Changes to improve our ability to make decisions and complete tasks emerged from our July 22 SE-EPPC Board meeting in Birmingham. Particularly, a change in bylaws resulted in a smaller and more productive Board of Directors that now has 4 officers, a previous past president, and one representative from each state chapter as voting members. It also includes as non-voting members, one representative from provisional state chapters, affiliate members, and liaisons that represent agencies or major non-governmental organizations. An example of an affiliate member is the South Carolina Native Plant Society. Current liaisons include the US Forest Service and SAMAB (Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere).

Another change in bylaws created provisional status for newly forming state chapters, giving them one year to get up and running before they receive state chapter status. A provisional state chapter must first submit bylaws to the SE-EPPC Board for approval. After one year of operating under these bylaws, the chapter will receive IRS non-profit status under group exemption through SE-EPPC. Also, all provisional state chapters are required to have at least 2 face-to-face board meetings per year, and are strongly encouraged to have quarterly meetings. Provisional state chapters, as well as all other state chapters, will be required to post their board meeting minutes on the SE-EPPC web page.

Another outcome of the past Board meetings was to define roles of officers. This was timely with the elimination of the coordinator position, and it now provides officers with an understanding of what they are expected to do.

These changes should help us build a stronger organization and identify and develop more meaningful goals. As president, I am grateful to have an opportunity to make SE-EPPC a better organization. We need everyone’s support in this effort so that we can make a difference in preventing new exotic pest plant introductions while getting rid of those that are already here. Visit our website at: www.se-eppc.org
Graduating Students:

Congratulations to the following students who recently completed their graduate studies on exotic pest plants:


New Books:


- **Invasive Aquatic and Wetland Plants Field Guide**, by Stratford Kay, 2002. North Carolina State University/ North Carolina Sea Grant: Barbara_doll@ncsu.edu


Education/Extension:

The Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) is an adult education extension program developed by the University of Florida and taught in many counties throughout the state. FMNP is for persons interested in learning more about Florida’s environment and conservation issues and is appropriate for people of all knowledge levels. The program includes courses in 3 subject areas: Freshwater Wetlands, Coastal Systems, and Upland Habitats. Each subject is taught independently and costs $200. For more information, go to www.MasterNaturalist.org

Chapter 6

This was crazy - she’d been a hostage long enough. She spent her days battling vicious alien intruders, the Sigourney Weaver of the floral kingdom, but now she was cowering in her own home, peeking out through the curtains, hoping that frightening thing out there would just go away. Her faithful and ever-so-patient canine companion alternately peers up at her and stared at the doorknob, leash in mouth and legs crossed – watching her behave like some paranoid freak, fearing she’d finally thrown a rod. She felt like she was teetering on the brink of insanity, and her dog was about to explode.

She knew this would happen, and had spent all afternoon obsessing about it, hoping that he would concoct some magical cure in response to her endless diatribe about the inevitable confrontation that was now unfolding, but she had been left to blaze her own path, flailingly refusing to take the low road. “No,” she’d told him, “this is someone I’ve got to see every day. I can’t just give her the old ‘Oh yeah, they tend to drop some leaves when they’re first transplanted, especially in, uh, whatever season this is . . .’ line and hope she finds the will to go on after her tragic loss. She’ll know I’m lying, or at least I will. No — I just have to talk to her.” She knew she did, but certainly did not want to right now.

He’d thought that maybe she could introduce the topic from an obtuse angle, steer the conversation to talk about their work perhaps, but she’d disagreed. “She knows what I do — kind of, I think. I’ve heard her yelling ‘that nice girl next door is an environmental guardian’ into the phone,” and she’d pre-empted the supposedly witty retort she knew would follow, “and yes, I’m pretty sure she’s talking about me because the other person next door to her is an old man...”

In her head she repeated “That which does not kill me makes me stronger,” while another part of her mind inquired, “How can I drop this kind of bomb on my neighbor, especially such a nice little lady, without coming off as a self-righteous know-it-all or, worse yet, a blue-booted thug, casting judgment on her neighbor, the legendary tree police?” How do you tell the little lady who waves to you each morning and sends you off with a ‘Go save our environment sweetie!’ each day, how do you tell her, when you come back at the end of the day, that you just spent 8 hours killing the plants she’s cultivating? How do you tell her that her newly acquired botanical additions are anathema in this clime?

She understood – her neighbor had purchased most of her plants from the local Big Tropical Illusion Garden Center, or whatever that place was called. She’d talked with the friendly garden department folks in their matching aprons and their pruners in substantial leather holsters. They’d sold her hearty, fast growing plants that would add texture, color, and beauty to her garden. She’d planted and coddled and watered and fed them, and they would grow and grow and grow, and then go to seed and set about their work of uncontested dispersal, until the day when that nice girl next door would come face to face with their healthy little progeny, and lay them all to waste, ripping them from the face of the earth, tearing them limb from limb.

“Yes, this was quite unexpected, she was always such a quiet girl . . .” How would she explain?

The best way to deal with your fears is to confront them. She was awash in bumper sticker psychology. Winners set realistic goals and achieve them. Losers, well losers sometimes covered in their own homes. She opened the door; the dog bounded gleefully forth and romped around the yard once, quickly, before heading for a favorite territorial signpost. “Oh hello deary” the little lady smiled, and waved as she looked up from some intense gardening activity, “isn’t it a lovely day for a walk? I just love it when...” her polite attention to the friendly conversation was distracted by the realization that her dog was still busy adding new meaning to the term basal bark application — wow that was really a patient pooch. “Just talk to her,” he’d said.

She interrupted the continuing stream of good cheer: “Ma’am — can we talk?” and was genuinely surprised by the response. “Oh good, yes I’d like that — it seems you’re always in such a hurry. Come on in out of the heat, you’ve been out working in the sweaty environment all day. I made some cookies this afternoon, and I’ve wanted to ask you about that other tree — it never did get those new leaves you talked about...” She rolled her eyes and stepped inside, praying that the truth, or at least most of it, would set her free. She’d been a hostage in her own home long enough.

An excerpt from “The Adventures of Hack Garlon and his buxom sidekick Squirt.”

---

**NOTES FROM THE DISTURBED EDGE**

**Regional Conservation: www.regionalconservation.org**

---