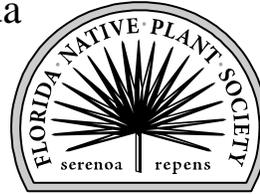




The Lily Pad

The Pine Lily Chapter of the Florida
Native Plant Society



Volume 1, September 2007

September Program: Dr. Steve Harper

Dr. Steve Harper works for the Environmental Lands Division with Pinellas County. He is the Research Director on the Pine Lily study within Brooker Creek Preserve. Brooker Creek Preserve consists of nearly 9,000 acres of pristine wilderness nestled in the northeastern tip of Pinellas County, the most densely populated county in the state of Florida. The Preserve provides opportunities for the public to study and enjoy native Florida plants, wildlife, and water resources. Dr. Harper will enlighten us with the preferred and/or limited habitat of the Pine Lily; what research he is currently working on; and future outlook for this plant. It will be an honor for Dr. Harper to come to Osceola County to bring us up-to-date and provide education of our Society Symbol. For more information about the Preserve, go to www.pinellascounty.org/envrionment.



September Field Trip: Lake Tibet Butler

The next field trip will be on September 22nd. Tibet-Butler preserve is located along the northwest shore of Tibet-Butler Lake Orange County, and is managed by the South Florida Water Management District. With over four miles of trails and elevated boardwalks through bay and cypress swamps, freshwater marshes, and scrub and pine flatwoods there will be lots of native plants to see. The trip will begin at the visitor center at 9:00 a.m. and last for 1.5-3 hours. So bring your field guides, cameras, and friends (or just yourself) and join us for an enjoyable morning exploring Florida native plant communities.

Directions: Take Exit 68 (Lake Buena Vista) off of I-4 West. Head north about 5 miles on C.R. 535 (Winter Garden-Vineland Road). Entrance to the preserve is on the east (right) side of the road.

Is Bottled Water Any Better? *Michelle Guidry*

In today's day and age grabbing a bottle of water is almost second nature. Drinking water is undoubtedly better than drinking soda or fruit drinks, but is that bottle of water really any better than your own tap water? And what are the effects of the bottled water industry on the environment?

In 2004, the global consumption of bottled water was 41 billion. In places that do not have reliable, clean water sources, bottled water is a necessity. For many in the U.S., clean water is provided through tap water. In some instances, the federal standards for tap water are higher than for bottled water. If a tap water municipality serves 25 or more people than they are subject to the Safe Drinking Water Act. To adhere to those standards municipalities are constantly testing for harmful substances that may be found in tap water. Tap water that is provided to you is safe to drink contrary to what some media reports may have you believe. In fact, 40% of bottled water is tap. So, you may be already drinking tap water and paying a very high price for it.

The cost of having bottle water is not only costly to you in what you

One way to avoid resorting to bottle water and still feel like you are drinking something "cleaner and tastier" than tap water, is to filter your own water at home. A high-end water filtration system for your faucet provides water at 18 cents a gallon. That beats paying more than a dollar for a bottle of water. By filtering your own tap water at home you would be saving a significant amount of money a year and doing a little bit of good for our environment.



spend to drink it but also has a toll on the environment. Bottled water costs 240-10,000 times more than tap water. Then you have to transport the bottled waters by some means, boat, truck or train. All of these forms of transportation burn up valuable fossil fuels and emit carbon dioxide. Additionally, to produce enough bottled water for American demand for one year uses up more than 47 million gallons of oil. That is equivalent to the oil consumption of 100,000 cars and to the emission of 1 billion pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Another stab at the environment comes when 86% of the plastic from bottled water ends up in the trash where it can take 400-1,000 years to biodegrade. Meanwhile, it is taking up valuable landfill space and leaking toxic additives into our groundwater.

Sign up for Eco Alerts



The FNPS tracks legislation and public policies that affect the conservation of Florida Native Plants. Issues that affect our mission and that call for some form of immediate action are presented on the FNPS website. In addition, FNPS maintains an Eco Alert list to keep interested participants informed of calls for action on a wide variety of Florida and national environmentally sensitive subjects. To join, send an email to <mailto:info@fnps.org>.

Plant Raffle

The last plant raffle was a great success! Congratulations to all the people who went home with a new plant and thank you for all who donated. Please continue to bring any plants, seeds, or cuttings you want to donate. If you do bring a plant to donate we ask that the plant is labeled with the common and scientific name and where it grows. We will be accepting donations for the raffle. This would be a great way for you to get some natives into your landscape and learn about them at the same time.



FNPS Members Retreat

The Florida Native Plant Society is organizing a Members Retreat for October 5-7, 2007 at Pine Lake Retreat near Clermont, FL. This informal retreat will give members from around the state an opportunity to mingle, learn something new and enjoy the beautiful ecosystems of Central Florida. Activities will include hiking, paddling, workshops, guest speakers, nature crafts and family program. The FNPS Government Policy & Legislature Committee will also hold an advocacy Workshop. Look for additional details on the website www.fnps.org in the coming months, and please contact Karina Veaudry executivedirector@fnps.org or (407) 895-8446 with questions or if you would want to assist before or during the retreat.

Species Spotlight: Swamp Rose Mallow

Hibiscus coccineus Walter By: Christina Uranowski

The stunningly attractive Rosemallow, also called Rose Swamp-Mallow (*Hibiscus coccineus* Walter) is our featured plant of the month. This attractive showy plant attracts butterflies and hummingbirds with its nectar (Figure 1). Many of us had the great pleasure of seeing this beauty in full bloom on our field trip to The Nature Conservancy Disney Wilderness Preserve last month. This was really a treat and we were very fortunate because the flower of this plant lasts only 1 day! Usually, many groups do not schedule field trips in the summer for lots of good reasons, like vacations. Mainly, because a typical summer day in Florida is extremely hot and humid, and too uncomfortable for most people to be walking around outdoors for any length of time. But, we would have missed this brilliant specimen in any other season! It was well worth the heat. This and several other species of the genus *Hibiscus* is very interesting with its impressive blooms.



Figure 1. *Hibiscus coccineus* with Sulfur Butterfly

The genus *Hibiscus* belongs to the Malvaceae family. You can find about 300 species of *Hibiscus*, where they occur, in the warm temperate, subtropical and tropical zones worldwide. In the United States, there are about 49 species of these variously colored always showy, flamboyant plants. The distribution map below (Figure 2), shows that Swamp-Mallow has been found to occur in several counties of Florida including Osceola. The larger US distribution map (Figure 3) shows its occurrence can be found as far as Arkansas and along the coastal plain states from Louisiana through Florida, northward to Virginia.

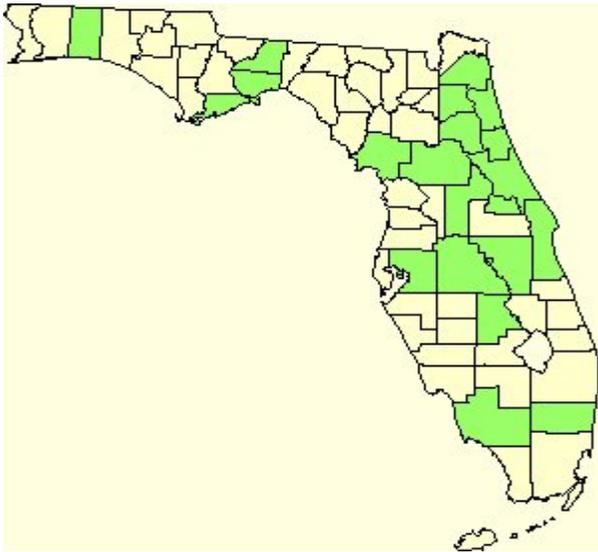


Figure 2. USF Institute of Systematic Botany, Plant Atlas Distribution Map of *Hibiscus coccineus*

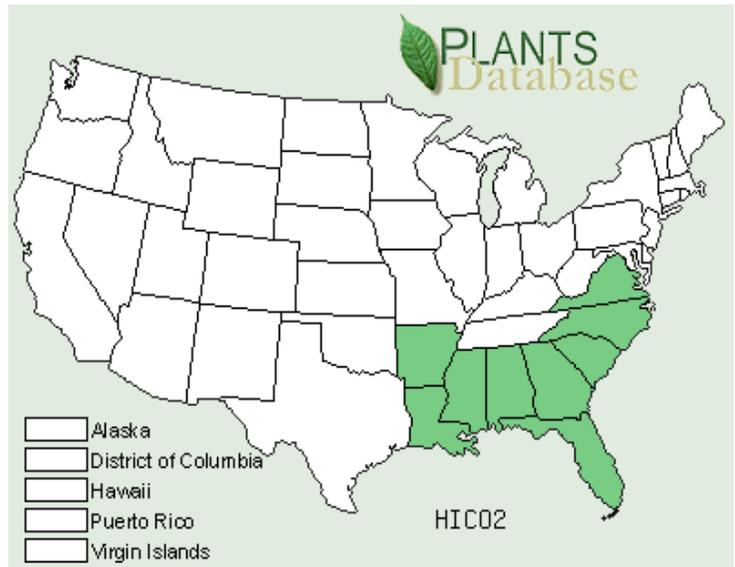


Figure 3. USDA, NRCS Distribution Map of *Hibiscus coccineus*

Swamp-Mallow is a herbaceous perennial that can grow as high as 8 feet tall, found in wetlands such as marshes, along swamps and in ditches. It definitely likes to have its feet wet! The leaves are alternate on long stems called petioles and are palmate, having up to 7 lobes. The five brilliant red petals do not overlap and are funnel-shaped on long stems, termed peduncles that occur in the axils of the upper leaves. The female organ, called the stigma, is very pronounced with five short divisions near the top, found in the middle of the floral tube surrounded by many male organs called stamens. If you look at the back of the flower you will see many green upwardly curved bracts called involucre bracts that subtend the calyx and flower petals, whereby this flower with its organs on top is termed superior. The fruit is a capsule that has numerous seeds in each of the 5 locules. *Hibiscus* is bisexual with radially symmetrical flowers borne solitary in leaf axils, has 5 free petals, 5 parted stigmas, numerous stamens and lobed leaves, characteristic of the Malvaceae Family or Mallow Family.

Florida is blessed with an abundance and huge diversity of plants. Next month, September 15th, we will explore the landscape of the Tibet Butler Nature Preserve in Orange County. Let's get out there and search for more interesting and wonderful Native Plants of Florida!

(Compiled from: *Hibiscus coccineus*, Edward F. Gilman, FactSheet FPS-253, IFAS, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, 1999; Godfrey, R.K. and J. W. Wooten. 1981. Aquatic and wetland plants of southeastern United States. Dicotyledons. University of Georgia Press, Athens, Ga.; USF, Institute of Systematic Botany; USDA, NRCS)

Become a Florida Master Naturalist

Eleanor Foerste has scheduled the next Florida Master Naturalist Training for Wednesdays starting October 3rd until November 7th. The training is \$225 and focuses on Freshwater Wetland ecosystems including rivers, lakes, streams, marshes, and swamps. There will be field trips as well as having classroom presentations and videos. Registration deadline is September 19th.



Sandie Mulrooney has attended the Uplands Module and has said that “habitats are studied in detail and field trips are extensive. Eleanor’s style of teaching makes it very enjoyable and amazingly easy to remember. I knew absolutely nothing about Uplands and had only recalled hearing of Uplands only once prior to the class.”

Register online at <http://www.masternaturalist.org> and click on the “Course Offerings” link. For more information call Cindy Rutherford at 321-697-3015

Please Read!
This will be voted on at the next meeting.

The Florida Hometown Democracy Amendment: A tool for citizens to take control of their communities *by Jan Allyn, Pinellas County*

Many people in Florida are frustrated with what they see as rampant, unsustainable growth where they live and work. They see local governments as unresponsive to their pleas for environmental preservation and respect for the character and integrity of their neighborhoods. They wonder whether there will be enough water for human use and for natural systems, and they worry about the effects of urbanization on their quality of life.

Stories are legion about citizens’ groups desperately appealing for the application of environmental laws and municipal codes to deny unwanted, sprawl-inducing projects. Residents of Yankeetown are fighting a project that would fundamentally change its charming, small-town character. A group in Tarpon Springs is going to the mat with retailing behemoth Wal-Mart to keep it from building a superstore on wetlands adjacent to the Anclote River, a protected waterway. Residents of the Panhandle are fighting a mega-airport that will open managed forest areas there to commercial and residential development. Opponents of developing Babcock Ranch found that it was unstoppable and reluctantly

settled for a compromise that will preserve much of the property but will undoubtedly create a corridor of sprawl between there and Fort Myers.

Florida's Growth Management Act, passed in 1985, was supposed to prevent such things from happening. Under the Act, counties and cities must develop and maintain Comprehensive Plans ("comp plans") that outline the expected course of a community's growth as it relates to land use, affordable housing, conservation, infrastructure, etc. But economic development trumps other considerations almost every time. Local governments are enticed by an expanding tax base and worry that denying property owners the right to develop their land as they see fit will provoke expensive lawsuits. Real estate developers are often wealthy and politically-connected. Too often, especially in a hot real estate market, growth management is practiced reactively rather than proactively. And the gospel of growth as economic engine and social panacea has a long history in the Sunshine State; it is preached by officials at every level of government, echoed by their acolytes in the chambers of commerce.

The Growth Management Act does provide for citizen involvement, but the process for challenging comp plan amendments is cumbersome and requires 'affected persons' to demonstrate that they will be adversely impacted. Especially when the adverse impact is environmental rather than financial, it can be difficult or impossible to associate the anticipated damage with an individual property owner or owners, and erosion of a community's quality of life is hard to quantify and therefore hard to prove.

Proponents of the Florida Hometown Democracy Amendment want to amend Florida's constitution to fundamentally reverse the process: rather than forcing citizens to demonstrate they will suffer as a result of a proposed comp plan change, it will require local governments to demonstrate to citizens that a proposed change is in their best interest. The Amendment would require voters to approve proposed changes to a county's or city's comprehensive plan via referendum. Amendment proponents believe that it is not unreasonable to require developers to convince the local citizenry that a proposed project will complement and not detract from a community's social and environmental well-being, as well as be a contributor to its financial health.

Approval of the Florida Hometown Democracy Amendment may slow the staggering pace of development somewhat. Dep, or a pending economic disaster. Predictably, the Amendment is opposed by the Florida League of Cities, the Florida Association of Counties, and the Florida Chamber of Commerce, who are making gloom-and-doom proclamations about the anticipated results if the Amendment should pass. Proponents of the Amendment need 611,000 signatures to get it on the 2008 ballot so that Florida voters can voice their opinion and approve or reject it. Many more signatures are required. To read more about the Amendment and to sign the petition, visit the website www.floridahometowndemocracy.com.

We Need You!



Would you like to take a leadership role in the chapter? We have a few open spots to serve as board members. If anyone would like to serve as an officer, we have an opening for Conservation Chair and Education Chair. We also need a Historian and Hospitality Chair. If you are interested, any present officer would be glad to discuss these opportunities with you.

Welcome Guests and New Members!

Joan Boesseace

Kathy Hale

The Board of Directors, Committee Chairmen, and Contacts

President: Christina Uranowski
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Vice President: Kimberly Duffy
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Membership: Ruth Clark
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Don't forget our Next Meeting is on September 19th at 6:30 p.m. at Peghorn Preserve in St. Cloud.

Florida Native Plant Society Membership Application

Membership in the Florida Native Plant Society enables you to receive their wonderful quarterly magazine *The Palmetto*. Joining the FNPS also entitles you to membership privileges in the Pine Lily Chapter of the FNPS and a subscription to their monthly newsletter *The Lily Pad*.

w New Member

w Renewal

Name _____

Business name or organization _____

Address _____

City, State and Zip _____

Home phone _____

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Check pertinent category

- | | |
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*Make check payable to: FNPS
 Detach and mail to:
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 Melbourne, FL 32902-0278***