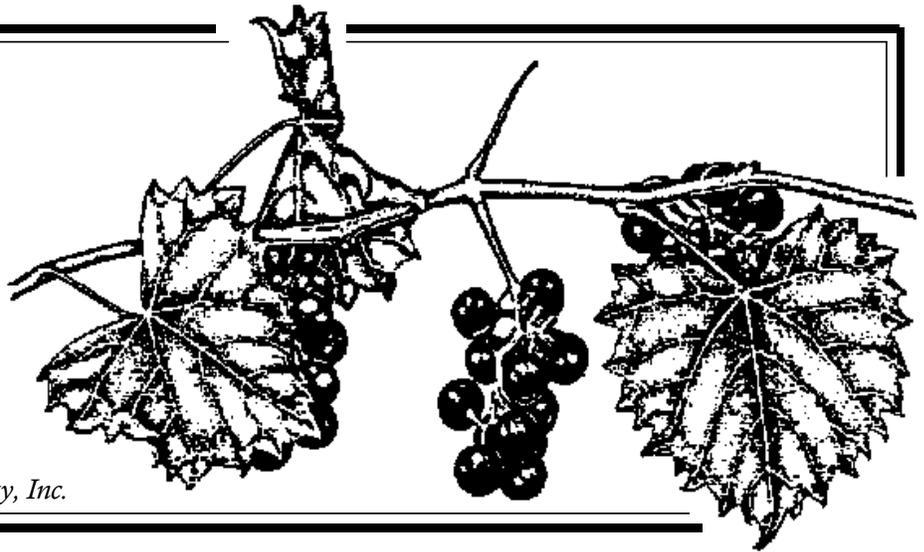


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# The Suncoast Grapevine

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## Plant Phenology and Climate Change

*Hillsborough County Extension, 7pm*

*January 21, 2009*

*Presented by George Kish*

Phenology is the study of time of year for recurring natural phenomena. Plant phenology is increasingly recognized as a vital approach for understanding how ecosystems respond to climatic changes. The USA National Phenology Network (USA-NPN) has been established to integrate phenological event observations on a national level with remotely-sensed weather and vegetation data.

Establishing the network in the southeastern United States is of outmost importance as the southeast is probably the most difficult of regions in the United States to distinguish regional climate change effects from the variability imposed by local weather effects. The magnitude of climate changes will likely be less severe in the southeast than in colder regions, but no less important to ecosystem dynamics. A plant phenology network for the southeastern U.S. will consist of a tiered approach consistent with the USA-NPN and include: (1) intensive sites focused on process studies, (2) spatially extensive environmental networks focused on standardized observations, (3) scientific networks with educational components (college campuses, nature preserves with educational programs, etc.), and (4) remote-sensing products that can be assimilated to extend surface observations.

Climate change projections for the southeastern U.S. indicate future periods of warmer summer maximum temperatures, higher evapotranspiration, and more intense rainfall periods with longer dry periods between rainfall events.

George Kish is a hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Tampa. His current research involves the development of a phenology network for the southeastern U.S. to evaluate the relation between climate change and ecosystem responses. George is a former member of the FNPS Board of Directors and a past president of the Suncoast chapter. George is also a Ph.D. candidate at USF in the Department of Geography.

*—Bob Upcavage*



The Florida Native Plant Society was organized in 1980 to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. For more information about the Florida Native Plant Society, please visit our web site: [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org)