Abbott at abbott@regionalconservation.org or 305-304-6610.
 - **Plantas de la Isla de Puerto Rico / Plants of the Island of Puerto Rico** – This new website was 15 years in the making, with detailed information on the over 3,500 plants. Link from the IRC website. For more information on the database and for pictures from the launch, visit the IRC Facebook page.

Tropical Audubon Society. 5530 Sunset Dr., Miami, FL, 33143. 305-667-7337. <http://www.tropicalaudubon.org>. Search the calendar for events such as:

- **Jan. 16: Eco-Restoration Day** - TAS's Steinberg Nature Center
- **Jan. 27: Conservation Meeting** - Everyone is invited.
- **Jan. 30: Conservation Concert** – Have fun and support TAS’s conservation efforts

SHADY CIRCUMSTANCES

By Steve Woodmansee, Pro Native Consulting

One of the top five questions I get from prospective native plant buyers is “What native ground covers tolerate shade? Oh and by the way, I want them to be showy and to tolerate my dog trampling all over them.” Many of you more experienced in native plant landscaping are smiling now because this desire is one of the biggest challenges for our yards. We love our stately oaks and hammock trees, and we notice that the lawn or other shrubs begin to thin and disappear as the trees and shrubs fill in the canopy. Many of us want to fill these now open, albeit shady, spaces, and of course we want them to be dog proof to boot. However, showy native ground covers for shade do not exist.

If you evaluate our natural areas that are normally shady for most of the year, for example the rockland hammock plant community, you will notice that there aren’t many ground covers, and in drier hammocks such as those of the Florida Keys, there are virtually none. Most hammocks have herb layers that are mostly leaves speckled with hammock tree seedlings. However, there are some species which will tolerate high levels of shade.

Ferns

Florida has over 120 species of native ferns and their allies, a third of which occur in Miami-Dade County. Many native ferns are listed as Endangered or Threatened, making them difficult to obtain for cultivation purposes. Most native ferns grow in shade, however the top layer of soil needs to be humus-like moist organic matter.

If you want to go ferny in your yard, I recommend you start out with either a native **Sword fern** (*Nephrolepis* spp.) or a **Southern shield fern** (*Thelypteris kunthii*). There are two native Sword ferns in Florida, and both are in cultivation. Be sure and get native species from reputable nurseries as there are several non-native invasive Sword ferns as well, and they can be difficult to distinguish. The two natives that are available are Giant sword fern (*N. biserrata*), also sold as Macho fern, and Wild Boston fern (*N. exaltata*). Sword ferns are rhizomatous and can be aggressive in the landscape, requiring increased maintenance. Sword ferns are generally 2-5’ tall, depending on the species, with Wild Boston fern being the smaller of the two species mentioned. Southern shield fern also does well in the landscape. It is a tough and relatively small clumping fern, so it won’t go crazy in the yard. Ferns are likely your best choices to deal with stomping pets.

Why aren't more native ferns sold at nurseries? Well, they reproduce by spores, making them a bit of a challenge to propagate. Those ferns in cultivation are typically propagated by division. Many are difficult to identify and have invasive cousins that greatly resemble them. Complicating things further is that they can hybridize with their non-native cousins. Keep an eye out for other species of native ferns brought into chapter meeting raffles, as this is one of the best places to get them.

Other shade-loving species

Basket grass (*Oplismenus hirtellus*): This stoloniferous grass has shimmering leaves reminiscent of bamboo, however it is not woody, and only reaches 6" tall. It looks great after rains, but will die back during drier parts of the year (unless watered). A bonus for this species is that buntings eat the seeds. It is difficult to find in cultivation, as it is difficult to keep "pretty" in pots. In an attempt to deal with the perceived desire for native shade loving species, I used to sell Basket grass as it is a favorite of mine and looks awesome in the landscape. I sold very few of them however, so it fell out of cultivation.

Hammock witch grass (*Dichantheium commutatum*): This species is a clumper, so it will not cover large areas on its own. It typically is less than 6" tall. It is also a favorite for buntings who eat the seeds. It is very rare in cultivation, but might be



© Shirley Denton, March 2003

found at Dade Chapter meeting plant raffles.

Baby rubber plant, Florida peperomia (*Peperomia floridana*): This is a succulent ground cover that has stems which grow along the ground. It is not tough though, and is easily killed when stomped on only a few times. In nature it is mostly found as an epiphyte (air plant) or growing on floating logs in the swamp. It can cover large areas however, and is a true ground cover being less than 1' tall. Be sure and get it from native nurseries, as other nurseries carry genetic material from outside of the U.S.

Rouge plant (*Rivina humilis*): This is fairly large for a ground cover, sometimes getting 4' tall, so it may not qualify, and is likely more suited to a "subshrub" category. However, it tolerates shade quite well, it has small white to pinkish flowers which attract butterflies, and has pretty, almost showy, red fruits which attract birds. It can be weedy in the yard, but is easy to pull up if it gets somewhere you don't want it. It is generally available at most native plant nurseries.

Final thought

If one of our goals with our native landscapes is to attempt to replicate existing natural habitats, and our shadiest habitats naturally have few native ground covers, why do we need them? There is nothing wrong with having a forest floor of tree seedlings, leaves and mulch. It is habitat, and many bird species, such as the Brown Thrasher, forage in it. I see no reason to try and create something that doesn't exist. Close your eyes and take a walk through your forest and enjoy the sound of crunching leaves, moist air, and the smell of the white stoppers.

Steve Woodmansee is the biologist and owner of Pro Native Consulting (www.pronative.com), native plant expert, chair of the Dade Native Plant Workshop, and former president of the Florida Native Plant Society and the Dade Chapter. He is a frequent contributor to Tillandsia, speaker and field trip leader.

DADE CHAPTER FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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 Eric von Wettberg, Vivian Waddell
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Refreshment coordinators: Cheryl & Ben Morgan (ckmorg@bellsouth.net)
Membership: Patty Phares (pharespl@gmail.com, 305-255-6404)

General chapter information: 305-985-3677 (new number)
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/dadefnps>
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TILLANDSIA

Editor: Patty Phares (pharespl@gmail.com, 305-255-6404)
Staff needed – coedit, layout, content. 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 15th of each month. Advertising rates from \$12 per month.

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

FNPS office: info@fnps.org, 321-271-6702
FNPS Website: <http://www.fnps.org>
FNPS blog: <http://www.fnpsblog.org>
FNPS is on Facebook and Twitter: FNPSonline
Dade Chapter – FNPS Council of Chapters: vacant – contact the president
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Did you receive your *Palmetto* and *Sabal Minor* in early January?

The *Palmetto* magazine should have arrived by postal mail. The *Sabal Minor* (January-February) should have been delivered by email or postal mail (also available at fnps.org). Contact FNPS if you did not receive them or need assistance.

NOT MEMBER? Join/renew now at fnps.org