

January-February
2016

Nature Coast Chapter meetings, field trips, and activities are open to FNPS members and the public alike.



A Message from the President

Greetings Nature Coast Chapter Members

“Be Inspired”



It is winter and some of us may need inspiration to get outside and work in the garden. Of course, our perfect weather is probably the best inspiration at the moment, but it will get a little colder as January arrives and many of our flowering plants quiet down for the season. Also, it is the holiday season and we get too busy to attend to the garden, so how can we get inspiration? Or maybe, we should just sit back and relax for a month or two before we start again. Oh no, not us! Because we are native plant enthusiasts, we can get inspiration from many sources. I know we will attend to our gardens so when spring arrives we will be happy with the results and love what we see. Right? Here are a few ideas to inspire.

Wildlife in the fall and winter can be a great inspiration to plant natives. The birds are

consuming the berries from the shrubs and trees and the butterflies are finishing up the last of the flowers. Planning for the spring to entice more and varied wildlife is important during the winter. There are many natives we can plant at any time of year to attract wildlife. **Perusing your native plant books** is a great way to spend the early dark evenings to get ideas.

Taking a walk in a park or preserve keeps us enthused about nature. **Visiting a friend’s garden** to get some ideas and maybe a few seeds for your own garden is fun as well as motivational. **Checking out native plant nurseries** and **botanical gardens** to find something new is very rewarding. I get inspiration from simply walking around the yard with my morning coffee planning the next project. And best of all, come to our meetings and get inspiration from our programs and the wonderful people that belong to our chapter.

We hope we inspired you in 2015 with our enthusiasm, our programs, plant sales, field trips and fun meetings. The lineup for 2016 is proving to be even more exciting. Pat Kelly, program chair, is planning some great educational programs and Gail Parsons, field

Message continued on Page 2

Monthly meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m.

Location: Land O’ Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O’ Lakes Blvd (US 41), Land O’ Lakes, FL 34639 in the back meeting room. Entrance is off the courtyard on the south side of the building.

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Welcome New Members

Karen Duffy
Cookie Fernandez
Sandra Gann
Connie Hill
Valentina Koutsevich-Vokselis
Paula Shorrock
Carl Waldron

Meetings/Programs

Date: January 12

Speaker: Jennifer Sharples

Program: Preserving Our Waterways

From this presentation attendees will learn what actions they can take to help preserve our water's quality and help prevent and reduce water pollution. By making simple changes in daily activities, attendees will learn how to protect the environment. An introduction will also be provided on the services that the Stormwater Management Division provides to the county.

Speaker Bio:

Jennifer Sharples works as a Public Communications Specialist for Pasco County's Stormwater Management Division. For the Division, she manages public outreach, educational and marketing programs. She has worked for the county for seven and a half years. Before moving to Florida Jennifer lived in Massachusetts and worked in marketing and communications.

To suggest a program contact Pat Kelly at (352) 588-0266 or patricia03@gmail.com

Date: February 9

Speaker: Chris Parisi

Program: Florida's Native Milkweeds in the Wild and in your Garden.

The state of Florida has 21 Native Species of Milkweeds, many of which are suited for the yard and garden environment. We will explore the milkweeds in Florida in their natural states and the species that do well in the garden or landscape. Milkweeds can be in sunny and dry to wet and shady environments so there is one or more right for your yard. Also, there will be discussion on the use of native milkweed vs. nonnative and biodiversity and local ecotypes of seeds.

Speaker Bio:

Chris Parisi owns Restless Natives Nursery in Tarpon Springs, Florida and raises several local ecotype native milkweeds to sell as plants and for seed resources. He hopes to increase the scale of his operation to supply seeds from several species especially those in Central Florida. Chris has been working with milkweeds since 2008 and with the Xerces Society, Cornell University and FANN on milkweed projects throughout the years.

Message from the President (cont'd)

trip chair, already has more field trip ideas than there are months in the year.

Our new project might be a native garden tour open to the public. We will need some help from you in the organization of this endeavor. It would be a great method of recruiting new members to our chapter and showing off some of our

terrific gardens. If you like the idea and want to help out in any way, let me know. Thank you for such a successful 2015 and hope to see you often in 2016.

Jonnie Spittler



Nature Coast and Hernando FNPS members ride the Withlacoochee Trail.

Andy Taylor, FNPS Director of Development, speaks to Nature Coast Chapter



Annie Johnson

Field Trips

Ahhochee Hill Sanctuary

January 16
24268 Lake Lindsay Rd, Brooksville
10 AM

Florida Audubon's Ahhochee Hill Sanctuary is 270 acres surrounded by other publicly protected land. Its rolling fields, mixed hardwood, a spring fed lake create a diverse habitat for a wide variety of birds butterflies and animals. The property was left to Florida Audubon Society by Lisa von Borowsky, long time supporter of Florida Audubon Society, specifically for the wildlife.

Recently a Long Leaf Pine Habitat Restoration project began on 140 acres of the sanctuary through a USDA grant. Hardwoods have been thinned to allow for natural reseeded of the pines from the existing pine forest. Treatment of invasive plants and opening up the canopy to allow more sunlight in will help stop the spread of coral ardesia. A winter prescribed burn should result in a much improved habitat for all of the resident gopher tortoises and other critters that live on, or visit the sanctuary. Given the proximity to the Croom tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest, it would not be out of the realm of possibility to host a population of red cockaded woodpeckers.

We will walk trails to compare the existing forest to the restoration area and get an update on progress of the project with Property Manager Christie Anderberg. The sanctuary is located at 24268 Lake Lindsey Rd in Brooksville, 1/4 mile east of Rt 41.

We will meet to carpool in Land O' Lakes at 9 AM at the McDonald's at US41 and SR 54. Those who live north may want to meet us at address on Lake Lindsay Rd at 10 AM. **Please let trip organizer, Gail Parsons, if you plan to join us at gailpar1@verizon.net. 813-920-2730.**

After the hike through Ahhochee Hill we will go to lunch at River Ratz on Lake Lindsay Rd at the Withlacoochee River.

Cypress Creek Preserve

February 13
Meet in parking lot of Freedom High School
10 AM

This preserve is a 2500 acre site between I275 and 175 with it's northern boundary just south of Pasco County line where the two Interstates split. This preserve is composed of 5 separate parcels that were purchased by Hillsborough County with ELAPP funds (comparable to Pasco's ELAMP funds). We will be exploring the largest parcel. The auricled spleenwort (a state endangered plant) has been documented on this site as well as deer, turkey, gopher tortoise and other creatures.

Bring lunch. Lunch will be at new pavilion on site. **Please let trip organizer, Gail Parsons, if you plan to join us at gailpar1@verizon.net. 813-920-2730.**



The
SPRING
PLANT SALE
of the
Nature Coast Chapter of
the Florida Native Plant Society will be
held at the
Land O' Lakes Community Center
5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd (Hwy 41)
10am-2pm
March 26, 2016,
(Fourth Saturday of March.)



Landscaping/ Garden News



The season to plant trees and shrubs is January-March. The plants are dormant. Then they wake to grow, they will be in their new, hopefully permanent home.

PLANT NATIVE TREES, today, under whose shade you do not expect to sit. Trees provide oxygen, shade, shelter, pleasure. Every yard should have at least one long leaf pine, preferably two. Long leaf pines are incredible habitat trees. Unfortunately, most of them have been cut. Long leaf pines are not as susceptible to the pine borer beetle. They don't take up that much space as they grow up, not out. A cleared, sunny spot is all that is required.

How to plant trees: take a hammock and lengths of rope on each end. The rope must be long enough to double loop it

around a tree trunk, that way it won't "saw" the tree. A nail should never be put into a tree as it can introduce insects and disease. A sheep's bend knot is the best knot for tying a hammock; it is easy to tie with a quick release. The sign of a good knot is being able to untie it easily! Lay out the hammock and the ropes. Plant the trees at either end.

When the trees grow up, you, or someone in the future, will have a place to rest. If you have the space, plant three trees in a triangle; then three hammocks for friends will have a place to hang. It's like the adage of having three chairs: one for you, one for a friend, and the third for company.

Annie Johnson



Chapter Representative News

Do you know that you can help the Florida native Plant Society when you shop online with Amazon? That's just one of the interesting items I want to share as Chapter Representative for Nature Coast. I attended the FNPS Board meeting held in November and have several new things to report.

How do you help FNPS when you shop on Amazon? All you have to do is use the links on the FNPS website <http://www.fnps.org/>. Just click on "Amazon Links" or one of the books listed as suggestions and FNPS gets referral fees when you buy **ANYTHING** on Amazon. How easy is that to help?!

If you missed the Cuba trip in November, don't worry, there's another planned for April 30 – May 7, 2016. Download the schedule at www.fnps.org and make your plans to see The Gardens and Plants of North Cuba with guides from Florida TREE Institute.

Florida Native Plant Month was a great success with 45 total proclamations all over the state. Our new Director of Development, Andy Taylor, led the hard work and the Board voted to continue the event in 2016. Andy also reported on

partnerships he's developing for FNPS with other organizations like the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, the Tampa Bay Times and the Florida Forest Service. Policy Chair Gene Kelly reported on upcoming opportunities for FNPS to help guide our elected officials to more responsible behavior in 2016. Of course, there will be continued effort to get legislators to use Amendment 1 funds as intended by voters. Also Gene expects the push to "Moneyize" State Parks, get Parks to generate money, to continue. We'll be calling members to action as each Park is reviewed for their potential profitability with things like hunting or surplus.

One other exciting item to share is a campaign in the planning stages for a Native Plant license plate with broad appeal to all Floridians. I hope to report on the steps we'll take to make this happen in the upcoming months. Meanwhile, take advantage of our best season to get outside! Go visit our many parks and preserves full of the native plants special and unique to our State!

Julie Wert, Chapter Representative

Paynes Prairie Field Trip, November 14, 2015

Observing gators at Payne's Prairie.



Nature Coast was joined by members from Hernando and Citrus Chapters for a field trip to Payne's Prairie.

A Winter's Tale



The best garden is the one you share, with friends, family and wildlife. Plants have fed indigenous peoples, animals, birds and pollinators for millennia. Different size fruits and berries feed different size wildlife.

For 15 years, my garden has evolved with native plantings: trees, shrubs, flowers and groundcovers. As I walked around it, the revelation (the big "duh") opened my mind. Native plants flower and fruit at different times to provide food throughout the seasons.

In the fall - *Hamelia patens*'s (firebush) bright red flowers for hummingbirds become red then black berries for birds and animals. Be sure to get the native species! *Callicarpa Americana* (beautyberry) seems to be the first with its purple or white clusters.

Myrcianthes fragrans (Simpson's stopper) has wonderfully fragrant flowers in spring and early red berries in the fall. By November, *Ilex vomitoria* (yaupon holly) is celebrating the season with its many bright red fruits. *Myrica cerifera* (southern wax myrtle) fills in the gaps of food sources by providing little berries throughout the seasons.

In mid-winter - *Ilex cassine* (dahoon holly) and/or *Ilex opaca* (American holly), *I. opaca* var. *Arenicola* (scrub holly) are noisy with feeding birds. One of my favorite midsize trees, *Celtis laevigata* (sugarberry/hackberry) is a fabulous food source for migratory birds and butterflies.

In late winter/early spring - a mixed hedge using *Forestiera segrata* (Florida privet/wild olive) is alive with berries and wildlife. *Ilex glabra* complements the hedge, but seems to be a last food source. Using a diversity of plants, shrubs and grasses will bring a diversity of wildlife. If you plant it, they will come.

The first to flower in the spring is *Prunus angustifolia* (chickasaw plum) and *Prunus umbellata* (flatwoods/hog plum). Their large fruits are too big for smaller birds but large birds and mammals love them. The fruits make a great jelly if you can get to them first.

Across the front of my house is a hedge of yaupon, beautyberry, firebush, wild coffee, rouge plants, flatwood plum, groundsel/saltbush, grasses and flowers like yellow senna privet and lots of red salvias. Vines are on an arbor over the front walk. From inside, I can watch the wildlife, birds and pollinators, throughout the seasons.



Yaupon Holly in Annie's Yard

Be sure to plant more than one of plants. It takes two to make a baby; it takes at least two to cross pollinate. Also, as with animals, some plants require a male and a female; these are dioecious plants. Make sure they are native species. The fruits in the fall and winter come from the flowers in the spring which feed the pollinators.

Realize these are just a few of the common shrubs. There are trees and flowers (another column in another newsletter). There are haws and palms and more than 2200 indigenous plants to La Florida. All Florida native plants provide some function - food, shelter, shade, oxygen.

An excellent source of information is Craig Huegel's [Native Plant Landscaping For Florida Wildlife](#). It is the first of a 'series' of three books by Dr. Huegel. The second is [Native Wildflowers and other Groundcovers....](#) The third is [Native Florida Plants for Shady Landscapes](#).

Annie Johnson, Photos by Annie Johnson

TREASURER'S REPORT

FNPS - Remanded Dues	\$1,400
FNPS - Conference Support	\$ 500
FNPS - Membership Brochure Support	\$ 200
FNPS - Unrestricted Conservation Grant	\$1,000
FNPS - Total Support	\$3,100
Lake Lisa Grant	\$ 500
Pasco Library Foundation Grant	\$ 500
Cotee River School Grant	\$ 500
Nature Coast Chapter - Total Grants	\$1,500
2015 Total Grants and Support	\$4,600

Our Spring and Fall Plant Sales are what make a season of giving possible. Our thanks go to the folks who organize and volunteer for these two events. We were generous with FNPS this year and included an unrestricted conservation grant so some scientist somewhere is working with our support. We had three Nature Coast Chapter grants this year so there will be many more native plants in Pasco County.

Submit suggestions, articles, or photos by February 1 to Karen Watrous at (813) 528-2368 or karen_watrous@yahoo.com

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TREASURER: STEPHEN JOYCE
CHAPTER REP: JULIE WERT
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Chapter website: pasconativeplants.org
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www.meetup.com/Nature-Coast-Native-Plant-Society/
www.facebook.com/PascoNativePlants
twitter.com/NatureCoastFNPS
 FNPS website: <http://www.fnps.org/>

FLORIDA ELM / AMERICAN ELM

by Peggy A. Gretchen
FNPS Member
Pasco Master Gardener

Botanical Name: *Ulmus americana* var. *floridana*

Common Name: Florida Elm, American Elm

Family: Ulmaceae (Elm)

Type of Plant: Native deciduous large tree with tall straight trunk and thin ascending to arching branches that form low on the tree and produce an attractive vase-shaped crown. Florida Elm is a smaller version and sometimes considered a variety of American Elm. Three other elms are native to Florida: Winged Elm, *U. alata*; Cedar Elm, *U. crassifolia*; and Slippery Elm, *U. rubra* (only Panhandle). Height: 60 – 80 ft. Width: 20 – 40 ft.

How to Identify:

Bark: Dark gray; scaly, deeply fissured with broad ridges.

Leaves: Alternate, simple, shiny green above, mostly ovate, 3 – 6 in. long, 1 – 3 in. wide, asymmetrical on either side of midrib, especially at base, margins toothed.

Fall foliage golden yellow.

Flowers: Small, inconspicuous, greenish-red.

Flowering Time: Spring. February – March.

Fruit: A flattened, ½ in. long winged samara, greenish with reddish margin. Somewhat inconspicuous. Late spring – early summer. Self-sown seedlings sometimes establish near parent plant.

Habitat: Floodplains and other mixed hardwood forests.

Distribution: *Ulmus americana* is native to much of eastern North America, from Canada southward to central peninsular Florida and west to Texas. The Florida population is frequent in north Florida south to the central peninsula, Collier County. Hardiness Zones: 8 – 10 (Florida population).

Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit: An attractive large specimen or shade tree. Useful for roadside plantings. Provides good shade from spring to fall; its deciduous nature allows for more sun in winter. Excellent cover, nesting, and food for wildlife. The seeds are eaten by songbirds and small mammals in late spring. Also, the spring flowers attract pollinators – a good food source for songbirds as well. Larval food plant for Question Mark and Mourning Cloak butterflies.

Cultivation: Adaptable!

Soil: Prefers moist, organic, fertile soils, but tolerates many. Acid to alkaline.

Light: Full sun – part sun/shade.

Water: Prefers moist. Tolerates dry to seasonally wet.

Miscellaneous: The Florida population of elms is not generally susceptible to Dutch Elm disease or the other pests and diseases which devastate elms elsewhere. Use Florida stock! Known as *Ulmus americana* 'Florida population' in the nursery trade. Numerous cultivars are also available. Fast-growing. Long-lived. Not salt-tolerant.

Propagation: By seed (sow immediately upon ripening) or cuttings.

Availability: May be available at Florida native nurseries.
See www.plantrealflorida.org!

References:

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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.

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

Become a member of the
NATURE COAST CHAPTER of the Florida Native Plant Society today.
Individual membership is only a \$35 donation.

Join to **protect** the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.
Support science-based **conservation** of our floral heritage and of the species that depend upon it.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- *The Nature Coastline*, the bimonthly newsletter of the Nature Coast Chapter
- *The Palmetto*, our quarterly magazine, which is filled with information on native plants, gardening, conservation of native habitats, etc.
- **Sabal Minor**, our bi-monthly newsletter that will keep you up to date on FNPS news and activities
- Native plant gardening and landscaping information
- Local plant sales
- Speakers and field trips
- Annual Conference discount
- Publications (10% discount)



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