



Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

The SARRACENIA TRUMPET

FALL 2014

Upcoming Events

September 2014

16 Chapter Meeting

October

12 Chapter Field Trip

21 Chapter Meeting, Chapter Election

25 Monarch Butterfly Festival (St. Marks NWR)

November

1 Friends WSSP / Manatees in Wetlands

18 Chapter Meeting

CHAPTER MEETINGS THIS FALL

Tues, Sep. 16 Bruce Means, PhD
Islands in the Sky (article p.1)

Tues., Oct. 21 Sarah Barrett
(FWC): The Black Bear

Tues., Nov. 18 t.b.a

The Sarracenia Chapter meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month September to May. Meetings are held at 6:30 PM at the Wakulla Public Library, Crawfordville, Fla. The public is invited.



The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to preserve, conserve, and restore the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.



Dr. Bruce Means Featured in First Fall Meeting

The chapter meeting on Tuesday, September 16, will feature widely known ecology expert, professor, and author D. Bruce Means, Ph.D. "Islands in the Sky: A Biodiversity Hotspot on Unexplored South American Mesas Called Tepuis" is bound to captivate.

Dr. Means counts many dozens of plant and animal species on the tepuis that are found nowhere else in the world Yet one can judge whether these little tables a mile and a half above sea level on another continent are far from our Florida Panhandle, or near, only after hearing the presentation.

Dr. Means, co-producer of numerous television documentaries on biological subjects, considers the great biodiversity on the tepuis his most exciting recent research. Hence his 32 expeditions to these little-known features found in Venezuela, Brazil, and Guyana.

Many plant species of the tepuis are carnivorous. Among them, according to Dr. Means, are pitcherplants whose closest relatives are the Sarracenias of our corner of the U.S. We Sarracenias will meet some South American cousins!



a tepui

The meeting, free and open to the public (as always), will begin at 6:30 PM in Wakulla Public Library. Everyone is invited to come a little early for refreshments and social time.

The Unkindest Cut

David Roddenberry

"Florida stands to lose not only a site featuring a state-listed endangered species, but also milkweed that sustains the ... monarch butterflies," is how Lisa Roberts, executive director of the Florida Wildflower Foundation addressed cont. p.2, "Unkindest"

Allergen of the Mortals

Jeannie Brodhead

When I was a child my grandmother made a wonderful dessert called ambrosia. It was a juicy mixture of citrus fruit and coconut. Ambrosia is said to mean "food of the gods."

Our native *Ambrosia* plants (the Panhandle has three) are not so nice. Their common name is ragweed – whether giant (*Ambrosia trifida*), common (*A. artemisiifolia*), or western ragweed (*A. pilostachya*). They get that common name from the ragged, deeply indented look of their leaves. Other common names include bursage and burrobrush.



A. artemisiifolia

Ragweed's pollen is the source of many miserable bouts of "hay fever" that people suffer from in the fall. They are second only to mold for causing allergic symptoms, according to webmd. ...second only to mold for allergic symptoms...

One or more of the 50 U.S. species of ragweed are indigenous to every state except for Alaska. (And a shame; the number would be so right for Florida and every other state to have just one species.) They thrive in disturbed soil and are frequently found along roadsides. Other fall-blooming plants, including goldenrod, often get blamed (see Gold – And Innocent on p.3) for cont. p.2, "Allergen"

—INSIDE—

- Notes From a Beginner, by Linda Smith
- The Late Summertime Blues, by Bill Petty
- MORE

Unkindest *continued from p.1*

the top management of St. Marks NWR after the Refuge workforce made a second bush-hog hit on the Hwy. C-59 shoulder outside the Refuge adopted by FWF and Wakulla County Public Works for special "showy roadsides" management.

The endangered species in Ms. Roberts's recent letter is the rare nightflowering wild petunia (*Ruellia noctiflora*) that happens to inhabit the tiny 130-foot stretch of roadway involved. The milkweed is the brilliant red-orange-flowering *Asclepias lanceolata*, occurring there in a rare, dense colony, according to Ms. Roberts.



Asclepias lanceolata

The spring 2014 issue covered the adoption of the very modest but ground-breaking county-roadways plan. Four short stretches of county-maintained high-ways were selected after professional consultation and some local volunteer assistance – including Sarracenia assistance. Wakulla County is to effect the wildflower-sensitive plan by taking some extra actions and by abstaining.

Sarracenia and Magnolia Chapter members on the staff of SMNWR had filled the volunteer role for the site selected near Newport on Hwy. C-59 (Lighthouse Road).

The infant wildflower project on what might be considered the "commons" of road rights-of-way faces many hazards. It might be likened to a hatchling sea turtle on its dash to the surf. Off-road vehicles, private sense-of-order mowing (in some areas), even wrecks can impinge on these wildflower sites in the roadways.

But, really, *et tu* Refuge? Investigate that force that gets possession of your people in the long, boring transit of machines from the US 98 work center to the Refuge via C-59.

Allergen *continued from p.1*

the allergic reactions that ragweed causes. To consider one of our three, common ragweed is an annual that blooms from July through August. Its tiny pollen can float for miles in the air, and the small, green flowers are said to produce more than a million grains per plant.

Even though ragweed makes so many people feel miserable, it does have its good points. Their seeds and leaves are

very important as a source of food for small animals. The plants also provide cover. In the fall months the flowers are an important pollen source for bumblebees and honeybees. Ragweed stalks were twisted into ropes in earlier days.

You can easily pull out all the ragweed in your neighborhood before they bloom, but the tiny pollen will still float in on the winds of autumn. Some allergy sufferers find it best to simply stay indoors during this time of the year.

Late Summertime Blues

Bill Petty

I love the blues. I play and sing the blues for my "Blues Fan Club" at the local nursing home. Ah, but the musical blues are not the only blues I love. I love blue flowers. I don't know why I love them; I just do!

Good spring and summer rains have made the Florida Big Bend a good place for wildflowers that like wet ditches. *Eryngium aquaticum* (aka rattlesnake root and corn snake root) is no exception.

There's a good stand of this tall *powder-blue globe inflorescence* beauty along the west side of Shell Point Road, where Live Oak Island Road branches off to the east. The powder-blue globe inflorescence is striking.

There are many other species of wildflowers in these ditches if you stop and take a closer look. Nearer to the ground but also a lovely blue is *Hydrolea corymbosa* (skyflower). You just have to stop



Hydrolea corymbosa / Kitty Loftin

and take a look. This route to the coast is a lovely drive. Go on, enjoy the ride, stop and sniff the flowers.

CHAPTER FALL WILDFLOWER FIELD TRIP

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, OCTOBER 12

WATCH FOR PARTICULARS

Notes From a Beginner – or The Low Road (Shoulder) Almanac

Linda Smith

August 2014 was a fun month for watching roadsides and landscapes for notable native plants. There were some very interesting discoveries.

A pretty big surprise was a stand of maples that have been turning red at the corner of Cutoff Road and Shell Point Road (two miles north of Shell Pt. -ed.). Harbingers of autumn...so soon? Between this spot and north of the big sign at the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge there is a stretch of roadside that is an ever-changing wet-to-boggy ditch with lots of diversity.

Some of the showy plants of August along here were pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata*) with tall blue spikes of flowers, and arrowhead (*Sagittaria spp.*) with clusters of white flowers. Common in shallow water and on edges of ponds, they light up otherwise weedy spots. Butterflies, skippers and dragon flies among others frequent their flowers.

Another common bright flower during this hot month was partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*). Adapted to sandy soil, these low bushy annuals can seed into dense borders along hedge-rows and roadsides. This plant attracts bees and butterflies, provides larval food for the cloudless and orange sulphur butterflies, and provides shelter and food for song birds, ground birds and small mammals. (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Native Plant Database.)

Pipewort or bogbuttons (*Eriocaulon sp.*) are evenly spaced throughout this wet savanna-like swale of Shell Point Road. The white dots on single stems look simple but they are complex clusters,



Eryngium aquaticum

according to authors. Throughout August, long stretches of rattlesnake master (*Eryngium aquaticum*) slowly grew into swaths of tall powdery blue haze.

Various yellow composite flowers and nearly hidden clusters of blue skyflower (*Hydrolea corymbosa*) bloomed.

Late in the month water cowbane (*Tiedemannia filiformis*) came up throughout the length of this distinct ecosystem. This and other members of the parsley or carrot family (*Umbelliferae*) host larvae of black swallowtail butterflies; I saw the caterpillars.

During August, the best surprises of all were three orange fringed orchids (*Platanthera* sp.) and a patch of Catesby's lily (*Lilium catesbaei*). These discoveries were almost as thrilling as the first time I saw a bald eagle! Unfortunately, following a heavy rain, the orchids were gone and I could not locate them again. The lilies were visible for over a week.

On the last three days of August, blazing star (*Liatris* sp.) began to bloom. A new season is easing in on the boggy coastal plant community along this short piece of road. I hope to take more notes in September. (*Fast-gaining wildflower enthusiast Linda Smith is among the newest Sarracenia members.* – ed.)

Gold – and Innocent

Jeannie Brodhead

Summer will soon be over and our roadsides and gardens will be blessed with our beautiful fall flowers. Be on the lookout for the sunny yellow spikes of our 17 local species of goldenrod (*Solidago* spp). They are really attractive when mixed in with purple mistflowers (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) with their dark green leaves.

Canada goldenrod (*S. canadensis*) is probably the most common one on the

roadsides. But look in moist pine flatwoods for the tall wand goldenrod (*S. stricta*) – and in the native-plant garden of the Wakulla Public Library, where Sarracenia and the Iris Garden Club have this year matched wand goldenrod with a gayfeather (*Liatris*) for a rich color harmony.

Rufino Osorio, in his book *A Gardener's Guide to Native Plants*, wrote that two of our local species of goldenrod, sweet goldenrod (*S. odora*) and seaside goldenrod (*S. sempervirens*), deserve a place in our wildflower gardens. *S. odora* needs moist, well-drained soil in sun to light shade, but *S. sempervirens* prefers moist to dry sites in full sun.

To see all of Florida's goldenrods, go online to the Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants.

Rare Enough

David Roddenberry

In her article above, "beginner" Linda Smith notes a plant that deserves further mention. Once beyond the "lawn orchids," nearly all encounters with terrestrial orchids thrill amateur botanists. Those of us living far enough down on the coastal plain to be in good touch with wet pine flatwoods that get some fire have that thrill in the different seasons.

As to St. Marks NWR and as to the showy broad-spike kind of orchids, there are so few spots holding the "snowy orchid" (*Habenaria nivea*) of summer that it seems almost rare in the Refuge.

And the similar but vividly colored orchids recorded for the Refuge, the *Pla*

tantheras that Ms. Smith chanced to see – well; if I can walk often in those wet flatwoods for several years and never come upon one, they might be considered rare in SMNWR. However, from mid-August 2014 to the present time in September, there have been several finds of *Platanthera* flowering in or very near the Refuge.



Platanthera cristata / Kitty Loftin

Ms. Smith's observation makes three *Platanthera* finds I've heard about. One station of over 20 individuals well ensconced in the Refuge's Panacea Unit, and another that's ¼ mile outside, seem to be the "crested yellow orchid" *P. cristata*. Perhaps Ms. Smith's find was that species also.