

FLEPPC Springs up at the TBWG's Spring Expo Trade Show

by Andrea Van Loan

The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council made a return visit to the Tampa Bay Wholesale Growers' Spring Expo this year with an educational display. The Expo, called *The Spring Horticulture Trade Show of the Southeast*, was held on Friday and Saturday, February 21 and 22 at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa. 3,263 people, including wholesale plant growers and distributors, landscape professionals, consultants, and members of the general public, attended the Expo.

Complimentary booth space has been provided to FLEPPC for educational purposes by the Tampa Bay Wholesale Growers at both the 2002 and 2003 events, creating an important educational opportunity. The booth was capably staffed by FLEPPC members Kathy Burks, Brian Nelson, Katy Roberts, and

Bruce Turley, who devoted personal time to making our participation at the event a success.

This is an especially important venue for the FLEPPC message about invasive, non-native plants because of the opportunity to educate and interact with members of the ornamental/horticultural plant industry. Many visitors came to the booth unaware of the problems caused by non-native plant invaders. They left informed and, in some cases, motivated to learn more. In the words of Katy Roberts "I think that this show was a grand success in addressing the problem of education on what, where, and how to deal with *invasive* exotic pest plants." A huge 'thank you' to Kathy, Brian, Katy, and Bruce, and to Hugh Gramling of the TBWG for facilitating FLEPPC's participation in the Expo.

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