



Native Plant Network: 2024 Member Survey Results

Survey Date: April 15, 2024

Number of Invitees: 1869

Number of responses: 314 (17%)

Background. In the April monthly newsletter, members of Fairchild's Native Plant Network were invited to participate in a 22-question survey that included questions pertaining to both membership and citizen science. We were interested to learn whether members were following through with maintaining pine rockland species in their NPN gardens and what kind of wildlife they might be observing. Members also had the opportunity to give feedback in the form of comments. The last time NPN surveyed members was in 2019, when 21% of 752 invitees responded. A full report on that survey is [available here](#).

The 2024 questions were:

1. What is the address where your NPN garden is located?
2. Approximately what percent of your garden and landscaping is native?
3. Who maintains your yard?
4. How many plants have you received from NPN over the years?
5. How many of the plants you received from NPN are still alive?
6. What are some of the native plants that you would like to have in your yard but you cannot find?
7. What first got you interested in native plants?
8. Which of these 7 plant species are in your garden/landscaping?
9. Which of these 8 native orchids from Fairchild's Million Orchid Project are in your garden/landscaping?
10. Which of these 6 butterfly species have you observed visiting your garden/landscaping?
11. Which single *nectar* plant species have you observed to attract the most butterflies in your garden?
12. Which of these 7 bird species have you observed visiting your garden/landscaping?
13. Which of these wildlife features do you currently have in your yard?
14. Which single plant species have you observed to be the most popular for birds to eat (fruit or seeds)?
15. Which of these 6 other wildlife species have you observed visiting your garden/landscaping?
16. Have you ever visited any of these 10 publicly-accessible pine rockland preserves?
17. What would you like to see more of from NPN?
18. How did you first hear about NPN?
19. What volunteer activities interest you most?
20. Could we add you to our list of volunteers to contact for occasional workdays?
21. Are you a member of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden?
22. What else would you like to tell us?

The survey had 314 responses. We asked respondents to enter their address so we could map some of the data; only 277 provided their addresses. The remainder of this report provides graphical summaries of each response along with a short description.

Conclusions: As in previous years, this survey confirms that NPN members have a deep appreciation for the benefits of native plants, a strong commitment to grow them, and familiarity with many of the pine rockland preserves in our region. Rare and common native plants are found in NPN gardens throughout South Florida. Our members maintain a strong interest in obtaining more native plants as well as advice on how to landscape and care for them. More than half of respondents showed a willingness to volunteer their time to remove invasive plants from nature preserves or install school gardens.

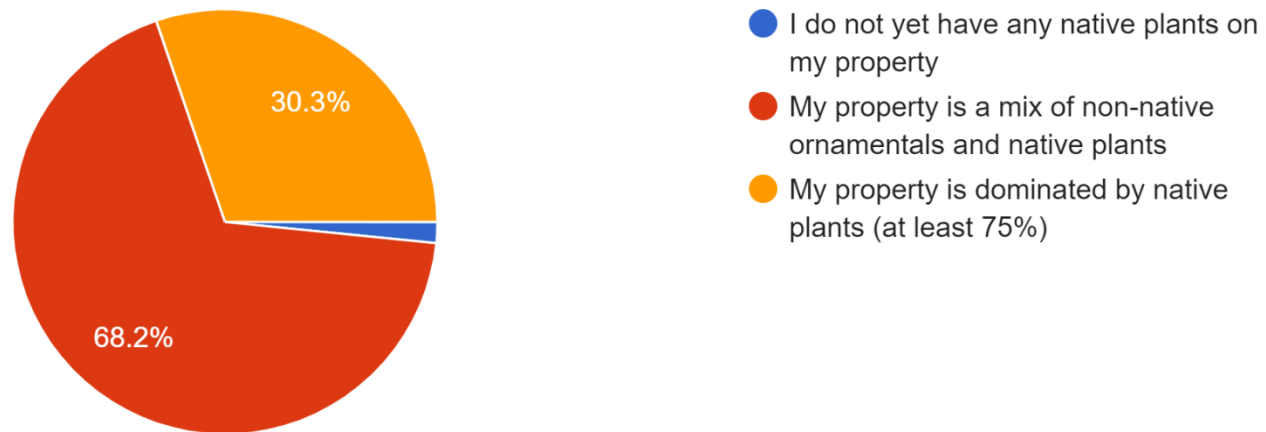
There were some changes and new information in this 2024 survey. We asked which plants were the best bird and butterfly attractors and firebush topped the list in both the bird and butterfly categories. In asking which plants members wish they could have but they are hard to find, we were not surprised to see milkweeds and orchids listed in response. Unexpectedly, native grasses were also a top scorer. The proportion of members reporting monarch sightings decreased from 90% in 2019 to 77% today, while those reporting atala hairstreaks increased from 35% to 55%. Lastly, it was great to see that members are observing not only butterflies, but many different birds species (from owls to hummingbirds), garden spiders, and even our South Florida endemic wandering centris bee.

Native Plant Network members are hardworking, nature-loving people who want to make our South Florida environs better for humans and wildlife alike. We thank our members for their dedication and encourage you to spread the word that more residents need to be planting native in their gardens!

-- The Native Plant Network Management Team

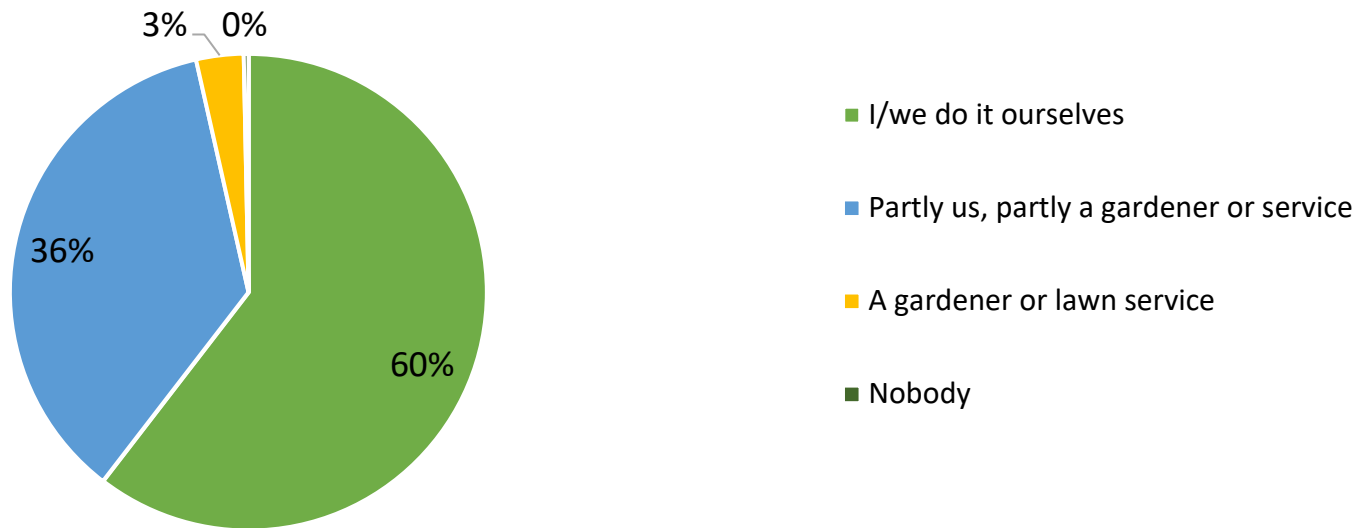
(2) Approximately what percent of your garden and landscaping is native?

314 responses



Unsurprisingly, NPN gardens are dominated by native plants! Most members (68%) have a mix of native and non-native plants, with about one-third of member properties being dominated by native plants. Only 5 members responded that they do not yet have any native plants on their properties. These results are highly consistent with those of 2019 (67% with mixed native and non-native, 32% with native-dominated, and two members lacking any native plants).

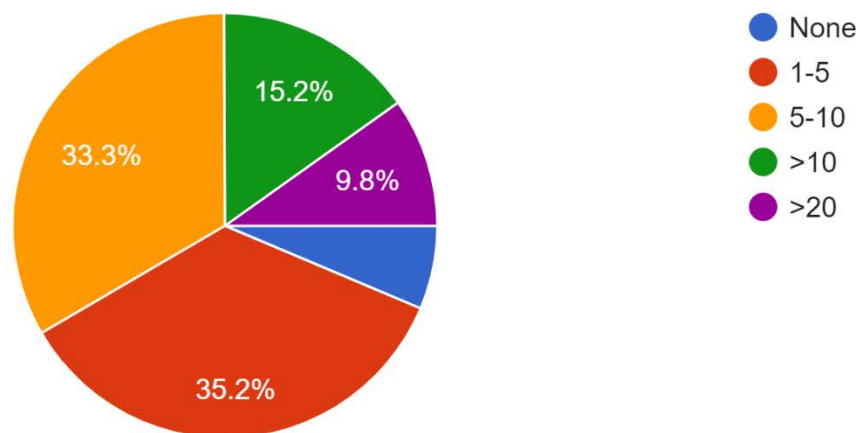
(3) Who maintains your yard? (314 responses)



Most homeowners maintain their own NPN. This question was new for 2024. Most members maintain their yards/gardens on their own (60%), and another 36% do it with the help of a gardener. Many of those members responded that they have workers who “mow and blow” but stated that they themselves take care of everything else. This is consistent with our observations that most commercial landscape crews are not accustomed to maintaining native plants.

(4) How many plants in total have you received from NPN (and formerly, CTPN) over the years? If you do not know, please make your best guess.

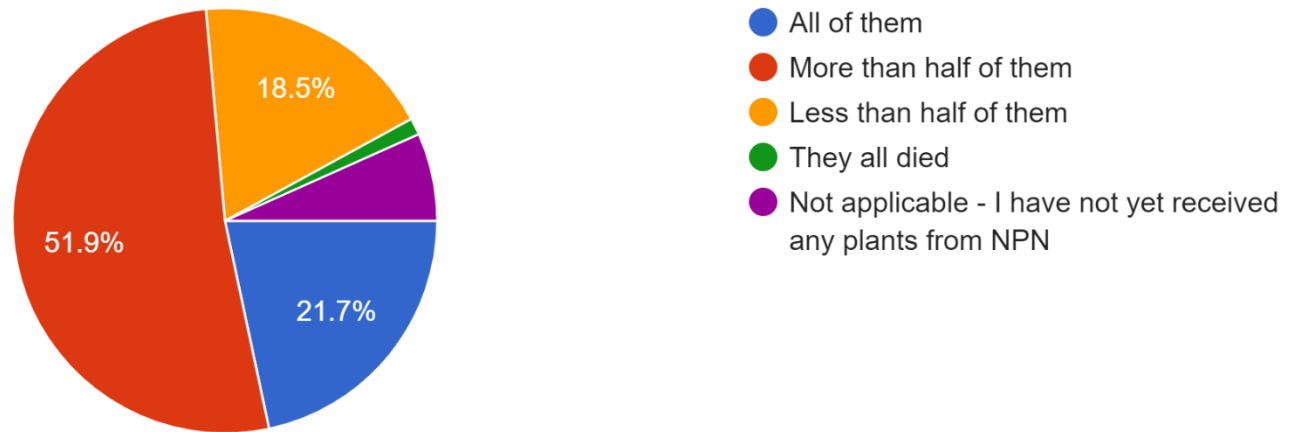
315 responses



Most survey respondents have received 1-10 plants. We are happy to see that most of the survey respondents have already received plants, and some have received more than 10. Thank you, long-term members for your dedication and for taking our survey!

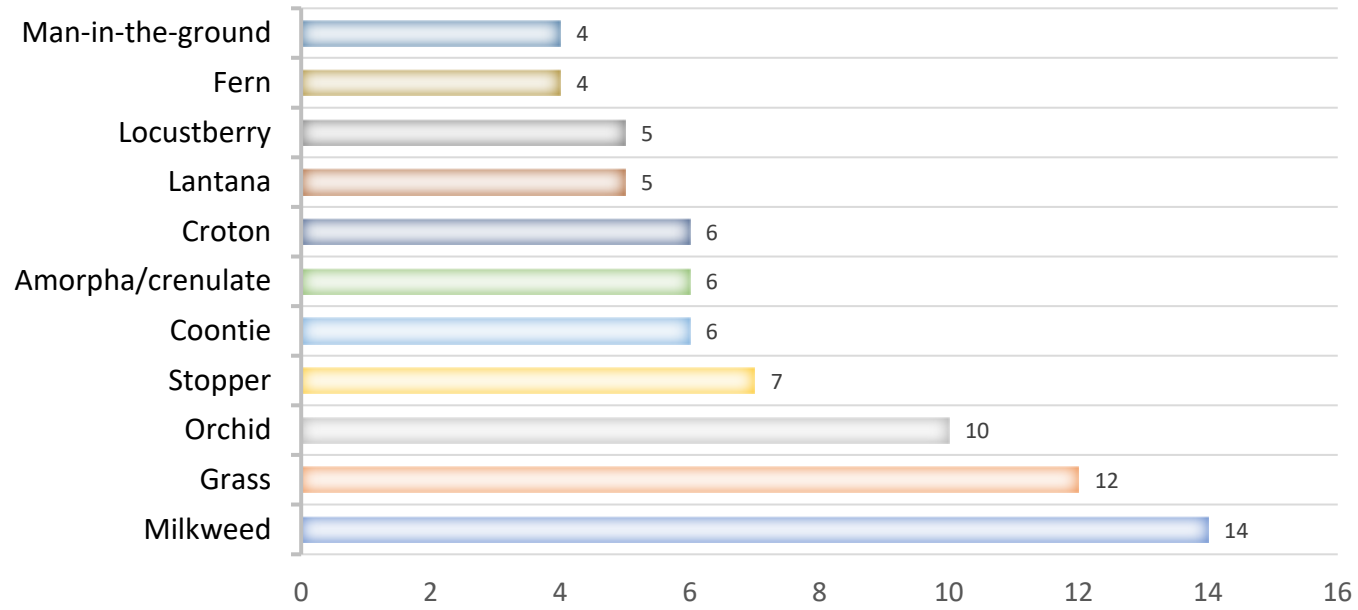
(5) How many of the plants you received from NPN (and CTPN) are still alive? If you do not know, please make your best guess.

314 responses



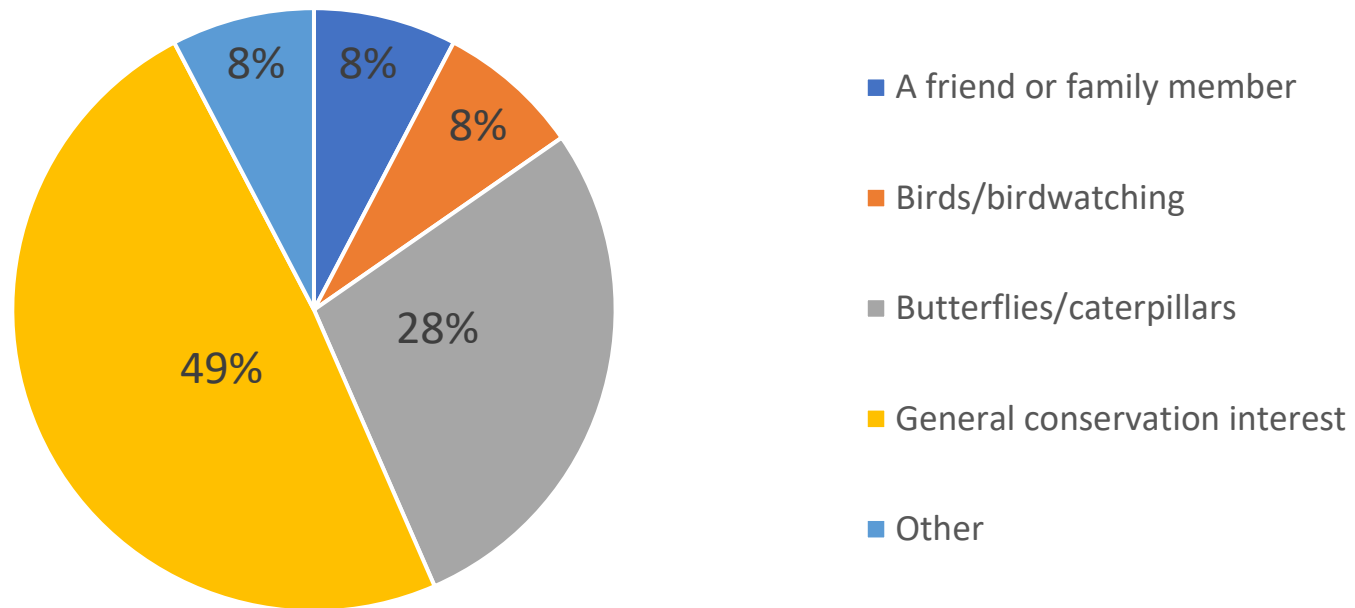
Plant survivorship continues to be high. We are pleased that most survey respondents who received plants report that some or all are still alive. In fact, more than 73% said that more than half of their NPN plants are still alive. These numbers are not as high as those of our 2019 survey (83% of respondents said that more than half of their plants were still alive), but that is to be expected, as 5 years have elapsed. Great job, members!

6. What are some of the native plants that you would like to have in your yard but you cannot find?



Respondents want milkweeds, orchids, grasses, and more! We left this question open-ended and respondents answers were all over the map but there were a few patterns that emerged. The species graphed above were the most requested. We weren't surprised to see native milkweeds and orchids as top answers; we love them too, and they are hard to obtain/grow. But it was somewhat surprising to see native grasses in high demand! We agree with you: grasses are a vital part of a pine rockland as well as an NPN garden and we should all be planting them more. We will surely have Crenulate lead plant, various native ferns, grasses, Lantana, and pineland croton available again in the future. Note that many of the plants on this list are available for sale at our recommended nurseries, which we list at the bottom of each monthly newsletter.

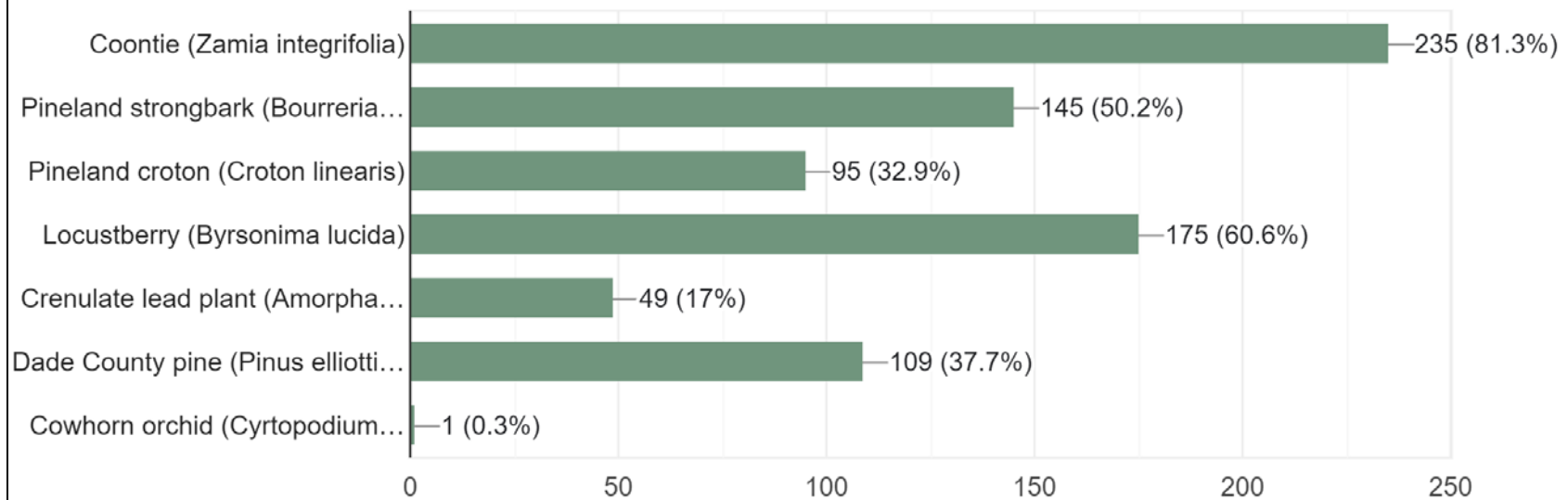
(7) What first got you interested in Native Plants? (313 respondents)



Respondents became interested in native plants for a variety of reasons. Nearly half of you reported that a general interest in conservation is what has led to your love of native plants, with one third of you blaming butterflies for getting you hooked! A love of birds is given equal credit to influence from friends and family members (8% each). This is a good time to remind everyone that a love of native plants can be contagious! By the way, we had a write-in option for the “Other” category where respondents attributed their interest in native plants to various institutions or events including Fairchild Garden, the Native Plant Network, staff at John Pennekamp State Park, and destruction of pine rocklands at Coral Reef Commons,

(8) Which of these plant species are in your garden/landscaping? Please click all that apply (or none, if you do not have these plants in your garden). SCROLL DOWN FOR IMAGES.

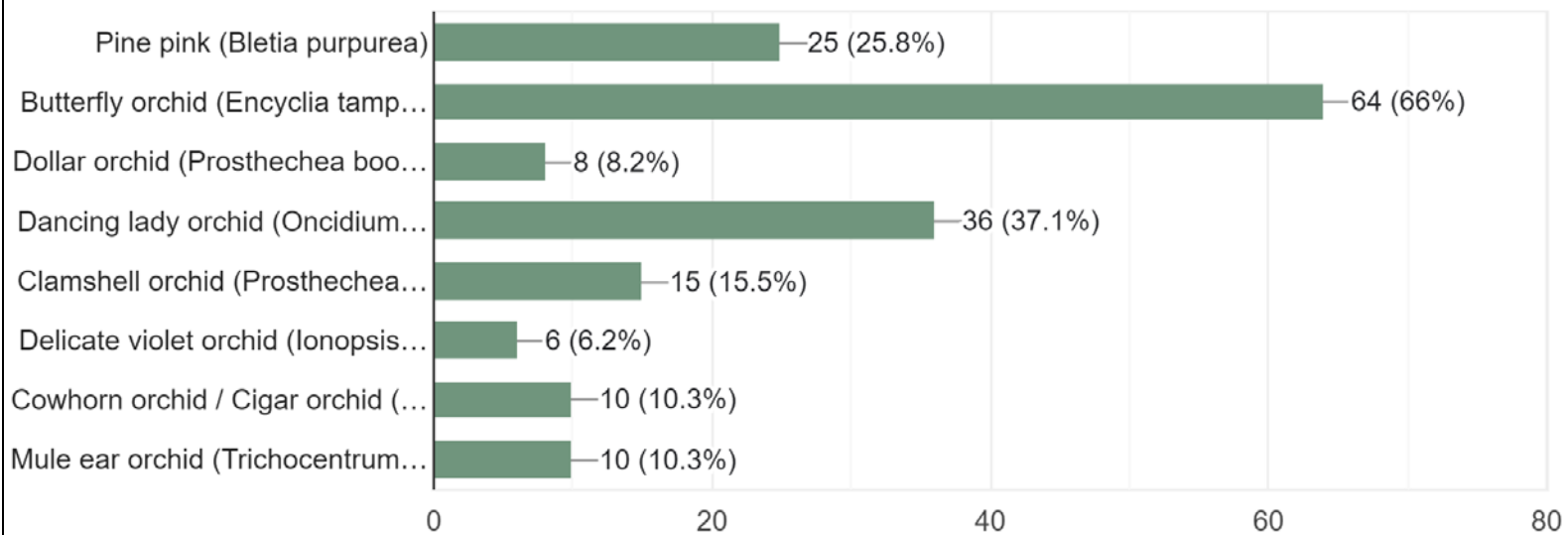
289 responses



Coontie retains its crown as the most popular plant in NPN gardens. The plants listed above are some of the species we were especially curious about. We included several of them in our 2019 survey, and we were interested to see how the results might have changed. In both surveys, coontie was by far the most popular plant, in >80% of respondents yards both times. The proportion of members with Dade County pine and Crenulate lead plant each decreased by about 10%, while the proportion with little strongbark jumped from 35% to 50%. We imagine the proportion of members with locustberry is now much higher, since we have been making that species available and promoting it for the Florida duskywing, but unfortunately we did not include that species in our 2019 survey.

(9) Which of these native orchids from Fairchild's Million Orchid Project are in your garden/landscaping? We'll count it if it's in a p...se plants in your garden). SCROLL DOWN FOR IMAGES.

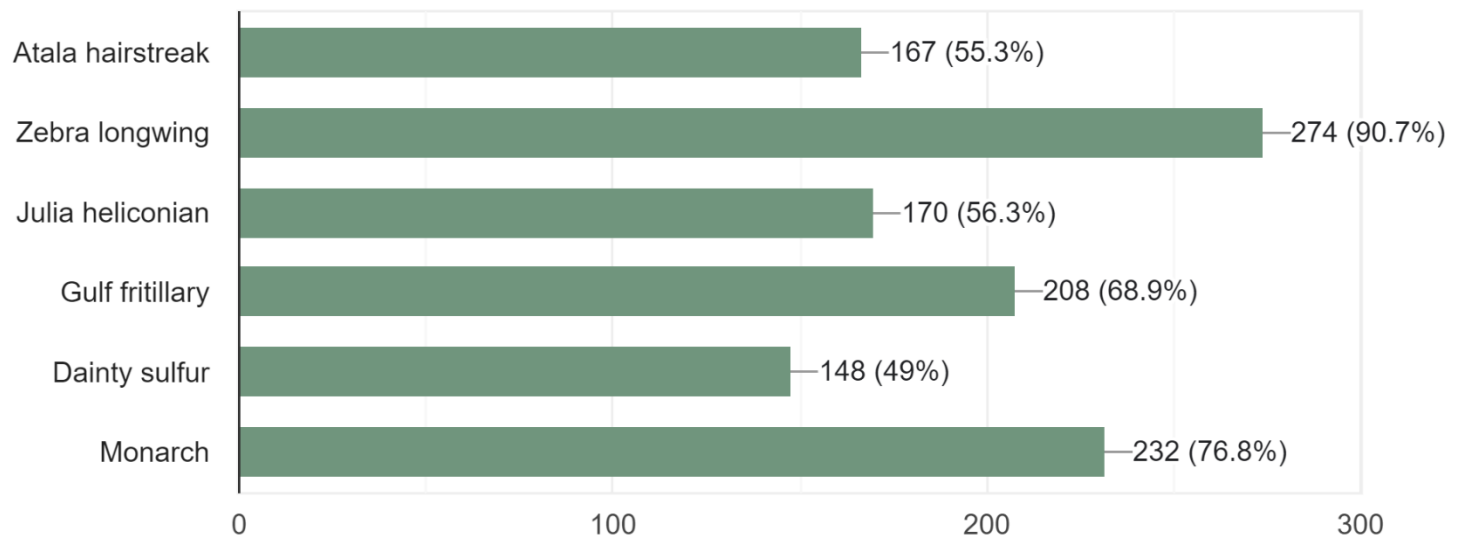
97 responses



Many respondents have native orchids. We included this question for our friends who run Fairchild's Million Orchid Project. Though some respondents skipped this question, presumably because they do not have any orchids, we were surprised at how many different native orchid species respondents had in their yards! Our lovely native butterfly orchid was the most common species, but the other much more rare and more difficult to cultivate species made a strong showing. Clearly, NPN members are also orchid lovers!

(10) Which of these butterflies have you observed visiting your garden/landscaping? Please click all that apply (or none, if you have not seen any of these). SCROLL DOWN TO SEE IMAGES.

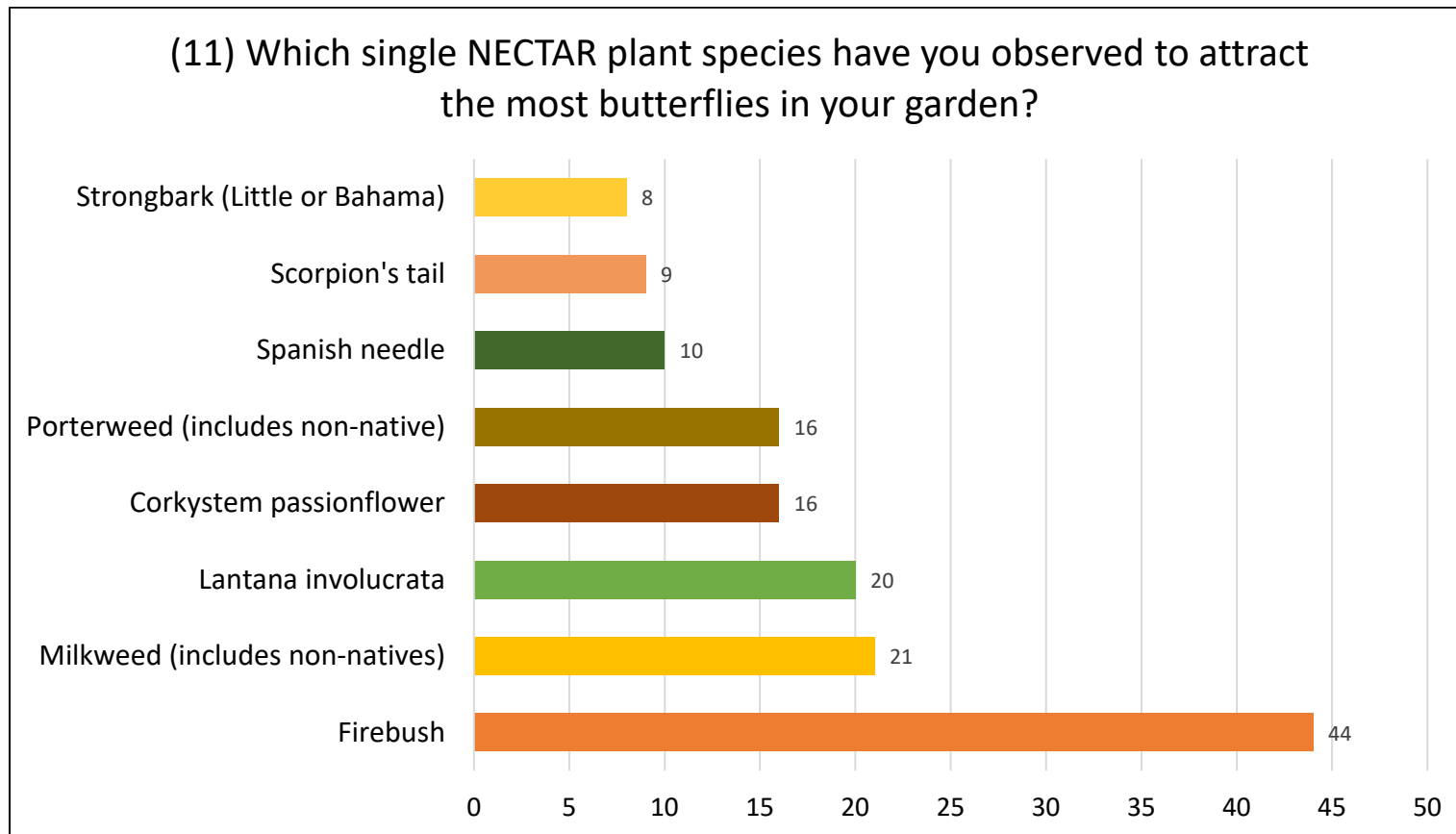
302 responses



Zebras abound, and atalas are surging! As in our 2019 surveys, we asked what butterflies members are seeing in their gardens. In both surveys, the Zebra longwing and the monarch butterfly were two species that were most reported. The Zebra longwing was reported at about 90% both years, but the monarch has decreased from 90% in 2019 to 77% at present. Is this the OE parasite? Something else? If only we knew. Nevertheless, we will continue to ask our members to not cultivate non-native milkweeds that are thought to exacerbate the OE monarch parasite. On another note, atala hairstreak reports have increased quite a bit from 35% in 2019 to 55% now—fantastic news! Thanks to the respondents who provided their addresses, and our friend Sriram, we have a fun interactive map of these responses. [INTERACTIVE MAP](#). We also have a static version for you to view on the next page.



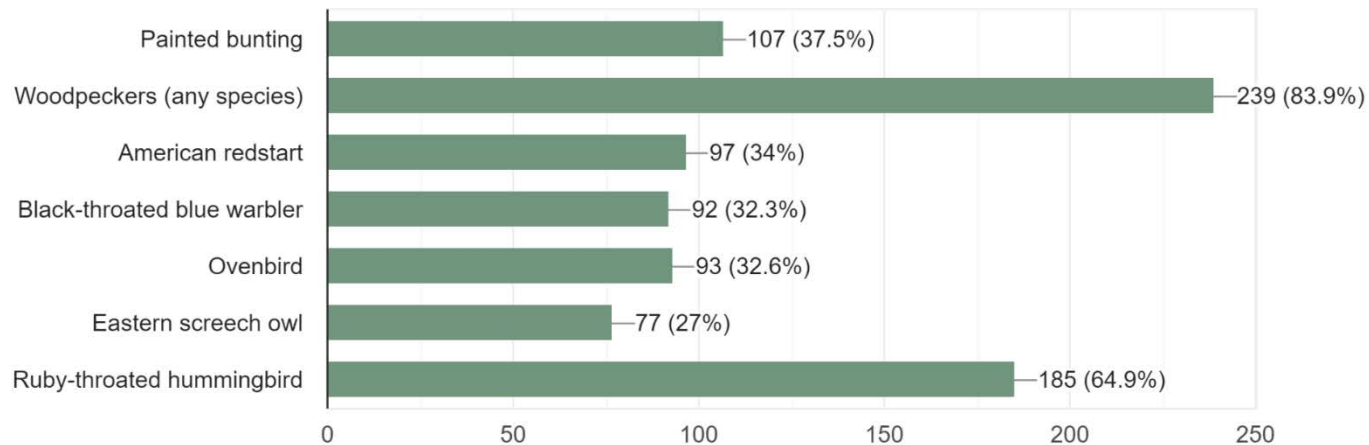
Your butterfly data, mapped. These maps illustrate where each different butterfly species was reported. Bigger butterfly symbols mean more reports. So yes, there are a ton of zebra longwings in the Palmetto Bay/Pinecrest area, and Key Largo looks to have a nice little atala population!



Firebush is by far your biggest pollinator attractor. This open-ended question about which nectar plants attract the most butterflies was a new one this year. In hindsight, we should have explained what a “nectar plant” is (several respondents listed coontie, which does not produce nectar, nor flowers for that matter). Nevertheless, there was a clear winner in the group with Firebush far outpacing its competitors. Good job, Firebush!

(12) Which of these birds have you observed visiting your garden/landscaping? Please click all that apply (or none, if you have not seen any of these). SCROLL DOWN TO SEE IMAGES.

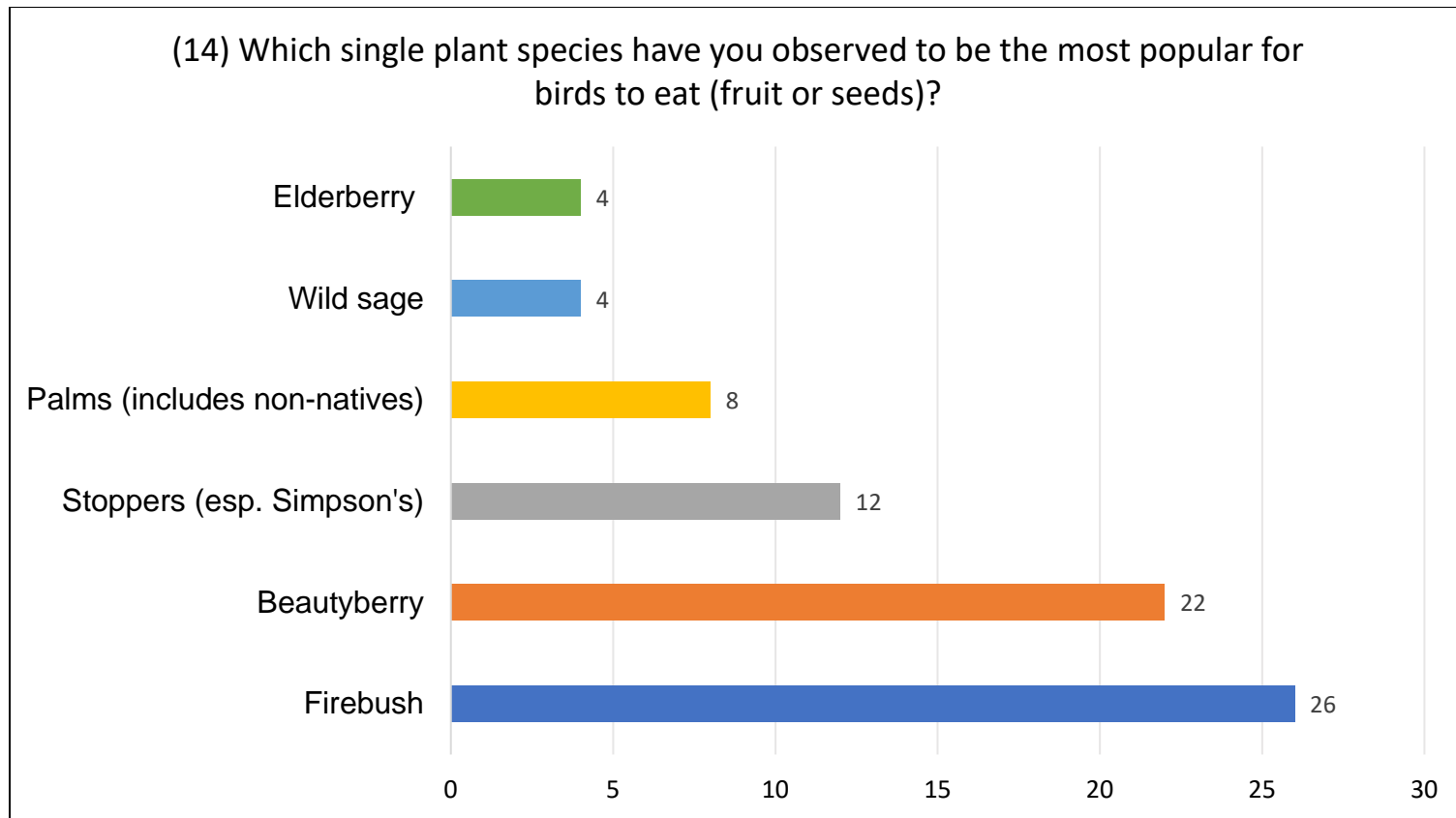
285 responses



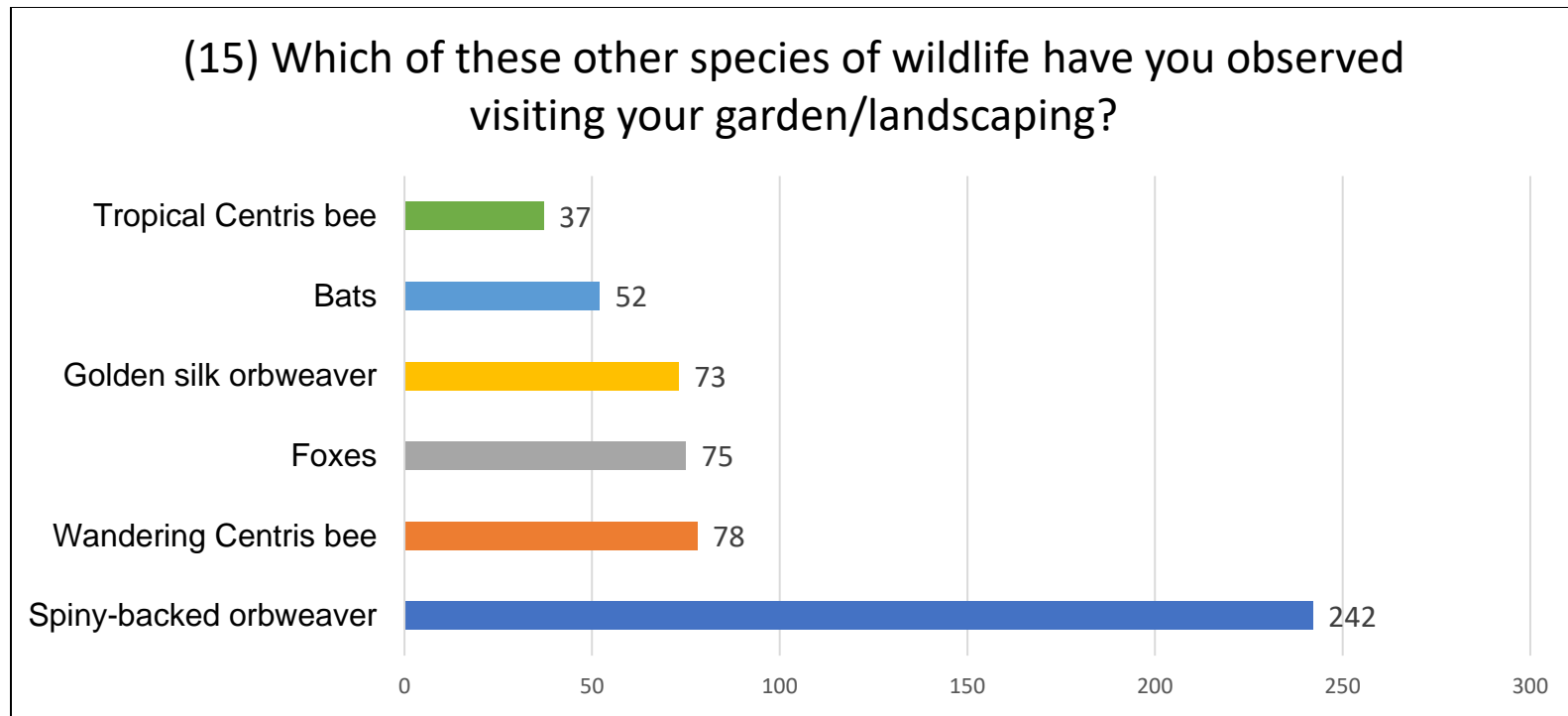
(13) Which of these features do you currently have in your yard?

210 responses

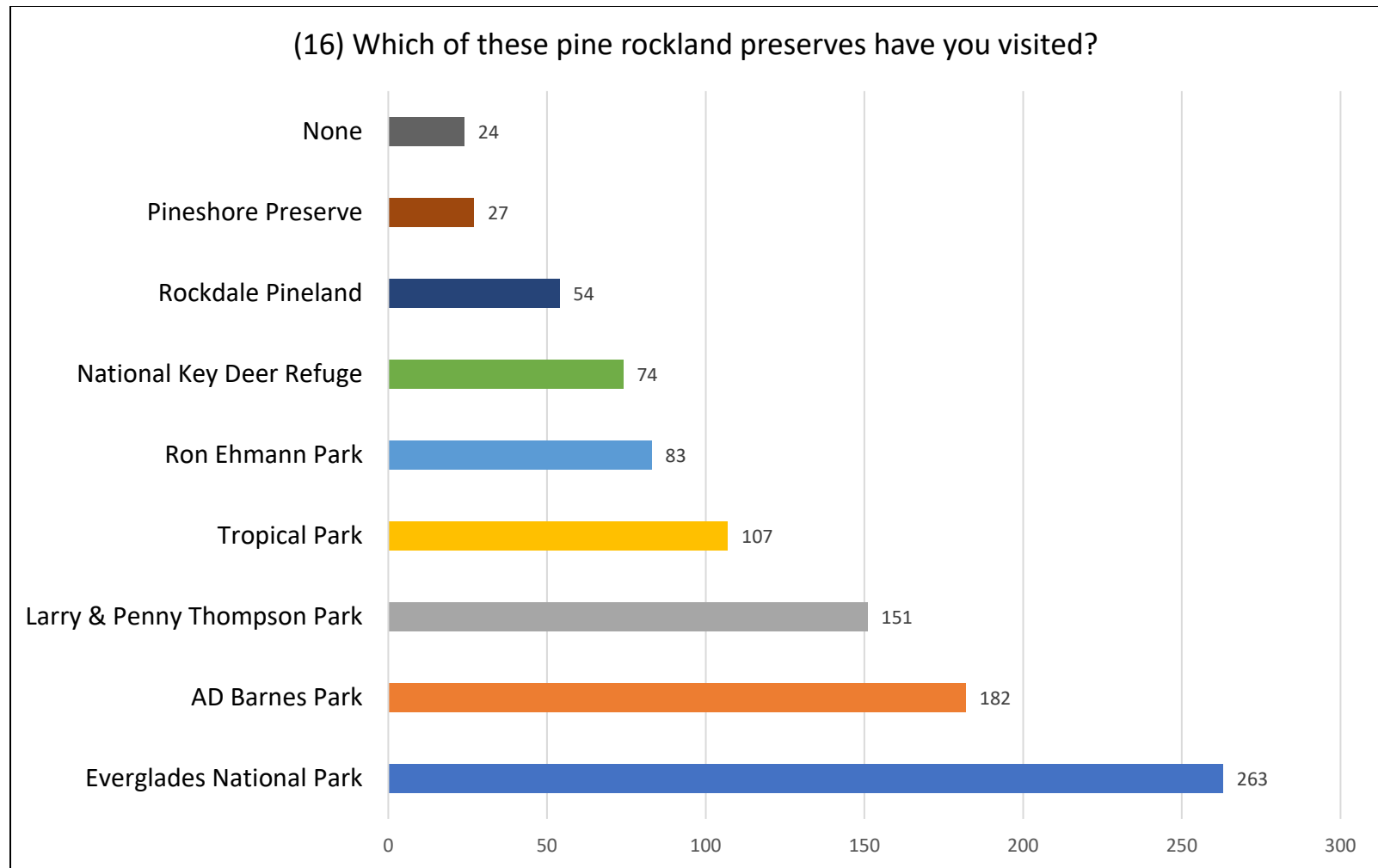
Woodpeckers and hummingbirds abound. We were pleasantly surprised about how good the birdwatching is in NPN gardens! Few respondents had NOT seen a woodpecker. More than a quarter of respondents reported seeing a screech owl. And migratory birds make a strong showing too. Part of the reason for these high response rates is that South Florida's avian biodiversity is awesome! But in addition, most members have features in their gardens that are there to attract birds (graph not shown). In fact, 85% of members have a water feature, 65% put out bird feeders, and 25% have nesting boxes or cavities available for birds. Some of these folks could probably sell tickets for a view of their avian oases.



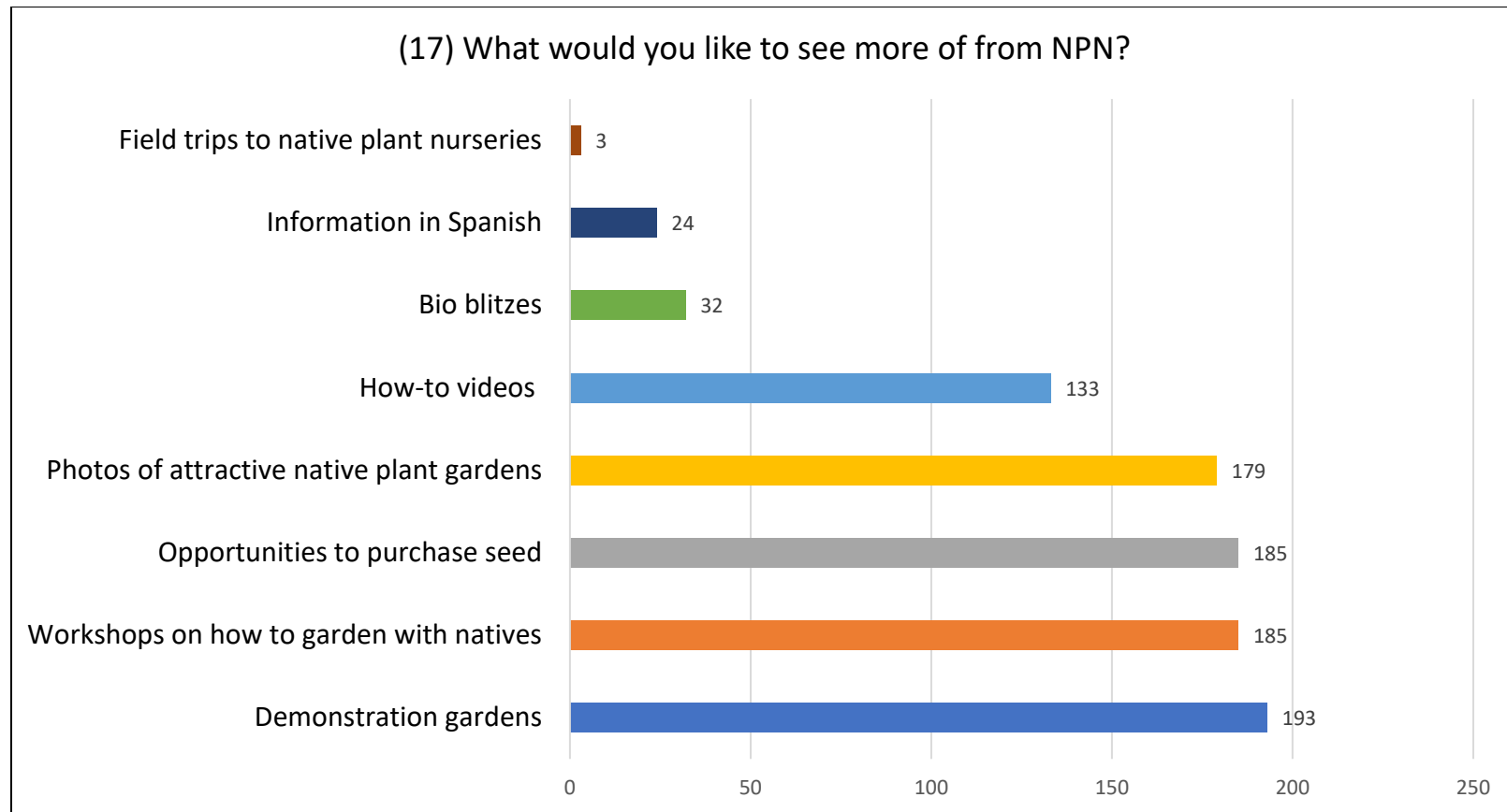
Firebush and beautyberry are stand-outs for their bird-attracting fruit. This was an open-ended question, so we did not influence answers with multiple choices that we provided. These six species (or groups of species) were what members reported as nature's best bird-feeders (and we controlled for a variety of name spellings and typos). Based on these results, we certainly think that every native plant garden in South Florida needs at least one firebush and one beautyberry.



A wide variety of wildlife visits NPN gardens. The spiny-backed orbweaver is by far the most common of the critters we included in our survey. It's great to see the variety of wildlife that is being reported. It's incredible that 78 people reported seeing our (cute, fuzzy and endemic) wandering Centris bee. If you have not observed a wandering Centris bee in your garden, you just need to add one or more locustberries, the only plant which produces the oil these bees need to build and provision their nests.



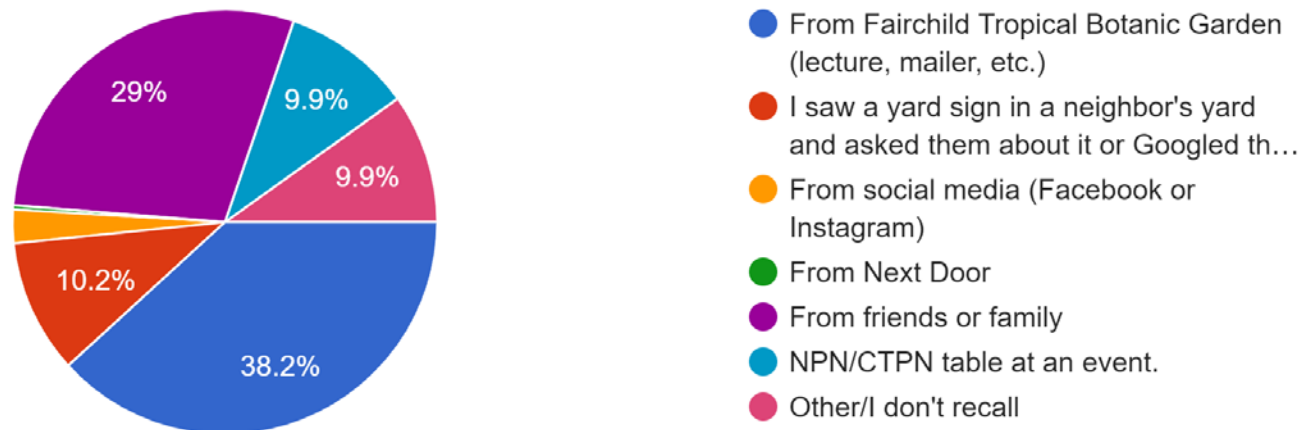
Everglades National Park's Long Pine Key area is by far the most-visited pine rockland. Which is striking, because all the other preserves we list (with the exception of National Key Deer Refuge) are not only free and open to the public, but they are much closer to the core of our NPN membership. As in our 2019 survey, Pineshore and Rockdale EEL Preserves were the least-visited. Although not every preserve on this list has designated parking, each one is open to the public for hiking and nature lovers, so take advantage!



Respondents want garden inspiration and local seed! This was a multiple-choice question. We did not include “more free native plants” because we knew that would be 100% YES! There were 294 people who responded to this question, and about 2/3 of them said YES PLEASE to the four last choices shown above. We will be working hard in the months and years ahead to provide these features to NPN members. Please, if you have an eye-pleasing photo of a native plant garden, email it to NPN@fairchildgarden.org! Regarding native seeds, we are piloting small give-away packets (*Neptunia pubescens*) as a freebie in the table display we bring to events. As resources are available, we will expand seed availability.

(18) How did you first hear about NPN (Native Plant Network, formerly CTPN/Connect to Protect Network)?

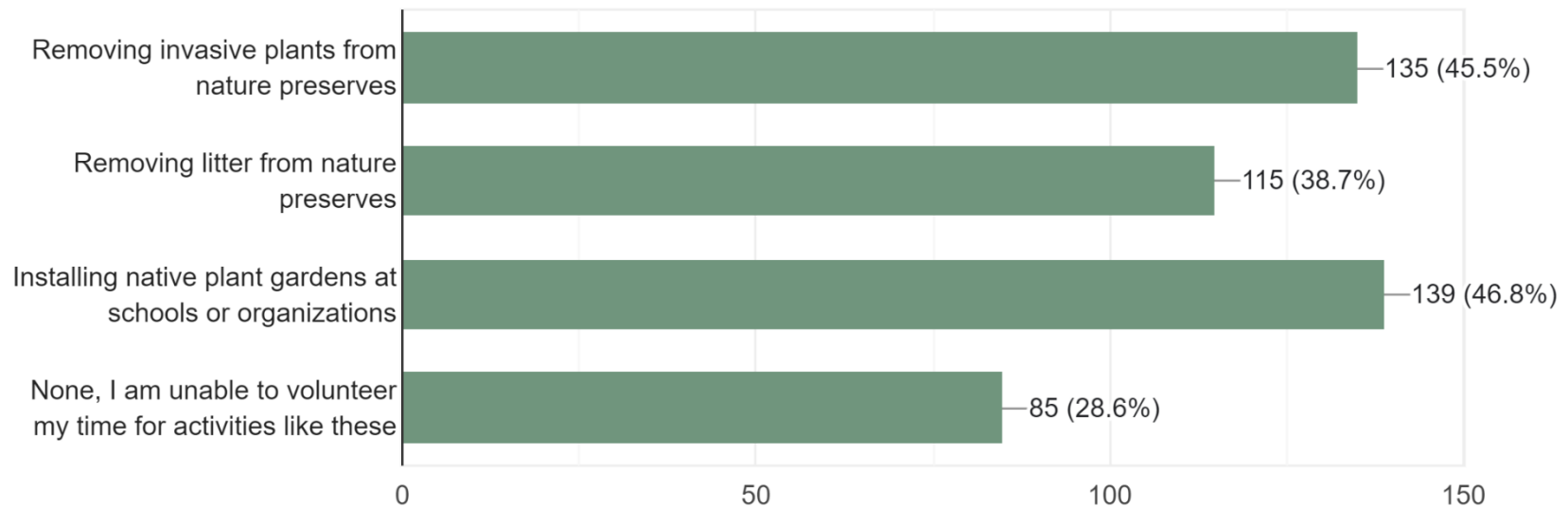
314 responses



You have gotten the NPN message from a wide variety of sources! We aren't surprised that news from Fairchild or word-of-mouth from friends and family are the means by which most of you found us. How cool that we recruited 10% of you from our yard signs and another 10% from our tabling events! Both of these do require some resources on our part, so it is very good to know the signs and tabling are doing their job.

(19) Sometimes NPN hosts or promotes volunteer workdays. Which of these types of activities interest you the most?

297 responses



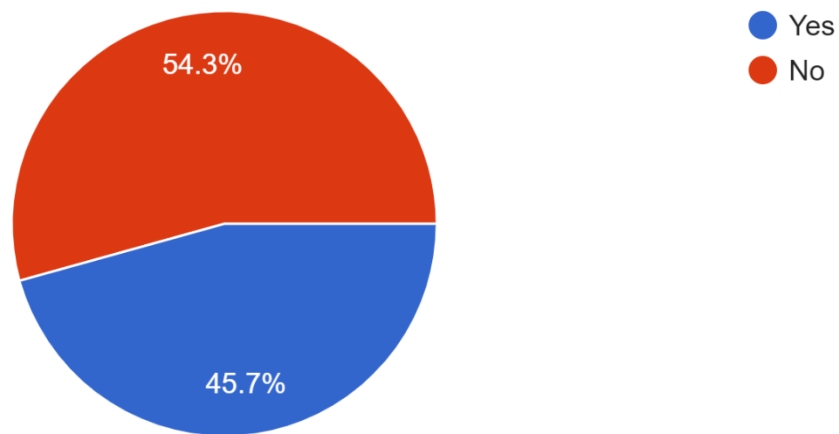
(20) Could we add you to our list of volunteers we contact for occasional workdays?

306 responses

Potential for future NPN member involvement. About half of survey participants would be willing to offer their time for volunteer workdays, which is fantastic. In addition, 64% said we could add them to our list of occasional volunteers (graph not shown). Thanks, folks!

(21) Are you a member of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden? (NPN members are not required to be Garden members, and the memberships are tracked separately)

313 responses



Fairchild membership. Of survey respondents, slightly more than half are not members of Fairchild, indicating that NPN is reaching beyond the membership of its parent organization and into the South Florida community. The proportion of NPN members who are not Fairchild members has increased from 46% in 2019.

(22) Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

NPN members are the best! Many respondents used this space to simply say thank you. Well, you are welcome, members, for 17 years of native plant promotion, and thank YOU for using your yard for the good of the planet! We have deleted many responses for the sake of brevity. Many respondents also used this space to ask us questions. We do not have the time to go through and answer these, but please know that you can email us with questions anytime at NPN@fairchildgarden.org.

I almost have too many Atalas, my coonties can't grow fast enough. I see them almost everyday
I love what you are doing, keep up the good work!! Thank you Daniela, for taking the time to explain and introduce me to a lot of new native plants.
more Opportunity to purchase locally-sourced native seed!!!!
identify more salt tolerant Pine Rockland native plants for those of us in the keys, Key Largo
Would love the opportunity to buy more plants, like the one several weeks ago!
Love to keep up with the newsletter, keep up the good work!
I would like to learn more about propagating plants. My fakahatchee grasses are blooming (and I suppose seeds are present too.). I would love to learn how to get those seeds to grow!
Our HOA is a new member. Thanks to Daniela & volunteers for support & help.
Thanks for propagating natives beyond Pinerockland species! Hammock species need help too.
Please mention any low level physical activity available for volunteers with physical limitations
Appreciate your service to the community and native plant distributions. Hope you keep growing and expanding your program.
Our HOA is a new member. Thanks to Daniela & volunteers for support & help.
We sighted dusky wing last summer for about 6-8 weeks on the pine land croton we took pictures
Coordination with other programs to curtail development in county. There are lots of areas around Homestead Speedway that can be absorbed/ used to create parks. I think the program has been around long enough that it should start to unit with other conservation groups to lobby for a less developed Miami-Dade. I think it would also be cool to try to link corridors with Broward and Monroe Counties. What does Native Plant Network need to make a bigger impact on the county? What services do you need? I.e marketing, legal, graphic design, etc.
I've been a member of Fairchild gardens on and off, on alternating years. A discount membership for Fairchild Gardens for NPN members would be a great idea.
A plant exchange location where you can drop off a plant and pick up another one would be nice.
Please provide more opportunities to purchase plants from you. It is difficult to drive to Homestead to purchase plants.
It would be a great if more experience members would be willing to visit homeowners properties and give some specific feedback on what to plant and where.
It would be great if you could provide plant labels to install when we receive plants, to generate interest from neighbors who walk by

I love the momentum. I've been reloading the native plants in my properties in the city of Miami (and others) for over 30 years. Nice to see the movement. You guys are fantastic! I see NPN signs all around Shenandoah and Silver Bluff! Keep up the good work!
Visited Boystown Pineland Preserve earlier this year and it was fantastic; please continue EEL park manager-led tours
You do a fantastic job of promoting native plants
Please give serious urban habitat restorers opportunities to buy native host and nectar plants from you. Unfortunately the nurseries you list are either too far, open at inconvenient hours or not helpful enough (I brought 20 varieties of S. Florida butterflies to my city yard in 8 years at great cost in time and expense and I would love easier local access to plants). Also help us protect our work and restored habitats from developers.
I really appreciate the plants I was given to get my native planted yard going!
I used to be a member of FTBG and gave student group tours for M-DCPS. I started a native plant garden at my school and one at my home. The rare plant I was trying to describe is planted at my school. We received it from an FIU student about maybe 8 years ago. It's doing very well. My school garden attracts many zebras! The fire bush is magical.
CTPN/NPN staff have been a helpful source of plant knowledge.
When you ask for seeds include photos. Make a 'why plant natives' brochure for the general public accessible online; there are many reasons and different sites accent specifics (beneficial insects, birds, habitats, ease of care, environmental benefits, etc) so it'd be nice to have it altogether in one place with examples or maybe a long list with links.
I'd like to purchase more native pants! And also learn more about how best to plant, prune, keep them healthy.
Thanks for the plants! They really helped me get started with natives.
It'd be great if there were more regular plant distributions for people who are members, even if it was just one plant every other month.
Thank you for everything you do!
Thanks for adding pictures on survey, where can I get a list of native plants and where to purchase and can I get any more free native plants?
I would love a "connect to protect for bugs". I want to maximize the appropriate native biodiversity in my yard and there are lots of *terrestrial* insect species that will never make it here because I live in a suburban desert. How can I ethically get some liguus snails and golden orb spiders? I have the same interest in getting dirt from natural habitat that is being developed so I can seed my property with any fungi/protozoa/etc that are part of our natural ecosystems that I might not have. My interest in this is for my yard to be a seeding point for local spreading of as much native biodiversity as possible to the surrounding neighbors.
Your work is very important and I hope you're able to maintain the network and engage new members.
You all are more impactful than you can imagine. Thank you for all you do!
You guys do a great job! Perhaps maybe a youtube channel or some social media presence like Instagram might be a good way to promote NPN and have accessible educational content.
more information for a totally novice to plants in South Florida
I no longer own the property where the native plants were growing beautifully. The new owner destroyed everything. Even the trees that were 50 years old. It was very traumatizing and sad.

I'm a teacher at Sunset Elementary. Daniela has helped Sunset's Eco Club learn about the endangered pine rockland. We have a pine rockland garden thanks to the program. I've also incorporated native plants in my home garden. Thank you!
Great Program, contact the Master Gardener Program for more volunteers.
Thanks for what you do, and I wish everyone could know about the importance of natives for so many reason!! I think and hope the younger generations in Miami will find plenty of attention getting links on social media in both English and Spanish, because I believe a substantial number care about nature but don't know what to do beyond that. With all the people living in condos or townhouses, we need to showcase which of these work as container plants. For example, in one part of my yard I have multiple corky stem passion vines, very close to blue porterweed (mostly the tall non-native one unfortunately). and the zebra longwings are all swarming around that area in the spring, and I show it to people whenever I can. There's also wild coffee in bloom there now. I need a male Alvaradoa mexicana if possible - thanks, love and keep up the grrrrreat work.
You do a great job of trying to educate homeowners on what to plant. Your staff at the plant events are very knowledgeable and helpful.
The vacant land across from West Lab Elementary (bounded by Ponce, Granada, Carillo, Pisano) should be used for Native Plant Biodiversity Garden. Now it is just lawn. Would NPN be interested in helping to plan/plant/maintain such a garden if University of Miami could be persuaded to donate the land?
We've been members for years but the cost increases have not been welcoming 😞
WE have participated in the Atala project at MetroZoo and love the extra plants you distribute once a year! The birds, bees, insects, moths and native wildlife make our one acre a true sanctuary & its all because of Connect to Protect staff & volunteers. THANKS!
I am older, but if I can help with installing gardens in schools (not other organizations), I would like to try.
Please include strongly discouraging (banning) pesticides in your initiative: at present the use is pervasive and extreme in the Village of Pinecrest.
I think explaining the care that newly plants require is essential. I think a lot of people assume that because plants are native they don't need to be watered .
Reach out as much as possible to elementary and middle schools
Thanks for your work! Native plants have now become a huge passion for me so thank you for providing plants and information on this topic.
This program is amazing. It has really taught me so much about plants and my environment.
Thank you for all the pine rockland plants we have received and the informative newsletters. The field trips are great, too.
Why aren't there any more free plants offered?
Love this program! I have learned so much about the beauty value and importance of native plants and landscape. Thank you!
thank you for all of the amazing work you do to provide for our native species and future of the planet.

Acknowledgments: Thank you to the members of NPN for your ongoing support! Our survey was created in Google Forms. Butterfly maps were created by Sriram Narasimhan using NextGIS software.

Contact: NPN@fairchildgarden.org

Web: www.fairchildgarden.org/NPN