

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY—THE VILLAGES CHAPTER

Friday, July 26, 2019

Big Cypress Recreation Center, 3110 Hendry Drive – Periwinkle Room

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Jo Hudak at 1:30pm, as Steve Turnipseed is on vacation.

Present: 63 were in attendance, 17 of whom signed in as guests.

New Business:

Jo welcomed members and guests. At 1:30pm, the meeting was called to order when Jo welcomed all first time attendees and explained that we are not a Villages club, but a Chapter of the statewide FNPS.

Green Isle Gardens Sponsors our plant drawing. They contribute 6 plants, plus there are plants provided by various members.

Upcoming Outings - Pamela Powell described the several outings organized starting in October.

- October 15 – Scrub Point Preserve
- November 3 – Organic Farm in Citra (Ladies Only) – this is a lunch; not related to FNPS
- December 7 – Cactus Jack Horseback ride
- December – Bear Track Preserve
- January 2020 – Crones Organic Farm Tour and Lunch
- February 2020 – Hidden Water Preserve in Mt. Dora
- March 2020 – Silver Canoe or Kayak trip
- April 2020 – Flat Island Preserve

Presentation: Planting for Birds by Kirsten Sharp-Ortega. Kirsten is from Johannesburg South Africa. She holds a Horticulture degree with specialization in Landscape Design and has worked at Green Isle Gardens for 3 years. Kirsten is on the Board of Directors for FANN (Florida Association of Native Nurseries) and vice president of the Passion Flower chapter of FNPS.

To attract wildlife to your yard you need to provide: Food source, Water Source, Place to nest / hide.

Kirsten put up a list of plants & shrubs that are attractive to Florida birds. Some plants she talked about included Corkystem Flower, Corkystem Fruit, Gallberry Fruit, Elderberry (need male & female to produce berries). Gallberry Fruit is often planted by beekeepers near hives – it prevents the honey from solidifying in the hive.

Grasses are also useful to birds as places to hide and for providing nest-building material. Fakahatchee, Love grasses, Elderberry Fruit.

Pawpaw Fruit is host to Zebra Swallowtail butterflies. Grasses are also useful to birds as places to hide and for providing nest-building material. Chickasaw Plum, Flatwood Plum, Red Mulberry all provide fruits attractive to birds. Red Mulberry needs male and female to get berries and these are trees that get very big very fast. Little Blueberry plants can be planted in pots – you don't need a big yard or space to help attract and support birds. That birds need to feed their young.

If you have flowers, consider leaving the “deadheads” / seed heads out to provide seeds for birds in the winter.

Red Pentas is not native to Florida but is very attractive to pollinators. Butterflies love Red Pentas – makes for great photo opportunities.

You can also attract birds by providing nesting boxes. Add larval host plants to attract bugs.

Great book, Bringing Nature Home by Doug Tallamy.

The presentation concluded at 2:10pm. Kirsten took questions from the audience for about 20 minutes. One question was about whether there are specific plants to attract specific birds. Kirsten said having a variety is always good; berries that ripen at different times extend the time that birds will spend in your yard. Diversity is an advantage because the wildlife will use what's available.

Question about Coral Bean – Kirsten said she did not mention in her talk because it is toxic to dogs and people; it has thorns; however hummingbirds love it.

Question about Lobelias – Kirsten said they are not native to Florida although they grow in this climate. They do provide good nesting material for birds.

Question about Coral Honeysuckle – Kirsten said it does not require a trellis, because it does not have tendrils to grasp. You can grow it along the ground; it will twine around other plants; it can be grown in a pot.

Question about a “misting system” for hummingbirds – Kirsten had not heard of it specifically for hummingbirds. She noted though that at Green Isle Gardens they have areas that are misted and many varieties of birds “enjoy” it.

Question about plants / trees that once produced berries but now don't, or not many – Kirsten said it may need a male / female around to pollinate with. The two sexes generally need to be within a mile of each other.

Plant Drawing – Carol Spears managed the drawing for about a dozen plants.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30PM.

The next general meeting will be August 23, at 1:30pm at the Big Cypress Recreation Center

Jo Hudak, Secretary