



THE NATURE COASTLINE

Nature Coast Chapter meetings, field trips, and activities are open to FNPS members and the public alike. Monthly meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at St. Marks Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall located at 7922 State Road 52 in Hudson(34667). (One mile west of Little Road on the south side of SR 52 next to St. Michael's Catholic Church). Parking for the Fellowship Hall is at the rear of the property.

Executive Committee meetings will be held the 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the New Port Richey Library, 5939 Main St. in New Port Richey, 34652. Meetings are open to all members; ask at the circulation desk for room location.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Jan. 12th Meeting: "Florida Native Wildflowers, Vines, & Groundcovers for Central Florida" - a PowerPoint presentation by Peggy Gretchen, Pasco County Master Gardener. Her program, "Florida Native Wildflowers, Vines, & Groundcovers for Central Florida" is an introduction to just some of the many Florida native plants useful for gardening and landscaping in central Florida. Florida native plants are ideally adapted to our soils, climate, hydrology, and wildlife, such as birds and butterflies. And, your landscaping will be unique and interesting! Join us and learn how to incorporate some natives into your Florida yard!

Jan. 17th Field Trip: Sunday at 10am: Nature Coast Botanical Gardens, Spring Hill - see page 2 for details.

Feb. 9th Meeting: " Maintaining Your Native Plant Landscape" presented by Bill Bilodeau, Past-President of the Pinellas Chapter of FNPS. Bill is a long time professional gardener who designs and installs native plant landscapes. He will discuss important basics, tools needed, and answer questions about how to keep your native plants looking good all year round. This is one not to miss as we all need to know how to keep our garden attractive!

Feb. 14th Field Trip: Sunday at 10am: Chassahowitzka by Car – A Self-Guided Driving Tour of Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area in Citrus County - see page 2 for details.

URGENT REQUEST FOR MEMBERS:

Some newspapers have notified us they are not going to list the title and speaker for our programs or do special announcements for non-profit groups. **Please check your local papers for the Jan. 12th meeting listing and report your findings to Sandy Vanno at 727-376-7663 or email her at: svanno@tampabay.rr.com.** We are also asking you for any recommendations on where to put our publicity. Are there SPECIFIC NEW email or publicity contacts where we might send meeting and plant sale announcements. (i.e. newsletters for homeowners assoc. or other groups). Again we ask you to give this information to Sandy.

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NEW MEMBERS

Lois Blaney Mary Fox

RENEWED MEMBERS

Betty Candelora
Gregory Cardinal
Peter & Lois Day
Elaine & Marcel Fortier
Karen Gruenhagen
Alice Gellweiler Hattie Lee
Gayle & Tim Pilson
Christina Storch
Christina Uranowski

Field Trip Information:

Jan. 17th Field Trip: Sunday at 10am: Nature Coast Botanical Gardens, Spring Hill The Nature Coast Botanical Gardens has transformed 3.5 acres into 17 themed gardens, including a Florida native plant garden, a butterfly garden, a desert-scape, and a waterfall garden, to name but a few. The Gardens are free of charge and we will self-tour at our leisure. **Directions:** The Gardens are located at 1489 Parker Avenue, Spring Hill, FL 34606. Take US19 to Spring Hill Drive in Hernando County. Go east on Spring Hill Drive 0.4 miles to Parker Ave. Turn left (north) on Parker. The Gardens will be on the left (west) side. **Carpooling:** To carpool from west Pasco meet at the old Publix Parking lot on the NW corner of US19 and SR52 at 9:40.

Feb. 14th Field Trip: Sunday February 14th at 10am: Chassahowitzka by Car – A Self-Guided Driving Tour of Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area in Citrus County

This is a self-guided, 8-mile driving tour through a variety of habitats. The guide brochure says the drive takes from 1.5 to 2 hours if one stops at the suggested points of interest for short walks. The unpaved, single lane road is fairly well maintained and traverses pine uplands, transitional zones, and penetrates deep within the largest and most pristine hardwood swamp south of the Suwannee River. There are no facilities along the way. Bring drinks, food, binoculars, and field guides and we'll enjoy a roving picnic in the wilderness. **Directions:** The entrance to Chassahowitzka WMA is on the west side of US19 in Citrus County, about 10 miles north of Weeki Wachee (SR50). Meet at the "Iron Ranger" station at 10am. There is an honor system fee of \$3 per person or \$6 per vehicle, but people over 65 or under 16 are free. **Carpooling:** To carpool, meet in the old Publix parking lot on the northwest corner of US19 and SR52 at 9:15am.

March for Parks
Nature Coast Chapter
Spring Native Plant Sale

On the 2nd Saturday in March, our Nature Coast Chapter has the opportunity to share native plants and native plant information with the general public at a booth in Starkey Park. We'll be offering native plants for sale, books, wildflower seeds and free literature.

If you are looking for the opportunity to become more active in our chapter plus have a day of fun, a sign up sheet will be at Jan. & Feb. meetings or contact sale coordinator Peggy Gretchen at (813) 991-4812 or by e-mail at: herculesmpg@earthlink.net



Saturday, March 13th: Noon - 4 p.m.
J.B.Starkey Wilderness Park,
New Port Richey

***Environmental Issues:* Florida Forever - Contact Governor Crist**

As we approach the 2010 Regular Session of the Florida Legislature, it is imperative that decision-makers hear from constituents about the importance of restoring the funding for Florida Forever this year.

At this moment, it is most important is that Governor Crist know that we want Florida Forever funding is in his proposed State budget for FY 2010-11.

A very small appropriation can ensure that Florida Forever will continue, that landowners will be able to negotiate with the state in full faith, and that the most critical pieces of wild Florida will continue to be protected.

The Coalition urges supporters of Florida Forever to write or call the Governor and let him know that the continuity of the program must be a top priority as he prepares his proposed budget for next year. \$15 million-0.0002% of \$66 billion budget-will enable the state to borrow up to \$300 million.

In 2008, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed legislation approving (authorizing) this annual amount for the next ten years.

While full funding is our goal, the continuity of the program is most important this year. The program was given no new funding in FY 2009-10, and another year without new capacity will be disastrous for the future of Florida Forever. Today, as little as \$5 million will still enable the state to borrow up to \$100 million next year to protect the best of wild Florida for all Floridians.

There has never been a better time to buy real estate in Florida, and it is time to let the Governor know just how committed his constituents are to this outstanding program. Please take a few moments and contact the Governor's office to show your support for Florida Forever!

And cite a local site or park that has been saved through Florida Forever or Preservation 2000, or one that should be in the future!

MAIL: Office of Governor Charlie Crist
State of Florida - The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

EMAIL: Charlie.Crist@myflorida.com

**WINTER/SPRING 2010 NATURE COAST GATHERING: SATURDAY JAN. 23RD
10:00AM TO 4:00PM CRYSTAL RIVER, FLORIDA**

A meeting of organizations and individuals working together as the informal Nature Coast Coalition to protect the greater Nature Coast. They will meet at the Crystal River State Buffer Preserve (13450 W. Power Line St. Zip: 34428 - Phone: 352-563-1311) for a day of shared community, activism, and planning. Agenda includes: unveiling of new website, update on large projects/threats to area, upcoming 2010 legislative issues, strategies for protecting this region and next steps/followup plans.

SouthWings is working to schedule flights in/around the Nature Coast region with groups and organizations on Friday, Jan. 22nd. For more information please visit www.southwings.org and contact: Caroline Douglas, Conservation Program Director at: caroline@southwings.org

Our program in November clearly showed us just what we are trying to preserve!

Announcements from FNPS

A Message from the President of FNPS

Dear Florida Native Plant Society Member,

As we approach our 30th Anniversary Celebration, we have every reason to be proud of where we've come from, and excited about where we're headed. Your involvement as a member of the Society has been fundamental to our progress and will be just as important as we move beyond this milestone to take on the challenges of the future.

One of the challenges facing the Society is similar to one we now face in our private lives. Budgets are tight and disposable income is light. And yet, my optimism about the coming year is genuine and wholehearted based on the success of our Society's efforts.

We are hopeful that, by the time of our celebration at the 2010 Conference in Tallahassee, the Governor will have acted on our request for a proclamation naming the 3rd week of May "Florida Native Plant Appreciation Week".

Your support has enabled us to achieve substantial progress over the past year and will be essential to our continued success in advancing the conservation of Florida's native plants. I hope you will continue to give as generously as you can with donations of your time, energy, and financial support.

Eugene M. Kelly, President Florida Native Plant Society

FNPS Landscape & Restoration Awards Application - Deadline March 5, 2010

Each year at the Annual Conference, FNPS gives awards for high quality native plant landscapes. If you have a home, business or school site landscaped primarily with native plants, you can apply for one of our landscape awards (presented at our annual conference). Categories also include Mitigation and Restoration projects.

Full information and application forms are available with this link from the FNPS website: <http://www.fnps.org/committees/landscape/pdfs/2010fnpslandscapeawardsapp.pdf> or check the Chapter Bulletin Board at our meeting. A copy of the form and the accompanying instructions is also in the Nov.-Dec. newsletter.

If you have questions or are interested in applying, talk to our Chapter Rep. Susan Vaughn who has assisted other members in compiling a successful application.

BLUE-STEM PALMETTO by Peggy A. Gretchen, FNPS Member, Pasco MasterGardener

Botanical Name: Sabal minor

Common Name: Blue-Stem Palmetto, Dwarf Palmetto, Bush Palmetto

Family: Arecaceae or Palmae

Type of Plant: Native medium-sized, evergreen shrub or groundcover; a trunkless fan palm with subterranean stem, several leaves, and a long flowering stalk rising well above the leaf blades. Related to the Cabbage Palm, Sabal palmetto. **Height:** 4 – 9 ft., usually 4 – 6 ft. (taller in very wet, rich swamps.) **Width:** 4 – 8 ft.

How to Identify: **Leaves:** Fan-shaped, deeply divided, blue-green to dark green, 2 – 4 ft. broad and long, borne on long stalks that lack the sharp marginal teeth of the Saw Palmetto (spineless petiole).

Flowers: Tiny, white, borne in showy clusters on 3 – 5 ft. long, branching stalks which rise above the leaves. Flowering Time: Spring and summer, usually May – June. **Fruit:** Small (1/3 in.), rounded, shiny black berries in conspicuous open clusters, ripening in the late fall.

Habitat: Frequent in the shady understory of moist to wet hammocks (woods), bottoms of rich slopes, and edges of floodplains. **Distribution:** Southeastern U.S., from North Carolina southward to northern and central Florida, and westward to eastern Texas. **Hardiness Zones:** 7 – 10.

Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit: Attractive all year! Use as a specimen shrubby palm, as an understory planting (alone or with other native shrubs or groundcovers), or as a mass planting for groundcover in shady locations. Well-suited for retention ponds, drainage swales, canal banks, medians / parking lots, and other difficult sites. When planted in mass, blue-stem palmetto provides valuable wildlife cover; the fruits provide food for many wildlife, including birds.

Cultivation: **Soil:** Often occurs naturally in rich, moist soil with pH 5.5 – 6.5, but will adapt to a variety of soil types and dry situations. Slightly salt-tolerant. **Light:** Part sun – full shade. May adapt to full sun.

Water: Performs best in moist or seasonally wet situations, but tolerant of drier sites after becoming established. Drought-tolerant.

Miscellaneous: Very cold-tolerant. Salt-tolerant. Moderately long-lived, exceeding 50 years. No maintenance required. Periodically remove old leaves and old flowering and fruiting stems as desired. Essentially no motility.

Propagation: By seed.

Availability: See your AFNN (Association of Florida Native Nurseries) directory!

Comment: Similar to Scrub Palmetto, Sabal etonia, which has larger fruit and leaf segments with stringlike filaments along their edges. Scrub Palmetto is endemic to Florida's sand scrub and requires well-drained soils.

References:

Haehle, Robert G. & Joan Brookwell, Native Florida Plants, Houston, TX, Gulf Publishing Co., 1999.

Huegel, Craig N., Florida Plants for Wildlife, Orlando, FL, Florida Native Plant Society, 1995.

Nelson, Gil, Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants, Gainesville, FL, University Press of FL, 2003.

Osorio, Rufino, A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants, Gainesville, FL, Univ. Press of FL, 2001.

Wunderlin, Richard P., Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida, Gainesville, FL, Univ. Press of FL, 1998.

Florida Native Plant Society

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Nature Coast Chapter Website
www.pasconativeplants.org

Submit newsletter articles to E-mail:
horansmo@earthlink.net
or to publication address

**NEXT NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE: Feb. 14th**

Other Interesting Activities:

Jan. 9th at 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Green Solutions Expo 2010 at Veterans Memorial Park, 14333 Hicks Rd. Hudson 34669
For more info call: 352-521-4288.

Jan. 23rd at 10 a.m.-4 p.m.: Nature Coast Coalition Gathering at Crystal River State Buffer Preserve, 13450 W. Power Line St., Crystal River 34428

Master Gardener Programs: Complete calendar at: http://pasco.ifas.ufl.edu/events_calendar.shtml

Jan. 5th at 6:30 p.m.: Creating a Florida-Friendly Landscape at the Hudson Area Branch Library, 8012 Library Road, Hudson 34667

Jan. 9th at 9 - 11a.m.: Hydroponic Gardening at Land O'Lakes Community Center at 5401 Land O'Lakes Blvd. 34639. (on Highway 41 on the west side of the highway).

Feb. 2nd at 6:30 p.m.: Hudson Library - TBA (check link above for Master Gardener calendar listing).

Feb. 13th at 9-11 a.m.: Pruning after the freeze) Land O'Lakes Community Center.

“The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.”

**Nature Coast Chapter of FNPS
Newsletter Publication
5249 Bougenville Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34652**

