



July 2022

Report from Your President:

by Linda Manley

Native Plants Support the Entire Ecosystem

Yes, native plants support the entire ecosystem. Does that sound like a bold statement? Perhaps so, but it's absolutely true. Think about this for a minute: plants are the only organisms that can manufacture their own food. The ONLY organisms that can manufacture their own food. Anything that humans eat, or that other animals eat, started with something that ate plants. If you eat meat, whether fish or poultry or red meat, that animal ate plants, or ate something that ate plants.

Cattle eat plants directly: corn, other grain, or grass. The same is true of bison, or antelope, or squirrel, or whatever other red meat you eat. Poultry eat plants directly, but also eat insects. If you grew up on a farm and raised chickens, you know that turning them loose in your garden kept the garden almost bug-free. Fish eat plants directly, or they eat aquatic insects or arthropods. Ah-ha, you say! They eat insects! Yes, but the insects eat plants directly. Or they eat smaller insects that eat plants. Invariably, the food trail ends at plants.

What do plants eat? Plants manufacture their own food using sunlight, air, and water. No other organism on Earth can do that. They work their magic to support the entire ecosystem, every other creature in our world. Often using assistance from mycorrhizal networks of fungus, plants send roots into the ground and leaves into the air to gather sunlight, carbon dioxide, and nutrients, and they convert these into food. Left on our own, we as humans certainly couldn't do that.

And now for the native part: Plants, animals, and insects have evolved together over millions of years. Most of these have optimal areas in which they grow, ranges where the presence of temperature, climate, and other organisms are ideal for them to mature and reproduce. If insects, for example, cannot find the plants with which they evolved for food, they cannot grow and reproduce, and they simply die. Do you wonder why we see fewer butterflies now than we did a couple decades ago? Look no farther than what is growing in yards these days. It's not the native plants the butterflies have fed on for hundreds of thousands of years. Instead, it's plants that have been imported from Asia, Africa, South America, or other areas and planted here for a variety of reasons: novelty, long-lasting flowers, resistance to insects, or similar explanations.

Such non-native plants are useless to our local insects because they don't recognize them as a food source and therefore don't eat them. Our insects need specific plants on which to lay eggs because that is the only food their larvae can eat. We all know about the need monarch butterflies have for milkweed. The same is true of other insects. Their larvae must have specific plants to eat or they cannot live. If a yard is filled with hibiscus, ixora, plumeria, and the like, insects will starve in that yard. On the other hand, if a yard has milkweed, passionflower, and wild lime, it will have butterflies on every plant.

I know that because you are members, you believe in our FNPS mission and you do your best to plant native. Now that you have even better reasons to do that, maybe you can

convince your neighbors or even your HOA to plant a few more natives. You can find a list of our nearest native nurseries in this (and every) newsletter. Thank you for supporting our organization.

Thank You

A grateful thank you from our chapter to Kyrsten Lemke, who has taken on the task of recording and reporting volunteer hours each month. In addition, Kyrsten is scanning in historical documents to be placed on our website. We appreciate her help!

Welcome New Members!

Welcome to Hannah Grissinger from Englewood, Renee LePere from Port Charlotte, and Ruth Pronchick from North Port. We're so glad to have you with us!

[Click here to Visit our Website](#)

Out and About with Mangrove Chapter

Display at Elsie Quirk Library

Mangrove Chapter currently has a display at the Elsie Quirk Library in Englewood. The library contacted us to see if we were interested and suggested July. Laura Soule and Linda Manley volunteered to organize the display and resurrected the large wooden display board that the chapter has used for several years. Laura surveyed what was needed to renovate the board and quickly set to work. She designed and arranged for a new header with our logo and installed it, which was a wonderful update. The two gathered a collection of free chapter handouts about native plants and raided the chapter library as well as their own to bring together a group of outstanding books that are displayed in a locked glass case.



We urge you to visit Elsie Quirk at 100 West Dearborn in Englewood and take a look at how the display shows off our chapter. The display will remain through the month of July.

Sunrise Beach Walk

OK, not really sunrise. Please join Anne Risberg and Linda Manley for an early morning walk at Blind Pass Middle Beach at 8 AM on Thursday, July 14. We're

starting early to avoid as much of the heat as possible and still be able to see the summer side of beach plants. Everyone comes to Florida in the winter and we point out plants as we can, but the summer is the time when Florida flowers put forth their best. We will walk the Duisberg Trail, which goes through shady areas as well as the sunny beach. No registration is necessary; just show up in the parking lot near the trail entrance. We anticipate the walk will be about 90 minutes, but less if the heat is oppressive. Please be sure to bring water and wear a hat and sunscreen.



Visit Sweet Bay Native Nursery

The chapter has planned a field trip to Sweet Bay Nursery in Parrish for Thursday, July 21. Sweet Bay is one of the premiere native plant nurseries in Florida and in the past has brought plants to Mangrove membership meetings. The owner, Tom Heitzman, has offered us a guided tour of the nursery in addition to plenty of time to shop. After the tour, we will have a Dutch treat lunch at Butterfield's Family Restaurant, a short distance away. We plan to car pool because the nursery is about 60 miles away and the drive will take about an hour. This trip is limited to 12 participants, but we still have spots available. If you would like to join this field trip, please contact Linda Manley no later than July 13:

88lingo@gmail.com

Your Free Pass to Florida State Parks

Did you know that you can use your library card to check out a one-day pass to a state park, just as if you had checked out a book? It's completely free, but each library has a limited number of available passes. Sadly, you can't just show your card at the park and get in free, but it's a wonderful opportunity if you plan ahead. For more information, see this link: **Florida State Park Pass**

Mangrove Chapter Grants

Did you know that Mangrove Chapter offers \$500 grants to establish or refurbish public gardens with native plants? Previous grant recipients have included entrances and community gardens in homes associations as well as the History Park in Punta Gorda. If you know of a public area that is tired and you'd like to update it with native plants, consider applying for one of our grants.

A grant can be used to enhance or replace gardens in public areas within our Chapter boundaries with Florida native plants. These areas may include community clubhouses, businesses, or non-profit entryways. Grants are limited to \$500 per grant request.

For further information or to apply for a grant, download the grant application from

www.mangrove.fnpschapters.org/outreach/grants/

Complete the application and either attach it to an email to **MangroveChapter@fnps.org**

OR mail the printed form to:

MCFNPS Grant Committee

PO Box 1153

Englewood, FL 34295-1153

We are on Facebook!!!

Look for: Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society or click this link:

Mangrove Chapter Facebook page

A Visit to North Port High School

On June 1, Ruth Ward, Laura Soule, Dave Manley, and Linda Manley met with Jim Noonan and Zack Ward, instructors at North Port High School. The purpose was to tour a large natural area on school property, offer suggestions as to the best use of the area, and recommend sources for native plants. The potential for this property is

immense: it appears to be over 30 acres of native woodland with a large pond that floods much of the surrounding area during the rainy season, creating a natural wetland. We found many native plants in this natural habitat, including pawpaw, blue hearts, oakleaf fleabane, coreopsis, Florida yellow flax, and many others, although Mr. Noonan acknowledged large stands of Brazilian pepper they would like to remove.



A large former woodshop has been converted to a classroom area. It houses several aquariums where students watched the life cycles of frogs and learned firsthand how nonnative fish eat and destroy populations of native fish. In another area of the building, students with an interest in mechanics can tinker with and learn to repair motors. A stove and refrigerator help to teach life skills, which students learn along

with lessons in ecology. (picture Left: Mr. Noonan explains a frog tank to Linda and Laura.)

The working greenhouse offered potential for raising native plants for sale. A nearby poultry shed housed chickens, ducks, and quail this past year, producing eggs for sale, and an organic garden attracted pollinators. Active bat houses helped reduce mosquitos and other pesky insects around the school. Future plans include instruction in composting, with hope to compost increased waste from the school.

Mr. Noonan and Zack Ward describe to Ruth and Laura how the students used the greenhouse last term.



Do you wonder where to buy native plants

Big box stores sometimes have plants that are native, or that they call native, but too often they are hybrids or cultivars and you can't be certain that the plant is a true native. Other times, the grower might already have treated the plant or even the soil with pesticides that are harmful or fatal to native insects. Buying from a native nursery helps avoid those worries. Here are a few area nurseries where you can confidently purchase native plants:

Sweet Bay Nursery, 10824 Erie Rd, Parrish, FL 34219

Florida Native Plants Nursery, 730 Myakka Rd, Sarasota, FL 34240

All Native Garden Center, 300 Center Rd, Fort Myers, FL 33907

Photographer Needed

Volunteer Photographer Opportunity

Our chapter needs volunteer photographers to take photos at membership meetings and occasionally at events like those listed above. We have missed some wonderful opportunities to keep all of you informed of our activities as well as to promote our organization to the general public. You don't have to be at every meeting or every event, just those that are convenient and interest you. We don't care whether you use a phone or a camera. Our only requirement is that you are able to email or otherwise transmit the photos to Linda Manley (88lingo@gmail.com) or Dave Manley (godave@boun.cr) so they can appear in our newsletter and be kept for our historical archives. Just send us labelled photos from the events you attend and we'll sort through them. To volunteer, please contact either one of us at the email addresses given..

FNPS Annual Meeting

This was my first opportunity to attend an annual meeting and I'm glad I tuned in. It was held via YouTube and about 80 people attended from across the state. This was a particularly important meeting and I learned a great many things about FNPS. We met our new Executive Director, Lynda Davis, voted on bylaw revisions, and elected a new Board of Directors, a situation created by the new bylaws. You can view the meeting on the FNPS YouTube channel by typing in "Annual Meeting."

Several members of the Board of Directors gave reports and I didn't get down all the information. Awards were presented to several members and a few chapters: Green Palmetto, Silver Palmetto, and Outstanding Chapter awards. (Mangrove Chapter was fortunate to win an Outstanding Chapter award in 2020.) Conservation and research grants were announced. Some of those who received research awards presented their results at

the conference in May of this year, for which 421 people registered.

The Legislative Committee related bills they classified as The Good, The Bad, and The Exceedingly Ugly. One particularly destructive bill passed by the legislature was expected to be signed by the Governor, but three people in the Hernando Chapter mobilized their membership and inundated the Governor with calls, letters, and emails, and succeeded in getting the Governor to veto the bill. These three people received Silver Palmetto Awards. Another person convinced the legislature to extend by two years the deadline for gathering enough reservations for new custom license plates, such as the plate currently promoted by FNPS. Two budget items highlighted by the Legislative Committee included \$100 million in funding for Florida Forever and \$300 million for Rural and Family Lands. Both of these programs are important to the preservation of natural areas, and therefore, native plants.

The Communications Committee reported on social media: at the state level. FNPS is now visible on (I think) eight different platforms. Facebook is the largest and we have 37,000 followers! We hosted 38 Lunch 'n' Learns with 14,000 viewers and 5 After Hours, with 1400 viewers. In other news, our membership statewide is now over 5850, and we have a new internship agreement funded by the Florida Wildflower Foundation.

I have to mention the people serving on our Board of Directors. Because they had to be elected, or in some cases reelected, those attending the annual meeting received their biographies. I was incredibly impressed with the quality of the people who have agreed to serve our organization in this capacity. I am convinced that all these people have our best interests in mind and will do their best to move our organization forward.

I would urge all of you to try to attend the annual meeting next year. It greatly expanded my knowledge of the Florida Native Plant Society.

Changes at Cedar Point

We are sad to report that Gerald Thompson has left Cedar Point for a new position with the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. It's a wonderful opportunity for Gerald and we wish him the very best in his new role. Gerald has been a critical part of our move to Cedar Point, easing the way for our new meeting times and places. We will miss his bright smile and the considerable knowledge he brought to Cedar Point, and we feel the Conservancy is lucky to have hired him. Rin has also left Cedar Point and staffing is uncertain at this time.

Events from Our Nature-Related Friends

Guided Nature Walks from Charlotte County Environmental Center

<https://www.checflorida.org/calendar>

All walks begin at 8:00 AM. 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 more information or to register, call 941-475-0769.

Friday, July 1st Join CHEC on a guided walkthrough 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. Please call 941-475-0769 to register or for information.

Saturday, July 2nd 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 941-475-0769 to register.

Tuesday, July 5th 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 941-475-0769 to register.

Friday, July 8th 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 941-475-0769 to register.

Saturday, July 9th 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 941-475-0769 to register.

Friday, July 15th 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, special adaptations that allow mangroves to thrive in salty environments, and why mangroves are important and protected in Florida. Please call 941-475-0769 to register.

Tuesday, July 19th 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 941-475-0769 to register.

Tuesday, July 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 941-475-0769 to register.

Saturday, July 30th 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 941-475-0769 to register.

Events from the Environmental Conservancy of North Port (ECNP)

<https://ecnorthport.com/>

Friday, July 15, 2022, 6:00 pm-7:30 pm Neighborhood Conservation Group Meet Up Myakkahatchee Creek Env. Park, 6968 Reisterstown Road, North Port, FL 34291
Wondering how you can get land in your neighborhood protected from development, or how to improve existing neighborhood land to benefit wildlife? We have answers but we need you to help us make it happen. Join us to meet like-minded neighbors, hear our ideas, and share yours.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED: Email NPconservancy@gmail.com or call/text 941-218-9775.

Saturday, July 23, 9:00-11:00 AM, Eco-walk with North Port Parks & Rec and RHPhotoAdventures
Myakkahatchee Creek Env. Park, 6968 Reisterstown Road, North Port, FL 34291
Florida Master Naturalist Robin Hagan of RHPhotoAdventures will guide this walk. There is no fee to participate, but pre-registration is required. To sign up, visit <https://bit.ly/NatureWalkNP> or call 941-429-7275 and select option #2.

Events from Lemon Creek Wildflower Preserve

<https://lemonbayconservancy.org/>

Mangrove Native Plant Society

COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for Meetings and Field Trips

If you are not feeling well, or if you or a family member has been exposed to COVID, please do not attend our events.

For indoor meetings and events, wearing properly worn face masks is recommended and will align with rules of the facility. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own beverages and packaged snacks.

For outdoor events or field trips, wearing masks is optional for vaccinated participants; strongly recommended for unvaccinated participants. Bring water, insect repellent, and sunscreen. A hat or head covering is recommended.

Participants are encouraged to maintain appropriate 6' social distancing when possible.

[Visit our website](#)

Mangrove Chapter Florida Native Plant Society | P.O. Box 1153, Englewood, FL 34224-1153

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