

## Mark your calendars

**Feb 3** - Work Day at Shirley McPherson Nature Trail at Heritage Village in Largo. Meet at 9:00 am, south end of trail.

**Feb 7**- Monthly Members Meeting. Moccasin Lake Nature Park 7:00 pm. Topic: *The Politics of Environmental Conservation*. Speaker: Jon Thaxton

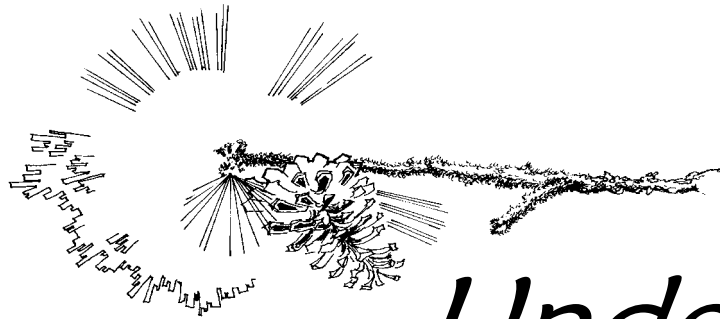
**Feb 10**- Field trip to Lake Chautauqua Park 9:00 am. Contact Erica Powell at fieldtrip.pinellas.fnps@gmail.com

**Feb 28** - Board Meeting. Clearwater Library 6:30 - 9:00 pm.

**Mar 7**- Monthly Members Meeting. Moccasin Lake Nature Park 7:00 pm. Topic: *William Bartram and the Art of Plant Description*. Speaker: Professor Thomas Hallock

**Mar 10** - Field Trip to Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park. Contact Erica Powell at fieldtrip.pinellas.fnps@gmail.com

**Mar 28** - Board Meeting. Clearwater Library 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm



# The Understory

## Welcome New Members

Crystal Adams, Lore Ayoub, Roger Lehrburger, Joyce Linna, Nathan and Debbie Bobier, Brian and Lauren Lee McCoy, Larry and Patrice Caffee, Ed and Pat Cigoi, Dave and McGettigan, Shannon McMahon, Karen Coales, Joshua Curry, Julie Willis and Ann Michell, Jens Darling, Kim Amendola and Eichinger Cauallius and Michael Nieder, Gary Christian, Chris and Monique Evers, Patterson, Mauri Peterson, Jan Luth Barbara and Gary Gardner, Christine and Terry Powell, Sharon Pulnik, Gauss, Bill Geffert, Mary Geisler, Joan Reinhardt, Jackie Hinckley and Michael and Sherry Goodyear, Gale Ken Schotz, Cathy Cain and Patricia and Tricia Heinzen, Eric and Joan Sharpe, John and Fran Sims, Larry Holm, Margie and Paul Hutinger, and Betty Smith, Cindy Smith, Steve Michael Jeffers, Bob and Jeri Johnson, Stone, Peter and Millie Tibma, Mary Dale Kawales, Rita Knorr, Karen White and Brad Wilkins.

## Volunteers Needed

There will be a workday at Shirley's Trail at Heritage Village on Saturday, February 3rd, from 9 a.m. until about noon. We will do general cleanup, prune unruly plants, remove exotic invasives, and install new plants. Heritage Village is at 11909 125th Street North in Largo, at the intersection of Walsingham Road and Ulmerton Road. It is part of the complex known as "Pinewood Cultural Park," which also includes Pinellas County Extension, the Florida Botanical Gardens and Gulf

Coast Art Center. Please bring sun protection, water, work gloves, and gardening tools (rakes, shovels, pruners, loppers, etc.)

To volunteer your time and energy for upcoming events please contact Joy Wharton at 522-8769 to add your name to the list.

Without the dedication and hard work of our volunteers, we wouldn't be able to accomplish our goals.

**Deadline for the April/May newsletter is March 1st**

**Contact [lkcurry1@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:lkcurry1@tampabay.rr.com) with story ideas**

## *President's Message*

Our chapter begins the New Year with a new president, two new board members and a new field trip chairperson. Our thanks are extended to Cathy Quindiagan, outgoing president, for three years of dedicated service during which the role of our chapter in the community has grown considerably. It takes a steady hand to continually deal with all the details and personalities of an organization, and Cathy has persisted admirably, holding it all together. Now is a time of transition which offers an opportunity for re-evaluation of our structures and activities. How is our chapter doing in relation to the Florida Native Plant Society's mission "to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida." Are we structured efficiently and are our activities broad enough to offer maximum support to that mission? Are we having a positive impact on our local communities in terms of public awareness of the importance of native plants and in terms of concrete environmental improvements that can stand as models for future actions?

I can say with certainty that the engagement of our chapter with public issues, projects, and education has been growing rapidly in the past few years. As environmental issues become of greater importance to our population, the visibility of our chapter grows. We have been and will be working on projects with governmental entities e.g. with SWFWMD on the Clam Bayou restoration, the City of St. Petersburg at Pinellas Point Park and Little Bayou Park, and the City of Clearwater on a new pocket park to be known as Rainbow Mars. We have also assisted the City of St. Petersburg with their landscaping codes.

Several non-profit organizations are seeking our expert advice. The Crescent Lake Neighborhood Association is taking responsibility for the environmental condition of their park. They are seeking to improve the water quality of the lake, remove invasive exotic plant species, and replant with native plants. Family Resources, Inc. in Pinellas Park, a not for profit counseling agency, has asked for our advice in the maintenance of an established native garden. Please see Ray Wunderlich's "Conservation Corner" in this newsletter for more details on our conservation initiatives.

Our "In Harmony with Nature" outreach program, which has been presented to over a thousand people, continues to provide a quality educational opportunity for people in

many different types of organizations. Through an FNPS grant the "Landscaping and Gardening with Florida Native Plants" PowerPoint presentation has had statewide distribution to every FNPS chapter. With the support of Audubon of Florida we have sold the cd to environmentally minded individuals and organizations throughout the state. Recently the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs inquired about the possibility of providing programs for a central six county region.

The picture is not all rosy, however. Much, much more needs to be done if we are to convert this county into an environmentally sound place. There is a tremendous environmental disconnect still rampant among most people in our communities. Decisions at all levels of government often reflect a lack of environmental awareness and concern. Development continues at an unsustainable pace. Though there have been improvements, we are still polluting our soil, water and air. If we are to arrive at a place where Florida's natural systems are highly valued and highly visible and where public and private decisions are made with the environment as high priority, our chapter has much work to do. We are in a position to lead, to educate, and to advise. It is our privilege to accept that responsibility willingly in the spirit of public service.

On our board of directors we have some very dedicated and active members who are willingly addressing the issues. The limiting factor that presently keeps our chapter from contributing all that it can is the lack of participation by more members. We need you, the members, to step up and support us. It matters not what your age, expertise, or physical capacity are. If you have a sense of the importance of our natural environment and the critical role that native plants play in it, then you can make a worthwhile contribution. Help us do all we can, volunteer your services. Opportunities to volunteer are announced at our monthly members' meetings, our on-line newsletter, and our web site. If you don't know what you would like to do, please call me at 727-322-9695 or email [billbilodeau@verizon.net](mailto:billbilodeau@verizon.net), and I will help you find a place to participate. Also, if you ever have positive suggestions on how to improve the functioning of our chapter, please feel free to contact me. Contributing to a noble cause larger than one's own personal welfare is very satisfying and uplifting. Join us in our projects and become a vital part of the solution.

- Bill Bilodeau

## Featured Yard

Several months ago, I contacted Lisa Curry and said I would like to share my yard in the newsletter. Why? I am not an expert on native plants (or any other plants for that matter). I'm not a professional landscape designer. But I am lucky and that's why I volunteered to share.

So how does being lucky have anything to do with this? Well, for starters, when I purchased my current home, I was lucky enough to inherit a yard that was truly a canvas waiting to be painted. I live in Oldsmar, about one block from the north end of Tampa Bay. I had seen the house several years ago and fell in love with it and its setting. As luck would have it, I was able to buy it and move in. It's a stilt home, so the third floor is literally up in the trees and what wonderful trees they are. Slash pines and live oaks reach out to my porch and my windows. I feel like a 10 year old with the neatest tree house in the neighborhood. I have a limestone driveway that reminds me of my grandparent's farm. The last thing I intend to do is pave it and add to Pinellas County's grotesque devotion to all things asphalt. I was lucky enough to find a little slice of country and I intend to preserve it.



Six and a half years ago, the yard provided me with some challenges. The back yard was a thick dark green blanket of air potatoes. But luck was still on my side, for peeking through this suffocating, obnoxious house guest were islands of saw palmetto and a hedge of the biggest firebush I had ever seen. I couldn't wait to free them from their bonds. With lots of digging, weeding, and cursing, I did get the air potatoes under control. I'd like to say I eliminated them, but they still haunt me to this day and require constant vigilance lest they return with a vengeance! But once this scourge was pushed back, I could see a yard that would let me design and "play."

But here's where luck played yet another role in the transformation of my yard. Almost twenty years ago, I met a member of an organization called T.R.E.E., Tampa Bay Reforestation and Environmental Effort, and we became friends. He told me about T.R.E.E. and the plantings they would conduct several times a year. These were with plants native to Florida.

I became interested and learned more about both the beauty and the benefit of native plants. From my involvement with T.R.E.E., I learned about the Florida Native Plant Society and specifically, the Pinellas Chapter. I have to thank both T.R.E.E. and the FNPS for teaching me what I know today about native plants. These organizations gave me the knowledge I needed to create a yard and a home that reflects my sincere love for my native state and my native county.



As I said earlier, I was ready to "play", to design my yard. I was like a five year old with finger paints and a big, piece of white construction paper. I added yellow anise and Florida privet for privacy hedge. Red cedars and sea grapes. Beautyberry and tick seed. Gaillardia and golden aster. Simpson stopper, Walter's viburnum, and golden dewdrop. Lizard's tail and blue iris for my pond. I discovered Wilcox Nursery and bought cabbage palms and a pignut hickory (which I had seen at Philippe Park and fell in love with). From Twigs and Leaves Nursery, a long leaf pine and a winged elm. Even more important to me are the plants in my yard that came from friends. Gallberry and scorpiontail from Tom Funari. A bald cypress and a yellow anise from Bob Funari. There is nothing more important to plant in your yard than memories and reminders. Not that I accomplished all of this in one fell swoop. And I have had my share of mistakes and failures. The yard has been, is, and will continue to be a work in progress and a place of learning.

Why natives? Well, again luck is involved. Growing up, I was lucky enough to have a mom and dad that took my two brothers and me camping from Pensacola to Jacksonville to Key West. Not in one trip mind you. Oh no! On a trip of that magnitude, five Earles would have left Pinellas County, but only two would have come back. Over the years we did see every part of Florida. And we were lucky enough to see Florida before the politicians started dancing to the tune of the developer's fiddle. And we were lucky enough to see natural Florida. From the bluffs of Torreya State Park to the clear water of Itchetucknee Springs. From the caves of Florida Caverns to the savannahs of Myakka River. From Fort Clinch to Fort Zachary Taylor. And while I didn't realize it at the time, I fell in love with Florida. That's why I use natives. Yes, they make economic sense. Yes, they provide shelter and food for animals and insects. But the driving reason I use natives is because it allows me to paint a little picture of the real Florida I fell in love with. - Evan Earle Jr.



## Conservation Corner

Happy New Year to All!! The holidays are behind us and the new year in front of us. We have opportunities to make significant, enduring positive footprints in our region of Florida and within our county. Thanks to the professional, respectful and steady leadership of outgoing president Cathy Quindiagan we are in a position to act on many profound issues that concern us all. The leadership of the chapters new President, Bill Bilodeau, will start us off in the right direction to tackle these issues. These issues include the following:

**ARUNDO DONAX or GIANT CANE:** The goal to prevent the propagation and processing of the exotic, invasive species, *Arundo donax*, or giant cane. Biomass Investment Corporation intends to grow it and Progress Energy to purchase it. There is an ongoing dialogue with Progress Energy, FLEPPC, The Department of Agriculture, our elected officials, our chapter and our state board. We wish to educate about this disaster in the making and protest this top 100 worst exotic, invasive species' cultivation. Our state board approved a scientific paper, by our state President Shirley Denton; formally disapprove of this species' intended biofuel cultivation.

**BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE:** Jan Allyn and Bruce Turley have had to step down from the Environmental Science Forum (ESF) due to the recently enacted Sunshine Law provisions this body is now under. I am still on the board. In December the ESF voted 9-4 NOT to recommend pumping the potable water in the Preserve to an exclusive, private golf course and tennis courts. I voted with the majority. Despite this voting, Pinellas County Utilities is going forth and pursuing permitting from SWFTMD to pump water from this Preserve. The conversion of 38 acres of slash pines to parking and ball fields within the Preserve is the next large item on the ESF agenda and will be attended to at the January meeting. This item is also very contentious with environmentalists who are lining up against the county/utilities which favor this horrible conversion, with few exceptions.

**LITTLE BAYOU PARK.** This 15-acre wild, city park in south St. Petersburg is one of the only bayside parks

left in the city. It is of interest to us due to its huge potential for producing better native habitats. Some of the park is grassy expanses with large slash pines dotting the landscape providing excellent roosts for black vultures, bald eagles, osprey, and great blue heron. A gopher tortoise has made its home in this park. On part of the bays edge many waterfowl nest and feed in the grasses and tidal marsh from a recently mitigated shoreline. A lake-fed stream runs into the park's lake, which in turn, flows into the bay in its tidal stream. This wetland area from lake to bay is canopied with mangroves, buttonwoods and various salt marsh shrubs. It is a haven for birds and other wetland species. A small amount of exotics are on the shoreline. An acre or so of oak hammock is infested with invasive exotics which will need our attention. Bill Bilodeau and I have been working with the City of St. Petersburg to procure their support to rid the park of its exotic, invasive species and associated neglected debris such as: *reclinata*, air potato vine, *wedelia*, golden rain-tree, *shoebuttan ardesia*, *brazilian pepper*, *guinea grass*, *grape vine* (native, but horribly invasive here), *carrotwood* and several others. We have a proposal for the city to eliminate these in phases. We have sectioned the park off into zones and within each zone we have identified plants that need to be removed or save. We would like our chapter to partake in workdays for this humble, worthy and neglected little park. It is a very manageable task. The city has approved the work and grant money will be applied for and used to purchase suitable native plant species particularly for pine flatwoods, salt marsh, and oak hammock habitats.

These are the primary conservation themes we are currently engaging and updates will be given in following newsletters.

Ray Wunderlich III - Conservation Chairperson

"I am myself and what is around me, and if I do not save it, it shall not save me."  
- *Jose Ortega y Gasset*

## *Weedon Island Preserve*

### **Weedon Naturalist – Coastal Wetlands**

**Sunday, February 18, 2007**

**12:30 pm – 3:30 pm**

The Weedon Naturalist Program is for adults who wish to become more familiar with the ecosystems that surround us. This program explores the complex and intricate connections between living things and the physical environment in which they occur, including the connections of people to these ecosystems. This month's session focuses on mangrove swamps which dominate Weedon Island Preserve. These transitional areas, which connect the Tampa Bay Estuary to our uplands, provide countless benefits to Tampa Bay's natural systems and economy. Following a classroom presentation and discussion on mangrove ecology we will head out into the swamp and observe and discover the

functions and values of the different types of mangrove ecosystems. Register early for this free program. **Recommended for adults.**

**Saturday, February 24, 2007**

**9:30 am – 1:00 pm**

**Pinellas County Adopt-A-Pond Program.** Learn how to identify native plant species around your pond and yard during this free educational seminar. Educational materials and breakfast items will be provided. Free native plants and other door prizes will be given away!

**Recommended for all ages.**

Contact Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center (727) 453-6500 to learn more about upcoming programs and to register.

## *Brooker Creek Preserve*

### **Cypress Swamp Café – The Energy Efficient Home**

**Wednesday, February 7, 2007**

**6:30 pm – 8:00 pm**

**Burt Henderson – IFAS Florida Energy Extension Service.** Join us for this series of presentations and discussions to explore the ways you can live a sustainable lifestyle. Each evening will begin with a social hour including refreshments and shade-grown coffee, followed by a presentation and/or discussion session. This week the Center presents, "The Energy Efficient Home" with Burt Henderson. Do you see your utility bills climbing higher and higher each month? Creating an energy efficient home not only saves you money but also reduces your personal impact on the environment. Join us to receive a free compact florescent light bulb and learn some practical tips for making your home energy efficient. Pre-registration is required for this program. Admission: Free.

**Recommended for adults.**

### **Paradise Lost? - Thinking About Florida's Environmental History**

**Saturday, February 10, 2007**

**1:00 pm – 2:00 pm**

**Jack E. Davis – University of Florida, Florida Humanities Council Road Scholars Program.** Join Jack Davis as he discusses the natural side of the human saga in Florida's history from the earliest land dwellers to the most recent land developers. Promoting a historical memory of Florida with nature at its center, Davis argues, becomes increasingly important as our culture retreats deeper into air-conditioned, artificial spaces. Pre-registration is required for this program. Admission: Free. **Recommended for adults**

Brooker Creek Preserve is located at 3940 Keystone Rd., Tarpon Springs, in northeast Pinellas County. To pre-register for events or upcoming sessions, call the Environmental Education Center at (727) 453-6800.

Learn more about Brooker Creek Preserve at [www.pinellascounty.org/environment](http://www.pinellascounty.org/environment).

**Learn how to become a Friend of Brooker Creek at <http://www.friendsofbrookercreekpreserve.org/>**

**Members of the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve receive a discount on admission fees.**

## 2006 Award Winners



### 2006 Chapter Award of Excellence

Danie Cutler received this award for her work at Clam Bayou Marine Education Center and the Coastal Restoration Project. She has orchestrated numerous work days for installing over 170 different species of native plants. She has worked with the city to remove invasives and exotic plants in order to replace them with natives. The once barren beach is now planted with hundreds of grasses to help stop erosion and several mangroves to promote a healthy nursery habitat. She has worked tirelessly to obtain funding to preserve, conserve and restore this property.

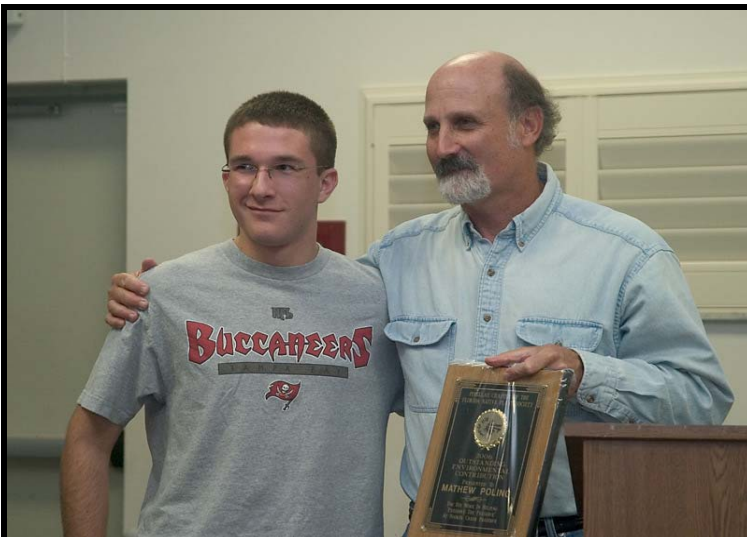
### 2006 President's Award

Cindy Peacock, a horticulture specialist with the Pinellas County Extension Service received this award in recognition of her outstanding service to the community and to our chapter. She teaches classes at the extension service and at schools that show children how to take care of our environment. She heads the scholarship committee of our chapter, arranges for our spring plant sale at Earthfest each year and conducts a children's workshop at our fall plant sale at Brooker Creek Preserve. Cindy is always willing to help in any capacity that furthers our goal to preserve, conserve and restore native plants and their communities.



### 2006 Outstanding Environmental Contribution

Mathew Poling, Senior Executive, Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve received this award for his commitment to the preservation, conservation and protection of the preserve. Mathew, a junior at East Lake High School and Senior Executive for the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, has been an effective advocate for the 8,500-acre preserve. He has led the Friends to adopt position statements on proposed development on preserve lands. He has been a volunteer at the preserve for a number of years. His knowledge of the preserve has made him an excellent guide for visitors.





## Chapter Field Trip

A full complement of twenty participated in our chapter's field trip on Jan 6th to Brooker Creek Preserve, an 8500 acre wilderness area in the north-eastern corner of Pinellas county. This preserve is part of the Lake Tarpon watershed and is comprised of a mix of inland swamps and pinelands.

The hike started out dramatically on the bridge over Brooker Creek when we saw an anhinga flapping its wings and fanning its tail in order to dry out its feathers after a dive. Also on the creek were Florida red-bellied turtles, black and yellow-crowned night herons, and the native floating mosquito fern (*Azolla caroliniana*).

In bloom on the trail were golden-rod (*Solidago fistulosa*), rose rush (*Lygodesmia aphylla*), and Nuttall's meadow-beauty (*Rhexia nuttallii*). We saw several species of blueberry including Darrow's (*Vaccinium darrowii*) and highbush (*V. corymbosum*), as well as a fair amount of rusty lyonia or stagger-bush (*Lyonia ferruginea*), and grass-leaved golden aster (*Pityopsis graminifolia*). Of particular note were the colonies of toothpetal false rein orchids (*Habenaria floribunda*) in bloom (see pic). It was a thrill to see these terrestrial orchids!

Don Stillwaugh was an excellent guide. He is an Environmental Specialist for Pinellas County's Biological Field Station and knows Brooker Creek very well. He is also a butterfly expert and, thanks to him, we saw our first swallowtail of the year, as well as barred yellow (*Eurema daira*), cloudless sulphur (*Phoebis sennae*), common buckeye (*Junonia coenia*), and rambling or sleeping orange (*Eurema nicippe*) butterflies; quite a number for this time of year.

All in all it was a fine morning out and we saw everything from wild turkey tracks and signs of armadillo to silk moth cocoons and a Pinewoods Tree Frog. We hope that you will join us for our next field trip to Lake Chautauqua Park, Clearwater, on Feb. 10th. Details are online at <http://pinellas.fnpschapters.org/> click on Calendar to see scheduled events. There will be one carpool site in St. Pete leaving at 8:30 am from the parking lot in the medical strip mall on the east side of 49th St. just north of the CVS Pharmacy at 49th St. and 54th Ave N.



One important note: Brooker Creek Preserve needs your support because of land use issues. The area includes a significant portion of the watershed of Brooker Creek, a major input to Lake Tarpon. The Friends of Brooker Creek are asking for your involvement in their proposal to change the land use, zoning and boundaries of the Preserve

in order to ensure its perpetual preservation. Please go to <http://www.friendsofbrookercreekpreserve.org/> for further information. - Erica Powell



Photos courtesy Erica Powell and Bill Bilodeau

## *Adding Color to Hammocks - Part 2*

In the last issue, I laid out my concept for this series. My plan is to write several articles describing plants that can add color to shady locations. Many home landscapes already have areas that are shaded by canopy trees; species such as oaks, magnolias and maples – a hammock overstory of sorts. In shady locations, our plant choices are limited. To broaden the palette a bit, I will consider species that I have found adaptable to our area. Not all are necessarily native to Pinellas County. I will begin this discussion by describing some of my favorite choices that are understory trees. Later articles will look at shrubs and groundcovers.

To my way of thinking (and I am not alone in this), the mid-canopy is dominated by trees that rarely reach higher than 20-30 feet in height. These mid-level trees are often found in small pockets of light, known as gaps, within the mature forest or are simply content within the deeper shade of the intact forest canopy. This mid-canopy is not dense and often the trees are rather widely spaced, but there are a great many different species that do just fine in limited light. Some do best if you create some light gaps yourself by selective pruning, but all will do well if planted with a little planning and forethought. Many, such as ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*) and hop-hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), are excellent choices, but provide no color. The ones I describe below are some of my favorite more colorful species.

### **Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*)**

There are few small trees more beautiful than a fringe tree in full bloom. Fringe trees are found naturally throughout most of Florida from the panhandle to the south-central peninsular counties of Sarasota and Manatee. They also are rather adaptable to a variety of conditions and may be found in many different situations from open environments to mesic hammocks. In Pinellas, they seem to do best when planted in semi-shady locations where they receive ample light, but not direct sunlight during the mid-day hours. Fringe trees will bloom well if they are located at the edges of your shady location or in a light gap where they get filtered light for much of the day. In this situation, they likely will develop as a single-trunked tree with a rather narrow irregular crown. Fringe trees grow very slow and seem only to add height during the flush of growth that comes when they leaf out in late spring. After that, they normally stay put. Fringe trees are not gorgeous foliage plants, but the mass of white flower tassels makes each spring a time to anticipate. Often, the entire tree seems to be covered with this mantle of white blooms. Fringe trees are monoecious. Although both sexes look very much alike, you will need both if you want fruit for wildlife. Make sure you get your tree from Florida stock, as sources further north are not likely to fare well here.

### **Silverbell (*Halesia diptera*)**

Like the fringe tree, described above, two-winged silverbell produces its showy white flowers in the springtime, before or during the time of leaf-out. As its name implies, the flowers are bell-shaped and are very showy. The variety “magniflora” is the showiest. Silverbell is only native to the panhandle region of Florida. It does not naturally make it down the peninsula, but it gets used in landscapes to great effect around Gainesville and other places north of Pinellas County. To use silverbell in our area, care must be taken to give it conditions that will enable it to thrive. This means filtered sun and hammock forest-type soils. The latter means reasonable organics and leaf litter in the upper layers as well as sufficient moisture. If you stick this plant in too much sun or in soils that are too harsh, it will not persist. But if you have what it takes, I would encourage you to give it a try. It is truly beautiful. Silverbell is a deciduous tree with a narrow irregular crown that rarely gets more than 20 feet tall. It has broad ovate leaves that are bright green. A second and similar species, Carolina silverbell (*Halesia carolina*), also is beautiful and has a natural range that extends into the peninsula all the way to Citrus County.

### **Hawthorns (*Crataegus* spp.)**

Hawthorns are some of my very favorite small trees and several of them occur naturally as understory trees and are tolerant of rather shady conditions. In my travels throughout Florida, I am always a bit surprised to find them deep within a hammock forest. While they may flower and develop broader crowns in open conditions, they can be used effectively in shady conditions, especially if they get sunlight for a few hours a day in a light gap (selective pruning can help with this) or in filtered sun. Although some hawthorns are typically wetland species, most of these are very adaptable as long as your site is not too dry. Hawthorns are in the rose and apple family and possess beautiful white blossoms in the spring. All are thorny to some extent and deciduous. The following are my favorites for shady sites.

**Parsley Haw (*C. marshallii*).** Its deeply dissected leaves and peeling bark make this species attractive even when it is not in flower. Parsley haw produces clusters of white blooms with pinkish stamens. Their fruit is a very small “apple” or “haw” that is bright red and persists into the early winter if not eaten first by birds.

**May Haw (*C. aestivalis*).** This hawthorn produces cherry-red fruits that are tart and made into jellies. Its name comes from the general time that the fruit is ripe, not from when it flowers. The large (for a hawthorn) flowers are produced very early in the spring. They are generally in small clusters of about 3 blooms each.

**Littlehip Haw (*C. spathulata*).** As its name implies, this haw produces very small fruit (i.e. hips – as in rose hips). In fact, its fruit is very similar to parsley haw in all respects. It also produces large clusters of small white blooms in the spring, but without the pinkish anthers. Its leaves are linear with small teeth at the end.



**Red Buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*)**

Red buckeye is native throughout the panhandle and the northern peninsula to around the Orlando area. It prefers mesic hammocks with reasonable soil moisture and fertility. Given optimal conditions, it may grow to more than 35 feet, but it is more likely to be seen as a 15-20' tree. It is deciduous with 5-parted palmate leaves. What makes it special, however, are the flowers that arise on rather long stalks at the ends of the branches in spring. The blooms are bright red and tubular, which makes a very showy splash attracting hummingbirds and large sulfur butterflies. Once established, this species is pretty tough to a variety of conditions. When stressed, however, its leaves will turn yellow and fall. Do not despair; just try to adjust the conditions a bit for next year.

**Red Anise (*Illicium floridanum*)**

Red anise is a small understory tree native to moist fertile hammocks in the panhandle. Although it is not native to peninsular Florida, it gets a lot of landscape use throughout our region and is fairly adaptable. What is often overlooked, however, is that it is truly an understory species. Given too much sunlight (which is better tolerated by yellow anise), it will not persist. Standing water will kill it in hours, but it is not very drought tolerant. When placed in the right conditions, however, red anise is gorgeous. Its evergreen leaves are rich green, succulent, and very fragrant when crushed. Its mantle of red star-shaped flowers in spring is breathtaking. I still remember the first time I saw one, standing 6 feet tall in full bloom. Both a white and a pink-flowered form are in cultivation also.

- Craig Huegel

**Be sure to watch for the continuation of this series in upcoming issues.**

## *Eco-Events*

***Saturday, Feb 17, 9:00-10:30***

***Saturday, Mar 24, 10:30-12:00***

***Rain Barrel Workshop at Pinellas County Extension.***

Learn how to collect rainwater from your roof. One barrel per Pinellas County household will be provided free to the first 125 to pre-register. Registration required. 727/582-2673

***Wednesday, Mar 7, 6:30-8:00***

***Global Warming: Changing the CO2urse at Brooker Creek Preserve Cypress Swamp Café.***

Explore ways to live a sustainable lifestyle. Join in the free discussion to understand the history and science of global climate change and talk about ways that personal choices can have an impact. Registration is required. 727/453-6800

***Saturday, Mar 10, 10:00-12:00***

***Compost Happens Workshop at Pinellas County Extension.***

Discover how easy it is to create compost. Pinellas County residents will receive a free 7.5 cubic feet plastic compost bin. For more information and to register call 727/582-2673

## *In Memory*

Recently we lost two people who were devoted to environmental conservation. Kathy Durham passed away on Jan. 21st, at home. A longtime chapter member, she once also served as our treasurer. She was a founder of the Pinellas chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, an active member of Friends of Boyd Hill Nature Park, and a perennial fixture at St. Pete city council meetings. We are also saddened by the death of Donna Heinrich on Jan. 3rd. A ranger at Boyd Hill for 17 years, she was a wildlife rehabilitator and educator, also lending her talents to care for captive animals at the Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary and Moccasin Lake Nature Park. Kathy and Donna both will be missed greatly.

Last spring we lost chapter member Dave Anschuetz to cancer, and would like to gratefully acknowledge the receipt of memorial contributions in his honor from Joanne Shrewsbury and Betty Wagner.

