

*Sharyn Richardson describes the threat the Melaleuca trees pose to South Florida*

Richardson: And then we have ongoing things. We're always collecting information about exotics. That's another one of our pet projects. Our exotics, particularly the melaleuca, because the malaleuca is a big problem in South Florida and people think it's a beautiful tree. We heard somebody, recently, tell us that the melaleuca was the only tree that he'd ever seen that he wanted to hug. I was really shocked, but I can see how people would think that because it's not a bad looking tree and because it's got that peely skin, I guess some people feel they would like to hug it, but it's terrible. It's a terrible tree and it's taking over the Big Cypress and people don't realize that. More people need to become aware, need to bear witness to the atrocities that are going on around us, not just with the way things are handled by the bureaucracy or by developers, whatever, but just, just nature or, well, the exotics aren't exactly natural, but there's always something. There's always so much that people need to be involved in and we're just a drop in the bucket.