



Message from the President

by Lois Cantwell

We managed to cram 54 people into the Classroom at Lemon Bay Park for our November Membership Meeting, where Sharon Whitehill took us "Traveling Through Time with Trees". She combined ancient mythological beliefs with recent scientific information, speaking about the communication between trees, their interchange of information, and how that effects the environment, their progeny and us.



We are still waiting to hear about the status of the larger Meeting Room for January and beyond. Just so we have enough space for an anticipated large crowd for February's meeting (Wild Orchids of Florida, Roger Hammer) we are searching for an alternative place that would have an equivalent seating capacity. If you know of one, let us know. We do have a bit of a list forming. We will keep you posted if we actually have to change the venue. Hopefully not!

To those of you who helped us out at our booth or stopped by to show your support, we appreciate your being there for the Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival at Laishley Park in Punta Gorda, November 17th. Not only did the location of the event change, but other things were done differently this year. We were under the pavilions, so did not need to set up a tent. We opted not to sell plants, as we would have been relegated to a separate area out on the grass (and were asked to pay \$25 for the privilege of doing so). As it was, we had just enough volunteers to cover the booth. It was windy and chilly in the first few hours, but warmed up nicely as the day progressed. We didn't count how many visitors came by, but there seemed to be a fairly good turn-out for the event.

Laurel Schiller's Annual Holiday Newsletter arrived in my in-box just the other day. She thanked her customers on behalf of all the wildlife that feed, shelter and nest in the plants that they know, Florida Native Plants! She was promoting the tree (her favorite) that serves as an excellent habitat for birds: Southern Red Cedar. You can start out with a "table top" size for the Holiday Season, then plant it on your property (or gift it to someone for planting). Decorating with ornaments and lights for the season is a first option, or put out some seed ornaments for the birds. This is a better way to utilize a "holiday tree" than those Norfolk pines that are promoted by the industry, in my opinion.



There was also a "plant profile" on the Black Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* subspecies *Canadensis*). A wetland plant, this large shrub (to about 10 feet if not pruned) is great for birds and pollinators, and its flowers and berries can be used to make a variety of wonderful edible products like wines, jams, jellies and syrups. Its medicinal use includes cold and flu-fighting properties and it is rich in symbolism for many cultures.

The latest news is that she is just getting started on a new blog as a home base for the Florida Native Plant Nursery's articles, "how to's" and thoughts on native plant gardening. So go to <https://naturalfloridagardening.com/> where you can click on The Articles-or-Contact Us-or-The Nursery's Website. A currently posted article is their "take" on the University of Florida's nine Florida-Friendly Landscaping Principles, which emphasize sustainable landscape choices for Florida. As each principle is stated, Laurel provides a more detailed viewpoint from the native plant perspective. Very interesting!

Wildflowers in the Local News



Our area is blessed with a good number of people who are knowledgeable about the flora and fauna of the local environment, as well as excellent photographers. I always enjoy picking up the daily newspaper to find the latest articles and photos about what's happening in the wild. Sometimes that leads me to an interesting website.

I happened upon "Gorgeous Goldenrods" a few weeks ago in the "Our Town: Outdoor Living" section of the Englewood Sun. The author/photographer was Tom Zinneman, one of our Mangrove Chapter members. Besides providing information about the growth habits of these beautiful fall wildflowers, he also pointed out that they probably have nothing to do with your hay fever (blame it on the rag weed, not the goldenrods). This is a much maligned native plant that deserves more respect, so I hope that the readership has learned something.

At the end of his article, I learned that Tom has a website where you can see more of his photos at ZinnysWorld.com. Besides the Home Page, where you will see

a Green Metallic Bee sipping nectar on a Florida Paintbrush, you can click on Field Trips-Gallery-Birding-Links-References-About Me. I found our November field trip to Deer Prairie Creek Preserve with lots of nice photos of the wildflowers seen that day. In the Gallery, flowers are listed by color and further categorized. There are other pages containing images of all sorts of flora and fauna common to Florida.

Also, click on About Me and note that Tom has published his first book. If you are looking for a “coffee table” style book containing “Portraits of Florida Wildlife”, check out the information. You can reach Tom at tezinneman@gmail.com, according to the newspaper article.

Speakers for the 2018-2019 Season at Mangrove Chapter

January 8, 2019 “Land Conservation in SW Florida” - Lee Amos, Land Steward & Staff Biologist at Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast -

February 12, 2019 “Wild Orchids of Florida” - Roger Hammer, Professional naturalist and survivalist instructor for Discovery Channel’s reality television show *Naked and Afraid* -

March 12, 2019 To be announced

April 9, 2019 “The Wonderful, Wacky World of Lichens”- Kate Borduas, Environmental Activist, Florida Master Naturalist and Certified Interpretive Guide -

December and April meetings are reserved for a Pot Luck supper and Silent Auction. Meetings are held every second Tuesday, from October through April at Lemon Bay Park in Englewood, located at 570 Bay Park Blvd. Doors open at 6:15 pm. Speakers begin at 7 and finish at 8 pm. All meetings are free and open to the public.

Volunteer Opportunities

If anyone would like to adopt the old “Yard Share” Program that we used to do a few years ago, it would be nice to get out in small groups and visit other members’ yards and gardens. We even broadened that to include some community places of interest. The educational and social aspects of this are beneficial. We learn from each others experiences whether positive or negative; learn more about certain plants and how they grow in different conditions; are exposed to new ideas and “how to’s”, and so forth. This is a good opportunity for some of our newer members to lead. All it takes is someone to get a few names of people that would like to show their yards and take it from there.

Another thing that needs doing is to update the lists of nurseries that we hand out so that people can find where to purchase native plants. We have 2 lists: “Local Native Plant Nurseries” and “Local Nurseries that carry Native Plants”. The nurseries on the second list in particular have not been revisited in quite a few years to assess what variety of natives they have in

stock, whether they are still in business, or if there are new ones in the area. If we can accomplish this by mid-February, they can be reprinted for “Plant Native” Day and beyond. Please help us get this done!

What’s up in my garden?

by Lois Cantwell

Arriving at my house in Rotonda after a 5 and a half-month hiatus, the first thing I noticed was the tremendous abundance of weeds and weedy grass. Now in my eleventh year of leaving my southern yard to the whims of Ma Nature, she really poured it on while I was away. It’s the worst I have ever seen, both in terms of quantity and variety. I filled 39 yard waste bags and 5 30-gallon barrels with the weeds and trimmings, plus half a pick-up truck with old palm fronds in just 3 weeks. And I’m not done yet. In the course of all that yard clean-up, I decided it is time to downsize a bit, so I am looking at a few projects to make that happen...more on that later.

Right now I am taking a closer look at the “pathology” of weedy-ness. Like the old saying about “which came first, the chicken or the egg”? Where do these weeds come from? Obviously, they come from seeds, so where did the seeds come from? Were they lying dormant in the ground, blown in on the wind, or from that little perching bird that dropped a pant-load of them into my garden? Most likely it’s all of the above.

I’ve come to the conclusion that, when I see so many weeds in certain areas of my yard, there is a pattern here. They are sporting seed heads or have already re-seeded when I arrive in the fall so much of the seed load is already in the ground. Plus, I am causing more seeds to fall into the soil (and my landscape gravel areas) as I pull them up. It’s a vicious circle. Now they are in the ground, just waiting for the summer rains to cause them to germinate while I am gone for the duration. Low and behold, they are back again the next fall. The big question is how do you break that cycle? I am leaning toward the use of the chemical approach, which I dislike, but desperate times call for desperate measures. If anyone has a suggestion, please let me know. Better yet, if anyone who likes to weed in the months of June through September when it’s hot and sticky humid, I have a job for you!



As an illustration of the amount of growth that can take place in less than 6 months, I am including some photos of an area of my back yard that was replanted after I lost my red cedar to the wrath of Irma. One photo shows a lightly mulched area of both newly-planted natives and new sprouts of natives that had done their own self-seeding. I left them to fend for themselves thinking of it as an experiment to see who makes it and what dies out. The second photo speaks for itself. Note the huge tangle of weedy grass in the foreground. It gives new meaning to the phrase “it’s a jungle out there”. Once I purged the



unwanted overgrowth it was amazing to see how many survived. Gotta love it!

A message from Sharon McKenzie (Barrier Island Parks Society),

We need to move some wild coffee to a cooler spot on the trails, and remove Madagascar periwinkle and re-plant railroad vine at Gasparilla Island Lighthouse (range light) on Wednesday, December 12 at 9:00 am. Could you pass along this link to your members to see if anyone can help? It would also be helpful if they could bring tools/gloves as well. We will provide water and snacks (granola bars/nuts). The link to sign up is below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090c4badac28aaf58-planting>

Thanks so much,

Sharon

Sharon R. McKenzie, Executive Director

"Inspiring preservation through exploration and discovery"

Barrier Island Parks Society, Inc.
Port Boca Grande Lighthouse & Museum
Gasparilla Island Lighthouse
Amory Memorial Chapel
Friends of Cayo Costa
Friends of Stump Pass Beach

P.O. Box 637 ~ Boca Grande, FL 33921
(941) 964-0060

December CHEC Programs

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center and the Charlotte County Natural Resource Department will be conducting the following free programs in **December 2018**. All programs can be found **at**www.ChecFlorida.org

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

Sunday December 2 Join **Ruth Ward** 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.

Monday December 3 Join **Al Squires** on a guided walk

through **Tippecanoe II Mitigation Preserve** in Port Charlotte. This 150-acre preserve is home to several families of the threatened Florida scrub jay. Meet in the parking lot.

Monday December 3 Visit the CHEC Christmas & Holiday Tree at **Cedar Point Environmental Park** from December 5 through January 3. The tree is decorated by the Englewood Shell Club using decorations made entirely from shell. Visitor's Center is open **8:30 AM – 4:30 PM**, Monday through Friday.

Wednesday December 5 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.

Friday December 7 Join **Bob "Coop" Cooper** 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 December 11 Join **Nancy Clayton** on a birding walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Cape Haze. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd at **8:00 AM**.

Wednesday December 12 Join **Bob "Coop" Cooper** 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.

Wednesday December 12 Get wild & wet! Join **Diane Drewry** at **Cedar Point Park** on a **Seagrass Adventure Wading Trip** into Lemon Bay in search of marine organisms such as sea horse, crabs and juvenile fish. **Registration required.**

Thursday December 13 Join FL Master Naturalist **Kate Borduas** as she explores "New Zealand and Australia: Maori and Aborigine – Life at the Bottom of the World", at **Bayshore Live Oak Park** in Port Charlotte at **10 AM**. Reservations advised.

Thursday December 13 Join **Al Squires** on a guided walk through **Tippecanoe II Mitigation Preserve** in Port Charlotte. This 150-acre preserve is home to several families of the threatened Florida scrub jay. Meet in the parking lot.

Friday December 14 Join **Ruth Ward** on a guided walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Cape Haze. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd.

Friday December 14 Join **Cindy Christel** and **Phyllis Cady** 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 adjourning state lands make it an important wildlife corridor. Meet at the parking lot on US 41 at **8:30 am**.

Saturday December 15 Join **Dave Clayton** 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.

Monday December 17 Join **Jean Levitt** 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 December 19 Join **Kate Borduas** on a guided walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Cape Haze. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd.

Wednesday December 19 Join **Greg Brezicki** 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.

Friday December 21 Get wild & wet! Join **David Ellis at Cedar Point Park** on a **Seagrass Adventure Wading Trip** into Lemon Bay in search of marine organisms such as sea horse, crabs and juvenile fish. **Registration required.**

Sunday December 23 Join **Ruth Ward** on a guided walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Cape Haze. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd.

Wednesday December 26 Get wild & wet! Join a **CHEC Naturalist at Cedar Point Park** on a **Seagrass Adventure Wading Trip** into Lemon Bay in search of marine organisms such as sea horse, crabs and juvenile fish. **Registration required.**

Friday December 28 Join **Bob “Coop” Cooper** 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.

Saturday December 29 Join **Dave Clayton** on a guided walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Cape Haze. Meet in the parking lot at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd.

Save the Date for Plant Native Day
March 9, 2019 at 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

The Demonstration Garden at Cedar Point

The Demonstration Garden at Cedar Point Environmental Park, 2300 Placida Road, Englewood, FL 34224 is always in need of volunteers. If you have 2 free hours on Monday morning come and join our group. We meet from 8-10 in the summer and 9-11 in the winter to care for the plants and enjoy the company of fellow gardeners.

[Errata](#)

The correct names of the Garden Keepers are (left to right) Carolyn Gregsak, Bonnie Moore, Gail Finney, Ann Caron, Lois Cantwell, Marcia Gromada, Krystal Klein not pictured are Jane Wallace and Deborah Wiggins

