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Source: Florida Entomologist, 100(1) : 1-4

Published By: Florida Entomological Society

URL: https://doi.org/10.1653/024.100.0101

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Announcements

A short history of Florida Entomologist in recognition of 100 years of publication

*John L. Capinera**

On 5 Jan 1916, 11 men interested in entomology formed the Florida Entomological Society. (Yes, they were all men; remember, this was 100 years ago—virtually all entomologists were men!) The purpose of the society was stated to be "to stimulate active interest in entomology on the part of Floridians. There is at present a marked dearth of amateur entomologists in the State." Anyone interested in "bugs" was invited to participate. At its inception, there were 39 members.

The history of the Florida Entomological Society has been summarized at least 6 times, notably by Tissot et al. (1954) and Denmark (1993). Rather than repeating the long and interesting history of the Society, I report here only on the general trends seen in the journal sponsored by the Florida Entomological Society: Florida Entomologist.

In Apr 1916, at the monthly Florida Entomological Society meeting, the proposal was made to publish a periodical to be called "The Florida Buggist," which would be the "Official Organ of the Florida Entomological Society." The Florida Buggist commenced publication in the summer of 1917 (Fig. 1). Initially, The Florida Buggist printed mostly nontechnical material such as basic life history, seasonal observations, distributional information, tips on beekeeping, etc. Interestingly, in 1918 the Society members were discussing the value of a mandated cotton-free year to eliminate boll weevil from the USA. They were convinced it could be done in a year, 2 at most. Not surprisingly, then (as now) folks were complaining about government interfering with their "rights" to use their land as they wished, so the cotton-free year idea went nowhere. Also in 1918, the first technical paper appeared: "Thysanoptera of Florida" (Watson 1918). This article was followed by 2 additional papers on thrips that year.

The original magazine or newsletter-like format would gradually change, as would the content. The journal continued to publish nontechnical material, but by 1920, research data on topics such as the efficiency of traps for capture of mosquitoes were creeping into the journal. By 1921–1922, most of the papers could be regarded as technical, being mostly taxonomic, distributional, and life history–oriented, although general information that we would now consider to be "Extension" literature also was included. The journal also continued to print the minutes of Florida Entomological Society meetings. With publication of Volume 4, in 1920, The Florida Buggist was renamed, and "molted" into "The Florida Entomologist." During the first full decade of publication, the journal averaged only about 4 technical articles per year.

In the 1930s, The Florida Entomologist continued without much change from the old "Buggist" format, and the content remained about the same. The Florida Entomologist averaged about 7 articles per year during the 1930s.

During the 1940s, World War II affected attitudes and practices. Not only were members urged to contribute research that would increase food supplies and help the war effort, but the journal began printing less newsy information, focusing instead on data-based research. Thus, the short articles and notes that formerly were a standard feature largely disappeared, possibly to save paper. Unfortunately, if there still were amateurs subscribing to this journal, surely they would have little reason to continue. The Florida Entomologist was evolving into a publication written by, and for, specialists. It averaged about 13 technical articles per year during this period.

By the 1950s, the journal was largely in its present form, but with the advent of new and more effective classes of insecticides, the journal content broadened from reporting mostly biology and taxonomy to include more studies on insect control, emphasizing insecticides and insecticide application techniques. The journal occasionally printed papers from other countries, but it remained largely focused on Florida and the southeastern USA. With publication in 1954 of Volume 37, the journal no longer claimed to be the "Official Organ of the Florida Entomological Society." During this period, The Florida Entomologist averaged about 19 technical articles per year.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the journal increased in size and stature, attracting more articles from outside Florida. The Florida Entomologist published about 29 and 50 technical articles per year during the 1960s and 1970s, respectively. During the late 1970s, the journal also lost much of its sponsorship from agrochemical companies, which previously placed advertisements in the journal. Beginning in 1979, the journal gained visibility by publishing the proceedings of Florida Entomological Society symposia on insect behavioral ecology, on fall armyworm, and on other timely and interesting topics. When a dean from the University of Florida questioned the quality and scope of The Florida Entomologist, a national survey of Entomology Department chairs was conducted (Brooks 1980). The Florida Entomologist was evaluated relative to other entomology journals and judged to be:

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The
Florida Buggist

Official Organ of the Florida Entomological Society.

VOL. 1 SUMMER NUMBER NO. 1
June 21, 1917

THE FLORIDA ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ITS HISTORY AND AIMS

On January 5, 1916, eleven men interested in entomology, met at the University of Florida and formed the Florida Entomological Society. The editor of the *Entomological News*, published in Philadelphia, in noting this event, stated that ours is the first entomological society to be formed in the South. The first officers were: President, J. R. Watson, Experiment Station; vice-president, Wilmon Newell, Plant Commissioner; secretary-treasurer, R. N. Wilson, U. S. Bureau of Entomology; member of the executive committee, Dr. H. S. Davis, Department of Zoology, University of Florida.

Since then monthly meetings have been held except during the summer months, June to August. Several special meetings have also been called.

There is presented at each meeting one or more papers on some entomological subjects. These are freely discussed by the members present. Under the heading of "Brief and Timely Notes" members present observations on insects that appear to

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Fig. 1. Florida Entomologist originated as The Florida Buggist, an interesting but unusual name. The name and content soon changed to reflect a more professional image and scientific content.

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- not quite as good as the Annals of the Entomological Society of America,
- slightly better than the Journal of Economic Entomology,
- slightly better than Environmental Entomology,
- slightly better than the Journal of the Kansas Entomological Society,
- superior to The Canadian Entomologist, and
- decidedly superior to The Great Lakes Entomologist, Journal of the Georgia Entomological Society, Proceedings of the Washington Entomological Society, Pan Pacific Entomologist, and Mosquito News.

Evaluations are always subjective, and should not be taken too seriously, but clearly The Florida Entomologist had acquired a strong reputation by this time.

It is not a coincidence that beginning in 1980, and continuing until today, the subtitle of Florida Entomologist is "An International Journal for the Americas." Despite the superior reputation of the journal, in the eyes of some Society members, the title of Florida Entomologist was too regional in focus, and not adequately appealing to entomologists from other regions. But when a poll of the membership was taken, the members voted to retain the title, but emphasized that it was, by design, "An International Journal for the Americas," not simply a regional journal. Note that the article "The" was dropped from the title at this time.

In the 1980s, scientific notes began to be a popular mode of communication in Florida Entomologist, and they continue to increase in popularity to the present day. The journal published on average about 74 technical articles per year during this decade.

In the 1990s, the minutes of the Florida Entomological Society ceased to be published in the journal. This is not surprising, given the availability of the internet and the ease and low cost of publishing in this mode. Florida Entomologist began publishing the journal electronically in 1994 and became:

- the first journal to put its contents on the Internet in PDF format,
- the first life science journal to have all current and back issues on the Web with free access,
- the first entomological journal to allow authors to archive supplemental digital material with their articles, and
- the first freely accessible journal hosted by BioOne.

During the 1990s, Florida Entomologist published about 75 technical articles per year.

With the new millennium, Florida Entomologist continues to increase in popularity. During the first decade of the 2000s, the journal published on average 88 technical articles per year, increasing to an average of 179 per year thus far in the 2010s. Throughout the world, anyone with internet access can view at no charge any article in Florida Entomologist, beginning with Volume 1 and continuing now through Volume 100. This is an achievement that few other journals can match. Florida Entomologist now projects a modern image and layout, with color photographs added to the cover and color display of figures available in both printed and online articles (Fig. 2).

Significantly, Florida Entomologist has become an important publication outlet both nationally and internationally, quite popular with not only entomologists in North and South America but throughout the



Fig. 2. Florida Entomologist now projects a modern image, and has grown not only in popularity (number of papers printed) but also in physical dimensions. Page size has increased from 11 × 19 cm in the original "Buggist" to 18.5 × 25 cm now. Color has been added to the cover, and is an option for both printed and online articles.

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world. For example, in this issue we publish work authored by scientists from around the globe, including Austria, Brazil, China, Germany, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, and Turkey. More locally, contributing authors are from throughout the USA, including California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Texas, and Washington DC. It has taken many years to attract such a diverse audience, but it has been a successful 100 year journey.

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