It has been a tough summer if you stayed in Florida. It was wet and hot, making gardening difficult and uncomfortable. And to top it off, Irma decided to invade and reek some havoc on our county as well as most of the state. We had to cancel our September meeting and our Fall tour because of the hurricane but some other ideas are now afloat that may be even more popular. So let’s look forward to fall which will be drier and cooler, and take the opportunity to perhaps make some changes in our own landscapes and gardens. This is the time to walk your landscape and maybe use one of the wonderful Native Plant Books available and think about how to bring in nature a little more. Take a small bed and get violent! Tear out the exotics and plant a few natives that will attract the butterflies, bees, birds, etc. After the violence of removal and planting the natives you can relax. Seeing life in your landscape is therapeutic. Watching wildlife in your landscape is the equivalent (only better) of watching the aquarium at the office! Our summer has been very stressful dealing with Mother Nature and everyone deserves to take a deep breath and ENJOY what nature can provide.

The Nature Coast Chapter Plant Sale is October 21st and that will give everyone an opportunity to buy a few plants that will improve our environment and help create a beautiful unique environment in your own back yard.

We have a busy fall coming up in the chapter as well. Our Christmas Potluck Party will also be a Silent Auction. We have many talented people in the chapter and I hope you will donate one of your art works, no matter what, to the auction. It is a fundraiser and a fun evening. We donate the pro-

(Continued on Page 2)
Meetings/Programs

Native Bromeliads

Speaker: Tom Wolfe
November 14

Bromeliads (often called “air plants”) are members of the pineapple family Bromeliaceae and are flowering plants - although their blossoms can be very small. They are not mosses as some of their common names suggest. All of Florida’s 16 native bromeliad species are epiphytic, which means they grow on other plants but they do not parasitize the host plant; they simply use it for support. Ten of these native bromeliad species are listed as threatened or endangered through loss of habitat, illegal collecting and a bromeliad weevil.

Speaker Bio: Tom has been growing bromeliads for over 50 years and has been president of the Bromeliad Guild of Tampa Bay, Inc., many times. He is past president of the Bromeliad Society International, been on the BSI board for 14 years and is an Internationally Accredited Master Bromeliad Judge.

Message (Cont’d from Page 1)

ceeds to the conservation fund of FNPS. Send me an email (jspitler1120@gmail.com) or call (813-435-8143) if you have something to donate.

Again this year, we will be participating in the U-P-CYCLE Festival. This is a great way to publicize the mission of FNPS. We sell books, some plants and talk to the public.

HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT OUR WEBSITE, PascoNativePlants.org? Cheryl McAloon has taken over this task and has done a superb job! It adds to our publicity with the wonderful Facebook page by Gail Parsons and Meetup.com by Steve Joyce. Check them all out and send links to all your friends and neighbors.

I would also like to remind everyone to renew your memberships. It would be nice if this were automatic, but you do have to send in a renewal form and your membership dues. If you want it to be automatic, sign up as a “Sustaining Member” and you will not get a renewal request ever again. The more members we have the more influence FNPS has politically, and that is important in making decisions regarding conservation lands and protecting our environment.

The Manchineel tree (Hippomane mancinella) is endangered in the State of Florida due to attempts to eradicate it from Florida’s southernmost beaches and other south Florida areas where people gather. The Manchineel is indeed poison to the touch or from ingesting its tasty fruits. The tree however is well known for its beneficial ability to stabilize sandy beaches from erosion, especially on Caribbean islands. It is also a food source for the endangered White Crowned Pigeon. So why am I bringing attention to this “undesirable” native flora with the beautiful light green leaves? I love the fun and the challenge of growing plants from all over our state: from the southlands to the panhandle! I now have several young Manchineel plants in pots that are available to anyone who would like the fun of growing one. All that is needed is a sunny location. The plant should be placed where it is not readily available to the public. Of course, being from South Florida it is sensitive to freezing conditions.

Fred Mulholland
(813) 962-7020
Fredbarb1@verizon.net

Thank you Nature Coast Chapter Members for being you. Looking forward to seeing you at the next meeting.
Jonnie Spitler
Bugs for Blues

By Julie Wert

Have you ever felt remorse because a favorite plant had big bites out of the leaves? Did you feel the damage from an insect marred the beauty of your favorite shrub? Good news! You can feel excited about it! You can say to yourself that special plant is doing its job and, even better, you are a part of improving the world by providing the plant as a part of your landscape.

By sustaining an insect, your admired plant is better than pretty, better than ornamental. That plant is filling its role in creating biodiversity. That plant has a place in the complex system that sustains humans on the planet.

This huge subject of sustainability of our world can be reduced to the more manageable control of what happens in our backyards. By planting natives that provide habitat for the insects, birds, butterflies and other wildlife, we can do our part to create links between natural and wild spaces, where the ecosystems that developed over time, still exist.

If the idea of the health of our planet is overwhelming to contemplate, go with the backyard where you are in charge of maintaining. Take the less obvious, but very satisfying rewards. Watch a mockingbird eat the beautiful purple berries off your Beautyberry shrub. If you plant a native oak tree, you can congratulate yourself. That tree can support over 500 species just in the Lepidoptera, or butterfly family, thus providing plenty of food for the baby birds in the area. Native bees can contribute the same pollinating services we get from honeybees.

(Cont’d on Page 4)
But those creatures will not be there unless we provide the plants that they evolved with and have been eliminated from our landscapes. We can be a part of creating necessary links between remaining natural spaces, just by replacing alien plants in our landscapes with natives and encouraging others to do the same.

The talk at a FNPS Conference by Doug Tallamy and his book “Bringing Nature Home” were responsible for the shift in perspective that should have been obvious to me. He said there is cause for optimism because it’s not too late and it’s a relatively easy thing to do to restore native plants to human dominated landscape.

I can sustain the optimism by reading what other native plant enthusiasts are doing and sharing, like Sue Scott’s advocacy for using the back ten feet of your yard to create habitat. [https://www.facebook.com/backtenfeet/](https://www.facebook.com/backtenfeet/). Our Native Plant organization meetings and events create a community that support the call to action. By doing the thing I love best, gardening and exploring the wild places, I can have a part in making a better world.
Life on the Front Porch

Sitting on the porch one evening, Terry and I noticed an insect flying into and out of a potted (non-native) cast iron plant. Looking past the dense foliage, we saw a potter wasp “pot” or brood cell on a stem with a caterpillar sticking out! (right)

As we watched, the wasp reappeared with a second caterpillar. She landed on a nearby leaf, repositioned her prey, and headed for the nest.

We then watched as the wasp stuffed both caterpillars into the nest at once! (far right) When she got both in, the wasp sealed the nest and made another one adjacent to the one pictured here.

Caterpillars molt many times before pupating and each developmental stage is called an instar. The more mature flannel moth late instars are a much duller brown, less wispy and more flannel-like, so this is a middle instar. If our booby-trapped beauty survives pecking birds, parasitic flies and a gauntlet of geckos, it will munch on oak or holly leaves and molt a few more times. Then it will pupate as a cocoon and emerge as a small but rather stunning moth. Females mate soon after emerging and lay eggs the next day, thus continuing the cycle.

Donald W. Hall at the University of Florida has studied, photographed and written about the life cycle here: http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/Creatures/MISC/MOTHS/puss.htm complete with a photo of a fecal pellet about to be launched. Yes, launched. As cited in “National Geographic,” some caterpillar species propel their waste pellets away, a distance of up to 40 times their body length to deter predators.

Wow, a doo-doo-flinging caterpillar with a toxic do! What are the odds?! “So yes, Puss Moth Caterpillar, we indeed do admire your hair, but from a safe distance!”

TRAIL MIX
By John Lampkin

“Do you like my hair?”

The snowy mop that covers a Southern Flannel Moth caterpillar from head to tail is a stunning “do,” evoking Albert Einstein or Doc Brown in “Back to the Future.” And the common name “Puss Caterpillar” is likely from “pussy cat,” a most loveable creature if there ever was one. But appearances are deceiving. DO NOT TOUCH THIS CRITTER! Venom glands at the base of the hairs secrete toxins engineered to make life very unpleasant for incautious native plant enthusiasts and curious children. How unpleasant? Think pain, excruciating pain as in multiple bee stings.

It was while exploring a trail in August that I saw what appeared to be a fluffy piece of bird down. Then my alert companion noticed that it was moving! We both knew enough not to touch, so I snapped pics like the one above by coaxing the venomous crawler onto a leaf and holding that up to the light.

Doing a bit a research, I found that only two species of potter wasps, genus Eu- menes, occur in Florida. Momma-wasp lays her egg in the mud “pot.” She gathers caterpillars, paralyzes them, and inserts them into the brood cell for the developing wasp to feed on.

Karen Watrous

Potter wasp stuffing two caterpillars into its brood cell

Potter wasp brood cell with a caterpillar sticking out.
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Calendar of Events


October 14 & 15 ......Suncoast Chapter Fall Plant Sale, USF Botanical Gardens 10 AM-4 PM Saturday, 10 AM-3 PM Sunday

October 18..........Suncoast Chapter Meeting/Program 7 PM, Hillsborough County Extension Center, 5339 County Rd 579, Seffner, FL 33584

October 21.........Nature Coast Chapter Fall Native Plant Sale 10 AM-2 PM, Land O’ Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O’ Lakes Blvd/US 41, Land O’ Lakes, FL
Suncoast Chapter Lettuce Lake Plant Walk 9:30 AM-11:30 AM, Lettuce Lake Park, 6920 E. Fletcher Ave, Tampa, FL 33637

October 26..........Talk & Tour “Reconnecting with Nature” 5:30 PM-6:30 PM, Heartwood Preserve Conservation Cemetery, 4100 Starkey Blvd., Trinity, FL 34655

October 27-29 ......Suncoast Chapter Fall Camping Trip: Myakka River State Park, 13208 State Road 72, Sarasota, FL 34241. See http://www.suncoastnps.org for details

November 11......“End of Fall” Plant Sale, Cypress Acres Nursery (See page 4)
November 14......Nature Coast Chapter Meeting/Program: “Native Bromeliads” 7 PM, Land O’ Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O’ Lakes Blvd/US 41, Land O’ Lakes, FL
November 18......Nature Coast Chapter Field Trip 9 AM: Starkey Wilderness Park, 10500 Wilderness Park Blvd., New Port Richey, FL 34655

November 11 ......Florida Birding & Nature Festival, Hillsborough Community College, 551 24th St. NE, Ruskin, FL. Registration required for Seminars & Field Trips. See http://www.floridabirdingandnaturefestival.org

November 14......Nature Coast Chapter Meeting/Program: “Native Bromeliads” 7 PM, Land O’ Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O’ Lakes Blvd/US 41, Land O’ Lakes, FL

November 18......Nature Coast Chapter Field Trip 9 AM: Starkey Wilderness Park, 10500 Wilderness Park Blvd., New Port Richey, FL 34655

December 12......Nature Coast Chapter Holiday Party 7 PM, Land O’ Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O’ Lakes Blvd/US 41, Land O’ Lakes, FL

Florida Wildflower Foundation Wildflower Symposium was re-scheduled for April 27 & 28th at UF-IFAS Orange County Extension Office In Orlando. See flawildflowers.org for details

Nature Coast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

Fall Native Plant Sale
October 21, 2017
10 AM—2 PM
Volunteers needed 8 AM—3 PM
Land O’ Lakes Community Center
5401 Land O’ Lakes Blvd/US 41, Land O’ Lakes, FL
**PARTRIDGEBERRY**

By Peggy A. Gretchen  
FNPS Member  
Pasco Master Gardener

**Botanical Name:** Mitchella repens  
**Common Name:** Partridgeberry, Twinberry  
**Family:** Rubiaceae (Madder or Coffee)

**Type of Plant:** Native prostrate, evergreen, perennial groundcover.  
**Usual Height:** 1 – 2 inches. **Width:** Will spread to cover an area.

**How to Identify:**
- **Leaves:** Opposite in pairs, dark green, ovoid to broadly ovate (egg-shaped, broader below the middle and rounded at both ends), glabrous (smooth), ½ inch. Evergreen.
- **Flowers:** White tinged with pink, four-lobed, hairy within, four stamens, ½ inch size. Borne in pairs with the ovaries partly fused. Fragrant.  
- **Flowering Time:** Spring – Fall. Mostly in spring.  
- **Fruit:** Red, round, ½ inch, dry berry-like drupes. Borne in pairs during fall and winter.

**Habitat:** Frequent in hammocks: upland hardwood forests, slope forests, upland mixed woodlands, limestone outcrops, mesic (moist) hammocks, and secondary woods.

**Distribution:** Eastern North America. Florida Panhandle, North Florida, and Central Florida. **Hardiness Zones:** 3 – 9.

**Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit:** One of our more adaptable, easy to grow native evergreen perennial low-growing groundcovers for moist, shady or partly shady sites in the typical home landscape. Over time, partridgeberry will spread in the understory to cover a large area. However, it is not very aggressive and will mix well with other understory wildflowers and groundcovers. The bright red fruits are very attractive in the fall and winter landscape. These fruits are eaten by birds, including wild turkeys, and small mammals.

**Cultivation:** Adaptable and easy to grow groundcover!  
**Soil:** Fertile, organic, acidic preferred.  
**Light:** Partial shade to full shade. Prefers partial sun/shade conditions.  
**Water:** Prefers moist conditions. In rich shady sites, may not require supplemental irrigation once established. During drought will require irrigation (will wilt). Do not keep it too wet.  
**Miscellaneous:** Plant 1 ft. apart for quick groundcover. Protect from foot traffic – does not tolerate. May fertilize to encourage and expand its spread. Much less aggressive than the non-native creeping figs.

**Propagation:** By stratified seed, cuttings, layering (stems root when they touch the ground), or division.

**Availability:** Occasionally at native plant sales and at native plant nurseries.  
See www.plantrealflorida.org!

**References:**