



# The Nature Coastline

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

*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.*

## Upcoming meetings and events:

### October 12th Meeting: *The Beauty of Florida's Sandhill Community*

Presented by Craig Huegel, PhD, member of Pinellas Chapter of FNPS, author of Butterfly Gardening With Florida's Native Plants and Florida Plants for Wildlife, former Administrator of Pinellas County's Environmental Lands Division from 1992-2004, and environmental consultant. Dr. Huegel will provide an in-depth look at one of Florida's most beautiful natural communities; the Florida Sandhill. Sandhills are one of the most diverse ecosystems in North America, but are now globally imperiled. Join us for a very visual tour of some of its most interesting plants and wildlife.

### October 17th field trip, Sunday 10am: Aripeka Sandhill, Hudson, FL

Carpooling: Meet at 9:30 a.m. at Save-A-Lot in the northeast corner strip mall at the corner of US 19 and SR 52. Directions: We will meet at 10 a.m. at the front gate on CR 595. The gate is on the north side of the road, approximately ½ mile west of US19. Take US19 to CR595. Turn west. Go ½ mile to the gate, which will be on your right. (If you pass the gate, you will end up in the historic town of Aripeka.) This 210 acre property is a fairly recent ELAMP acquisition. The purchase protects this important wildlife corridor, which had been zoned for development. Our guide will be NCC member and Aripeka resident Richard Stauffer. The area includes both sandhill and wetland habitat. Walking should be relatively easy, and the diversity should be spectacular. We will be out about two hours. There are no facilities.

### November 6th, Saturday 10am-3pm: Dade City Garden Club fall garden tour and market day

'Market in the Garden' 13630 5th Street, Dade City. NPS members are needed to volunteer for this event. Please email Peggy Gretchen.

### November 9 meeting: *How Planting Natives Can Make a Difference*

We'll present a video of the inspirational keynote talk from the 2009 Conference by Doug Tallamy, Ph.D., "Wake Up and Plant the Natives: Planting Today to Preserve Florida's Tomorrow". We'll learn why we need biodiversity and why animal diversity depends on native plants. We'll see why we need to change our landscaping models to save biodiversity and what a sustainable suburban ecosystem might look like. Join us to find out the simple things you can do that can make a difference.

Sunday, November 14 from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon the Nature Coast Chapter of FNPS is invited to a home garden tour at Pat Kelly's house, 32839 Tyndall Rd., Wesley Chapel, 33545. (contd...)

(Meetings and events contd...)

The house sits in the middle of ranch land in east Pasco County. The yard started out as pasture but with some major help from FNPS members & books, native nurseries, and folks with strong backs it has been transformed. It now boasts a small pond and bog, an arbor, a scrub habitat with endangered, endemic scrub plants and an elevated garden (better known as a drain field). It is mostly sandy and dry with understory in the hedgerows. There are over 75 species of native plants that have been planted and many more that were here at the beginning. Wildlife is plentiful; sandhill cranes, red-shouldered hawks, cardinals, blue birds, pileated woodpeckers, fox squirrels, lizards, butterflies, dragonflies, frogs, toads, black racer snakes and a gopher tortoise! Light refreshments will be available and a wide, circular driveway around the property offers plenty of parking. If you are unable to come on Sunday you are welcome to come to an Open House event on Saturday and Sunday, November 13 & 14 from 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Directions: 3.5 miles east of the intersection of I 75 & State Rd. 52 then 1.5 miles south on County Road 577 (Curley St.) and 1/4 mile east on Tyndall. Bear left at fork, there will be signs welcoming you.

Dec. 14th Annual Holiday Pot Luck Dinner: We encourage you to bring a favorite dish to share at the pot luck. Please indicate on the sign up sheet on the refreshment table at the Nov. meeting, how you will be adding to the pot luck ( beverages, entree, salad, side dish, dessert, etc.) Native plants, some books, and a small tree will be part of the drawing; members should bring decorations for the tree. There will also be a voluntary gift exchange for those who wish to participate. Bring something garden related for about \$10 ( Mark if gender specific). Returning by popular request is the non-narrated digital slide show. Put together by Susan Vaughn from photos, many taken by members, it includes a collage of native plants and natural plant communities, birds, butterflies and fun field trip outings which will run in the background while we eat, socialize and exchange gifts. Don't forget, spouses are invited!

#### Chapter contact information

##### OFFICERS:

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Program Coordinator: (open position)

Field Trip Coordinator: (open position)

Chapter website: [pasconativeplants.org](http://pasconativeplants.org)

# Silkgrass

by Peggy Gretchen, FNPS member, Pasco Master Gardener

**Botanical Name:** *Pityopsis graminifolia*

**Common Name:** Narrowleaf Silkgrass, Goldenaster, Silver-leafed Aster

**Family:** Asteraceae (daisy or aster)

**Type of Plant:** Native, perennial, clump-forming, grass-like wildflower or groundcover, with silky, silvery stems and foliage. Silkgrass derives its name from the soft, pure white hairs that cover the plant. Often occurs in colonies. Highly variable form – delicate or robust. Height: up to 3 ft. Width: Same. Spacing: Allow ample room for large, dense clumps.

## How to Identify:

**Leaves:** Alternate, mostly basal, grass-like, silvery gray-green, veins parallel. Attractive most of the year, even when not in bloom.

**Flowers:** Showy masses of bright yellow small to medium daisy-like flowers with heads of yellow disk and ray florets on branching stems held above the grass-like foliage. Flowering Time: Spring – summer – fall. Usually the heaviest bloom is in the fall.

**Fruit:** An achene (one-seeded, non-splitting, hard).

**Habitat:** Scrubs, sandhills, dry pine flatwoods, upland mixed forests, and ruderal (disturbed) sites.

**Distribution:** Common nearly throughout Florida and the Keys. Hardiness Zones: 8 – 11.

**Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit:** A showy, easy to grow native wildflower, especially for dry, sunny sites. Useful as a groundcover, and spectacular when grown in large masses. Attracts butterflies (nectar)! Try mixing in a bed with Blazing Star (*Liatris*), Florida Paintbrush (*Carphephorus*), or Tropical Sage (*Salvia coccinea*).

## Cultivation:

**Soil:** Prefers well-drained, sandy, acidic.

**Light:** Full sun best to light shade.

**Water:** Dry to moist. Drought-tolerant once established.

**Miscellaneous:** Prune old stems annually. Spreads moderately by self-sown seed, but solitary plants rarely form viable seeds. Some forms slowly spread by underground rhizomes and form loose colonies. Not salt-tolerant.

**Propagation:** By seeds or division. Fresh seed germinates readily, and if started in early spring, the young plants may flower by fall.

**Availability:** 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.

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

Suncoast Native Plant Society, The Right Plants for Dry Places, St. Petersburg, Florida, Great Outdoors Publishing Co., 1997.

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.

Wasowski, Sally, with Andy Wasowski, Gardening with Native Plants of the South, Dallas, Texas, Taylor Publishing Co., 1994.

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

*Thank you renewed members: Julie Wert, BJ Fread, Peggy Gretchen, Janice Howie, Marilyn Smullen, Doris Bareiss, Richard Stauffer*

A note from Julie Wert

**Call for Volunteers:** Those of you that were confused by the directions for the September field trip understand why our chapter is calling for a volunteer to be the *field trip coordinator*. It doesn't mean you have to make all the decisions about where the field trips will be. You can take suggestions for them, raid the newsletters of other chapters, join other organizations and chapters on their outings or revisit past places. That's always fun, especially if it's a different time of year. The main job will be the logistics of a trip and coordinating with the newsletter.

We also need a *speaker coordinator*. That's also a managerial job since suggestions for speakers come from an informal committee, anyone with a good idea! Coordination is the hard part. I know there's someone out there with the organizational skills to get the details put together and we need you! Call (727-863-1363) or email me ([aripekajule@verizon.net](mailto:aripekajule@verizon.net)) and we'll talk about it.

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*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)

