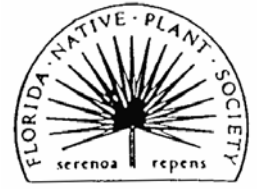




Sea Rocket



Newsletter of the North/Central Brevard Sea Rocket Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

April 2007

The Florida Native Plant Society was organized in 1980 to promote the preservation, conservation and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida, primarily through education.

**Wednesday, April 25th
Sea Rocket Meeting, 7:00 PM**

Karen Andreas has been growing bromeliads for 20 years at her Merritt Island home. She is editor of the newsletter of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies and helps her webmaster husband run the Council's web site (www.fcbs.org), the number one bromeliad resource on the Internet. She is a member of the educational staff at Harry P. Leu Botanical Gardens in Orlando and a Master Gardener. Karen is a past president of the Bromeliad Society of Central Florida and a past Chairman of the Florida Council. Karen teaches about bromeliads all over the state, spreading her bromeliad addiction where ever she goes.

**Kayak the Thousand Islands
with Sea Rocket's February speaker, Tim Kozusko
May 12, 2007**

The group will depart from the Cocoa Beach County Club at 9:00 AM.
Kayak rentals will cost \$20.00.

Contact Barb Venuto if you are interested in joining the group: cvenuto@cfl.rr.com or 452-3609.

Sea Rocket Newsletter Goes Digital!!!

In an ongoing effort to conserve natural resources, Sea Rocket members who have provided an e-mail address to FNPS will begin to receive their monthly newsletter via e-mail, starting with this April newsletter. If you would prefer to continue receiving your monthly newsletter in the mail, or if you are still receiving your monthly newsletter in the mail and would like to provide us with an e-mail address, please contact Judy Gregoire at judy_gregoire@yahoo.com or 615-1743.

Wednesday, May 23 Sea Rocket Meeting ~~~ Dr. Jay Barnhart—Wildflowers

Dr Jay Barnhart, M.D. will discuss how he thinks and analyzes different wildflowers. He was a Medical Examiner specializing in Forensic Pathology in Miami-Dade County for 15 years. So when you see a yellow wildflower on the side of the road, you may know what it is after you hear how Dr. Jay thinks!

Make your own Rain Barrel and Help Conserve Water!!!

The Brevard County Storm Water Utilities Department and the University of Central Florida are sponsoring a Rain Harvesting Workshop at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary on Saturday, May 12 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Participants will learn how to help reduce irrigation costs at their homes and will all receive a Rain Barrel of their own. The cost is \$30.00 and will cover all supplies and instructions to make your very own rain harvesting device. Reservations are preferred. Please contact Desiree Ard at dard@mail.ucf.edu or 407-823-4145 to ensure that all materials are available for your barrel.

If you were not able to attend this year's FNPS Conference, consider marking your calendar for the 2007 Members' Retreat!!!

The Florida Native Plant Society is organizing a Members' Retreat for October 5 – 7, 2007 at Pine Lake Retreat near Groveland/Clermont, FL. This informal retreat will give members from around the state an opportunity to mingle and enjoy the beautiful ecosystems of Central Florida. Activities will include hiking, paddling, horseback riding, workshops, guest speakers, nature crafts, family programs and much more. Look for additional details in the coming months at www.fnps.org, and please contact Karina Veaudry (executivedirector@fnps.org or 321-332-6242) if you would like to assist before or during the retreat.

And for an opportunity closer to home...

The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council is holding its 22nd annual Symposium at the Holiday Inn in Cocoa Beach from April 30 - May 3rd. More information on the event can be viewed on the FLEPPC website at http://www.fleppc.org/Symposium/2007/2007_Symposium_info.htm.

Volunteer Needed!!!

The Titusville Men's Garden Club (TMG) is searching for a water manager with a little electrical know how. The Sea Rocket Nursery shares space with this group, and TMG paid for the new nursery ground cloth. They now need one or more people with irrigation knowledge, including the timers, pumps, mist house and electrical connections. Do you know someone who is interested in joining the TMG or volunteering to assist?

Contact Tony Koromilas, Nursery Manager at AKOROMILAS@aol.com or 269-1931.

The staff at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary would like to thank the Sea Rocket members who volunteered to assist with our 2007 Keep Brevard Beautiful Grant to beautify our front entrance gate!!

Jim and Nancy Escoffier
Suzanne Meyer

Martha Pessaro
Audrey Nelson

We couldn't have done it without you!!!

Butterfly Garden Tours are available at the Bok Tower Sanctuary on the following dates:

April 26, 2007	May 1, 2007
May 5, 2007	May 9, 2007
May 12, 2007	

For more information, visit www.elderhostel.org.

The Titusville Men's Garden Club Tree and Plant Sale will be held in the downtown Titusville parking lot across from Emma Parrish Theatre on Friday, April 20 from 12 PM to dusk and Saturday, April 21

Coral Bean, *Erythrina herbacea* Linnaeus

For the next month, expect to see the brilliant red flowers of these multi-stemmed shrubs in clearings and coastal woodland areas. In addition to their striking color, the flowers are easily identified by their characteristic form, which consists of Christmas tree shaped aggregates of elongated cylindrical individual scarlet blooms. These clusters are located at the tips of leafless branches that are a product of the previous year's growth. They are followed by shiny black and vermilion poisonous seeds, which make their appearance in the summer and fall, when the elongated bean pods (Fabaceae family) spontaneously split open. Because of their attractive appearance, the beans are often fashioned into necklaces and other novelties. In Mexico, they are used for poisoning rats. The leaves, which emerge as the flowers reach their peak, are compound in their structure, each leaf stem bearing 3 spearhead shaped leaflets. The distribution range is throughout the deep South, and west to Texas and Mexico.

Contributed by: Jay Barnhart; **Originally published in:** Sebastian Inlet State Park's Volunteer Newsletter, *The Outgoing Tide*, published and edited by Sebastian State Park Ranger Ed Perry.

News from the Florida Native Plant Society

FNPS is desperately working to collect email addresses for every FNPS member with an e-mail address across the state. FNPS does not sell or share its email list with anyone, and they intend to use email addresses for very important messages only (maybe 6-8 per year including the *Sabal minor* distribution and a conference announcement). If you have received recent e-mails from Sea Rocket Board Members, then FNPS already has your e-mail address.

FNPS Online—Did you know that...

....you can click on a map of Florida to determine which native plant species are found throughout the state? The list of species that you will get has been compiled based on a database of species occurrence by county originally developed by Dr. Richard Wunderlin and tailored for this specific use by Dr. Shirley Denton. The plants listed were derived from a combination of sources: the AFNN directory of species available at Florida Native Nurseries, plant lists developed by FNPS chapters, and species listed in books by Rufino Osorio and Robert Haehle and Joan Brookwell.

Go to **www.fnps.org** and click on **Landscaping** and then **Plants in Your Area**.

?????Question of the Month?????

Answered by: Kari Ruder

Q. Should you cut back your native bunch grasses? (Submitted by Barb Venuto)

A. That is really up to you. Cutting back bunch grasses can encourage more growth from the base of the plant, leading to larger, denser clumps. Many clump grasses will do this regardless of being cut or not. Certain clump grasses like the love grasses (*Eragrostis* sp.) have foliage that will go dormant over the winter, and will produce new foliage in the spring. If you cut back the dormant or brown foliage before you see new growth in the spring, then you will have nothing but a stub of grass left. The brown foliage provides structure over the winter. Instead of cutting back the grasses, you can also carefully comb out the dead foliage by running your fingers through it. You may want to do this even if you cut your grasses back as you will often notice that there will be brown foliage left after cutting. Of course, most bunch grasses don't have to be cut back at all. Muhly grass, for example, will do fine without being cut back. You can remove the spent flower heads in early spring, or let them fall out on their own. You can also cut it back after flowering if you prefer to do so. But do you need to? Some may argue that you do, but think about it. Does the grass get cut back every year when it's growing on it's own in nature? No. A fire may come through occasionally, but every year? When in doubt, let's take some clues from nature.

Board of Director and Committee Reports

President's Message: Betty Page

The large turnout and enthusiasm of workers for the Viera project on March 10 shows that chapter members do consider their membership to be more than just an excellent lecture series. They like hands-on participation in our goal of bringing native plants to the attention of the general public. They are gardeners, and they like to build gardens. This is as it should be and very encouraging. There will be more opportunities in the upkeep of the Viera garden, and we will look for other appropriate situations in which we can build native plant gardens for the public. Please make suggestions.

Hospitality: Norma Forney

I am sure all of our members would like to thank Gail Hill for providing refreshments for the February meeting and Barbara Henry for the refreshments for March. Thank you both very much.

Membership: Gail Hill

Welcome new Sea Rocket members!!!!

Mike Mulleavey Peggy Cushman
Get Involved!

Education: Kari Ruder

Viera Garden Update - I'm happy to report that all of the plants have now been planted at the Volunteer Appreciation and Learning Garden in Viera, which Sea Rocket received the Keep Brevard Beautiful Xeriscape grant for. We planted over 200 plants and so far, less than 10 have died. For those of you not familiar with the garden, it is located in the Viera Regional park in a close to one-acre in size traffic island. Conditions are pretty brutal for the plants but they are doing remarkably well. Weeds have started popping up so it is now time for a workday. Please join us on **Saturday, May 5th from 9:00am to 11:00am**. Please contact Kari (naturewise@earthlink.net or 536-1410) if you need directions. Bring gloves, a bucket or similar to collect weeds in, a hand trowel for digging weeds, and water. Come and see what's blooming!

Newsletter: Judy Gregoire

You should notice some changes in this month's Sea Rocket newsletter. While I might not always be able to produce eight pages of information (not to mention my Page 1 claim to be saving natural resources!!!), I hope that you are finding this month's newsletter informative. In addition to the new digital option, we are adding some new features to the newsletter, and we hope that Sea Rocket members can help by contributing questions, suggestions and articles to futures newsletters. Here are some of the ideas we are working on

- Are you planning to attend the 2007 Florida Native Plant Society Conference in Gainesville, FL? Would you like to write a short article about your experience? Many Sea Rocket members will not be able to attend this year's conference but would appreciate reading information about the sessions, field trips, and social aspects of the conference. Articles of any length are welcome. You can write about one particular session or field trip that you participate in, or you can write a general article about the entire conference.
- Do you have a question about a native plant in your yard or a plant that you saw on a recent hike? A question about growing natives in your yard? A question about our local ecosystems and the role of native plants within them? A question about dealing with exotic plants in your community? The Sea Rocket newsletter will be including the new monthly feature, "Question of the Month". Please submit any questions that you think would be of interest to all Sea Rocket members to me by e-mail or phone.
- Finally, please contact me if you have any additional ideas for articles or other content for future newsletters. Guest contributors are always welcome, and if you are interested in writing an article that would be of interest to Sea Rocket members, don't hesitate to contact me.

Judy_gregoire@yahoo.com or 615-1743.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, April 19-Sunday, April 22—FNPS Annual Conference, Gainesville
Check out www.fnps.org for updated information

Friday, April 20 & Saturday, April 21—Titusville Men's Garden Club Tree and Plant Sale, Historic Downtown Titusville; see Page 2 for more details

Saturday, April 21—Sea Rocket Native Plant Sale at the Earth Day Celebration, Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, Titusville; 10 AM to 4 PM; see below for more details

Wednesday, April 25—Sea Rocket Chapter Meeting, 7 PM, Cocoa Ag Center, with Guest Speaker Karen Andreas, Florida Bromeliads

Monday, April 30—Thursday, May 3—Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council Symposium, Cocoa Beach Cocoa Beach Holiday Inn; see Page 2 for more details

Saturday, May 5—Sea Rocket Garden Workday, Viera; 9 AM to 11 AM, see Page 4 for more details

Saturday, May 5—Turkey Creek Jubilee, Palm Bay; 10 AM to 4 PM; call 952-3441 for more details

Wednesday, May 9—Sea Rocket Board of Directors Meeting, Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, 6 PM

Saturday, May 12—Kayak the Thousand Islands with Tim Kosuzko, Cocoa Beach, 9 AM
See Page 1 for more details

Saturday, May 12—Rain Harvesting Workshop at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, 10 AM-12 PM
See Page 2 for more details

Monday, May 14—Conradina Chapter Meeting, 7 PM, Melbourne Library on Fee Ave.
With Guest Speaker Kari Ruder, Cultivating New and Rare Natives for Landscaping and Restoration

Saturday, May 19—Sea Rocket May Yard Tour; see below for more details

Saturday, May 19 & Sunday, May 20—Keep Brevard Beautiful Secret Garden Tour
See Page 6 for more details

Wednesday, May 23—Sea Rocket Chapter Meeting, 7:00 PM, Cocoa Ag Center
with Guest Speaker Dr. Jay Barnhart, Wildflowers

Please contact Judy Gregoire to alert Sea Rocket members to future events throughout the community.

Earth Day at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary Saturday, April 21 from 10 AM to 4 PM

Join us for live music, live animals, guided hikes, educational programs, environmental exhibitors, food, and much more!! The Sea Rocket Nursery needs your help at our native plant sale. Contact Pat or Suzanne if you are available to assist with moving plants on April 20 or with the plant sale on April 21.

Pat Bayer: 638-4660 and Suzanne Meyer: 264-4922

May Yard Tour

On Saturday May 19th, Sea Rocket members are invited to tour the Berntson/Hudson yard on Merritt Island from 9am to 3pm. In 2004, the hurricanes destroyed almost all the vegetation and since then, 95% of the front yard has been replanted with native trees, shrubs, and flowers. Most species were chosen to attract birds and butterflies. The backyard is also home to many native species and includes a large pond. The house is one of the stops on the Keep Brevard Beautiful Secret Garden Tour but members can visit for FREE. Kari Ruder from Naturewise Nursery will be on hand to answer questions and sell a variety of the native plants featured in the yard from 9am to 1 pm. **Directions:** From SR 520 take N. Banana River Dr. to Cunningham (6th street on left). Turn left (west) on Cunningham, make right (north) on Jacaranda, then left (west) on Concord to 2nd house to last house on left.



Sea Rocket Chapter - Florida Native Plant Society

March 28, 2007 Chapter Meeting Minutes, 7PM

Betty Page thanked the membership for their vote of confidence in electing her Chapter President and hoped the coming year would be fruitful. Betty referred to the February Chapter Meeting minutes in the March Newsletter and asked if there were any changes needed – minutes were approved unanimously. The Treasurer, Eileen Szuchy, was not present but had prepared a brief statement that the Chapter's bank account had \$3,649.22, which did not include the plant sale revenue from the Waterwise Seminar on March 17. The KBB Grant native planting at the Volunteer Appreciation Garden in Viera was a success – the grant has not yet been received but will cover all expenses incurred thus far.

Betty thanked Judy Gregoire for accepting the challenging task of future Chapter newsletter production. Judy invited members to send anything they feel is interesting – either “print ready” or just ideas. Judy mentioned that there will be a “feature question” each month on native plants and invited members to email questions [judy_gregoire@yahoo.com]. Judy will begin sending the newsletter electronically to members who prefer this method, which saves paper, but said she would continue sending hard copies to those members preferring the mail method.

The FNPS Annual Conference will be held on April 19-22 in Gainesville. This event unfortunately conflicts with many local Earth Day events and most Chapter officers and Board members will not be able to attend, particularly because of the Earth Day event at the Enchanted Forest on Saturday, April 21. Betty encouraged folks attending the Annual Conference to take notes and report back to the Chapter so Conference news can be included in the May Chapter Newsletter.

Betty thanked Kari Ruder and Paula Berntson for initiating and managing the KBB Grant for the Volunteer Appreciation Garden and read a letter of thanks to the Chapter from the Commission.

Betty received an affirmative vote to adjourn and turned the meeting over to Program Chairman Barbara Venuto who introduced the evening's program speaker: Dr. Forrest Dierberg, who gave an eye-opening presentation on the monstrosity *Hydrilla* and the havoc it wreaks on our Florida environment. Both dioecious and monoecious, hydrilla is a submergent aquatic that propagates by a variety of methods. It “tops out” in a waterbody, covering the surface and eliminating the light and space that our native submergents require. Hydrilla reduces sportfish populations, clogs waterways, hinders navigation, displaces native vegetation and reduces water quality. On the bright side, hydrilla is cold intolerant so it is limited to warmer latitudes. Hydrilla is a major problem in the Everglades where it rapidly has become the major submergent within the stormwater treatment areas (STAs) that the Everglades restoration depends upon. Controlling this aquatic will be a major challenge for Everglades managers. Dr. Dierberg had samples of hydrilla and several “look alike” natives including naiad and musk grass.

A Native Plant raffle and refreshments closed the evening – members & guests had a chance to win several red cedars, swamp bay, beautyberry, wild coffee, tallow wood and several coonties. Thanks to Barb Venuto for the wild coffee and Ray Wheeler for the abundance of native plant beauties.

Keep Brevard Beautiful 2007 Secret Garden Tour Saturday, May 19 & Sunday, May 20—8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Come and be part of some of the best-kept secrets on the Space Coast as you tour the beautiful yards of local residents and get some ideas for your own garden.

For more information, visit www.keepbrevardbeautiful.com



March 14, 2007

Searocket Chapter
Native Plant Society
Merritt Island Florida
Hand Delivery

Dear Members:

Please accept our sincere thanks for the grant you obtained from Keep Brevard Beautiful. The plants your group installed are doing well and will enhance the "Waterwise" section of the County's Volunteer Appreciation and Learning Garden for years to come. Our Office relies on heavily on grants to do outreach, so we really appreciate the time and effort it takes to put a project like this together. Special thanks to Paula Berntson and Kari Ruder for all their hard work.

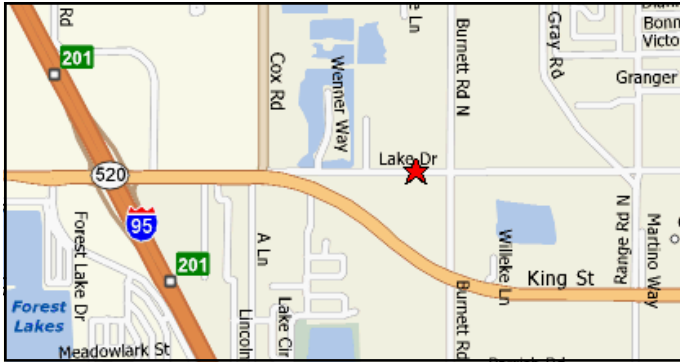
Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah S. Coles".

Deborah S. Coles
Special Projects Coordinator IV

Thank you to all Sea Rocket
Members who helped to make this
garden a reality!!!

Did you know that there
are currently 3,128
Florida Native Plant
Society Members across
the state???



Brevard County Agricultural Center

3695 Lake Dr, Cocoa, FL

- From I-95, go east on SR 520 to the first traffic light (Burnett Rd.). Go left at the light and one block north to Lake Drive. Turn left and the Ag. Center will be ahead on your left.
- From US 1, go west on SR 520 to the traffic light immediately after the Bob Steele Chevrolet dealership. Turn right onto Burnett Road and go one block to the stop sign. Turn right onto Lake Drive and the Ag. Center will be ahead on your left

Please do not call the Ag. Center for anything but clarification on directions to the center. For all other questions, contact a member of our board.

Sea Rocket Board of Directors

President— Betty Page: sioned@digital.net or 269-0555; **Vice President**—Barbara Venuto: 452-3609 or cvenuto@cfl.rr.com; **Secretary**—Joanie Regan: 482-3323 or jregan@cityofcocoa.com; **Treasurer and Chapter Director**—Eileen Szuchy: 634-5248 or bidensz1@yahoo.com; **Membership**—Gail Hill: 453-4865; **Education**—Kari Ruder: 536-1410; **Nursery Co-chairs**—Pat Bayer: 638-4660 and Suzanne Meyer: 264-4922; **Library Co-chairs**—Woody Dierberg, PhD and Joanie Regan; **Refreshments**—Norma Forney; **Hike Leader**—Paul Schmalzer, PhD: 268-5473; **Newsletter**—Judy Gregoire: judy_gregoire@yahoo.com or 615-1743



Florida Native Plant Society

For additional information on membership benefits or changes of address call, write or e-mail FNPS, or visit our website:

P. O. Box 278, Melbourne, FL 32902-0278
Phone: 321-271-6702; Fax: 31-951-1941
info@fnps.org/www.fnps.org

Sea Rocket Chapter mailing address: P. O. Box 1095, Cocoa, FL 32923-1095



Sea Rocket

c/o Judy Gregoire
444 Columbia Blvd
Titusville, FL 32780

Please contact us if you would like to receive future Sea Rocket newsletters via e-mail.