CHAIRMAN'S NOTES - The Exotic Pest Plant Council's annual business meeting was held on February 6, 1991 in Davie, Florida. A large turn-out of concerned individuals attended the meeting. Membership now totals 116. Also, attached to this newsletter are the minutes of the business meeting and the revised version of the Council's By-Laws......Mr. George Molnar (Dade County Dept. of Environmental Resource Management or DERM), who is one of the founding members of the EPPC, has resigned his position with Dade County and will be relocating to the San Francisco Bay area in June. Mr. Molnar has been a very active member of the Council and will be sorely missed. George has promised to remain active in the Florida EPPC and plans to organize a new Chapter of the EPPC in California. Mr. Molnar, presently holds the Chair positions for the committees East Everglades and EPPC Director. EPPC members who are interested in assuming the chair positions of either of Mr. Molnar's committees, which will be available in May, please contact the Chairman of the Council, Don Schmitz, at (904) 488-5631...........It is vital for the entire membership to participate in the EPPC in order for the Council to be effective in influencing our lawmakers that efforts need to be undertaken in fighting the spread of invasive exotic vegetation. I have included a list of the present committees, their chairs, and their members. Please feel free to contact the committee chairs and offer them your assistance.

FEDERAL ISSUES - Representatives from the Office of Technical Assessment's Food and Renewable Resources Program (U.S. Congress's research arm) will be visiting Florida in mid-April on a three day invasive exotic plant and animal fact finding tour in central and south Florida. The Dept. of Natural Resource's (DNR) Bureau of Aquatic Plant Management has arranged the tour to focus on the need for federal funds to manage invasive exotic plants in Florida's wetlands and upland forests......Mr. John Giglio, U.S. Senator Bob Graham's environmental legislative aid was recently briefed about the issue of biological pollution in the State of Florida by DNR personnel. Senator Graham is familiar with bio-pollution issues because of his experience with the hearings on the exotic zebra mussel infestation in the Great Lakes. It is possible
that the EPPC membership can convince him and his aids to take a more aggressive stance in Washington D.C concerning Florida's invasive exotic plant populations. Please call Mr. Giglio at 202-224-1545 to voice your concerns about Florida's growing bio-pollution problems. . . . U.S. Rep. Clay Shaw, R-Ft. Lauderdale has requested that the House Appropriations Committee include funds in the 1992 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill for construction of a South Florida quarantine facility. U.S. Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Ocala, whose district has severe problems with hydrilla, also testified in support of building the research center to help study controlling noxious aquatic plants with insects. He proposed that the federal government should appropriate $1.9 million to accomplish this task. Congressmen Larry Smith, D-Hollywood, and Tom Lewis, R-North Palm Beach, also supported this appropriation.

STATE OF FLORIDA ISSUES - House Bill 1433, which would have imposed an endorsement of certification fee on Florida's agricultural and horticulture nurseries generating $312,170 per year, was defeated on March 26, 1991 by the House Natural Resources Committee. The funds from this bill were intended to supplement the bio-control research programs on melaleuca and Brazilian pepper. Despite favorable editorials from the Tampa Tribune, Tallahassee Democrat, and The Florida Times-Union, HB 1433 was defeated by one vote because of opposition posed by the agricultural and horticultural lobbies. They felt their industries should not have to pay for the "sins of their Fathers."

EXOTIC PLANT CONTROL IN THE EAST EVERGLADES - Although melaleuca has been well recognized as a pest plant throughout Florida, it has not yet become established within Everglades National Park. The Park, with the cooperation of DERM, Florida's Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), and the Florida Dept. of Corrections, has created a four mile "melaleuca free" buffer in the East Everglades. This project began in 1986, and with continued outside support and cooperation, the Park has been able to increase the buffer by a mile each of the last three years. Current estimates indicate that the 1991 mile has as many melaleuca trees as the previous three miles of buffer zone. This year, a six person crew will spend four months in the field treating melaleuca in the 4th mile and enhancing the buffer zone for Australian pine trees. Also, prescribed burns will be conducted to control seedling growth in certain locations. For additional information, call Bob Doren at (305) 245-5266.

SFWMD MELALEUCA CONTROL EFFORTS - Melaleuca elimination initiatives by the SFWMD are making significant progress. The first phase of the project began in November 1990 and aims to treat all mature melaleuca trees in the Water Conservation Areas (WCA). In WCA 2-B, the melaleuca infestation is heavy and the soil is dry. Here, all-terrain vehicles, each equipped with a 15 gallon sprayer,
are being used to treat melaleuca. Approximately 20,000 trees have been either girdled and treated with herbicides (frill technique) or have had herbicide sprayed near their bases (basal treatment technique). In WCA 3, where the melaleuca infestation is light to moderate, a helicopter is being used to deliver crews and supplies to each treatment site. To date, 75,000 mature melaleuca trees have been treated with herbicide and more than one million seedlings have been manually removed within an area of approximately 142 square miles. Only the frill application technique is being used to control mature trees in WCA 3. The second phase will focus on surveillance and inspection and the long term management of melaleuca including the eventual introduction of biological control agents. All treated areas will be inspected periodically to find regrowth and new seedlings. Follow up herbicide treatments will be made as needed. For more information, please call Mr. Dan Thayer (407) 687-6129.

BIOCONTROL OF EXOTIC PEST PLANTS - Research on biological control of Brazilian pepper trees by Drs. Fred D. Bennett and Dale H. Habeck of the Dept. of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida in Gainesville continues. More than 160 phytophagous insects have been found associated with Brazilian pepper in southern Brazil. Surveys have been concentrated in the Piracicaba area (Sao Paulo State) and Curitiba (Parana state). A sawfly, Herteroperryia hubrichi, and a thrips, Liothrips ichini, have been selected for host-specificity testing in quarantine. Although both are known to feed only on Brazilian pepper trees in Brazil, considerably more testing will have to be done to confirm this. Problems in maintaining colonies in quarantine have severely limited studies. An adventitious wasp (Megastigmus transvaalensis) discovered in Florida in 1988 develops in the exotic tree's fruits. It is now widespread in Florida and surveys to ascertain infestation rates are continuing. All funding for this program has been furnished by the Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS). The budget crunch this year reduced funding and the funding level for 1991-1992 is uncertain. This is the final year of the 5-year Brazilian pepper - IFAS project and, although funding by IFAS is expected to continue, outside funds are needed to accelerate the work. This is especially crucial since Dr. Bennett is planning to retire in the fall of 1992. For more information, please contact Dr. Dale Habeck (904) 392-4901. The fungus Botryosphaeria ribis was isolated by Dr. Roger Webb, University of Florida, from declining melaleuca trees at the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. Symptoms of the decline are associated with two mycotoxins that act quickly once a melaleuca tree is inoculated with the fungus. The fungus is ineffective unless introduced into a wound that penetrates the tree's cambium.

STATEMENT FROM THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY REGARDING INVASIVE EXOTIC PLANT SPECIES - The purpose of the society is the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. The society accomplishes
these goals by providing information to interested individuals on the protection, management, and restoration of native plant ecosystems by the means of periodic and occasional publications, conferences, symposia, workshops, and a statewide membership organized by local chapters. We advocate that **exotic plants that invade and spread** without human assistance through native plant communities **should be controlled and eradicated**. Their spread to unaffected areas should be severely restricted by regulatory means. While we prefer that native plants be used for landscaping, we do not object to the use of non-aggressive exotics that don't spread from planting sites and impact natural areas - Mr. Steve Farnsworth, President, 1991.

**COMMITTEE ON NOXIOUS PLANTS FORMED** - Dr. Dan Austin, a botanist at Florida Atlantic University for more than twenty years, has volunteered to chair this new committee. This committee will evaluate new exotic plant species as to their potential invasiveness in Florida. **Dr. Austin** was one of the first individuals in Florida who **recognized the threats posed by invasive exotic vegetation** and published an article in 1978 outlining his concerns in Environmental Conservation entitled "Exotic plants and their effects in southeastern Florida." Anyone who wishes to serve on this committee, please contact Dr. Austin at (407) 367-3320.

1991 EPPC COMMITTEES AND THEIR MEMBERS: * denotes Chairs

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Mr. Bill Kline
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**East Everglades:**
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Ms. Devi Sharpe
Mr. Robert Doren
Ms. Sandy Vardaman
Mr. Dan Thayer

**Publications Committee Needs Your Help** - Mr. Mark McMahon, Chairman of the EPPC Publications Committee, needs your help in obtaining good, quality 35 mm slides (not duplicates) illustrating prominent morphological features of the 23 exotic pest plant species published in the last newsletter. **Help him!**