

FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY—THE VILLAGES CHAPTER

Friday, October 26, 2018

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: 72 were in attendance, 11 of whom signed in as guests.

New Business:

Chance Drawing: Green Isle Gardens sponsors our Chapter and provided 6 plants for the chance drawing.

Steve welcomed members and guests. Steve welcomed all first time attendees.

FNPS: We are a chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (not a Villages “club”). 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 Villages’ Chapter is about the sixth largest out of 37 chapters.

Scott Davis spoke on The Milkweed Project at The Villages’ Chapter FNPS in the past. July 3rd he was in a serious motorcycle accident and has already undergone several surgeries. Our chapter donated about \$151 towards his medical expenses.

November 15th Outing to Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings State Park. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings is the author of The Yearling. Carpool leaves Big Cypress Recreation Center promptly at 7:30AM. The park is about 1 hour drive. There will be a tour led by Ranger Geoffrey Gates. Sign up with Georgette in the back - \$8 covers the \$3 entry fee and \$5 honorarium.

Officer Positions for 2019: We will need a **VP of Programs** – responsible for lining up the speakers for 11 monthly meetings. There is a list of resources and prior speakers from which to draw. There will be recommendations and support for the position. We will need a **VP of Field Trips** as Georgette Gerry is becoming a snowbird and will be away about 6 months of the year. Need to organize 2-3 outings a year. Georgette will be available to help. If you are interested in running, let Steve Turnipseed know. Voting is at the January 2019 meeting.

November 23rd Presentation: Will be panel discussions. Maybe 5 tables with different topics and 2-4 “experts”. Audience can go from table to table to ask questions, listen to discussion.

Special Presentation DAR Conservation Award: The NSDAR Conservation Award is a national award that can be presented to any man or woman with a distinguished conservation record. It was presented to Steve Turnipseed today, by DAR representative Diane Clemmons.

Our October Presentation is: **Step-by-Step to a Florida Native Landscape** by Ginny Stibolt

Speaker Bio:

Ginny Stibolt began her professional life as a teacher and over the years has taught math, science, business, and computer courses at levels from 7th grade through college. She is a life-long gardener with a Master of Science degree in Botany from the University of Maryland. Since moving to Florida in 2004, she has written 4 peer-reviewed books on Florida gardening all published by University Press of Florida. She has also coauthored "Climate-Wise Landscaping" published by New Society Press in 2018. In addition, she has written hundreds of gardening and nature articles for various publications. She speaks regularly to environmental and gardening groups. Her website is www.GreenGardeningMatters.com.

In 2004, Ms. Stibolt moved from Maryland to Clay County in Central Florida. In her first year there were 4 hurricanes and a "tulip fiasco", which led her to authorship of a column, "Adventures of a Transplanted Gardener". Her first book is Sustainable Gardening for Florida. For every one pound of food that you grow yourself or buy from a local farmers market, you prevent several times that in greenhouse gases. Ms. Stibolt said that joining the Florida Native Plant Society changed her viewpoint from "what could grow in Florida" to "what grows in Florida."

As a starting point, she took a 1/3 acre plat and began converting it to all Florida Native plants, and that eventually became the book, Step-by-Step to a Florida Native Landscape. Native landscapes help mitigate climate change.

Consumers are offered unsustainable options. Example, big box stores and the annuals. Plants that are at the end of their life cycle and are "protected" from predators will kill pollinators, caterpillars, etc.

Nandina Domestica is an invasive plant that kills birds, especially migrating birds. "Invasive" is defined as having invaded our natural areas and reduced the vitality of that native area. The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council (FLEPPC.org) determines what is invasive. Invasive is not the same as aggressive. Aggressive is also a "pioneer species" – one that might be first take over a disturbed area, i.e. after a fire.

Doug Tallamy, a professor of entomology and wildlife ecology at the University of Delaware, changed the way people think about native plants. People think non-native plants look good because nothing eats them. But plants should support all the local wildlife. Native landscapes are important because they attract insect, which feed the birds and they support pollinators and save the Monarch butterflies.

Tropical Milkweed is not native. It will thwart the Monarch butterfly life cycle. People like it because it blooms through the winter. If you have Tropical Milkweed, cut it back so that the Monarchs will move on. You can find a list of plants that are native to your area on FNPS.org/plants.

Trees – do not buy trees that have been “topped”, are too old (3”caliper or larger) or are pot bound. They are a bad investment of time and money. Better to buy a “whip” or young tree (about 1”caliper) even though you may have to protect it from deer or other problems. When planting a tree, rinse off all the planting material. Do not add other stuff (i.e. food, enriched soil) to the planting hole as that will discourage the roots from expanding. Uncoil the roots. Arrange a berm around the trunk so water will stay in the hole. Water it a lot in the beginning and do not trim it. If tree requires fertilizer or compost, apply it in a ring OUTSIDE the berm to encourage the roots to expand. A second application should be even farther outside, and so on. Encouraging the roots to spread out will make the tree more drought and wind tolerant. InformedGardener.com is her reference.

Freedom lawns have grass and other native plants mixed in and do not require the water and fertilizer that straight grass lawns do. Lawns in Florida use 30% of our potable water (in The Villages 70% of all water use is for landscaping). Goldenrod does not cause allergies because its pollen is heavy and sticky and requires insect pollination. Ragweed is the culprit for allergies because it is wind pollinated.

Create a civilized border and reduce “edge-feet totals” making it easier to mow. Just because something is “native” does not mean it will grow where you plant it. “The hand of the gardener shows in the landscaping”.

Trees “transpire” – more water from the ground to the air. In your yard, trees will win the competition for water. Trees become part of the global eco-system. Every molecule of water that trees “transpire” / move to the air will cool the air and mitigate climate change. Move the “lawn” away from trees. Lawns and trees don’t get along. Create groves around trees to use falling leaves as mulch.

Ms. Stibolt has a free download-able document – “Why Natives Are Important”. You can find it on FNPS.org / Resources, scroll down to Gardening with Natives section. Chapter webmaster, Barbara Wertz said she would add a link to our chapter website.

Coontie (arrowroot) was used in making animal crackers, among other uses. It was almost harvested to extinction, but is making a comeback and so is the butterfly that uses it as a host plant, the Atala.

Following her presentation, Ms. Porter talked to interested audience members at the back of the room until 3:00pm.

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

The meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.

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

Jo Hudak, Secretary

ADDENDUM to Minutes
Email Regarding Treasurer Position
September 29, 2018

Judy Mason turned in the Treasurer supplies and resigned saying that she did not have time. At the meeting on September 28, 2018, Susan Hamilton volunteered to replace Judy in the Treasurer duties (Marcia Gould will still be working the back office forms and filings).

President Steve Turnipseed emailed the board of The Villages' Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society on September 29, 2018 asking for a vote to accept Susan Hamilton as the temporary replacement chapter Treasurer until the new officer vote takes place at the January 2019 general meeting.

The vote was unanimous in favor to accept Susan Hamilton as the temporary Chapter Treasurer, from

Steve Turnipseed, President

Roger Selch, VP of Programs

Georgette Gerry, VP of Field Trips

Carol Spears, Chapter Representative

Barbara Wertz, WebMaster

Joannene Hudak, Secretary