

April 2024

NEWSLETTER



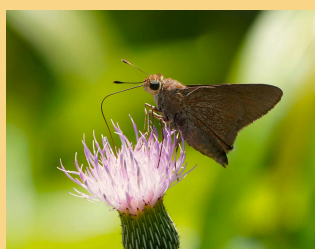
CORKSCREW SWAMP TOUR HIGHLIGHTS



On April 9, club members toured the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp Wildlife Sanctuary along its boardwalk. Sally Stein, the Director of Public Programs, led the tour and our very own Amy Swanson, a longtime volunteer at the sanctuary, also joined us. Many wildflowers were in bloom including a beautiful ionopsis orchid with dainty flowers. We also ventured into an area that is not generally accessible to the public to view a large specimen of the cigar or cow-horn orchid high in a tree. With regards to animals, there was a black-bellied whistling duck swimming between alligator flag plants, a baby red-shouldered hawk in its nest, a vulture nest in a tree cavity, and a juvenile little blue heron wading in the water. Other sightings are shown in the accompanying photographs. Eagle-eyed Amy spotted the Brazilian skipper butterfly caterpillar. She loves caterpillars! Thank you to Barb Van Esler for organizing the trip.



Brazilian Primrose - invasive



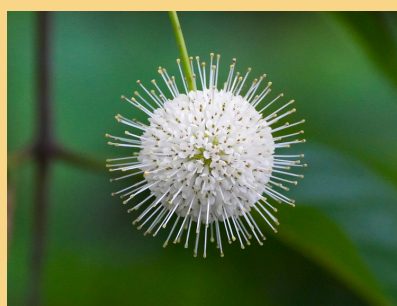
Monkskipper Butterfly



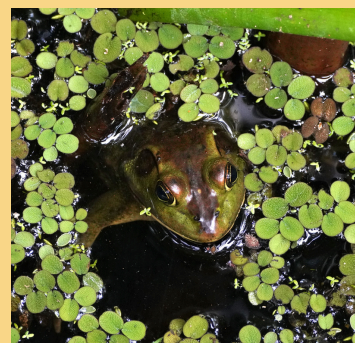
Lanceleaf Arrowhead



Brazilian Skipper Caterpillar



Buttonwood



Pig Frog (male)

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER - 2024

- April 30 - Deadline for Membership Renewal Fee for May 1, 2024 - April 30, 2025
- May 3 - 11:00 am Campus Tour/Gordon River Cruise at SWFL Conservancy
- May 21 - 11:00 am General Meeting and Plant Exchange at VillageWalk Town Center
- June thru October - Nothing is scheduled and normal club activities resume in November



TRIPS & TOURS

Trips and Tours!!!!

Join us for a trip to SWFL Conservancy Center in Naples!

May 3rd, 11:00 AM
\$20 members \$25 non-members

We will be touring the Dalton Center followed by an electric boat tour of the Gordon River. We will organize a carpool if needed.

Contact Linda Musick at craigemusick@comcast.net for more information.

IMAGES FROM THE BUTTERFLY GARDENS 5 THROUGH 10 + CORNER GARDEN

(Plant/animal identification was done using PlantNet, Seek, Merlin phone apps. Some plants are identified as part of a family and not as a specific species.)



Butterfly Pea



Butterfly Gaura



Scorpion Tail



Clerodendrum



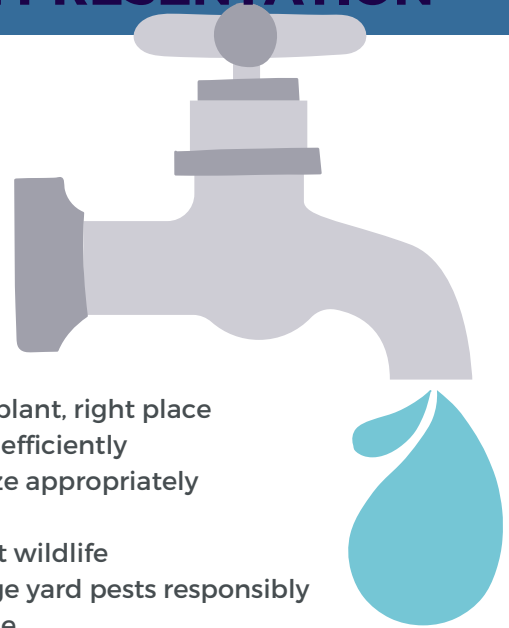
False Shamrock



Crested Philippine Violet

WATER CONSERVATION PRESENTATION

Don Rainey from the University of Florida/Institute of Agricultural Science spoke about “Applied Techniques in Water Conservation” at the Annual Meeting on April 16. He spoke about principles and practices that can be applied to our gardens and landscapes to conserve and efficiently use the limited water resources that we have available. These considerations are especially important because of the rapidly increasing population of Florida. Too many people want to live in this beautiful state that we call home! Although the irrigation practices in VillageWalk are largely out of our control, there are other ways that we can wisely use water. The Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program from the University of Florida describes nine science-based principles for creating “healthy and beautiful landscapes that protect Florida’s natural resources”.



1. Right plant, right place
2. Water efficiently
3. Fertilize appropriately
4. Mulch
5. Attract wildlife
6. Manage yard pests responsibly
7. Recycle
8. Reduce storm water runoff
9. Protect the waterfront

More information is available online at <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/about-ffl/9-principles/> or just do an internet search.



BUTTERFLY FEST 2024

The Butterfly Festival took place on April 6 on a beautiful spring day. Linda Blaise organized and led a team of volunteers to run the festival. It is an important event for many reasons including:

- Educating the public about wildlife and the environment
- Promoting the beauty and importance of the butterfly gardens so that there is continued support
- Providing a fun and entertaining activity for kids and adults of all ages
- Fundraising to offset the cost of the festival and to support the butterfly gardens/garden club

The education of the public is impactful because kids and adults often put what they learn into practice in their own lives and in the lives of others.



A bee-keeping couple from Colorado at the Pollinator tent



Linda, our tireless leader!



Eileen with her parrot friend

Despite the late date due to rainy weather, about 450 people attended the event. There were educational tents for native plants, butterflies, pollinators and sustainability. The release of the butterflies was a highlight. Bird Gardens of Naples, a pet bird adoption center, brought four friendly and colorful parrots. Donuts and refreshments were enjoyed by all. Mark Aulick provided some great music. Bromeliad and honey sales, silent auction items, and the raffle brought in revenue. Most importantly new garden club members and butterfly garden volunteers signed up.

A big THANK YOU to the army of volunteers, the generous support of the sponsors/donors, and the many people that attended the event. There was truly an army of volunteers who included gardeners, garden club members and spouses. As Linda has said, "A theater performance is more than the cast of characters. Behind the scenes there are many hours that go into the prep and props and then afterwards there is the removal and storage of everything used in the production".

Thanks to our Sponsors

- Leslie Prinz - Orchid Realty Group
- Andy Koehneke - SW Florida Insurance Associates
- Kelly Short - Berkshire Hathaway
- Kellie Brown - John R. Wood Properties



Festival music from Mark



Amy with her caterpillar friend



Having fun at cornhole



Lots of interest at Native Plant tent



Release of a Gulf Fritillary Butterfly



An educational spin on bingo - Butterfly Bingo



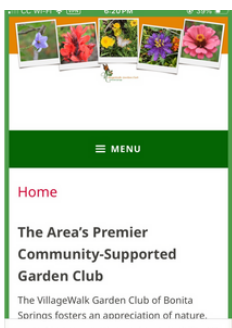
Wonderful bromeliads for sale



Face and arm painting for kids and adults



Families enjoying festival



CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE!

www.villagewalkgardenclub.com

Our new website is full of information about the garden club, events and sustainability practices.

