

ECOQUEST

June 2020

Into the Night!



Inspired by Selby Gardens' spectacular Queen of the Night cactus (*Selenicereus pteranthus*), this challenge will have you venturing out at night to find the beautiful cactus flowers that open or are fragrant only at night. *Selenicereus pteranthus* belongs to a genus which has species that can grow as epiphytes or terrestrially. Some species bloom a single night each year, beginning at twilight, and provide a spectacular show as dinner-plate-sized flowers open up all along the length of the plant for a few brief hours. Then, as dawn creeps over the horizon, the petals close and the show ends.

In addition to moonlight cacti, this month will also feature cacti in general. Many Florida cacti flower during the day, so be sure to see them all. Show off your cactus photography skills with this June event, "Into the Night!"

WHAT IS AN ECOQUEST?

EcoQuests, part of the [Sarasota-Manatee EcoFlora Project](#), challenge Floridians to become engaged citizens in the observation, study, appreciation, and conservation of the native flora and fauna of Florida.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

1. Download the easy-to-use [iNaturalist app](#) on your mobile device, or register on a laptop or desktop at [iNaturalist.org](#).
2. Visit the [Sarasota-Manatee EcoFlora "Into the Night" page](#) and click "join" on the upper right.
3. Photograph plants anywhere in Sarasota and Manatee Counties.
4. Post your observations to iNaturalist.

WHAT IS THE GOAL?

Help us document as many cacti as possible by June 30 - especially the night-bloomers in our area. Remember that any observation still contributes to Sarasota-Manatee EcoFlora, even if it's not featured in our monthly challenge.

WHERE SHOULD I LOOK?

Many night blooming plants, like the Queen of the Night, are climbers. Be sure to look up and check out trees. Live Oaks in particular host many epiphytes and climbing plants. Other Florida cacti thrive on sandy beaches and harsh scrub land.

Photo tips: When taking photos at night, use a wide aperture, slow shutter speed, and if possible a tripod so your camera has more time to take in light. Using flashlights or other light sources can also help illuminate night time plants and their flowers.

Remember not to remove the plants from the trees or disturb any wildlife while photographing, and please be careful on the streets at night. Wear light-colored or reflective clothing and carry lights.