



# The Nature Coastline

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

**May-June 2011**

*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, Hudson, 34667. The hall is one mile west of Little road on the south side of State Road 52 next to St. Michael's Catholic Church. Parking for the Fellowship Hall is at the rear of the property. Executive Committee meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday at 6 p.m. at the New Port Richey Library, 5939 Main St. in New Port Richey, 34652. Executive Committee meetings are open to all members; ask at the circulation desk for room location.*

## **Meetings and Events:**

**May 10th Meeting: Fire In Florida: A Prescription for Life presented by Mary Barnwell, Senior Land Management Specialist at the SWFWMD.** Prescribed fires are used by land management entities to manage habitat and reduce the frequency and intensity of wildfires in the state. Without fire, the vegetation in Florida would rapidly converge to a state of uniformity consisting of hardwood hammocks. Unique wildlife species would be lost and the wildflowers for which the state was named would decline. Sometimes mechanical equipment or herbicides are utilized to remove heavy fuels, but these are not as effective as fire and are typically more expensive. This program will explore how fire is used in the landscape to manage public lands, the problems with some of the substitutes for fire, and what a Florida without fire would look like. Join us for an informative evening.

**Field trip May 14th Saturday at 10 am: Tour of the Home of Chris Storch**

After visiting Pasco County in the late 1990's, Chris and her partner Tony purchased their home in 2001 and re-located from New Jersey with their young son. The property is 1.7 acres and lies along the South Branch of the Anclote River. Many old slash and long leaf pines are on the property and much of the original habitat was preserved by the previous owners.

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**Earth Day at Crew's Lake Park - Saturday April 30th from 9:30am-2pm** (contd p.6...)

**June 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting by Bruce Turley: Shade Gardening with Native Plants**

Bruce's programs are usually a 'hands on' look at actual plants, and in this case natives for shade. Many people are stumped by the plants that are appropriate for shade in the landscape and yet nature provides the answer through our hammock habitats. (contd p.4...)

**June 18th Field Trip Saturday at 10 am to Wilcox Nursery, 12501 Indian Rocks Rd, Largo and continuing to the Florida Botanical Gardens, 12520 Ulmerton Rd, Largo**

After the educational program with Bruce Turley of Wilcox Nursery on Tuesday, we can visit the nursery and see the native plants available to homeowners. At Wilcox Nursery, their emphasis is to enhance Florida's natural heritage through a selection of Florida's native plants and low impact gardening goods. Their mission is to acknowledge that our urban landscapes were once part of a habitat and still remain as part of an ecological system. (contd p.4...)



**Welcome new members:** Ann Chatterton, Kevin Doll, Katie Mac Millen, David Peterson, and Tom Ungaro

**Renewed members:** Doris Bareiss, Lois Blaney, Nancy Brown, Rosemarie Coyle, Paul Francois, Janice Howie, Kay Haywood, Nikki Janosch, Shirley Koerner, William Oehlecker, Jennifer Seney, Lucy Shaw, Sandy Vanno, Russell Watrous, Annie Schmidt and John Stites.

Chapter contact information:

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**Field trip May 14th:** (contd...)

Chris enrolled in the Florida Master Gardener class in 2003 to learn more about the diversity and challenges that come to every new Florida gardener. She is now the President of the Pasco MG's and works with over 50 volunteers to disperse valuable horticultural education to the residents of the county. But it is the FNPS meetings and field trips that continue to expand her knowledge about native plants and the ecosystems that surround their home.

**Directions:** 17157 Gunlock Road, Lutz, FL 33558. Approximately one mile east of the Suncoast Highway on Route 54, you will turn south on Meadowbrook Drive, go to the end and turn left onto Bridlepath Ct., again go to the end and make a right onto Deerfield Dr., and again, go to the end and make a right onto Gunlock Rd. Their home is the third driveway on the right. There is a raised bed out front with red bricks and a butterfly garden. Please park on the left hand side of the street.

**Carpooling:** For those from the **East** side of the county we will meet at 9:45am the Big Lots/Mcdonald's parking lot at the corner of US Hwy 54 & US Hwy 41.

For those from the **West** side of the county we will meet at 9:30am at the corner of Moog Rd and US 19 behind the Burger King. Carpooling may alleviate any parking issues in the neighborhood.

## **Plant profile:**

### **Myrsine floridana**

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

**Botanical Name:** *Rapanea punctata*, *Myrsine floridana*, *Myrsine guianensis*, *Rapanea guianensis*

**Common Name:** Myrsine, Guiana Rapanea, Colicwood

**Family:** Myrsinaceae (Myrsine)

**Type of Plant:** Native evergreen shrub or small tree with light gray bark; upright, columnar form, single to multi-stemmed trunk, little-branched, open crown, dioecious (see flowers). Potentially thicket-forming. Salt-tolerant. Height: 8 – 25 ft. (avg. 8 – 15 ft.) Width: 3 – 5 ft.

#### **How to Identify:**

**Leaves:** Alternate, leathery, elliptical, medium to dark green, 2 – 5 in. long, mostly clustered toward ends of branches. Leaf margins smooth and often curled under.

**Flowers:** Small, greenish-white, borne in clusters along bare branches below the leaves. Male and female flowers mostly on separate plants (dioecious). Flowering Time: Mainly winter into spring, November – March. Possible year-round.

**Fruit:** Small, rounded, dark blue to black drupes (fleshy, with one seed), about ¼ in. diameter, borne in showy clusters along bare branches below the leaves of female plants. Ripen in late summer. Eaten by some songbirds and small mammals.

**Habitat:** Hammocks and pinelands, mostly coastal, but also inland as well.

**Distribution:** Mostly Central and South Florida; West Indies, Mexico, and South America. Has been reported as far north as Dixie and Levy Counties in Florida. Hardiness Zones: 10 – 11, but will adapt to Zone 9.

**Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit:** Myrsine is an attractive and versatile large shrub or small tree useful as a specimen plant, natural screen or hedge, or in a mixed shrub bed, with wild coffee, beautyberry, Florida privet, or coontie. With appropriate pruning, may be used as a small columnar tree, suitable for narrow spaces. Useful in difficult areas or conditions such as parking lots. The fruit will attract some songbirds, including cardinals. Also, if allowed to sucker and form thickets, Myrsine will provide good cover, but the short, thin branches do not encourage nesting.

#### **Cultivation:**

**Soil:** Most any. Very adaptable. Acid to mildly alkaline.

**Light:** Full sun – part shade. Tolerates full shade.

**Water:** Dry – moist. Drought-tolerant. Will survive on natural rainfall, once established.

**Miscellaneous:** Overall a hardy plant. Tolerant of difficult conditions. Cold-tolerant to about mid-20s F. More cold-hardy than the very similar Marlberry, *Ardisia escallonioides*. Salt-tolerant.

**Propagation:** By seed.

**Availability:** All Native Nursery in Wesley Chapel, or see your AFNN (Association of Florida Native Nurseries) Directory.

#### **References:**

Haehle, Robert G. and Joan Brookwell, Native Florida Plants, Houston, Texas, Gulf Publishing Company, 1999.

Huegel, Craig N., Native Plant Landscaping for Florida Wildlife, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2010.

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

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

Walton, Dan and Laurel Schiller, Natural Florida Landscaping, Sarasota, Florida, Pineapple Press, Inc., 2007.

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

### **June 12th program by Bruce Turley: (contd...)**

We will do a casual look at native plant choices for our landscapes adapted to shade. Our urban environment creates some additional challenges that we will discuss. Bruce Turley is the owner of Wilcox Nursery in Largo. He's past president of Pinellas Chapter of FNPS and a board member for Florida Association of Native Nurseries (FANN formerly AFNN). If shade plants are what you need in your yard, come join us!

### **June 18th Field Trip to Wilcox Nursery (contd)...**

After the tour by Bruce and perhaps a little shopping, we then travel the short distance to the Florida Botanical Gardens to enjoy over 30 acres of cultivated gardens, 90 acres of natural areas and a picnic area for those who wish to bring lunch. **We will concentrate on the Native Plant Garden which is close to the parking lot and is shaded.** It should be a leisurely and inspirational day for our members, family and friends to enjoy.

**Directions:** From Interstate 275 South, travel toward St Petersburg. Take exit 31, SR 688/Ulmerton Rd toward St Pete Clwr Airport for approximately 12 miles. Turn right on Indian Rocks Rd for .4mi. Wilcox Nursery is on right. From US 19S travel to SR 693/66th St ramp toward St Pete Beach. Turn right onto Ulmerton Rd/SR 688W. Turn right on Indian Rocks Rd. Wilcox Nursery is on right. To travel from Wilcox Nursery to Florida Botanical Gardens go South on Indian Rocks Rd .4mi. Take 2nd left onto Walsingham Rd/SR688E. In 1.5miles the Botanical Gardens will be on the right.

**Carpooling:** For those from the **East** side of the county we will meet at 9am at the Big Lots/Mcdonald's parking lot at the corner of US Hwy 54 and US Hwy 41. For those from the **West** side of the county we will meet at 9:15am at the corner of Moog Rd and US 19 behind the Burger King.

### **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. It just involves keeping the yearly program calendar and coordinating the information provided by the chapter officers who have made the contacts with the speakers and sharing that information through emails.

Congratulations to David Peterson, winner of the Nature Coast Chapter Conference scholarship. David is a new member of FNPS and the Chapter. We look forward to hearing about his experiences at the FNPS Conference, held this year in Maitland, May 19-22. Don't forget, early registration ends April 14! Go to <http://www.fnps.org/pages/conference/> for more information.

### **Earth Day at Crew's Lake Park: April 30th: Saturday from 9:30am - 2pm**

**16739 Crew's Lake Dr., Spring Hill 34610 (off Shady Hills Rd. between Hwy 52 & County Line Rd.)** This is a great family day with many activities for the kids, both fun and educational. We are a part of this wonderful environmental day offering seed kits for kids and age appropriate free literature. This year we will add an invasive plants table manned by Gorgon O'Connor with photos and samples of the "worst offenders". **Be a volunteer; sign up at our meeting or contact Coordinator Mary Horan at 727-849-2335 or email her at: [horansmo@earthlink.net](mailto:horansmo@earthlink.net) Volunteers with plants and supplies need to be at the park by 8 a.m. Our usual location is left of the covered pavilion.**



Mary Barnwell, Senior Land Management Specialist for SWFWMD, discusses pine flatwoods with participants of the Nature Coast Chapter of FNPS Florida Forever Take a Hike at Conner Preserve in Land O Lakes on March 26, 2011. There were approximately 20 hikes this year, from Miami to Pensacola, in support of Florida Forever. That's DOUBLE the number of hikes from last year! It was a beautiful day for a hike.

### **2011 Nature Coast Regional Envirothon: Report by Mary Horan**

Nature Coast Chapter participated in this event on Feb. 23rd. Teams of students from high schools in Sumter, Citrus, Hernando and Pasco county participated. Working with an advisor they studied from early December on soils, forestry, groundwater, aquatics and wildlife. At Anclote River Park they rotated through testing stations for each area and scores were compiled. The winning team was from Pasco High School and will be eligible for a \$500 scholarship from the St. Pete Times when they enter college. They also can go on to compete at the state level and if they win go on to compete nationally. The Envirothon began in 1979 and Florida has competed nationally 4 times and won once. It is supported solely by private and public sector donations of time, services and contributions. Our chapter provided certificates of recognition for the Pasco teams and a plaque which was presented to the winning team and remains at their high school. ***The Nature Coast Chapter was asked by the Regional Coordinators if we would like to be added to the Steering Committee which plans the event. This committee meets only once or twice a year and otherwise communicates by email. If you would like to become involved in encouraging our teenagers to become knowledgeable about our environment and join this committee representing the Nature Coast Chapter, contact Mary Horan @ 727-849-2335 or email her at: horansmo@earthlink.net.***



Hope everyone had a great Lupine season! Photo by Paul.

*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](http://www.fnps.org)

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