



## President's Message

by Lois Cantwell

We will be back in the Classroom for our November 13th Membership Meeting at Lemon Bay Park. The larger Meeting Room is still closed for repairs. So, given a good turn-out, we should be nice and cozy while our guest speaker presents "Traveling Through Time with Trees".

I love trees! They are our friends, providing valuable shade on those hot and humid days; storing carbon; cooling our homes and yards; sheltering, housing, and feeding wildlife; creating beautiful forests and landscapes. My Florida license plate says "Trees are Cool" and my favorite gardening work shirt says "Got Shade?" (courtesy of the "People for Trees" organization). I like to wear it as a statement to the neighbors who have sterile looking treeless yards. My northern yard has more trees than I can enumerate, a mature mixture of oaks, pines, maples and cedars that attract all sorts of wildlife and provide lots of natural mulch to implement in my garden areas.

You will see lots of emphasis on providing shade in the landscape and growing plants in the understory of our yards and gardens this season. This will be the theme of our "Plant Native" Day event in March. There will be a series of newsletter articles in this and coming issues featuring trees and related topics. If any of you have something to share on the subject, please send your articles and photos to our editor for inclusion in the dialog.

### **Do No Harm to those Innocent Bystanders**

It is unfortunate that many of the trees planted in America's landscapes have shortened lifespans simply because of improper use of mulch. Layering it on too thickly and banking it up against the tree trunk are the worst things homeowners can do to their trees. Proper application of various organic mulches can be of great benefit to trees, holding moisture in the soil, acting as a weed barrier, reducing a tree's need to compete with weeds and grass for water and nutrients. Added benefits include stabilizing soil temperatures, increasing beneficial microbial activity below ground, keeping soil loose and friable, as well as fertilizing the tree. A properly laid ring of mulch around a tree will also save it from the out-of-control, string-trimmer toting lawn cowboy. How many of us have witnessed the damage inflicted by these machines cutting into the bark.

The central problem with the piled-higher-and-deeper approach is too much moisture. This hurts the trunk by contributing to rot, as well as acting as a conduit for pests and diseases. Tree roots grow right up into it, so that during hot, dry weather, those all-important feeder roots dry out and die. This can be deadly for a young tree. Arborists recommend adding no more than 3 to 3 1/2 inches of mulch over the planting area and leaving a blank space of 3 inches or more between the tree trunk and the mulch layer.

### **A Consequence of Using Herbicides**

Using a type of herbicide that is designed for use as a long-lasting, residual weed control, may be inadvertently killing your trees. The herbicides containing the chemical Imazapyr have the potential to damage and kill landscape trees and shrubs. Ortho Ground Clear is a combination of Imazapyr and glyphosate. The label recommends its use for weed control on driveways and

patios. Imazapyr can travel with water to any plant roots that may grow under or around treated areas. If you use a landscape service, get a list of the products they use along with the active ingredients.

Roundup, once a proprietary brand name used by Monsanto to sell the herbicide glyphosate, is now used to market a variety of lawn and garden products sold by Scotts Miracle Gro and that can be confusing. Be sure to read the labels carefully for use and content before buying or using any of these products. It is also noteworthy to mention that in 2015 the World Health Organization found that glyphosate is a probable human carcinogen, so consumer beware!

[Click here to Visit our Website](#)

## Mangrove Chapter FNPS Holds Open Forum

The Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society presented its first meeting of the season on October 9 at Lemon Bay Park in Englewood. More than two-dozen guests were in attendance at the Open Forum, a framework for an interactive, question/discussion session, between the audience and 4-person panel, concerning gardening with native plants in this area of SW Florida. Several first-time attendees were present and we look forward to seeing them throughout the coming season.

The panel consisted of four members of the Mangrove Chapter: Bonnie Moore, Linda Wilson, Al Squires, and Gail Finney. Several questions, submitted prior to the meeting, brought the audience and panel into the full spirit of discussion and debate. Some of the most enthusiastic debate revolved around planting non-native plants with native plants, soil composition, and soil amendments.

Meeting adjournment at eight o'clock seemed to arrive too soon, and many guests lingered to share their comments. Members are looking forward to the Open Forum becoming an annual tradition, starting off each new season at the October meetings.



Panel members give their attention to Gail Finney as she responds to a question from the audience about the Native Plant Demonstration Garden at Cedar Point Environmental Park in Englewood. L-R: Bonnie Moore, Linda Wilson, Al Squires, Gail Finney

## Speakers for the 2018-2019 Season at Mangrove Chapter

**November 13, 2018** - Sharon Whitehill, Retired Professor of English from Grand Valley State University of Michigan, Author, and Poet -

“Traveling Though Time with Trees”

**January 8, 2019** - Lee Amos, Land Steward & Staff Biologist at Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast -

“Land Conservation in SW Florida”

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

**March 12, 2019** - Pete Widin, Landscape Architect, Creator of Edible, Native Landscapes -

"Edible Plants in the Neighborhood Landscape", a webinar

**April 9, 2019** - Kate Borduas, Environmental Activist, Florida Master Naturalist and Certified Interpretive Guide -

"The Wonderful, Wacky World of Lichens"

**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.

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## FNPS Mangrove Chapter November 24, 2018 Field Trip

The Saturday after Thanksgiving is the perfect time to take a walk through one of Charlotte County's loveliest preserves. On Saturday, the 24th of November, Trail Guide Al Squires, will lead a walk through a section of Alligator Preserve in Punta Gorda. The Preserve is located at the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC), 10941 Burnt Store Rd in Punta Gorda 33955.

The Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center ("CHEC"), a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, is dedicated to raising public awareness of the valuable natural and cultural resources in the greater Charlotte Harbor area by providing environmental education, recreation, research, and management of conservation lands.

In 1983, Charles E. Caniff envisioned and worked toward creating a center in Charlotte County, where children and adults could come to experience and learn about the natural Florida environment. Thanks to Mr. Caniff's hard work and dedication, and the support of Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center's sponsors, the Alligator Creek and Cedar Point Centers were established and now provide over 20 different educational programs. They manage 8 environmentally sensitive lands, and provide recreational opportunities to the community and more than 8 miles of hiking trails. Alligator Creek Preserve was established in 1987, adjacent to the 30,000+ acre Charlotte Harbor State Park Preserve, and includes four miles of nature trails.

Walkers will meet at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 24. For more information about the post-Thanksgiving walk, you may contact Trail Guide, Al Squires at 941-769-3633 or email him at [ahsquires1@comcast.net](mailto:ahsquires1@comcast.net)

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### Sharon Whitehill to Speak at FNPS Mangrove Chapter in Englewood

On November 13, 2018, the Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will welcome Sharon Whitehill, former Professor of English at Grand Valley State University of Michigan. Sharon's presentation

will be *Traveling Through Time with Trees*.

Combining ancient mythological beliefs with recent scientific information, Sharon talks about the communication between trees, their interchange of information, and how that affects the environment, their progeny, and us.

Sharon is an author and a poet. During her tenure at



Grand Valley, she published two scholarly biographies and has since published two memoirs and several poems. She has been led through this journey by her own deep and abiding personal connection with the natural world. Sharon lives in Port Charlotte, where she has been since her retirement in 2002. Her talk Tuesday evening is based on a lay sermon she presented at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Charlotte County. Mangrove Chapter meetings are held at Lemon Bay Park, 570 Bay Park Blvd. in Englewood, Florida with speakers beginning at 7:00 p.m. Doors open at 6 pm. The evening promises to be informative and inspiring with plenty of time for comments, questions, lots of good discussion, and snacks.



(photo of Mrs. Whitehill by Leslie Van Hall)

## The Garden Keepers

A group of people interested in native plants works each Monday morning maintaining a demonstration garden at Cedar Point Environmental Center. L. to R. Carolyn Gregsak, Bonnie Moore, Gail Finney, Ann Caren, Lois Cantwell, Marsha Gromeda and our newest gardener Kristy Klein.

We could always use more help. If you have a spare Monday morning think about spending some time with us. We will put you to work one day, one day a month, every Monday or anything in between that fits your schedule. We would love to have you.



## Exotic Trees May Be Pretty, But They're Bad News for Birds

Gardeners love to thumb through nursery catalogs and decide which new flowering trees, shrubs, and other ornamental plants they will add to their yard in the spring. In most cases, unless they are an invasive species that can escape into the wild, non-native trees and shrubs are considered colorful additions to the urban landscape. But a new study in the journal [\*Proceedings of the National Academy of Science\*](#) suggests there's a big downside. Planting too many non-native woody plants in a yard can drastically reduce insect populations and in turn impact the breeding success of insectivorous birds. Lead author Desirée Narango, a research associate at the Smithsonian's Migratory Bird Center and current visiting researcher at the City University of New York, says that ecologists have known from past studies that non-native



woody plants aren't great for insects.

"Non-native plants have different chemical compounds, so they might not be able to be eaten by certain leaf-eating insects. They also leaf out and flower at different times; they have a different phenology," she says. "We already knew they could impact insect diversity, the number of species using these plants, but we didn't know how that might impact the animals that rely on insects for food. A chickadee doesn't necessarily care what kind of insects are on a tree; it just cares if there's enough to eat and survive and reproduce."

Narango and her colleagues worked with an ongoing project called Neighborhood Nestwatch that has been running in the Washington, D.C., area since 2000. The team placed 159 nest boxes in yards around D.C., then monitored the success of Carolina chickadee pairs that moved in over the next three years. They also assessed the biomass percentage of native and non-native trees in a 50-meter radius from the boxes, which is roughly the size of a chickadee territory, and sampled the trees to assess the quantity of insects and caterpillars on native and non-native trees.

What they found is that landscaping matters. When the percentage of non-native trees exceeded about 30 percent of the biomass, the breeding success of chickadees plummeted below replacement levels, meaning that over time yards with lots of exotic trees were population sinks, reducing the number of chickadees. The only reason Carolina chickadees still bounce around such suburban yards is because birds produced in more successful neighborhoods or parks recolonize the non-native landscapes.

The finding was not too surprising for Narango, who, along with coauthor and well-known conservationist and entomologist Douglas Tallamy, published a paper last year in the journal [Biological Conservation](#) showing just how much more productive native trees were compared to non-natives. The chickadees, though they are omnivores eating any bug, seed, or berry they can find, rely on energy-packed caterpillars to feed their chicks in the spring, as do many other bird species—even primary seed eaters. In that study, the team found 20 or more caterpillar species clinging to native species like oaks, cherries, and maples. Related non-native species had a less diverse collection of bugs, and some introduced species had just one species or none. In fact, [according to Tallamy](#), native oak trees can support at least 534 species of moths and butterflies alone while cherries, willows, and birch trees support over 400 each.

The importance of planting natives is magnified by the fact that over 80 percent of land in the U.S. is in private hands. "These novel, artificial suburban landscapes are found across the country," Narango says in a statement. "But a ginkgo that you plant in D.C. and a ginkgo that you plant in L.A. are doing the same thing for bird conservation—nothing."

The study isn't chickadee-specific either. Because the little birds are one of the few that will breed in nest boxes, they are used as a stand-in for all the species that rely on insects, like warblers and vireos. "Chickadees are a good proxy for insectivorous birds," Narango says. "Migratory species may not be breeding in your yard, but they are moving through and using these yards as habitat."

Other recent research shows the bugs—and in turn the larger species that rely on them—need our help. A study looking at insect populations in nature reserves in agricultural areas across Germany indicate that insect abundance has dropped by [a staggering 75 percent](#) in the last 30 years. [Another study released earlier this month](#) shows that insect biomass in Puerto Rico's Luquillo rainforest has also crashed in the last 40 years, falling by a similar amount, likely caused by climate change. The study found that the loss of insects led to a more than 50 percent reduction in anole lizards in the forest and harmed bird species like the Puerto Rican tody, which has diminished by 90 percent in the same time period.

In urban and suburban areas, protecting wildlife that relies on insects means choosing and planting the right tree. The gardening industry, which is in a constant search for new exotic species and varieties of trees to sell, has made it more tempting for homeowners to plant a unique specimen rather than a traditional hickory or cherry tree. Still, U.S. homeowners and landowners are pretty fond of native trees. Native oaks, maples, dogwoods, redbuds, basswood, and others are still popular choices. But as diseases like oak wilt and pests like the emerald ash borer decimate native tree populations, cities and homeowners are opting for non-native trees with fewer diseases or predators.

Narango says once homeowners know the potential impacts of the trees they plant, they're usually supportive and begin to see their yard as an important part of the ecosystem.

"A lot of these homeowners, when they think about backyard birds, think about cardinals and robins and chickadees," she says. "But for a short period during the year we have this tremendous influx of birds that are moving north to the boreal forest or south to Central

and South America. They may only be in your yard for three to seven days throughout the year, but they could potentially be the most important days of their life, because we know they use these urban areas extensively for habitat during migration. By providing habitat for chickadees, you're providing habitat for birds you may not even know about."

[https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/exotic-trees-may-be-pretty-they-re-bad-news-for-birds?utm\\_source=greenlife&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=newsletter](https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/exotic-trees-may-be-pretty-they-re-bad-news-for-birds?utm_source=greenlife&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter)

This Sandhill Crane was photographed along Laurel St in Venice. S/he and a partner had courageously stopped traffic as they delicately stepped across the four lanes of E Venice Ave.

Photo by CA Gregsak



## Ecologists suggest it is time to rethink the modern lawn

<https://phys.org/news/2018-10-ecologists-rethink-modern-lawn.html>

A pair of urban ecologists, one from Australia, the other Sweden, suggests in a Perspective piece published in the journal *Science* that it might be time to rethink the idea of the modern lawn. In their paper, Maria Ignatieva and Marcus Hedblom note that the natural benefits of green lawns are far outweighed by negative environmental consequences, and because of that, new forms of groundcover need to be explored. The expanse of cut green grass that surrounds many houses and serves as a draw to parks and other outdoor places is not as green as it might look. The modern lawn requires not only a lot of water, but fertilizer. It also requires mowing, in most cases using gas-powered machines that spew carbon monoxide and other toxins into the air. Ignatieva and Hedblom note that it is true that lawns offer some positive benefits such as pulling carbon dioxide out of the air, but the negative aspects of [lawn care](#) far outweigh their benefits. They note that globally, lawns currently occupy land space equivalent to England and Spain combined. Lawns also currently require an enormous amount of water—in arid regions, lawns account for 75 percent of water consumption. They also note that weed killers and fertilizers wind up in the water table. And artificial turf, they note, is not a likely solution. It doesn't contribute to carbon sequestering, causes problems with water runoff, and might be poisoning local water tables. Because of the obvious drawbacks, the researchers suggest that it is time for the world to rethink the idea of a [lawn](#). They note that some communities have already begun to do so by allowing natural meadows in place of [lawns](#). Such meadows, they note, can be made aesthetically pleasing by using grasses suited for the purpose. They also note that in some places, such as sections of Berlin, landscape has been allowed to grow wild. More realistically, they suggest research into plant types might result in the development of naturally short grasses that do not need much [water](#) to survive. In the end, they suggest that perhaps a combination of efforts might work. But for that to happen, people need to start reframing the mindset of modern groundcover.

Read more at: <https://phys.org/news/2018-10-ecologists-rethink-modern-lawn.html#jCp>



# Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center and the Charlotte County Natural Resource Department will be conducting the following free programs in November 2018.

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

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

**Saturday November 3** Join **Carolyn Gregsak** 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 November 7** 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

**Thursday November 8** Explore “**The Florida Scrub Jay in Peril: Learn what YOU can do about it**” with **Kate Borduas** at **10 AM** at **Bayshore Live Oak Park** in Port Charlotte. The Florida Scrub Jay - Florida’s only endemic bird - is in real danger of extinction. Learn what YOU can do to help save what the Cornell Lab of Ornithology has called a “Species of the Century.” **Reservations advised.**

**Friday November 9** Join **John Phillips** 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.

**Saturday November 10** Join **Denise Hart** 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.

**Sunday November 11** Join **Greg Brezicki** on a guided walk through the old growth pine flatwoods and mangrove fringe of 125-acre **Oyster Creek/Ann & Chuck Dever Regional Park** in Englewood. Meet at the San Casa entrance.

**Monday November 12** 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.

**Tuesday November 13** 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**.

**Thursday November 15** Learn how Southwest Florida is currently experiencing Climate Change with **James (Jim) Beever, Planner IV for the SW Florida Regional Planning Council** at **10 AM** at **Bayshore Live Oak Park** in Port Charlotte. More severe tropical storms and hurricanes, significant losses of mature mangrove forest, water quality degradation, and increased harmful algae blooms have already damaged communities. Hear about Jim’s work in climate change planning. **Reservations advised.**

**Monday November 19** Join **Jean Leavitt** 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.

**Tuesday November 20** Join **Al Squires** 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 November 21** Join **Kate Borduas** on a guided walk through the old growth pine flatwoods and mangrove fringe of 125-acre **Oyster Creek/Ann & Chuck Dever Regional Park** in Englewood. Meet at the San Casa entrance.

**Friday November 23** Get wild & wet! Join **Eileen Gerle** 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 November 23** Join **John Phillips** 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.

**Saturday November 24** 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.

**Wednesday November 28** Join **Carolyn Gregsak** 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.

**Thursday November 29** Open your eyes to **“Lichens: Masters of Symbiosis”** with **Kate Borduas** at **10 AM** at **Bayshore Live Oak Park** in Port Charlotte. Lichens are all around us but might as well be invisible for all the attention they are given. Learn to love these intriguing organisms. **Reservations advised.**

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**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.

### Plants Available

If your garden needs a bit of sprucing up - come and see us. A variety of member grown plants are available for a donation. You can find necklace pod, shiny leaf coffee, elephant's foot, lyre-leaf sage, tropical or scarlet sage, spiderwort and others. The plants are available Monday from 9-11 am.

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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.

Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society | Phone:941-769-3633  
Email: [MangroveFNPS@comcast.net](mailto:MangroveFNPS@comcast.net) | Website: <http://mangrove.fnpschapters.org/>