

Florida EPPC 2001 Symposium - “Weeds in La Florida”

The date was September 11, 2001. No symposium has ever gotten off to a more ominous start (and hopefully never will again) — and tenuous conclusion. Meeting during the peak of hurricane season caused tension, but the events of the day quickly overshadowed any concerns over weather.

With trepidation, the decision was made to go on with our Symposium. With an Invocation that remembered those in NYC and Washington D.C. and gave thanks that we were all together safely, the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council 16th Annual Symposium began in St. Augustine, with the theme: “Weeds in La Florida, 2001” – Marking 500 years of North America’s first contacts with alien plants. Sarah Reichard set the stage with her insightful keynote address, “Nipping new invasives in the bud: evaluating plants for invasive potential,” Kathy Burks’ slate of speakers was informative and involving. Lots of folks worked hard to keep things moving on many fronts serving as moderators, audiovisual geeks, field trip leaders and registrars. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for Certified Pesticide Applicators were provided for the first time at a FLEPPC Symposium.

Outstanding Achievement Awards went to Hugh Gram-

ling of the Tampa Bay Wholesale Grower’s Association and FLEPPC’s Doria Gordon for their efforts and accomplishments with the FLEPPC/FNGA nursery industry dialogue. This committee has established trust and communication between the groups while addressing the problem of nursery trade plants that are invasive in natural areas. Hugh and Doria’s tenacious efforts have been reported in *Wildland Weeds*.

Local arrangements were headed by DEP’s JB Miller. Highlights included Thursday night’s banquet and social, which definitely helped everyone relax for a little while. The band kept everyone dancing. All of the Casa Monica staff was accommodating and friendly, and I would recommend St. Augustine and the Casa Monica to anyone for a meeting.

Friday morning brought torrential rains, tornado warnings, and a tropical depression bearing down on Florida. But, we barrelled ahead, holding our Annual Business Meeting and final Symposium session. Elections chose Mike Bodle as Vice Chair and JB Miller, Tom Fucigna, Kathy Burks, and Jim Burney as board members. Thanks were expressed to outgoing Directors, Mike Bodle, Hillary Cherry, Francois Laroche, and Brian Nelson, and a special plaque was presented to Dan Thayer in appreciation for his many years of dedication to FLEPPC including the past three years as Treasurer.

Brian Nelson is already hard at work for local arrangements next year in the Tampa area and we look forward to seeing everyone there next September - without any outside distractions. - Ken Langeland, FL-EPPC Chair.

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