

# BEAUTYBERRY POST

## THE NEWSLETTER OF MACKAY GARDENS AND LAKESIDE PRESERVE

September/October 2015



### Time and Change by Steve Franklin

Time and change are related to many different aspects of our lives. First and foremost, for the average human being, are the physical and psychological changes that take place over a lifetime. We transition from young, robust, inexperienced, but quick to learn individuals to older, hopefully wiser, but often less physically active people. These changes seem to take place in the blink of an

eye. For some of us, it seems incredible that we could have amassed the knowledge and experiences that we have in so little time. The fact is that a human being is capable of achieving a tremendous number of accomplishments during the course of an average lifetime.

Compare that capability to the time it has taken Florida to evolve to its present size, shape, and condition. According to geologists, 550 million years ago Florida only existed as a tectonic platform thousands of feet below sea level known as the Florida Plateau. It extended southward from the continent Pangea. As tectonic plates shifted Pangea split apart and then repeatedly shifted back and forth heating marine sediment and forcing it upward until it cooled and hardened. The result was the Appalachian Mountains, which are purported to have been higher than the Rockies at that time.

Time slogged on, millions and millions of years of time. Rain, ice, and snow eroded the mountains. Some of those minerals washed down rivers and streams until reaching the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico where ocean currents deposited them on limestone several thousand feet thick, the hardened bones of ancient sea creatures which, after death, sank and became part of the Florida Plateau. Ice ages came and went causing the levels of the oceans to rise and fall, but eventually leading to the exposure of a land mass twice as wide as present day Florida. More ice ages began and ended, altering the land mass time and again, sometimes reducing Florida to nothing more than a string of islands. As portions of land remained above sea level, certain plants and animals evolved in this unique environment. They became reliant on the sun, fire, and rainfall in quantities normal to Florida, and today they are known as our native species.

Finally I come to the point of all of this talk of time and change. While it took nature millions of years to create Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve, man altered the environment considerably in little more than an average human's lifetime. Now dedicated volunteers assist the City of Lake Alfred in an effort to reverse some of those changes, specifically by removing invasive plants in an effort to restore balance to the habitat so Florida native plants and animals can thrive again. This too will take time, but the time it takes could be made considerably shorter with the involvement of more impassioned volunteers.

In conclusion, our lives amount to little more than a hiccup compared with the grand scheme of things, but wouldn't it be great if every one of us made a noticeable contribution to the conservation of at least a little piece of the awesome environment that supports us? It's easy. It's rewarding. You'll meet good, like-minded people. Join us, won't you?

The beautiful red blossoms featured in the above photo are the Pride of De Kaap, or *Bauhinia galpinii*. Read more about this MGLP heritage plant in the Master Gardener Corner column in this edition.

## Calendar of Events

### September

- 9/3- First Thursday Gardening Series 10a-12p **Landscape Pest Management** with Joe Wolf
- 9/12- **Nature Walk** 8a with Steve Franklin
- September volunteer work dates: 1, 8, 15, 22, 29\* 9a-noon (Tuesdays)
- 9/12- Saturday volunteer work day! 9a-noon

### October

- 10/1- First Thursday Gardening Series 10a-12p **Fish, Frogs, and Fire!** with Pat Farris
- 10/4- **Nature Walk** 2p with Steve Franklin
- October volunteer work dates: 6, 13, 20, 27 9a-noon (Tuesdays)
- 10/17- Saturday volunteer work day! 9a-noon
- 10/4- **Eagle presentation** 10a with Maitland Birds of Prey followed by **Eagle Watch Training** with Reinier Munguia

### November

- 11/5- No First Thursday Gardening Series
- 11/8- **Nature walk** 2p with Steve Franklin

- 11/14- **Astronomy Night** 7p with Cleveland Carter
- November volunteer work days: 3,10,17,24 9am-noon (Tuesdays)
- 11/14- Saturday volunteer work day! 9a-noon

\*Note time and/or date changes

All programs are free. Registration for events is recommended but not necessary. Contact Anaeli Quinones at [quinones@mylakealfred.com](mailto:quinones@mylakealfred.com) or 863-291-5272 with questions or to register.

**First Thursday** series are hosted by Polk Master Gardener Pat Farris.

**Volunteer participation is essential to achieve progress and success at MGLP. Whether it is working to improve the gardens, restore native habitat, or assist with advertising or fund-raising events please consider a donation of your time for this worthwhile endeavor to protect a piece of Florida history and habitat. We need volunteers! Contact Volunteer Coordinator, Cathy Butcher, to find out more. [cassiebelle@verizon.net](mailto:cassiebelle@verizon.net)**

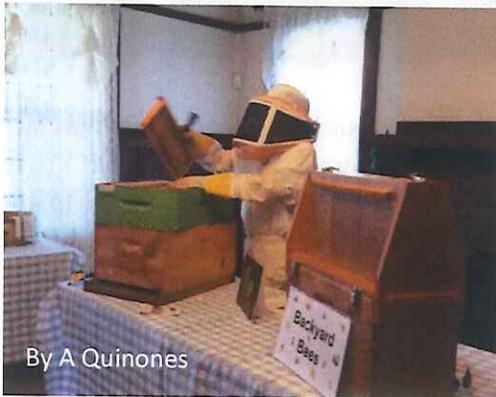
Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve is located at 900 Mackay Blvd. in Lake Alfred, Florida, 33850. It is free and open 7 days a week from dawn until dusk. To inquire about renting the house and facilities please call Parks and Recreation at 863.291.5272. Beautyberry Post is a bi-monthly newsletter edited by Cathy Butcher with assistance from Steve Franklin. To receive the BP by email please contact Anaeli Quinones at [quinones@mylakealfred.com](mailto:quinones@mylakealfred.com).

## Recent Happenings

The City of Lake Alfred and Mackayster volunteers would like to thank David Waldrop and volunteers from the Heartland Division of the **Florida Trails Association** for recently repainting our trail markers and adding more posts to make the trails more user-friendly. FTA is responsible for creating our trail system almost 11 years ago.



Florida Wildlife Commission has approved funding for another round of chemical treatment to remove invasive plants in the Preserve. Initial treatment this summer included several acres of running bamboo and 13 other plant species in areas of the northeastern portion of the Preserve. This **Invasive Species Removal Grant** renewal has expanded the treatment area to include the southwestern portion of the property as well. Work will be scheduled for this fall and spring of 2016.



Lake Alfred residents, Bonnie Sprague and Ray Duchesneau, educated and delighted their audience with Backyard Beekeeping at the **First Thursday Series** in August, complete with an equipment demonstration, protective clothing, and a sample of local unprocessed honey!

MGLP has been approved to receive \$50,000 in matching grant funds from the **Department of State's Division of Historical Resources**. This funding will be used to renovate the second story of the Mackay mansion and restore the Craftsman-style house back to early 1900 conditions.

If you would like to peruse back issues of the **Beautyberry Post** you can find them at the City of Lake Alfred's website, [mylakealfred.com](http://mylakealfred.com). Look for the newsletters under Parks and Recreation, Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve.

Please help promote awareness of MGLP by LIKING our **Facebook** page. Check out **Friends of Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve** to keep up with events, see photos, and read interesting historical information.

## Master Gardener Corner

by Cathy Butcher

### ***Bauhinia galpinii* syn. *Bauhinia punctata*, *Perlebia galpinii*\***

Red bauhinia, African plume, nasturtium bauhinia, red orchid bush, pride of DeKaap, Vlam-van-did-Vlakte; these are all common names for the lovely plant in this photo. Well, maybe not that last one. I can't even pronounce it without getting tongue-tied. So, what's in a name?

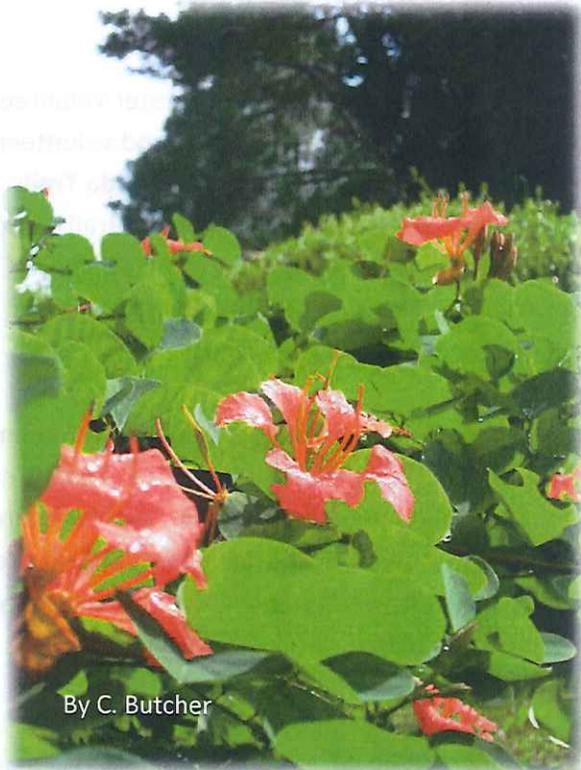
Swedish botanist, Carl Linnaeus has been given credit for establishing the naming system that organizes plants into simple and orderly categories according to shared characteristics. This system, devised in the mid 1700's, is still used today although it is not uncommon for plants to be renamed as botanists and

horticulturists clarify their descriptions further through research.\* Linnaeus studied earlier attempts by botanists and physicians to name and describe the plant kingdom and incorporated some of their systems into his method. He did away with lengthy descriptions and simplified the naming process to a two-part system that was suggested 200 years earlier by brothers, Gaspar and Johann Bauhann. Linnaeus named the *Bauhinia* genus after these two brothers. *Bauhinia* is the genus of our featured plant.

What else is in a name?

During 1889 Earnest Galpin was a bank manager in the gold mining town of Barberton, South Africa. He was also an enthusiastic botanist and avid collector of plants. His spare time was spent roaming the countryside collecting and identifying specimens. He discovered hundreds of new plants. In the early 1900's he gave his extensive collection of documented, pressed, and dried specimens to the government of Pretoria. His herbarium of approximately 22,000 pages still exists today in the National Herbarium situated within the Pretoria National Botanical Garden. Galpin was responsible for introducing many of South Africa's plants into cultivation and some of those were named for him. One such plant is the *Bauhinia galpinii*. *Galpinii* is the species of our featured plant.

*Bauhinia galpinii*, Pride of De Kaap is native to South Africa. De Kapp is Dutch for "the Cape" although this plant does not come from the Cape but the name probably suggests the De Kaap Valley. It grows in semi-tropical to tropical locations and does well here in central Florida with our hot, wet summers and



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flowered form.

(usually) temperate winters. It can survive freezing temperatures if protected the first 2 or 3 years. It prefers to grow as a shrub but can be trained into a small tree. However, it does not want to remain a small shrub. It wants to explore the landscape with rambling, reaching, sprawling growth! It needs space. Otherwise it has few problems and the beauty of the fragrant orange-red flowers during the hottest of summers is an absolute delight. Butterflies agree.

I mentioned that Linnaeus grouped plants according to shared characteristics to simplify the naming process. *Bauhinias* share a similar, unique leaf shape. It is often compared to a cow hoof. I prefer camel foot! At Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve we have two other lovely *bauhinias* that share this leaf shape and similar bloom structure with the pride of De Kaap; *Bauhinia variegata*; purple orchid tree and a white

These trees are not native to South Africa. They live in parts of India, China, and Viet Nam. Their blooming season is opposite to the pride of De Kaap. Here, in late winter, they tend to lose most of their leaves just before blooming and regain them as blooming continues throughout spring. Then, multitudes of long, green seedpods develop that eventually ripen and turn brown. Abruptly the pods twist open causing seeds to propel out into the landscape. They are very prolific, germinate easily, and soon there is a forest of seedlings that become messy and difficult to remove if not removed at this small stage. The tough, large leaves do not decompose rapidly nor do they make attractive mulch.



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*Bauhinia variegata* has been classified by FLEPPC as a Category I invasive plant for central and south Florida. Refer to this website and publication for more information before considering adding these trees to your landscape: <http://www.fleppc.org/> and [http://www.fleppc.org/ID\\_book/bauhinia%20variegata.pdf](http://www.fleppc.org/ID_book/bauhinia%20variegata.pdf). However, the University of Florida, IFAS # publication ENH250 suggests using the plant in central Florida landscapes with caution. Manage it to prevent escape into natural areas. The address for that publication is <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/files/ST/ST09100.pdf>

The Mackay pride of De Kaap is located on the west side of the house. It is in bloom at this time. This young plant was grown



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from seeds of the original plant that was removed from its location along the back porch due to its rampant growth. A second *bauhinia* seedling, staked and mulched within the landscape east of the house, recently succumbed to “creative visitor parking”. The surviving plant is more protected and hopefully will be allowed to thrive and bloom for many years to come.

## Faces

One wildflower, one ancient tree,  
One butterfly, one honey bee,  
One wise old owl, one mockingbird,  
One white-tailed deer free of the herd,  
One anole, one squirming snake,  
One still crane with a choice to make,  
One fast squirrel, one scared rabbit,  
One preying fox out to nab it,  
One lone gator, one wary fish,  
Many faces, all with one wish;  
To live as they were intended,  
To be just one link in a chain,  
To have their actions defended  
By the source from which they all came.  
And so it is with we who choose  
To work and play in wild places,  
And fret about all that we lose  
If we lose one of those faces.

Steve Franklin