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### **Message from the President Lois Cantwell**

At our March meeting we learned about North Port's "Fertilizer Ordinance and Plants for Pollution Reduction", presented by Elizabeth Wong, who is their Storm Water Manager. At least 26 members and guests enjoyed this very energetic and animated speaker, who provided an over-view of the city's canals and the Myakkahatchee Creek which is their source of drinking water. I had no idea that their canal system was so extensive. We also heard a lot about pervious and impervious surfaces with regard to roadways, parking areas and even asphalt. Anyone who visits the new North Port Library or City Hall will gain a sense of what individuals in a growing community can do to show that they care about their water. At the Utilities Office in North Port, you can also see an example of Florida-friendly low water use landscaping.

### **Board of Directors Looking for Secretary and Treasurer**

Looking ahead to our May membership meeting and election of officers, we are asking for help in identifying individuals who can either serve as a "nominating committee" or volunteer to run for one of two open positions on the Board of Directors. Please contact Lois ([birderlois@hotmail.com](mailto:birderlois@hotmail.com)). The following are brief descriptions of duties for the Secretary and Treasurer positions:

**Secretary:** 1. Keep minutes of all meetings, including membership and board of directors. 2. Conduct any required correspondence. 3. Function as President, if both President and VP are absent from membership or board meetings. (Almost never happens). Can be a "snowbird", as other BOD members can fill in to take minutes during summer meetings. (Membership meetings are Oct-May).

**Treasurer:** 1. Keep and maintain complete, accurate, and up-to-date accounts of all financial transactions. 2. Deposit all money and other valuables with depositories. 3. Disburse funds. 4. Report an accounting of all transactions on a regular basis. 5. Perform other duties as assigned or required by State and Federal Laws. 6. Exercise the function of President, if the remaining board members are absent from general or other meetings. (Almost never happens). Should probably be a full-time resident.

**March 31 - Amberjack Environmental Park**

# Walk

Just a reminder that we will be walking at Amberjack Environmental Park this coming Saturday, March 31, 2018. We will meet at 9 AM, [6250 Gasparilla Pines Blvd., Cape Haze, FL](#).

Directions: Travel south on CR [775 \(Placida Rd\)](#) to Gasparilla Pines Blvd. Turn east onto the boulevard and drive 1.2 miles to the end of the road. Turn into the entrance to the park on the right. Meet at the kiosk in the parking area.

Hoping for early bloomers that are harbingers of spring, and seeing the wild rosemary. The birders in our group will be alert to the many species found in this park. We will see pine flatwoods, scrub oak and mangrove habitats.

Happy Easter to all. Hope to see many of you on Saturday

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## Report from our recent Pond Work Day

Three of our members, two county workers, and a new CHEC volunteer made another foray into the cattail-ridden section of the pond nearest to the front parking area at Cedar Point Environmental Park this past Friday. We lopped, sprayed and pulled some of the numerous willows that were left in that area on our last mission. The cattails and willows still seem to be winning the battle. We even discovered some stubs from our last visit that must have escaped the sprayer, as they were re-sprouting. It looks like we are about done with this project. Still plenty of larger willows left for bird habitat, and somewhat less of a jungle surrounding the retention area. Thanks to all who were willing to lend a hand and slog around among the cattails over the last couple of seasons. It certainly wasn't like a tip-toe through the tulips.

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## Plant Native Day



The weather was perfect, our membership helpers were fantastic, Laurel's container gardening presentation was inspiring, we had a good crowd, plant sales were brisk and the PRBS folks had a great booth. All in all, another successful outreach program goes into the books. It was also a \$1,685 kind of day, which is a record for us. We took in a total of \$484, Laurel sold \$910 worth of her nursery plants (10% came to us), and PRBS made \$382 on their plant sales. But, it's not about the money, so much as getting our target audience interested in native plants. I use the "intake" as an indicator of that interest and there were 156 people

there to participate.



I sent a thank-you email to Laurel Schiller that afternoon and here is her reply: “As always, enjoyed seeing all of you and working together for a successful event. How about a ‘how to’ on creating diverse, multi-layers of SHADE as a topic, and how important shade is for successful, sustainable plantings.” So, I think we have a theme for next season, which will be our 15<sup>th</sup> Annual “Plant Native” Day! Great job, Mangrove Chapter!



### **Notes from Laurel Schiller’s Container Gardening Presentation**

Suggested plants that can be grown in combinations:

1. Prostrate Porterweed, Lake Side Twinflower, Swamp Milkweed, Starry Rosinweed (moist)
2. Darrow’s Blueberry, Necklace Pod, Salvia, Coral Honeysuckle (dry-average)
3. Butterflyweed, Twinflower, Tropical Sage, Blanket Flower (dry-average)
4. Horsetail, Cardinal Flower, Swamp Milkweeds (wet)

Suggested plants that can be grown singly in pots:

1. Muhly Grass-true beauty in the fall
2. Horsetail-likes soggy to moist soil, wetland edge plant
3. Coontie-toughest plant, don’t overwater
4. Sea Oats-grasses will out-compete wildflowers when grown in the same pot
5. Coral Honeysuckle-“every yard should have it”, earliest nectar source for migrating hummers

Other plants suggested for containers:

Thriller (gives height/color): Black-eyed Susan, Blue Sage, Coreopsis, Sneezeweed

Filler (fills in horizontal space): Beach Sunflower, Calamint, Scrub Mint, Love Grasses

Spiller (cascading, helps keep pot cool): Mimosa, Frog Fruit, Beach Verbena

General Notes:

1. Advantages to container gardens: Flowering presence in areas where there is no soil (entryways, lanai, concrete places); excellent for accents; can move

in/out of sun/shade; can enjoy from multiple vantage points from within the house; lower maintenance; good height for working (dead-heading, watering, adding/removing plants)

2. Components of a wildlife habitat in a container: provides flowering, fruiting, seeding, shelter. Adding a water source makes it complete.

3. Do not use insecticides (which are indiscriminant) near pots (within 500 feet). Check the “Beyond Pesticides” website. Avoid mosquito larvae by hosing out saucers often.

4. Native plants respond to day length, go quiet in winter in zones 9b/10a. Best results for container gardens are from mid-February to November. Choose plants accordingly.

5. Porousness of container plus amount of heat dictates how often to water. Allow flowering to go through summer/fall, then cut back. Meanwhile, deadhead self-seeding plants to flush out new growth, unless you want to allow new seedlings to replace older plants.

6. Ideal potting soil make-up: composted soil, vermiculite and sand (45-55% content)



Nursery Plant Sales are brisk



Dish Gardens ready for sale



Planter ready for silent auction

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### **GREG VINE at FNPS, Mangrove Chapter Meeting, April 10 “Florida Friendliness in the Home Garden”**

The Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society has the pleasure of welcoming Venice resident and businessman, Greg Vine, to their April 10 meeting at Lemon Bay Park in Englewood.

Greg will be talking about the “Florida Friendliness” of the garden that he and his wife, Susie, designed and created at their home in Venice. Greg learned about sustainable, environmentally-friendly development, construction, and business management practices, while serving on the Board of Directors of the Florida House Foundation. He is an active member of the Venice Area Chamber of Commerce and was General Chairman of the 20/20 Visions of Venice Task Force, a citizen-driven project developed to enhance the long-term quality of life and economic and environmental development of the greater Venice area.

He is past president of the Board of Directors of Venice Area Beautification Inc., know as “VABI,” and has been an active VABI board member for over two decades. He is currently the chairman of the VABI Urban Forest committee. Greg is honored to have received numerous awards for his business and community involvement, particularly Sarasota County’s award for water conservation. He was invited to speak in Tampa at the Environmental Education Foundation symposium, “Working for a Sustainable Future.”

Greg Vine Enterprises, Inc. has won the Merit Aurora Award for Energy Efficient Design presented by the Southeast Builders Conference and the Florida Home Builders Association.

Greg has been a private real estate investor for more than 40 years. Along the ongoing planning and maintenance of their beautiful garden, Greg and Susie own SunAcre Corporation, a licensed brokerage company.

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## **Report on FNPS Annual Retreat at Archbold Biological Station, February 9-11, 2018**

Since our Chapter Representative, Al Squires, had a previous commitment, he was unable to attend this annual FNPS retreat. John Holyland kindly agreed to sit in to represent our chapter. Actually he and Christine were our Chapter Reps prior to Al. So, here are a few notes from John's report to our last BOD meeting.

FNPS has 3,973 members. Also, there are 20,000 followers on Face Book, Twitter, You Tube, Linkedin and Instagram.

Volunteer hours reported by 28 chapters in 2016 totaled 33,967. For 2017, 23 chapters reported 28,709 hours. (Our chapter reported 3203 and 3448 volunteer hours for those 2 years, respectively.).

Strategic planning hopes to increase membership, revenue and conference attendance by 10% annually. A new membership application form has been designed to be given out with our membership brochures. New member applicants have the opportunity to give more than the minimum for each category. There was much discussion about how to retain members and encourage young people to join.

There is great emphasis on the use of social media and other technological advantages of the Internet to improve communication, record keeping, data sharing, collaboration and financial information among chapters and FNPS administration. We will be hearing more about Google Drive, Google Docs, Face Book accounts, Quick Book, Tech Soup, etc.

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**Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center and the  
Charlotte County Natural Resource Department will be conducting  
the following free guided walks and programs in  
April 2018**

Unless noted, all walks begin at **9:00 AM**. For directions or further information, call Cedar Point Environmental Park at [941-475-0769](tel:941-475-0769)

**Tuesday April 3**

Join **Kate Borduas** on a guided walk through

the 81-acre **Bill Coy/Buck Creek Preserve** in Englewood. The scrubby flatwoods and mangrove swamp border Buck Creek, which flows into Lemon Bay. Meet in the parking lot.

**Tuesday April 10** Join **Kate Borduas** on a guided walk through the old growth pine flatwoods and mangrove fringe of 125-acre **Oyster Creek/Ann Dever Regional Park** in Englewood. Meet at the San Casa entrance.

**Tuesday April 17** Join **Kate Borduas** on a guided walk through 308-acre **Tippecanoe Environmental Park**. This Charlotte County park includes habitats such as scrub, pine flatwoods, marsh and wetlands. Meet behind the Charlotte County Sports Park

**Wednesday April 18** Join **John Phillips** on a guided walk through **Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park**, a 487-acre Charlotte County property of mature pines, dry prairie, marsh wetlands and freshwater ponds. Its location adjoining state lands make it an important wildlife corridor. Meet at the parking lot on US 41 at **8:30 am**.

**All programs can be found at**  
[www.CHECflorida.org](http://www.CHECflorida.org)

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## **April Field Trip**

The Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society invites the public on a trail walk through the NORTH end of Myakka State Forest on East River Rd (off South River Rd) in North Port, Florida on April 28, 2018 from 9 am to 11 am.

Myakka State Forest is made up primarily of mesic flatwoods with a mixture of longleaf pine and slash pine overstory with a palmetto understory. Numerous depression marshes are scattered throughout the flatwoods, providing many opportunities for viewing wading birds and other wildlife. The forest includes approximately 2.5 miles of frontage on the Myakka River, which is designated as an Outstanding Florida Water and a Wild and Scenic River. The Myakkahatchee Creek flows through the forest for 1.5 miles and provides an additional water resource.

Myakka State Forest was purchased in 1995 as part of the Myakka Estuary Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) project. The Florida Forest Service manages the forest for multiple uses, including timber, outdoor recreation, wildlife, and ecological and hydrological restoration. Join us for a relaxing and informative morning as we search out wildflowers and signs of wildlife with Trail Guide, Al Squires.

**DIRECTIONS:** Walkers will meet at the NORTH end of the forest, ABOUT A MILE DOWN EAST RIVER RD, IN THE PARKING AREA ON THE RIGHT. Traveling south from Rt.41 or I 75, take N River Rd (which becomes S River Rd.) to E River Rd. Turn left onto E River Rd. We will meet you there in the parking area.

Traveling north from Pine St./S River Rd., turn right onto E River Rd. We will meet you there in the parking area.

The physical address for Myakka State Forest is 2000 S River Rd, North Port which is a different entrance than our meeting place. This may cause some confusion between you and your GPS. Directions are also available on the Mangrove Chapter website: mangrove.fnpschapter.org. For more information you may contact our Trail Guide, Al, at 941-769-3633 or email him at ahsquires1@comcast.net

We encourage Floridians and our winter visitors to learn more about the importance of Florida's native plants and communities by becoming a member of the Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society.

The Florida Native Plant Society promotes the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

Meetings, field trips and special events are free and open to the public

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## What's up in my Garden

by Lois Cantwell

Well, my second post-Irma project is mostly complete, just in time for the advent of spring and ready to mature a bit before heading north for the summer. I was able to repurpose a few plants that were left over from our last and recent season's plant sales, including pots of Christmas Berry, Elderberry, Elephant's Foot, Muhly and Fakahatchee grasses. A Saffron Plum, gleaned from one of our raffles, is comfortable in its new place. I purchased a Bay Cedar, Bahama Coffee, St. John's Wort and Quail Berry to fill out the mix.



There are a number of other plants in the newly created bed that had sprouted up on their own, mainly Oakleaf Fleabane, Wild Coffee, Bloodleaf, Scorpiontail, and even Mexican Milkweed. Some sprouts were selectively weeded out. Top-dressing with FloriMulch brought it all together. It's all one big experiment to see what will survive the summer rains and heat. Hard to believe that all of this filled the area previously occupied by one huge Southern Red Cedar. The verdict will be in come mid-October. I'm sure of one thing. Even though a lot of weeding was done, and I threw down a modicum of mulch, this disturbed area will produce a lot of weeds from dormant seeds. A fun-filled fall awaits!

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