



September 2021

Report from Your President:

by Lois Cantwell

Members and Friends:

I'm sure you know the old saying about "the light at the end of the tunnel". Well, the light that we thought was the waning of the pandemic a couple of months ago, was the "Covid-Delta Train" coming our way. So, just as we were hoping to re-start our in-person meetings this fall, that plan has been derailed for a while. Your Board of Directors will be going back to the drawing board to look at options to prevent our members from getting too bored.

So, bear with us for a while. If any among you have knowledge of good virtual educational programs that may be available, please share that information with us. You can send a message by visiting our Website, clicking on "Contact Us". There is a link to our website in this newsletter that you can use to reach us anytime. We would like to hear from you!

Meanwhile, similar to last season, there will be the option of providing 2 or 3 field trips per month that we can at least get out into nature and learn more about native plants, their habitats, and the ecosystems in which they reside. Stay tuned for details.

Happy Trails!

Email us at mangrovechapter@fnps.org.

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

Adventures of the Natives
Episode 2

by Linda Manley

Cast:

Red Cedar, Nutty Thistle, Rusty Lyonia

Laurel Oak, Starry Rosinweed, Summer Mimosa

Rusty was deep in thought at the Native Roots Bar. Turning to look at Red and Nutty, he said, "I've become pretty interested in gardening since I retired. I've been to Cedar Point a few times and the Mangrove Chapter demonstration garden looks like a pretty big job. I wonder if they could use some help there."

Red scoffed and replied, "Have you ever seen a garden that had too much help? I'm sure Mangrove could think of many things they'd like to do to improve the garden and make it a real showplace. Every extra pair of hands would help. And you live here full time, which means you would be especially valuable during the summer, when all the snowbirds have left."

"The seasonal gardeners have done a real good job so far, from the looks of things," said Rusty.

Nutty added, "They sure have, but I think Red is right. A garden can always use extra help. Your own garden at home is quite something, too. New ideas could help the Mangrove Chapter garden expand and look even better. And what about you, Red?"

Red thought a moment and then replied, "I really enjoy exploring new parks and learning more about our native cousins. I think I'd like to learn how to be a walk leader and help with the field trip committee."

Nutty and Rusty said together, "That's exactly right for you! You definitely ought to volunteer for that committee!"

At the Pampered Petals spa, another conversation was taking place. "All of us could help at Mangrove Chapter?" asked Laurel, emerging from her herbal wrap. "How could all of us help?"

"The Board of Directors is made up of not only the officers, but also the heads of all the committees within Mangrove," explained Starry as she peeled the cucumbers off her eyes. "Over a dozen committees are active in keeping Mangrove Chapter operating all year. Think of the garden committee, whose members take care of the garden at Cedar Point. Or the grant committee, whose members review applications and visit the proposed garden sites to determine who qualifies for the grants. There are lots of other committees, too."

Summer shyly ventured, "I've always, sort of, wanted to be a secretary. Do you think I could volunteer for secretary of Mangrove Chapter?"

"I think you'd be perfect," Starry exclaimed. "You already attend every meeting and take notes for yourself on topics that come up. You would just have to write them up in a formal style so everyone can understand them."

"I don't know," said Summer, thinking out loud. "I'm not too sure about being up in front of everyone."

Starry countered, "You don't have to be in front of everyone. They don't have a table up front where all the officers sit. You just take notes from wherever you like to sit, and you don't have to read the minutes out loud. The minutes will be sent to members through email. But you would have to attend meetings of the Board of Directors, as well as members' meetings."

Summer filed these ideas away to think about for a while. Meanwhile, wheels were turning in Laurel's head.

Tune in next month for another exciting episode of Adventures of the Natives.

**From "Nature's Best Hope",
by Doug Tallamy; Part 4 of a Series**

Continuing the discussion about restoring insects, Chapter 8, we look at "Restoring Native Bees". As pollinators, bees maintain a diverse base of plants as terrestrial food webs. They perform the largest share of pollination duties versus other insects, such as moths, butterflies, beetles, wasps, flies and ants. Only 13% of our plants are wind-pollinated, so the balance of pollinator duties is accomplished primarily by roughly 4,000 species of native bees. Pollinators are essential to life as we know it on planet Earth, responsible for pollinating 87% of all plants and 90% of all flowering plants. If pollinators were to disappear, all of these plants would also cease to exist, resulting in a fatal blow to the human race along with most other species.

We are already aware that our bee populations are declining. Scientists are scrambling to understand the current plight and conservation of native bees in human-dominated landscapes. Of the handful of our native bees already studied, most are in steep decline. Half of the Midwest's species have disappeared from their historic ranges in the last century. Four species of bumblebees have declined 96% just in the last 20 years, and 25% of our bumblebees are at risk of extinction.

In his book, Doug Tallamy describes in detail how and what we should be doing to support pollinators in our yards and gardens. We need a better understanding of who our pollinators are and what they need to thrive; learn how and where they nest (70% of our native bee species nest in the ground); understand how our fall clean-ups are in direct conflict with the over-wintering habits of the stem nesters and wood nesters. We should also pay attention to blooming phenology and appreciate plant genera (nearly 30% of native bees are host-plant specialists). There is also a photo in his book showing a roll of toilet paper buried in the ground, one end just above ground level. The suggestion is that a bumblebee queen will chew a hole into the roll and start her colony in early spring. Does anyone want to try that experiment?

Eastern Iowa Wildflowers

by linda Manley

We spent a few days in Eastern Iowa in early August and visited several parks and wild areas while we were there. Their wildflowers are as beautiful and abundant as ours.



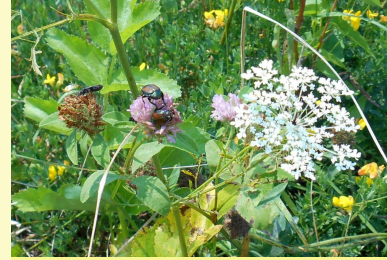
Our first trip on our first day was to Lost Grove Lake, where we found birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) (left), prairie coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*), and wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*). The insects found common red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) to be almost irresistible, although we'd like to see fewer Japanese beetles. The monarch was a much more welcome species. Queen Anne's lace was blooming everywhere. I've never seen so much! It was along every roadside, every ditch, for miles and miles. The sight was stunning.



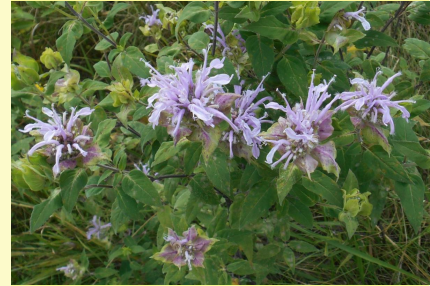
prairie coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*)



Monarch Butterfly



Insect Magnet Queen
Anne's Lace



wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)



The second park we visited that day was Scott County Park. This park is much wilder and more natural, and the plants in it reflected that. Nearly all of them were new to me and I was grateful for identification assistance from a couple of Iowa Wildflower Facebook pages. The scenery was beautiful and was enhanced by the creek running through the park. American bellflower (*Campanulastrum americanum*) (left) is a beautiful shade of blue, and common self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) is a tiny lavender blossom you can barely see. Jumpseed (*Persicaria virginiana*) also has small blossoms, but they're white, and I have to include Jack-in-the-Pulpit, one of my personal favorites. Calopteron terminale, the end-banded net-winged beetle, had striking, bright colors.



common self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*)



Jumpseed (*Persicaria virginiana*)



Calopteron terminale, the end-banded net-winged beetle,



Jack-in-the-Pulpit

The next day we made a brief stop at Lock and Dam 13 on the Mississippi River and were rewarded with seeing about a hundred kayakers taking part in the 25th Annual Great River Rumble. They started their journey upriver and spent a few days paddling down as far as LeClaire, where they ended their adventure. Sadly, this would be their last Rumble, but the sight of all those colorful kayakers was cheery and uplifting. Happily, I also found two nice plants: our own swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) and evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis*).



swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)



We then drove to Spring Lake, the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The park was filled with wildflowers, and the first one we saw was *Rudbeckia hirta*, the black-eyed susan. A mass of these flowers can't be beat for pure color. We found crown vetch (*Securigera varia*), white sweet clover (*Melilotus alba*), and white campion (*Silene latifolia*), a new one for me. The water lilies illustrate what sometimes happens with too much of a good thing. The lily pads covered the surface of the water nearly completely, leaving little room for wading or water birds.



Rudbeckia hirta, the black-eyed susan.



crown vetch (*Securigera varia*)



white sweet clover
(*Melilotus alba*),



white campion (*Silene latifolia*),



Water Lilies

On our last day, we walked a trail in Leach Park, right beside the Mighty Mississippi. We found common mullein and jewel weed, but the new one for me was obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*). It's hard to believe I made it to this advanced age without seeing that before, but sometimes life is strange. Finally, I have to include a photo of the massive wind farms along I-80. Dozens and dozens of windmills dotted the countryside, leading us to believe that there may be hope for a future with greater use of renewable energy.



Wind Farm



obedient plant (*Physostegia virginiana*)

Another Interesting "Bug Book"



I took up reading this book before leaving Florida to return north in April. Between numerous disruptions, I am past half-way through it and find it both informative and amusing. **"Extraordinary Insects-The Fabulous, Indispensable Creatures Who Run Our World" (2018), by Anne Sverdrup-Thygeson**, was previously published as "Buzz,

Sting, Bite" for those of you who may have read it.

The introduction's first paragraph gives you a quick snapshot of just how many insects populate our planet..."more than 200 million insects for every human being living on the planet today." And it goes from there, which is mind-boggling. There are insects that have ears on their knees, eyes on their penises, and tongues under their feet. Witty descriptions of these "bugs" with a touch of much anthropomorphizing makes it a fun read. Besides, the phantasmagorically-colorful photo of a huge beetle on the cover is beautiful!

My Northern Garden in the Fall

by Lois Cantwell

No matter what it says on my calendar, Ma Nature has her own idea of what will bloom early or later in my garden as summer transitions into fall. With 9/22 as the first day of autumn, I will have a good mix of both seasons' blooms until the time the "late bloomers" arrive. The red Monardas have given way to their lavender kin, white daisies are past it, and the Goldenrods are now the main bee attraction. Michigan has roughly 9 *Solidago* species, and I have at least 4



specimens. Pictured at left: Mondarda growing on fence.



New England Astor



Obedient Plant and Tall Phlox

Gray-headed Coneflowers and Thimble-flowers will be seeding soon. Plants like Gloriosa daisies that look more like colorful versions of Black-eyed Susans, are fading as the Rudbeckia species continue to shine brightly. A new plant this season is a cultivar of Purple Giant Hyssop (*Agastache scrophulariifolia*)--good luck pronouncing that. It is native to the southern part of my state, but hardy to Zone 2. Its' 3-to-4-foot height, topped with light blue flower spikes is also proving to be a bit of a bee magnet, so a beneficial addition. (sedum and purple coneflower at right).



The Sedums (Stone Crop) are just starting to show a tinge of pink, which will darken with time, so a couple of photos that depict their late-summer-to-fall look are shown. The pink Turtle Head and white cultivar of Joe-Pye Weed (*Eupatorium*) will bloom in October-November for added garden color. The green-turning-to-purple leaves contrast with the airy white blossoms.



Turtlehead



Later fall: Sedum and
Coneflower



Eupatorium (Cultivar, Joe-Pye Weed



One of the enjoyable aspects of gardening is witnessing what the changing seasons bring to the yard. It is a much more subtle transition in my Southern yard, which requires a bit more vigilance. Then there are the comings and goings of the birds and other critters, so be sure to read Bill's article about that elsewhere in the newsletter.

LooseStrife

by Jane Wallace



Lythrum flagellare
Photo by Craig Hargett

During a site visit with Jayne Neville, a recent transplant from Connecticut, I realized when you mention loosestrife to many new Florida residents they respond with a look of horror on their faces. Northerners are familiar with purple loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*, an exotic invasive. Not in Florida. I tried to map the distribution of this plant on the internet but the maps vary

widely, the worse one I saw says the plant now grows in every state except Florida. It is prohibited from use in Florida according to the Federal Noxious Weed List, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) 5B-64.011 Prohibited Aquatic Plants, or FDACS 5B-57.007 Noxious Weed List.

There are three native *Lythrum* found in this area: Winged Loosestrife *Lythrum alatum* var. *lanceolatum*, Wand Loosestrife *Lythrum lineare* and Florida Loosestrife *Lythrum flagellare*. (above Left). All three are Obligate wetland plants, meaning the under natural conditions the almost, always occur in wetland and ditches.

Winged and Wand loosestrife superficially resemble purple loosestrife. They are tall, clubby plants with flower spikes. Winged loosestrife has lavender flowers; wand, white. Winged Loosestrife is winter dormant and boom in sunny areas, especially in roadside ditches, toward the end of rainy season. To my knowledge, I have never been in the right place at the right time to see Wand Loosestrife.

Florida Loosestrife, *Lythrum flagellare*, looks nothing like the others. It is a low growing, creeping ground cover with red stems and small purple flowers. It naturally occurs only in Florida and is listed as endangered by the state. It has been especially abundant in our area, found in most ditches and low lying, wet areas.

To my mind, we should consider all the native Loosestrife in our area as threatened. With the massive clearing of land for development, and more importantly, the road widening that replaces roadside ditches with pipes and sod, is causing the destruction of the habitat for these plants (and many others). If you have access to a wet area or a rain garden, please consider planting these native *Lythrum*. Winged loosestrife is available at Sweet Bay Nursery and Florida Loosestrife can still be found along the roadsides and often, even your yard.



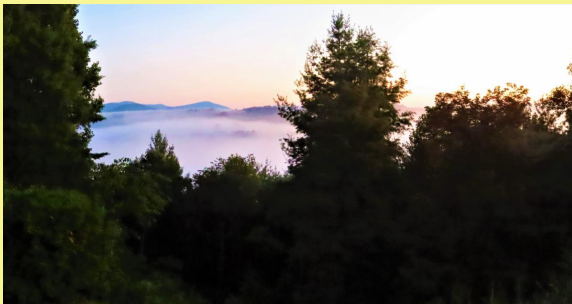
Lythrum alatum var. *lanceolatum*
Photo by Shirley Denton



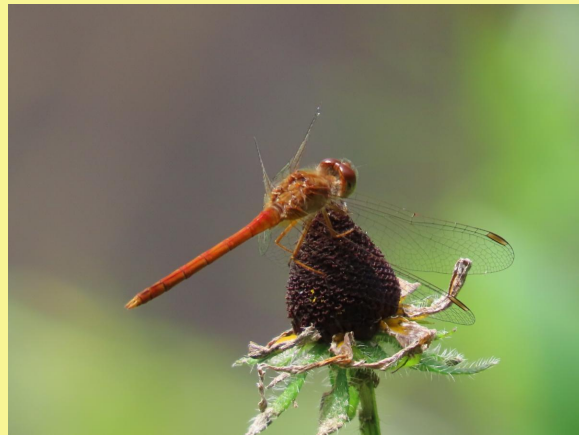
Lythrum lineare
Photo and © by Roger Hammer
Wildflowers of the Everglades

As the End of Summer Approaches by Bill Dunson

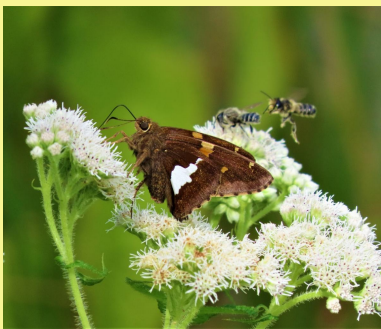
As the end of summer approaches, some things change and some do not. Every morning when I look out the back window I now often see fog in the New River valley due to the cool moisture laden air. This burns off quickly when the sun comes out but you can see that there are some changes coming. Another change is the appearance of some species that were not present before, or at least not for several months. For example this medium-sized red dragonfly, the autumn meadowhawk is well named since its appearance predicts the coming fall season.



Fog in New R Valley, North Carolina



Autumn Meadowhawk



On the other hand the silver spotted skipper (left) has been numerous for some time and continues to be commonly seen. But they are now seen on different flowers that have recently bloomed such as the boneset and my favorite the spectacular ironweed. These skippers have not gone unnoticed by certain predators such as a bright yellow crab spider "hiding in plain sight" in the flowers of a purple Brazilian vervain; this spider successfully caught and ate two skippers on successive days! The lack of camouflage by the spider did not seem to be an issue in alerting the prey to a problem.



Crab spider catches silver spotted skipper on Brazilian vervain



Silver spotted skipper on iron weed.

A butterfly which I recently observed for the first time this summer was a bright orange question mark. It was sunning on a rock wall and alternately showed its outside very cryptic pattern and the inside brightly colored pattern. This species is unusual in that it does not feed on nectar but on sap, rotting fruit and dung, and can survive quite cold weather. I have seen it out at Thanksgiving time but many of them migrate north in the springtime.



Question mark butterfly, inner wings



Question mark butterfly outer wings

Another rarely seen butterfly was a male spicebush swallowtail, one of the confusing "black and blue" mimics of the pipevine swallowtail (left). I show here an inner view of the wings revealing the light blue color, and the outside which demonstrates a double row of large orange spots. In comparison there is only a single row of orange spots in the mimic female black tiger and the toxic model pipevine swallowtails. I doubt that most humans and certainly birds notice the difference in numbers of rows of spots- the overall appearance is quite similar. But it is striking that both the inner and outer aspects of the wings of the pipevine and its mimics are quite similar.



Pipevine swallowtail on butterfly bush

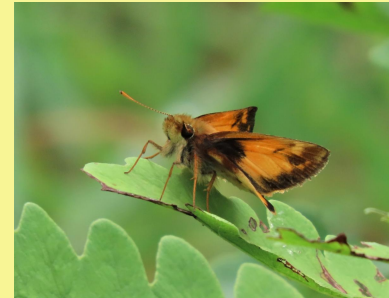


Male spicebush swallowtail on great lobelia



Tiger black swallowtail outer wings

I generally try to ignore the more difficult to identify skippers but this male zabulon is interesting in that it emerges in two separate broods in May and August in North Carolina. So its appearance now is timely and indicative of the season. With sufficient local knowledge of such timing you could construct a fairly accurate annual calendar



Our final "bug" is not an insect but an arthropod called a Chilopod. It is commonly seen in the Blue Ridge mountains this time of year on the surface moving at an impressive speed for a critter with this many legs to coordinate. It is locally called the "apple" millipede since if you pick it up and shake it, you will detect a fruity smell. This smell is actually a cyanide compound which the millipede uses to protect itself so it is best not to inhale too deeply! In the wild they are an important part of the detritus community in the leaf litter and can be considered to be interesting and non-toxic under normal conditions.

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.

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