



July 2020 Newsletter

In This Issue...

- Restoring the Gold Coast Update
- Pine Rockland Initiative Update
- "Meet Our Team" Spotlights
- Recent IRC News and Events

Monthly Conservation Note

Resilience and Recovery

Hurricane Isaias reminds us that nature never sleeps. Our friends in Puerto Rico and Hispaniola have already been affected and Isaias is now marching north through the Bahamas. As I write this, future effects on Florida and the southeastern US coast are unclear. Isaias is not a major hurricane, and there was a time when some residents of the Caribbean and southern Florida would have shrugged or maybe even thrown a party. But those days are over. Hurricane Isaias is particularly dangerous because our defenses are down, we are mentally exhausted, and our social fabric is stretched to a breaking point. Puerto Rico alone has been hit by an economic crisis (beginning in 2014), an outbreak of the Zika virus (2016), Hurricanes Maria and Irma (2017), the worst earthquake in a century (2020), and now the COVID-19 pandemic with its widespread social, political, and ecological effects. But the people and ecosystems of Puerto Rico are incredibly resilient and they will recover.

It is easy to get discouraged in times like these, but we must rise above the incredible challenges that face us now. We must remind ourselves that, as hard as our lives are now, people have survived much worse before. What is different now is that both

Individual efforts are needed across the board. From simple civility and responsibility (wear a mask!), to dialing back the negativity in politics and social media, being more aware of and dealing with the root causes of racism, and volunteering with a nonprofit or community organization. We need to be thoughtful about what we want the recovery, when it comes, to look like. And we need to strive assertively for that vision. Do we want a "recovery" that takes us backwards, leaves racism in place for another generation, the environment destroyed, the economy benefiting only a few? I don't think so. So think about the future you want, and strive every day to do something positive for both people and nature. If we do that our resilience will grow and our recovery will be transformative.

George Gann

Founder and Executive Director



society and nature are worn down, depleted, not just in a few places, but everyone all at once. The ability of nature to provide for us has been dangerously diminished. And our ability to help each other is limited, so every individual's efforts are more valuable and needed than ever; our attitudes are key.

IRC Associate Carlos Trejo curates a bilingual Facebook page on [Puerto Rican plants](#) with nearly 7,500 members. Puerto Rican curiosity about nature has not diminished despite numerous serious social and environmental challenges over the last several years. Their indomitable spirit is uplifting.



Thank you to all those who have supported IRC's programs in the last month.

Jeanie Duck, Martha Strom, Steven Plamann, Nina Pantozzi, and Amneris Villanueva.

Thank you to recently renewing NFYN sponsors! The [Key West Botanical Garden \(KWBG\)](#) is a conservation habitat and natural garden which also propagates plants for the garden and for sale to the public. [Indian Trails Native Nursery](#) is a wholesale nursery that also offers consultations and native landscaping guidance.

Donations allow us to provide important free resources to the public, land managers, scientists, landscape designers, and enthusiasts of native plants and native plant gardening.

IRC has an E-Trade account, so please contact us about giving gifts of stock.

DONATE

Restoring the Gold Coast Update

First Round of Biodiversity Starter Plant Kits Delivered

Earlier this month, IRC had the pleasure of



delivering starter plant kits for five sites. In total, there were 35 plants from nine species., including 15 larval host plants and 18 nectar plants used by 26 or more species of butterflies.

These were assembled from our partner native plant nurseries: Amelia's Smarty Plants, Indian Trail Native Nursery, Meadow Beauty Nursery, Silent Native Nursery, and George Gann's private stock.



Each kit helps build on the biodiversity hot spots we are creating in our Restoring the Gold Coast program. For more information including how to purchase your own kit, [click here](#).



Pine Rockland Initiative Update

Pineland Croton Propagation and Monitoring

Pineland croton (*Croton linearis*) is the host plant for the endangered Bartram's scrub hairstreak butterfly (*Strymon acis bartrami*). The goal of this project is to install 3,000 plants and sow 3,000 seeds on Big Pine Key to aid the federally endangered butterfly. Over the past few years, IRC relocated seed-bearing plants to the mainland, collected seeds, propagated plants, set up new planting and direct seed plots, installed plants grown in a new container size, direct seeded, and conducted quarterly monitoring. Through June 2020, a total of 1,819 plants have been installed and 2,566 seeds have been sown.



Thanks to Kevin Kalasz, our collaborating partner at US Fish and Wildlife Service, Rob Barron of Coastal Growers, Inc. for curating our seed plants in Boynton Beach; Jennifer Possley, Sabine Wintergerst, and Brian Harding of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden for assistance with Croton

propagation; volunteers Ian Wilkinson and Susan Kolterman with seed collecting; volunteers Kim Gabel, Lydia Cuni, Cari Eggleston, and Amelia Petrello for assistance with monitoring and data entry; IRC Associate Mary Truglio Fesmire for assisting with monitoring; and IRC staff Alex Seasholtz, Christian Bartell, Donnie Faughnan, Hans van der Heiden, Daniel Bomback, Benjamin Durrington, Louis Castillo, Ruben Sola, Alexander Blochel for assistance with fence and plant installation, direct seed trials, and monitoring.



"Meet Our Team" Spotlights

Employee - Samantha Gabriel



We are celebrating Samantha Gabriel's third year working with IRC! Samantha is truly a jack of all trades here at IRC! She is responsible for all aspects of office administration and also contributes to our programs, including uploading new photos to our website, entering field data into the Floristic Inventory of South Florida, digitizing historical data, and editing reports. Additionally, she has done much of our graphic design work including the logo for Restoring the Gold Coast. She graduated from Barry University (Miami, FL) with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Fine Arts in 2015. She is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Florida Atlantic University.



We are so grateful for all that Samantha does to keep IRC organized and running smoothly!

Board Member - Patty Phares

Patty Phares is an active volunteer with local environmental, nature and service organizations in Miami-Dade County, Florida. She is a long-time volunteer for the Dade Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, a Board member of the Miami Blue Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, and a Board member of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Florida. She has served on the Land Acquisition Selection Committee for Miami-Dade County's Environmentally Endangered Lands Program since 2014, and volunteers for Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden's conservation team. A native of East Tennessee and a graduate of Hanover College in Indiana and the University of Florida, Patty served in Samoa as a Peace Corps Volunteer and moved to South Florida in her job with the National Marine Fisheries Service, from which she is retired. Her native plant yard, a part of Fairchild's "Connect to Protect" program, simultaneously suffers and thrives from benign neglect. Patty joined the IRC Board in 2011.



Recent IRC News & Events

IRC Staff Become CERPITs

Congratulations to our field biologist, Michelle Smith, and field crew leader, Alex Seasholtz, who both recently became a Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner-in-Training (CERPIT) through the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)!

According to SER's website, "SER's ecological restoration practitioner certification program encourages a high professional standard for those who are designing, implementing, overseeing, and monitoring restoration projects throughout the world."

For more information, [click here](#).





[Virginia saltmarsh mallow](#) (*Kosteletzkya pentacarpos*).

Flower Friday links are found at the bottom of the plant pages on Natives For Your Neighborhood, in the Comments section.

Natives For Your Neighborhood and Florida Wildflower Foundation

As part of our collaboration with the [Florida Wildflower Foundation](#), we have added links on [Natives For Your Neighborhood](#) to nearly 200 "Flower Friday" pages on the FWF website. These excellent wildflower accounts, especially rich in information on pollinators and their interactions with plants, are authored by [Stacey Matrazzo](#), FWF Program Manager. Stacey also authored [Native Plants for Florida Gardens](#), along with our friend and colleague Nancy Bissett.

Atlantic Dunes Park Ecological Restoration Event

IRC recently continued restoration work at Atlantic Dunes Park in Delray Beach as part of our Restoring the Gold Coast Program. With the support of Coastal Growers Inc., Neglected Native Nursery and a few volunteers, we continued cutting back invasive plants within the park and planted 24 plants of 12 species.

Plants added to the park include Cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco* 'Horizontal'), Beach-creeper (*Ernodea littoralis*), Spanish stopper (*Eugenia foetida*), Narrowleaf yellowtops (*Flaveria linearis*), Blolly (*Guapira discolor*), Scorpionstail (*Heliotropium angiospermum*), Beach clustervine (*Jacquemontia reclinata*), Wild-sage (*Lantana involucrata*), Mouse's pineapple (*Morinda royoc*), Pricklypear (*Opuntia humifusa*), Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) and Baycedar (*Suriana maritima*).

Be sure to stop by Atlantic Dunes Park to check out the amazing biodiversity at this park!



