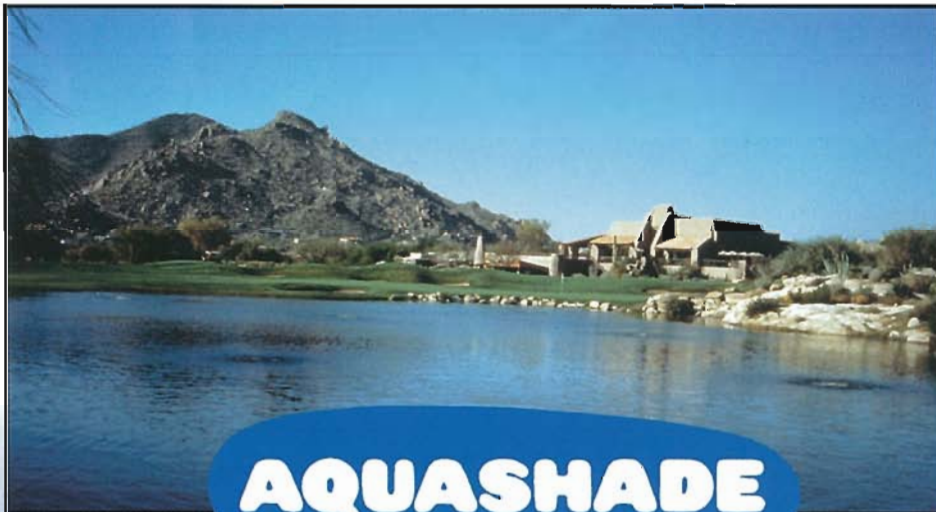


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Editorial

I look forward to serving as president of the Florida Aquatic Plant Management Society. For those who have volunteered their time to do the daily duties of running our society, I am grateful. Most members have no idea of the number of hours that our officers, directors, and committee members contribute each year. In addition, our sponsors are greatly appreciated and truly make the annual meeting an enjoyable event.

Public perception of controlling plants is a never-ending battle we face. The bass fisherman who fish around floating mats of water hyacinth or hydrilla often like these exotic plants to remain since they provide a type of structure and concentrate sport fish. But, left untreated exotic plants can eliminate large areas of bulrush and eelgrass or not allow the establishment of other native plants. I am often asked why we control exotic plants or why we don't leave some for fisheries. I believe the best one line answer is that we control exotic plants to allow our native, beneficial plants to establish, survive and thrive. I like this answer because it ends in a positive note. We aim to improve, not maintain or reduce, wildlife habitat.

The Florida Aquatic Plant Management Society has traditionally been an organization dedicated to the control of invasive aquatic plants. But the control of torpedo-grass along a shoreline only to have paragrass establish in the same area does not make for good lake management practice. There have been many private and public revegetation projects, studies published and unpublished, over the past 20 years. The IFAS Center in Ft. Lauderdale has been a leader in revegetation techniques for many years. Their publication entitled "Aquascaping" has an excellent listing of plant material. I believe our Society needs to stress the control of invasive plants, but also the establishment of native, beneficial plants. We plan to publish a special issue *Aquatics* during the summer or fall season that will list about 15 native species that can be used in shoreline plantings. Each species will include a color photograph of an actual planting, a brief description, flower color, blooming season, habitat, wildlife value, freeze tolerance, soil types, light requirement, salinity, pest problems, growth rate, recommended

Continued on page 13

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Lake Tahoe in winter—this spectacular lake is plagued by Eurasian water milfoil infesting shallow littoral areas and canals. Photo by David Tarver

Aquatics

Winter 2001/Vol. 23, No. 4



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Ludwigias – Friends or Foes? by Susan Peters, Lyn A. Gettys and David L. Sutton | 4 |
| FAPMS 2001 Summary of Accomplishments/Events by Nancy Allen | 10 |
| Tumid Spider Mites Damage Water Hyacinth at the Sixmile Creek Marsh Restoration Area, Brevard County, Florida by Marc C. Minno, Kenneth L. Snyder and Kimberli J. Ponzio | 12 |
| FAPMS Charter Members | 14 |

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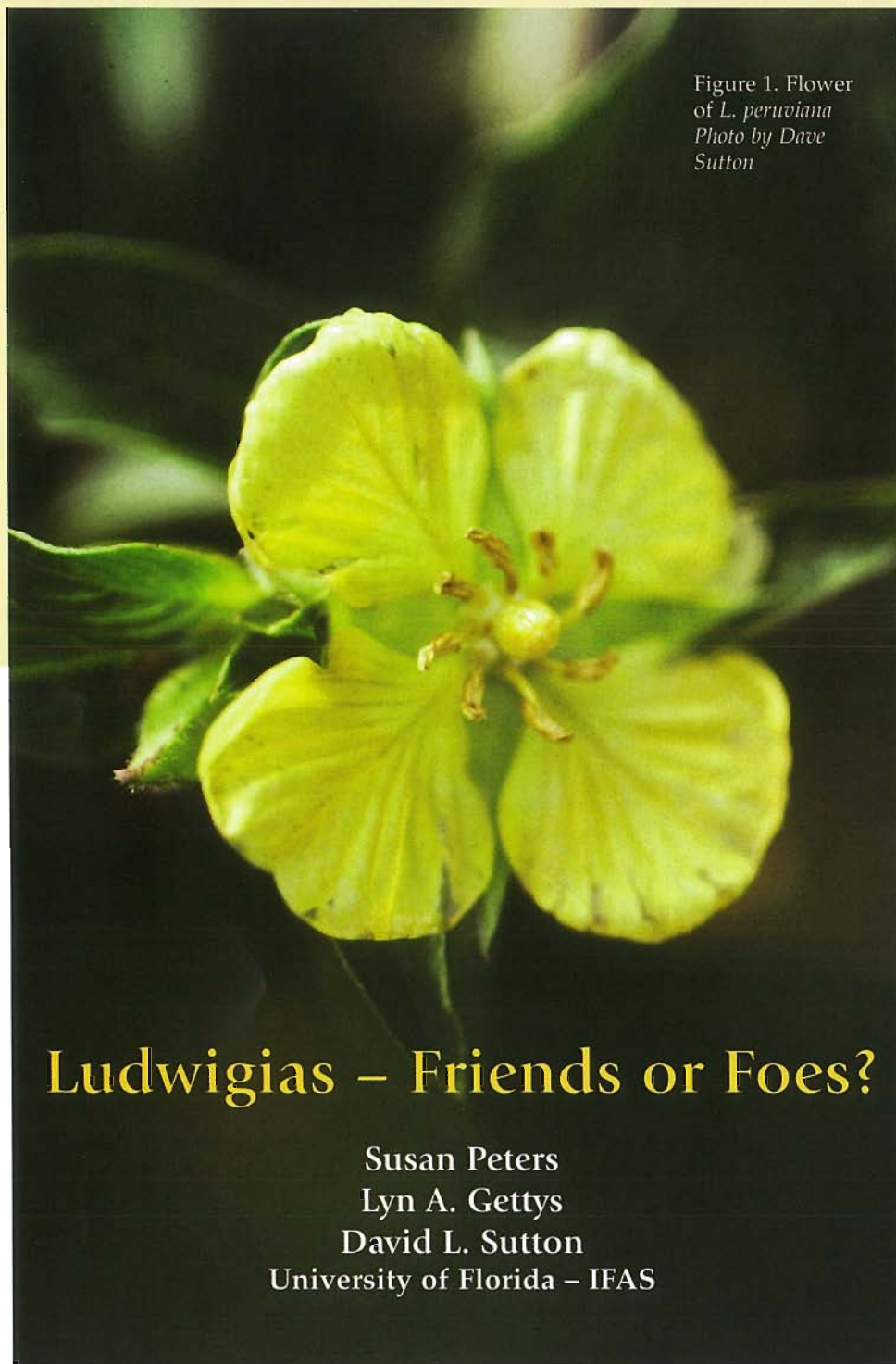


Figure 1. Flower of *L. peruviana*
Photo by Dave Sutton

Introduction

Jethro Tull used the term “weed” in 1731 in the publication “Horse-Hoeing Husbandry” to refer to aggressive, competitive plants that interfere with the production of crops. The old English word “wēod” was derived from a prehistoric Germanic plant and is a very subjective epithet.

A number of different definitions have been used to describe weeds because a plant that is considered a nuisance in one situation may be desirable in another. The Terminology Committee of the Weed Science Society of America in 1956 described a weed as a plant growing where it is not wanted. Others, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, have looked at weeds in a different

light; Emerson described weeds as “plants whose virtues have not yet been discovered.”

The Onagraceae, or Evening-primrose family, contains the genus *Ludwigia*, a group of plants that have both desirable and undesirable characteristics. The purpose of this article is to provide information on

species in the genus *Ludwigia* and to assess whether they are desirable natives or weeds.

Classification, Distribution, and Range

The genus *Ludwigia* was named in honor of C. G. Ludwig by Linnaeus in 1753. *Ludwigia* is one of 20 genera with about 650 species belong-

ing to the Onagraceae or Evening Primrose family. Members of the family are annual or perennial herbs or shrubs. Other notable species in the family are the fuchsias and clarkias found in many landscapes.

There are about 75 species of *Ludwigia* worldwide. Members of this genus are commonly called *ludwigia*, false loosestrife, water-prim-

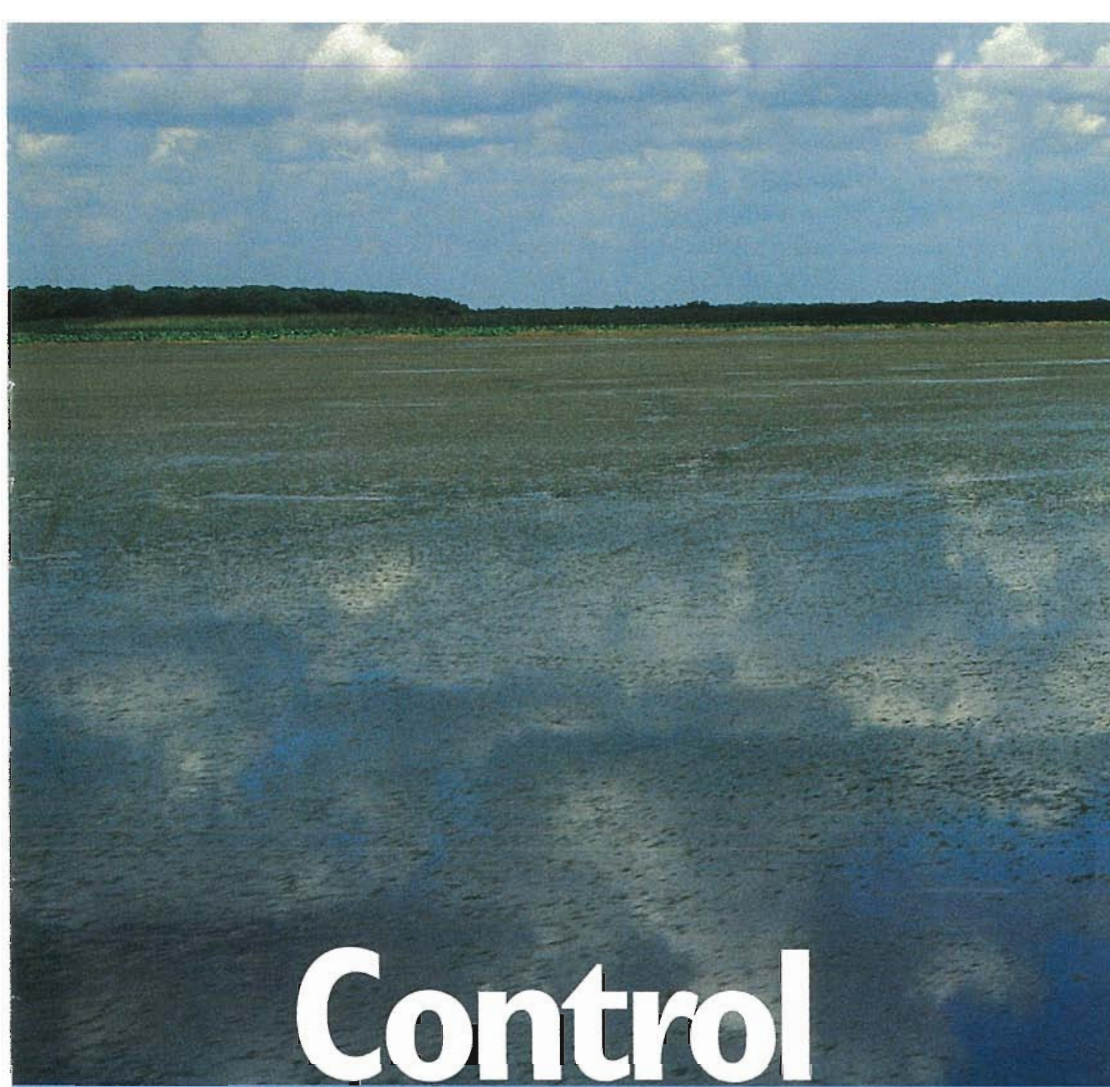
Ludwigias – Friends or Foes?

Susan Peters

Lyn A. Gettys

David L. Sutton

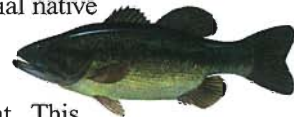
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rose, primrose-willow, seedbox, and a number of other less endearing terms, including “weed”.

Many *ludwigias* colonize marshes, swampy woodlands, stream banks, drainage ditches, and canals. The *ludwigias* were originally found mostly in subtropical and temperate areas of the Americas but are now

distributed throughout the world.

Florida is home to about 30 species of *Ludwigia* (Table 1). Three species, *L. bonariensis* (Micheli) Hara, *L. grandiflora* (Michx.) Greuter and Burdet, and *L. peruviana* (L.) Hara, are considered exotic or non-native, although they are not on the Federal Noxious Weed List. Distribution of

the various species in Florida is widespread with about one-third of them fairly prevalent throughout the state.

Morphology

Many *ludwigias* are quite attractive. Their leaves are usually simple with margins that are entire or minutely toothed. Leaf arrangement is alternate or opposite and small stipules subtend each leaf. Solitary flowers are borne in leaf axils and are hermaphroditic, actinomorphic, and generally showy. Each flower has 4, 5, or rarely 6 petals and the same number of sepals. Petals are bright yellow and easily detached, while the green sepals are persistent. The fruit is a many-seeded capsule that dehisces longitudinally or terminally to disperse a multitude of seeds.

Two species, *L. peruviana* and *L. octovalvis* (Jacq.) Raven, have been cultivated at the University of Florida Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center. Both are herbaceous annual or perennial shrubs (depending on their location) and exhibit a simple to moderately branched growth habit. Both plants range in height from 1 to 3 m (3.3 to 9.8 ft) and become woody with age, starting with the growth nearest the base. Leaves are ovate to lanceolate, sometimes pubescent, and arranged in an alternate manner. *L. octovalvis* is considerably smaller in size than *L. peruviana* and produces smaller leaves and flowers. Both species bear solitary yellow flowers in leaf axils; flowers of *L. peruviana* are large, 2.5 cm (1.0 inch), and showy (Fig. 1), while the flowers of *L. octovalvis* are smaller, 1 to 1.5 cm (0.4 to 0.6 inches). The seed capsule of *L. peruviana* is broadly obconic in outline and quadrangular in shape with an overall length of 1 to 3 cm (0.4 to 1.2 inches), while *L. octovalvis* produces a linear-oblong seed capsule that ranges from 2.5 to 5 cm (1 to 2 inches) in length.

A number of *ludwigias* possess characteristics that allow their survival in immersed, marshy environ-

Table 1. *Ludwigias* found in Florida. Exotic species are shown in bold type.

| Scientific Name | Common Name | Distribution |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>L. alata</i> | Winged ludwigia | Coastal |
| <i>L. alternifolia</i> | Seed-box, Rattle-box | NW |
| <i>L. arcuata</i> | False loosestrife | W coast, N central |
| <i>L. bonariensis</i> | Carolina ludwigia | Two NW counties |
| <i>L. curtissi</i> | Curtiss' ludwigia | S, coastal counties |
| <i>L. decurrens</i> | Wingleaf ludwigia | Most of Florida |
| <i>L. erecta</i> | Yerba De Jicotea | S, central |
| <i>L. glandulosa</i> | Cylindricfruit ludwigia | NW, N central |
| <i>L. grandiflora</i> | Largeflower ludwigia | N |
| <i>L. hirtella</i> | Hairy seed-box Spindle-root | NW |
| <i>L. lanceolata</i> | Lanceleaf ludwigia | N of Lake Okeechobee |
| <i>L. leptocarpa</i> | Anglestem ludwigia | Most of Florida |
| <i>L. linearis</i> | Narrowleaf ludwigia | Most of Florida |
| <i>L. linifolia</i> | Southeastern ludwigia | Most of Florida |
| <i>L. longifolia</i> | Longleaf ludwigia | One county |
| <i>L. maritime</i> | Seaside or coastal seed-box | Most of Florida |
| <i>L. microcarpa</i> | Little seed-box | Most of Florida |
| <i>L. octovalvis</i> | Water-primrose | Most of Florida |
| <i>L. peploides</i> | Floating ludwigia | Three counties |
| <i>L. peruviana</i> | Water-primrose | Most of Florida |
| <i>L. pilosa</i> | Hairy ludwigia | N |
| <i>L. ravenii</i> | (none) | One NE county |
| <i>L. repens</i> | Red ludwigia | Most of Florida |
| <i>L. spathulata</i> | Spoon ludwigia | Four N counties |
| <i>L. sphaerocarpa</i> | Globefruit ludwigia | Fifteen N counties |
| <i>L. suffruticosa</i> | Headed seedbox | Most of Florida |
| <i>L. virgata</i> | Savannah seedbox | NW, central |
| <i>L. X simulata</i> | (none) | Three counties |

ments. At times they produce white, spongy roots that grow vertically upwards to the water surface. These roots are thought to facilitate gas exchange in low oxygen environments. The U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual also refers to them as "water roots," a morphological adaptation that plants may exhibit to better tolerate anaerobic soils. The manual further comments on the ability of *ludwigias* to produce spongy tissue in their leaves, stems, and roots. This spongy tissue may provide buoyancy and support, or serve as a reservoir or passageway for oxygen needed for metabolic processes. Another competitive advantage, at least in *L. peruviana*, is the germination of seeds under low oxygen conditions while floating in water.

The perennial growth habit and tendency toward brittleness in the *ludwigias* are also assets. In some species, including *L. peruviana* and *L. octovalvis*, broken, floating bits of vegetation may readily form adven-

titious roots to create large dense mats of floating plant debris, thus ensuring their spread and colonization of new areas.

Control

The Florida Bureau of Invasive Plant Management indicates that *L. peruviana* is not a particular target for control efforts but may occasionally be controlled as a nuisance native in conjunction with efforts against exotic weeds. Broward County Water Management personnel will remove *L. peruviana* so that other species more desirable than *ludwigia* may proliferate in wetland areas.

Excessive growth of *L. octovalvis* can impair waterways and hinder recreation, but these plants may also provide refuge and nesting habitats to wildlife and serve as a food source for birds.

Growth of *L. peruviana* in some countries is so pervasive that government intervention is required to assist in its control. For example, approximately 30% of the Botany

Wetlands (a series of urban swamps and lakes near Sydney, Australia) were covered with *L. peruviana* in 1994. Ecological studies on germination and growth experiments conducted in 1990 to 1991 as part of a management plan for the area found approximately 450,000 seeds of *L. peruviana* per m² (1.0² m = 10.8² ft). Fresh seed were found to be highly viable with a germination rate up to 99%, and 20% were still viable after 2 years of dormancy. Large numbers of seeds were maintained in the soil (65,000 seeds per m²), and as many as 300,000 seeds per m² were retained over the winter in old fruits. Water flow, machinery, or birds dispersed floating seeds and seedlings, and best germination occurred when seeds were exposed to light.

Despite this knowledge, *L. peruviana* continues to be a problem in Australia. The species was introduced into the Sydney Botanical Gardens in 1907 and now forms dense, monospecific stands over large tracts of the Botany wetlands, displacing other wetland vegetation

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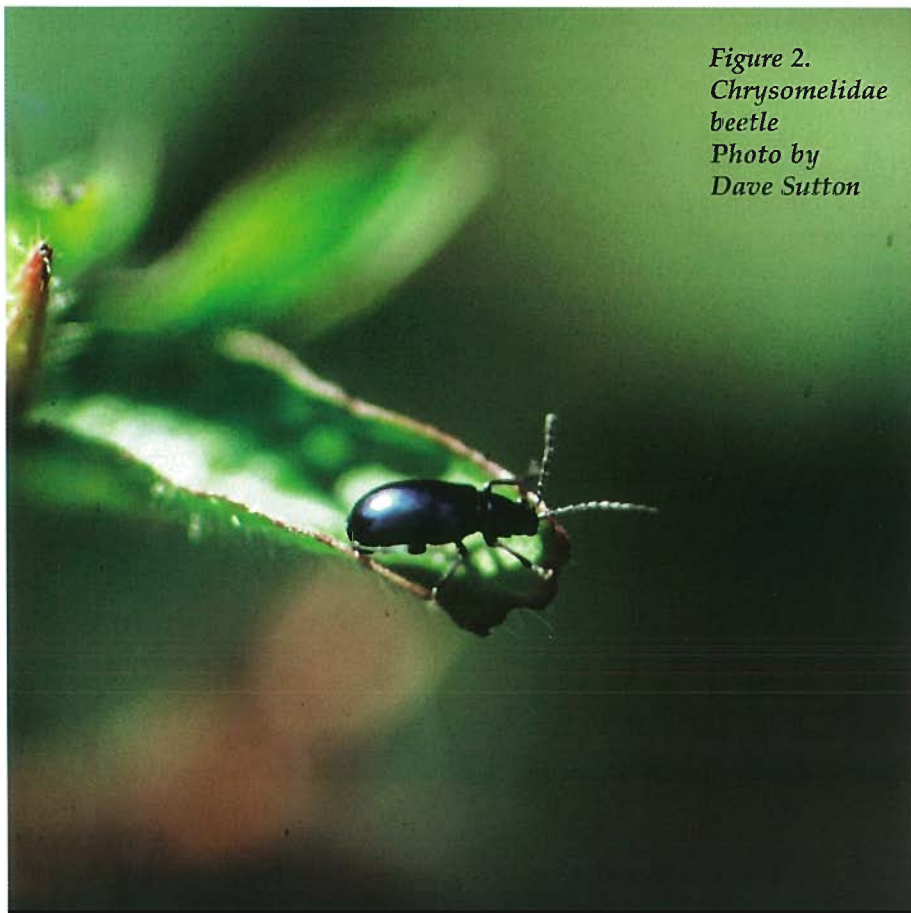


Figure 2.
Chrysomelidae
beetle
Photo by
Dave Sutton

to the extent that bird populations have been significantly reduced. Other wetlands north and south of Sydney have been affected, and *L. peruviana* has now been declared a noxious weed in the Municipality of Botany in New South Wales and in Queensland.

Ludwigias are generally found in disturbed areas. Colonization may be controlled with application of a number of different herbicides including 2,4-D, glyphosate, dicamba, and fluridone. Mechanical removal has reportedly been successful but may cause problems, as the species regularly forms plantlets from stem fragments. Natural predators in southern Florida such as a small, brightly colored Chrysomelidae beetle (Fig. 2) may help keep growth of *L. peruviana* in check.

Conclusion

Of the 30 or so species of *Ludwigia* present in Florida, about ten *ludwigias* are widely scattered throughout the state. *Ludwigias* propagate read-

ily in disturbed habitats and are well adapted to our climate. Some of them do merit consideration for their potential to become "nuisance

natives". Unlike Australia, however, extreme methods of control are not yet required in Florida, unless their removal is desired to make way for more desirable species.

There are those of us who admire the beauty of *L. peruviana*. The showy, yellow flowers and the clear, vibrant green of the new vegetation have earned the species the admiration of many. In fact, the Boca Raton Garden Club has even selected *L. peruviana* as its club logo. This just goes to show that one person's weed is another's ornamental!

Acknowledgments

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FAPMS 2001 Summary of Accomplishments/Events

By Nancy Allen

I hope this will be the first in a long line of similar articles to come. While putting together this year's historical program, I found out first hand, how difficult it was to pull society information together. To preserve our history, it would be very beneficial if the future outgoing presidents summarize their year in office with a list of accomplishments or events that are note worthy. Here's what happened in 2001;

1. Sponsored a coffee break at the 2001 IFAS Research and Review meeting March 7th in Palm Coast.
2. The society donated \$250 to the Shelley Stocker Science Development Fund Memorial.
3. Co-sponsored a short course with the Lee County Hyacinth Control District on 17-18 January 2001. We provided free aquatic plant I.D. charts to the participants.
4. Submitted a letter to Governor Bush supporting Senator Charlie Bronson for the position of Commissioner of Agriculture.
5. Provided \$1,000 to the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Foundation/APMS Graduate Stipend Award.
6. Gave a \$3,000 dollar contribution to U of FL/IFAS, for the production of 6 different aquatic and upland plant photomurals to be used for educational purposes in Florida schools.
7. Sent a letter to Federal representatives asking for their support for full funding of the US Army Corps of Engineers' Aquatic Plan Control (APC) Program that provides research and cost-share management funds.
8. Purchased a wireless microphone for FAPMS events.
9. Endorsed a letter to Dale Dubberly, Chief of Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services concerning a request for exemption from 5E-2.033 (FAC) "Organo-Auxin herbicides; Restrictions and Prohibitions" for use in non agricultural herbicide applications.
10. Updated and revitalized the FAPMS display booth. This booth is available for use by any society member.
11. Donated \$1,250 to the FAPMS Scholarship and Research Foundation.
12. New web page address set up at www.fapms.org
13. Donated \$2,500 to the APMS Educational Outreach Program, for the production of grade school educational packets on invasive aquatic plants in the southeast.
14. Passed three By Law changes; one created a Library membership, and the other two were under section VI -Officers and VII-Board of Directors. These were language changes to clarify terms and eligibility to hold an office position.
15. Paid \$250 for AERF Membership.
16. Aquatic Plant Manager Of The Year was awarded to William L. Smith-USACE, Palatka, FL.
17. 25th Annual Conference held at the Adams Mark Hotel Oct. 16-18, 2001 in Daytona Beach, FL.
18. Drought conditions, followed by high water levels, led to record low dissolved oxygen levels around the state.
19. On September 11, 2001, a terrorist attack occurred against the United States.



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Tumid Spider Mites Damage Water Hyacinth at the Sixmile Creek Marsh Restoration Area, Brevard County, Florida

Figure 1. Damage to water hyacinth by the spider mite *Tetranychus tumidus*. Photo by Marc Minno



By Marc C. Minno,
Kenneth L. Snyder,
and
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The Sixmile Creek Marsh Restoration Area is a 2,800-acre property located at the junction of Sixmile Creek and the St. Johns Marsh in southwestern Brevard County, Florida. This area was once covered by extensive freshwater marsh and wet prairie habitats, but levees were constructed from 50 to 30 years ago to drain the wetlands and develop improved pastures for cattle. The St. Johns River Water Management District (District) acquired the property in the mid 1980's in order to restore the wetlands for water quality improvement and wildlife conservation. Hydrological connection

to the St. Johns Marsh was accomplished in May 2001.

While on a field reconnaissance of the Sixmile CMRA on December 7, 1999, we observed a patch of dying water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) that was covered with silk webbing (Figure 1). Closer inspection revealed water hyacinth plants that were being attacked and severely damaged by a spider mite. About 30 m² of water hyacinth were severely affected. Specimens of the mite and plant were collected and submitted to Dr. Cal Wellborn, Acarologist with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry in Gainesville. Dr. Wellborn identified the mite as tumid spider mite (*Tetranychus tumidus* Banks) in the family Tetranychidae.

O'Hara (1961) noted *T. tumidus*

damaging water hyacinth growing in canals in southern Florida and mentioned that it was the only organism that he found capable of killing the plant. Pieterse (1972) raised 12 spider mite species on water hyacinth under laboratory conditions. *Tetranychus tumidus* had one of the highest reproductive rates of the dozen mite species tested. He suggested that since spider mites were relatively inexpensive and easy to rear, they may be useful as a biological control to slow the growth of water hyacinth. Center (1987) studied the effects of arthropod herbivory on water hyacinth leaf and ramet production by tagging individual leaves and monitoring damage over time. The study was carried out in a canal in Palm Beach County. *Tetranychus tumidus* was observed to cause limited damage to water

hyacinth, especially to older leaves during the winter (December through February).

These records of tumid spider mites infesting water hyacinth appear to be valid. Unfortunately, *T. tumidus* has long been confused with a closely similar species, *Tetranychus gloveri* Banks, a common pest of cotton (Boudreaux 1979). In a 1958 publication, Boudreaux removed *T. gloveri* from synonymy with *T. tumidus*, but mistakenly applied the wrong names to these mites until corrected in 1979. Thus the literature regarding these species was in error for over twenty years. In his 1979 correction, Boudreaux mentioned that *T. tumidus* was only known from water hyacinth in the wild, but that it could be cultured on cotton in the lab. The type specimens were collected on water hyacinth in Florida around 1900. In contrast, *T. gloveri* infests many different plants in the wild but has not been collected from water hyacinth. Boudreaux (1979) had specimens of *T. tumidus* from Florida, Louisiana, and

Cuba, and speculated that this mite was native to South America, the region of water hyacinth origin.

The District controls invasive weeds, like water hyacinth, using an integrated pest management approach. Managers across Florida successfully use this approach to keep water hyacinth at maintenance control levels. While herbicides are most often used, mechanical and biological controls can also be applied to manage invasive weeds when and where appropriate. Perhaps Pieterse's idea of rearing and mass-releasing spider mites, such as the naturally occurring *T. tumidus*, could be evaluated as another tool for the integrated pest management of water hyacinth.

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Editorial Continued

water depth, propagation, survivability, planting criteria, difficulty of collection, and cost. This publication could be updated every several years to include other species and the latest planting techniques. A brief description of our society is that it's an organization dedicated to the control of invasive plants. Perhaps, in the future we can be thought of as an organization dedicated to the control of invasive plants and the improvement of shoreline habitat with the establishment of native plants.

Please call me at 813-744-6163/6164 or email me at john.rodgers@dep.state.fl.us anytime you have a concern, suggestion, or question.

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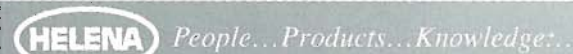
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This list was updated by Bill Haller, Bill Moore, and David Tarver, and represents those that joined the Florida Aquatic Plant Management Society during its first year (1976/1977). Please refer to *Aquatics* Vol. 21 #2 for more FAPMS history. If you have any suggestions/corrections for this list, please contact Catherine Johnson at 407-380-2024

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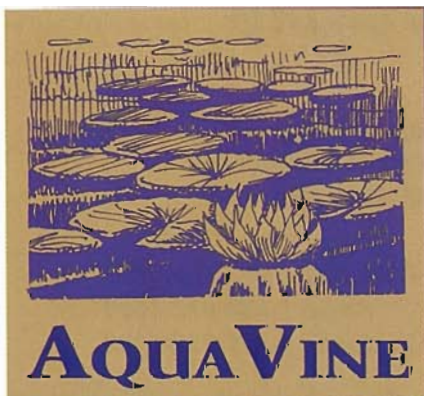
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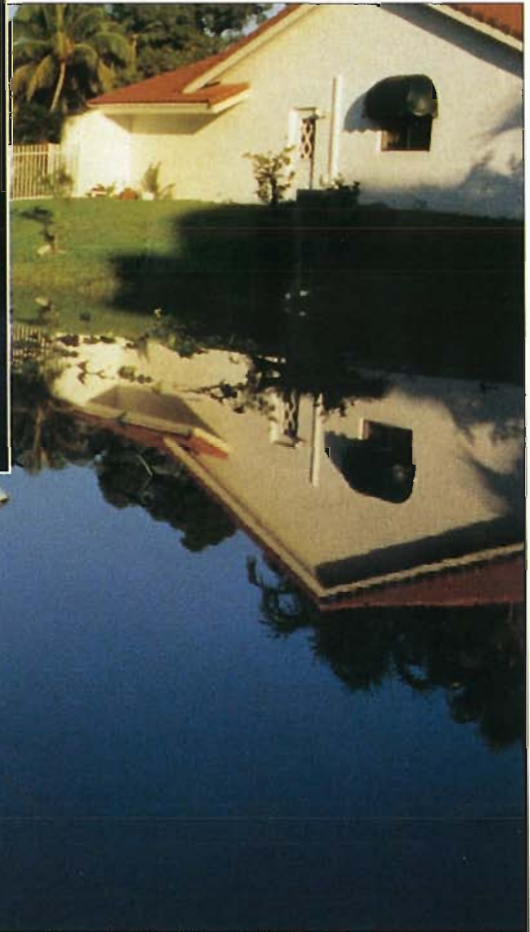
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