

FNPS 23rd Annual Conference Highlights

HISTORY
May 2003

23rd Annual
FNPS Conference
**Symbiosis: the
Power of Partnerships**
Hosted by
the Coccoloba Chapter
March 8-11, 2003
Holiday Inn Bell Tower,
Fort Myers, Lee County



Florida International University is producing quite a few top-notch plant ecologists. At left are FIU graduate students, alumni, and their beloved professor, Suzanne Koptur, together again at the 2003 conference. Front row, L-R: Carl Weekley, Suzanne Kennedy (FNPS Conservation Chair), Phil Gonsiska (Endowment Award Winner), Suzanne Koptur. Back row, L-R: Hong Liu, Anne Cox, and John Geiger.

The "power of partnerships" was very evident in this past year's conference, which offered 25 field trips and a wide assortment of special programs devoted to the relationships between plants, animals, and people (in landscapes ranging from backyards to regional parks) as well as science and restoration topics. One would be challenged to name an organization not represented at this conference. Special highlights from the program were the heartfelt talk and readings by Janisse Ray, author of *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, and a presentation from Efrén Cazares on mycorrhizae, very educational for all of us and made all the more enjoyable by Efrén's low-key humor and charming style. Best of all were the warm, friendly faces of Coccoloba Chapter members everywhere — selling homemade beautyberry and Walter's viburnum jelly (yum!), sporting organic cotton conference t-shirts printed with soy-based inks, and proudly showing off their beautiful native plant yards. Thanks, Coccoloba, for a great conference and time together.

Each year at the conference, FNPS holds our annual membership meeting during which we elect officers and present awards. Check out the new list of officers on page 3. Many

thanks are due to our Nominating Committee composed of Annie Schmidt, Hernando & Nature Coast Chapters, Debbie Butts, Suncoast Chapter, and Gil Nelson, Magnolia Chapter, for bringing more "new blood" to our board. The FNPS Mentor Award recognizes lifetime achievements of our most revered senior scientists, educators, and naturalists. This year's award went to Dr. Loran Anderson, highly respected botanist and plant taxonomist from Florida State University. The Silver Palmetto Award is given to the board member most helpful to the President during the past year. FNPS President Kim Zarillo was pleased to present two Silver Palmetto Awards this year, to both Shirley Denton, who has done amazing amounts of work on the FNPS website, and Jo Anne Trebatoski, who has reinvigorated the Membership Committee, established our Annual Fund Appeal, and is now leading a third annual fundraising trip (to the Amazon!). Green Palmetto Awards are provided to members for their scientific and technical contributions, educational outreach efforts, and general service to the society. This year there were several: Kathy Boone, recently retired after many years of leading the non-

profit Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation Native Plant Nursery. Roger Hammer, who is thankfully now writing books in addition to wonderful magazine articles (beautifully illustrated with his own world-class photography). Dr. Nancy Coile, recently retired after years of service as our state botanist within the Division of Plant Industry. Richard Moyroud, who has served on the Endangered Plants Advisory Council for years, worked on a variety of conservation programs, and an especially important resource for growing and using South Florida native landscape plants. Hester Wagner, founding member of the Conradina Chapter and instrumental in establishing conservation heritage programs in Brevard County.

Mentor & Palmetto Awards

Mentor Award

Loran Anderson, PhD

Silver Palmetto Award

Shirley Denton, Science Chair & FNPS Webmaster

Jo Anne Trebatoski, Conference Chair, Membership Chair, and Fundraising Leader

Green Palmetto Awards

Kathy Boone, Service
Roger Hammer, Education
Nancy Coile, PhD, Technical
Richard Moyroud, Service
Hester Wagner, Service

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and the many, many individuals and organizations who supported us with advertising, exhibits, artwork and photos for our program, raffle donations, signage, and volunteer help.