

The Understory

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

October - November 2011

President's Message

By: Alexa Wilcox-Huegel

“Cease being intimidated by the argument that a right action is impossible because it does not yield maximum profits, or that a wrong action is to be condoned because it pays.”

— Aldo Leopold ([A Sand County Almanac](#))

Don't you wish we could get this idea across to the politicians and policy makers of the world??

I imagine most of you have read the classic “A Sand County Almanac” by Aldo Leopold. If you haven't, I highly recommend it as one of the most enlightening, practical, and common sense explanations for the need for conservation I have ever read. It is just as relevant now as in the 1940's when he wrote it. There are so many wise insights in his writings that I could quite easily quote his whole book here. One thing that I find encouraging and frightening at the same time is this quote: *“our bigger and better society is like a hypochondriac, so obsessed with its own economic health as to have lost the capacity to remain healthy. The whole world is so greedy for more ‘bathtubs’ that it has lost the stability necessary to build them or even to turn off the tap.”*

The frightening part is that he wrote this in 1948. Now, here we are fighting once again (or is it ‘still’?) that way of thinking. The encouraging part is that because of the work of writers such as Aldo Leopold, E.O. Wilson, Rachel Carson, and Archie Carr, in the 1940's & 1950's, people became more aware of the need and reasons for conserving our natural resources and preserving many of our natural areas, and we made some great strides in preservation. It is encouraging to know that if we speak out with a unified voice, some of the policy makers might listen. We hope.

President's Message

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Now, it is *our* turn to educate the current generation and those who follow about WHY conservation and preservation are so important. Aldo again states it best: *“Civilization has so cluttered this elemental man-earth relationship with gadgets and middlemen that awareness of it is growing dim. We fancy that industry supports us, forgetting what supports industry.”*

I also love this quote from E.O. Wilson: *“Perhaps the time has come to cease calling it the ‘environmentalist’ view, as though it were a lobbying effort outside the mainstream of human activity, and to start calling it **the real-world view.**”* Without our natural world functioning and restoring itself, we humans will end up as extinct as the dinosaurs of the past.

What we (FNPS) do to encourage gardening with our native plants is important, but it is only the tip of the iceberg. The roots of what we do must go much deeper than just adding natives to our home landscapes. We must get involved, write letters and e-mails in mass and let our voices be heard by the politicians and policy makers. We must remind them of what is at stake. It isn't about personal wealth or short-term financial gains; it is about keeping our state, and ultimately, our planet's life support systems functioning for the life of all of us.

Please read further about our upcoming programs and field trips to some awesome sites, including camping at Highlands Hammock if you can, in October, or just come for the day. Our December meeting is a special highlight of the year.... A Conservation Celebration joint meeting with St. Pete Audubon (Dec 14th) and many of our other environmental groups and friends. (See flyer in this newsletter to share with your friends). Our Keynote speaker this year will be Manley Fuller, President of the Florida Wildlife Federation, an effective and long time advocate helping to preserve Florida's natural areas. Manley will share with us ways we can be more effective in helping to conserve and preserve our beautiful and fabulous state in these times.

Alexa

Pinellas County to Receive \$3.3M for Wilde Property Improvements

By: JanAllyn

The Florida Communities Trust Governing Board convened on Thursday, August 25th at the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Building in Tallahassee where they ranked applications submitted during the Parks and Open Space Program's 2011 Florida Forever grant funding cycle. Just eight projects from communities throughout the state were selected to receive a combined total of \$17.6 million in Florida Forever funds for their land acquisition efforts. Debbie Chayet, Grants Specialist for Pinellas County, traveled to Tallahassee for the meeting and successfully made the County's case for receiving funds for the Wilde property on the northern edge of Brooker Creek Preserve, acquired in 2009. The 871-acre property will provide a corridor for wildlife, connecting Brooker Creek Preserve with 1,000 acres in

Hillsborough County and with the Anclote River corridor. The property supports abundant wildlife and has a number of different habitat types: oak hammock, cypress domes, marshes, pine flatwoods and sandhill. The Florida Forever funds will be used to add recreational amenities, to improve existing habitat and to perform restoration of land that was formerly pasture and orange grove.

Legislative Session to Start Early Next Year

Because the decadal census has just been completed, it is time for states to reapportion voters into districts. The politically-contentious redistricting process takes place in the legislature, and to accommodate it the session will convene in January (instead of the usual March) to get the job done. Last year's legislative term resulted in catastrophic changes to environmental and growth laws in Florida, and all of us who care about such things must be vigilant next year and write to our legislators early and often about our concerns. It's easy to do if you have a computer and email. Many legislators also use social media as well, so "friend" your representatives and keep in touch via Facebook or Twitter, as well as by phone and email. Public outcry stopped the shenanigans with our state parks earlier this year and killed a few other horrible ideas, and if enough people are vocal about their concerns they can influence future decisions as well. It's also important to financially support environmental groups who employ a lobbyist, like Audubon of Florida, Florida Wildlife Federation, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Nature Conservancy, 1000 Friends of Florida, the Trust for Public Land and Sierra Club (FNPS no longer has a lobbyist, unfortunately, due to lack of funds).

But Will They Listen?

A recent letter to Miss Manners really got my dander up this week. A correspondent complained that s/he attempted to contact a member of the U.S. House of Representatives via the official website, but the "contact" form (<https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml>) would not allow it unless the zip code provided was within the member's district. This proved to be correct, and House policy. From the House website FAQs:

Can I send a message to a Member who does not represent my congressional district?

Congressional courtesy dictates that Representatives be given the opportunity to assist their own constituents. The [Write Your Representative](#) service does not allow for the processing of messages to a Member that does not represent t12.2

Craig Huegel Ph.D. Named Florida Habitat Steward for 2011 by Florida Wildlife Federation

At the Florida Wildlife Federation's 74th Annual Conservation Awards Banquet, held June 11, 2011, at the Chateau Elan Hotel and Conference Center in Sebring, noteworthy Florida conservationists were recognized for their achievements. For his outstanding contribution to helping ensure a sustainable future for Florida's habitats, the Federation is proud to name Dr. Craig Huegel as its Florida Habitat Steward for 2011.

A naturalist with extensive training and experience in wildlife and plant ecology, wild lands management and listed-species permitting, Dr. Craig Huegel is an ardent advocate for saving what remains of "the real Florida." As co-founder of the Urban Wildlife Cooperative Extension Program at the University of Florida, and Administrator of the Department of Environmental Management for Pinellas County, he has worked extensively with local and county governments, state agencies, and the general public on issues related to comprehensive planning, growth management and wildlife at the urban interface.

Dr. Huegel has received numerous accolades for conservation work and environmental education. He produced a popular series of 30-minute video programs on Florida's native habitats and wildlife. Presently, he is a principal at Ecological Services Associates, Inc., an environmental consulting business that provides a wide range of services to private, governmental and not-for-profit clients. He lectures and writes on a broad range of topics related to Florida wildlife and wildlife habitat, particularly concentrating on Central Florida.

Additionally, Dr. Huegel serves on the Board of Brooker Creek Preserve and has provided great service to the Native Plant Society. His teaching acumen reaches from the formal classroom setting to in-person education in the field. Often mixing humor into his presentations, listeners gain knowledge of the natural world as well as having an enjoyable experience. With many publications to his credit, Dr. Huegel not only has a wealth of knowledge at his command, but he also knows how to share that knowledge well.



The Federation's annual selection of outstanding conservationists is one of the oldest in the state. Award winners are selected from nominations made to the Federation's board of directors and are chosen for their dedicated efforts on behalf of Florida's fish and wildlife and native habitats.



November Elections: Proposed Officers and Board of Directors for 2012

It is that time of year when we present our membership with a slate of officers to guide us through the 2012 year. The nominating committee proposes the following:

President:	Jan Allyn
Vice President:	Mary Jackson
Secretary:	TBA
Treasurer:	Cindy Smith
Chapter Representative:	Debbie Chayet

Directors at Large: Mary Ann Beekman, Tiffany Custer, Andrew Karpinski, TBA

New Member
Shreeram Krishnaswami

In Memorium: John Beckner

By: Fran Palmeri, Serenoa Chapter FNPS

Botanist John Beckner, 79, died of congestive heart failure August 22 in Sarasota, Florida. A teacher, researcher and writer, he specialized in plant taxonomy and ecology. Over a long career, he worked at the University of Florida Herbarium at Gainesville, University of South Florida, University of Miami, Pinellas Technical Institute, Eckerd College, Ringling College of Art and Design and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, where he was curator of the Orchid Identification Center.

An internationally recognized orchid expert, Beckner became interested in them growing up in St Petersburg where his first job was in an orchid nursery. He was an accredited judge of the American Orchid Society judge for more than forty years and a founder of the Orchid Conservation Committee, Inc. At Orchid Shows and Exhibits he built dozens of exhibits and educational projects for public showing. *Platanthera x beckneri*, an orchid, and two other species of plants are named in his honor.

A researcher with a prodigious memory, he wrote more than 100 scientific and popular publications on his varied interests. His latest article "Walter's Orchids" written with longtime friend and colleague Daniel B. Ward, appears in the current issue of the "Journal of Botanical Research Institute of Texas". His extensive library along with his papers, are now housed at the University of Florida.

He was most happy out exploring Florida's wild places. Over the years, he botanized all 67 counties in the state, keeping meticulous field notes. In 1982 he described a very rare endemic, scrub lupine (*Lupinus aridorum mcfarlin ex Beckner*).

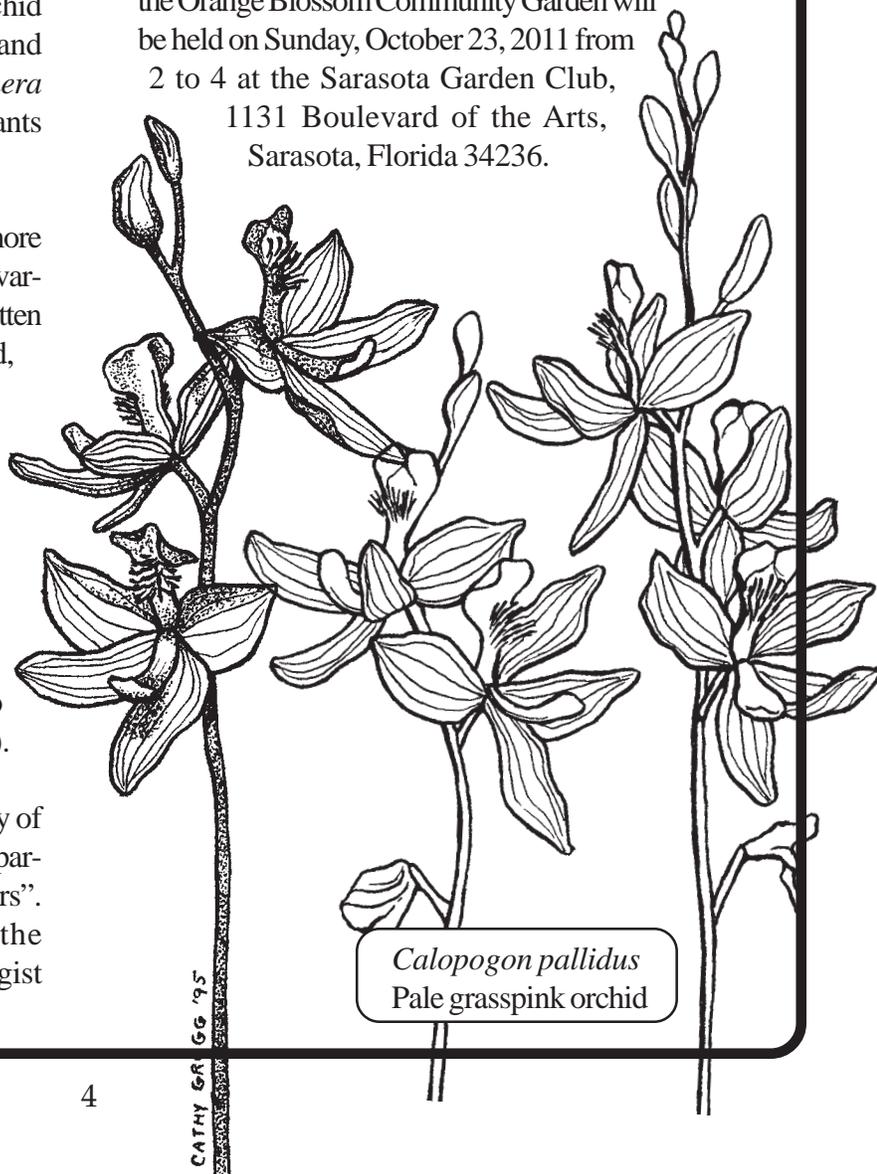
A field trip with John Beckner—and he led many of them --was an adventure, in which he encouraged participants to be "observers, explorers and inquisitors". Showing ecologist Stuart Pimm around the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve, he and park biologist Mike Owen discovered a new species of orchid.

He gardened throughout his life and designed yards, gardens and parks. In recent years he maintained a plot at Sarasota's Orange Blossom Community Gardens where he also gave talks and was instrumental in getting a shade house installed.

Active in horticultural and conservation groups, including the Florida Native Plant Society and Sierra Club, he initiated a world orchid conservation conference in 1997 (with John Atwood).

John Beckner once observed, "Florida in only about a hundred years, has become one of the most environmentally ruined regions on the planet. Conservation efforts are needed everywhere and for most of the native biota." With his death, Florida has lost a friend.

A celebration of John Beckner's life sponsored by the Orange Blossom Community Garden will be held on Sunday, October 23, 2011 from 2 to 4 at the Sarasota Garden Club, 1131 Boulevard of the Arts, Sarasota, Florida 34236.



FALL Wildflower Festival & Plant Sale Fundraiser

Saturday, October 8, 2011

9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Wilcox Nursery

12501 Indian Rocks Rd, Largo

727-595-2073

Sponsored by:

Florida Native Plant Society

Pinellas Chapter

Event will include:

- Ø Native plant specialists to advise and assist with plant choices
- Ø Educational information about gardening with natives, plants to avoid, attracting wildlife to your landscape
- Ø Educational Lectures
- Ø Information on composting, use of Rain barrels, best mulch for you site
- Ø Native Plants books for sale;
- Ø Nature photography prints by Christina Evans, professional photographer
- Ø Nature inspired ceramics and art to enhance your outdoor spaced
- Ø Information on installing ponds or water features to enhance your yard and attract wildlife to your landscape.
- Ø Potted Herbs for your 'Kitchen Garden"; Farm Fresh produce
- Ø Special & unique selection of 'hard to find' native wildflowers

Volunteers Needed!

There are many jobs to do, even if you are not a 'native plant expert', so if you are willing to volunteer for a 2-3 hour period of time, (or all day)

Please contact Mary Ann Beekman @ mbeekman@tampabay.rr.com

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)

Upcoming Meetings and Field Trips

Program: Wednesday, October 5

Time: Meeting begins at 7:00 pm with announcements, plant auction and snacks. Speaker starts at 7:45pm.

Location: Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Rd., Largo.

Speaker: Katy Roberts (former Pinellas FNPS President).

Topic: Florida's Edible (and NOT so edible) Plants, and how they can be used. Katy Roberts will speak about Florida's incredible wild edibles (and those that are not so edible) and will weave the talk around the book of that title by Richard J. Deurling and Peggy S. Lantz. It is an easy read and understandable for beginners. Plants have defenses and a person needs to know what is, and is not, consumable. Katy's talk will focus on native plants that have food or ethnobotanical uses, with an emphasis on preparation. Katy will bring some edible plants for auction, and some yaupon holly tea for tasting.

October Field Trip: Saturday, Oct. 22

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

Location: Tiger Creek Preserve, with camping option

Times: 10:00am at the site (Directions below) or . . .

Carpooling: Meet at 6:45 a.m. at the Perkins Pancake House, Gulf to Bay & US 19 intersection, northeast corner, just across from Clearwater Mall. We will leave promptly at 7:00.

Description: Named after the pristine blackwater stream that forms its spine, this beautiful preserve contains hardwood swamps, hammocks, scrubby flatwoods, pine flatwoods, sandhill and longleaf pine/wiregrass habitat. It's a land that must be burned in order to survive, and one where some animals literally swim through ancient white sands. Tiger Creek Preserve is a critical link in a network of preserves designed to protect what is left of the Lake Wales Ridge ecosystem. The oldest physical feature of peninsular Florida, the Ridge is a national hotspot of biological diversity and Tiger Creek Preserve is home to unique and rare plants and wildlife. (Click link for photos: <http://www.nature.org/photosmultimedia/tiger-creek-slideshow.xml>.)

Directions: From the North on State Highway 27: Go approximately four miles south of the intersection with Highway 60 in Lake Wales. Turn left onto County Road 640 (at the stoplight, look for a sign for Babson Park and Webber College; Fatboy's BBQ is on the corner.) Go 2

miles to SR 17 (Scenic Highway) and turn right. Go through Babson Park. At the top of the hill, turn left at N. Lake Moody Road. At the stop sign, turn left onto Murray Road. Go 2 miles and take a left onto Pfundstein Road. The George Cooley Trail is 100 yards on the left. To visit the Highlands Trail, continue on Pfundstein Road and turn left at The Nature Conservancy sign. There is a Hiker Parking area just ahead on the right. If you wish to visit the office, take the gravel drive past the Hiker Parking sign. Go through the open gate to a Visitor Parking sign. Keep left for parking.

Camping option: Those who want to camp can join Andy Karpinski at Highlands Hammock State Park. He has already booked site 38 for Friday and Saturday nights. You are responsible for booking your own site. Andy recommends sites 37 through 46, which are all in the same loop. You must book through ReserveAmerica, online at <http://floridastateparks.reserveamerica.com> or call 800) 326-3521 or TDD (888) 433-0287 to book sites. You may share sites, with up to eight people, two tents, and two vehicles per site. Andy has room to share with two more tents and one vehicle on his site. Sites are approximately \$24 a night, including tax (cheaper for seniors over 65).

Contact Andy at ak@stonemarmot.com to let him know you are camping. Use "Tiger Creek Camping" as your subject so the email isn't labeled spam. Let him know if you have a site and if you are looking to share, when you plan to arrive and leave, and how many in your party. Those camping will probably do another hike on Sunday. When you book your site, directions will be given to the Campground. Be sure to let Andy know you will be joining us, and which site you are in. We will plan a campfire on Saturday night. Every brings their own meals/food but we will choose a site and gather together.

November Program: Wednesday, November 2

Time: 7:00 pm (doors open at 6:30 for set up)

Location: Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Rd., Largo

Program: Annual Pot Luck Social. This is our annual meeting to elect new officers and board of directors, and acknowledge the special contributions of some of our members. Enjoy a relaxing evening with friends as we have a pictorial review of the wonderful natural places we have gone and the things we have done during the previous year.

November Field Trip: Myakka State Park

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

Date: Sat., November 5

Location: The park is located 9 miles east of I-75 at: 13208 State Road 72, Sarasota.

For detailed directions: <http://www.myakkariver.org/index.php/park-info/park-location>.

Time, meeting at Site: 10:00 am meet at main entrance of the Park, (they have a wonderful gift shop run by the Friends of Myakka group) and we will drive to the trail from there. Please note, there is a fee of \$6.00/car for up to 8 people.

To carpool: Meet at 8:00 am at Home Depot (22nd Avenue entrance) off 22nd Ave. St. Pete. We will leave promptly at 8:15 am.

Description: This is the perfect time of year to see some of Florida's beautiful grasses and fall wildflowers at a dry prairie. We will drive past some of the sturdy & rustic cabins built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the depression of the 1930's (What a brilliant idea to pay unemployed people to work improving our parks at the time when the parks could not afford to maintain themselves.!) These cabins can be rented for camping (though you must book quite far in advance for weekends.). They are equipped with beds, a small kitchen & bathroom, and have a charcoal grill outdoors.

Bring: Comfortable hiking shoes, hiking stick if you wish. Hat, beverage, snack or lunch. Binoculars & camera if desired.

Camping is available for those who wish to stay over.

Consevation Celebration: Wed., Dec. 14, 2011

Annual Joint meeting with St. Petersburg Audubon.



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Myakka State Park,
prairie and pines

Goldenrods

By: Craig Huegel

Goldenrods (*Solidago* spp.) are members of the aster family and almost universally present across Florida and the rest of North America. The genus is also represented in other parts of the world; from Mexico and South America to parts of Eurasia. North American species have been introduced into Europe for landscape purposes and a few have become established as pest plants there. They are universally admired for their showy golden blooms and their ability to attract a vast array of pollinating insects, and they are sometimes reviled for their ability to thrive and spread in places they are not welcome. In the past, they were blamed for hay fever, but that issue has been resolved. We now know that it is solely the pollen of ragweeds (*Artemisia* spp.) that cause those symptoms each fall.

Goldenrods occur in nearly every habitat type in Florida, except fully inundated systems, and they are usually common in those places where they are present. Twenty unique species have been recorded in Florida, and many can be found in west-central portions of the state. They are sometimes difficult to distinguish from each other, but if you take a close look at each, take note of the habitat they are growing in, and take in the overall size and nature of the plant, it is really not that hard. The following are species sometimes offered for sale by members of FANN; the Florida Association of Native Nurseries. Since all goldenrods bloom in late summer and fall, they are also species you may notice as you hike our natural areas this time of year.

Canada goldenrod (*S. canadensis* var. *scabra*; syn. *altissima*) occurs throughout the northern third of Florida and in scattered locations in central and south-central counties. This species is far more common north of us and was one of the stalwarts of the fall flora where I once resided in Wisconsin. Canada goldenrod is a robust species that can reach 6 feet in height by its late summer/early fall blooming season. It also suckers aggressively and tends to form large swaths of erect stems in a virtual monoculture. For this purpose, it is not an easy wildflower for the home landscape, but an excellent choice for an open field restoration. In my mind, this species looks and acts most similar to pinebarren goldenrod (*S. fistulosa*), described immediately below. Its

inflorescence is a bit more regular and its leaves more elliptical and slightly toothed. Our variety has grayish green foliage and stems that are rough to the touch because of stiff hairs. Canada goldenrod is most abundant in open fields and pastures.

Pinebarren goldenrod (*S. fistulosa*) is one of the most common goldenrods to be found in Pinellas County, though it is found throughout the Southeastern Coastal Plain. As its name implies, it is common to pine flatwoods and other upland sites (including weedy fields). Because it suckers aggressively, it forms large extensive colonies and because it is robust, these colonies are easily noticed. Pinebarren goldenrod reaches a mature height of 4-5 feet by mid-summer and begins to bloom in early fall. Its bright yellow flowers occur in broad open panicles that fall in all directions from the main stalk. Its leaves are also distinctive; they are somewhat lance-shaped, with a sharp point and small teeth along the leaf margins. If you see large colonies of rather tall goldenrods in an open field setting in early fall, they are very likely pinebarren goldenrod.



Canada goldenrod
S. canadensis
Photo by Wilbur H. Duncan,
Univ. of GA



Pinebarren goldenrod
Solidago fistulosa

Photos by the author unless noted.

Chapman's goldenrod (*S. odora* var. *chapmanii*) is the southern half of Florida's version of sweet goldenrod (*Solidago odora* var. *odora*); a species in the northern half of Florida and elsewhere renowned for its heavily aromatic foliage and value in herbal teas. The problem this far south is that our variety (i.e. variety *chapmanii*) is nearly lacking in those aromatic oils. If you are hiking in north Florida and encounter this species, pick a leaf and smell it – better yet, give it a taste. Chapman's goldenrod is very common in a wide variety of upland habitats. Unlike pinebarren goldenrod, it does not form dense colonies and it is neither very tall nor aggressive. Chapman's goldenrod rarely stands taller than 2-3 feet and individuals are normally spaced a foot or more apart. Blooming occurs in early summer and is almost always completed before pinebarren goldenrod kicks in. The leaves tend to be wider and more oval also. I find Chapman's goldenrod frequently in mesic to xeric pinelands.

Downy ragged goldenrod (*S. petiolaris*) occurs in north Florida to about Gainesville. It also occurs in open habitats throughout much of the southern half of the U.S. This is a poorly described species in the literature, but an attractive goldenrod that has good potential as a landscape species. Micanopy Wildflowers, owned by Claudia Larsen, is currently propagating it and I have been experimenting with it in my home landscape. Downy ragged goldenrod, as its common name implies, has distinctive foliage that is a bit “downy” in appearance. Each leaf is oval in shape, without noticeable teeth, and a bit wrinkled – like in a wild coffee. Unlike some in this group, it does not sucker aggressively and it rarely stands much taller than 3-4 feet.

Rough-stem /Wrinkleleaf goldenrod (*S. rugosa* var. *aspera*) is another north Florida species that is far more common to states to our immediate north. In those states, it is one of the most widely grown goldenrod for the home landscape and one cultivar, “Fireworks”, shows up on numerous nursery offerings and lists of “must have” plants. It is not currently offered by Florida native nurseries, however, to the best of my knowledge. I include here, only for completeness and because I hope it eventually makes it into our trade. Rough-stem goldenrod is a well-behaved species that does not sucker extensively nor grow too tall. As its common and Latin names suggest, the foliage is rough to the touch. The leaves are oval, noticeably toothed and wrinkled, and the flower heads are on arching stems.

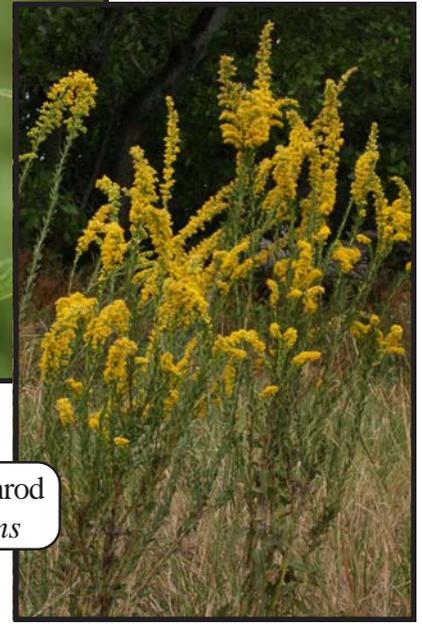
Chapman's goldenrod
S. odora var. *chapmanii*



Downy ragged goldenrod
S. petiolaris



Rough-stem goldenrod
S. rugosa



Seaside goldenrod
S. sempervirens

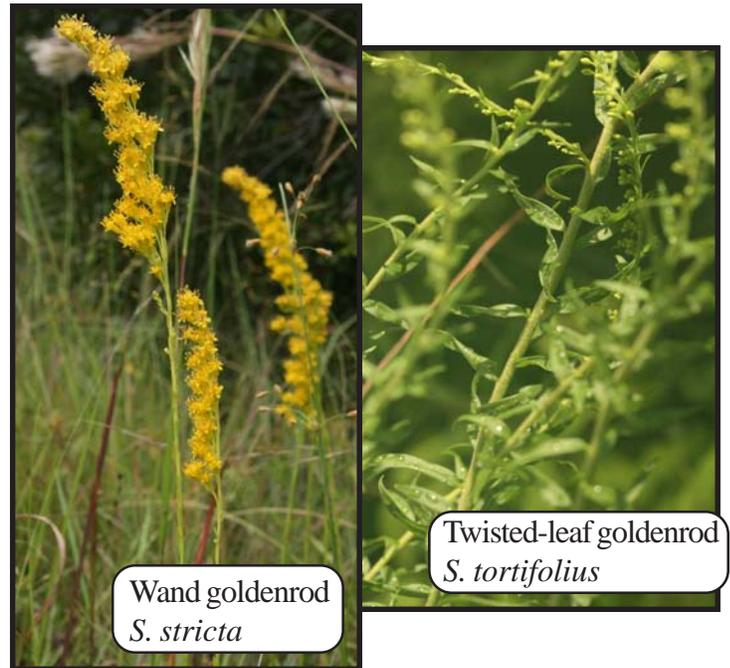
Seaside goldenrod (*S. sempervirens*) is most abundant along our coastlines, but occurs in a wide variety of uplands interior to the coast. It also is widely used as a landscape ornamental - so its seed can spread from wildflower gardens and plants can establish from them.

This is one of the easiest goldenrods to distinguish. For one, it is the only evergreen goldenrod present in our area. Its large, strap-like leaves are present year-round. Blooming tends to occur in the fall, on stalks that can rise 6-8 feet above ground elevation. This is a very robust species. It can make a stunning statement in an expansive setting or prove too large and overwhelming for smaller ones. Seaside goldenrod does not sucker as aggressively as some, but it often spreads quickly through a landscape by seed.

Wand goldenrod (*S. stricta*) is another goldenrod that is hard to misidentify. Its Latin and common names come from its flower stalk that is almost like a blazing star; normally a single wand of tightly clustered bright yellow blooms. Wand goldenrod is diminutive during much of the year. Its basal leaves are thin and elongated. The flower stalk rarely stands taller than about 2-3 feet, and flowering occurs in late fall. Like Chapman's goldenrod, it does not form dense colonies, and individual plants are often several feet apart from each other. This goldenrod prefers slightly moister soils than the others described above and is most likely to be seen in open fields and savannas that get wet during the rainy season. I love the way this species looks in a landscape, but it is only infrequently offered by commercial sources. The Natives, owned by the Bissets in central Polk County, often propagate wand goldenrod.

Twisted-leaf goldenrod (*S. tortifolia*) is another common goldenrod; found most often in dry uplands throughout Florida. It is a robust species that can reach heights of 5-6 feet and it can form extensive colonies in locations where it is well adapted. Its Latin and common names point to one feature that makes its identification simpler: many of its willow-like leaves are twisted, not flat like the others. Blooming occurs during the fall months. The flowers are on arching stems. Twisted-leaf goldenrod is only very rarely propagated by commercial sources.

As you walk about the natural lands of Florida in the fall, you cannot help but notice blooming goldenrods. Take a closer look at the species you encounter, take note of where they are growing, their bloom time, and their basic habit and I bet you will come to identify them – at least most of the time.



FNPS 2012 Endowment Grant Research Awards and Conservation Grant Awards

The Florida Native Plant Society maintains an **Endowment Research Grant** program for the purpose of funding research on native plants. These are small grants (\$1500 or less), awarded for a 1-year period, and intended to support research that forwards the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society which is "to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida."

FNPS Conservation Grants support applied native plant conservation projects in Florida. These are small grants (\$1500 or less) awarded for a 1-year period. Examples of projects that this grant supports are on-the-ground native plant community restoration, land acquisition, and habitat enhancement. To qualify for a Conservation Grant, the proposed project must be sponsored by an FNPS Chapter.

Application guidelines and details are on the FNPS Web site (www.fnps.org), click on 'Awards and Grants'. Questions regarding the grant programs should be sent to info@fnps.org. **Application deadline** for the 2012 Awards is March 2, 2012. Awards will be announced at the May 2012 Annual Conference in Plant City. Awardees do not have to be present at the Conference to receive award.

Florida State Parks Travelogue: Koreshan State Historic Site

By: Dmytro Durbak, supplemented by information on the Florida State Parks website

Koreshan Settlement is in the Florida Koreshan Historic Site, along the Estero River in Lee County, near Ft Meyers. It was a religious society founded by Dr. Cyrus Teed of New York State, and later of Chicago. Koresh is Hebrew for Cyrus. In 1894 Koreshanians bought property in Florida and established a commune south of Fort Myers, and under their jurisdiction. Around 1906, Koreshanians decided to separate from Fort Myers and establish the township of Estero. Unhappy about losing a substantial chunk of tax money, local civic leaders in Fort Myers had Teed arrested. He was soon released with apologies, but during his incarceration he was severely pistol whipped by Marshal Sanchez, suffering injuries from which he never recovered, and he died in 1908.

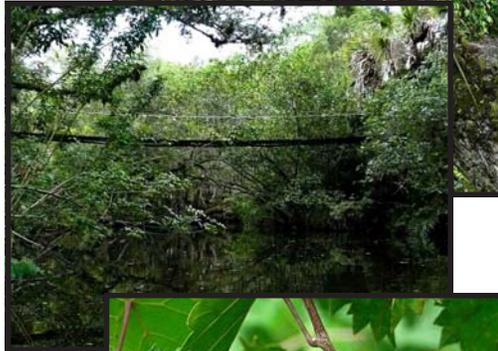
Koreshanians were completely different from all other religious movements of that period. They were well-educated and wealthy professional people. After Teed's death, they were governed by the Planetary Court made up of women. They traveled and were visited – Thomas Edison was a frequent guest. They built an Art Hall for theatrical productions, lectures, and musical events open to the public and they drew large audiences. Koreshanians were business oriented and not adverse to making profit. They owned a small sailing ship, *Ada*, for commercial travel and freight, as well as for commercial and sport fishing. They built a three-story General Store, the only stop between Fort Myers and Naples. It also housed the Estero Post Office, Riverview Restaurant, and Mobil Oil gas station. Koreshanians practiced cutting edge technology. They had state of the art machine shops, and an electrical power station that was in use until Florida Power and Light arrived in 1946. But, despite

their education and modern business ideas, Koreshanians had eccentric religious views. They believed that the universe existed within a giant hollow sphere. They designed and later commissioned the Pullman Coach Works to make a special surveying instrument to prove it. The experiment was held in 1897 on Naples beach using 2.5 miles of the beach and the sloop *Ada*, 4.5 miles away. Using a powerful telescope they determined that the earth's horizon curved up "proving" their theory.

Koreshanians also owned the Mound Key, a man-made island at the mouth of the Estero river. It was built from shells in 100 BC - 500 AD, is 31 feet high and is believed to have been the capital of the Calusa nation. We are going to kayak to the Mound Key on our next visit to the park. It is about 3.5 miles down-river from the camp. The last Koreshanian donated the property and the Mound Key to the State of Florida in 1961. Today, visitors can fish, picnic, boat, and hike along the Estero River. A boat ramp and canoe rentals are available. Visitors can take self-guided tours of the settlement or a ranger-guided tour. For overnight stays, the park has a full-facility campground.

Campers can enjoy campfire programs every Saturday night from January through March. Located on U.S. 41 at Corkscrew Road. Koreshan State Historic Site offers 60 campsites, all with electricity and water, a picnic table and fire ring. Twelve sites are designated tent camping only and located next to the Estero River. Four paved ADA campsites are available. Sites have a vegetation buffer between them for privacy. Fire wood and ice are available for campers at the ranger station.

(Beginning with the July-August 2011 issue of the Understory, we began a regular column on Florida's State Park system, designed to encourage all of us to visit these gems of real Florida. If you wish to contribute a column for a future issue, please send it to Craig at: Huegelc55@aol.com)



From top, wild pine, cable bridge over the Estero River, and muscadine grape. Photos by Dmytro Durbak.

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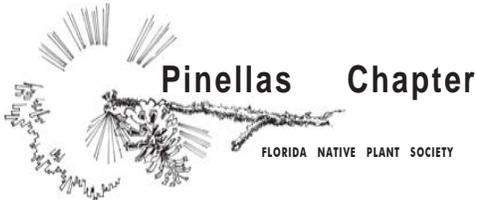
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**See Directory of phone numbers
and e-mail addresses on page 7**



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