

Florida Native Plant Society

## MANGROVE CHAPTER

### Message from the President - Lois Cantwell

Our last membership meeting, a.k.a. Denny's birthday celebration on Valentine's Day was a fun and festive evening. A larger room translates to a bit more work to get 50+ seats and 3 large tables set out, put up our display, set out literature, prepare the refreshments, etc. before 6:15. I suggest that we have a couple of extra helpers to show up early enough to schlep all those chairs. It certainly was nice having the space to meet and greet and engage with one another prior to the meeting, plus not being crammed together during the proceedings. In another light, those of us with wee voices may need the aid of a microphone in order to be heard. Also, we had the challenge of getting all 48 attendees to sign in-had to recirculate the sign-in sheet on a clip board. Another suggestion is to have a greeter at both entrances to "herd". Marianne Owen has volunteered to be one.



Sunset Over Lemon Bay, taken from the porch outside the meeting room.

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**We now have a vacancy on the Board of Directors-Vice President. Alas, we are losing David Delgado and Judith Timyan to the "other coast", wanting to be closer to family, with a brand new grand-baby in**

the picture. They have been very involved with our events and activities in their brief couple of seasons with us and we wish them well. Thank you to David and Judith for your generosity and hard work. Election of new officers takes place in May, so we are hopeful to fill David's shoes then. (He was also a valued member of our demonstration garden work group, contributing both muscle and witty repartee).

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We had a great turnout at our last field trip (Jelks Preserve), with about 30 people joining our guest leader, Nancy Edmundson and Al Squires, who each took half the group to make it more manageable. The weather was perfect and we had fun checking what we saw vs. the last recorded plant list from 10

years ago. Several of us regrouped at nearby Snook Haven for a good lunch.



## WildFlower Preserve Open House

There were a fair number of visitors to our booth at the recent Wildflower Open House. We found new homes for many of our home grown plants (\$40 in donations) and handed out literature, gave out fliers and "save-the-date" cards for Plant Native Day. Chatting with visitors and getting them interested in native plants kept us fairly busy. We always ask people to sign up to receive our newsletter, so we recorded several email addresses in the process. We have actually acquired new members in the process! The weather was terrific and the food truck provided excellent sandwiches.

Reading further in the newsletter, you will find lists of upcoming activities and volunteer opportunities, as March will be a rather busy month. Please help us out in any way that you can.



Carolyn Gregsak talks to a visitor at our booth

## Seeing Red in the Garden

Looking around the yard recently, I noticed that I had some spots of red showing up in the front yard. One patch was a clump of Tropical Sage (*Salvia coccinea*), which I have plenty of, but the other red objects were another story. A lovely batch of Rouge Plant (*Rivina humilis*) berries were showing off their colors. I couldn't help wondering if any of the local birds were finding them for a meal. Hadn't seen any going after them, and there were



Rouge Plant, *Rivina Humilis* with ripe berries

some fruits falling to the ground.

Rouge Plant will take full sun, but we seem to find it in shady areas at the park at Cedar Point. Taking our hint from Ma Nature, we planted the ones we have in the demonstration garden under a large red cedar, where they are doing quite well. I did the same and planted mine in a shady spot that only gets a bit of sun early in the mornings. I like this plant for its lovely little white flower spikes and the fact that it bears fruit throughout the year. In nature it is found in woodlands and disturbed sites. It is a relative of pokeweed and makes a small, carefree, colorful border plant for informal shady settings, which is just what it does in my garden just a few steps from my front door. It supposedly does attract several species of birds, so I will have to pay more attention.

## Englewood's Unique Sand Pine Scrub Area, by Diana Harris, The Sun, 2/11/2017

If you read the Sun, you know who Diana Harris is. She keeps everyone up-to-date on the history of the Englewood area. It was interesting to read a recent piece in the newspaper with the words "sand pine scrub" grabbing my attention. She starts off by pointing out that the word "historical" can not only describe buildings, events, and people, but also plants, animals or habitats. And, there is even a national registry for trees and groves! I didn't know that. From there, she launches into a history of the local Lemon Bay Cemetery on State Road 776 and the fact that it is built on top of a historical and endangered sand pine habitat. Who knew! Here is her description.

"The habitat is a sand ridge that extends from the cemetery inland to the Englewood Water District building on Selma Avenue. When Indiana Avenue (S.R. 776) was built in the 1950s, the road cut through the sand ridge. On the opposite side of the road from the cemetery, on S.R. 776, remains the other part of the ridge. It appears to be a small hill covered with pine trees. But these are very uncommon pines called sand pines."

"This is the only spot in town you will find these trees. The cemetery itself has only two sand pines left on its property, but if you drive through the neighborhood behind this sand ridge, working your way back to the Water District property, you will see many of these distinctive sand pines growing in yards."

"Looking closely you will see these trees are different from the taller, straighter slash pines. They are usually shorter, fuller, and often rather twisted. They also have a smaller, rounder cone."

"Sand pine scrub lands have almost disappeared from Florida. Since they are high and dry areas, in earlier days they were considered very desirable pieces of property on which to build. Obviously, that's the reason for our cemetery having been placed where it is. But now development has just about wiped out the sand pine scrubs. When putting in a golf course, an orange grove, a housing area, it's easier and cheaper to bulldoze a sand ridge and make everything the same height."

"Most of the remaining sand ridges and ancient dune fields are found inland in central Florida, although there is some sand pine scrub south of us on Marco Island. These habitats are so rare and unusual. Now the major sites, in the whole state, number less than 10. So you see we have a most special nature area here."

## The Myakkahatchee Creek/Little Salt Spring Greenway Corridor Initiative

In late January and early February, there were a few articles in the local Sun newspaper regarding conservation efforts by the Friends of Little Salt Spring (FLSS) to protect this unique heritage. Their goal is to preserve the greenway corridor that connects the Myakkahatchee Creek Corridor with Little Salt Spring Archaeological and Ecological Preserve.

This would serve to maintain open-land access for wildlife from one conservation area to another, a distance of approximately a half-mile. This last remaining piece of land is threatened by development, which would further fragment the property from the last remaining abutting native habitats and disconnect the last elements of the wildlife corridor from the creek to the spring.



Jane and Jean botanizing during the plant survey

Lawry Reid, President of the FLSS, to whom we sent a letter of support, is calling on the various

environmental organizations to serve as "partners in preservation" to support their efforts. Subsequently some of our Mangrove Chapter members got involved in a survey. After several forays into the property, we ended up with a significant native plant list. The importance of the botanical survey may play a role in a plan to utilize the school parcel for various learning purposes by 3 schools that are adjacent or nearby, as well as the general public. Stay tuned for further developments, hopefully good ones!



A portion of the pine/palmetto flatwoods on the corridor property



Bill Dunson describes depression marsh ecology to the group

# March Activities.

**Mar 3 (Friday):** BOD Meeting, Cedar Point Environmental Park, 2:30 PM. Members are always welcome to attend.

**Mar 11 (Saturday):** "Plant Native" Day, 9:30 AM to 1:00 PM, Cedar Point Environmental Park, 2300 Placida Road, Englewood FL. See the link to the informational flier elsewhere in the newsletter, or visit our website: [mangrove.fnpschapters.org](http://mangrove.fnpschapters.org). Please print and share the flier.

**Mar 14 (Tuesday):** Membership Meeting, 7:00 PM, Speaker Program, "Preserving Wild Florida", presented by Mary Lundeberg who is a full-time resident of Englewood, a conservation photographer and writer who celebrates the natural world through her art.

**Mar 23 (Thursday):** 2nd Annual Benefit Luncheon to support the Englewood Archives. Sponsored by The Friends of the Englewood Archives, Lemon Bay Women's Club, Mangrove Chapter, and Englewood Area Historical Museum, 12 Noon to 2 PM, Tringali Community Hall, 3460 North Access Rd, Englewood, FL. Pre-sold tickets \$15.00. Door and Table prizes, 50/50, Donation Raffle, Music by Gottfried Creek.

**Mar 23/24 (Thurs/Fri):** Plant Survey at Cedar Point Environmental Park, 9:00 AM. If you would like to lend a hand, contact either Bobbi Rodgers (941-475-0769) or Al Squires (941-769-3633). We team up and use check-lists to ID what is blooming and/or fruiting each month for an ongoing statistical database (phenology).

**Mar 25 (Saturday):** Field Trip, 9:00 AM: Myakka State Forest, S. River Rd., North Port. For more information, contact Al Squires (941-769-3633 or [ahsquires@embarqmail.com](mailto:ahsquires@embarqmail.com)). Directions are on our website ([mangrove.fnpschapters.org](http://mangrove.fnpschapters.org)).

## Volunteer Opportunities and Things to Do.

**"Plant Native Day" Helpers:** We still need a few more people to sign up for a couple of areas: Parking, Hospitality, Floaters/Greeters. Send me an email if you can help out. [birderlois@hotmail.com](mailto:birderlois@hotmail.com). Please remember to contribute baked goods, beverages, paper and plastic ware for our refreshment table. Contributions of your home-grown plants will be most appreciated!

**2nd Annual Benefit Luncheon (For Englewood Archives):** Carol Leonard has a sign-up sheet that may still have openings for anyone who can provide some of the food items, help with the prizes and raffle, etc. If you can help in any way, call Carol at 473-3292.

Selling Tickets for the Luncheon: I have 20 tickets in my possession for the Benefit Luncheon. They are \$15.00. If anyone can assist in selling some of these, let me know. If you wish to purchase a ticket(s), call me at 697-2756 or email [birderlois@hotmail.com](mailto:birderlois@hotmail.com)

**Lemon Bay Garden Club Garden Tour-Looking for a Native Yard:** The Lemon Bay Garden Club wants to include a "native" yard in their Fall Garden Tour, the weekend before Thanksgiving. Proceeds from the tour are used for scholarships and camperships for local children. Mangrove Chapter member, Susy d'Hont has kindly volunteered her yard for the tour. She has a lovely yard that combines natives, Florida-friendlies and a few exotics, which provides something for everyone to observe.

**The Landscape Committee at Tangerine Woods** is looking for an arborist to give them some guidance on keeping the trees in their common areas healthy. If there is a local arborist that you could recommend, contact Carmen Lowden at [cmlowden@aol.com](mailto:cmlowden@aol.com).

**Newsletter Editor:** If you can spare just 3 hours/month, please contact: Gail Finney, interim editor at 913-424-3027 or migafinn@gmail.com. We use the Constant Contact (Basic Toolkit), which is ordered for use by the editor, and we reimburse for the cost on an annual basis. Until we find a permanent replacement, Gail Finney has volunteered to help us out temporarily. Deadline for submitting articles to Gail is the 22nd of the month. We invite all members to contribute articles about relevant topics, such as a favorite plant, what's happening in their yard, seeking help with a pest problem, experiences to share, field trip experiences, etc.

**The 5th Annual Native Plant Show**, Sponsored by FANN (Florida Association of Native Nurseries), April 20-21, 2017, Bradenton Area Convention Center, Bradenton, FL. To view the show schedule or register, go to <http://www.nativeplantshow.com/schedule/>



## Shiny Lyonia (*Lyonia lucida*)

Also known as Fetterbush lyonia

The glossy green leaves and aromatic pink flowers make shiny lyonia one of the stars of the early March garden. The high suckering, open arching evergreen shrub has a clonal growth habit. The shrub is 2-6 feet tall and 4 feet wide. Shiny lyonia grows best in well drained moist acidic soil in full sun to part shade. It is not salt tolerant. Shiny lyonia blooms in March, April and May on the old wood before new growth appears. The fruit is a dark brown color.

It is propagated by root cuttings, root division, and seeds. If you harvest the seeds, they can be overwintered at room temperature.

Many members of the Lyonia are poisonous but shiny lyonia is not known to be.

Pollinators like it especially bees.

Shiny Lyonia gets its name from a Scotsman, John Lyon, who lived from 1765 to 1814. The Indians used the wood of the shiny lyonia for the bowls of the tobacco pipes.

You can see it now in a visit to the Cedar Point Environmental Center Demonstration Garden.