



## President's Message

by Lois Cantwell

In my sunny northern cottage garden, my annuals are barely making it, and the perennials are hanging in there, although some are starting to wilt and shrivel as our drought continues. Compared to our last (wetter) summer season, they are generally shorter, leaves more sparse, and with fewer flowers. They are being kept alive with judicious use of hoses and watering cans for the duration.

One successful experiment has been to establish a small shade garden on the edge of a treed area that provides dappled shade much of the day. I dug a channel along the edge of the driveway to direct run-off from the road (during snow melt and rain events) into this area in hopes of keeping it moist. A bonus was finding several native shade tolerant plants at a local nursery. Blue-eyed grass, turtle head and joe-pye weed are doing well in their new digs, along with a couple of accent ferns and other northern perennials. Three quarters of the yard has large pines, oaks and maples, so there is great potential for continuing to experiment with plants that do well in the understory. My wish list continues to grow.

Shade is easier to come by here in the north versus the Florida yard. Mine is adequately shady, as I worked at creating layers of small native trees and shrubs in order to provide a habitat of sorts for birds and other wildlife. Sadly, we are losing our southern trees on a daily basis as development displaces them in the name of progress. As stewards of the environment we must do what we can to promote the notion that shade is a valuable commodity in Florida or anywhere. Let this be our mission for the coming season.

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### Welcome New Members

Carol Hackett and Joan Morris, both from Venice.

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### The Mighty Oak

North America is home to about 90 species of native oaks, but many of them are declining because of clearing and the introduction of nonnative species and diseases. Native oak trees offer incredible benefits for wildlife, so it's more important than ever to plant those valuable hardwoods. If you have room for

only one shade tree in your yard, plant an oak (after choosing among natives to your region). These have evolved with the residing wildlife and will provide the best support. Just to support the butterflies, Birds & Blooms magazine listed the following Top Ten native oaks: Black, Bur, Chinkapin, Gambel, Live, Pin, Plateau Live, Southern red, White, and Willow.

### Oak Lore

\*The oak was crowned the national tree by Congress in 2004.

\*Acorns feed more than 100 wildlife species, including deer, squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, blue jays and wood ducks.

\*A single oak may produce thousands of acorns each year, but only one in 10,000 acorns develops into a tree.

\*Oaks grow 13 to 24 inches per year. Before you plant one, be sure the location is big enough for the tree to reach its maximum height and width.

Source: Birds & Blooms, extra!, May 2018

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## Trees and Termites

Recently David Wilson was asked to evaluate the use of trees near homes in regards to terminate infestations. He gives us some food for thought as we contemplate our own landscapes.

David concluded:

These trees are an asset to the area and provide shade and noise dampening in the neighborhood as well as a certain ambiance of classic old Florida. One of the goals in Charlotte County is to preserve and replant for tree Canopy effect and community beautification.

Termites will go to homes and businesses completely devoid of trees. (I've heard it said that If trees are removed and if there even are any termites on a given property, they will have nothing left to eat but the home!)

David G. Wilson III, member and co-founder Mangrove Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society

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## Plant a Native that really Pops!

If you like showy, intricate, ornate lavender to purple flowers, about 3 inches wide or more that attract butterflies, this plant is for you. And it really does "pop". Getting its name from the hollow fruits that begin ripening in May that pop loudly when crushed, hence "Maypop". We also know it as Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*). *Passiflora* is Latin for "passion flower" and relates to the crucifixion of Jesus. *Incarnata* means "flesh colored", alluding to the sometimes pinkish flowers. Another nickname for this plant is "Apricot Vine". The Cherokee gave



it the name "ochoee", translating to "apricot place", as the fruit's pulp is edible and has the flavor of apricots.

*P. incarnata* is a hardy herbaceous perennial vine, prostrate to climbing, preferring rich acid to basic soils, dry to moderately moist in zones 7-10. It should not be over-watered. Plant them where they can climb, or as a cover on an unattractive landscape element. It can become weedy and aggressive. Prune to keep within bounds.



Horticulturists sometimes cross it with other species to create attractive hybrids, such as *Passiflora* 'Incense', with large frilly, heavily perfumed blossoms. We had a similar hybrid in our Chapter demonstration garden several years ago that shared an arbor with coral honeysuckle. Unfortunately, neither of them did well after a couple of consecutive summers of inundation from the flooding rains. Occasionally we do find a remnant of this hybrid, but not very robust.

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## Save the Date

# Harvest for the Harbor 2018

Friday, November 9  
6:00 - 10:00 pm

Lashley Park Pavilions  
Punta Gorda, FL



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## Save the Date for Plant Native Day

9:30 A.M.- 1:00 P.M., **Annual "Plant Native Day"**: Cedar Point Environmental Park, Englewood.

**"Shade: Planting for it and Planting in it"**. Lectures, walks and plant sales.

