

**MINUTES**  
**FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY—THE VILLAGES CHAPTER**  
**Friday, August 26, 2016**  
**Big Cypress Recreation Center, Periwinkle Room**

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Steve Turnipseed at 1:30.

Present: 56 members and guests.

Old Business:

- Membership. FNPS membership is tax deductible and runs 12 months from the date you sign up. Forms and annual dues are accepted at the meeting or you can join on-line at [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org). If you have not joined, please consider doing so. About 30% of the dues come back to our chapter. Those who joined in 2015 will receive renewal notices the month before they are due. There are over 3,000 memberships in the state organization.

New Business:

- Carol Spears is our chapter representative; she was applauded for her 30 years of National Park Service. She reported that in the future, the FNPS annual conference will be in a different format. Regional rather than individual clubs will host the annual conferences. The next is May 17-21, 2017 and will be held at Westgate River Ranch Resort and Rodeo in Polk County. Our area will host in 2020. The goal this year is to have 4,000 members by January of 2017. October is Native Plant Month.
- Steve reported that we now have generic business cards to help advertise and promote our chapter.
- September 23 Meeting Presentation. Our speaker will be Jason Smith from the University of Florida, and he will talk on urban tree diversity.
- September 30 Seven Member Native Plant Garden Tour from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Sign-ups will take place next meeting for members only; addresses will be given at that time. Directions are from the Big Cypress Recreation Center, though participants can start anywhere they please.

Presentation:

There were 4 members on the panel: Steve Turnipseed, Kathy Porter, Carol Spears and Jeanie Powell. The following includes the questions and answers about native (and non native plantings).

**Recommended Plants**

What is a good ground cover to replace turf grass?

Frog Fruit (phyla nodiflora) is a host plant to 3 butterflies and nectar to many pollinators. It can be mowed, and in traffic areas, it flattens when walked on. Several chapter members have significant areas with Frog Fruit. Will Frog Fruit take off and cover adjacent areas? Yes, it will creep out and over surrounding grass, but it can be edged it, pulled or apply herbicide where you don't want it.

Sunshine mimosa (mimosa strigillosa) has deep roots. It can be confined with edging. It produces its own nitrogen.

Non-natives include perennial peanut and Asiatic jasmine, and for shade, ajuga. Mass plantings of low growing shrubs also serve as a ground cover.

### **Attracting Wildlife**

What to do to discourage armadillos?

This is a non-native invasive animal from South America. Only thing you can do is trap it.

What can I do to attract wildlife to my landscape planted in April?

It takes time; plant it and they will come. Also, as the neighborhood landscapes mature (especially trees and large shrubs), you will see more birds. Plant host plants for butterflies. Avoid insecticides since 2/3 of our native bees are ground dwelling. Plant masses (a large group) of plants to attract wildlife.

Are there fewer butterflies this summer?

Perhaps since it has been hot and dry, rains are late and neighbors are spraying yards. Also there are less native areas left.

What are good pollinator plants?

These include scorpion tail, rosin flower, firebush, Florida privet (large woody shrub), scarlet sage and partridge pea.

### **Maintenance**

Do the professional landscapers know how to maintain native landscapes?

Often the person doing the work is not knowledgeable, they just mow, edge and go.

Get a certified arborist for tree work.

Hire a horticulturist to consult (example: Amanda Martin).

Carol Spears had one service during her 1 month vacation trip away. Steve had 2 hours of help once a week to control weeds and to trim beach sunflower and vines.

How can I keep up with maintenance?

Keep a small pruning tool with you when you are out in the yard.

Use 2 to 4 inches of organic mulch (pine straw or pine bark fines) to control weeds and retain moisture and nutrients.

Our newly planted Florida privets are having problems.

Even native shrubs need to be given adequate water during establishment. UF lists forestiera segregata as "No pests or diseases are of major concern". Don't confuse Florida Privet with the ligustrum japonicum which is subject to the olive shoot worm.

Bring cutting and picture of any problems to the Master Gardener Plant Clinic on Mondays to the Health Dept. building (441 / Morse Blvd) or Pinellas Annex on Fridays.

Our liatris flowers are lying down. What should I do?

You can stake them. You can prune the stalks before flowering. Plant them among other plants like muhly grass. Second year stalks may be more stable.

My calamint turned brown and died.

Perhaps it had too little water, or had a high nitrogen fertilizer. The cause of yellowing might be too much water.

I have ants in my ground cover; what should I do?

It is OK if they are native pyramid ants. If they are fire ants in a mound, use bait.

I have weeds in my lawn that are spreading.

Take the weed to the Plant Clinic for identification, and proper treatment.  
My ten foot wide strip of frog fruit not doing well on property line with neighbor, but it is now recovering.

Perhaps it had too much water or chemical runoff, yellowing might be too much water.

### **Experience with Landscape Conversions**

How do you get ARC approval?

Submit to your design to the ARC; include a list of plants with your site plan. Attend the ARC meeting so you can address any questions they have. The need to keep 2 feet of turf around the property perimeter was challenged, and they agreed that a ground cover was OK, but for larger plants, keep the stem of the plant 3 feet off the property line. ARC does not like to see pine bark in the low areas as it floats; but pine straw is OK. If you live in District 11, a developer's rep will do the review, not the ARC. Get approval from ARC! About 25% of people have done major work have had complaints.

Do you need to get approval to remove trees greater than 4" diameter trunks?

Yes, and they will send out a certified arborist at no cost.

Does the Water Management District restrict removal of grass because of absorption?

No, SWFWMD is concerned about non-permeable surfaces.

What about county setback?

The county is concerned about visibility and utility access, but that does not mean that you have to keep turf grass there.

### **Other Questions**

Is a bottle bush native?

No, but provides nectar for hummingbirds.

How do you fertilize plants?

Fertilize out from the plant root ball to encourage establishment.

Donations: Donated one gallon native plants (six of them) from Green Isles Nursery and members were awarded to members and friends.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:00.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be September 23 at the big Cypress Recreation Center.

Jeanie Powell, Secretary