Rain showers punctuated by the occasional downpour did little to dampen the enthusiasm of those who came out for the Florida Wildflower Foundation’s fifth annual symposium held Sept. 27-28. Presented in partnership with Brevard County’s Environmentally Endangered Lands Program, the event showcased jewels in the EEL crown: Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Dicerandra Scrub Sanctuary, Sams House at Pine Island and Titusville’s Enchanted Forest. It was fitting, too, that Saturday’s programming coincided with National Public Lands Day and featured the dedication of a wildflower garden by Xavier Cortada, keynote speaker and artist behind FLOR 500, a statewide participatory art and history project featuring depictions of native wildflowers by 500 Florida artists.

Symposium participants enjoyed a variety of options, from field trips and dinner and a silent auction at Dixie Crossroads on Friday, to a full day of talks, walks and workshops on Saturday. A Saturday morning welcome from FWF Chairman Terry Zinn, and a presentation from Dr. Ross Hinkle on the EEL Program, and folks were off and running to line up for hikes or to find a seat in classrooms that quickly filled. Occasionally dodging raindrops, hikers explored the Enchanted Forest’s flora and fauna -- and how native peoples made use of their surroundings.

Classroom sessions got under way with Joanna Helms’ discussion of Florida’s medicinal wildflowers. As a sixth-generation Brevard Countian, Helms carries on family tradition at Mama Jo’s Sunshine Herbals, which she named after her great-great grandmother Joanna Curtis, who arrived in Titusville in 1867 and grew to rely on the area’s plants and wildlife for survival and well-being. “The beautiful thing about plants,” Helms said, “is they work mind, body, spirit and emotion.” Rafael Stowe, a home health nurse, said she wants to become better educated in the use of herbals in patient care. “I thought it was very interesting,” she said of Helms’ presentation on Florida’s apothecary, which includes such wild beauties as elderberry, beautyberry, firebush, goldenrod, horsemint, magnolia and passionflower.

Though others might imagine all sorts of things they’d want to be sure to have with them on a deserted island, herbalist Helms says, “I would definitely bring elder with me.” Aside from its anti-inflammatory, antiviral and diuretic properties, elderberry is also used to make jam and syrup, and perhaps most important if you’re stranded on an island, wine.

Other enlightening sessions followed on landscaping for fall (Craig Huegel), a look at some of the recent family changes among the (Continued on page 3)
Make your wildflower garden wild, not weedy by Jeff Norcini

Wildflower gardens add a natural look to otherwise ordered landscapes. But that natural appearance will become weedy if weeds are not controlled. Unlike the infomercial tagline, “set it and forget it,” doing so in any garden, let alone a Florida wildflower garden, often results in a weedy mess.

Weeds that commonly occur in wildflower gardens vary widely across the state. Here are simple suggestions for controlling any weed occurring in a wildflower garden.

- Check for weeds at least once a month, and at least twice as often during rainy periods.
- The best defense against weeds is a good offense. In a wildflower garden, that means wildflower canopy coverage—the denser the canopy the fewer the weeds. However, some aggressive weeds can grow up through a dense canopy in search of light.
- The fastest, most effective way to eliminate a weed is to pull it; make sure you get its roots.
- Many native wildflowers maintain their presence by re-seeding, so know what wildflower seedlings look like; pull out everything else. Download a guide at www.flawildflowers.org/planting.php.
- Before pulling weeds, make sure the soil is moist. Pulling them from dry soil may leave roots behind to haunt you another day.
- Pull weeds when they are small. Not only are they easier to pull, but you will minimize soil disturbance, which can lead to more weed seeds germinating.
- Some weeds can produce viable seeds just days after they flower, so pull them before they flower.
- Direct mower discharge away from the garden so that no weed seeds are blown into it.
- To prevent turfgrasses from creeping into the garden, edge it several times a year.
- Do not mulch. A mulch thick enough to suppress weed seed germination will also suppress wildflower seeds.
- Don’t fertilize—you will be fertilizing the weeds as well as wildflowers. If you feel that you must fertilize, use a controlled release product once a year at ¼ to ½ of the lowest rate for bedding plants and perennials.
- If you cut back your garden annually, hold off until late November. Cutting back your garden opens up the canopy and allows weeds to grow.
- If you need to use an herbicide, just spray the individual weed. The best time to spray is early in the morning after the dew has dried. Do not spray if rain is expected within a couple of hours or if there is a breeze. An herbicide can drift in even a gentle breeze to damage or kill your wildflowers.
- Given the rainy weather across much of the state this summer, be on the lookout for purple and yellow nutsedge (Cyperus rotundus and C. esculentus, respectively). These aggressive weeds can take over a garden in a month or two, especially during rainy summers. Both exude a chemical from their roots that can inhibit growth of surrounding plants. Once established, it may take a year or two of regular hand weeding to eliminate them.

More information:
- Purple nutsedge—http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Plant.aspx?id=1470
- Yellow nutsedge—http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Plant.aspx?id=1729

What is a weed? Simply stated, it is any plant, native or not, that is growing where it’s not wanted. Ragweed and dog-fennel are native to Florida, but most people probably would not welcome them in their wildflower gardens.

Plant Profile: Goldenrod (Solidago sp.)

Nothing says fall in Florida like the radiant goldenrod in bloom! A tall, rigid perennial, it is easy to spot among other wildflowers and grasses. In its natural setting, it can cover the landscape in vast swaths of shimmering gold.

Because it is so versatile and grows in a variety of conditions, goldenrod can be a wonderful addition to home landscapes. Its profuse and conspicuous blooms attract many species of bees and butterflies.

There are 20 species of goldenrod native to Florida, at least four of which are commonly available at nurseries that carry Florida native plants: Solidago sempervirens, S. listulosa, S. odora, and S. stricta.

Family: Aster (Asteraceae)

Habitat: Depending on the species, goldenrod may be found in sandhills, wet pinelands, tidal marshes, disturbed areas, and along roadsides and coastal dunes.

Range: Throughout Florida

Blooming season: Typically summer and fall, but some species have been known to bloom throughout the year.

Growth habit: Plants are upright, rigid and can grow to 2–6 feet tall when flowering, depending on species. Some may spread by underground rhizomes to form large clumps.

Flowers: Terminal inflorescence consisting of densely packed bright yellow-gold flowers

Soil: Moist to dry, acidic to alkaline

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Purple nutsedge (top) has a dark purple inflorescence. Yellow nutsedge (bottom) has a yellowish inflorescence.

This aggressive weed grew through a dense canopy of wild petunia (Ruellia caroliniensis).

Yellow and purple nutsedge (also called nutgrass) look identical before they flower. Both have shiny green leaves with pointed tips.

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wildflowers (Walter Taylor), butterflyscaping (Jaret Daniels) and fire ecology (Paul Schmalzer). Participants discovered, too, that aside from being storehouses of knowledge, presenters could also be quite entertaining. After Taylor’s presentation, Sandy Bauerschmidt of Orlando said she “learned a lot,” but she seemed most delighted that now she would be able to picture the inimitable educator and author when reading his latest book. Walks and workshops acquainted visitors with such things as the Enchanted Forest’s birds (Joe Swingle), archaeology and geology (Elaine Williams), wildflowers (Schmalzer) and a forest exploration and peek into the world of fungus (Jay Barnhart Jr.).

More than 130 participants found something to enjoy at the two-day event that offered as a backdrop some of Brevard County’s most enchanted settings. “The support shown from the community was really amazing,” said FWF Executive Director Lisa Roberts, deeming the symposium a success. “The more people who know what we do, the better off Florida is going to be,” she added.

But there will be no resting on laurels — Love Vine, Lancewood or otherwise. Asked when planning begins for the 2014 symposium, Roberts replied, without a moment’s hesitation, “Right away.”

(BSYMPOSIUM, continued from page 1)

FWF board member Dena Wild shares her knowledge of dog tennel with other participants. (Photo/Dixie Tate)

Participants in Kari Ruder’s plant propagation workshop learn how to work with cuttings. (Photo/Lisa Roberts)

Field trip participants stop in the salt marsh at Pine Island Conservation Area. (Photo/Vince Lamb)

Biodiversity Loop takes hikers into the cool quiet of wet hammock on a walk led by Elaine Williams that touched on Florida’s archaeological, geological and botanical heritage. (Photo/Dixie Tate)

The Foundation’s Board of Directors poses in front of Sam’s House at Pine Island Conservation Area. (Photo/Vince Lamb)

(Cortada poses in front of his FLOR 500 installation with Anne and Buddy McKay. (Photo/Vince Lamb)

Mike Knight, Program Manager of Brevard County’s EEL program shows a “reclaiming for nature” flag. (Photo/Vince Lamb)

Patricia Burgos and Wendy Poag enjoy a slice of pizza between sessions. (Photo/Lisa Roberts)

Stopping along the way to photograph sandhill flora. (Photo/Dixie Tate)
Welcome new members

(r) – renewal

Business
Nancy Bissett (r)
Roger Tripplett, Green Seasons Nursery (r)

General
Rina Avellaneda Kathie Benson
Nancy Bickner Chris Boivin
Wendy Breeden (r) Patricia Burgos (r)
Linda Christian Laura Covel Clark
Charles Crook Sharon Dolan
Ingrid Elmosri Teresa Jabour
Chris Janesko Victoria Jones (r)
George Kish (r) Mary Lou Klein (r)
Laura Leigh Lawlor Susan Llorca
Jean Lynn Peter McClure
Margaret McNamara Kathryn & Paul Merry
Sherry Mollette Gail Padgett
Wendy Poag (r) Blant Reeves (r)
Kari Ruder (r) Jeanne Ryba
Jay Sockrider (r) Patricia Tarasavage
Lorie Theusen Lisa Walton
Christopher Waltz (r) Linda Wilson (r)
Kay Yeuell (r) Kim Zarillo (r)
Garden Club of Orange Park Inc. (r)

License Tag
Fernando Aragon (r) Betty Dunckel (r)
Johnny Glenn Larry Hutt
Annie Johnson (r) Jo Anne Kani-Miller (r)
Sandy Knoll Carol Lucia (r)
Amanda Martin Stacey Matrazzo (r)
Suzan McCarty (r) Sandra McQueen (r)
Joanne Mulinare (r) Kristie Reynolds
Elaine Roblez Carolyn Saft (r)
Renae Senn Alan Squires (r)
Kirk Stowe Barbara Zimmerman

Student/Senior
DuBose Ausley (r) Gail Baker (r)
Sandra Bauerschmidt Gail & Mike Duggins
Steven Durkovic (r) Christina Ely
Noreen Engstrom Dotty Faibisy (r)
Sondra Greenfield (r) Patricia Houston
Barton Lipofsky Helen Lovell
Judy Martino Kathryn McClure
Kristyn McClure Patrick McGuinness
Betty Roberts (r) Ada Robertson
Steve Rose Theodore Schropp
Jane Simonsen Chuck Tague
Neta Villalobos-Bell (r) Carmen Visconti
Anne Vogt Barbara Waldron
Emily Wilson

Join a movement that’s growing like wildflowers!

Over the last decade, our members have raised more than $2.6 million for Florida’s native wildflowers and grasses through their membership dues and donations made through the State Wildflower license plate. By doing so, they’ve helped seed highways, fund community plantings, create educational materials, support important research projects, and much more.

By becoming a Florida Wildflower Foundation member, you can join the fight to preserve and conserve Florida’s native wildflowers, too. To join, use the convenience of PayPal online at www.FlaWildflowers.org/membership.php or snip out this membership coupon to send with a check. Got a Florida State Wildflower license plate? Your membership is free!

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☐ Student/Senior, $15  ☐ Contributor/Business $100
☐ General, $25  ☐ Sustaining, $250
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Maitland, FL 32794-1066

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For sale: Cottage on a pond

Located on 15 natural (no invasive exotics!) wooded acres with trails and 4 ponds, this 3BR, 1BA, furnished A-frame cottage is priced to sell at $124,750.

With central heat and air, boardwalk and dock, detached large screened porch, and a separate 24 x 16 workshop or studio. Zoning permits one additional home on this property. It is 5 miles from the lovely small town of Madison, Florida (www.madisonfla.com), near I-10 and 50 miles from Tallahassee. Visit bit.ly/1gBRzpw for descriptive information and to see more photos.

Contact Eleanor Dietrich at cabinlady43@aol.com if you have questions about the property.

Calendar


March 29: Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival, Deland

Visit FlaWildflowers.org/news.php for full calendar and event details.

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