

May 2018



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## Message from the President

by Lois Cantwell

I don't know about you, but I look forward to reading my daily newspaper, especially on the days of the week that the columns written by our local "nature writers" appear. And we are seeing more and more of them as the seasons go by. They certainly fill a niche, and a very important one at that. Such a good way to bring nature into each household, right under their noses, for their eyes to behold the colorful photos of birds, flowers, turtles, insects and so much more.

Some of the more recent columns I have read, such as Bill Dunson's "Bike into the wild"; Jim Knoy's "Exploring the Flatwoods" and "Hiking the Eagle Point Trail"; Mary Lundeberg's "Migratory shorebirds from the Arctic"; Josh Olive's "Florida is Wild"; plus other regular features by Abbie Banks on the latest birding excursions, and Robin Jenkins' stories about the latest rehab efforts to return wounded animal life to the wild. What better way to get people interested in what's out there, learn about the flora and creatures of the woodlands and waters, and understand why it is so important to treasure these gifts as Florida continues growing and development runs rampant.

I particularly enjoyed the succinct way that Josh Olive put it at the end of his article. "I want to share my love and appreciation of the natural Florida with as many people as I can." "My wish is to see that some of it preserved as it once was, because the heart of Florida is not Orlando, or Tampa, or Miami. The heart of Florida is wild and may it always be so." So let us hang our palmetto fronds on that and do our best to teach our attendees about "the natives" and other aspects of nature, as we guide them on our field trips, teach them at our outreach events, and provide them with educational literature at environmental events. Press on regardless!

## Report from our last Membership Meeting

We had a nice crowd of 42 people at our April membership meeting, who heard Greg Vine talk about the use of sustainable landscaping. He showed video of how various "ecosystems" were established on his property, including ponds, waterfalls, and aquatic plants, as well as a small forest of trees with a variety of nature-friendly understory plants. As a result, a significant variety of wildlife either visits or resides on his property. He is currently the chairman of the VABI (Venice Area Beautification Inc.) Urban Forest committee and has won an award from Sarasota County for water conservation. He has been invited to

speaking in Tampa at the Environmental Education Foundation Symposium, “Working for a Sustainable Future”. What a concept! I do my best to provide habitat for wildlife on my standard sized lot, and hopefully, many of you try to do the same. There are too many “sterile” yards out there, perpetuated by the continued growth and development in our state. We need more people to stand up for the flora and fauna.

## Message from the Nominating Committee Chair, Barb Seibel

“There are now over eighty members in this chapter. We are no longer a small, struggling chapter that had to keep recycling officers out of necessity. We now have enough members to have an honest to goodness real election, with at least two people running for each office. Members who feel they are willing and able to fulfill the obligations of these offices, please submit your name and the office you want to run for to [leftyb3@comcast.net](mailto:leftyb3@comcast.net).”

## April was Water Conservation Month!

The month of April is historically one of the driest months of the year here in Florida. It is also the time of year when there is an uptick in water usage when people irrigate and plant their yards. The water management district encourages residents to follow a number of tips that will potentially save hundreds of gallons of water, and lower their utility bills. This April was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Water Conservation Month, and we should be conserving water throughout the whole year. Be mindful of your water use in everyday activities. Fix leaks in faucets, toilets and showerheads. Turn off the faucet while brushing teeth and take shorter showers. Only run your washing machines and dishwashers when full. Thaw frozen foods by other means than under running water. Scrape, but don't rinse dishes before loading in the dishwasher. Install high-efficiency bathroom fixtures. Check your irrigation system for leaks, and turn it off during rain events, only watering as needed. Use a hose with a shutoff

## Proposed Bylaws Changes

At our May meeting, prior to the Election of Officers, we will be calling a vote on the latest proposal for a Bylaws change. This was shared via blast email in April and read at our April general membership meeting. Here they are again for review:

### Article IV: Officers and Executive Committee

*Current:* Officers shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Immediate Past President.

**Proposed:** Officers shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, **Chapter Representative**, and Immediate Past President.

(Note: We wish to make the Chapter Representative an elected officer, instead of being appointed by the President.)

*Current:* All officers shall be elected by a plurality vote at the Annual Meeting (May) of MC members present and voting. Those elected shall serve for a one year term. They shall take office as soon as possible and shall serve until duly replaced. The offices of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be limited to three consecutive terms, in a given office.

**Proposed:** All officers shall be elected by a plurality vote at the Annual Meeting (May) of MC members present and voting. Those elected shall serve for a one year term. **They shall take office as soon as possible. The offices of President, Vice President and Secretary shall be limited to three consecutive terms, in a given office. To provide continuity, the Treasurer and Chapter Representative's terms shall not be limited.**

### Duties of Officers

The following description of the Chapter Representative's duties will be added to this section, which currently describes the individual duties of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer:

**Add: Chapter Representative. The Chapter Representative shall have the following duties:**  
**1. Represent the MC at all Council of Chapter Meetings. 2. Represent the MC at all other functions as assigned by the President. 3. Report on the Chapter Representative's meeting and attendance of functions to the BOD and General Membership.**

Looking ahead to our May membership meeting

nozzle when washing the car. Consider installing a rain barrel with a drip irrigation system for watering landscaping. You can probably come up with a whole lot more ideas about conserving water each and every month.

and Election of Officers, the following slate of officers is proposed. Nominations from the floor will be taken for open positions:

**President:** Lois Cantwell

**Vice President:** Alan Squires

**Secretary:** OPEN

**Treasurer:** Linda Wilson (Pending Approval of Proposed Bylaws changes)

**Chapter Representative:** Alan Squires

The following is a brief description of duties for the Secretary position:

**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).

## May General Membership Meeting Tuesday May 8

Your Annual Meeting and Election of Officers is to be held on **May 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM, Lemon Bay Park**. After the voting process, there will be a **covered dish supper followed by a silent auction**. Bring your own place setting and a dish to share. Bring a friend, or neighbor, a visitor or relatives. This adds to the festivities. Many of our members have "flown" north, so the more the merrier. Also, bring at least one (or more) items to enter into the silent auction. This is our final (and entertaining) fund raiser activity for this season, so bid high and bid often. There is always an interesting array of items to tempt you.

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## What's up in my garden?

by Lois Cantwell



Yellow Tops



Tickseed with Black eyed Susans  
in the Foreground



Starry Rosinweek

'Tis the season for yellow! More by accident than design, I ended up with a wildflower garden in full sun that is predominantly yellow. This is a circular plant bed that is the site of a former Canary Island Date Palm. Somehow I see some irony here. Canary...yellow... really? Anyhow, I took this empty spot near the driveway and filled it with a variety of wildflowers, beginning last spring. Little did I realize that, while

making my list of plants that I wanted, the majority of them would bloom in shades of yellow.

I had included things like scrub mint, liatris, blue salvia, twinflower, pineland heliotrope, and pennyroyal, which are anything but yellow. However, they are a bit overshadowed by a combination of tall, bold plants like cutleaf coneflower, sneezeweed, black-eyed Susan, stary rosinweed, tropical milkweeds, and yellowtops, as well as pencilflower and tickseed. Many of these are self-seeding, so the more the merrier.

There are little spots of blue, pink and white, and I will not be here to see the liatris adding its lavender hues, but right at the moment the overpowering color is y-e-l-l-o-w. Maybe I should consider spiderwort! That will add plenty of later winter, early spring blue. Now I just have to find a way to squeeze them into an already crowded plant bed, or...add them to parts of the outer border. Eureka! Isn't gardening with native plants fun?



Sneezeweed



Black eyed Susans with Pencil Flower

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## Report from the recent Earth Day Festival

Although the weather was a bit on the warm side, we had a super turn-out at Buchan Park for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Englewood Earth Day Festival, sponsored by BIPS and TOS. Our tent was in a perfect location adjacent to the entrance, so a steady stream of attendees came right past our potted plants, the electronic plant ID board and our usual tri-fold display and literature. We received about \$80 in donations, the plants going like hot-cakes, talked to at least a couple hundred people, and handed out so much literature we ran out of some of our items. It was a bit of a long day, having to be there to set up at 8:30 AM and the event didn't officially begin until 11 AM and lasted until 4 PM. There was a variety of food vendors to keep us fed and watered and lots of booths to visit and network with people. A big "thank you" to our members who came to help with preparations and spend the day talking about native plants and educating all that entered our booth. Fun stuff! Photo 5106: Plants and Display at our booth

Photo 5107: Sue & Carolyn prepare for selling plants

Photo 5109: Laura talks to a visitor

Photo 5110: Lots of action in our tent; Barb is representing CHEC

Photo 5111: Plants going fast; folks ID plants on the game board





Lots of action in our tent; Barb is representing CHEC

Sue and Carolyn prepare for selling plants

Plants and booth at the Earth Day Festival

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