



## KATHLEEN CRADDOCK BURKS

(09/30/1946 – 06/08/2006)

**K**athy Burks, outstanding Florida botanist and dear friend to many in the conservation community, died at her home on June 8, 2006 after a brief battle with cancer. Kathy will be remembered for her joyful personality, her passion for botany, her personal integrity, her dedication to excellence, and her many contributions to botany and conservation in Florida.

Kathy received a Master of Science degree in Biological Science from Florida State University in 1992. Her master's project was a critical floristic study of Lake Miccosukee and environs in the Florida panhandle, where she developed an early

expertise and interest in aquatic species, and endangered species such as the federally listed Miccosukee gooseberry (*Ribes echinellum*).

Kathy's first major project after graduating from FSU was a four-year study of plant diversity in wet savannas in the Apalachicola National Forest, which involved botanical inventory and monitoring of groundcover diversity in response to prescribed fire. She was hired by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in 1993 where she worked in the Bureau of Invasive Plant Management for ten years and became known as one of the state's foremost experts on invasive plant species. During this time, Kathy gave dozens of presentations, conducted workshops, and contributed to numerous papers and reports, including *Florida Wetland Plants: an Identification Manual* (1998, John Tobe senior author) and *Identification and Biology of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas* (1998, Ken Langeland senior author). Kathy also provided expert plant identification services for biologists and public land managers throughout the state.

Kathy joined the Florida Natural Areas Inventory in January 2004 as the program's invasive plants biologist where she was responsible for mapping the distribution and abundance of invasive exotic plants in Florida, and developing a statewide invasive plants geodatabase to manage the information and make it readily accessible. At FNAI she continued her role as a leader in the field of invasive plants, working with federal, state, and local governments and private organizations to advance critical issues related to the prevention and control of invasive exotic plant species.

During Kathy's career she served as Chair of the Invasive Species List Committee for the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, as Chair of the Science Committee for the Florida Wildflower Advisory Council, as a member of the Florida Endangered Plants Advisory Council, and she had recently accepted the responsibility of serving as Plants Editor for the Florida Committee on Rare and Endangered Plants and Animals (FCREPA). Whether invasive plants, rare plants, or roadside wildflowers, Kathy was involved with helping bring good science to decisions regarding all of these important conservation issues.

Beginning in her days at graduate school, Kathy was always a devoted advocate for the R. K. Godfrey Herbarium at Florida State University, bringing positive attention and critically needed financial resources to this important educational and research resource. Based on this longtime relationship with the Herbarium, her family requests that anyone wishing to honor Kathy make a contribution in her name to the Florida State University Foundation, specifically earmarked for Friends of the Godfrey Herbarium, P.O. Box 3062739, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2739.

We will miss Kathy's expertise and effectiveness, her congenial approach to getting the job done. But we will mostly miss her warm spirit, the passion and dedication she brought to botany and protecting Florida's important natural areas, and the friendships those who knew her were so fortunate to experience. Kathy leaves an enduring legacy in her good works and friendships that will continue to inspire for many years to come.

Gary Knight  
Director, Florida Natural Areas Inventory