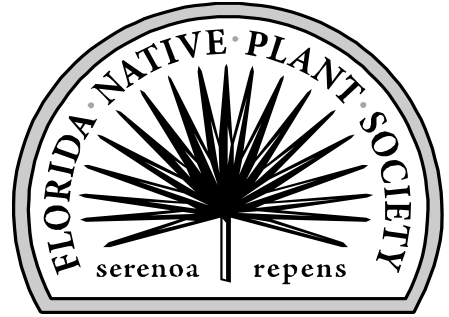


The Lily Pad

The Pine Lily Chapter of the Florida
Native Plant Society



FNPS Mission: The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida

March 2009

Our speaker this month is Karina Veaudry talking about “The Status of Conservation in Florida”. Karina grew up in Central Florida and as an avid hiker and conservation volunteer, has experienced many of Florida’s natural areas. She has been involved with the Florida Native Plant Society for the past 19 years and is FNPS Executive Director since 2006. She’s been working with Landscape Architecture for the past 22 years, specializing in promoting the use of native plants, tree preservation during construction, ecosystem preservation, landscape ordinance writing and conservation policy, writing for municipal comprehensive plans. As a volunteer, she has been an interpretive guide, wetlands monitor, native plant seed collector, wildlife monitor and has completed outreach programs regarding Florida’s ecosystems, water conservation, native plant landscape design and land acquisition programs.

In Bloom:

Cardinal airplant (*Tillandsia fasciculata*)

Also known as common wild pine, presumably because of its relatedness to the pineapple, *Tillandsia fasciculata* is often seen conspicuously holding on to cypress trunks and branches. The red cardinal color is due to the bright red bracts of the inflorescence, the tubular purple flowers are really only noticeable up close.





WEED ALERT!

Melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*)

Melaleuca, also known as paperbark tree, punk tree, cajeput tree, and white bottlebrush tree, is a sub-tropical tree in the eucalyptus family, with spongy, white paper-like bark that can grow to 50 feet in height. The 1-2 inch long, gray-green, oval leaves of Melaleuca are arranged alternately along the stem and smell of camphor when crushed. Flowers are white, brush-like spikes and the fruits are small, woody button-like seed capsules.

Native from Australia and New Guinea, Melaleuca was introduced into southern Florida in the early 1900's and was largely planted for landscaping and for "swamp drying". Nowadays, the distribution of Melaleuca in the U.S is currently confined to southern Florida, where it occupies an estimated several million acres, primarily within the Florida Everglades system. The tree tolerates most sub-tropical ecosystems, preferring wet to occasionally wet sites. It is an aggressive invader that spreads rapidly, converting native plant communities such as sawgrass marshes, wet prairies and aquatic sloughs into impenetrable Melaleuca thickets. Mature trees commonly form very dense stands that virtually exclude all other native plant species, especially in disturbed areas. Their growth pattern also allows wildfires to spread more quickly and at a higher temperature causing higher adjacent native tree mortality than native plant fires.

In a single year, one tree can produce a dense island hammock nearly 600 ft. in diameter. It is one of the greatest threats to the Florida Everglades ecosystem, which faces extreme and possibly irreversible alteration as a result of intrusion by Melaleuca and another noxious, troublesome exotic, Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*).

Look for first:

Papery, brownish-white bark
Stiff, lance-shaped leaves
Spikes of creamy-white to pinkish flowers



Cypress: Florida's Majestic and Beneficial Wetland Tree

Cypress is a conifer in the *Taxodiaceae* Family, often called the Baldcypress Family. The 14 species in this family are found in China, Japan, Formosa, Tasmania, and North America. In the United States, cypress's only other relatives are the *Sequoia* and *Sequoiadendron* genera which include the redwoods of California.

Although cypress was once widely distributed across North America, most of its pre-historic forests are now extinct. Only three forms of the cypress genus, *Taxodium*, remain: Baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*), Pondcypress (*Taxodium ascendens*) and Sweet and Montezuma cypress (*Taxodium mucronatum*) (Bailey & Bailey 1976). Baldcypress occurs in the Atlantic and Gulf coastal plains from Delaware to Texas and also in the Mississippi Valley north to southern Illinois. Pondcypress is found in a more limited range with a northern limit of Virginia. Montezuma cypress is a native of Mexico growing in the Central Plateau along the Pacific Coast (Harrar & Harrar 1962, Bailey & Bailey 1976, Brandt & Ewel 1989).

Cypress swamps are forested wetlands dominated by cypress trees and located along stream and river banks, spring runs or in ponds with still or slow moving water. Swamps often have long periods of flooding, and cypress is the most flood-tolerant of all the Florida tree species. The species composition and different kinds of swamps are determined by three environmental factors: hydro period, nutrient inputs, and fire (Ewel & Odum 1984). One kind of swamp-- the cypress dome--develops in a depression in the ground in pine flatwoods ecosystems; the water in these ponds moves very slowly and only drains internally through the water table. These cypress ponds have the ability to hold more water than soil of the same volume. Runoff from storms can be stored in cypress ponds making them excellent flood control prospects (Ewel 1990). After the rainy season ends and water tables in surrounding soils drop rapidly, these ponds can also contribute to recharging groundwater. It is not clear yet, however, how purposely directing urban runoff to ponds might impact plant and animal communities in the ponds. These swamps can help in maintaining and enhancing water quality.

Cypress ponds have been documented to remove both phosphorus and nitrogen from secondarily treated wastewater, by soil processes and plant uptake. After taking up these nutrients, cypress growth can increase dramatically but there is some concern about the impact on wildlife populations; the wastewater may affect plants and small organisms which animals depend on for food and shelter (Nessel et al. 1982, Ewel 1990). These swamps also provide habitat to many wildlife species, including some that are rare and endangered, such as limpkins and wood storks. The density of plants in cypress swamps also creates a favorable habitat for large mammals, and the abundance of hollow trees provides homes for many birds and tree-dependent mammals (Ewel 1990). Wood ducks, for example, are common residents and also consumers of cypress seeds giving them a reputation of being good seed disseminators and contributing to the regeneration of cypress (Dennis 1988).

Baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*) - Baldcypress is a tree growing to 150 feet tall and more than 6 feet in diameter. Its leaves are flat, 1/2 to 3/4 inches long and grow on

both sides of the horizontal branchlets and is said to be the largest tree in North America east of the Rockies (Dennis 1988). It grows in and along flowing water: river swamps, stream banks, spring runs and lake shores. These trees are called dwarf cypress or hat-rack cypress (Brandt & Ewel 1989). Baldcypress grows at low stem densities in locations with moderate water flow, high-nutrient availability, and rare forest fires.

Pondcypress (*Taxodium ascendens*) - Pondcypress is a smaller tree (but it still can grow to a big tree: click on photo) with awl-shaped or scale-like leaves pressed close to its (sometimes more) pendulous branchlets. From a distance many pond cypress ponds have a domed appearance. On closer inspection it can be found that the trees in the middle and deepest part of the pond are the tallest, and they become progressively smaller away from the center of the pond. Scientists believe these results from conditions for cypress growth being better in the deeper part of the pond. The tree is limited to ponds with still or slow-moving water. When pondcypress is faced with soils poor in nutrients, such as the marl soils in the Everglades or the clay soils in the Florida panhandle, growth may be extremely slow giving the trees a stunted or dwarfed appearance. It grows at high stem densities on sites with slow-to-stagnant water, low- nutrient availability, and occasional forest fires.

Cypress trees can live for hundred of years, has "knees" that protrude above the soil, and loses its leaves in the winter, hence the "bald" cypress name. Some studies have reported that cypresses' "knees" and buttressed trunks serve to supply oxygen to the roots of the trees and also anchor and support the tree in an unstable environment (Dennis 1988). The knees are a part of the root system which grows above the soil. Knees vary in height: some are reported up to 12 feet (Dennis 1988).



The pale green, needle-like Baldcypress leaves turn brilliant coppery in the fall before dropping.



Pondcypress leaves are similar to Baldcypress, but needles are pressed against the stem

Where to go to see Cypress in Central Florida:

Several large cypress trees and swamps are in Florida and can be viewed and experienced by boardwalks, rivers, and trails.

Withlacoochee State Forest (Richloam Wildlife Management Area). This forest is part of the Green Swamp, an 800-sq.-mile swamp system in west-central Florida (Larson 1995). Nature trails and camping sites are available to experience the two major swamp communities: cypress/mixed hardwood swamps and cypress domes. The Richloam Wildlife Management Area is the best place within the state forest to see the cypress, best observed by taking Hwy 50 (exit off I-75). The Baird tract is also a good place to see cypress, located east of Richloam along the same highway.

The Florida State Champion Cypress Tree. The American Forestry Association and state forestry agencies collect data on sizes reached by North American trees. Size is calculated by measurements taken of the tree diameter, height, and crown spread. Based on the addition of all these measurements, a tree is awarded a number of points. Trees with the largest number of points may be classified as state or national champions. The current national champion cypress is in Cat Island Swamp in north-central Louisiana with a score of 748 points. The Florida state champion (with 557 points), commonly referred to as the Senator, is located along Highway 17/92, one mile northeast of Longwood, in the Big Tree Park. There are areas to park alongside the road, near the Senator tree.

Silver Springs. Second- growth baldcypress are abundant along spring edges and can be seen from the tour boats at one of Florida's oldest amusement parks. Located near Ocala at 5656 East Silver Springs Blvd., Silver Springs, FL.





Events around Town

Wekiva Riverfest 2009

Wekiva Springs State Park

March, 2009

The public is invited to see, enjoy and learn about *Central Florida's* unique water resources and wildlife. Activities include music, wildlife displays, children's nature crafts, food vendors, book signings, pontoon boat rides, wildlife art/artists.

Riverfest canoe/kayak race

Wekiva Island (formerly Wekiva Marina)

1014 Miami Springs Dr, Longwood, FL

Sat, March 14

The race will be approximately five mile long. Paddlers will start at Wekiva Island and go about 30 minutes downstream where they will circle a buoy and proceed to the finish line. For more info on Riverfest festival and race go to www.friendsofwekiva.org

Sunday, March 15

Disney Wilderness Preserve

Sun, March 15

Join KVAS on a rare Sunday tour of this preserve that is becoming a widely known example of habitat restoration. For more information contact Larry Rosen

LarryRosen@cfl.rr.com

Kowtown Festival

Toho Square

Sat, March 21, 11am – 5pm

Celebrate Kissimmee's 126th birthday with live entertainment, historical exhibitors, great food, art & crafters, historic tours of the downtown and much more!

Sidewalk Art Festival

March 20 - March 22, 2009

Winter Park, Florida

Over 225 national and international juried artists will exhibit original art work.

Tibet-Butler Preserve

Beyond your Backyard Festival at the Tibet-Butler Preserve

Sat, March 21 - 10am to 4 pm

Enjoy live music, experience environmental programs & guided hikes and explore Florida's beautiful natural habitats. For more information call (407)876-6696.

Eggstraordinary!

March 28 - 10 am

If you are in the mood to decorate eggs, this fun class is for you. Discover how eggs develop, see eggs of local birds and decorate chicken eggs to take home! Open to all ages, limited to 50 participants. Call the preserve (407)876-6696 to reserve your space.

Florida Wildflower Festival (downtown DeLand)

Sat, March 28 - 9 am to 4 pm

Come out and celebrate spring's wildflowers in Volusia County. Besides educational displays, vendors and children's arts and crafts, there will be guest speakers who will share tips on wildflower cultivation and landscaping. Guided field trips are available to Forest Groves Wildflower Farm, a Stetson University native plant garden, Hickory Bluff Preserve and Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge. For more information visit www.floridawildflowerfestival.com

Osceola County Master Gardeners Plant Sale

KVLS Building, Osceola Heritage Park (1911 Kissimmee Valley Lane, Kissimmee)

Fri, April 10 - 9am to 5pm

Sat, April 11 – 9am to 3pm

Palms, Hybrid Hibiscus, bromeliads, perennials, annuals, herbs and natives and 100% melaleuca mulch. Master Gardeners will be available both days for questions and advice. For more information, call 321-697-3000

Annual Spring Wildflower Tour

The Disney Wilderness Preserve

Sat, April 18th from 9:00-12:00

Botanist Danny Husband will be leading a tour throughout the preserve where we will explore Florida's gorgeous wild flowers. Great opportunity to see beautiful restored Long Leaf Pine Flatwoods and wildlife. For more information, please contact Danny Husband dhusband@tnc.org

Very special events happening throughout March in Florida:

Swallow-tailed kites return to Florida. Migrating songbirds, in full breeding plumage, arrive in waves each week. Scrub-jays begin to mate and build nests in scrub oaks. Largemouth bass start to bed in north Florida, as do red ear sunfish in central Florida. Horseshoe crabs lay eggs on coastal beaches on the full moon at high tide. Endangered gray bats return to Florida caves to raise young.

We have a diverse constituency and want to make sure we are doing our best at meeting your needs. If you have ideas for program topics, speakers or field trips, please feel free to send an email to mjohnson@ecotonelanddesign.com

Don't forget our Next Meeting is on Mar 19th at 6:30 p.m. at First United Methodist Church in Kissimmee. Located at the corner of Dakin and Church.

We are always looking for people to help make our chapter everything it can be. If you ever feel you would like to lend a helping hand please just contact any of our board members.

The Board of Directors, Committee Chairmen, and Contacts

- President: Mark Johnson
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Florida Native Plant Society Membership Application

Membership in the Florirda 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*.

New Member Renewal
 Name _____
 Business name or organization _____
 Address _____
 City, State and Zip _____
 Home phone _____ Work phone _____

Check pertinent category

- Individual \$25
- Full time student \$15
- Library subscription \$15
- Family or household \$30
- Contributing \$40
- Supporting \$250
- Not-for-profit organization \$50
- Business or corporate \$100
- Donor \$250

Make check payable to: **FNPS**
 Detach and mail to:
**Pine Lily Chapter of
 Florida Native Plant Society
 P.O. Box 278
 Melbourne, FL 32902-0278**