

## President's Message

I can look out any window in my house and see lots of trees and wildlife. Or walk into the farthest room in the house to see another house on my street. There is no busy traffic zipping past the front yard. I seldom hear the sound of lawn equipment polluting the air with noise and smelly gases. This is in stark contrast to leaving the busy-ness of my Florida neighborhood behind for the summer months. It has been something like a vacation.

This past season was fraught with the sights and sounds associated with the building frenzy taking place on my street. Our yard and the Florida-friendly neighbor's across the street have become even more of an oasis for the remaining wildlife and precious pollinators. On my last day in Florida I was thrilled to see a pair of hummingbirds darting about my Fire Bush seeking nectar. These little snapshots of wildlife benefiting from our efforts at planting natives help to make it all worthwhile.

Back in Michigan, I am seeing some of those same efforts happening in this area. I have been attending a series of lectures at our local library, highlighting the yard's impact on wildlife habitat. One speaker, a local resident who I am getting more acquainted with, has established at least 3,000 sq. ft. of native habitat in her yard. She showed oodles of photos illustrating the whole process over a 10-year period of time, using ground covers, perennials, shrubs and grasses.

Her photos of birds, bees, and butterflies reaping the benefits were very inspirational. I am already forming a wish-list of natives to this area, plus locating native plant nurseries that cater to this hardiness zone. Oh, what fun! If you are doing this in your "home states", keep up the good work. We will all be back at it again when we return to Southwest Florida in the fall.

Visit Our  
Website

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## Report on Bird Migration

by Bill Dunson  
Englewood, FL

<http://lemonbayconservancy.org/news-blog/nature-notes-by-bill-dunson/>

We had a very exciting spring migration of neotropical birds through our Manasota Key yard in mid-April to early May, and when it was over we definitely yearned for more. Since we were scheduled to attend a grandson's high school graduation in Interlochen, MI, on May 27, this provided a perfect opportunity to catch the migrants at Tawas Point, MI, on the western shores of Lake Huron as they headed to breeding territories in Michigan and further north. It is interesting that many of our SW Florida human snowbirds also return to Michigan, perhaps due to the direct route of I-75.

Baltimore orioles have a wide breeding range in eastern N America extending from N GA to Canada. The male is a spectacular bird and sings a melodious song. They pass through our part of Florida for only a few weeks in the spring so if you want to enjoy their songs and watch construction of the marvelous hanging nest by the female, you must go north yourself. Cedar waxwings are equally beautiful in a entirely different way and may be enjoyed in Florida during the winter, but their breeding range is from N Georgia to Canada. A very different bird is the eastern kingbird which is all black and white. It actually breeds from S Florida into Canada and we encountered a large number of them in Michigan. Their head color is interesting since they are a predator on insects and their dark eye is camouflaged by the black head. We have yellow bellied sapsuckers (the male is shown with a double red head pattern) in Florida during the winter but their nearest breeding range is in Pennsylvania. So it was a treat to see this beautiful woodpecker in its summer home range in Michigan.

Three of the warblers we encountered in Michigan are very occasionally seen in Florida during migration. We found this male golden-winged warbler singing on its breeding territory in Michigan which was a real treat. The bay-breasted female shown here was still migrating northward to a nesting site, likely in Canada. The cerulean female was also in migration and was actually close to the northern extent of her breeding range.

An exciting find in a northern Michigan marsh was a group of nine trumpeter swans, which are recovering from near extinction. The similarity in appearance to the destructive exotic mute swan and the much more abundant native tundra swan (which is occasionally seen in Florida) has caused difficulties in its recovery. These birds are likely breeding in Michigan.

While walking through a marsh near the Au Sable River a bit north of Tawas Point, MI, listening to singing sedge wrens (which in small numbers winter in SW Florida), I was amazed to see a spectacular Blanding's turtle. It is rare except in some mid-western and Great Lakes states and endangered in some. Its extraordinary coloration and gentle disposition are so different from the cooters, snappers and softshell turtles we are so familiar with in Florida.

Those who cherish the spring flush of flowers and birds would do well to pack their bags and plan a trip in May to follow the progression of spring northwards. It is a fabulous experience and one which allows you to extend the fantastic sights of our Florida spring and also enjoy the remarkable bird songs which are rarely heard in Florida.

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## Rain Forests and Waterfalls of the Appalachians Tour

September 10 - 15, 2017

Don't let September slip away. It will be here sooner than you think.

Our native plant society is embarking on an adventure to the Appalachians this summer to botanize, socialize and explore the mountains on a refreshing trip to the temperate rain forests. Come with us while we discover the amazing world of the spruce-fir forests of the southeast with local, expert guides. Invite your favorite traveling companion or come alone and make new friends. Seating is limited but you can reserve your spot for only \$50. For more information on pricing and itinerary, visit [www.indigotravelcompany.com](http://www.indigotravelcompany.com) or call Devon at 813-478-1183.

## Summer Activities

JULY 29, 2017, CEDAR POINT ENVIRONMENTAL PARK,  
2300 Placida Rd, Englewood

We will be walking the Big Pine Trail, an under-used and underappreciated trail. Expect to see a large variety of plants as well as water birds.

AUGUST 26, 2017, LEMON BAY PARK,  
570 Bay Park Blvd, Englewood

The walk at this very familiar park will be mostly in the shade.

SEPTEMBER 30, 2017, HATHAWAY PARK,  
35461 Washington Loop Rd, Punta Gorda

This is our annual summer walk along the water, with abundant shade. One of the plants we should be seeing is Pond Apple.

## What's Blooming in the Garden

**string lily, swamp lily (Crinum americanum)**

The string lily is a long-lived perennial that has

shrub like qualities. It will grow 1-4 feet tall and 1 foot wide with leaves growing directly from the bulb.

The sting lily has white blooms, although some references say a light pink bloom can occur. The lily like flowers are up to 4 inches long and wide. The leaves are long and strap like up to 2-3 inches wide and 2 to 4 feet long.

The white or blush flowers are fragrant and lily-like reaching up to 4 inches wide and long with 2-6 flowers forming a showy umbel at the top. The sepals are 3-4 inches long and 1/2-inch wide. They are joined at the base, forming a long tube, but curve backward at the end to form a ball-shaped blossom.



It prefers sunny moist location, hence its name swamp lily but tolerates some light shade. It will also grow in standing water up to 6 inches. Although this is a wetland plant in its native habitat, it performs well in moderately moist soils in garden settings. The one in the Demonstration Garden is on the edge of the rain garden.

Grasshoppers like this plant and may chew on the foliage. Mealybugs, nematodes, slugs and snails are occasional visitors. It is susceptible to leaf scorch. It is suitable for moist to wet areas, water gardens and pond peripheries. It can be used as a border, or foundation area, and circular drive centers.

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

<http://mangrove.fnpschapters.org/>

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