

**Magnolia Chapter FNPS Monthly Update: May 2012**

“Nowhere is nature’s ‘Yay!’ more apparent than a good display of wildflowers.”(Jenn Schensul)

**Chapter Happenings:**

May 2012 wrapped up a glorious springtime on the slopes, flatwoods, rivers and lakes of North Florida’s Red Hills region. Reports of magnolia, fever tree and pitcher plant blooms abounded. A last round of whacks were taken at the Gholson Nature Park’s invasive exotic plants. And folks dispersed out to take in floral diversity away from home.

**Robert K. Godfrey Herbarium Open House Events**

Prior to the April and May Chapter Meetings, Drs. Austin Mast and Loran Anderson opened the Robert K. Godfrey Herbarium at FSU (Biology Unit 1 building, room 100) from 6 - 7 p.m for tours. Herbarium Director Dr. Austin Mast and Professor Emeritis Dr. Loran Anderson informed visitors about data retrieval and the virtual herbarium effort. Folks attending were amazed at the knowledge, technology and collections housed in the herbarium. The quick tours do not do it justice. With the success of the open house events, check the calendar for more in the future.

**May Plant of the Month –Smooth Oxeye:**

Dan Miller picked Smooth Oxeye, *Heliopsis helianthoides* (L.)Sweet var. *gracilis* (Nutt.)Gandhi & R.D.Thomas, as the May Plant of the Month without a doubt since it is such a happy plant. It has so much fun those crazy Europeans liken it to a ballet dancer. Smooth Oxeye is a member of the Aster family with a sunny disposition found in North Florida pinewoods from Jefferson to Bay Counties, as well as other southeastern states. It is a regional variety of a plant with a much wider distribution through North America. The flowers resemble sunflowers (*Helianthus*) with a yellow/green disc surrounded by happy yellow ray flowers produced in loose panicles or sprays over a long blooming period. It isn’t overly picky about growing conditions and produces short rhizomes. The preference is full or partial sun in moderately moist to well drained soils. Smooth Oxeye is fast and easy to grow (at least so far so good in my garden). New Magnolia Chapter member, Carole Hayes won a blooming *Heliopsis* in the plant raffle to take home to her garden.

**Magnolia Chapter Annual Meeting, May 3, 2012**

May is the scheduled meeting of the Chapter membership. Next year’s annual meeting will include proposals for revising the chapter’s by-laws and electing a new leadership team (officers serve on a two year cycle). This year Chapter Treasurer James Cooper presented the budget. The take home message was...we’ve got money in the bank raised by calendar sales and past conferences, and we’re spending it on good stuff!

May, 2012	
CD (36 mth), 2%	5,126
CD (60 mth), 2%	5,126
Savings	3,418
Checking	9,155
Cashbox	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,975</b>

Expenses	\$	Category
Calendar Printing	1750	EO
Speakers	1500	EO
Panhandle Res Grant	500	RC
Student Scholarship	500	RC
Chap Rep (travel)	400	GM
State Sales Tax	350	EO
Library Project	250	EO
Refreshments	200	GM
Booth	180	EO
Awards	100	EO
FANN	100	EO
Maclay Garden	100	RC
St Marks Trail	100	RC
Gholsons N.P.	100	RC
Postage	100	GM/EO
EO = Educ/Outreach, GM = Gen Mgt, RC = Res/Consv		

### **May 3, 2012 Program: Biological Control of Florida's Invasive Weeds: Progress and Perspectives.**

James P. Cuda, Ph.D. University of Florida's Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants convincingly presented biological control strategies as the most sustainable approach to the management of many of Florida's invasive exotic pest plants. As in the case of the aquatic pest plant hydrilla and the herbicide sonar, when an invasive plant becomes resistant to herbicides, which are often seen as the least bad solution, there's renewed interest in biological controls. To demonstrate biological control methods, Dr. Cuda highlighted his work on the Brazilian peppertree, *Schinus terebinthifolius* Raddi (Anacardiaceae), a non-native plant that has become one of the most invasive weeds in Florida, California, Hawaii, and more recently Texas. Biological control involves the introduction into Florida of host-specific natural enemies of an invasive plant that are capable of selectively damaging the target invasive plant without wreaking havoc on the native ecosystem. There have been failures and costly mistakes, such as the introduction in the Caribbean of the cactoblastic moth which now threatens Florida native plants.

Brazilian peppertree, nicknamed "BP" for short, is also known by a corruption of its scientific name, *Schinus how-terrible-you-been-to-us*, because of the way it has taken over Florida natural communities and because it supports other non-native pests. BP stands harbor citrus root weevils, black iguanas, red-banded thrips (a mango pest) and Asian tiger mosquitos...terrible critters! To learn how to control BP, scientists started by looking into the DNA of the populations in Florida centered on Punat Gorda and Miami. With this information, scientists tracked BP back to its native range where its predators could be studied and assessed in trials for host specificity, or how much of an appetite they have for Florida native plants. Potential BP biological controls include a wasp that parasitizes seeds, a sawfly that the feds got cold feet about bringing in, and *Epismus* moth that has been introduced into Hawaii.

For folks looking to get into native plant conservation, the field of biological controls appears to be a great mix of foreign adventure and domestic zen moments. First pick an invasive plant with an appealing exotic name (think of our invasive pests like Natal, Burma and cogon grasses, Australian pine and scaevola, Santa Maria or all the plants from Southeastern Asia. Then be prepared to think like a bug. One of Dr. Cuda's interesting slides showed such a person "defoliating" a plant for an experiment: on hands and knees picking off leaves from a plant like a munching caterpillar, observing the regrowth of the plant, then munching again. Since experiments such as these take several seasons of munch-regrowth-munch-regrowth, and multiple tests to make sure that an organism is ready for introduction, biological control science will definitely be a sustainable career in addition to being a sustainable approach to invasive species management. For information, google "Florida's Brazilian Pepper Management Plan."

### **May 5, 2012 Field Trip to Apalachicola National Forest Savannas, Liberty County**

The power of one. Into the vastness of the Apalachicola National Forest few have been privy to sights of towering white cedar stands, profusions of greenfly orchid blooms and hybridizing pitcher plants deep with the forest, disjunct from the roaring of the highway, guided by expert botanists across a network of unpaved forest roads that traverse the wilderness. On Saturday, May 5th, Dr. Ann Johnson & Scott Davis met the power of one hardy soul ready to accept the privilege, Scott Copeland. With Scott C. eager to brave the wilderness and soak up all that is possible to cram into one mind in a day, Dr. Ann and Scott D. were freed to cover as much forest and taxonomy as they could in a day.

Trip highlights included:

- A pond cypress head festooned with flowering greenfly orchids (*Epidendrum conoposeum*), the blooms contrasted with leaves reddened from exposure.
- The endemic Apalachicola St. John's Wort (*Hypericum chapmanii*).
- Hybridizing Yellow & Purple Pitcher Plants (*Sarracenia flava* & *rosea*).
- The endemic & endangered Apalachicola Aster (*Eurybia spinulosa*).
- Atlantic White Cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*) that escaped the logger's saw.
- The elusive Pond Pine (*Pinus serotina*).
- The endemic & endangered Thicket Waterwillow (*Justicia crassifolia*).

Scott Copeland was in botanical heaven. He also happened to have the most volunteer days at Gholson Nature Park for exotics (see below). When Leigh Brooks asked what he wanted for his prize, he said he already got it, spending the day in the field with expert guides Ann and Scott. He was overjoyed with that gift so much he blogged his pleasure. Read his story at:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/05/11/1090432/-The-Daily-Bucket-Carnivorous-Plants-of-the-FL-Panhandle>

### **April 14 and 22, Gholson Nature Park Workdays, Chattahoochee.**

Leigh Brooks wrapped up the spring's exotic removal and park resource management with two workdays in May. Here are stat's for 2012 workdays at Gholson Nature Park.

Number of workdays: 10

Number of volunteers: 26

Volunteer hours: 159

Number of bags collected: 62

Most volunteer hours: Scott Copeland, 8 workdays, 25.5 hours. Scott also recruited volunteers totaling 19 hours. Prize: gift membership to FNPS and Baldwin's spiny pod (*Matelea baldwiniana*) plant donated by Bill Boothe/Bok Tower.

A Root Jack tool made a big difference, especially in persistent areas of coral ardesia and Nandina. Thanks to FNPS Magnolia Chapter for the donation to the cause, which paid for the new favorite tool, supplies, snacks and volunteer party. [the next sentence is to be read in a shout out, like from the late great adman Billy May] "The Root Jack is so impressive, several volunteers have since purchased a Root Jack for home use."

### **Roadside Wildflowers**

Eleanor Dietrich took her advocacy for roadside wildflowers on the road, presenting at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Florida Native Plant Conference, "Preserving the Natural Heart of Florida," held May 17<sup>th</sup> – May 20<sup>th</sup> in Plant City. Eleanor's work shows that it is no longer just about Garden Clubs encouraging state transportation departments to plant roadside wildflowers. Instead, there's another story of ecology and biodiversity as found in a recent article published in the *Miami Herald*.

Jen Schensul, of the Hackensack New Jersey *Record* covered the attraction of roadside wildflowers in her article, "Wildflowers Have Become a Travel Destination", including our favorite panhandle wildflower route through the Apalachicola National Forest, in a wildflower destination Top Ten list from USA Today. Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/05/15/2799886/wildflowers-have-become-a-travel.html#storylink=cpy survival>.

Also newsworthy, on May 10, 2012, the Florida Department of Transportation's Midway Operations Center was given the 2012 Paths of Sunshine Award from the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs (FFGC); the only statewide award recognizing roadside maintenance units for their superior management and conservation of native wildflowers and other plants, The Midway Operation Center's wildflower conservation efforts included protection of the beautiful stands of native wildflowers on the State Road 65 rights-of-ways during the widening and improvements through the Aplachicola National Forest between Telogia and Sumatra. Midway also won the Roadside Beautification award in 2007. Lynn Artz, Wakulla County Board of County Commissioner and Sarracenia FNPS Chapter member, accepted the award at the FFGC convention in Jacksonville on behalf of the Midway Operation Center's Gabriella Corbin. The award included a certificate for wildflower seeds to be planted to further roadside beautification efforts in North Florida.

### **News on the Conservation Front**

FNPS Land Management Review:

The new state Land Management Review (LMR) schedule is ready for 2012 -2013. Please look at the schedule and see which state park, forest or preserve you are interested in participating in as an FNPS reviewer. FNPS contributes one or more volunteers for these two day natural resource management audits. The full schedule is posted on the FNPS LMP web page (<http://www.fnps.org/committee/partners>). There is an Interactive Map on the new web site that can keep you posted (<http://www.fnps.org/lmrs>). For more information contact:

Anne C. Cox, Ph.D.

FNPS Land Management Partners Chair

561 744-9531 Voice

561-339-1549 Cell

lmpartners@bellsouth.net

### Apalachicola National Forest Forest Highway 13 Cogongrass

On May 29th, Wilson Baker, Brad Hartman and Guy Anglin met with Teri Cleeland (Deputy Forest Supervisor, National Forests in Florida), Marcus Beard (Ranger, Apalachicola National Forest), Carl Petrick (Ecosystems Staff Officer, National Forests in Florida), Gary Hegg, (Silviculturist Apalachicola National Forest) and Brian Pelc of The Nature Conservancy.

The purpose of the visit was to observe and discuss concerns about Cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) on the Apalachicola National Forest. Magnolia Chapter members are especially concerned about an infestation that is scattered along several miles of Forest Highway (FH)13. FH 13 runs east and west through most of the Forest, which means that we have a seed source right through the heart of the forest.

If this pest isn't removed from the forest, it will soon become unmanageable. The members had a very constructive and informative discussion in conference and during the following field visit. In Guy's opinion the Forest Service is aware and appreciates the significance of this pest. It will be difficult, but the Magnolia Chapter needs to encourage the Forest Service to make this a priority and take whatever action is necessary to eradicate Cogongrass from the Forest.

### Web Notes

USGS Spring MEGA MAP SALE (we are talking one dollar for those massive, wall size maps - EcoRegions, Quads, even BULLETINS) <http://tinyurl.com/d729pge>.

Friends of St. Joseph Bay State Buffer Preserve (a.k.a. "The Buffer Preserve") have Photo Workshop and Contests and are posting about upcoming Public Meeting there for Land Management Review <http://www.stjosephbaypreserves.org/>

News about HWY 65 and its appeal: [www.miamiherald.com/2012/05/15/2799886\\_p3/wildflowers-have-become-a-travel.html](http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/05/15/2799886_p3/wildflowers-have-become-a-travel.html).

Final Recovery Plan for Gentian Pinkroot is out for reading at <http://www.fws.gov/panamacity/> or <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/species/recovery-plans.html>

### Help Wanted

Florida Friendly Landscape Brochure Photos:

The Northwest Florida Water Management District is developing a new brochure on "Florida Friendly" landscaping to complement their other water conservation brochures. They are looking for several photos of "Florida Friendly" yards in the panhandle for use in the brochure and would like photos to include some turf and some ground cover and flowers. NFWMD will be happy to give credit to the photographer in the publication. Please direct photos and inquiries to:

Lucinda Scott

Public Information Coordinator

[Lucinda.Scott@nfwmd.state.fl.us](mailto:Lucinda.Scott@nfwmd.state.fl.us)

850-539-5999