



Meredith Heather

# ARCHBOLD OCTOBER 2021 NEWS for curious minds



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## Feral Hogs & Oak Hammocks



Feral Hog captured on camera trap by Carlton Ward Jr.

Dr. Raoul Boughton began studying feral hogs at Buck Island Ranch eight years ago to better understand the ecology of these abundant mammals in Florida grazing lands. Funded by the USDA, Boughton and his team deployed 44 motion-triggered camera traps throughout the ranch beginning in 2015. They also tracked hog movements with GPS collars. This trove of data created



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an opportunity for Sriram Narasimhan, a summer intern in Archbold's Predator-Prey Program. Advised by Joe Guthrie, Predator-Prey Program Director, and Boughton, Narasimhan knew from prior diet studies that feral hogs loved acorns. For his study, he explored whether hogs prefer oak hammocks over wetlands and irrigation ditches using camera trap data and by measuring the surrounding habitat. And, he asked if the association with oak hammocks increased with oak acorn production during fall and winter. **Camera traps confirmed more feral hogs in oak hammocks, but there was no clear increase in use compared to wetlands or ditches. Feral hog presence in oak hammocks did increase during the fall and winter oak acorn mast.** Watch Narasimhan's research presented [here](#). Narasimhan confirmed passive monitoring of wildlife with camera traps provides inexpensive, long-term, and high-quality information. Camera placement and regular check-ups are critical. More cameras is usually better. That's why the Buck Island Ranch camera array is being absorbed into the greater effort of the Florida Wildlife Corridor Observatory Project. Joe Guthrie and Dr. Boughton are deploying hundreds of cameras across multiple landscapes.

## LTAR Leaders



Shefali Azad (left) and Hilary Swain (right) portraits by Dustin Angell.

Archbold is proud to announce Dr. Hilary Swain and Shefali Azad, Archbold Data Manager, received awards for their leadership, commitment, and dedication to the

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"Archbold Biological Station is one of America's iconic centers of continuous research and education in field biology. It is a prototype of what we need all across America."

— Edward O. Wilson

## Visiting Scholars at Archbold

Archbold will award two grants-in-aid of research by visiting scholars for the 2022 field season.

Applications are due November 15th and awarded by December 14th.

[Learn more here!](#)

US Department of Agriculture [Long-Term Agroecosystem Research Network](#) (LTAR). Nominated by the Central Plains Experimental Range site, **Swain received the Founders Award in recognition of her leadership contributions influencing the vision and direction of the LTAR Network.** Swain said, "I am deeply honored by the Founders Award. LTAR has been one of the most rewarding professional experiences of my career and has made a huge impact on [science at Archbold's Buck Island Ranch](#) and the Archbold-UFL LTAR site in Florida". Nominated by the Central Plains Experimental Range site, **Azad received the Impact Award in recognition of individual and group network-level accomplishments that enable the LTAR Network to advance a vision for a sustainable US agriculture.** Azad said, "We had to ask every LTAR site to rummage through decades of crop harvests or grazing records or weather data, repackage it into a meaningful common format, add land management notes and geospatial references, and finally publish it online for posterity. The work still isn't complete, but it's been a joy working with a diverse group of people that are committed to the same ultimate goal of data accessibility". Both Swain and Azad contributed to the national LTAR Network goal of understanding how we can sustain food production while decreasing environmental impacts and maintaining rural prosperity.

Online Events

## Menges Wins Mentor Award



Dr. Eric Menges (top left) with his Archbold Plant Ecology staff and interns in 2016.

### **The Florida Native Plant Society honored Dr. Eric Menges, Archbold Emeritus Research Biologist, with their 2021 Mentor Award with this dedication:**

"In his time at Archbold, Eric's work has increased greatly our understanding of the ecology of Florida scrub vegetation, the population biology and demography of numerous rare and endemic scrub plants, fire ecology, conservation biology, and scrub restoration. Eric has mentored student interns, graduate students, post-doctoral students, and research associates in producing a body of work reflected in more than 150 publications. Many of his students and associates have gone on to successful careers in universities, colleges, and agencies". Nominated by colleague Dr. Paul Schmalzer, NASA Plant Ecologist, Menges expressed gratitude, "Thank you, everyone. I'm very proud of our interns and students. They've taught me a great deal". Menges credits his grandfather, father, Orie Loucks, Don Waller, Deborah Rabinowitz, and Warren Abrahamson as influential mentors in his life. **This gift of mentorship was passed forward from Menges to 33 Research Assistants and 127 Interns at Archbold while studying rare plants in the Florida scrub for over three decades.**

**Nov 4: 3:30 PM**

'Seasonal Space Use and Inter-Annual Site Fidelity of Female Gopher Tortoises'

Chelsea Moore,  
Archbold Intern

[Register here](#)

Watch all past virtual events [here](#).

Congratulations on this well-deserved honor, Dr. Menges.

## Blazing Purple



Scrub Blazing Star photo by Kaitlin Griffith.

**A walk through Florida rosemary, oak scrub, or scrubby flatwoods at Archbold means Scrub Blazing Stars (*Liatris ohlingerae*) are afoot.** You will overlook them most of the year: A green rosette of elliptical leaves in the sugar-white sand that sometimes hides dormant underground. During summer, this hardy herb fires up one, or many, three-foot-tall stalks of rose-pink flower heads. Butterflies flutter in for nectar fuel. The transfer of pollen to nearby Scrub Blazing Stars via butterfly courier ensures the future of this rare plant. If the flowers avoid the hungry mouths of deer and invertebrates, the fruits float up and away

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for immediate germination upon landing. The [Plant Ecology Program began collecting life history data](#) on Scrub Blazing Star populations every year at Archbold and the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest in 2000. They also study the fire ecology and seed/seedling ecology in the laboratory and field for this fire-adapted scrub endemic. Over the years, many visiting researchers at Archbold contributed to our understanding of this endangered plant found only on the Lake Wales Ridge in two counties and Winter Haven Ridge in one county. **Archbold conservation and science are helping Scrub Blazing Stars survive and thrive.**

## The Scrub Blog

Nature and Science from Florida's  
Heartland

Explore [The Scrub Blog](#) by Archbold creative staff.

## Friends of Boca Grande



Inaugural field trip to Buck Island Ranch with 'Friends' from Boca Grande.

**A group of friends from Boca Grande, inspired after visiting Archbold on a field trip sponsored by the 'Friends of Boca Grande Community Center,' are launching a fundraising effort to support a research internship at Archbold named 'Boca Grande 6-R Initiative'.** The 6-R stands for Ridge, Ranch, River, Reef, Research, and Restoration. Based out of Gasparilla Island in southwest Florida, this group cares about understanding the breadth of environmental issues in Florida. They first visited Archbold in 2017 on field trips to explore water flow through the Headwaters region of the Everglades and specifically the flow from the Lake Wales Ridge through ranches and rivers to Lake Okeechobee. They aim to make a difference within their community and Florida by supporting research and restoration. The 'Boca Grande 6-R Initiative' will support a new post-baccalaureate internship at Archbold and will target underrepresented candidates to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field sciences. **Boca Grande friends are investing in students, early career researchers, and aspiring leaders who are passionate about the ecological challenges facing Florida and who want to be part of the solution. Archbold is excited and grateful for Boca Grande friends' partnership in supporting a sustainable future in Florida.**



### Directions to Archbold Biological Station

Eight miles south of Lake Placid. Entrance is 1.8 miles south of SR 70 on Old SR 8.

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