



A Welcome New Year

January 2021

Report from Your President:

by Lois Cantwell

Here we are rounding the turn into a (hopefully) more promising New Year. While it still seems strange to not have in-person gatherings, we continue to look for ways to get our members together and remain engaged in Native Plant Society activities. I thank Bill and Kate for their efforts to get us outdoors and learning more about the relationships between the various plant communities and their environmental habitats. Learning the names of the native plants and where to expect to find them is just the tip of the iceberg. Understanding the how's and why's of their existence gives us the bigger picture and some of those "aha" moments.

I also want to thank Dave and Barb for keeping us informed and up-to-date by way of the Mangrove Chapter website, <https://mangrove.fnpschapters.org>, while Anne maintains our Facebook. These are the best places to stay in tune with our activities and available virtual learning opportunities, so please visit our website often. I will continue to provide information to our membership via "blast" emails between newsletters. Gail does a great job of combining our articles, photos and other items into an informative and easily read news format. I hope that the majority of our members are reading them! Dave has also subscribed to Zoom, which enabled your Board of Directors to "meet" via that venue on a monthly basis to continue the business of your chapter. At this juncture, we are reluctant to extend that to our 100-plus members, which could be too cumbersome. Besides, many of us are very likely all Zoomed out.

Please Welcome New Members: Jayne Hayes and Gayle Plaia, both from Punta Gorda.

Reminder: If you have not already done so, please fill out the **Survey Monkey** that was sent out to the membership on December 22nd. We want your feedback on meeting attendance, meeting location, our currently offered events and services, as well as any comments you might have, so that we can better serve you. If you could **take the Survey by January 15th**, we can analyze the data and share the findings. If you have NOT received the Survey, please **Contact Us**.

Election of Officers for Mangrove Chapter, 2021: According to our newly-

revised Bylaws (which can be accessed on our website) we will hold our **Annual Election** during the month of January, instead of May. This gives the officers a full calendar year to preside over Chapter business. Your slate of officers for 2021 is as follows: **President:** Lois Cantwell; **Secretary:** Marianne Owen; **Treasurer:** Linda Wilson. In the absence of an “in-person” meeting, you may vote for this slate via the **Contact Us** button on our website, or simply email us by **January 15th** at **MangroveFNPS60@gmail.com**

Please note that the **Vice President** is now an appointed/volunteer position, which remains unfilled at this time. Anyone interested in joining the Board as VP may apply, so **Contact Us** please. While on our website, please find the page where our current **Officers and Committee Chairs** are listed to become familiar with who’s who. We will be in need of someone to handle **Publicity** as we move forward, so please volunteer to help out with that.

[Click here to Visit our Website](#)

Field Trip Dates for January-April: Mark your calendars to plan ahead, as we move into the coming year. We plan to meet on Wednesday mornings at 9 AM, twice per month. For starters, we will walk at **Deer Prairie Creek January 13th**. Field trip locations will be announced as we go along. The proposed dates for the rest of the season are: **1/27, 2/10, 2/24, 3/10, 3/24, 4/7**. There may be other opportunities for other outings as time goes by, so we will keep you posted.

What's Up in Our Demonstration Garden

We have a new group of “garden keepers” this season. We have spent 4 Mondays in the month of December sprucing it up after a long hot summer without much attention. So far, we have Lois (Garden Chair), Laura S., Bob S., Martha S., Muffy M., and Melissa U. We have also had a bit of help from Tony and Dave of the Thursday work party, taking on some of the heavier work. It is certainly looking like more of a garden these days. We have pruned, limbed, weeded, tidied, and repositioned bird baths so far. The photos give an overview of the main section of the garden. It is much more open to sunlight after several trees were removed in the early summer. Remember that it is winter here, so the “barren” look is temporary.





We seem to be ready to start digging and potting some of the plants that are sprouting up in the wrong places. Looking ahead, we are considering building our plant inventory so that small scale “plant sales” may take place right there in the garden. Chances of having a “Plant Native” Day are pretty slim, so this could be an alternative that will help get “the natives” out into the general public. Perhaps a sort of “plant swap” among members could be arranged. (Don’t you miss those plant raffles we had at our monthly meetings?) Those of you who have “roots and shoots” in your yards and gardens that you would like to contribute, please drop them off on Mondays 9 to 11 AM while we are there working. And also feel free to joins us! We are wearing masks, social distancing and engage in friendly conversation as we work. Additional volunteers are always welcome!

Jack Lyons' Memorial

Myakka State Forest has completed their planting with funding from the Jack Lyons fund. It looks very nice! The beach sunflower is doing very well, and it looks like we included a coontie in the mix, which they placed in a corner by the flagpole. Mission accomplished!



We are on Facebook!!!
Look for: Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

Mangrove Chapter Field Trip Report

I arrived in Florida on December 3rd, so I missed a few field trips, led this season by

Bill Dunson (right) and Kate Borduas (below right). I had already missed 3 previous outings: Stump Pass Beach State Park, 10/28, “The Ecology of a Barrier Island”; Tippicanoe 1, 11/21, “Search for the Golden Leather Fern”; and Blind Pass/Middle Beach, 12/2, “Establishing a Plant List” (heard that was a very chilly day). On 12/16 we walked at Manasota Scrub Preserve, “A Tale of Two Wetlands”, and on 12/30 we studied “The Diverse Ecological Communities” at South Venice Lemon Bay Preserve.



You have probably picked up on the use of “themes” as we go about our twice-a-month approach to field trips. With two knowledgeable trail guides (plus a few other folks within and outside of our membership), we receive mini-lectures about plants, plant communities and their ecology, which enhances the field trip experience. Add the company of like-minded botanizers, lovely warm days (or not), and the joy of getting out for a walk in nature, it is most enjoyable.



Besides, we get to see each other, regardless of masks and social distancing. When we again see smiling faces and renewed opportunities to share hugs, life will be so good!

So, check those Field Trip Dates mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, and make plans to join us. You will receive an email reminder about a week ahead of each scheduled walk. If something spontaneous develops, you will be informed about that, too. To those of you who take photos, please share them! Pass them along via email to [**MangroveFNPS60@gmail.com**](mailto:MangroveFNPS60@gmail.com)

What's Up In My Garden

by Lois Cantwell

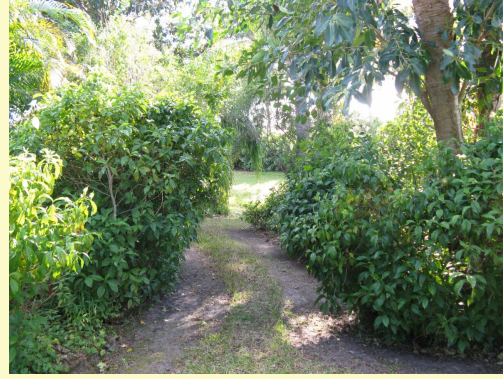
As always, there is quite a lot to do in my Florida yard when we return from the north in the fall. It was mid-April when we left and early December when we returned. So a 7-month hiatus gave the growth in the yard a couple of extra months in the heat and humidity to foster even more wild and crazy creeping, climbing and over-reaching. I've joked about plants on steroids in the past, but this was over the top. I'm talking the equivalent of 50 yard-waste bags in 3 weeks, plus there is a huge pile of tree trimmings waiting to be processed as of this writing. There are still plant beds to clean up and more trees and shrubs to trim.

The trees and shrubs in particular seemed to have taken a giant leap—you know how the sleep-creep-leap saying goes. Well, they bounded! My Wild Coffees, which I often refer to as “the plantation”, are now the coffee “forest”. There is a lot of thinning to do, and I'm taking no prisoners. Maybe I will rescue some of the smallest ones for future plant sales.

Once they get to a certain size, they fail the transplant challenge.



Wild Coffees in spring

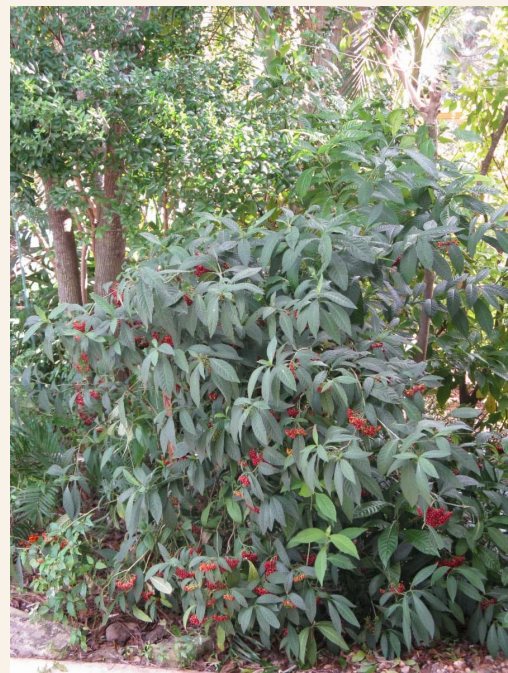


Wild Coffees in Fall

I had one plant in the yard that really came back with a vengeance. I thought I had “weeded” out all the sprouts last spring. I had also mulched heavily with tons of oak leaves swept from my neighbors’ driveway. The Bloodleaf, *Irsene diffusa* got to be 5 to 6 feet tall in some areas. One cluster of them overtook a large Privet Cassia nearly shading it out. In another section of the yard, riotous Bloodleaf comingled with equally tall Scorpion Tail, Painted Leaf, Tropical Sage, and Spanish Needle. I’m sure they were fabulous for the pollinators while at their peak, but in the going-to-seed stage, it was off with all of their heads.



Berries on Shiny Wild Coffee



Berries on Velvet Leaf Coffee

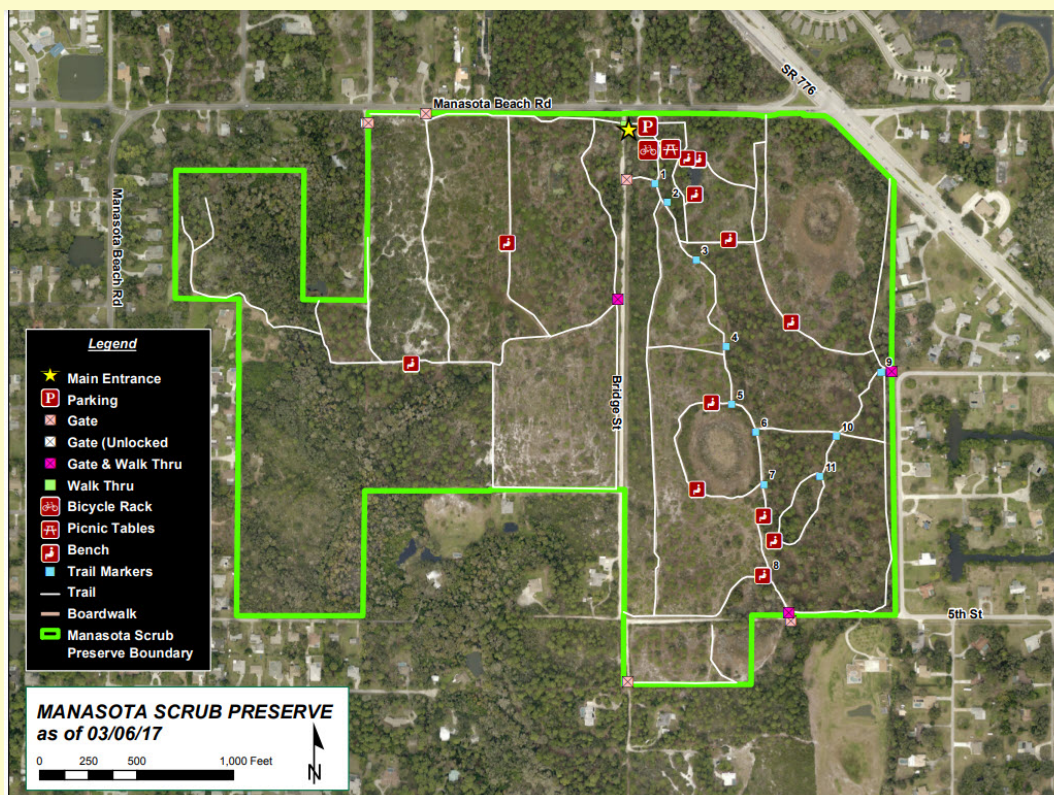
Gardening in Florida as a “snow bird” is a sort of two-edged sword. I planted my yard for the wildlife and the enjoyment of watching 13 years of maturation, producing bountiful berries and cover for a variety of birds and sources of nectar for the pollinators. But, when you aren’t around during the growing season, keeping up with it all can be a bit daunting. You just have to keep your garden tools sharp!

A Tale of Two Wetlands Manasota Scrub Preserve

article and photographs by Bill Dunson

The famous "Denny and Al" show took us almost every year on nature walks to the western side of Manasota Scrub Preserve which is indeed quite interesting, with pine flatwoods and scrub habitat. However, there is a very interesting and different natural story on the eastern trails. Although there are mesic pine flatwoods there, the most remarkable ecological demonstration is the differences in plants between one wetland degraded by ground water pumping for the Englewood Water District (wetland 1), and one much less impacted by such drying (wetland 2).

On the map you can follow the 1.5 mile loop we will walk starting from the parking area at 2695 Bridge St, Englewood, FL 34223. We will progress from trail numbers, 1, 2, left to wetland # 1, then to trail number 9, 10, 6, 7, around the loop circling wetland # 2 to trail number 5, then 4, 3, 2, 1. Meet in the parking lot just a few yards from Manasota Beach Rd at 9 am for a 2 hour hike.



Wetland # 1 is close to route 776 and not far from a well pumping field east of 776. Bioindicators such as inappropriate red maples growing in the center of the wetland and slash pines along the outer rim tell us that this wetland is drying up. It does still contain obligate wetland species such



Eastern Mesic Pine Flatwoods (above)



Wetland 1 impacted hydroperiod by pumping (above)



Red root seed head (above)



less impact drying - many buttonbush dragonlet male sunning itself on a cool day.



band winged dragonlet male

as redroot; the characteristic seed head is shown here as are the bright red roots. Another obligate wetland species is sandweed or marsh St John's wort, which is likely so unusually healthy due to absence of abnormal winter fires. It occupies a zone about 2/3rds of the way out to the rim of the wetland.



Manasota Scrub Preserve Wetland 1 showing healthy sandweed ... slash pines encroaching (Above)

Below: Red Root



Wetland # 2 is father away from the well field which may explain its better hydrology. It has an extensive growth of buttonbush, very few invading maples, and most of the small slash pines around the periphery are dead. I also found a nice dragonfly, a band winged



Pines dying along the edge lots, buttonbush
in center

Our walk around Manasota Scrub Preserve will reveal many interesting facts about plant bioindicators of wetland ecology and how they change with depletion of ground water.

CHEC Volunteer Opportunities

There are volunteer opportunities out there, especially in the outdoor environment, so plenty of ways that you can get outside, socialize to some extent and serve your chapter! See the link below for the CHEC Calendar.

Lois sent in this note about our Chapter and CHEC opportunities:

I spoke with Shelby Festa, Volunteer/Program Coordinator at the Alligator Creek location. She was inquiring as whether our Chapter would be leading any walks on any of the CHEC managed preserves, such as Oyster Creek, as we have in the past. I will keep in touch with her as we get into the season.

Shelby has inherited some additional responsibilities associated with Cedar Point Environmental Park, since the Resource Manager's position* is open again (Susan Converse has resigned) and the building is still closed for remodeling. She is gathering information on volunteers, so if you have been or are planning to be a CHEC Volunteer at that location, contact Shelby at 941-575-5435 or shelby@checflorida.org. She may be short of trail guides at the moment.

*This position will soon be posted on the CHEC Website, so anyone out there with background and qualifications should inquire.

She has also just found out that we have a history of doing monthly Plant Surveys there. If anyone among you has been continuing to do these, let me know. If those of you who have done them in the past would like to help, perhaps the best person to contact would be Barb Seibel. She has been the keeper of the data. If this is no longer a CHEC project, it can continue to be a Mangrove Chapter project.

I also updated Shelby on our Chapter's ongoing sponsorship of the Demonstration Garden at Cedar Point and that many of us in Mangrove Chapter have also been CHEC Volunteers. I will be looking to our membership to add people to our "garden keepers" list, as we have lost a few people for various reasons. Let me know if you are interested in participating. We meet on Monday mornings at 9 AM and work for just a couple of hours. As soon as we have identified a group, we can get started, although I will not be back until mid to late November. (Someone would need to keep track of who is working so that volunteer hours can be recorded until I return).

See the link below for the CHEC Calendar.

Lois

<http://www.checflorida.org/Calendar.html>

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center

Schedule of events

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center and the Charlotte County Natural Resource Department will be conducting the following free programs to the public in **January 2021**.

All programs can be found at www.ChecFlorida.org

Nature Walks

All walks begin at **9:00 AM**. On these casual walks with CHEC volunteers, you will search and learn about plants, animals, fungi, and more that live in Charlotte County preserves.

Prepare for each walk with plenty of water, insect repellent, sunscreen, and clothing that will protect you from insects and plants.

Advance registration is required for all walks and all participants are required to wear face masks. For more information or to register, call at **941-575-5435**.

Tuesday, January 5th Join CHEC 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. Phone 941-575-5435 to register or for information. **All participants are required to wear face masks during the program.**

Friday, January 7th Join CHEC 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. Please call 941-575-5435 to register or for more information. **All participants are required to wear face masks during the program.**

Tuesday, January 12th Join CHEC 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 adjoining state lands make it an important wildlife corridor. Meet at the parking lot on US 41. Please call 941-575-5435 to register or for more information. **All participants are required to wear face masks during the program.**

Friday, January 15th Join CHEC on a guided walk through the scrub and pine flatwoods of 217-acre **Amberjack Environmental Park** in Rotonda. Meet at the end of Gasparilla Pines Blvd. Please call 941-575-5435 to register or for more information. **All participants are required to wear face masks during the program.**

Tuesday, January 19th Join CHEC on a walk at **Bayshore Live Oak Park** along the shoreline of Charlotte Harbor to explore the various mangrove species found there. We will cover mangrove identification, general ecology including special adaptations that allow mangroves to thrive in salty environments, and why mangroves are important and protected in Florida. Call 941-575-5435 to register

or for more information. **All participants are required to wear face masks during the program.**

Thursday, January 21st Join CHEC 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. Please call 941-575-5435 to register or for more information. **All participants are required to wear face masks during the program.**

Friday, January 22nd Join CHEC 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. Please call 941-575-5435 to register or for more information. **All participants are required to wear face masks during the program.**

Tuesday, January 26th Join CHEC on a guided walk through the old-growth pine flatwoods and mangrove fringe of 125-acre **Ann Dever Regional Park** in Englewood. Meet at the San Casa entrance. Please call 941-575-5435 to register or for more information. **All participants are required to wear face masks during the program.**

Friday, January 29th Join CHEC 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 adjoining state lands make it an important wildlife corridor. Meet at the parking lot on US 41. Please call 941-575-5435 to register or for more information. **All participants are required to wear face masks during the program.**

Go to www.CHECflorida.org for a complete program calendar.

Mangrove Native Plant Society COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Meetings and Field Trips

For All Events:

- If you are not feeling well, please don't attend this gathering.
- Properly worn masks or face coverings are always required for participation.
- Participants must maintain appropriate 6' social distancing at any event.
- Please do not gather in groups.
- Use provided hand sanitizers as needed.
- Nearby restrooms are available for hand washing.

Additional Guidance for Indoor or Outdoor Meetings:

- Participants must maintain appropriate 6' social distancing inside and outside the meeting room, following the markings on the floor.
- Entrance/exit signs and arrows may be posted for directional traffic flow.
- Chairs are placed at least six feet apart.
- Surfaces of tables and chairs in use are sanitized before and after use.
- No food or beverages are served. Attendees may bring a personal beverage.
- Attendance may be limited, depending on state/county/city mandates.

Additional Guidance for Outdoor Walks and Activities:

Properly worn masks or face coverings are always required for participation.

Social distancing of 6' is emphasized for sitting, standing, and walking activities.

Surfaces of tables, chairs, and benches in use are sanitized before and after use.

Attendees are encouraged to bring their own chairs, beverages, packaged snacks, and hand sanitizer.

[Visit our website](#)
