



# Cuplet Fern, Florida Native Plant Society

Serving Central Florida since 2010

*Discover the allure and importance of Florida's native plants with us!*

PO Box 150021, Altamonte Springs, FL 32715

(352) 658-3677

CupletFern.org

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March 18th, 2020

Dear Cuplet Fern members, partners, and supporters-

The past week has seen drastic changes in our outreach, programs, and special events. This is an important time of the year not just for us, but for so many in our community that raise awareness for our environment.

You may have seen content from social media streams interesting you to “go outdoors” or “opt outside” or even “discover and explore natural areas on your own” in relative seclusion as a plausible alternative to social distancing right now. This is not what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is advising<sup>[1a][2]</sup>.

In unusual times such as these, even a chapter like ours that *identifies* with the outdoors must heed and acquiesce to the instructions placed during a pandemic. Do not play roulette with the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS CoV-2). Cuplet Fern strongly advises you to stay home and avoid discretionary travel during this time.

The level of the community's *sustained* adherence to the safe practices set forth by the CDC<sup>[5]</sup> will *directly reflect on the rate of new infections* being reported every day from here on out<sup>[7]</sup>. Unfortunately, the situation is projected to get much worse before it begins to get better<sup>[11]</sup>. We have entered a much more complex phase where known distinct transmissions are being blurred as more and more people are reporting unknown routes of contracted infections through community spread<sup>[1b]</sup>.

- SARS CoV-2 is a novel virus and causes coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19<sup>[8]</sup>.
  - Currently there are no medications to treat or vaccines to prevent COVID-19<sup>[10]</sup>.
- Millennials circulating in our population are the least likely to be symptomatic<sup>[11]</sup>. This pandemic cannot be overcome without the cooperation of young people.
  - It is less how an infected person feels than whether or not that individual is still shedding the virus<sup>[11]</sup>.
  - There are CDC guidelines for people that test positive for COVID-19 that wish to discontinue home isolation with or without further tests to determine if they are still contagious<sup>[12]</sup>.

*Our statewide mission is the conservation, preservation, and restoration of Florida's native plants and native plant communities*



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- Older adults and individuals with underlying health issues pertaining to heart or lung disease or diabetes are at a higher risk of developing serious complications from COVID-19<sup>[3][4]</sup>.
- COVID-19 persists on different surfaces and in the air for different periods of time. There is a lot about this that is still fully not known<sup>[1b][13]</sup>.
- The current pandemic situation is unprecedented<sup>[11]</sup>.
- The confirmed cases in Orange, Osceola, Volusia, and Seminole continue to increase. Some are travel related, some are not<sup>[9]</sup>.

These are a few of the many reasons why limiting or restricting your travels is so important.

Cuplet Fern has a lot to lose. On Friday, March 13th, I sent an email notifying the board that this situation was serious enough to reconsider all events due to a sizable group of our members being over the age of 60. Many of them are treasured members for decades. Their safety is something that I take very seriously. On March 17th, many community partners and Cuplet Fern canceled or postponed all remaining event outreaches in March. It is likely that this will also continue into April should the spread of COVID-19 increase. On March 17th, I advised our social media team to stop publicizing any additional content that might entice people to travel and explore for non-essential purposes until further notice. Over the next few weeks, I will be working with our publicity team on modifying our events while staying closely updated to the developments in this public health crisis.

Should you suffer from “cabin fever”, connect with loved ones through video chat, phone, text, or email. This is particularly a difficult request for extroverts that feel restricted in their desire to leave their home. However, in the interest of your community and yourself, you must adhere to CDC guidelines. Remember, you may be required to practice restricted movements and avoidance of social groups for a prolonged period of time.

Demand for food in Florida just this past week has grown considerably. Price gouging may become an issue especially in hard hit areas. Report price gouging to 866-9NO-SCAM.

Recognize that our minds want to work in normal, set patterns of schedules and personal routines- however, *acknowledgement and adherence of CDC guidelines* during a pandemic is what is required from each of us. It will take all of us at Cuplet Fern to break from our prior outdoor activities and choose to stay at home. *Only if we abide and stop promoting movement away from home will the spread of COVID-19 slow down.* This is exceedingly important for the health and



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recovery of our economy- and will be telling if tighter restrictions come into place should people refuse to follow self-guidance without the rule of law.

For *at least* the next 2 weeks, Cuplet Fern chapter does not support or endorse any media that continues to advertise, advise, recommend, channel, allude, or insinuate nonessential travel practices contrary to the guidelines set forth by the CDC<sup>[1][2]</sup>. Should you have gone on an outdoor adventure that is work related, please caption your media appropriately so it may *not* entice the public to do the same. The “look what an interesting find I made on my excursion so everyone can get interested” media content can wait until the pandemic dissipates. The tainted gas pump handle, the person that you unexpectedly came in contact with, a trip-and-fall accident, *among many other unknown variables* will be out of your control while “exploring”. Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York believes that the hospital capacity in his state is about to be overwhelmed<sup>[11]</sup>. Preserving a functioning healthcare system is paramount<sup>[10]</sup>. Spectacle or celebratory social media moments that entice or allude to non-essential travel away from home should be scheduled after this crisis dissipates as they are counterproductive to the current efforts of the CDC.

The reach of publicity in our age- especially online- is far reaching and can influence people *even when unintended* in infected *and* uninfected geographical areas. If enough of us start going beyond their home, then it becomes *contrary* to what is needed to slow COVID-19 through human movement during this time. The under 10-person gatherings is a guideline that includes within your home<sup>[11]</sup>. The fact that the CDC is advising a need to stay at home, infected or not, is a rule to prevent additional lives being meaninglessly lost. The numbers of those infected continue to climb each and every day<sup>[9]</sup>. This is what “delaying and flattening the curve” means for this particular pandemic- to reduce and discourage human movement away from home.

This statement in itself is extraordinary. However, it is proactive and has been made so others in our community know that pandemic safety supersedes anything else for Cuplet Fern.

It is my personal hope this is not one the *first* of many stern warnings from others but one of the *last* so that we may all rejoin our normalcy sooner than later. Unfortunately, the situation is poised to get much worse without intervention on many different fronts. Our hearts particularly go out to our fellow chapters in Miami-Dade and Broward counties that serve communities that have already been disproportionately affected during this time<sup>[9]</sup>.



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Practice staying at home where authorities can respond quickly in *any* emergency should something happen to you. This pandemic is going to test a lot of our identities as we are so ingrained in the way we define our nonprofit outreaches, but will also bring into focus the necessary steps needed for the protection of human lives.

Remember the old adages “*Better safe than sorry*” and “*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure*”. They still ring true.

*M. Kateli*

Mark Kateli  
Cuplet Fern President

All citations accessed March 18th, 2020.

[1a] CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/get-ready.html>

[1b] CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#spreads>

[2] White House:

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20\\_coronavirus-guidance\\_8.5x11.315PM.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11.315PM.pdf)

[3] CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

[4] CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>

[5] CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

[6] CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>

[7] White House Briefing Statement for March 15th:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-briefing-2/>

[8] CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/types.html>



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[9] Florida Department of Health COVID-19 Confirmed cases map

<https://fdoh.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/8d0de33f260d444c852a615dc7837c86>

[10] CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/guidance-hcf.html>

[11] White House Briefing Statement Transcript for March 16th:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-briefing-3/>

[12] CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

[13] Harvard Medical School:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/coronavirus-resource-center>