

July-August 2015

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



A Message from the President



Hi Everyone,

“Born to Burn” was the theme of the Florida Native Plant Society Conference this year and what an exciting conference!

This was my first time spending any time in Tallahassee and being able to visit some of the very interesting places in the city as well as the surrounding areas was wonderful. There were at least 25 field trips from which to choose and I chose the 70,000 acre St. Marks Wildlife Refuge and Bradwell Bay in the Apalachicola National Forest.

At St. Marks we traveled through two sections of the huge refuge by open bus, stopping every little while to discover new and different native species. Dr. Lauren Anderson was our guide. He is a venerated botany educator at FSU and told great stories about every plant and its history. The expansive views of the coastal marshes were breathtaking. I wish everyone could have experienced this trip. At Bradwell Bay on Sunday, we took pictures of the yellow pitcher plant which is very impressive. Bradwell Bay is part of

the Apalachicola National Forest. We drove 13 miles on a dirt road into the pine forest to find the pitcher plants. On conference days, the speakers and their subjects were all enlightening and inspirational, and the dinner venues were fun and interesting. We ate on the 22nd floor of the Capitol Building, and at Wakulla Springs State Park and lastly at Tall Timbers Lab and Research Center. Each of these places was spectacular and fun.

About twelve people from Nature Coast Chapter participated and I know all had fun and learned so much. We also had a special treat. Mary Ellen Gotto, our vice president, was presented with the Residence Landscape Award for Excellence for the entire Florida Native Plant Society. We are very proud of her and her beautiful yard. She is an inspiration for all of us.

At the conference, we also rolled out the new membership brochures and the Plant Roots With Us Campaign. Our goal is to double our membership by the 2017 Conference. So... bring a friend to join us. Thank you. *Jonnie Spitzer*

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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Meetings/Programs

Date: July 14

Speaker: Panel discussion on propagation techniques from Nature Coast Chapter native plant gardeners and nursery owners.

Program: Propagation Techniques: Panel Discussion

- Wonder if those seedlings are weeds or your precious native plants making babies?
- Want to know how you can maximize the germination rate of native plant seeds or clippings?
- Your natives have multiplied and you want to share your bounty - what is the best way to transplant them?
- Learn some techniques and tips from Chapter members who are native plant gardeners and nursery owners.

**To suggest a program contact Pat Kelly at
(352) 588-0266 or patriciaak03@gmail.com**

Date: August 11

Movie Night with Popcorn

Title: What Plants Talk About

Hard-core science is effortlessly integrated with a light-hearted look at how plants behave, revealing a world where plants are as busy, responsive and complex as we are.

Plant ecologist, J.C. Cahill and a variety of other experts in plant communication take us on a journey into the “secret world of plants” where plants eavesdrop on each other, talk to their allies, call in insect mercenaries and nurture their young. It is a world of pulsing activity, with plants communicating, cooperating, and sometimes waging all-out war.

Discover that plants are a lot less passive and a lot more intelligent than you think.



News from the FNPS Annual Conference

By Julie Wert, Chapter Representative

I'm writing this from the very modern Aloft Hotel in Downtown Tallahassee, City of Trees. What a great place for a Native Plant Conference. This city is very walkable, allowing Conference attendees to go to their destination along tree shaded sidewalks, while admiring this graceful southern town. Who would guess, just from the view, what nefarious political intrigue goes on behind these classic brick walls?

But I'm not going to talk about what happens in the halls of the Capital that can ruin your breakfast by reading about it over your morning coffee. I want to tell you about one of the great experiences that were available at the 35th FNPS Conference in the hope that it will encourage all of you to go next time.

Tallahassee, nicknamed Trailahassee, is surrounded by wonderful Parks and



Pitcher plant. North Florida, 2015 Conference.

Preserves and could be an inspiration for all the Florida cities represented here by our Legislators. On Thursday I visited the urban Fern Forest, about 10 minutes by car from the hotel. It was a field trip on Ethnobotany, Foraging and Wildcrafting: Edible and Medicinal Plants of the Coastal Plain. We snacked

our way through 4 hours of a walk, at the usual leisurely pace of a group of native plant enthusiasts who want to know about every plant on the list and then some.

We tried Wild Cucumber, nutritious *Bidens alba*, gourmet shoots of *Smilax* that will hydrate you on a hot day and discovered wild lettuces native to Florida. We saw the original source of Salic acid or aspirin, the Black Willow, identified the Bearsfoot Aster that is being researched for male pattern baldness and the Water Hemlock, look alike to Elderberry, so poisonous it shouldn't be touched. We learned that research by the USDA has confirmed our lovely Beautyberry is a useful insect repellent. Beargrass (*Yucca filamentosa*) is edible but better as a source of a fine natural soap and Giant Ragweed is a source of oil.

Continued on Page 5

Welcome New Members



Bernice Stephenson
Alice Blakeley
Martha Everitt
Lee Howell
Vratislar `Kathleen` Kejzlar
Darlene Raudabaugh

Ann Swinford
David Hamby
Shelli Ginther
Janet Marks
Debbie Richter
Tina St Pierre

Nancy Thompson
Joan Van Tilburg
Ramon Fagundo
Gary and Roberta
Mighton

“We can restore native plants to our environment one garden at a time”

Field Trips

Troy Springer's Yard Tour

Saturday, July 11
10 am

Troy Springer gave an inspiring talk to our chapter in March on landscaping with native plants, and we all saw several slides of his beautiful garden. Now we are going to have the opportunity to visit his garden personally, and learn about his failures and successes and his methods to maintain his garden.

Troy started a landscape business while he was a student at USF and later realized that his yards were harming wildlife. He learned about native plants, opened Springer Environmental Services in 2005, and has been active in the Suncoast Chapter since then.

Directions: Troy's address is 13831 Hwy 92 E., Dover, FL 33527. Since it is only about a 30 minute drive to Troy's residence from our usual carpool location, everyone will need to arrange their own carpool with members from their neighborhood. To get to Troy's take either I75 or the Suncoast Pkwy. south to I-4 E (toward Orlando). If taking the Suncoast Pkwy., you will need to take I275 to Rt. 4. Exit at McIntosh Rd, #14, and then take a left on U.S.92/SR600 and go for about 2.5 miles E. Troy's is on the right hand side of Hwy 92 and the next driveway past Hidden Hilltop Rd. (blue sign).



Beech tree at Lizzie Hart Sink

Anclote Key Boat Trip and Grill Out

Saturday, August 15
10 am to 4 pm

Join us for a wonderful summer day and a chance to get out of the air conditioning and into nature. We will be taking a charter boat, a 40' catamaran from New Port Richey to Anclote Key, a barrier island that can only be reached by boat. Anclote Key is one of the beautiful islands that are owned by the Florida State Parks, so you will not find high rises or condos or anything much but nature on it. All of these islands have soft white sand beaches and a cooling sea breeze year round. Get too warm, and just hop in the Gulf and lounge around and relax. The shelling is usually good and walking along the beach is always a treat. The boat is covered so there will be shade on the trip, and it is equipped with bathrooms. The trip out and back will take about 35 to 45 minutes.

There are two options. **The boat ride alone will cost \$25, and if you want the grilled lunch and the ride, the price is \$40.** Children under 10 are half price. The lunch includes barbecued chicken, honey sesame chicken, pulled pork and salads. Soft drinks and sodas are included for all. You can check out the website islandparadisearcharters.com and click on "island cookout", or email me at janicehowie@aol.com with questions. Because a minimum of 15 are needed for the charter, a deposit of \$15 for the trip only or \$20 for the trip and cookout will be due by the July meeting. I have seen both the boat and the lunch, and it looks like a wonderful day.

Bring a hat, sunscreen, towel, beach chair, beach umbrella if you have one, and something for your shells. Those not getting lunch should bring their own. If you want something other than water and soda, bring a small cooler. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at State Parks.

Directions: The charter leaves from the North Channel of Gulf Harbors in New Port Richey. The boat is docked between Marine Parkway and Florimar on an access road just west of U.S. Hwy. 19. Address: Magnuson Hotel Marina & Resort, 5015 US 19N. New Port Richey.

Conservation Chair News

LETTER TO LEGISLATORS

This is the letter written on behalf of our Chapter to Pasco County State Legislators and to several other key State Legislators concerning Amendment 1 funding. *Jan Howie*

We are writing on behalf of the 96 members of the Nature Coast Native Plant Society, Pasco County, concerning the funding of projects for Amendment 1. Several of our members gave up weekends to collect signatures to get the Amendment on the ballot, wrote editorials in favor of the Amendment, and sent emails to our Legislators. We are highly invested in the outcome of Amendment 1, and so when we tell you that we are not happy with how the process has gone so far, hopefully you will understand that we are not uninformed citizens, but are citizens who have been following this process and who care deeply about the future of the environment in Florida.

Florida is at a crossroads currently. Many in the Legislature seem to now recognize that our springs are in trouble, and that they are like the "canary in the coal mine" for our aquifer. It is good to see that the budget for Amendment 1 includes some funding for springs restoration. What does not seem apparent in the current proposal is the desire to add more conservation land purchases to the current holdings in the State. Many Legislators seem believe that we have enough public lands in conservation now. However, we are in a period of rapid growth, and as you know, Florida is now the third largest State in the Union in population, and still growing. With all of these new residents comes the inevitable subdivisions, strip malls and roads. More development means there is more water runoff, less land for aquifer recharge, and fewer wetlands to aid in flood control and cleanse the water that goes into the aquifer. Careful land purchases can

also provide wildlife corridors to insure viable populations of our animal life, and restore flow and clean water to the Everglades and South Florida. **Florida Forever should have more funding than it had years ago at \$300 million, not less.**

The other disturbing trend that we see in the funding proposals is the tendency to put expenditures that were formerly included elsewhere in the budget into the Amendment 1 monies, so that much of the monies will not actually be "new" funding as was the intent of the Amendment. Those of us involved in the Amendment intended Florida Forever monies be restored as a minimum for land purchases, and that the new funds also be expanded to include a broader scope of environmental and recreational activities. **However, never was the intention to include prior maintenance expenses or state park and water management district funding or have Amendment 1 to become a catchall for any prior expenses that belong elsewhere in the budget.** It is not that these agencies are unworthy of funding, as they have suffered cutbacks during the economic downturn, but they don't belong in the Amendment 1 budget.

The best way to end the conflicts over Amendment 1 funding would be to set up a committee of scientists representing all areas of the State who would determine how the funds would be distributed. They would be the ones with the knowledge to know what is needed and where the funds can be utilized most effectively.

Please consider our positions so that an equitable solution can be reached on Amendment 1 funding.

Florida Native Plant Society Membership Application

Benefits of membership include: *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, membership in the local chapter of your choice, chapter newsletter, native plant gardening and landscaping information, Speakers and field trips.

New Renewing

Select Membership Category

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donor \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Household \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business \$125 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Library \$15 |

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FL County _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Chapter (assigned by location unless otherwise requested) _____

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You can also sign up and pay with credit card at
<http://www.fnps.org/participate/membershipinfo>

News from the FNPS Annual Conference Continued ...

2015 Conference continued from page 2

This was all told to us by Scott Davis, our field trip leader and brilliant plant expert. I have the list he provided of 86 plants and will share it with anyone that's interested.

Most of these Coastal Plain plants grow in our area. At the end of the trip Scott provided us with refreshing teas made from pine needles, sassailla and Yaupon Holly, along with Kudzu chips. Yum! Where else but at a Native Plant Conference can we have such a rare experience? And it was only one event in

four full days of unique experiences available.

Make your plan today to join us next year in Daytona! It will be even more fun with all of you!

Chapter member Richard Stauffer visits the carnivorous Pitcher plant bogs of north Florida during the 2015 Conference. Imagine how many insects these huge *Sarracenia flava* can trap!



Chapter Member Earns Landscape Design Award at Annual Conference

By Mary Ellen Gotto, FNPS Member.

I just returned from my first ever FNPS conference in Tallahassee where I was honored to receive the Landscape Design Award of Excellence in the residential group. There were two professional awards given, one to Florida International University and the other to Achbold Biological Station as well as two other residential awards.

The application for this award was more time consuming than difficult. I was required to list the native plants in my yard, including both common and scientific names. Then I had to list the number of each type. Incredibly, the Wood Sage and Lyreleaf Sage alone numbered over 100 each! I drew each of my gardens and indicated where the plants were located as well as including 10 photos of my landscape.

The final requirement was an essay meeting certain criteria: (1) problems with invasives on my property (none), (2) did I keep the native plants when I built my home (there were only a few weeds growing on my lot), (3) my goals, (4) did I provide education on native plant use and (5) problems I have encountered while growing my natives. This last issue has been significant since I live in a maintained community where landscapers manage my property (all 1/4

acre!). I have worked very hard for the past 6 years to prevent the landscaping company from weeding, spraying anything in my beds and pruning (improperly). This is an ongoing concern for me.

I hope to encourage other members of the Nature Coast Chapter to seriously consider applying for this award. Most of your landscapes will fit the requirements. They do not have to be large, showy or perfect! I will be glad to help anyone with the application. I had a lot of help from other members in our chapter, our local plant nurseries and our twice yearly plant sales where I purchased all my plants. So, thank you all for your encouragement!



Mary Ellen Gotto accepts award at FNPS Annual Conference



Mary Ellen's backyard



CHAPTER DIRECTORY

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



Chapter website: pasconativeplants.org
E-mail: naturecoastfnps@gmail.com
www.meetup.com/Nature-Coast-Native-Plant-Society/
www.facebook.com/PascoNativePlants
twitter.com/NatureCoastFNPS
FNPS website: <http://www.fnps.org/>

“We can restore native
plants to our environment
one garden at a time”

Plant Profile Quiz

How much do you think know about the plant featured in this newsletter, White Swamp Milkweed? See below, or full profile on page 7 for the answers.

1. True or False, White Swamp Milkweed requires wet, boggy conditions.
2. What light conditions should it be grown in —full sun, part shade, or full shade?
3. Which insect pest is it susceptible to?

Cypress Acres Nursery

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1. False 2. Part shade to full shade 3. Aphids

WHITE SWAMP MILKWEED

by Peggy A. Gretchen
FNPS Member
Pasco Master Gardener

Botanical Name: *Asclepias perennis*

Common Name: White Swamp Milkweed, Aquatic Milkweed, Swampforest Milkweed

Family: Apocynaceae (Milkweed or Dogbane)

Type of Plant: Native perennial herbaceous erect wildflower. Long-lived, Will reseed and spread. Height: 1 – 2 ft. Width: 1 – 2 ft.

How to Identify:

Leaves: Opposite, stalked, smooth, narrow to lanceolate, 2 – 6 in. Stems with milky sap. **Flowers:** White or pale pink in terminal or axillary 1 – 2 in. wide umbels (flower clusters whose flower stalks meet at a common point, like the ribs of an umbrella). Borne in profuse, large, showy clusters! Unique and intricate with downturned petals (5) and sepals and upright hoods and horns.

Flowering Time: Spring – Summer – Early Fall.

Fruit: Follicles (pods) to 3.5 in. long = dry fruits that open by one suture at maturity to release smooth seeds that lack the cottony appendage common to many milkweeds.

Habitat: Frequent in marshes, cypress swamps, floodplain forests, and wet woods.

Distribution: Florida Panhandle, North Florida, and south to Central peninsula. North to South Carolina and west to Texas.

Hardiness Zones: 8 – 9.

Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit: Excellent for mixed wildflower (moisture-loving) and butterfly gardens. Attractive and showy flowers. Plant in groups for best effect. Attracts many butterflies as a nectar plant. Larval plant for Monarch and Queen butterflies. As its common name suggests, this milkweed performs well in wet, boggy conditions, but it does not require them. Average garden soil and moderate irrigation will do nicely! Or try in pots without drainage or set in saucers of water.

Cultivation: Easy to grow and adaptable to garden conditions.

Soil: Prefers fertile, organic, and moist to wet soils.

Light: Partial shade (flowers best) – Full shade.

Water: Moist to wet conditions are best. Tolerates occasional flooding. Does well with regular irrigation, especially in summer. Some drought tolerance once established.

Miscellaneous: Spreads by self-sown seed. Annually prune older dead stems. As with all milkweeds, *A. perennis* is susceptible to aphids. Remove by hand or with blasts of water. Avoid chemical pesticides, which are lethal to butterflies and their caterpillars. Use soap and oil solution only when absolutely necessary. Ladybugs and their larvae and Green Lacewing larvae are good biological controls.

Propagation: By seed or division.

Availability: See www.plantrealflorida.org!

Comment: There are more than 20 species of milkweeds native to Florida, some of which are becoming more readily available. Please avoid the use of non-native species! There is ongoing research and growing controversy over the use of the non-native Scarlet Milkweed (*A. curassavica*), which is more readily available.

References:

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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)



Nature Coast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society
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