



The Nature Coastline

Newsletter of the Nature Coast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

March-April 2012

Monthly meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Land O' Lakes Community Center 5401 Land O Lakes Blvd (US 41) Land O' Lakes Fl 34639, in the rear meeting room with entrance off the courtyard on the south side of the building.

Meetings and Events:

March 13: Introducing Florida Friendly Landscaping to an HOA Master Gardener Tom Ungaro will review the 9 principles of Florida Friendly Landscaping and share guidelines that he used to introduce and obtain approval for implementing a Florida Friendly landscape within a Deed Restricted Community. Tom practices "green" conservation and received the Water Wise recognition in 2011 from Pasco County for water conservation landscape practices within a residential community. His own yard in a deed restricted community is a wonderful example of how he has put these principles into practice.

Field trip Sunday March 18, 2012 at 11am at Harry P Leu Gardens 1920 North Forest Ave, Orlando, Fl 32803. The Harry P Leu Gardens are not native. They encompass 50 acres of manicured gardens of many types, from a rose garden to a Camellia garden and a vegetable garden among many others. They are all beautiful in their own right and worth visiting. The Native Wetland Garden is the only garden described as native. It was created to invite wading birds and other wildlife into the area. The plants here are almost entirely native. (contd p2..)

April 10th program: Medicinal Plants: Trees in Our Woods by Sid Taylor. This program grew from Sid's 12 years of presenting the Pioneer Medicine Woman table at Chinsegut Nature Center for Pioneer Day. We'll be previewing phase one: the traditional use of trees from our woods. This is an historical investigation of ethnobotany and not intended to be a recommendation for treatments. Consult with your Doctor before applying any alternative medicines for healing. Join us to learn some of the fascinating ways common trees in our woods have been used throughout the history of people in Florida. (contd p2..)

Field trip Saturday, April 21, 2012, 8am at Boy Scout Preserve, Green Key Rd, NPR. Pasco County Environmental Lands always see it's fair share of trash dumping, but our coastal preserves suffer the most. The Nature Coast Chapter is joining Great American Cleanup this year to tidy up Boy Scout Preserve on Green Key Road, a site of perpetual dumping. The upland parts of the preserve were 85% covered with Brazilian Pepper when purchased in 2010. Recent contracted weed-tree removal has opened up the 18 acres, showing historic Boy Scout campfire rings and the oaks, palms and cedars that belong in maritime hammocks – and revealing the garbage dumped there over the years. (contd p2..)

Welcome new members: ERMA Z LARAWAY, JUDITH LEVAULT; **and renewed members:** KAREN GRUENHAGEN, JONNIE AND ROBERT SPITLER, RUSSELL AND PATRICIA WATROUS.

Chapter contact information

OFFICERS:

President: Julie Wert (727)863-1363 aripekajule@verizon.net

Vice President: B. J. Fread (813)317-7088 fireinthecat@yahoo.com

Secretary and Social Media: David Peterson (727)359-4809 super_270@hotmail.com

Treasurer, Newsletter & Website Coordinator: Mary Horan (727)849-2335 horansmo@earthlink.net

Chapter Representative: Russell Watrous (813)996-7692 russellwatrous@yahoo.com

CHAIRPERSONS:

Field Trip Coordinator: Jonnie Spitler rspitler@verizon.net (813)948-8472

Newsletter Distribution: Dan Meahl dmeahl@tampabay.rr.com and Helen Bates (727)869-5847

Newsletter Editor: Paul F. underastarrysky@verizon.net

Publicity Chair: Sandra Vanno (727)376-7663 svanno@tampabay.rr.com

Membership: Doris Bareiss (727)842-3133 wildcoffee@verizon.net

Historian: Shirley Koerner (727)848-8000 koerner@verizon.net

Refreshments: Pat Kelly (352)588-0266 patriciak03@gmail.com

Books: Sharon Holding (727)843-9771 sharholdi@cs.com

Government Affairs Coordinator: Peggy Gretchen (813)991-4812 herculesmpg@earthlink.net

Conservation Chair: Jan Howie JaniceHowie@aol.com

Program Coordinator: (open)

Chapter website: pasconativeplants.org

Field trip Sunday March 18, 2012 at 11am at Harry P Leu Gardens (contd..)

They help filter pollutants from the water and protect the shoreline from erosion. They also provide food, habitat, and shelter for birds, fish and other wildlife. March 18th is a free admission day and plant sale at the gardens. This is our only botanical garden field trip this year. So if you would like to spend the day wandering beautiful formal gardens please join us. Directions: Take I-4 east to Exit #85, Princeton St, Turn right on to Princeton Street and follow the signs to Leu Gardens.

Carpooling: If you're coming from the west side of the County you can meet at 8:30am at WalMart by the garden center at the intersection of SR 54 and Little Road. Everyone can then go to the primary meeting place at the Synovous Bank at 9:00AM at the junction of I75 and SR56 on the north side of SR56 at exit 275 in Land o Lakes. We will fill up the cars and head to Orlando.

April 10th program: Medicinal Plants: Trees in Our Woods by Sid Taylor (contd..)

Sid has been with the Fl. Dept. of Agriculture for since 1993. She is the Resident Park Naturalist in recreation at Tillis Hill in Citrus County. She has served on the Hernando Chapter of FNPS and has been involved in the Society since 1994. She volunteers at the Chinsegut Nature Center in Hernando County and attends events and lectures there regularly.

Field trip Saturday, April 21, 2012, 8am at Boy Scout Preserve (contd..)

Please put on your grubby clothes, sturdy mud shoes, bring a picker or grabber and a bucket, and help clean up this beautiful little mix of hammock, salt marsh and mangrove. Saturday, April 21, 8 am – 11 am, south side of Green Key Rd, at the narrowing just past Channelside Drive. Parking is along side the road. Katie will be there very early so we should have no problem finding the entrance.

Plant profile: **BUTTERFLY MILKWEED**

by Peggy A. Gretchen,
FNPS Member, Pasco Master Gardener

Botanical Name: *Asclepias tuberosa*

Common Name: Butterfly Milkweed, ButterflyWeed, Butterfly Milkplant, Orange Milkplant

Family: Asclepiadaceae (Milkweed)

Type of Plant: Erect to sprawling, tuberous-rooted (taproot) native long-lived perennial wildflower. Evergreen in South Florida, winter dormant northward. Clump-forming. Height: 1 – 2 ft., maybe 3 ft. Width: 1 – 3 ft.

How to Identify:

Leaves: Mostly alternate to opposite, narrowly lance-shaped to grass-like. Milky sap lacking. Dormant in winter.

Flowers: Showy, bright reddish-orange to orange in large, profuse clusters. Flowering Time: Spring, summer, fall. February to October.

Fruit: A 3 – 5 in. long pod that splits open to release cottony seed clusters, which are spread by wind.

Habitat: Flatwoods and sandhills (sandy uplands), woodland edges, roadsides, and sandy disturbed sites.

Distribution: Canada southward throughout Florida and westward to Texas. Hardiness Zones: 4 – 10.

Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit: An attractive native perennial wildflower excellent for sunny, dry sites, and an excellent butterfly plant. Use in mixed wildflower and butterfly gardens. Larval plant for Queen and Monarch butterflies. Nectar plant for many other butterflies. Plant in large, showy masses. Will reseed and may spread. Will become dormant in winter, but returns in the spring each year. Don't mulch heavily, if at all, and don't overwater, or it will rot. Because of the long taproot, it's best not to move it once established. After seed pod splits open, try planting the seeds in open soil.

Cultivation:

Soil: Sandy, very well-drained.

Light: Full sun.

Water: Needs dry to slightly moist conditions. Water to establish, then it will survive on natural rainfall. Highly drought-tolerant.

Miscellaneous: Low salt-tolerance. Remove older, dead stems annually. Milky sap lacking.

Propagation: From seeds or root cuttings.

Availability: See your FANN (Florida Association of Native Nurseries) Directory or www.plantrealflorida.org!

References:

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

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

Taylor, Walter Kingsley, Florida Wildflowers in their Natural Communities, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 1998.

Trass, Pamela F., Gardening for Florida's Butterflies, St. Petersburg, Florida, Great Outdoors Publishing Company, 1999.

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

Chapter announcements:

We still need a Program Coordinator! Please consider making a modest donation of your time to our chapter and volunteer to do this important job.

Nature Coast Chapter Spring Native Plant Sale Saturday, March 31 from 10 AM to 2 PM Land O'Lakes Community Center (behind) 5401 Land O'Lakes Blvd./US 41, Land O'Lakes, 34639

Nature Coast has had two very successful plant sales in LOL; and we look forward to another one! Again, the Pasco Master Gardeners will join us with an information table.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! Please sign up at our Feb./March meetings or contact coordinator, Peggy Gretchen at [813-991-4812](tel:813-991-4812) or herculesmpg@hotmail.com.

From Chapter President Julie Wert:

Our Chapter meeting start time changes to 7:00 PM, beginning in March! Thanks to everyone that has helped make the transition to our new location in Land O Lakes at the Community Center. This will be the location for our spring and fall plants sales also.

As usual, spring on the Nature Coast will be busy! This means lots of opportunities to be outside and to volunteer for our Chapter activities. Besides the meetings and field trips, we'll have two plant sales. Plant sales are a great way to get to know fellow Chapter members and learn more about Native Plants. The dates are March 31 and April 21 for Earth Day. April 21 will give us the choice of the workday/field trip at Boy Scout Preserve or helping David Barnard represent Native Plants at the Crews Lake Earth Day Celebration.

The annual FNPS Conference in May will be in right down the road in Plant City this year. Our Chapter is again offering a "Scholarship" to the Conference on May 17 – 20. The Chapter will pay your registration fee for two days. Special events and evening meals are not included. Interested Chapter members can submit their names at the February and March meetings or you can contact a Chapter Officer to put your name in the hat for the drawing at the March meeting. Check out the Conference page on the FNPS site <http://www.fnps.org> for the schedule of speakers and field trips. I encourage everyone to hear the keynote speaker on Saturday, Doug Tallamy, author of Bringing Nature Home. If you don't already have this inspiring book we have a few or you can get it at the Conference and get it autographed!

Earth Day at Crew's Lake Park, Saturday April 21st, 9:30am - 2pm

This is a great family day with fun and educational activities for the kids plus opportunities to win a free native plant. This year we will only be providing a Nature Coast Chapter table with information about the chapter, free literature for kids and parents, and some assistance for a native plant sale by member Dave Barnard's Cypress Acres Nursery.

Please contact Coordinator Mary Horan at 727-849-2335 or email her at: horansmo@earthlink.net if you want to want to volunteer.

Looking for native plants? Check out the website for the public on native nurseries is: www.plantrealflorida.org.

Hey! Check out the Chapter page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PascoNativePlants



Tom Ungaro shows Chapter members how he used the 9 principles of Florida Friendly Landscaping in his yard.



Chapter members and friends enjoyed an outstanding January day at Lettuce Lake Park. Photo by Julie Wert.

In the mood for more pix? Here's my album from my January visit to Leu Garden: <http://goo.gl/qt115> and here's my January album: <http://goo.gl/e2mOj>

From our Conservation Chair Jan Howie:

On **April 24th**, there will be very important meeting for anyone who cares about the Nature Coast and the preservation of our beautiful spring fed rivers. The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD or Swiftmud) will meet to decide whether or not to accept the proposals of the SWFWMD staff to set minimum flow levels (MFLs) for the Chassahowitzka and Homosassa Rivers. No one doubts that MFLs are a good thing to protect our rivers, however many area environmental organizations disagree with the standard and some of the methodology that was used to determine these. Using an arbitrary figure of up to 15% harm that SWFWMD believes is acceptable, SWFWMD is proposing a MFL allowing for an 11% withdrawal from the Chassahowitzka and a 5% withdrawal from the Homosassa. Considering that these rivers are already stressed, degrading them and the wildlife in them up to an additional 15% is clearly unacceptable. This is the last meeting that will be held on this issue, so **mark you calendar now**, and please try to attend. The time of the meeting will be announced later and carpools can be organized at our chapter meeting. As we have seen in other meetings with SWFWMD, **public opinion matters. United we can make a difference.** This meeting will be held at: Southwest Florida Water Management District, 2379 Broad St. Brooksville, FL 34604

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



FNPS Website: www.fnps.org
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5249 Bougenville Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34652