



Florida Native Plant Society

MANGROVE CHAPTER

Report from Your Past President:

by Lois Cantwell

At our March Membership Meeting, we heard from Alice White of “People for Trees”. Her presentation, “The Good, the Bad & the Ugly” was not only informative, but quite entertaining. We had 31 attendees who learned about the benefits of planting trees: how, by creating shade, they can lower air temperatures by as much as 15 degrees; contribute to A/C cost reductions; that pine trees produce more oxygen than any other tree in Florida (who knew?); a mature tree can provide oxygen for four people for a year; pine trees provide homes to over 11 species of birds!

The message is “Be sure to choose trees that are native”! They are drought tolerant and provide the best resistance to strong winds, and most importantly, they belong here! Some great trees to plant include: Sweetgum, Elm, Sycamore, Live Oak and Laurel Oak. Other good tree choices include Longleaf Pine, Slash Pine, Bald Cypress, and Southern Red Cedar. Alice also mentioned some of the “bad” trees: Jacaranda (brittle), Norfolk Pine (big trunk, little canopy), and the VERY Bad: Brazilian Pepper, Melaluca, Australian Pine, Chinaberry, China Tallow and Carrotwood. In the “Ugly” department, Alice showed numerous photos of trees and shrubs that had been way too radically pruned to the point they were more of an eyesore. For more information on this organization that promotes the value and importance of maintaining and protecting a healthy native tree canopy: www.peoplefortrees.com. Got Shade? Plant some!

Commentary about the Future of Mangrove Chapter (repeated from the March newsletter)

We are still in need of a slate of officers for the 2020-2021 season moving forward. So, why is it that no one is coming forward to fill these offices? Do you think your past president is going to cave and step back into the President’s position? Are you intimidated by the “responsibility” associated with being on the board? Do you think that you have to do the same things in the same way they have been done over the last 10 years? Do you think the current bylaws are carved in stone? Do you think you have to know a lot about native plants?

Have you NOT renewed your membership in anticipation of our chapter dissolving? Remember that 26% of your dues to FNPS are returned to the chapter, adding about \$850 or more to our treasury annually. Besides that,

FNPS is a worthy cause. They preserve natural lands from development, conserve rare native plant species and launch major rescue and restoration projects. Have you thought about the \$5,000 donation we received from Denny Girard's estate? Do you want that to be "donated" to some other non-profit environmental group (if our chapter dissolves) instead of funding our Native Landscape Grant Program?

Let's think positive for a moment. Consider forming a "focus group" that will examine all of the inventive ways that point to a solution to this dilemma. Consider BOD positions "shared" with others, such as "first and second" President, Vice president, Secretary, Treasurer. Example, we have a "snow bird" member who is willing to be Secretary during the months that they are here if someone else will fill in during the summer months. You don't have to be a full-time resident to be an officer. Become a "shadow" to one of the current officers, and waste no time in getting the basic information that you need to take over that position at the end of this season. Time is of the essence.

Your Immediate Past President is continuing on the BOD in an ADVISORY capacity. She is going back to Michigan in May. Your current VP/Chapter Representative is moving away in May. Your Secretary and Treasurer will remain in the area, expecting to be travelling and enjoying life after retiring from their day jobs, but could be consulted for advice. BOD meetings could even be "suspended" for the summer and we can regroup in the fall. We do have 9 Committee Chairs who also serve on the BOD. How about moving our Annual Membership Meeting to January when the majority of members are available and elect officers then? Do you have any other ideas? We have lots of potential flexibility here. Think about it and give us some feedback soon. Otherwise, you are missing an opportunity to create a new path for Mangrove Chapter.

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COVID 19 Response

We have had messages from FNPS regarding suspension of all Chapter activities for the duration of the ongoing virus threat.

All Field trips and membership meetings for April and May are canceled.

The State Conference is also postponed indefinitely.

All Cedar Point Environmental Park trips (walks, kayak, and wading trips) are canceled. The building is also closed.

Continue social distancing and stay safe, healthy and well. We will see you in the fall.



In a nutshell, we just “winged it” and had one of the nicest annual outreach events in my recollection. Amid the publicity and forthcoming guidelines regarding the Covid19 situation, cancellations by participants, and a lot of reinventing and juggling, we managed to pull it off. We made it in the shade: Laurel Schiller gave 3, 30-minute sessions out under the pines at the back of the

garden (her handouts were great!); our member-grown plant sale was at the picnic table behind the second arbor; Joni from PRBS showed up with her monarch display, so she parked at a small table under the first arbor.

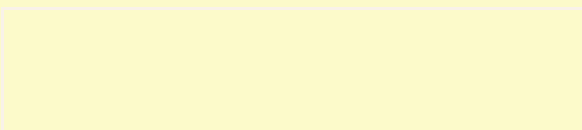
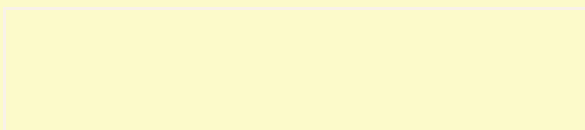
We grouped our plants all around the garden, inside the beds to make room for foot traffic. We placed about 20 folding chairs so that people could take turns enjoying the talks about gardening for butterflies, had a tent with our Mangrove Chapter display out by the side of the center, with the nursery plants being displayed on the sidewalk. There was also a water station, with hand sanitizer available, as well as disposable gloves.

Meanwhile, we offered 2, 45-minute “native plant discovery” walks, which helped to separate folks from the main event.

We must have had an estimated 75 people in attendance, and not all at once, although there was a big rush of people buying plants at the very beginning, which then tapered off.



At least a total of 50 people sat (or stood) during the 3 talks. The nursery plants went like hot cakes and our inventory of small pots was remarkably diminished by the end of the event, which had been shortened by 1 hour. It was gratifying to see so many people eager to buy native plants for their yards, especially to serve the butterflies and other pollinators. Some folks even brought carts!





Mangrove Chapter did display/literature under tent



Joni from PRBS with Monarch display

We are on Facebook!!!

Log into your Facebook account. To find our posts:

Type in: Mangrove Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society in the search box and press enter. You will see our page. If you have not yet joined the group, clip on the "Join" button. You must join to be able to add comments and post pictures.

More About “Planting Native” for Pollinators



A lot of people were asking about how to acquire native milkweeds at our PND event in March. Many came to buy milkweed, but the folks who sell the non-native variety were not available. Many of the attendees specifically wanted the native variety and we answered many questions as to where it can be found and how to grow it. Acquiring it through the native nurseries is one thing, maintaining it in the landscape is the challenge.

Conversation ultimately centered on the display that we have in the Demonstration Garden. There we have the two Swamp Milkweed varieties, one pink and one white, growing in separate set-ups of a pot within a pot, in order to keep the soil continuously moist. Just by luck, the White Swamp Milkweed (*Asclepias perennis*) was blooming for the first time! It was nice to be able to show it off. Having revisited it recently, it is continuing to produce additional blooms. The Pink or Rose Milkweed (*A. incarnata*) is currently doing quite well in the second pot. Its natural bloom time is a bit later in the season than the white one. It has a slight issue with aphids at the moment, which can be remedied.

The name *perennis* means “perennial”. This species prefers shady, wet habitats and requires moist soil for successful cultivation. Stems root wherever they touch the ground, forming colonies in nature. The name *incarnata* means “flesh colored” and alludes to the pink flower color. It is also a “swamp” milkweed and shares the same habitat as the white, but has larger, pink flowers. The flowers emit a pleasant fragrance reminiscent of cinnamon. Pollination relies on a visiting

insect slipping on the horn so that one of its legs enters a slit between the nectar cups. Pollen stuck to its legs may be transferred to another flower in the same manner. A milkweed flower essence is used in India to incarnate the soul and help strengthen self-esteem. (Information taken from “Complete Guide to Florida Wildflowers”, Roger L. Hammer).



Example of Pink Swamp Milkweed



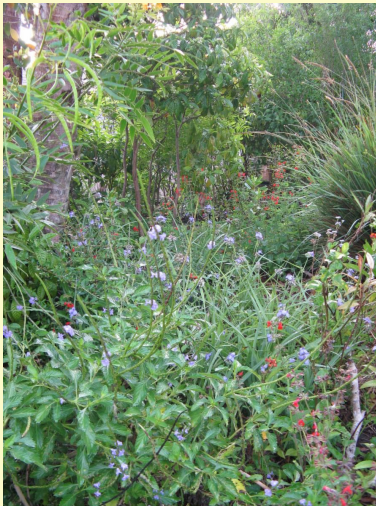
Pot within a pot in demonstration garden



Attendee looking at potted milkweed

What's Up in My Garden

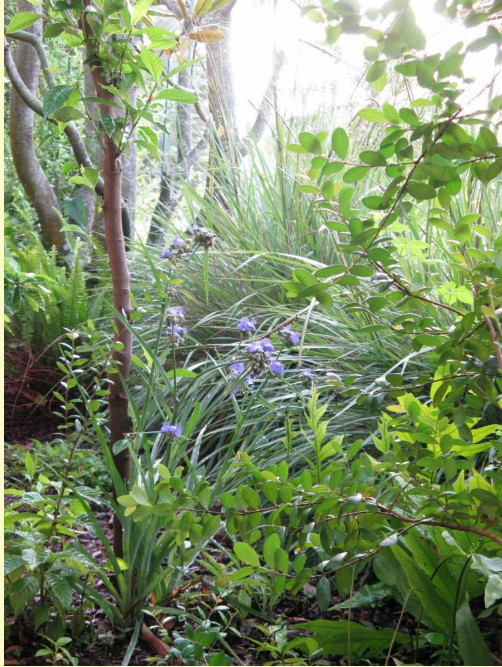
Lois Cantwell



The blues have it! The harbingers of spring that have blue (or lavender-blue) flowers are doing their thing. Those hues add some “pop” to the shady



areas around the yard. Wild Petunias peek out beneath the Paradise Tree and its understory of Simpson Stopper. They share a bed with Rouge Plant, so specks of red from the berries complete the picture. Somehow, the petunias have also migrated all the way to the back yard beds, as well as creeping into the lawn, but that’s okay, as they are most welcome anywhere.



Spiderwort among shrubs/grasses on south side of house



Wildflower berm, outside view with pathway in background



: Back Yard garden, front view, west side of house



Wildflower berm on north border, inside view

The Spiderworts and Blue Mistflowers occupy many nooks and crannies in other parts of the yard, contributing to the pallet of yellows and reds provided by Coreopsis, Black-eyed Susan, Starry Rosinweed, Tropical Sage, Privet Cassia, and Necklace Pod. Blue-eyed Grass occupies a special place in a damp site, and Blue Porterweed rounds out the group. The butterflies, mostly Monarchs, Longwings and Sulphurs, add to the phantasmagoria of color in the yard. Non-native Milkweed adds its own orange-red hues as well. I am selectively cutting them back after the last crop of Monarch caterpillars went through their cycle. Three of them actually pupated on the lip of an old litter box that I use for various gardening chores...had to leave the box in place for the duration so as not to disrupt the process. All three emerged as healthy adults! I saw one of them the next morning out in the grass having been discovered by a male ready to mate. Those guys love the fresh females!



Emerging monarch on edge of litterbox, one of 3 that successfully pupated on the same box

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