

March Newsletter 2014 (Copy 01)

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Coccoloba Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society



March 2014

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Roy Beckford and the Low-down on Garden Pests

By Martha Grattan

Our very special guest this month was Roy Beckford from the Lee County Extension Office. Many of our members know Roy from previous events and activities at extension, so it was with great pleasure to us that he came out on a Thursday night to educate

Happenings

March, Saturdays 9:00 to 10:30

Conservation 20/20

Guided Walks -

www.Conservation2020.org

Guided nature walks are provided by Conservation 20/20 volunteers on Saturdays during the winter season in March. Parking is free and no fee or registration is required. Please remember to bring items you may need during the walk (i.e. water, hat, sunscreen, binoculars, camera, closed-toed shoes or boots, etc.).

March 8th

Caloosahatchee

Creeks (2nd Saturday)

Call [707-0862](tel:707-0862) for more information

March 15

Wild Turkey

Strand (3rd Saturday)

Call [707-3325](tel:707-3325) for more information

March 22

Pine Island

Flatwoods (4th Saturday)

Call [707-8251](tel:707-8251) for more information

March 13

Coccoloba Chapter Meeting at Calusa Nature Center

Russ Hoffman, Beautiful Ponds

6:30 social; 7 program FREE

Month of March

IFAS Florida Homeowner Garden Series

10:00a.m. - 12:00p.m. Fort

Myers Regional Library,

1651 Lee Street, Fort Myers,

FL Call [\(239\) 533-7513](tel:239-533-7513) or [533-](tel:533-7504)

[7504](tel:533-7504) for more information

our group about common garden pests.

Roy started the presentation with a few points on Integrated Pest Management (IPM). By using the IPM system, it becomes much easier to manage garden pests naturally. Native plants already have a higher tolerance for most of our native pests because they have been living together for so long. Vegetable and fruit plants, come from elsewhere, however, and that means greater vulnerability to the 1% of bugs that are harmful. It's true! Only 1% of the insects in the garden are harmful. The rest are beneficial! By using the IPM system, one can keep plants healthy by harnessing the power of beneficial insects.

Mr. Beckford stated that it is important to know your pests. It is best to start with a good book that lists both the beneficial insects and the pests.

Identification is easier with a magnifier and good illustrations. IFAS offers several books that fit the bill on their website: <http://ifasbooks.ifas.ufl.edu/p-153-helpful-harmful-harmless.aspx>

The IFAS site offers the best pricing for these books, and it is recommended that interested parties purchase from this website to maintain support for IFAS.

With book in hand, it is time to get started with the IPM plan. Start with routine inspections of the plants. Try to fit this in a couple of times per week.

Remove damaged leaves and fruit, and look under the leaves for suspicious insects. Nighttime inspections, using a green light, can also be helpful. Apparently, insects can't see green light! Pull weeds sooner, rather than later, because they compete with your plants and add stress. They also provide additional shelter to undesirables.

After the weeds are pulled, there might be enough room for some plants that support beneficial insects.

March 15

Calusa Heritage Days

Saturday 10a.m. - 4 p.m.

For complete information about this event see the article in this issue of the Coccoloba Jam or call

(239) 283-2062 or 283-2157 or

check the website

at <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/rrc/>.

This includes cilantro, nasturtium, dill and sweet alyssum. If the plants are still struggling, it might be time to spray with some environmentally friendly deterrents. This might include garlic, neem oil or soapy water. Remember insecticides should be a last resort, because they will kill the beneficial insects, as well as the pests. In closing, it might be helpful to accept that there will be some damage to the plants, and that it is OK.

If you would like to contact Mr. Beckford, he can be reached at the Lee County Extension office.

Roy Beckford – County Director and Agriculture/Natural Resources Agent, UF/IFAS Extension, Lee County. fbeckford@leegov.com or [239-533-7512](tel:239-533-7512).

If you would like a digital copy of Mr. Beckford's in-depth presentation, please contact marthagrattan@yahoo.com for a copy of the power point. (Windows users only)





My daughter Isabella with the incredible, edible Bidens.

Eating the Weeds with Green Dean

By Martha Grattan

A couple of weeks ago, I loaded the kids in the car and drove up to Port Charlotte to meet the legendary Green Dean for a foraging expedition. All I can say is, WOW! I had no idea there were so many edible plants in my backyard! For the next four hours, we rambled about a waterfront park and a few vacant homes in the adjacent neighborhood.

Interestingly, Green Dean doesn't bother to confine himself to edible natives. As far as he is concerned, invasive exotics are more than fair game!

I won't go into the whole list of plants we looked at that day. Rather, I would like to focus on one very interesting specimen, the humble Spanish Needle, also known as Bidens alba, or Beggar Ticks. A member of the Aster family, Bidens is one of the most common native plants in homeowners' yards. It springs up just about any time of the year and blooms all year round. It's not choosy about soil conditions and grows just about anywhere. Most people don't know it's edible. I know I didn't!

Even without the edible feature, Bidens is a valuable contributor to the ecosystem. The year round growth pattern is an important feature to beekeepers. Bees and butterflies in Florida need to forage continuously, and Bidens is an important source of food in between major nectar flows such as Sea Grape and Saw Palmetto. Sulfur Butterflies seek out Bidens for the chemical compound phytosterin. In my mind, this alone is a pretty impressive contribution for a pesky weed.

As we walked around, nibbling on this and that, Green Dean paused at a bushy Bidens

AS WE WALKED AROUND, HIDDING ON THIS AND THAT, GREEN DEAN paused at a bushy BIDENS plant. He informed us that Bidens is edible from the root up. One could start with the flower. It makes a nice addition to salads. The leaves also make a nice addition to a salad, but only added a few at a time. Heavy consumption of raw leaves can cause a bellyache due to the saponin content. Saponin is a chemical compound that is part of a plant's natural defense system. It leaves a bitter taste which discourages grazing. Happily, the chemical breaks down when the leaves are cooked.

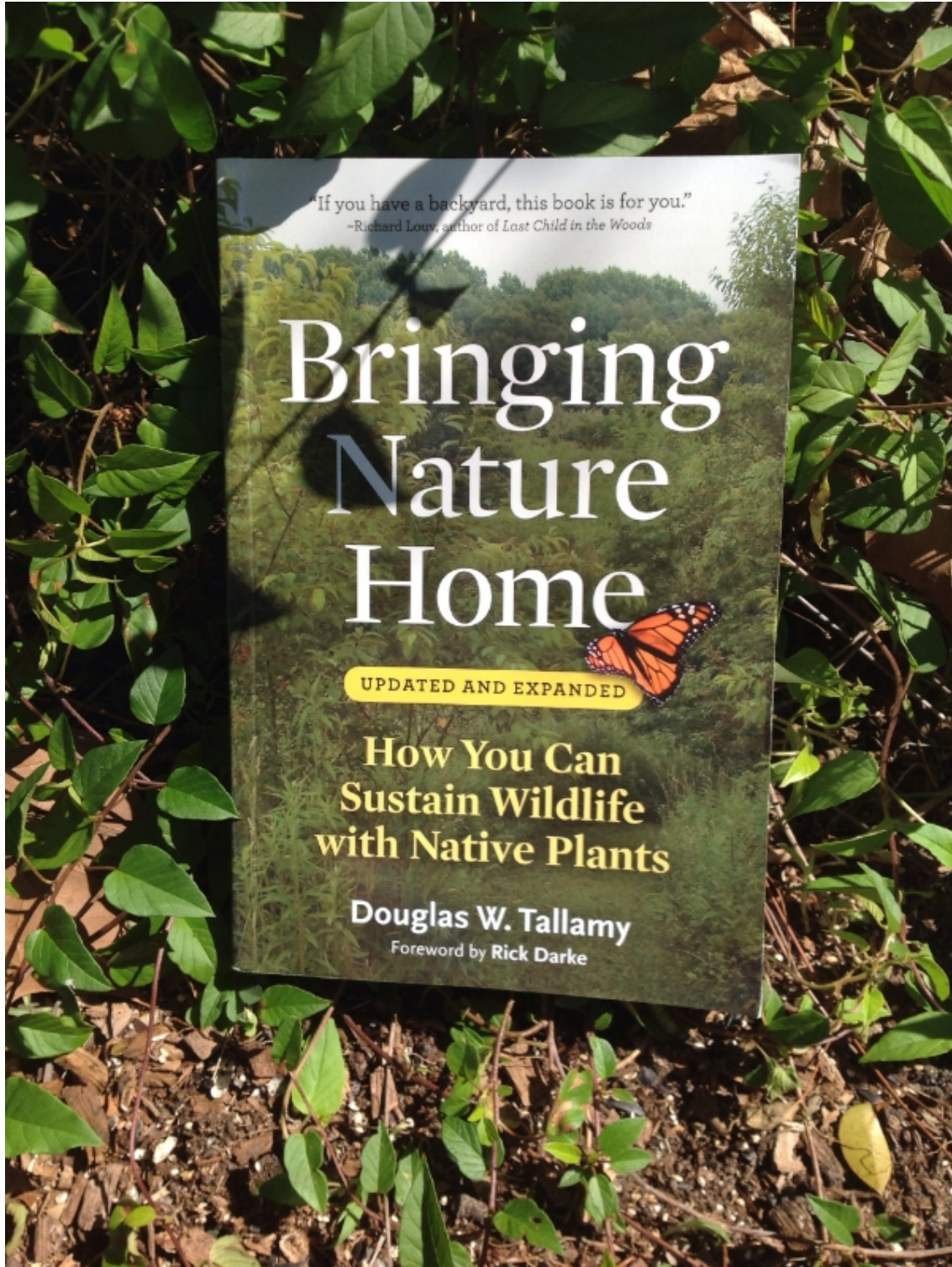
The kids were listening closely. Isabella reached out and plucked a white and yellow blossom. She chewed it thoughtfully and then handed one to her friend Max, who cautiously munched it down. "It kind of tastes like a radish," she commented. Max nodded in agreement. Green Dean continued on. "The leaves can be dried and used to make a tea, or you can Florentine them," he added enthusiastically.

In my own opinion, Florentine is the best style to eat Bidens. Choose young leaves and tender stems. Gather and rinse well. Sauté with olive oil and garlic and add some parmesan cheese. Delicious! The health benefits of eating this weed are very impressive. Bidens is low in calories and high in fiber. It's also high calcium (111mg per serving.) It has been shown that regular consumption of the plant can lower blood sugar, strengthen the immune system and reduce inflammation. Plus it is free, readily available, and tastes great! I say Bidens for everyone!





Bidens mixed in with Golden Creeper, Mimosa and Dollar Weed.



Dr. Tallamy's Book

Are Alien Plants Bad?

By Martha Grattan

On Friday February 28, several members of the Coccoloba Chapter met at the Naples Botanical Gardens to participate in the Zamia Chapter's fifth annual banquet and lecture. Both the food and company was lovely. The event featured Douglas W. Tallamy, professor and chair of the department of entomology at University of Delaware. He has an impressive resume that includes 68 published research articles. He has taught insect taxonomy, behavioral ecology and other courses for nearly three decades. He is also the author of the "Bringing Nature Home," "The New American Landscape" and "Phytochemical Induction by Herbivores."

Mr. Tallamy provided a thought provoking discussion about why native plants are "good" and why exotic plants are "bad." He mentioned that the terms "good" and "bad" may seem subjective. Then he explained that as a scientist he can quantify the difference between "good" and "bad" in terms of a species contribution to the ecology of a region. Specifically the food web that living things rely on for survival. Exotic plants do not make significant contributions to the food web.

The destruction of native habitats and the introduction of exotic plant species have weakened the world food web dramatically. As a result, once common species of plants and animals are growing increasingly rare. Mr. Tallamy explained to us that the majority of plants and animals are "specialists." They have interdependent relationships with one or maybe a few other species for food and reproduction. In fact some plant seeds will not germinate unless they pass through the digestive track of the symbiotic host.

During the lecture it came to me that I haven't done enough to support my birds. Mr. Tallamy explained that a pair of songbird parents need between 300 to 500 caterpillars and spiders to feed their babies! Not a week but a DAY! It takes these hard working parents 12+ hours every day to find this many insects to feed their families. When one realizes this little piece of information, it is not hard to understand why we have lost 50% of our songbirds in the last forty years.

Mr. Tallamy's message was not one of all doom and gloom. He shared the story of the Atala butterfly. This butterfly was never listed as endangered because no one could find an existing population or even a single specimen in Florida. The reason for this apparent extinction was the absence of the Coontie plant. No Coontie, no Atala butterflies. When landscape designers started adding the Coontie to their design palette, Coontie became a widespread presence in Southwest Florida. Gradually, the Atala butterfly began to reappear!

By using native plants in the landscape, we as homeowners, can restore the food web! It is that simple. If you share the information with your neighbors, together you can create a

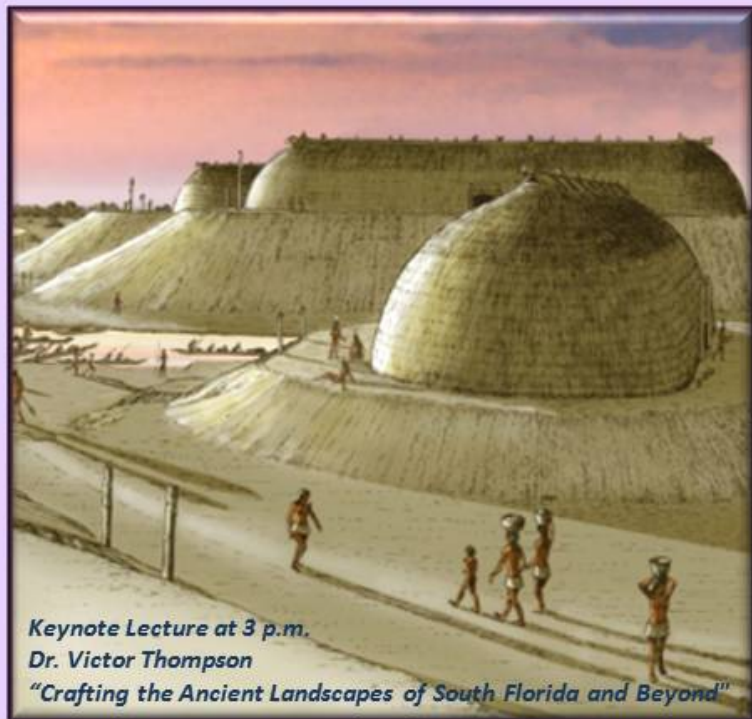
wildlife corridor. If the idea takes off nationally we can create a habitat larger than all the national parks put together. I think it is time we got busy!

Calusa Heritage Day 2014

Saturday, March 15

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Archaeologists
Artists
Authors
Replicators
Food
Boat Tour
Children's Area
Site Tours
Speaker's Tent
Atlatl Throwing
Calusa Tastings
Native Plants



\$5 per person, Children and RRC Members Free
Randell Research Center, Calusa Heritage Trail
13810 Waterfront Drive, Pineland
For additional information: <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/rrc/>
239-283-2062 or 283-2157

Calusa Heritage Day,

Saturday, March 15, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend Calusa Heritage Day on Saturday, March 15. This festival takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Calusa Heritage Trail, 13810 Waterfront Drive, Pineland, located on scenic, historic Pine Island. Admission is free for RRC members and children under 12, and for all others admission is \$5. Complimentary parking, including handicapped parking will be available the grounds.

Speaker's Tent: Two Prominent Archaeologists Among Speakers

Victor Thompson, known in Southwest Florida for his archaeological work at Pineland, Mound Key and Fort Center, has been chosen as keynote speaker. Describing himself as “interested in the ritual and ceremonial landscapes, subsistence systems, and the political development of the peoples who occupied these areas over extended time frames”, Thompson will talk about “The Crafting of the Ancient Landscapes” at 11 a.m. in the Speaker's Tent and at 3 p.m. in the Classroom with his keynote address. Additionally, William Marquardt, Director of Randell Research Center will invite visitors to think about how seemingly mundane things can make important contributions to our understanding of the past, in his discussion of “Shells, Animal Bones, and the Stories They Tell.” Dr. Thompson is Director of the Center for Archaeological Science at the University of Georgia. Dr. Marquardt also directs the Institute of Archaeology and Paleoenvironmental Studies at the University of Florida. Other speakers joining the event will include Dr. Michael Savarese of Florida Gulf Coast University who has been studying the oyster bar habitats of Estero Bay.

On-going from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Florida Public Archaeology Network will host atlatl throwing and Calusa tool and weapon crafting demonstrations will take place led by expert replicators. An atlatl is a very accurate throwing stick, developed long before bow and arrow, which was used by the Calusa and other pre-columbian Florida people. Children and adults will get to try the atlatl for distance and accuracy.

Get on the water to learn about archaeology

Captiva Cruises and RRC will offer a narrated archaeological tour through Pine Island Sound from 12 noon to 1:30 p.m. as part of Calusa Heritage Day. Tickets can be purchased at the festival March 15 or in advance. It's \$30 for adults and \$20 for students. You'll board the 45-foot Santiva, one of Captiva Cruises' famous touring vessels, at the dock at Tarpon Lodge, across the street from the event after meeting your guide at the information tent. This event and partnership between Captiva Cruises and RRC lets Calusa Heritage Day attendees enjoy activities at the event and also to go out and get the feel of Pine Island Sound to learn even more about the Calusa.

Attention artists and art lovers

Artists at Calusa Heritage Day will share interpretations and their work with attendees. Ancient Hands makes pottery and other art, including reproductions of works by pre-Columbian artisans, and will be on hand to sell and explain their wares. Felix Macaguani Rodriguez will display his wood carving and bone implements inspired by early people of the area. Peter Sottong, whose information can be found at www.KeyMarcoCat.com, creates museum-quality reproductions of Calusa masks including those unearthed by Smithsonian archaeologist Frank Hamilton Cushing in 1896 on Marco Island. Dick Workman and Robin Brown will teach how to make cordage from various plants and will be joined by special guests who will demonstrate basket making. Olde Tyme Crafts will be on hand to demonstrate historic-era crafts such as spool knitting, rag rugs, stick weaving, quilting, and knot tying, and will sell kits that will help you get started making your own creations. Dave McDonald of the Indian River Archaeological Society will share his shell tool replicas.

Calusa Tastings

From 12:30 to 2:30 you can sample foods eaten by the Calusa, including papaya and oysters and fish, flavored with chili peppers if you like. The oldest papaya seeds recovered in North America were excavated at Pineland, and chili pepper seeds dating to about 2000 years ago were unearthed here too. Information about the plants and animals you may sample are included in the free tastings.

Exhibits from the Florida Museum of Natural History

Enjoy exhibits from the Florida Museum of Natural History at Calusa Heritage Day without leaving Lee County. Our Gainesville-based parent organization and state museum will loan exhibits for the event. The exhibits will be in the classroom from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and include displays on zooarchaeology and excavations that took place at RRC. Each exhibit will include experts to explain the material and some will include hands-on options.

Learn About Southwest Florida History and Ecosystems

Representatives of local historic and environmental organizations will be on hand to share information about SW Florida and their organizations. Participating facilities and organizations include the Mound House, J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Friends of Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves, Manatee Park, Calusa Land Trust, Port Boca Grande Lighthouse and Museum, Lee County Conservation 2020, Cape Coral Historical Museum, Friends of Cayo Costa State Park, SW Florida Museum of History and Imaginarium Science Center, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and Back Ten Feet.

Tours of the Calusa Heritage Trail and Ethnobotany Tour

Walk the Calusa Heritage Trail with a trained docent to learn about the Calusa and

Take the Calusa Heritage Trail with a trained docent to learn about the Calusa and their ancestors. Tours will start every half-hour beginning at 10:30 and ending at 3:00. Or, at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., take part in a specialized tour to learn more plants and their uses by native people. These tours are family friendly and walking is involved.

Come By Water: Calusa Heritage Day offers boat-tour option

Captiva Cruises is offering a ride from Captiva Island's McCarthy Marina across Pine Island Sound to the docks at Tarpon Lodge. This boat ride provides an effortless way for visitors and others on Sanibel and Captiva – and even south Fort Myers – to enjoy a day on Pine Island Sound and also attend Calusa Heritage Day without the hassle of driving.

The boat will depart McCarthy Marina at 10 a.m. Passengers will get a narrated tour of the harbor then enjoy lunch at the Tarpon Lodge before attending the festival. The lodge is across the street from the festival site. The boat will return passengers to Captiva after a two-hour stay. Fare for the boat ride, tour, and festival admission is \$45 for adults, \$35 for children; lunch is not included. Reservations are required by calling Captiva Cruises at [\(239\) 472-5300](tel:2394725300).

Refreshments

Food will be on sale by Pine Island favorites Little Lillie's Island Deli and Mel Meo's Fish Wagon. Free water will available throughout the grounds, and we encourage you to bring your own refillable water bottle, wear comfortable clothing and shoes, and plan to stay the day!

Still have questions? Feel free to call us at [\(239\) 283-2062](tel:2392832062) or [283-2157](tel:2392832157) or check the website at <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/rrc/>.



Project Noah

By Isabella Peedle

Do you like to do photography? Or even to just observe wildlife or plant life? Well, if you haven't heard of it, you should definitely look into this website called "Project Noah." Project Noah is a website for all ages who are interested in nature. What you do is take pictures and post them, describing the plant or animal. If you don't know what sort of creature it is, you can have experts on the site tell you. Not good at

photography? It doesn't matter! The website includes both professional photographers and beginners. Don't like doing photography at all? Just look at everyone else's photos and learn new facts about each. It's a great educational experience for anyone.

Project Noah also has a section called "missions." Missions are specific groups that you can join or create. An example would be groups of wildlife just for Florida, or a group only for a certain type of plant. You can also earn badges for posting a certain number of a species or by completing missions. So, if you are interested, join Project Noah today at <http://www.projectnoah.org/>.

John Sibley's Corner

By John Sibley

Spring is upon us, and the evidence abounds. The new foliage on the Strangler Fig, Cypress, Tamarind, and Hickory trees, and the Cross Vine among many others. My favorite, of course, are the springtime wildflowers that are beginning to blossom everywhere, especially the Blanket Flowers. Add to that, the increase in butterflies in both quantity and species. Spring is a beautiful thing! A time of renewal and refreshing. That's also the case with Coccoloba as a new board takes over, with new ideas and initiatives, in March, and the FNPS conference now just weeks away. Lots going on, and lots to look forward to, under new leadership and a new year.

Native Plant Society Meeting Minutes, Coccoloba Chapter, February 13, 2014

By Martha Grattan, Secretary

John Sibley calls the meeting to order. He announces that the Naples Zamia Chapter will be holding their annual banquet at Naples Botanical Gardens on Feb. 28. John Sibley introduces Roy Beckford UF/IFAS Agricultural and Natural Resources Agent with the Lee County Extension Office. Roy gives a very entertaining presentation on common garden insects, native plants and doing things naturally. For more on Roy's presentation, see the story on page one of the newsletter.

John Sibley calls the business meeting to order. Marlene Rodak gives the treasurer's report; \$3574.64 in the treasury. The final \$45.00 has been paid to Deep South Nursery to complete the \$900.00 planting grant for the Old Courthouse in Fort Myers. Babu Mathews makes a motion to approve the treasury report. Pat Moyer seconds. Motion passed.

John Sibley yields the floor to Marlene Rodak for the FNPS Conference planning update: Babu Mathews is working with the vendors and exhibitors. Registration is scheduled to go online in the next few days. Marlene states that the field trips are “first come – first served” so it is important to register early. The “save the date” cards will coincide with online registration. The nine science fair winners have been invited to the conference. The “Do Plants Respond to Ultrasound?” experiment will be on display. There also will be a journaling workshop, which is limited to ten people, at \$40.00 per person. Dick Workman is hosting a palm leaf basket weaving workshop. The cheese and wine event is in the process of getting funding from . . . Martha Grattan is working on the speaker schedule. Marlene Rodak states that FGCU has added a resort style pool to the dormitories. Marlene Rodak yields the floor to John Sibley.

John Sibley states that the next item on the agenda is the Native Nursery Plant Show, which is on April 10 & 11 in Kissimmee, FL. FANN needs money to put on this event. The board unanimously approves a \$500.00 donation as a sponsor. John Sibley asks for a vote on the \$500.00 contribution/sponsorship for FANN. Marlene Rodak asks why we can't just run the donation through the conference. John Sibley responds that it is easier to just have the chapter contribute. Sue Scott makes a motion to put it to a vote. Mark Miller seconds the motion. Motion passed by majority vote. None opposed.

John Sibley states that the next item on the agenda is the Manatee Park, Bonita Springs and Rotary Park plant sales. While he has been a big proponent of the plant sales, he now feels that the message is better delivered through plant tours, with small sales after the event. Katie Lackland from Rotary Park, who has been a great asset to our chapter, has asked about our plans for the annual Earth Day event. Marlene Rodak suggests that member nurseries could organize and sell plants at that event if they want to. Marlene Rodak also states that we could consider doing a brief 15 minute sale after the tour. Mary Rawl states that the Searocket Chapter collaborates with an ACE Hardware to put together home tours. The tours last for one day, and individuals can sell plants if they want to. John Sibley states that the new board might want to look at the plant sale at a later date and suggests we move on to the next agenda item.

John Sibley yields the floor to Dick Workman. Dick gives a brief report on the NPS Florida retreat he attended with Treasurer Marlene Rodak. The NPS leadership is planning to revise their bylaws to make meetings more manageable. The changes are a work-in-progress which has been going on for two years. He recommends that members visit fnps.org to see what the changes look like. Highlights include a new council of chapters with representatives from North, Central and South Florida. The intention is to help the chapters become a bit more independent of the state organization, and Dick feels that this is a positive change. He thinks the chapters need enhanced communication amongst themselves. Dick Workman yields the floor to John Sibley.

John Sibley announces that tonight is the board election. The current board members have made a recommendation for the new board as follows:

Martha Grattan - President

Pat Moyer - Vice President

Marlene Rodak – Treasurer

Carolyn Moore – Secretary

Jenny Evans – Newsletter (with Martha Grattan filling in)

Dick Workman – State Representative (Marlene Rodak to take over this position after the conference)

Carolyn Moore was not present. Robin makes a motion to approve the new board. Babu Mathews seconds the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Marlene Rodak thanks John Sibley for his years of service, and the membership claps.

Linda Potter announces that Calusa Heritage Days are coming up on March 15, the third Saturday in March. Babu Mathews announces that Cape Coral’s “March in the Park” is on March 8, also a Saturday. The event includes raffles and prizes. She also mentions the Pine Island Garden Gala on Feb. 22. For more event information, please check the “Happenings” section of the Coccoloba Jam.

John Sibley asks for a motion to adjourn. Sue Scott makes the motion. Mark Miller seconds. Motion passed.

Dick Workman conducts the monthly plant auction.

Rouge Plant (which builds red blood cells) - \$5.00

Cross Creek (book) - \$5.00

Scorpion Tail - \$2.00

Fiddlewood - \$3.00

Fiddlewood - \$6.00

Scorpion Tail with Coontie - \$2.00

Gumbo Limbo (known for its turpentine smell) - \$3.00

Total from the plant sale - \$26.00

Meeting location

Coccoloba monthly meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month at the Calusa Nature Center. The Nature Center is located at 3450 Ortiz Avenue, Fort Myers (just north of the intersection of Colonial Boulevard and Ortiz Avenue). Check out our website at fnpscoccoloba.org

Comments about the new email edition?

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Martha Grattan (temporary newsletter editor) know at:

**Martha Grattan (temporary newsletter editor) know at:
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