



August 2022

Mission of the Florida Native Plant Society

The mission of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

Report from Your President:

by Linda Manley

Ad-Venture Out This Summer!

The heat is brutal this summer, there's no doubt about that. Temperatures in the 90s every day, with the heat index in three digits. Why would you leave your air-conditioned living room? You leave that manmade spot because the world is filled with nature that's waiting to welcome you.

Some of nature's creatures are at their best now. Many birds have already raised their chicks and now have time to sing. They fly around your neighborhood trees, flashing their bright colors for you to enjoy. Small mammals are leading their youngsters through the woods, crossing our human-made trails, teaching the kids to search for food and fend for themselves in the near future. Plants that emerged in the spring are setting buds and opening blossoms, inviting the insects and other pollinators in to help them set seeds and reproduce.

Okay, you might have to take things a little easier in the summer weather. Maybe you won't go running down the trails or hiking the mountains (maybe not Florida mountains) with a full backpack, but you can still enjoy the best of what nature has to offer, just in moderation.

We have indeed slowed down since we hiked to the Continental Divide in Costa Rica a few years ago. Now we like our trails to be flat, or nearly so, and less rugged. In this weather we limit our walks to not more than an hour and a half, preferably an hour. We bring water, wear hats, and pace ourselves. I am perhaps more susceptible to the heat than others and I've learned the hard way how much I can tolerate.

Florida still has great things to do in the summer. Mangrove Chapter sponsored a beach walk last month. CHEC has guided walks at local parks every week. The Peace River Butterfly Society has a yard tour every month. Venice Area Audubon Society has bird walks. Lemon Bay Conservancy gives tours for the public each month. And the list goes on. Check out the websites for groups like Peace River Audubon, Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Program, The Environmental Conservancy of North Port, and similar organizations. These organizations are not oblivious to the Florida summer heat and they pace their activities accordingly.

So don't give up your summer! Go outdoors, take water, wear sunscreen, and enjoy!

Click here to [Visit our Website](#)

Out and About with Mangrove Chapter Beach Walk Report



One sunny July morning, nine of us gathered at Blind Pass/Middle Beach for an early morning walk. We spent about an hour on the shady Duisburg Trail, discovering a nice collection of both native and nonnative plants. Some of our hikers were amazed at the size of the mangroves—and of all the trees—which have been undisturbed for many decades. All had interesting bark that appears as the trees grow more mature. We were surprised to find so many mangrove crabs that seemed less skittish than usual and allowed us to get good photos of them.



Seagrape



A bold mangrove crab

When we moved to the sunny beach, Willie filled us in on the nesting habits of sea turtles this year, and how our area has had a bumper crop of nests. Next, she told us about the importance of sea oats and railroad vine in stabilizing the soil and preventing beach erosion. We walked the beach watching seabirds and looking for interesting shells and shark teeth until we reached the entrance. By that time, the sun was baking the beach and us, and it was time to go. Summer walks are viable if we stick to the early morning and take care to stay hydrated. We should do more of these, so let me know if you'd like to volunteer to lead one. 88lingo@gmail.com



Black Mangrove



Buttonwood

Sweet Bay Nursery Field Trip Report

Sweet Bay Nursery is one of the premiere native plant nurseries in Florida and some of our members shop there for their native plants on a regular basis. These traits made it an excellent choice for a midsummer field trip, so 11 of us met there on a hot, sunny July morning. Co-owner Tom Heitzman welcomed us and related the history of the founding and growth of the nursery, expressing gratitude that, 27 years ago, Florida land was much less expensive. Tom gave us a guided tour and talked about the plants available, answering our questions as we moved along.



The nursery is a beautiful place: quiet, peaceful, away from noise and traffic, with birdsong as its background. I could see meditation classes taking place there. Our members chatted and shared garden knowledge while we walked the aisles over and over, drinking in the lush greenery surrounding us. Deciding what to buy—and limiting ourselves to not too many—was the fun part. Nearly all of us came home with new plants for our gardens, and I suspect our purchases totaled around 50 plants. Sweet Bay generously offered us all discounts.



Members begin to choose the plants they take home.



Sweet Bay had a butterfly garden plant section.

Following the visit, we caravanned to lunch at Peach's Restaurant in Ellenton, where Lisa, our server, took excellent care of us. The food was delicious and the air conditioning was more than welcome. This visit was so successful that I'm sure we will do it again, perhaps in

the spring when the weather is more forgiving and planting is easier.



Trail Clearing at the Haw River

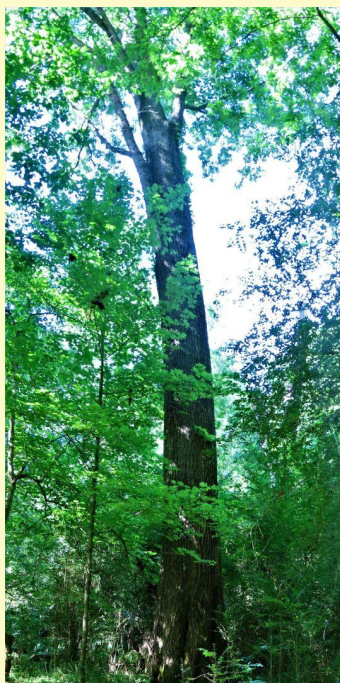
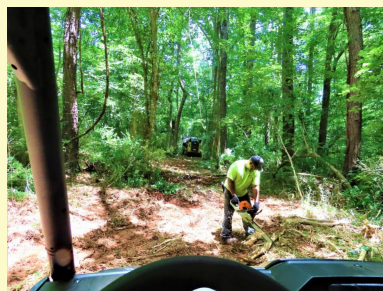
by Bill Dunson



Bill Dunson, one of our longtime walk leaders, has recently relocated to a mostly wooded plot of property in North Carolina. From time to time he sends us updates on progress on this land. This short series describes clearing a walking trail.

Yesterday was a momentous day in that the mulching machine arrived to complete our 36-acre trail system down along the Haw River. It was semi-controlled mayhem and the surprising result is a useable trail system but that will need some continued work to maintain and smooth it out.

Lots of new territory was revealed including many interesting trees, plants, and viewscapes along the river.



A new tree species revealed is this huge oak which I am guessing is a



The beautiful Rosepink/Sabatia appeared out front along the main highway in our only true open field.

cherry bark oak but am not sure.
Anyone with more experience with
southern floodplain oaks, please let
me know what you think it is.

My Northern Report

by Lois Cantwell

The views from the large windows in the front and back of our house are completely different. The back view features several very large pines and oaks shading an open understory. Feeders hanging on shepherd's hooks under the pines enable us to see a good variety of our feathered friends. Unfortunately, the squirrels and chipmunks tend to frequent them, too. The backdrop to all of this is a vacant wooded lot behind our rustic wooden fence where we see all sorts of action.

Relentless chipmunks, acrobatic squirrels, trotting foxes, seasonal rabbits, an occasional deer, raccoon, groundhog, porcupine, or opossum--we never know what may roam through the woods at any given time. There's not enough space for all the "critter stories" I could tell. All I can say is that there's never a dull moment.

From early spring until late July, I have tallied 26 species of birds, some migrating further north, others local to the area. About a dozen of these have fledged one or more broods of young. It's a treat to see them bring their offspring to the yard at feeding time. The ones I dislike having around due to their bullying behavior are the starlings and the grackles. I'm always glad to see them move on. Among the favorites are the cardinals, chickadees, tufted titmouse and nuthatches.

Gazing out my front room window, I see the vegetative indicators of the seasons' constantly changing colors as spring flows into summer and fall finally arrives. This year our rather tardy spring pushed my summer bloomers about six weeks behind, but that's okay. This "cottage garden", replacing turf grass, occupies the only sunny area on the property. Two shade gardens flank this area, providing added variety in greenery and blooms.

For lack of appropriate planting space, I ended up growing three small beef-steak tomato plants in pots. They have been potted "up" into progressively larger ones. Now they are in 10-gallon sized "grow-bags" called Coolaroos. Check them out on the internet. They can be used for 16 different herbs and vegetables. They also come in 2- and 5-gallon sizes. Lots of potential for experimentation.

FREE EVENT • FREE EVENT • FREE EVENT

A poster for a trail guide training event. The background is a photograph of a dirt trail winding through a forest of tall pine trees. At the top, the text 'Let's Hike!' is in large, bold, green letters, and 'TRAIL GUIDE TRAINING' is in white letters on a green banner. Below this, there are two green circular callouts with white leaf-like borders. The left callout says: 'Come learn how to be a trail guide at the different parks of Charlotte County and sign up to volunteer to lead them! Snacks will be available!'. The right callout says: 'AUGUST 15+ 29 Starts at 9AM CEDAR POINT ENVIRONMENTAL PARK 2300 PLACIDA RD, ENGLEWOOD FLORIDA'. At the bottom, there is a small logo on the left and the text 'For Registration: 941-475-0769, Tome@checcflorida.org' in the center, and 'CHARLOTTE COUNTY FLORIDA' with a small logo on the right.

Let's Hike!
TRAIL GUIDE TRAINING

Come learn how to be a trail guide at the different parks of Charlotte County and sign up to volunteer to lead them! Snacks will be available!

AUGUST 15+ 29
Starts at 9AM

CEDAR POINT ENVIRONMENTAL PARK
2300 PLACIDA RD,
ENGLEWOOD
FLORIDA

For Registration: 941-475-0769, Tome@checcflorida.org

CHARLOTTE COUNTY
FLORIDA

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/**](http://www.mangrove.fnpschapters.org/outreach/grants/)

Complete the application and either attach it to an email to [**MangroveChapter@fnps.org**](mailto:MangroveChapter@fnps.org)

OR mail the printed form to:

MCFNPS Grant Committee

PO Box 1153

Englewood, FL 34295-1153

Alternatives to Commercial Fertilizers

by Lois Cantwell

Like everything else these days, making purchases at your local garden center can hit you

hard in the pocketbook. If you are focused only on growing native plants, the purchase of fertilizer may not be on your radar screen, but growing a variety of commercial garden plants over a period of time ultimately depletes the nutrients in the soil to the point that they are not thriving without some type of amendment. Remembering the N-P-K ratio listed on a package of store-bought fertilizer, we know that Nitrogen promotes green, leafy growth; Phosphorus is responsible for roots, fruits and flowers; and Potassium (K) takes care of your plants' overall health.

The go-to soil amendment is compost. It can be dug into the soil as you prepare the beds, added to a planting hole, or used in addition to or in place of mulch. Depending on your soil type, compost can improve drainage in clay soils or improve moisture retention in sandy soils. Amendments can also be comprised of fruit and vegetable scraps, fish emulsions, fish-tank water, water from boiled vegetables or boiled eggs, crushed egg-shells, coffee grounds or tea leaves, or a home-made yeast/sugar brew.

The ingredients in my "counter-top compost" concoction, which I keep in a re-purposed whipped topping bowl with a lid and place in the refrigerator, usually includes: chopped up banana peels for potassium, crushed egg shells for calcium, vegetable peelings from making salads, etc., fruits and berries that have passed their freshness, contents of tea bags and coffee grounds. When Gerald was changing out fresh-water fish tank water (for nitrogen and other nutrients), our demonstration garden at Cedar Point benefited from the extra boost. When pulling weeds or trimming your plants, cut them into manageable pieces and scatter them onto your plant beds so they add nutrients back to the soil as they decompose. Just ignore the messy look, they will disappear over time. Then, there is the compost bin if you prefer to go that route. Whatever you do, enjoy your gardens this summer!

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

[Mangrove Chapter Facebook page](#)

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

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.

Thursday, August 4th 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.

Friday, August 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.

Tuesday, August 9th Join CHEC on a guided walk through 308-acre Tippecanoe 1 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.

Friday, August 12th 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.

Monday, August 15th Join CHEC on a guided walk at Cedar Point Environmental Park, one of the last remaining large tracts of undeveloped land on Lemon Bay in Charlotte County. With 115 acres pine flatwoods cover over 60 % of the park, Cedar Point also has scrub, scrubby flatwoods, mangrove swamps, salt marshes, and wetlands. Please call 941-475-0769 to register.

Tuesday, August 16th 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, August 19th 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. Please call 941-475-0769 to register.

Tuesday, August 23rd 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, August 26th Join CHEC on a guided 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.

Monday, August 29th Join CHEC on a guided walk at Cedar Point Environmental Park, one of the last remaining large tracts of undeveloped land on Lemon Bay in Charlotte

County. With 115 acres pine flatwoods cover over 60 % of the park, Cedar Point also has scrub, scrubby flatwoods, mangrove swamps, salt marshes, and wetlands. Please call 941-475-0769 to register.

Tuesday, August 30th 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.

Events from the Environmental Conservancy of North Port (ECNP)

<https://ecnorthport.com/>

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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