

The Understory

Newsletter of the Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, Inc.

April - May 2012

Spring is Here... And Has Been For Awhile! (President's Message) By: Jan Allyn

This spring seems to have arrived earlier than ever, with plants budding and bursting much earlier than usual. Is this a sign of climate change, or only an aberration? We can't tell from just one year, but phenologists are gathering data to track climate trends and try to improve climate predictions. Last June many of us attended George Kish's workshop for the USA Phenology Network and signed up to track temporal changes in plants and animals in our yards and neighborhoods. I'm a terrible procrastinator and got as far as creating an account online and adding my plants, but then have been completely remiss about entering data. I'm resolving to change that, because "citizen science" really is important. It can also be a lot of fun, and an excuse to really notice what's going on around you.

Spring is a great time to get out and do some hiking in our parks and preserves, before it gets too hot and muggy. We have some beautiful spring-bloomers, including black-eyed susan, sneezeweed, and tickseed. Coral bean is blooming now, and in wet areas look for iris and meadow beauty. The many members of the blueberry family – *Vaccinium* and *Lyonia*, for example—are blooming this time of year. With our early spring, dogwoods, redbud, and plums have largely finished blooming. If you're headed to an area where ticks are prevalent, you'd be wise to read Belinda Lambert's article in this issue about how to protect yourself from Lyme disease.

Our annual FNPS State Conference is coming up May 17-21, and this year it's close by in Plant City, making it very easy to attend. Because you register for each day of the conference separately, those who work during the week can sign up just for the Saturday sessions and

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a Sunday field trip, if they wish. A highlight of every conference is the conference plant sale, with vendors from around the state selling hard-to-find species. There is also a silent auction of "gift, crafty" items which usually includes things like handmade pottery, jewelry, and art. Over the years, I have purchased a number of things that I dearly love. I encourage all members to attend the conference if time and finances allow—you will enjoy yourself, you will learn interesting things about our native plants and plant

(President's Message continued)

communities, and you will make new friends who appreciate and care about our environment as much as you do.

Because of our plant sale in April and the FNPS conference in May, we won't have a field trip until June and we're still deciding where to go, but we'll keep you posted. If you've got a great suggestion, please send it to me!

Jan



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FNPS State Conference

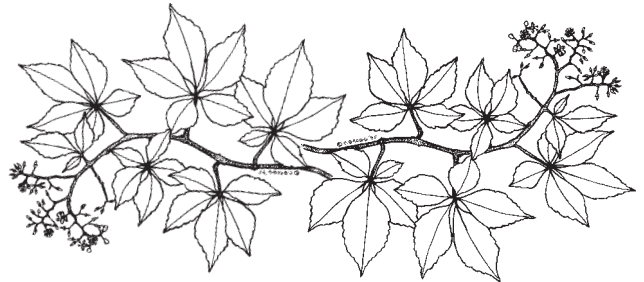
Only a couple of weeks remain to save \$25 on program registration for this year's Spring Conference in Plant City, hosted by the Suncoast and Hernando Chapters. The early registration discount ends April 16. This year's conference theme is "Preserving the Natural Heart of Florida" and there are many great field trips into the heart of Florida – some already filling up!

More conference info:

<http://www.fnps.org/pages/conference/>

Register now:

<https://www.eventville.com/catalog/eventregistration1.asp?eventid=1008997>



Win a "Scholarship" to the FNPS State Conference!

The Chapter will be giving away two vouchers worth up to \$165 each toward this year's FNPS State Conference registration. You must be present at the April 4th meeting to enter. Two winners and a first and second alternate will be chosen at random. In the event that one or both of the winners are unable to attend the conference, the alternates will receive the award. This year's conference will be May 17-20 at the Trinkle Center in Plant City. Speakers and breakout sessions will be Friday and Saturday, field trips on Thursday and Sunday. Full agenda, including field trip descriptions, can be found online at FNPS.org/conference/. Registration is also online, and is "a la carte"; i.e., you can register and pay for just those days and field trips you'd like to attend. Deadline for early-bird registration is April 16th. Winners will be asked to register and then submit their conference registration confirmation for reimbursement, which will be immediate.

New Mobile Field Guide for Invasive Plant ID

Within the next month, a new tool will come online that will assist users of mobile devices in identifying Central Florida invasive plant species in the field. Funded by a Kathy Craddock Burks Education and Outreach Grant from the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, the Orange County Environmental Protection Division contracted the creation of “FLIP” (FLORIDA Invasive Plants) an online field guide for invasive exotic plants designed for mobile devices (phones, iPads, iPods, Kindles, Nooks, etc.). The site will display photos, identification tips, and eradication advice for Category 1 invasives. Initially, 20 species will be available on the site, but more will soon be added. FLIP is being designed by the creators of the [Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants](#) at the University of South Florida, a site familiar to many FNPS members, and will use photos from that Atlas, as well as from other sources.



Spring Plant Sale – April 14

Our spring plant sale is just around the corner! Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 14th. Come and stock up on spring-blooming wildflowers and other plants for your garden. Speakers will give presentations on aquatic plants, how to create a pond, and wildlife gardening. Volunteers will be needed at Wilcox Nursery in Largo, both on the day of the sale and on April 11-13 for prep work. If you'd like to help, please contact volunteer coordinator Mary Ann Beekman (mbeekman@tampabay.rr.com) to let her know when you are available.

Literary Guests at Spring Plant Sale

We are pleased to have not one, but two, authors attending our April 14th plant sale, both with brand new books! Craig Huegel will be signing his “Native Wildflowers & Other Groundcovers for Florida Landscapes.” Tampa Bay Times environmental journalist Craig Pittman will have his newest title, “The Scent of Scandal: Greed, Betrayal, and the World’s Most Beautiful Orchid,” about the illegal introduction of a wild Peruvian orchid to the U.S. orchid trade. And Adam Conner will be giving a talk about wetland plants and landscape design for backyard ponds. For more details about the plant sale, see the flyer in this newsletter.

Proud of Your Native Landscape? Share It -- Oct. 6-7

We're already scouting for attractive gardens for the 2012 native landscape tour. You can inspire others to learn more about natives and incorporate them in their own yards by sharing your knowledge and your landscape. Your yard should be landscaped mostly with native plants, be free of invasive species, and well maintained. This year the tour will be the weekend of October 6-7. Typically we have 8-10 homes on the tour, with half in north Pinellas and half in south Pinellas. If you'd like your yard to be considered, please contact Mary Jackson at (727) 542-7138 or maryjack99@aol.com.

Upcoming Meetings

April Program: Wed., April 4, 7:00 pm
Florida native trees & shrubs by **Brightman Logan** of All Native LLC . Brightman is a founding member of FNPS and the Florida Association of Native Nurseries, and has served on the board of the Florida Wildflower Foundation. In addition to cultivating native plants, he has also waded into organic vegetable farming. A story about his new venture, Magnolia Organics, a USDA certified organic farm appears in the most recent edition of Bay Soundings. (Link to Brightman Logan profile: <http://www.baysoundings.com/fall2011/Stories/Profile-BrightmanLogan.asp>)

Where: Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo

Spring Plant Sale, April 14 (no Field Trip in April)

May Program: Wed., May 2, 6:30 pm
Annual Landscape Tour of Native Plants at Pinellas County Extension.

Join us for our annual guided tour of the grounds of Pinellas County Extension, including the native demonstration garden, pond loop, and other areas harboring interesting native species! Groups of 10-15 people will depart the auditorium at 10-minute intervals, each with a guide to identify the various plants and answer questions. Tours will take about an hour and we will return to the auditorium afterwards for refreshments and announcements about upcoming events. Note the earlier-than-usual meeting time, designed to squeeze out a bit of extra daylight.

Where: Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo

FNPS State Conference, May 17-20 (in lieu of May Field Trip)

Other Events

Give a Day for the Bay, Saturday, April 7, from 8 am until noon, Walsingham Park, Largo. Removal of invasive carrotwood and Chinese tallow seedlings, Brazilian pepper and primrose willow. In Partnership with Pinellas County Parks and Conservation Resources. To sign up, email Colleen Gray: colleen@tbep.org.

Island Earth Days at Honeymoon Island State Park. Sat., Apr. 14, from 10 am to 6:00 pm, and Sun., Apr. 15, 10 am to 5 pm \$8.00 per car entrance fee (up to 8 people). Activities include live music, kayak race, rain barrel workshops, bungee jumping, rock wall, food, beer and wine, fine artist and quality craft vendors, environmental exhibits, nature talks, kids activities, nature education area... and more! For more information visit www.IslandEarthDays.com.

Boyd Hill Nature Preserve April Events:

April 7, 10 a.m. – **Air Potato Roundup**. Round up some exotics and keep our preserve looking beautiful.

April 15, 10 a.m. – **Gopher Tortoise Hike**. Join Herpetologist George Heinrich for a journey into the world of one of our keystone species. Learn why they are so important and what you can do to protect them. Cost: \$3.00 nonmembers/\$1.50 members

April 10, 7:30 p.m. – **Natural History Speaker Series:** “Creating a Wildlife Habitat without Creating a Jungle.” Join Jeanne Murphy of Sensing Nature for ideas on how to turn your yard into an oasis that makes wildlife (and your neighbors) happy. Cost: Free

April 24, 7:00 p.m. – **“The Common Language of Environmental Education.”** Discover the universal excitement sparked in children around the globe when they explore the natural world. Cost: \$3.00 nonmembers/\$1.50 members

April 28, 10:30 am – **Wildflower Walk**. Spring is here and so are the wildflowers. Explore their beauty on this guided stroll. Cost: \$3.00 nonmembers/\$1.50 members

For a complete list of upcoming events at Boyd Hill, email BHPreserve@stpete.org.



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12501 Indian Rocks Road, Largo, Florida 33774
Tel. (727) 595-2073 wnursery@tampabay.rr.com
www.WilcoxNursery.com

Let us help you Plant Real Florida!

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Florida Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within the state (800-435-7352, reg. no. CH4271). Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the state. (FDACS/DPI Cert. #47222877).

*It's Spring ...
Celebrate!*

**Native Plant Sale Fundraiser
April 14th, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Wilcox Nursery & Landscape**

12501 Indian Rocks Road, Largo
www.wilcoxnursery.com
(727) 595-2073

**Bring the natural beauty of Florida's native
wildflowers, shrubs and trees to your garden!**

10 a.m. – Book signing

Tampa Bay Times journalist **Craig Pittman**:

"The Scent of Scandal: Greed, Betrayal, and the World's Most Beautiful Orchid," "Manatee Insanity," "Paving Paradise."

Wildlife ecologist **Craig Huegel**: "Native Wildflowers and Other Ground Covers for Florida Landscapes," "Native Plant Landscaping for Florida's Wildlife."

1 p.m. – Landscaping Your Pond

Adam Conner, owner of Wet & Green Native Things, will talk about designing a garden pond, and how to choose plants to grow in and around water features.



Gifts, Crafts, Jewelry and Books from Local Artisans

Members of the Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will be on hand to assist you with selecting the best native species for enhancing your garden and attracting birds, butterflies and other creatures, while reducing water use and landscape maintenance.

A portion of proceeds from the sale benefits the Pinellas Chapter.

Pinellas FNPS members receive a 10% discount on plant purchases.



Clearwater Audubon Seeks Hog Island Scholarship Applicants

Each summer Clearwater Audubon Society sponsors a local teacher to attend the Educator's Week Camp on Hog Island in Maine. The weeklong camp is a time for rejuvenation, networking and learning from very experienced educators from around the country. It is a terrific professional development opportunity for any teacher (new or experienced).

Clearwater Audubon is looking for teachers in northern Pinellas County who would be interested in applying for this opportunity. If you are interested in applying, contact Lynn Summerson (education@clearwateraudubon.com) for more information and an application.

Camp description:

This summer, July 19-24, join environmental educators from around the country for a dynamic and fun-filled residential program on Audubon's famed Hog Island, in the scenic mid-coast area of Maine. Designed for both science and non-science educators, this session will generate exciting ideas for creating and incorporating environmental education activities into your curriculum and teaching. Workshops using techniques in field biology, art, music, photography, theater, journaling, and other disciplines will be presented, as well as a host of classic Audubon Camp field trips. Participants will visit the nearby restored Atlantic Puffin and seabird colony, as well as explore Hog Island's magnificent spruce forest, its rich intertidal zones, a local bog, etc.

Continuing Education Credits are available. Go to <http://hogisland.audubon.org> for full details, prices, photographs, staff biographies, sample schedule, and information on possible scholarships. Or call Erica Van Etten, camp registrar, at 607-257-7308 x.14.





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Joint Work Day with Friends of the Hammock Very Successful

About 20 people showed up at the City of Dunedin's Hammock Park on March 17th for an invasive plant removal workday. Frank Brandt, member of both Pinellas FNPS and Friends of the Hammock, was resplendent in a green, shamrock-bedecked bowtie in recognition of St. Patrick's Day. He kicked off the festivities with a show-and-tell, displaying a rogue's gallery of invasive species that can be found in Hammock Park, comparing cuttings to demonstrate differences between the invasives and similar native plants also found there. Assisting were Friends of the Hammock president Jim Polgar, and Art Finn, Arborist for the City of Dunedin. Armed with information, work gloves and plastic bags, volunteers immediately attacked the Boston Ferns that infested the woods along Cline Trail. Fortunately, the recent dry weather and loose sandy soil made this a fairly easy job, and the pleasant spring weather and the shade of the hardwood hammock kept the workers cool and lively. A special treat was the discovery of Jack-in-the-pulpit plants, several still in bloom. (To learn more about this plant, check out the Feb./Mar. issue of the newsletter.) Moving through the understory, volunteers filled bag after bag with ferns and the occasional air potato tuber. They then moved on to a nearby pond area and began harvesting wild taro, an emergent aquatic plant. When the three-hour work session was done, it was reported that 150 bags had been filled, a remarkable achievement! However, much remains to be accomplished in the area of invasive species removal in the Hammock. Wild orange trees and Senegal date palms are prevalent, and their removal will require heavy equipment, not just energetic volunteers. Thanks to everyone who attended this successful event. We hope to collaborate with the Friends of the Hammock again soon!

Plant Profile: Five Great Natives For Pond Enhancement By: Debbie Chayet

A freshwater pond can be rapidly enhanced by the addition of any of the following easy to grow native plants.

***Iris hexagona*.** Prairie Iris blooms in spring with beautiful purple flowers contrasted against tall strap-like leaves. While the flowers attract butterflies, iris has a short bloom season and goes dormant in winter. Considered an emergent wetland plant tolerant of intermittent flooding, prairie iris should be planted at the water's edge. This iris does well in full sun to partial shade.



Canna flaccida Yellow Canna produces large, bright yellow flowers year-round. Easily reaching heights of five feet, this plant is often chewed leaves as it is Canna Skipper butterfly. An emergent wetland plant tolerant of intermittent flooding, plant yellow canna at the water's edge. Yellow canna does well in full sun to partial shade.



***Pontederia cordata*.** Pickerelweed is a wonderful wetland wildlife attractant. This plant grows up to four feet tall, has heart to lance-shaped leaves and grows in small colonies. It explodes with a profusion of small purple flowers, each with a splotch of yellow in the center. Many types of butterflies are seen nectaring on the flowers. Pickerelweed seeds are an important food for ducks and small mammals. Considered an emergent wetland plant tolerant of intermittent flooding, pickerelweed should be planted in 6-18 inches of water and in full sun.

***Sagittaria graminea, S.lancifolia, S. latifolia*.** Duckpotato plants are a group of similar, flowering wetland species that produce 3-petaled white flowers on tall stalks. The leaves vary in shape from strap-like to more heart-shaped; all grow up to five feet tall. The flowers attract butterflies and other pollinators and the tubers and seeds are eaten by waterfowl. The leaves may be eaten by small mammals. Considered an emergent wetland plant tolerant of intermittent flooding, duckpotato should be planted in six inches of water, in full sun.

***Nymphaea odorata*.** Fragrant Water Lily is a plant with long stems and floating leaves. Large, white multi-petaled flowers bloom from spring to fall. The stems and seeds are a food source for ducks and mammals. The large, nearly circular water lily leaves are a good hiding place for small fish and other aquatic wildlife. This plant prefers water at least 3 feet deep and full sunlight.

All of these plants will spread rapidly once established, so install at least 2-3 feet apart. To make a more natural appearance, plant in clusters and then enjoy the appearance of color; both from flowers and wildlife!

Shared Passion for Nature Touches a Life

By: Dmytro Durbak

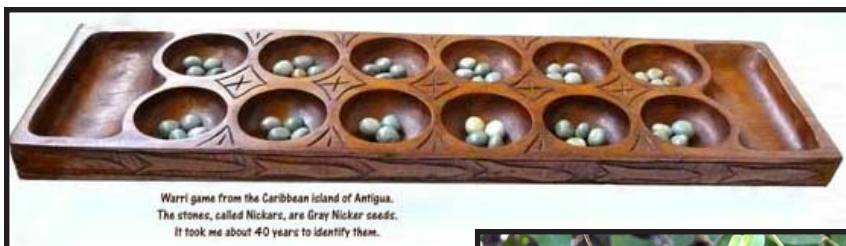
About 45 years ago I spent two weeks on the Caribbean island of Antigua. In the lobby of the hotel where I was staying I found an interesting board game and asked one of the staff to teach me to play it. The game was called Warri and was played with stones called Nickars. It was a game for adults requiring a lot of planning and skill. I found the game in a local market, bought it and still have it.

In 2004 I went on a tour at the Weedon Island Preserve. The volunteer guide was Bob Kimzey, an older gentleman very knowledgeable about local plants, and all sorts of critters that we encountered on the way. One of the plants Bob identified for us was the gray nicker, which was in seed. I immediately recognized the seeds as the Nickars that came with my Warri game.

This and several other tours with Bob Kimzey marked a pivotal point in my life. Since early childhood I was attracted to nature. Hiking (most of the Appalachian Trail) and camping were, and still are, a big part of my life. Surprisingly, my outlook on nature was macro in scope. I saw trees - not pines, butterflies - not white peacocks. In just three hours Bob changed all that. My photography interests, which were primarily candid portraiture, changed to nature photography. My favorite thing now is to take a beautiful picture of some flower, bird, or butterfly, and then to identify it by common and scientific names. Had I met Bob 65 years ago, my life would have been a lot richer.

Bob Kimzey is no longer with us, but his spirit lingers.

Editor's note: Bob Kimzey was a member of the Pinellas Chapter for many years. He was a Master Naturalist and volunteered for Brooker Creek Preserve as well as at Weedon Island. He died in 2008.



Warri game from the Caribbean island of Antigua. The stones, called Nickars, are Gray Nicker seeds. It took me about 40 years to identify them.



GRAY NICKER (*Caesalpinia bonduc*)
Fabaceae or pea family-Florida native
Dmytro Durbak



GRAY NICKER (*Caesalpinia bonduc* (L.) Roxb.) Fabaceae/Bean Family Photo: D. Durbak



GRAY NICKER (*Caesalpinia bonduc* (L.) Roxb.) Fabaceae/Bean Family Photo: D. Durbak

Gray Nicker (*Caesalpinia bonduc*)
Photos by Dmytro Durbak.

Welcome New Members

Debra Black, Ernie Franke, Kodiak Brothers, Cathy Ordiway, Sarah Palm, Jason Sharp

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Lyme Disease and You

By: Belinda B. Lambert

Environmental Program Manager

Pinellas County Dept. of Environment & Infrastructure
Transportation & Stormwater Division, Stormwater Section

If you have a job in the field, you are likely to be exposed to Lyme disease. Even if you don't work outdoors, chances are you are outdoors at some time during the day or week, or share a house with a pet that could carry an infected tick. So we are all potentially exposed to Lyme disease. While ticks are only active during the spring and summer in most of the United States, in Florida they can be active year-round (temperatures above 40°). Lyme disease is the fastest growing infectious, and the most common vector-borne, disease in the United States.

Here's the idyllic scenario. You know you are bitten by a tick and develop a "bull's-eye rash" around the site of the tick bite a few days later (right picture). Your doctor orders a Lyme blood test, results are positive, and the correct antibiotic dose is prescribed immediately. By the time you start taking the prescription, flu-like symptoms are just beginning. These symptoms get no worse, and after about a month, you are fine.

But we all know things are rarely idyllic, don't we? Lyme disease is but one of the diseases that can be transmitted by the *Ixodes scapularis* tick. In addition to Lyme disease (*Borrelia burgdorferi*), the same tick can also carry several other diseases (e.g. Ehrlichiosis, Babesiosis, and Bartonellosis). Less than half the people infected with Lyme disease are aware of being bitten by a tick, and it is usually the nymph stage (think poppy seed size) of the deer tick that does the damage. Only about half the people infected with Lyme get the rash, and it may not have the characteristic bull's-eye shape. The Lyme blood test used by CDC to screen for Lyme Disease is only 50%-65% accurate. The CDC also estimates that actual cases are ten times higher than the number that gets reported.

Let's say your case is average. The symptoms begin and Lyme disease is not considered as the cause. If not diagnosed and treated promptly, Lyme disease can progress

to a chronic stage and take years to resolve, or even be fatal. It usually starts with flu-like symptoms, achy joints and overwhelming fatigue; it can progress to any system in your body, and the symptoms tend to come and go in cycles. Months go by and the symptoms keep changing. By now you have probably been to several doctors and still have no diagnosis. Maybe you were *misdiagnosed* as having fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, Parkinson's disease or other similar conditions. Worse yet, you may have been told it is all in your head. In my case, it took five doctors and two years before I was diagnosed, so I guess I was lucky, considering the statistics for Florida!

If any of this sounds familiar, please educate yourself further about Lyme disease. If your doctor doesn't have experience (clinically) diagnosing and successfully treating Lyme disease, find one who does. It may save your life.

To learn more about Lyme disease through online resources, visit:

www.FloridaLymeDisease.com

www.LymeDiseaseAssociation.org

www.LymeDisease.org

www.LymeMD.org



"The average Lyme patient sees seven doctors and spends two years before accurate diagnosis of Lyme disease is made. In Florida, clinical records reflect anywhere from five to over 20 doctors and two to over 20 years before accurate Lyme diagnosis is made." (www.FloridaLymeDisease.org)

2012 Contacts

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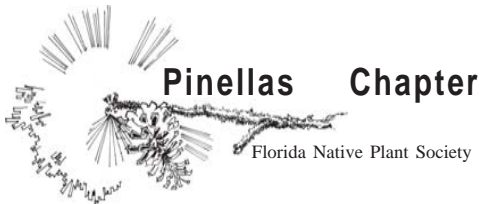
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Plants Sales: Tiffany Custer, Chairperson & Bruce Turley

Landscape Tour :

Mary Jackson, Chairperson

**See Directory of phone numbers
and e-mail addresses on page 2**



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