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Coccoloba Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 13th
Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium
3450 Ortiz Ave. (corner of Ortiz and Colonial)
Fort Myers, FL 33905
(6:30 pm social; 7 pm speaker)



Inside November 2014

- Field trip to Fakahatchee Strand
- Follow Coccoloba happenings on the web, Facebook, & Twitter



“Walking in the Fakahatchee Strand was not on my bucket list. Because I never in a million, billion years thought I would. Thank you for arranging such an amazing and unforgettable experience.”

- Mary Ellen Frazier

- November Speaker
- Grants & Awards
- Minutes of the General Membership Meeting
- Seed Balls!
- Happenings

Follow Coccoloba happenings on the web, Facebook, & Twitter! Check out Coccoloba's website for up-to-date information on chapter events

(www.fnpscoccoloba.org)

. Like us on Facebook (type in Coccoloba Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society) and follow us on Twitter (@FNPSoccoloba) to join the conversation!

VOLUNTEERS!

We need helpers for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) and Wet Plan workshops. Marlene Rodak will be co-teaching the

A Fun Day in the Swamp!

On an absolutely perfect October day, this was a rare opportunity to have three of the best, most knowledgeable Fakahatchee Strand guides for our trip. Dennis Giardina with Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, was once the park manager at Fakahatchee Strand. Now Mike Owen is the Park Biologist. Both of these gentlemen have the Best Jobs Ever! Then, the icing on this perfect-scenario cake was Donna Owen, Mike's wife. She and Mike were married just over a year ago ... in the swamp! These three practically have their own swamp language by using Whoop-whoops to find each other and keep track of one another. If you had the privilege of attending Mike and Dennis' presentation at the FNPS conference in May, you know how animated and passionate these two are about Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park and the rare orchids and plants occurring there.

We met up at the ranger station, before driving to our parking site then hiking to the secret swamp entry. Sadly, because of orchid poachers, our entrance and the location of our tour is a secret. However, Donna, Mike and Dennis took us to a place known to have a plethora of orchids and

FYN workshops. Both workshops are open to the public and we would love to have volunteers to help with registration, and other fun and easy tasks! Please contact Marlene at (239)273-8945 if you are willing to help with these important events. For more details, including locations, please check the "Happenings" section of this newsletter

INTRODUCTORY FYN WORKSHOPS

December 3, from 1 – 4PM
February 19, from 1 – 4PM

NEIGHBORHOOD LAKES AND PONDS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

November 14, 1-4PM

January 27, 1-4PM

March 26, 1-4PM (at two
locations)

Visit www.WetPlan.org for
more dates

rare plants.

The first few steps in were wet. After that, we barely noticed the water. Each of us were provided walking sticks, which proved to be quite important for maintaining balance in the hip-deep water. There were downed logs and a mucky bottom to negotiate at times. The muck became an issue when we stopped for any period of time. Once stagnant, we would actually sink into the muck without noticing ... until we tried to lift our feet to move. As mentioned, the walking sticks were very useful.

We had no run-ins with alligators or snakes. We saw one palm-size fish-eating spider that was nightmare-worthy. Otherwise, we had the opportunity to see MANY orchids, bromeliads and other interesting and rare plants. With some encouragement, we watched a night scented orchid (*Epidendrum nocturnum*) begin to open before our eyes! I never would have believed it without seeing it!

The day was absolutely PERFECT for the field trip. It was neither too hot nor too cool. The water, although cool with our first steps, quickly became unnoticable. It was a "Goldilocks" kind

Get your Name Badge!

We would like to order name tags for members who would like them. The hope is that members would have a nice name badge to wear at:

- Chapter meetings
- Field trips
- Outreach events (like Lowe's or plant sales)
- WetPlan
Neighborhood Lakes
and Ponds Workshops
- Upcoming events

Please let us know by November 22, 2014, if you would like a name badge. If so, please go to the Coccoloba website at www.FNPSCoccoloba.org, scroll down the page and click on the Name Badge button on the right side.

of day. Although we only planned to spend a few hours wading Fakahatchee, it was close to 3 pm by the time we left. Nobody seemed concerned with the time or particularly rushed to want to leave. Frankly, as we hiked from the secret swamp entrance to our parked vehicles, we commented at how utterly stress-free we all felt.

Fakahatchee Strand is an absolutely fabulous place to see and spend a day. It is a virtual guarantee that all your stress will melt away by spending some time there. And, if you have the opportunity to see the preserve with Dennis Giardina, Donna or Mike Owen, do not pass it up! We were barely back to our parked cars before the field trip participants were asking when we could do it again.



On the left is our little troop wading through the swamp.

*Other items of note and pictured below are the fuzzy wuzzy airplant (*Tillandsia pruinosa*), which is believed to **ONLY** occur in Collier County and the freshwater sponges we found on a submerged log.*





**Meet our November
guest speaker,
Gayle Edwards!**

Join us on Thurs., November 13th, at 6:30 p.m. for the Coccoloba Chapter meeting at Calusa Nature Center in Fort Myers. Gayle's presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. Don't miss out on this informative presentation on a variety of exotic invasive plants!

Gayle Edwards moved to Florida in 1998 and became a Master Gardener in 1999 because of a need to learn the Florida flora, shortly after that she became native plant member. She is a butterfly enthusiast and until recently cared for the Butterfly Garden at Terry Park. Exotic Invasive plants became an item of interest which led to presentations of Exotic of the Month to the Coccoloba Chapter and Master Gardeners. Gayle is now on the FLEPPC board of directors.

To see the FLEPPC list go to <http://www.fleppc.org/list/list.htm>

FNPS 2015 Endowment Grant Research Awards and Conservation Grant Awards

The Florida Native Plant Society maintains an Endowment Research Grant program for the purpose of funding research on native plants. These are small grants (\$1500 or less) that are awarded for a 1-year period, and intended to support research that forwards the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society which is to “promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.”

FNPS Conservation Grants support applied native plant conservation projects in Florida. These grants (\$5000 or less) are awarded for a 1-year period. These projects promote the preservation, conservation, or restoration of rare or imperiled native plant taxa and rare or imperiled native plant community.

To qualify for a Conservation Grant, the proposed project must be sponsored by an FNPS Chapter.

Application guidelines and details are on the FNPS Web site (www.fnps.org). To view them, click on 'Participate/Grants and Awards'. Questions regarding the grant programs should be sent to info@fnps.org.

Application deadline for the 2015 Awards is March 6, 2015. Awards will be announced at the May 2015 Annual Conference in Tallahassee. Awardees do not have to be present at the Conference to receive their award.

Minutes of the General Membership Meeting of the Florida Native Plant Society, Coccoloba Chapter

Thursday, October 9, 2014, 7:00 pm

By Ben Johnson, Chapter Secretary

Attendance: 21

Thank you to guest speaker Debbie Hughes, Senior Horticulturist of the Edison and Ford Winter Estates, for her topic on seeding and propagation, and sharing some of the history of the estates.

Meeting came to order. Marlene Rodak motioned to pass last meeting's minutes and Fred Geist seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Marlene Rodak gave the current NPS Coccoloba treasury balance of \$5890.19. She stated the chapter is looking for a CPA to file this year's taxes. Marlene talked about a membership renewal improvement process to better inform members when renewals are due. With Robin Krivanek at the helm, the chapter purchased membership renewal postcards. Robin will send these, at her expense, to remind members to renew their membership. Other business as usual, and current financial obligations met.

Sue Moore of the Lakes Park Enrichment foundation talked about the foundation's interest in creating a children's garden at Lakes Park. They are looking for volunteers to assist with this project. They are also planning a fundraiser March 15 for this project. She then mentioned upcoming events at Lakes Park: Scarecrows in the Park October 17-31 and Lakeside Country Bash December 13. More information on the Lakes Park Enrichment Foundation and their upcoming events can be found at their website <http://lakesparkenrichmentfoundation.org>.

Martha Grattan reviewed the meeting agenda. Emphasis was placed on increasing membership, and encouraging others to join. Martha also talked about volunteer opportunities and upcoming events. Support is needed for the following: Presenters for "WetPlan" seminars, Garden tour coordinator, teams for yard evaluations, refreshment committee for monthly meetings, work days and plantings (Manatee Park and Calusa Nature Center), sales, nursery promotion and recruitment and special projects like Heights Elementary. Anyone interested in helping can contact Marlene Rodak at 239-273-8945.

Pat Moyer mentioned that there will not be a native plant sale at Manatee Park this year, but Manatee Park will be hosting a "Birds, Butterflies and Bees" event on November 1. The Coccoloba Chapter will be involved, and have a table set up.

Sue Scott requested that upcoming events be emailed as soon as possible to allow for earlier postings on internet pages.

Marlene Rodak updated members on outreach projects to promote education on native plant sales at Lowes, Home Depot, and various other nurseries, and also displayed the plant markers provided by the Lee County Division of

Natural Resources. She then stated the Chapter is need of a projector with an estimated cost of\$400. Lucy Breitung made a motion to purchase a projector. Motion seconded by Robin Krivanek. Motion passes.

Marlene Rodak motioned to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Robin Krivanek. Motion passes. Meeting was adjourned.



Seed balls are fun for everyone!

Looking for a gardening activity that's fun for the whole family? How about making wildflower seed balls? All you need is compost (or organic soil), dry clay, native wildflower seeds and water — oh yes, and a willingness to get your hands dirty!

Seed balls consist of different types of seeds rolled into a marble-sized ball with clay and soil. They date back to ancient times when they were used to help repair farms after annual floods. In the 1930s, a Japanese scientist rediscovered the technique in an effort to increase food production. Today, they are used to help reseed areas where native flora has been disturbed or destroyed.

Making seed balls is fun, easy and is a great activity for kids of all ages. Here's what you need:

- 3 parts compost or organic soil
- 5 parts dry red clay (or other natural, air-dry clay)
- 1-2 parts water
- 1-2 parts native wildflower seeds of your choice*
- Large bowl or tub to mix ingredients
- Large box to dry and store seed balls

* Be sure to select seeds that are native to your area and that are suitable for the conditions in which they will be used.

Mix the compost, clay and seeds in bowl. Add 1 part water and knead until mixed well. Take small bits of the mixture and roll into balls about 1 inch in diameter. The balls should hold together; if they crumble easily, add more water to the mixture. Allow the seed balls to dry on a flat surface and in a sunny location for 24-48 hours.

Once the seed balls dry, they can be placed (or gently tossed, which is a lot more fun!) into a garden plot or pile of dirt. Don't bury them, but allow them to remain exposed to Mother Nature. The clay will protect the seeds from animal disturbance, and will eventually break apart and wash away with rain.

The compost will provide nutrients for the seeds to grow. If you choose to store the seed balls for a little while, be sure to put them in a dry location as exposure to moisture may result in them sprouting!

To order native ecotype wildflower seeds to use in making seed balls, [visit our online store.](#)

Happenings

Wine Tasting to benefit Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife

The Waterside Wine Club at Cape Harbour is hosting their "We Know Pinot!" wine tasting event to benefit the Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife. It will be on Nov. 18th from 5:30-8:30pm.

The Waterside Wine Club is located at 5785 Cape Harbour Drive in Suite 203 Cape Coral, FL 33914. Go to the Harbour shops and proceed to the second floor overlooking the marina halfway between Fathoms and Pignolis in Suite 203. In the promenade, follow the signs up the stairs or take the elevator across from the second parking garage. Tickets are \$15 or you can order online for \$10 at <http://watersidewineclub.com/event/know-pinot/> or call for more information: (239) 540-1557

Introductory Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Workshops

Wednesday, December 3 from 1PM – 4PM and

Thursday, February 19 from 1PM – 4PM

Bonita Springs City Hall

9101 Bonita Beach Road

Bonita Springs, FL 34135

For more information call: (239) 273-8945.

Register for this free class online:

FFL-Dec3.eventbrite.com

FFL-Dec19.eventbrite.com

Websites: <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

Wet Plan Workshops

Neighborhood Lakes and Ponds Management

Friday, November 14, 1-4PM
Lee County Hyacinth Control District
15191 Homestead Road, Lehigh Acres, FL 33971
Tuesday, January 27, 1-4PM
Bonita Springs City Hall
9101 Bonita Beach Road, Bonita Springs, FL 34135
Thursday, March 26, 1-4PM
Calusa Nature Center & Planetarium
Iona House, 3450 Ortiz Avenue, Fort Myers, FL 33905
Thursday, March 26, 1-4PM
Lakes Regional Library
15290 Bass Road, Fort Myers, FL 33919
Visit www.WetPlan.org for more dates

Home School Nature and Science Programs (2-15 years)

Bring your home school kids to learn about nature and the environment or make a related craft. Programs are geared for a broad age group. Please wear shoes and clothes appropriate for hiking and outdoor exploration.

The themes are in this order: Nature Giving (12/8). All are on Mondays from 10 AM to 11:30 AM. \$5 Residents / \$8 Non-Residents

Located at Rotary Park Environmental Center, 5505 Rose Garden Road, Cape Coral, FL 33914

For more information, call the Rotary Park Environmental Center at (239) 549-4606

Citizens Academy will Begin in February

The Citizens Academy is a 12-week class, teaching citizens about City government and how the processes work. There are two classes per year, the first is in February.

Enrollment is open to Cape Coral residents, and the class size is limited.

Additional information is available by contacting the program coordinator at 574-0446 or by email at citizensacademy@capecoral.net.

Free Butterfly House Tours

Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays at 10:30 am, free and no reservations required.

Located at Rotary Park Environmental Center, 5505 Rose Garden Road, Cape Coral, FL 33914.

For more information, call the Rotary Park Environmental Center at (239) 549-4606

Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program (16 years and older)

Have your own environmentally friendly oasis. Learn about the right plant for the right place, how to create a beautiful yard with efficient use of water, where to find plants that do not need chemical interference and more. The cost of this class is per household. Friday from 1:00 pm-4:00 pm, 11/12, \$15 Residents / \$23 Non-Residents

Located at Rotary Park Environmental Center, 5505 Rose Garden Road, Cape Coral, FL 33914

For more information, call the Rotary Park Environmental Center at (239) 549-4606

December 3rd in Bonita Springs from 1-4 pm; [Click here](#) for more information and to register. This workshop is free and refreshments will be served. Volunteers are also needed for registration, etc. Contact Marlene at (239) 273-8945 for more info.

Do You Want to Reduce the Amount of Fertilizer Used on Your Property?

The City of Sanibel Vegetation Committee is offering a guided native vegetation and landscaping tour of City Hall grounds, which have been planted solely with native plants.

Come walk the grounds for ideas on planting native vegetation that requires no fertilizer. Come see how you can plant a garden that reseeds itself with very little maintenance, is good for the environment and will attract birds and butterflies.

Vegetation Committee members will provide valuable information on proper planting and care of native vegetation. The City of Sanibel encourages planting of vegetation that is indigenous to the area as it requires very little maintenance, NO fertilizer, and NO supplemental irrigation.

[Click here](#) to view the links to the plant list and the native plant slide show.

The City of Sanibel is a "walkable and bikeable" community and features one of the most extensive shared use paths in the State of Florida. Attendees to these special events are encouraged to enjoy our good nature; bicycle to these

events and stay FIT-4-LIFE!

The tour of City Hall grounds is on:

Wednesday, November 12, 2014

The guided tour begins promptly at 10:00 a.m.

Registration is not required. Attendees meet at the main entrance to City Hall, 800 Dunlop Road, in front of the main staircase. For additional information regarding the guided native vegetation tour, please contact the City's Natural Resources Department at (239) 472-3700.

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