

BROWARD COUNTY BUTTERFLY CHAPTER

Jan 2016

PLANT OF THE MONTH



Man-in-the-ground
(*Ipomoea microdactyla*)
Native, MiamiDade
Photo: Rossi, P

Welcome to our meetings!

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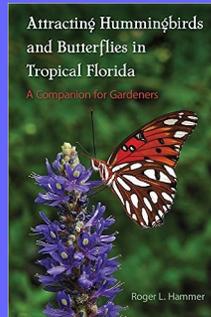
Coming Attractions

Tue Feb 9, 2016

At Tree Tops Park, 7pm

Roger Hammer, Naturalist /
Award-winning author

"Attracting hummingbirds and
butterflies in tropical Florida"



Field Trip to

Long Key Nature Center

JOIN US

Sunday Jan 24 10am-Noon

Presenter Kelli Whitney. Learn about
winter butterflies & the history of Long
Key Park!

More info, Call: Pat 954 376 1128; email
BCBCmail@gmail.com

Reminders

Next meetings
TUE Jan 12, 2016
TUE Feb 9, 2016

Hope to see you!

Amazon Users

Please order thru website
www.browardbutterfly.org.
BCBC earns 4% of your pur-
chases.

Silent Auction

Please ID donated plants.
We accept natives and non-
invasive plants.

Signing In Notebook

Members & guests, please
print your name. As a
guest, please give us your
email address to receive
our newsletters.

**Please take your Plants
donated at each event or
meeting home if not auc-
tioned off.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

TUES JAN 12, 2016 Kelli Whitney "TRENDS IN BUTTERFLY COUNTS"

Also Wildflower Seeds & Plants for auction

Contact us at www.browardbutterflies.org; email: BCBCmail@gmail.com

Chapter meetings at Tree Tops Park 3900 SW 100th Avenue, Davie FL 33328 – 954-357-5130

BROWARD COUNTY BUTTERFLY CHAPTER

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Atalas, Colorful & Unpredictable

It is called the Florida atala or coontie hair-streak. Where once they were listed as threatened and even thought to have disappeared, now they are a species of the greatest conservation need. They appear in Broward, Palm Beach and Miami Dade counties, often turning up in the yards of butterfly lovers who attract them planting their host plant the coontie or *Zamia pumila*. The coontie plant is native to Florida and once was found in the wild in most of the peninsula and in southeastern Georgia east of the Apalachicola River. The plant sold in Florida nurseries is *Zamia pumila* which remains the dominant form although other *Zamia* species in the West Indies exist.

The root is poisonous which contains the toxin cycasin yet the Seminoles made a process of washing it out after grinding the roots into a flour. Coonties were an important source of foods for the Seminoles during the lengthy Seminole wars. The plant almost disappeared because the Florida settlers in the late 1800s to 1900s used the plant to make the flour into an industry. Of course the atalas could have disappeared with it. By the 1930s atalas were considered rare, and this butterfly was thought to have extirpated from our local counties when a small amount of butterflies was found on Key Biscayne in 1979. Garden enthusiasts have kept planting this cycad since then and are responsible for the rebounding numbers of atalas.

The plant is dioecious, being either male or female, where the male cones are more slender. Fertilization occurs when the weevil *Pharaxonotha zamiae*, moves from the male to female cones which enlarges. In time, the cones open, the flesh of the red seeds are exposed for the pickings of birds and other animals. The eggs are found on the outer parts of the leaves; even on the cones. The larva of echo moth also uses the cones to pupate.

This is a very striking hairstreak from the Lycaenidae family of butterflies that includes the blues and metalmarks. It is the second largest group behind the Nymphalidae which comprise for example, the monarchs, queens and gulf fritillaries. The black and shimmering blue green wings against the red thorax and a dash of red in wings, warns predators to be wary. The female wings has hues of blue against black, the male appears a bit more green-black and slightly smaller. They are only 1.5 inch, the gossamer wing butterfly that delicately lights up in sunlight. Planting cycads gives no guarantee to see atalas because atalas can be picky. There are many surprises in store for the anxious gardener waiting to see them, they're still uncommon because they can be introduced upwards to a dozen or more plants, yet disappear or maybe reappear again two years later, lucky for you and your counties.

1. <http://fnpsblog.blogspot.com/2010/08/coonties-captivating-cycads.html> 2. <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg347>; 3. <http://fnps.org/assets/pdf/palmetto/ham-mer-roger-the-coontie-and-the-atala-hairstreak-vol-15-no-4-winter-1995.pdf>



The bench & dedication

The ceramic bench is a thing of beauty. It was carefully crafted with the zebra longwing & mami blue renditions perfectly mottled in place. The day of the bench dedication at Long Key Nature Center for Prof. Elane Nuehring was windless yet delightfully cool. Nearly fifty individuals came together to share thoughts of Elane, former president of Miami Blue's chapter. Those attending included Ron Nuehring, Linda Evans of the Miami Blue Chapter and friends of the Nuehrings. The Broward County Butterfly chapter hosted the affair and was well represented.

Organizers Cindy Jenkins and Kathy Arcangeli did a wonderful job, Cindy made artful floral table baskets, Kathy worked quietly arranging food and drinks for all. Poignant reminiscences were shared by the speakers. Still others revealed Elane's gift of persuasion and curiosity for butterflies, this coming from Kelly Whitney, Ron Nuehring, Barbara DeWitt, Janice Malkoff and Miriam Avello. We thank all participants and volunteers.

Atala Butterfly Information ~ read the Abstract on the New and Revised Life History of the Florida Hairstreak *Eumaeus atala* (Lepidoptera: Lycaenidae) with Notes on its Current Conservation Status

Author(s) Sandy Koi and Jaret Daniels

Source: Florida Entomologist, 98(4):1134-1147.

Published By: Florida Entomological Society

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1653/024.098.0418>

URL: <http://www.bioone.org/doi/>

Directions to Tree Tops

We meet at Tree Tops Park. From I-95, exit at Nob Hill Road. Travel 2.5 miles south on Nob Hill. Tree Tops will be on the left hand side.

From I-95, exit at Griffin Road. Travel west approximately 8.2 miles to Nob Hill Road. Turn right. Travel a quarter of a mile north. The entrance to the park will be on the right hand side of the road.

From I-75, exit at Griffin Road and travel east approximately 4.7 miles to Nob Hill Road. Turn left. Travel a quarter of a mile north. The entrance to the park will be on the right hand side of the road.

There are vines from the morning glory Convolvulaceae family to admire. Two species are rare and listed as endangered by the state of Florida. They are the rockland morning-glory *Ipomoea tenuissima* and man-in-the-ground, a most vibrant pink and *Ipomoea microdactyla*, of a paler pink color. Both are restricted to the pine rockland habitat in southern Miami-Dade. After fire, man-in-the-ground, named because of its tuberous roots, quickly regenerates. They are available at some nurseries and can be seen in Larry & Penny Thompson Park and Navy Wells Pineland Preserve. Hummingbirds, skippers and moths visit them for nectar.

Credits: Roger Hammer, fnpsblog.blogspot.com/2011/12/man-in-ground.html.

<http://regionalconservation.org/ircs/database/plants/PlantPage.asp?>

The *Eumaeus atala* butterfly B.Richie; Eggs. BugGuide.net Caterpillars; NABA J.Everett



The mature orange-brown atala caterpillars pupate in a crescent; they do not use a cremaster (hook), instead use a silk girdle attached to the leaf.

Nectar sources for hairstreaks including atalas include spanish needle, chaya, wild coffee, bloodberry, lantana, white indigo-berry and saw palmetto.



Family, friends of Elane Nuehring