Copper Plant

Did you know...

…the copper plant (*Acalypha wilkesiana*) has foliage (leaves) that are more colorful than many flowers?

**History**
Traditionally, the leaves of this plant are medicinal and eaten as vegetables in the management of hypertension.

**Characteristics**
Belonging to a family of Euophorbiaceae, the copper plant (*Acalypha wilkesiana*) is an evergreen shrub that can grow up to 6-10 feet in height and 4-8 feet wide. Note: Evergeens are trees, shrubs, or plants having foliage that persists and remains green throughout the year.

Copper plants have separate male and female flowers on the same plant. The male flowers are in long spikes which hang downwards while the female flowers are in short spikes. They do not show up easily as they are often hidden among the leaves. The flower stalks are 4 to 8 inches in length.

*Acalypha wilkesiana* has been shown to have antibacterial and antifungal properties (Akinde, 1986; Oladunmoye, 2006). In a study, Ogundaini (2005) reported the use of the expressed juice or boiled decoction of this plant in the treatment of gastrointestinal disorders and fungal skin infections (“Effect of *Acalypha wilkesiana* on Activities of Some Liver Function Enzymes and Body Weight of Normal Rabbits,” Omage Kingsley, et al., *Pakistan Journal of Nutrition* 10 (6): 552-554, 2011)

**Web Site (and E-Group)**
For more details about wildlife on the Bay Colony Club property (as well as Fern Forest and Anne Kolb Nature Centers), see:

http://southfloridawildlife.weebly.com