



# Sea Rocket



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

September 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.

**Sea Rocket Meeting—Wednesday, September 26, 2007, 7:00 PM**  
**Worm Composting with Carl and Bernie from *Our Vital Earth* in Sanford, FL.**

Carl and Bernie were trained in Australia about recycling organic materials and the benefits of vermiculture, or worm composting. In Australia, they were able to reduce their organic waste going to the landfills by 65% in a 4 year period from 1996 to 2000. Using this process and taking responsibility for their own organic waste, they are able to make plant food that is healthy. It contains 77 trace elements and minerals that are fed into the soil. It will replace the use of chemical fertilizers, insecticides, and fungicides. The mission of *Our Vital Earth* is to promote good health and to make our environment a safe place to live, naturally. *Our Vital Earth* sells many products such as worms, worm tea, worm bins, worm castings, formula mix, and more. Visit [www.ourvitalearth.com](http://www.ourvitalearth.com) for more information.

**Sea Rocket Meeting—Wednesday, October 24, 2007, 7:00 pm**  
**Green Roof Technology with Dr. Jay Garland**

In the quest to design more efficient buildings, green roof technology will become a more popular example to lower energy costs and increase managed storm water run off. It increases the life of the roof 2-3 fold and reduces heat and noise. Examples of green roof technology include Boston General Hospital with its 6500 sq. ft. healing garden, California Academy of Science in San Francisco with a 2.5 acres rolling garden, and the Fairmont Hotel in Vancouver with a food garden roof. Germany has 20% green roof technology on all their buildings. Dr. Jay Garland is the Chief Scientist and Biological Programs Manager for Dynamac Corp at the Kennedy Space Center. He oversees research associated with protection of the sensitive environment surrounding the space center and the potential use of biological systems for environmentally sustainable water and nutrient recycling. He has completed research fellowships in Japan, Buenos Aires, and Innsbruck. He has authored over 60 scientific papers. Best of all, he works with Dr Paul Schmalzer! We hope to tie this lecture with a field trip to the UCF green roof.

**Field Trip—Saturday, October 20, 2007 9:00 am—12:00 pm**  
**Buck Lake Conservation Area**

This is a joint project of the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program. Vegetation includes scrub, flatwoods, hammocks and marshes. Prescribed burning and scrub restoration have been conducted since its acquisition in 1996.

**Directions:** I-95 to St. Rt. 46 (Exit 223). West on SR 46 1.2 miles. Preserve entrance is on the north side of SR 46. It is a gravel road called Blake Lee Trail. There is a sign marking the conservation area entrance and the mail box is marked 5060. Go 0.3 miles north on gravel road to gate. Parking is in grassy area left of road at gate.

Bring hat, sunscreen, water, and insect repellent.

## **FNPS AMAZON JUNGLE SAFARI - OCTOBER 19-28, 2007**

Join fellow members of the Florida Native Plant Society on a natural history tour. This rainforest adventure is a great opportunity to have fun and learn about the world's largest rainforest and river system. We will have our own specially trained guides to describe flora and fauna for us. We will be staying in 4 Explorama Lodges and hiking in the jungle as well as traversing the river system in "collectivos", long, passenger boats. Along the way we will see monkeys, sloths, toucans, macaws, horned screamers, piranhas, caiman, leaf cutter ants, pink dolphins, etc. We will have the opportunity to view the top of the rainforest on the Canopy Walkway which is 115 feet in the air and a third of a mile long. We will view ethnobotanical plants along the medicine trail and within the ReNuPerRu Ethnobotanical Garden adjacent to one of the lodges we will stay in. Starting and ending in Miami, the price for this adventurous nature itinerary is \$2795 per person to double occupancy. The tour is escorted by experienced FNPS tour leaders Jo Anne and Fred Trebatoski. A Peruvian naturalist will meet you at the airport in Iquitos and stay with you throughout the trip. For more information please log onto [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org) and click on the brochure (pink) in the trip descriptor on the home page.

CONTACT the Trebatoski's at [plantnative@earthlink.net](mailto:plantnative@earthlink.net) or call 800-466-9660 for more info.

### **Sea Rocket Website**

Have you been to visit the Sea Rocket website recently at <http://nbbd.com/npr/SeaRocket/index.html>?

The website has been visited an average of 110 times a month this year. Sea Rocket newsletters are currently being added to the site each month. In addition, links to articles by Eileen Szuchy and Paul Schmalzer are visited more often than that: *Edible Plants* by Eileen averaged 916 times a month, *Scrub Habitat* by Paul averaged 390 times a month, and *Woodlands Habitat* by Paul averaged 194 times a month.

But there is great potential for much more information to be added at any time. The website is a great tool for education and membership recruitment!!! Do you have ideas or articles that you would like to add to the Sea Rocket website? Contact a member of the Sea Rocket Board of Directors to find out how you can help.

### **Naturewise Open House**

**Saturday, September 8th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm**

Naturewise nursery will be open to the public to celebrate the start of fall gardening in central Florida. We'll be selling lots of great native plants and featuring our heirloom vegetable plants and herb plants. If you'd like to come but don't know where we are, please e-mail or call Kari for directions or more information ([naturewise@earthlink.net](mailto:naturewise@earthlink.net) or 321-536-1410).

### **Native Teas**

***Submitted by: Gail Hill***

1/4 cup Horsemint flowers, leaves and stems (1/8 cup dried)

2 1/2 cups water

Combine horsemint and water in saucepan. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat, cover and steep for 10 minutes. This recipe is also good for Spanish Needle flowers, Bog Mint, Elderberry flowers, Sweet Clover, White Clover, Wisteria Flowers, and Sweet Goldenrod leaves! Double or triple for iced tea!

If you enjoyed reading answers to the *Question of the Month*—we need more questions!!!!

Please submit your questions to Shari Blissett Clark for future newsletters.

## **Landscape corridors promote plant diversity**

Published by Mick Kulikowski, North Carolina State University August 31, 2006

[mick\\_kulikowski@ncsu.edu](mailto:mick_kulikowski@ncsu.edu) or 919-515-8387

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Landscape corridors, thin strips of habitat that connect isolated patches of habitat, are lifelines for native plants that live in the connected patches and therefore are a useful tool for conserving biodiversity.

That's the result of the first replicated, large-scale study of plants and how they survive in both connected patches of habitat (those utilizing landscape corridors) and unconnected patches. Scientists at North Carolina State University and collaborators at other U.S. universities conducted the study.

Patches of habitat connected by corridors contained 20 percent more plant species than unconnected patches at the end of the five-year study, says Dr. Ellen Damschen, the study's lead author and a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Damschen completed her Ph.D. in the lab of Dr. Nick Haddad, associate professor of zoology at NC State and a co-author of the paper describing the research. The research appears in the September 1, 2006 edition of the journal *Science*.

The loss and fragmentation of habitat is the largest threat to biodiversity globally, Damschen and Haddad say. In an effort to prevent species losses, conservation efforts have intuitively relied on corridors, which have become a dominant feature of conservation plans. However, there has been little scientific evidence showing that corridors do, in fact, preserve biodiversity.

To perform the research, the scientists collaborated with the U.S. Forest Service at the Savannah River Site National Environmental Research Park, a federally protected area on the South Carolina-Georgia border. Most of the Savannah River Site is covered with pine plantations. The U.S. Forest Service created eight identical sites, each with five openings, or patches, by clearing the pine forest. A central patch was connected to one other patch by a 150-meter-long, 25-meter-wide corridor, while three other patches were isolated from the central patch – and each other – by the surrounding forest. The patches are home to many species of plants and animals that prefer open habitats, many which are native to the historical longleaf pine savannas of this region.

The researchers surveyed all plant species inside connected and unconnected patches from 2000 to 2005; nearly 300 species of plants were found. When the study began, there was no difference in the number of species between connected and unconnected patches, the scientists say. After five years, however, patches with a corridor retained high numbers of species, while those without a corridor lost species. Corridors provided the largest benefit to native species while having no effect on the number of invasive plant species. Invasive species seem to already be everywhere, not needing corridors for their spread, or remain where they originated, Damschen says. These results indicate that using corridors in conservation should provide benefits to native species that outweigh the risk of furthering the spread of exotic species.

Damschen says that a number of factors likely contributed to the difference in plant diversity. Seeds dispersed by animals are more likely to be deposited in patches with corridors; flowers are more likely to be pollinated because corridors increase the movement of insects; and animals that eat seeds – like ants and mice – can eat the seeds of more common species in connected patches and give rare seeds an advantage. While the researchers predicted that corridors would be beneficial to increasing plant richness, "It's surprising that we would see such a dramatic change over a short time scale," Damschen says. "Plants are thought to be relatively sedentary organisms that are heavily influenced by their environmental surroundings. This study indicates that plants can change relatively quickly through their interactions with the landscape and the animals that interact with them, such as seed dispersers, pollinators and predators."

*Continued on Page 6*

## Board of Director and Committee Reports

### *President: Betty Page*

September is almost upon us and we will once again be privileged to attend Sea Rocket Chapter meetings. Program chairman Barbara Venuto has arranged some very interesting speakers for the fall months, after the desert heat of the meetingless summer. Meetings will resume on September 26 at the Brevard County Agricultural Center on Lake Drive in Cocoa.

Over the summer, the chapter has sustained an immeasurable loss. Judy Gregoire is leaving the Brevard County EELS program to take a marvelous position as Director of the Newfound Harbor Marine Institute at Seacamp on Big Pine Key, FL. We wish Judy great success in her new job and much happiness. Although she has not been a member for very long, she has made a large contribution to the chapter and her few months as Editor of our newsletter has set a very high standard for its future. Hail and Farewell, Judy!

### *Education: Kari Ruder*

#### **Volunteer Appreciation and Learning Garden, Viera**

I'm happy to report that we had our final inspection of the planting we did in the waterwise section of the Brevard County Volunteer Appreciation and Learning Garden, and that we passed with flying colors! We have received our re-imbursement check and have successfully completed our grant award. Keep Brevard Beautiful staff were very impressed with the garden and how well the plants were doing. The Master Gardeners and some County staff held a workday to weed the rest of the garden and it's looking very nice. I did some more weeding before and after the inspection, and I'm sure more will be needed soon. Stay tuned for an announcement about a workday there in the near future. Hopefully the weather will cool and more of you will volunteer to help! Thanks to Nancy, Buddy, and Paula for helping with the last workday.

Again, if you haven't been to the garden yet, please get there! Remember, this is an all native garden that is nearly an acre in size! If people ask you where they can go to see native gardens, you can send them there! You can learn more about it by visiting the garden's website at: [http://www.brevardcounty.us/environmental\\_management/valg\\_home.cfm](http://www.brevardcounty.us/environmental_management/valg_home.cfm)

### *Newsletter: Judy Gregoire*

While I have only created a few of this year's newsletters, I am sad to say that I must already relinquish my post with this September newsletter as my last. I am very excited about my new career opportunity (see Betty's message above), but am sad to be leaving Brevard County and Sea Rocket.

Shari Blissett Clark has offered to take over the newsletter on a **temporary** basis. The Sea Rocket Board of Directors will still be looking for a member to create the newsletter over the course of the next few months. Could you be that certain someone??? There are already a good number of interesting articles accumulated and waiting to be used in future newsletters. Those articles, combined with the monthly submissions of the Sea Rocket Board of Directors, make it easy to assemble a 4 page newsletter each month - and sometimes 6-8 pages!!! Once a newsletter is complete - other members of the Board assist with printing and mailing. Please contact a member of the Board if you are interested in hearing more of the details involved in creating the Sea Rocket newsletter. It is a valuable part of membership, and I have found that it is not really as hard as you might think!!!! If you have access to a computer and you know how to "Cut" and "Paste" - then you can create the Sea Rocket Newsletter!!!!

Until then, you can reach Shari at [jclark109@cfl.rr.com](mailto:jclark109@cfl.rr.com) or 264-5185. Have a great year of meetings and hikes, and I hope to see many of you at next year's FNPS state conference!!!

## Upcoming Events

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Saturday, September 8</b>   | Naturewise Open House, 9 AM  |
| <b>Monday, September 10</b>    | Conradina Chapter Meeting, Gil Nelson, Melbourne Library, 7 PM   |
| <b>Wednesday, September 26</b> | Sea Rocket Chapter Meeting, Worm Composting with Carl and Bernie, 7 PM   |
| <b>Saturday, September 29</b>  | Yard Tour of Sea Rocket Member George Opre's Yard, 9 AM  |
| <b>October 5-7</b>             | FNPS Membership Retreat  |
| <b>Wednesday, October 17</b>   | Friends of the Enchanted Forest Membership Meeting, 6:30 PM followed by Beneficial Bats and Night Hike; call 264-5185 for more information |
| <b>October 19-28</b>           | FNPS Amazon Jungle Safari  |
| <b>Saturday, October 20</b>    | Field trip to Buck Lake Conservation Area, 9 AM  |
| <b>Wednesday, October 24</b>   | Sea Rocket Chapter Meeting, Green Roofs with Dr. Jay Garland, 7 PM   |

*Please contact Shari Blissett Clark to alert Sea Rocket members to future events throughout the community.*

### Welcome to the Sea Rocket Chapter: *by Gail Hill*

We have a lot to be thankful for--our chapter is getting larger and larger! Welcome to new members: Kathie Benson and Thomas Seberry—hope to see you at the meeting on Wednesday, September 26, 2007. Please make sure you let us know you're here so we can say hello!

A batch have rejoined us for another year (don't know what we do without you!): Michelle Clifton, Sylvia Eppig, Paula Eri, Barbara Hoelscher and Liz Laudadio. THANK YOU!

### Nursery Needs Nursing: *by Pat Bayer*

We've all been taking turns checking the watering system daily this sizzling summer. One time the mist house quit misting because the well pump broke. There has also been several problems with the overhead sprinkling system. The plants are thriving on the extra attention, and we plan to have a sale at the Enchanted Forest in November. Everyone please save your bowls for the nursery when you eat salads at the fast food places. We are using them for saucers for the plants that like wet feet. Pots are also appreciated. Please bring them to the September meeting or the nursery. Thanks to Suzanne Meyer, Betty Page, Ginny Blaetz, and Michelle Clifton for helping us beat the heat!

### **Butterfly Fest, October 13-14, 2007 Florida Museum of Natural History Gainesville, FL**

ButterflyFest is dedicated to increasing awareness of our state's butterflies as fascinating and fun ambassadors to the natural world accessible to all. Activities will promote the conservation and preservation of Florida's butterflies and moths through the promotion of butterfly gardening, sensible use of non-destructive pest control practices and landscaping with native plants.

For more information, visit:  
[http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/butterflyfest/festival\\_info.htm](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/butterflyfest/festival_info.htm)

### **Saturday, September 29, 9:00 AM** Yard Tour of Sea Rocket Member George Opre's Yard, Merritt Island

We will meet at George's home and he will give us a tour of his yard as well as some of the common areas he manages within his subdivision. George has been overseeing (and installing) the landscaping for his subdivision for several years and can show us how fast some species have grown, as well as how he's integrating more natives and battling exotics. He propagates many of the plants he installs in the landscape and can give members some great information on his successes, failures, and challenges. This will be a great tour for those interested in seeing how natives and non-natives can be integrated in a more formal landscape.

Please contact Education Chair Kari Ruder (321-536-1410 or [naturewise@earthlink.net](mailto:naturewise@earthlink.net)) for directions.



*Continued from Page 3*

The next step in their studies of corridors is to make predictions for how corridors affect plants based on plant characteristics, Damschen and Haddad say. The researchers will study the specific effects of pollination and seed dispersal by wind and animals on plants in both connected and unconnected patches of habitat, for example.

An abstract of the paper follows.

"Corridors Increase Plant Species Richness at Large Scales"

**Authors:** Ellen I. Damschen, University of California, Santa Barbara and North Carolina State University; Nick M. Haddad, North Carolina State University; John L. Orrock, University of California, Santa Barbara; Joshua J. Tewksbury, University of Washington; Douglas J. Levey, University of Florida

**Published:** September 1, 2006, in *Science*

**Abstract:** Habitat fragmentation is one of the largest threats to biodiversity. Landscape corridors, which are hypothesized to reduce the negative consequences of fragmentation, have become common features of ecological management plans worldwide. Despite their popularity, there is little evidence documenting the effectiveness of corridors at preserving biodiversity at large scales. Using a large-scale replicated experiment, we showed that habitat patches connected by corridors retain more native plant species than do isolated patches, that this difference increases over time, and that corridors do not promote invasion by exotic species. Our results support the use of corridors in biodiversity conservation.

## **Agenda for FNPS Membership Retreat - October 5-7, 2007, Pine Lake Retreat, Groveland ,FL**

### ***Friday, October 5, 2007***

Optional check-in - Recreation on your own; Lunch and Dinner Available

### ***Saturday, October 6, 2007***

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 7:00 am to 8:30am  | Check-in and BREAKFAST  |
| 8:00am to 9:15am   | Plant ID Contest in Breakfast Dinning Area  |
| 9:30am to 10:30 am | Welcome & State of FNPS Address - Shirley Denton, Ph.D., FNPS President   |
| 10:00am to 11:00am | FNPS Advocacy (Children's Programs simultaneously 10am to 12:00pm)  |
| 11:00am to 12:00pm | Guest Speaker - Susie Caplowe, Sierra Club, 'Advocacy for 501c3 Organizations'  |
| 12:00pm to 1:30pm  | LUNCH   |
| 1:35pm to 2:45pm   | Workshop (A) Plant Journaling with Marjorie Shropshire - OR -<br>Workshop (B) Rainbarrel Making with Gabriella Milch - OR - Children's Programs |
| 3:15pm to 6:00pm   | Field Trip (A) Hike - OR - Field Trip (B) Paddle  |
| 6:30pm to 7:30pm   | DINNER  |
| 7:30pm to 8:45pm   | FNPS Jeopardy!  |
| 8:45pm to 10:30pm  | Fireside Chat   |

All programs are free,  
and housing and meals are affordable!!!

### ***Sunday, October 7, 2007***

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 7:00am to 8:30am | BREAKFAST  |
| 8:45am to 9:30am | FNPS Executive Director & FNPS Administration Reports  |
| 9:45am - 12:00pm | Chapter Forum (Children's Programming provided simultaneously)   |
| 12:00pm - 1:30pm | LUNCH (Edible Native Plant Presentation during lunch by Peggy Lantz)                                       |
| 1:45pm - 4:30pm  | Field Trip (A) Hike (Different area than Sat.) - OR - Field Trip (B) Paddle (Different location from Sat.) |

Visit [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org) for more information on how to register.

## **Inkberry (aka Beachberry)**

*Scaevola plumieri*

This herbaceous, sprawling shrub is native to Florida, the West Indies, and South America. It often forms small dense erect to trailing clumps, and the plants have alternate glossy green thick leaves that are typically clustered near the branch tips.

One of the other common names for this plant is “half flower”, a description quite aptly applied to the appearance of its white to pinkish bloom which looks like the bottom half of a typical flower. The very interesting explanation for this feature lies in the fact that the flower bud is tubular, but splits lengthwise along its top surface upon opening, causing all of the petal lobes to open mostly downward. Check this out with a hand lens when you have an opportunity! When ripe, the black juicy fruits are unpleasantly bitter, and ingestion of them by humans is likely to cause vomiting and diarrhea. The plant plays an important part in dune stabilization because of its rapid growth, extensive root system, and high tolerance for salt spray and strong wind. In Central and South Florida it is found on and near coastal sites.

It is Florida's only native plant in the Goodenia Family, although a closely related exotic, *Scaevola frutescens*, which has a white berry and is native to the Indian and Pacific Oceans, has been extensively planted along South Florida salt water canals because its rapid dense growth provides very effective visual barrier fences. Both of these species can be located in the area of the Park (Sebastian Inlet State Park) near to the South side of the bridge. The native species is on the crest of the sand dune just to the East of the bridge, and one can find the exotic one for comparison by looking beneath the bridge ramp just beyond the ditch that harbors an elderberry bush.

**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.

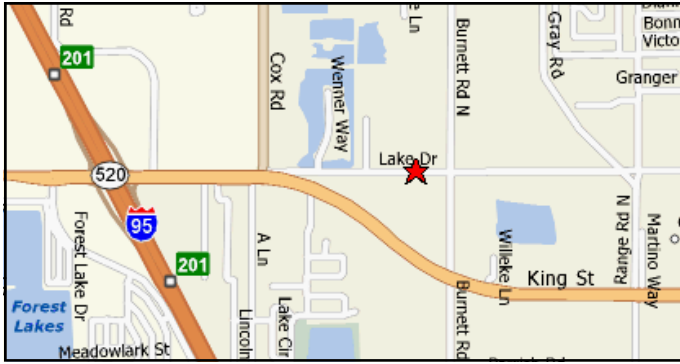


Photos of Florida's native *Scaevola* by Shirley Denton

FNPS membership is up  
to 3107 across the state!!!

### **NEW COPIES OF CLASSIC FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT BOOK**

Sally Sun reports that the Suncoast Chapter of FNPS has a number of new copies of Craig Huegel's "*Florida Plants for Wildlife*" book available for sale. This book is excellent and copies are scarce as it has been out of print for some time. If you'd like a copy, contact Sally at 813-935-1312 or [spriggssun@yahoo.com](mailto:spriggssun@yahoo.com).



## 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@cityofcocoabeach.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; **Hospitality**—Norma Forney; **Hike Leader**—Paul Schmalzer, PhD: 268-5473; **Newsletter**—Shari Blissett Clark: jclark109@cfl.rr.com or 264-5185

## 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 Shari Blissett Clark  
444 Columbia Blvd  
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*Please contact us if you would like to receive future Sea Rocket newsletters via e-mail.*