

NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY—THE VILLAGES CHAPTER

Big Cypress Recreation Center, 3110 Hendry Drive – Periwinkle Room

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

Present: 45 members and 20 guests signed in, but 80+ were in attendance.

New Business:

Florida Native Plant Society – Villages Chapter – was on the front page to today's Daily Sun, LifeStyle section.

If you want to donate plant for the auction – please label the plant and bring to a meeting by 1PM. If you could write to FNPS ahead of time, then Carol Spears could provide a description.

Spring Garden Tour June 1st (7:30AM-12:30PM) - Our chapter hosted a Spring garden tour of 12 homes for FNPS members in good standing. This was the first time that our chapter has hosted a Spring tour. At least 50 people took the self-guided tour. Steve asked those whose homes were on the tour, and who were in the audience to stand and be acknowledged.

Tour of Florida Association of Native Nurseries on June 8th – professionals from Central Florida were on this tour of 4 homes with Native Landscaped yards

Green Isle Gardens – Steve thanked Green Isle Gardens for their monthly donation of plants. Steve picked the plants this month – he chose ones that were blooming and “yellow”. Many plants were also donated by members.

Steve welcomed members and guests. Steve welcomed all first time attendees. There are annual dues to become a member of the Florida Native Plant Society and about 30% of the dues come back to our Villages Chapter. The state society has about 4,000 members and our chapter is almost 150 members. FNPS has an annual conference and in 2019 it will be in Crystal River – very close to The Villages. FNPS encourages local landscaping practices and policies that preserve Florida's native plant heritage.

The Villages Chapter of FNPS, Treasurer, needs volunteer help – if you have accounting or bookkeeping experience and can help with filling out forms and calculating sales tax, please see Judy Mason or Steve Turnipseed.

Collect seedlings from Carol Spear's Butterfly Garden – if you would like to collect some seedlings from Carol's butterfly garden, contact Carol. Carol has an abundance. Be prepared to come with your own potting mix, pots, etc.

July Presentation will be Plants of the Florida Scrub by Marc Godts, of Green Isle Gardens.

Sumter County Master Gardener Course – Apply to be a Master Gardener by completing the [Sumter County Master Gardener Application](#) and, send your application by July 1, 2018, to UF/IFAS Sumter County Extension, ATTN: Donna Lester, 7620 SR 471, Suite 2,

Bushnell, FL 33513. The UF/IFAS Extension Sumter County will hold Master Gardener classes on Fridays, 9 am to 3:30 pm, August 31 through November 30. If you have questions today, you can see any of three master gardeners who are here (Steve, Kathy, Pat) after the meeting.

Our Special Presentation for June - Update on Native Landscapes in The Villages by Steve Turnipseed, Chapter President. Steve Turnipseed is a retired Chemical Engineer, now a certified UF/IFAS Master Gardener in Sumter County, a Florida Water Star Accredited Professional and the founding president of The Villages Chapter of FNPS. His own yard is all native and recipient of the 2016 FNPS Award of Excellence.

The pictorial tour includes drone pictures by Roger Selch and Al Lippman. Steve provided a look at many of the larger native landscape conversions with before and after images. The chapter Guidance for Residential Florida-Friendly Native Plant Landscapes was also reviewed.

Why promote native plants? Achieve water and chemical savings. Also there is a correlation between native wildlife and plants. Native plants are those that occur naturally in a region in which they evolved. They are the ecological basis upon which life depends, including birds and people. Without them and the insects that co-evolved with them, local birds cannot survive.

Adult birds may survive on seeds, but they need insects to feed their young.

The Villages scrapes everything down to bare earth when they build and then put in plants that they choose, which are mostly non-native.

You can convert even a small strip of lawn into something peaceful and colorful.

Frog Fruit ground cover – To avoid fungus, mow Frog Fruit to 4 to 6 inches with a push mower or hand loppers. This will keep the lower stems dry. If fertilization is needed, use slow-release fertilizers. Buy fertilizers that contain at least 15% of the nitrogen in slow-release forms.

Zoysia grass is susceptible to fungus; depending on the size of your yard may require 40,000-50,000 gallons of water a month – this was confirmed by audience member!

Converting your yard to natives can create a “look / see / experience” place for you versus a grass lawn where you just mow / edge / weed.

If you “plant natives, they will come” – insects, butterflies, birds, pollinators.

Steve paused for comments from audience members, those who have converted their lawns. Those who have converted their yards have no regrets – they now enjoy the space.

Steve moved to the topic of Guidance for Residential Florida-Friendly Native Plant Landscapes. We live in an area that has aesthetic requirements that must be acknowledged. The Villages allows sod to be replaced by other ground covers, but they must be filled in within 12 months and cut to a uniform height under 12 inches.

- FNPS recommends practicing the 9 Florida-Friendly Landscaping Principles
- Follow good landscape design practices
- Obtain approval
- Maintain the landscape (there is no such thing as “no-maintenance landscape”)

Following his presentation, Mr. Turnipseed addressed questions from the audience until 2:35pm.

Donated plants were awarded to members and guest in the chance drawing.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.

The next general meeting will be July 27, at 1:30pm at the Big Cypress Recreation Center

Jo Hudak, Secretary