

The Understory

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

February - March 2011

President's Message By: Alexa Wilcox-Huegel

Dear Friends,

One of the things I love most about this time of year is seeing the shapes and forms of the deciduous trees. You can truly appreciate the wonderful graceful stems and branches when there are no leaves in the way. I especially love watching the buds of the bare-branched trees swell and suddenly transform into beautiful flowers before the leaves pop out.... like Chickasaw plums, redbuds, fringe trees, etc. Though our urban area does not have as many of these types of trees anymore, those of us who have added some back into our yards can enjoy nature's spring show all the more. I hope you can join us for one of the upcoming field trips where we will (hopefully) see some of these flowering beauties.... or at the very least, in February, learn to appreciate their 'undressed' form and come to identify some by their shapes as well as their leaves.

Early in January, your Board of Directors met on a chilly Saturday morning at the Nature Center at Honeymoon Island State Park (a great nature center to visit by the way) to determine committees, set goals for the year ahead, and decide what activities and events our FNPS chapter could/should/would participate in. There are many opportunities available to get our message out to the public, and in many ways and forms. One of the things that often holds us back is time since we all have "paying" jobs, and that often limits the number of events and projects we can take on. I know that a great many of our members also contribute a lot of volunteer time to help promote our FNPS mission, but there may be others of you who would be also willing to get more involved, but don't know how or what to do, or feel you don't know enough to help. ALL help is appreciated. We all had to start somewhere and helping with plant sales, giving out literature at festivals, etc. is a great way to learn and help at the same time. During the year, we will have our Volunteer Coordinator(s)

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calling to ask for help. Don't be shy! Come join us. It is fun and rewarding to know you are doing something that helps keep Florida the wonderful place it is. Looking forward to a great year ahead,
Alexa

Rare white-flowered form of Florida paintbrush
Carphephorus corymbosus
Photo by Craig Huegel



Chapter Calendar

February Program: Wednesday, Feb. 2 7:00 pm, Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Rd., Largo.

Speaker: Craig Huegel, PhD

Topic: Landscaping for Wildlife

Join us in February as native plant expert and professional wildlife biologist, Craig Huegel, speaks to us about creating landscapes for wildlife. For far too long, we have looked at landscapes solely as window dressings for our homes. It is time we realized their role in a regional context and designed them for an ecological purpose. Landscaping that also provides wildlife habitat can take many forms, but it is purposefully designed for the birds, butterflies, and other wildlife of greatest interest, and it considers the whole equation of food, water and cover. Craig will take us on a visually interesting expedition through the concept of habitat and provide a thought-provoking discussion of what we need to consider in using native plants to create it in the places where we live and work. The Chapter will be selling Craig's newest book; *Native Plant Landscaping for Florida Wildlife* (2010, University of Florida Press) at the meeting and he will be happy to sign copies following his talk if you wish.

February Field Trip: Saturday, February 5

You must sign up for all Field Trips — see info below.

Location: Morris Bridge Wilderness Park, Tampa

Time: Meet by 8:45 am at Perkins parking lot, Gulf to Bay Blvd, just east of US 19 if you wish to carpool. We will meet behind the restaurant and plan to leave no later than 8:45 in order to get to the site by 9:30 am. See directions below if you are planning to drive separately.

Description: Part of the Wilderness Parks Complex managed by Hillsborough County, this trail wanders across lazy Hillsborough River, through open grassland and pine/palmetto forest, and offers abundant opportunities for bird enthusiasts. The trail this hike follows is part of the Wilderness Parks trails complex, and connects with other Parks along the River. We will explore

out from the main parking area and return in time for lunch. At this time of year, we should have some great views of the wetland forest as it buds out. If anyone wishes to stay longer, we may stop at one of the adjacent Parks along the River and do a short boardwalk loop trail before heading home. The trails are in excellent shape, but wear good footwear. You may wish to bring water and snacks. There are good facilities at the entrance.

Sign-up / Information: Contact Alexa Wilcox-Huegel at e-mail: alexa776@tampabay.rr.com or call (727) 422-4792.

Directions to Morris Bridge Wilderness Park: Exit Pinellas County across either the Courtney-Campbell or Howard Frankland Bridge/I-275 and take it to the intersection with I-4. Exit at I-4 and go 8.1 miles to the intersection with I-75. Take I-75 north to Exit 266 – Temple Terrace/Fletcher Road. Turn right (east onto Fletcher) and take the Morris Bridge ramp onto Morris Bridge Road. You will go about 2.5 miles north on Morris Bridge Road to the entrance to the Park. The Park entrance is on the left. We will meet inside the park at 9:30 am.

March Program: Wednesday, March 2, 7:00 pm, Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Rd, Largo.

Speaker: Bill Bilodeau

Topic: Maintaining Your Native Plant Landscape
Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Rd, Largo.

Former Chapter President and professional native plant landscaper, Bill Bilodeau, will speak to us on the many issues related to maintaining a native plant landscape. Tending a native landscape is different from a more traditional non-native one, but using natives does not free us from needing to perform regular maintenance activities if our landscapes are to prosper. As someone well-experienced in installing and maintaining such landscapes, Bill has developed a clear understanding of what is needed and what is not. Join us for an informative and interesting evening with one of the Chapter's most engaging speakers.

March Field Trip: Saturday, March 19

You must sign up for all Field Trips – see info below.

Location: Devils Millhopper/San Felasco Hammock, Gainesville

Time: Meet by 7:00 am at Perkins parking lot, Gulf to Bay Blvd, just east of US 19 if you wish to carpool. We will meet behind the restaurant and plan to leave no later than 7:00 in order to get to the site by 9:30 am. See directions below if you are planning to drive separately.

Description: Devils Millhopper Geological State Park is a truly unique natural preserve located at the north end of Gainesville. In the midst of north Florida's sandy terrain and pine forests, a bowl-shaped cavity 120 feet deep leads down to a miniature rain forest. Small streams trickle down the steep slopes of the limestone sinkhole, disappearing through crevices in the ground. Lush vegetation thrives in the shade of the walls even in dry summers. A significant geological formation, Devil's Millhopper is a National Natural Landmark that has been visited by the curious since the early 1880s. Mid March is the perfect time to see some of Florida's most beautiful spring-blooming plants. We will eat lunch at the parking lot following our hike into and around the sinkhole and then venture down the road to San Felasco Hammock – another unique and beautiful hammock forest.

Sign-up / Information: Contact Alexa Wilcox-Huegel at e-mail: alexa776@tampabay.rr.com or call (727) 422-4792.

Directions to Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park: Devil's Millhopper is approximately 110 miles north of our carpool site and a short distance off I-75. Take I-75 north to Exit 390 (SR-222); Gainesville's most northerly exit. Turn right onto SR-222 and go 3.7 miles to NW 43rd St/CR-2053. There is a sign for the Park here and a stoplight. Go 1.0 mile north to Millhopper Road (CR-232). Turn left on Millhopper Road and go approximately 0.2 miles to the Park entrance. It is on the righthand side. As this is a State Park, there is a small admission fee for each vehicle.

FNPS 2010 Award Recipients

By: Alexa Wilcox-Huegel

The **Chapter Award of Excellence** is presented by the Board of Directors to a person (or persons) in the community who we feel has most helped to serve the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society; the conservation, preservation, and restoration of native plants and native plant communities. This year's Award was presented to Dr. James Olliver, Provost of St. Petersburg College's Seminole Campus, for his direction, support, and vision for the community by encouraging the College to preserve and restore natural habitat on the grounds to teach and encourage students and local residents about the importance of native plants and the value and interaction of native plant communities.

Since 2010 is our Chapter's 20th Anniversary and we have spent the past year reflecting on our many accomplishments, it seemed only right that the 2010 **President's Award** be given to someone who has been intimately involved with us for a great many years. The President's Award is at the discretion of the Chapter President and I was proud to present it to Cathy Vogelsong; specifically for her many years of "behind the scenes" work in support of this Chapter through her artistic talents. Cathy was newsletter editor for more than 12 years (1994-2006) when our newsletter was published in print. Not only did she edit and do the graphic-arts work for the *Understory*, she also coordinated its printing through an outside printing source. She took a couple of years off to return to school to become a Registered Nurse, but agreed to return as Newsletter Publisher in late 2008. Since that time, she has worked with Craig Huegel to set up and publish the bimonthly newsletter that all of us receive. Cathy is the one who makes each issue look so good and read so well.

Cathy also designed both of our Chapter T-shirts. Her beautiful artwork generated thousands of dollars over the years. She did the original native plant line drawings for our Chapter note cards (still available at our sales table), and her original drawings are still used in many of our flyers, landscape tour booklets, and special art needs. Her art is also used by the State FNPS in their Conference brochures. Though she tends to work "behind the scenes", it is time we recognized her for all the various things she has contributed to this Chapter over the years.

(FNPS 2010 Award Recipients, cont.)

Every once in a while, we have someone who has given so much of themselves in support of educating the public about the value of native plants that a special award seems warranted. To that effect, the Board of Directors decided to create the **Pine Tree Award** and present it from time to time to someone for their special perseverance to the environmental health of Florida through “drought and fire”. The Chapter’s first Pine Tree Award was presented to Bruce Turley at the Conservation Celebration in 2010. Bruce, a native Floridian himself, began promoting native plants many, many years ago, when as a young man fresh from college he went to work for Everett Wilcox at Wilcox Nursery. He now owns that same nursery and has built it into one of the best retail native plant nurseries in the state. He has introduced many people to the beauty and value of native plant gardening through his nursery activities and his community activism. Many of us would not be FNPS members if it were not for his efforts. He has supported this Chapter in many ways and roles, including serving as past President, Vice President and Board member for many years. He has promoted natives through educational programs and is always willing to help promote our various projects and events. From putting up posters, helping sell tickets to the Landscape Tours, promoting books and environmentally sound planting practices, to the way he has generously helped our Chapter raise money through plant sales held at his nursery, with his own staff taking much of the work burden off Chapter volunteers, even during these hard financial times. Just as a pine tree puts down deep roots and withstands fire & drought, still providing food and shelter for many types of wildlife, Bruce has established strong community ties, and feeds others through his educational outreach over the years.

November “Above & Beyond” Award recipients:

Even though the FNPS is a volunteer organization and all the work we do is volunteered by nature, there are always a few individuals who give “above and beyond” the norm. This year, the Board decided to recognize some of those whose contributions were particularly outstanding.

Jan Allyn: Jan serves as our webmaster. Over the past years, she has contributed countless hours setting up and maintaining our Website pages (pinellasnativeplants.org and our Facebook page). She ensures that our activities get linked to the state website. In addition, she writes,

collates, and publishes “Notes from Pinellas” to let us know about Chapter and other environmental news that is timely in nature. Jan is the Chapter person who maintains our “Go Daddy” account; the system we use to actually get the newsletter out by email to all our members.

Mary Ann Beekman: Mary Ann has been exceptionally dedicated and reliable in getting us wonderful refreshments week after week. She hauls supplies, bakes cookies, comes in early to get things set-up and makes sure that everything is pretty for us.

Bill Bilodeau: Since the beginning, Bill has served as chair or co-chair of the Chapter’s Landscape Tour Committee. His leadership has made this annual event extremely successful. He also coordinated the speakers for our Chapter’s Community Outreach Speakers Bureau. More often than not, Bill also did the speaking.

Dr. John Hood: John contributed the greatest number of volunteer hours at the Extension office; working in the grounds on a number of projects. John also volunteers time at various other events (Plant Sales, etc.).

Craig Huegel: For the last 2 years, Craig has led our field trips, arranged many of our programs, and served as our *Understory* editor. Each issue contains articles he has written. He contributed many volunteer hours at the Extension office after being awarded a Chapter Grant by the state; adding to the plant diversity on their grounds, and directing other volunteers who helped plant and maintain this collection. He also regularly helps with the plant auction and at our plant sales.

Mary Jackson: Mary also spent many hours on the Film Festival and worked extensively on the Landscape Tour Committee and plant sales.

Jim McGinity: For the past four years, Jim has served as a co-Chair of the Landscape Tour Committee; directing activities in north County and assisting Bill in the overall event. He also was the leader and stimulus for the 2010 Environmental Film Festival.

Cindy Peacock: For several years, Cindy has served as the Conservation Celebration Chairperson; using her organizational skills to coordinate all the groups involved and contacting all the various environmental organizations to participate with their displays. She is also the contact and coordinator for distributing the Chapter’s summer camp scholarships.

Cathy Quindiagan: Cathy has served as our Membership Chairperson for many years. In this position, she promotes the Chapter to new members and provides

(FNPS 2010 Award Recipients, cont.)

follow up to ensure that they understand their benefits and get involved. She also is the key person at Chapter events who talks to the general public and gets them interested in joining FNPS.

Mary Sanders: Mary spent a great many hours on the 2010 Film Festival and volunteers many hours at the Extension office; serving mostly to direct the plant surveys for Debbie Chayet in the P2000 property. She also helps in coordinating volunteers for various events.

Cathy Vogelsong: (see above) Newsletter Publisher and artistic contributions.



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Letter to Alexa Wilcox-Huegel from Dr. James Olliver, St. Petersburg College, regarding his award:

Dear Alexa:

I so appreciated the honor bestowed by the Native Plant Society at your "Conservation Celebration" last night. It was a wonderful event with a big crowd and excellent speaker. The award itself – the beautiful nature painting – does look very much like our Habitat Park, and will be proudly displayed on campus. Please extend our heartfelt thanks to the members of the Native Plant Society for recognizing the work on Campus.

It was not my role to speak last night, but if I had I would have wanted to tell the members of the Society (and the assembled audience) that this was very much a team effort and institutional award. While I was very proud and humbled to receive this award, it was done on behalf of the College and the outstanding team of faculty and staff who have worked to build our academic classes and programs (especially Environmental Science Technology and Parks and Leisure Services) and our incredible facilities (especially the new Habitat Park) to be a model for sustainability and reflection of the importance of native plants and preserving our environments. Special thanks go to Susan Reiter, our VP for Planning and Institutional Services, who has been a staunch supporter and provided inspired leadership to the development of the Park and preservation of the site, to Debbie Chayet, County Grants Specialist, who has provided the pivotal assistance in helping us secure a large grant for invasive removal and now an application for restoration and replanting, and to the Seminole Campus biological science faculty, especially Professor Steve Schultz, who have been watching over and working over the past decade to put us in the position to achieve the recent successes while the funding and enrollments reached the critical mass for us to act.

Again, convey our team's thanks to the members of the Pinellas Chapter of the Native Plant Society. We anticipate, with the help of all those named above and many more on all our SPC sites, to continue and expand our support for the use of native plants and the preservation of the environmental features on the Seminole Campus, and will look to partner with the Society in future ventures to support both organizations' goals.

James Olliver, Provost, SPC

If You Fertilize This Spring, Do It Responsibly (It's the law)

Article provided by Pinellas County Watershed Management Division

Early spring is often a time when we think about fertilizing our lawns. Practicing responsible fertilizing will not only make your lawn green and keep local waterways — including Tampa Bay and the Gulf of Mexico — healthy, it is now the law in Pinellas County, because of an ordinance adopted last year.

The ordinance is intended to reduce nitrogen and phosphorous (nutrient) pollution. In Pinellas County, nearly 74% of the waterways (streams, lakes, and marine waters) don't meet State water quality standards. Source control, i.e. keeping the nutrients out of the water in the first place, is the most cost effective tool for local governments (and tax payers) to help lower nutrient levels in surface waters. The County has participated in and completed several studies that indicate fertilizer is a source of nutrients in local waterways.

Under the new ordinance, the following rules apply to Homeowners & Landscape Companies:

- Use zero phosphorus lawn fertilizers*
- Use lawn fertilizers with 50% or more slow-release nitrogen from October 1-May 31 and fertilizers with no nitrogen or phosphorous from June 1-September 30 of each year
- Apply no more than one (1) lb total nitrogen per 1000 square feet per application
- Keep 10 feet away from any lake, stream, canal, wetland, or stormwater pond when fertilizing
- Use broadcast spreaders equipped with a deflector shield
- Sweep up fertilizer that falls on driveways, streets, and sidewalks
- Never blow lawn clippings, leaves, or yard waste into streets or down storm drains

* Phosphorous fertilizers can be used from October 1 – May 31 if a soil test indicates a phosphorous deficiency. Analysis results must be submitted to Pinellas County Watershed Management prior to application. Go to www.pinellascountyextension.org for more information on obtaining a soil analysis test.

Homeowners, if you use a landscape maintenance company that applies fertilizer, make sure they have obtained their State Certification and are displaying the County decal on their vehicles. Additionally, lawn care professionals who provide only basic services such as mowing and edging must obtain Landscape Best Management Practices Certification from the county by July 18, 2011.

Homeowners, HOAs, and businesses who wish to learn more about installing, designing, and caring for their landscapes in an eco-friendly manner are encouraged to seek information from Pinellas County's Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program (FYNP), <http://pinellas.ifas.ufl.edu/FFL/index.shtml> or <http://www.floridayards.org/>. For a list of free Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ classes contact the Pinellas County Cooperative Extension Education Center at (727) 582-2100.

By the time this article is published, Pinellas County and the Tampa Bay Estuary Program will have launched a countywide campaign called "Be Floridian" to inform homeowners about the new fertilizer restrictions and promote the use of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ — including site-appropriate native plants that require less water, fertilizer and pesticides. Look for eye-catching billboards, print ads and a website (www.BeFloridian.org) beginning this Spring — and THINK PINK! You can help us get the word out to your friends and neighbors by requesting a "Be Floridian" yard sign and distributing door hangers about the new fertilizer ordinance in your neighborhood. Contact Nanette O'Hara at nanette@tbep.org or Anamarie Rivera at arivera@pinellascounty.org to request yard signs and door hangers. *Note: If you would like to participate in Pinellas FNPS outreach efforts to educate local residents about the new fertilizer ordinance, please contact Jan Allyn (jallyn@tampabay.rr.com) or Mary Sanders (Mary.Sanders1@verizon.net) to volunteer.*

Field Trip - Prologue

Emerson Point, Manatee County

By: Craig Huegel

Nearly 20 FNPS members and friends gathered together at the entrance of Emerson Point Park near Palmetto on Saturday January 15 to explore one of Manatee County's most interesting natural areas for our monthly field trip. As Anne describes below, it was a beautiful day to be outside and we took our time and visited several distinct sections of the park before heading home around 2 pm. From the parking lot, we walked the various loop trails through the hardwood hammock; venturing through an amazing collection of south and central Florida trees and shrubs as well as hiking up and down over Native American shell middens and historic homesteads and out across the short boardwalk overlook onto Sarasota Bay. After lunch at the picnic area near the Visitor Center, we drove a short distance to the boardwalk which winds its way through some beautiful mangrove forest and then up a planted hill to the observation tower that provided a breathtaking view across the water to the Skyway Bridge, Anna Maria Island and Egmont Key. We returned to our cars once more and drove a short distance further to the Point, where we walked the beach trail through huge half-topped sea grapes and large mangroves. Emerson Point is a park with lots to see and do. I suspect most of us will return someday in the near future to explore it more. If you missed this trip, it is definitely worth the relatively short drive.

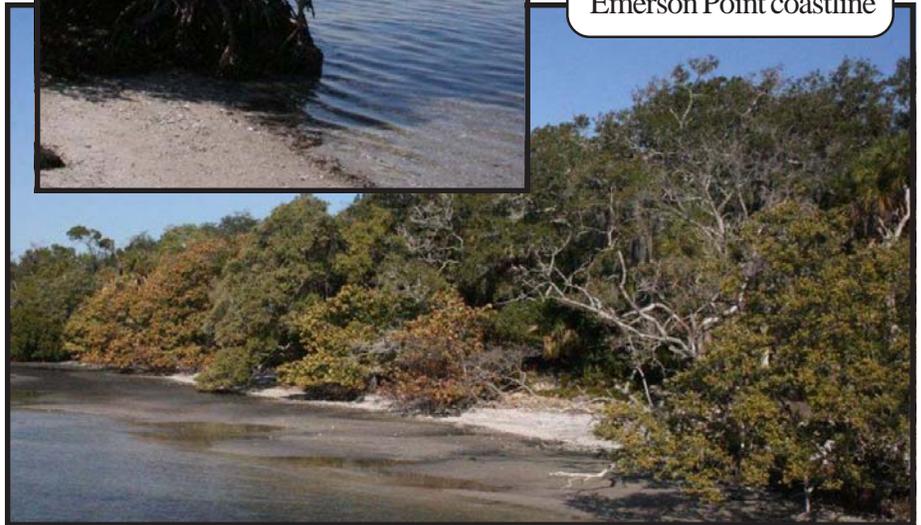


Most of the group gathered after lunch to walk the beach trail.



Red mangrove

Emerson Point coastline



Impressions of the 1/15/11 Field Trip to Emerson Point Preserve in Palmetto

By: Anne Kramer

Saturday was a perfect weather day if you dressed in layers. The breeze was cool and gentle, the sun was not hot enough to break a sweat, there were no mosquitoes, and it wasn't too cold. We saw and heard birds which added to the beauty of our experience. The park was not

overcrowded with visitors and best of all; we had a robust crowd of native plant enthusiasts with several new visitors and members we hadn't seen in a while. Always in good form was our fearless speaker, leader, and guide, Craig Huegel.

In bloom were the native plumbago (*Plumbago scandens*), and non-native climbing cactus and mother-in-law's tongue; the latter evidence of non-natives planted by the early settlers around their homesteads. In fall color was the tardily deciduous soapberry tree (*Sapindus*

(Emerson Point Field Trip, cont.)

saponaria). The dramatic red peeling bark of the gumbo-limbo (*Bursera simarouba*) was a main attraction as well as spectacular roots of the red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) and the sea-grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) that had been sculpted by the affects of wind and water. Views from the Point over the Gulf were spectacular and we saw evidence of horseshoe crab moltings. Being on a midden meant we had lots of shells on the ground and plants that tolerated the growing conditions they produce. Personally, I was inspired by a geometric grove of planted gumbo-limbo in full sun with straight trunks and full crowns that had a bed of tawny grass underneath. The combination of form, color, and texture was simple and striking. It was a subtle demonstration of the hand of man on nature in a positive way.

Between lunch, hiking, and the ride-sharing there were wonderful opportunities to get to know one another and continue to build friendships. This free park is a real gem. Here's looking forward to the next trip.

The Florida Goldenaster Project: A Protected Haven for Endangered Plant

By: JanAllyn

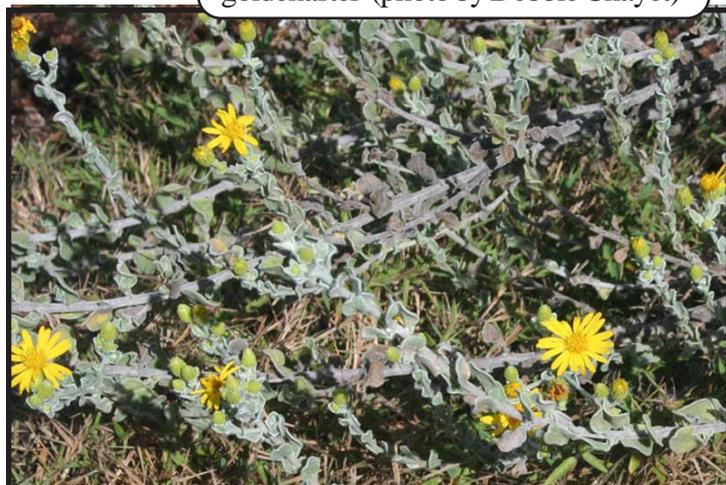
This past fall two groups of local volunteers joined Cindy Campell, rare native plant curator for Bok Tower Gardens, in giving some wildflowers a check-up. The project they came to help her with involves reintroducing populations of Florida goldenaster (*Chrysopsis floridana*) to ensure the species' survival and to help researchers better understand its life history. Natural populations of this lovely yellow wildflower no longer exist in Pinellas County, but in addition to two sites recently planted by Bok Tower Gardens at McKay Creek and Weedon Island, there are Florida goldenasters at Fort DeSoto Park and at Boyd Hill Nature Preserve which were planted there many years ago. While the goldenasters at Boyd Hill are doing well, the population at Fort DeSoto is in decline because nearby vegetation has encroached and put the plants in shade, which they don't like—the species typically occurs in open sandy patches that have been maintained with fire. A fall-blooming wildflower, Florida goldenaster is endemic to west-central Florida and is listed as endangered, chiefly because of habitat destruction. Partially as a result of

successes by Bok Tower's reintroduction program, the US Fish & Wildlife Service recommended in 2009 that it be reclassified as "threatened," but that has not yet happened.

On November 5, volunteers convened at the McKay Creek Preservation 2000 property near Pinellas County Extension and under the direction of Cindy and other Bok Tower personnel performed "demographic monitoring" of nearly 800 plants that were installed there in June 2009. When planted, each seedling was given an engraved metal tag with a number so that researchers can monitor the status of individual plants. The assessment team recorded the height and width of each plant and noted whether or not it was flowering. They also recorded whether plants were dead or absent. After two years, approximately 80% of the plants have survived, and about a quarter of them are flowering and producing seed. Volunteers joyously celebrated the discovery of a few dozen new "babies", recording their locations and giving them numbered tags. This is the second monitoring event at McKay Creek, the first one occurring in November 2009, just a few months after the seedlings were planted. The next day, Saturday November 6, the Bok Tower team joined another group of volunteers to perform a similar monitoring operation at Weedon Island Preserve, where over 900 seedlings were planted during the summer.

The Florida goldenaster reintroduction project is funded by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Florida as part of a species recovery plan, with the cooperation of the Southwest Florida Water Management

Chrysopsis floridana, Florida goldenaster (photo by Debbie Chayet)



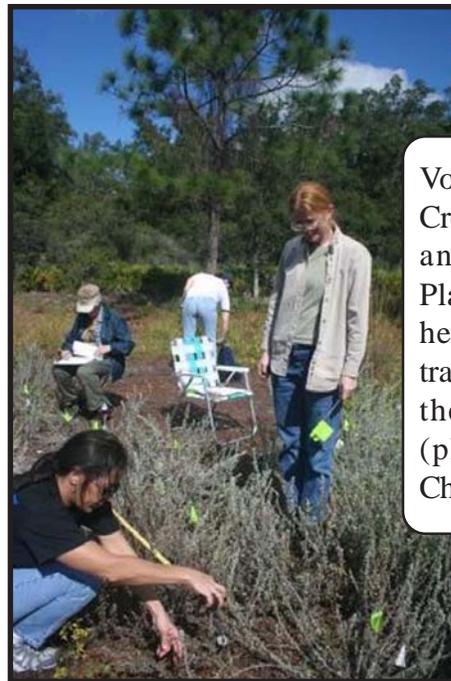
(Florida Goldenaster Project, cont.)

District (SWFWMD). Its goal is to create self-sustaining populations of Florida goldenaster on protected land. Initially, germination trials were performed to test the viability of seed collected from wild populations at donor sites in Manatee and Hillsborough Counties. The project allowed researchers to study the optimal conditions for germinating seed for the species. Bok’s Endangered Plant Program has a state-of-the-art germination chamber which allows precise, timed control of temperature, soil moisture, humidity, and light. Also studied were different germination substrates, with random-testing of samples for viability under controlled conditions. Optimal conditions for storing seed were also studied: the viability/ longevity of seeds stored at ambient, cold, and cryogenic temperatures. An affiliate of the Center for Plant Conservation, Bok is one of a number of facilities around the country that “banks” the seed of different species as a hedge against extinction.

The first outplantings were performed in 2008 and 2009 at two sites on the Little Manatee River Southfork Tract, owned by SWFWMD. In total, 3,146 Florida goldenaster seedlings have so far been planted, including the two Pinellas County sites, with seed coming from a number of different donor locations. The initial Manatee County plantings had between 12-16 sites donating seed, while the Weedon Island planting used seed from 26 wild populations. This is one reason for the careful tagging and monitoring of individual plants. Researchers know the seed source for every numbered plant and want to compare the success of plants from different seed sources. They also want to learn more about the life history of Florida goldenaster, including what its natural lifespan is. Most books classify it as a “short-lived perennial” but what that means in terms of years is not precisely known. The Bok Tower Gardens staff will be returning each fall for the next

few years to collect data about the populations at McKay Creek and Weedon Island and monitor their progress.

In addition to volunteering to help with events like the Florida goldenaster monitoring, Cindy Campbell of Bok Tower Gardens says FNPS members can assist researchers by keeping their eyes open. When visiting natural areas, be alert for unusual plants and take note of the location if you find a species that you think is rare, then notify the property’s land manager or researchers who might be interested. If you would like more information about Bok Tower Garden’s endangered plant program, or about the Florida goldenaster project, contact Cindy at (863) 676-1408.



Volunteers at McKay Creek, measuring plants and recording data. Plants were tagged to help volunteers keep track of which ones had their data recorded. (photos by Debbie Chayet)



Cathy Quindiagan planting asters at McKay Creek in June 2009 (photo by Jan Allyn)

Welcome New Members!
Andrea Anderon, Delia Farrar, Elizabeth Mason, Lucyanne & Paul Robinson

Plant Profile: Hawthorns

By: Craig Huegel

I have never hidden my great love of hawthorns (*Crataegus* spp.). I am unabashedly fond of them for a great many reasons and I have promoted their use in Florida landscapes for more than 20 years. My love of haws comes from both their beauty and utility; traits that make them especially useful in landscapes designed for wildlife and for aesthetics. And, given the large number of native species possible, there are excellent choices for nearly every setting likely to be encountered.

Hawthorns belong to the Rose Family, along with the plums, cherries, serviceberries, and crabapples. Roses are revered for their beautiful 5-petal flowers, which are often present in the spring, and the production of nutritious fruit, generally high in vitamin C. Florida's hawthorns all produce white blooms; either solitary, in small clusters, or in large masses across the canopy. The fruit are variable in color, size, and time of year that they ripen. Like true roses (*Rosa* spp.), hawthorn fruit are often called "hips". Most are rather bland in taste, but an entire industry has been built in the South around the hips of the mayhaw (*C. aestivalis*) and its close relatives (*C. opaca* and *C. rufula*). Hawthorn hips are also frequently available in natural food stores for use in teas and as nutritional supplements.

Despite their great ornamental beauty and practical uses, Florida's hawthorns are not widely grown or available without some searching. Over the past 20+ years, I have collected most of our species and incorporated them in the native plantings around the Pinellas County Cooperative Extension office. Here, they can be seen as mature specimens and evaluated for use in your own landscape. It is my hope that eventually the trade will make some of the less commonly grown species more widely available.

Hawthorns can be easily separated into groups by those that grow naturally in dry, sunny upland sites and those that prefer moisture and a bit of partial shade. But over the years, I have learned that our wetland species can do exceptionally well in typical landscape conditions once established. This should not be surprising, however, as many of our most

commonly used natives, such as red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and dahoon holly (*Ilex cassine*), are naturally found primarily in wetlands. Wetland haws just need some time to get established before they are required to make it without supplemental irrigation.

Haws can also be separated by those that hold their fruit into winter and those that don't. This is important to wildlife as the "winter-bearing" species generally provide food at a time when it is significant. Haws which ripen in the summer and autumn come at a time when such food is abundant nearly everywhere. Many of these are not extensively eaten by wildlife and eventually fall to the ground. Winter-bearing species often go unused for months, but flocks of American robins, cedar waxwings, and even small warblers find and consume them by late winter – if not before.



Large fruit - "Summer haw"
left and below



Medium-sized fruit
cockspur haw.



Small fruit -
Parsley haw



Small fruit that over-
winters - littlehip haw

Florida Hawthorns

Common Name	Latin Name	Habitat ¹	FruitSize ²	FruitSeason ³	FlowerType ⁴
Summer haw	<i>C. flava</i>	U,S	L	Su	S
Dwarf haw	<i>C. lepida</i>	U,S	M	Su	S
One-floweredHaw	<i>C. uniflora</i>	U,S	M	F	S
Cockspur haw	<i>C. crus-galli</i>	U,S	M	OW	C
Beautiful haw	<i>C. pulcherrima</i>	U,P	M	F	SC
Littlehip haw	<i>C. spathulata</i>	U,P	S	OW	C
Green haw	<i>C. viridis</i>	W,S	S	OW	SC
Washington haw	<i>C. phaenopyrum</i>	W,S	S	OW	C
Parsley haw	<i>C. marshallii</i>	W,P	S	OW	C
Mayhaw	<i>C. aestivalis</i>	W,P	M	Sp-Su	S

¹U=upland; S=Sunny; P=partial sun; W=wetland

²L=large; M=medium; S=small

³Su=summer; F=fall; OW=over winters on tree; Sp=Spring (May)

⁴S=single or in very small clusters; C=clusters of many flowers; SC=clusters of 5-7 flowers generally

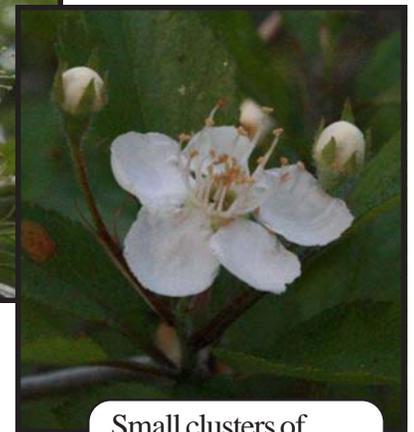
I have written extensively about hawthorns previously and have devoted a good number of pages to them in my recent book, *Native Plant Landscaping for Florida Wildlife*, so I won't go into a long discussion here on the individual species. What I thought might be most useful is to provide a table that clearly compares the traits most important in evaluating their use in home landscapes. This table does not include every species present in Florida and is based on the taxonomy most commonly used currently. This taxonomy, however, is changing—especially for the species most often called “summer haw” (*C. flava*). True “summer haw” is not now considered to be native to Florida and will likely be renamed and split into a number of closely related species including the one Dr. Wunderlin now calls *C. michauxii*. Other taxonomists have put that species (common to our part of the state) under *C. integra* and have put others from north Florida under different names. Three different “summer haws” are present in the Extension landscape – I just don't know yet what the new Latin names will be. Regardless, I would encourage all of you to walk the grounds during late February and March while the haws are blooming to get a better idea of which ones you most prefer.

All haws are susceptible to a disfiguring disease, cedar-apple rust, which requires red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) as an alternate host. Infected cedars pass the spores onto haws (and other “apples”) where they complete their life cycle. It is an annual cycle that goes

Single flowers, not in clusters - Mayhaw



Large clusters of flowers - little hip haw



Small clusters of flowers - green haw

back and forth each year between genera and it can be eliminated by breaking the cycle at either end during any single year. If you have red cedar in your landscape or nearby (up to a mile away), use hawthorns with one eye out for the appearance of this disease.

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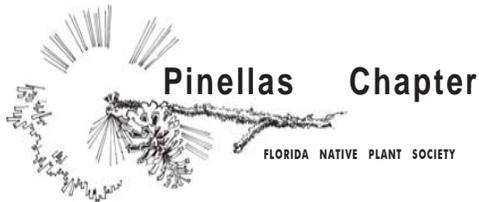
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See Directory of phone numbers
and e-mail addresses on page 5



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