

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY—THE VILLAGES CHAPTER

Friday, June 28, 2019

Big Cypress Recreation Center, 3110 Hendry Drive – Periwinkle Room

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

Present: 51 were in attendance, 10 of whom signed in as guests.

New Business:

Steve welcomed members and guests. At 1:30pm, the meeting was called to order when Steve welcomed all first time attendees and explained that we are not a Villages club, but a Chapter of the statewide FNPS. Our Villages' chapter has been in existence about 4 years now, and with about 150 members ranks 7th or 8th out of the 37 chapters.

Green Isle Gardens Sponsors our plant drawing. They contribute 6 plants, plus there are plants provided by various members. If you would like to donate a Florida Native Plant to the drawing we ask you pot it up, label it and bring it in by 1PM the day of the meeting.

Upcoming Outings - Pamela Powell has several outings organized starting in October. She will be at the July meeting and may start taking reservations for the October meeting then.

- October 15 – Scrub Point Preserve
- November – Organic Farm in Citra (Ladies Only)
- December – Bear Track Preserve
- February 2020 – Mt. Dora
- April 2020 – Flat Island Preserve
- TBD – Canoe / Kayak trip

Ambrosia Beetle - Steve mentioned that the non-native Ambrosia Beetle from Asia and was first discovered in Savannah. It has done a lot of damage to trees in states along the Gulf coast and up the eastern seaboard. It bores into trees and carries a fungal pathogen called Laurel Wilt. The tree responds to the invasion by shutting down its vascular functions, basically killing itself. This blight has already affected over 0.5 million trees, including avocado trees.

Jason Smith of IFAS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, (who was a speaker at The Villages FNPS in the past 1-2 years) discovered that some trees seem to have a natural resistance. He propagated some of these trees and gave two 1-gallon trees to Steve. Steve planted one in his yard. He donated the other to an agricultural business in Apopka that reproduces trees from cellular tissue.

Review FNPS Annual Conference - In response to question from the audience, Steve briefly reviewed the FNPS Annual Conference that was held in May in Crystal River, Florida. Carol Spears mentioned that we may be able to get some of those speakers here.

Steve asked that if anyone heard any good speakers or presentations that would be of interest to our group, to let him know. Also, if anyone would like to volunteer to help organize speakers and presentations it would be greatly appreciated; just let him know.

Upcoming Speakers - On July 26th, Kirsten Sharp-Ortega from Green Isle Gardens will speak on Planting for Birds.

Presentation: Edible Flowers by Ann Lambert. Anne has lived in the Village of Calumet Grove for 16 years. She was a Marion County Master Gardener for over 10 years creating and heading up their Youth Programs. Anne has been the president of the Villages Garden Club North for 13 years and writes the monthly gardening article for the POA newsletter. Her other hobbies include cooking and sewing.

Edible flowers are first mentioned in recorded history around 140BC.

Beebalm was used by the Colonists as a substitute for black tea after the Boston Tea Party.

Broccoli, Cauliflower and Artichokes are all flowers.

Don't eat flowers that have been sprayed with insecticides. That includes flowers from Florists and Big Box stores. Don't eat leaves, plants, flowers if you have any allergies to those plants; if it looks "crazy", don't eat it – follow your instincts.

If you can eat the vegetable, you can eat the flower from that plant. Example Squash blossoms.

Plants with edible flowers include:

- Spiced Saffron from the crocus
- Calendula (the poor man's saffron)
- Capers
- Marigolds (add to deviled eggs)
- Hops
- Beautyberry
- Day Lily
- Red Bud flowers
- Spanish Needles (the flowers, not the needles)
- Prickly Pear
- Dandelion
- Pepper Grass
- Spiderwort (in butter, cream cheese)
- Elderflower (make a simple syrup, add to vodka)
- Oxalis (cream cheese)

Monin Brand has several syrups made from flowers, i.e., Elderberry.

Chartreuse is a liqueur made by monks in the 18th century and aged with 130 herbs, plants and flowers, including carnation petals.

Pick the flowers in the morning just after they open. Bathe them in salt water and lay on paper towels – bugs should emerge. Immediately drop them in ice water for 1 minute. Use immediately or refrigerate.

The presentation concluded at 2:15pm. Anne took a few questions from the audience. She invited the audience to come up and sample some of the foods that she brought, made with edible flowers. The plant drawing took place. The meeting adjourned at 2:45PM.

The next general meeting will be July 26th, at 1:30pm at the Big Cypress Recreation Center

Jo Hudak, Secretary