The Nature Coastline

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

JAN-FEB 2023

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A Message from the Vice President

The Promise of the Future

I saw my new neighbor staring at my backyard and knew what she was thinking. Tall, brown, dried-up stalks waving in the wind, not much green, very little other color. I was compelled to explain, "Those are Florida native plants, and I know it doesn't look good now. Most of them go dormant in the winter. However, when you see what it looks like in the spring, summer and fall, your eyes will be treated to a feast of beauty not common in the non-native plant community."

We Florida native plant lovers see the brown and dried-up, but we also envision the promise of the future in those stalks. We know the abundance of life that exists in those crispy stems and the food they supply for our native wildlife. Enough abundance to feed everyone and still produce the next generation of native plants just as it has been for eons.

So, I say to those uninitiated to natives, "Have your ornamentals if you must. But in the spring let me dazzle you with the sight of the many-lobed blooms on my Flame Azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*), and in the summer the delicate, arching beauty of the flowers on my Spider-Lily. I challenge you to match the spectacular intricacy of those blooms in your ornamentals!

Molly Hays
Vice-President
Nature Coast Chapter of FNPS

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

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 p.m.
Location: Meetings are held at
Heritage Park Community Center
5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd
Land O' Lakes, FL 34639

"If you have not been fully vaccinated, wear a mask."

Email naturecoastfnps@gmail.com

Chapter website: pasconativeplants.org
Chapter E-mail: naturecoastfnps@gmail.com
Facebook Group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/PascoNativePlants/
twitter.com/NatureCoastFNPS

The Society fulfills its mission through:

- Support for conservation land acquisition
- Land management that enhances habitat suitability for native plants
- Education
- Public policies that protect our native flora, especially rare species
- Research on native plant species
- Encouragement of local landscaping practices and policies that preserve Florida's native plant heritage

To become a member go to https://fnps.org/join **and click the membership type that is right for you or you can print the form, complete, and mail it to FNPS, or call. You may also join at a chapter meeting.**

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY, A FLORIDA-BASED NONPROFIT CORPORATION (REGISTRATION NO. CH3021), MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE OR VISITING THEIR WEBSITE AT csapp.800helpfla.com. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT.

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FNPS Nature Coast Chapter Facebook Group

Message from Molly Hays,

Facebook Administrator

Do you have a Facebook account?

Check out our new and exciting Nature Coast Chapter group page.

Here's how you can find the group on Facebook:

1)Go to facebook.com and log in.

2)In the search bar, type in the name "Nature Coast Chapter Florida Native Plant Society".

3) click on the JOIN button.

Here you will be treated to news and photos of NCC field trips and members sharing photos of their plants giving you ideas for your garden, photos of plants currently in bloom, information about native nurseries to see and to purchase just what you need to add to your garden, educational webinars demonstrating ideas such as how to design a native garden in your landscape, and links to purchase items such as informative books, and lovely calendars and note cards with beautiful photos of native plants.

We now have 128 members in our Facebook group. and always love welcoming new members.

Purchase Books, Calendars & Cards to Benefit the Nature Coast Chapter

A way to support the Nature Coast Chapter is to purchase beautiful 2021 calendars and note cards created by chapter member, Pat Kelly. To purchase calendars and/or cards go to **https://www.facebook.com/groups/PascoNativePlants/** and order with your credit card.

If you prefer to pay by check, send an email to Pat Kelly at patriciak03@gmail.com

FNPS Nature Coast Chapter website http://naturecoast.fnpschapters.org/

Mellissa Perkins does a great job as our Website Administrator. Stay current with all our chapter information about meetings and events plus photos and links to the FNPS website.

AmazonSmile https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/homepage?orig=%2F

Shop at smile.amazon.com and we'll donate 0.5% of eligible purchases to your favorite charitable organization—no fees, no extra cost. Register and choose FNPS as your charitable organization.

Nature Coast Chapter Website

Administered by Cheryl McAloon

Nature Coast Chapter
Florida Native Plant Society
Website Update

Go to http://naturecoast.fnpschapters.org and check us out!

Hello Nature Coast Members:

Cheryl McAloon here with an update on our website.

January, 2023 you can expect a new look for the Nature Coast Chapter. The enhanced site will allow for a colorful slide show to greet members and guests along with "badges" that will highlight upcoming events.

Behind the scenes, this transition is made possible with the help of Shirley Denton with the Suncoast Chapter. Shirley has been instrumental in planning and consultation.

In conclusion, looking forward to the new Nature Coast website. We hope you enjoy!

Membership by Julie Wert

Welcome new and renewing members Blake Bohannon and Melisa Dzidzovic, Teresa Campbell, Adrienne Druss, Peter Gonzalez and Jonnie Spitler, Adrianne Kuzmaak, Roberta Owens, Savannah and Callie Riegg, Chris Storch, Russell Watrous and Jo Ann Zurek.

The Nature Coast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society would like to extend a warm welcome to you. If you're a new member of our chapter you will now receive our bimonthly newsletter, The Nature Coastline, containing information about upcoming events, pertinent articles, plant profiles and lots of other information. You will also receive the FNPS quarterly magazine, The Palmetto and the FNPS bimonthly newsletter The Sabal Minor. Join us at our next meeting!

Native Plant Walk at Lettuce Lake Conservation Park

6920 E. Fletcher Ave, Tampa FL 33637

The Schedule for 2023 is the First Saturday of the month at 9:00 a.m.

Every month except July, August and December

January 7

February 4

March 4

April 1

May 6

June 3

September 2

October 7

November 4

Meet behind the Joel E. Jackson Nature Center in the Native Plant Garden for a walk on the paved trail and boardwalk with a representative of the Suncoast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. Learn what grows naturally in the hardwood swamp and how native-plants benefit wildlife. Walks are free but there is a $2 charge to enter the park. Dogs are not allowed on the boardwalk.

Announcement:

FNPS 2023Endowment Grant Research Awards,

Conservation Grant Awards, the Dan Austin Award for Ethnobotany, and Cornelia McNamara Grant

The Florida Native Plant Society maintains an **Endowment Research Grant** program for the purpose of funding research on native plants. These are small grants ($2500 or less), awarded for a 1-year period, and intended to support research that forwards the mission of the Florida Native Plant Society which is**"to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida."**

FNPS Conservation Grants support applied native plant conservation projects in Florida. These grants ($5000 or less**) are awarded for a 1-year period. These projects promote the preservation, conservation, or restoration of rare or imperiled native plant taxa and rare or imperiled native plant communities**. To qualify for a Conservation Grant, the proposed project must be sponsored by an FNPS Chapter.

The **Dan Austin Award for Ethnobotany** will provide up to $1500 to graduate or undergraduate students who are studying Florida ethnobotany– i.e., the study of the relationship between peoples or cultures with plants native to Florida or Florida ecosystems. These can be current uses or historic uses.

The Florida Native Plant Society has established a**Cornelia McNamara Grant** program for the purpose of funding applied research on native plants and habitats, particularly those that are rare or imperiled. These are small grants ($1500 or less), awarded for a 1-year period, and intended to support research that will **yield data to inform the management for or restoration of native species and habitats.**

Application guidelines and details are on the FNPS Web site (**www.fnps.org**), click on 'What We Do/Awards and Grants'. Questions regarding the grant programs should be sent to **info@fnps.org**.

Application deadline for the 2023Awards is March3, 2023. Awards will be announced at the May 2023Annual Conference. Awardees do not have to be present at the Conference to receive award.

Call for Research Track Papers and Poster Presentations

Florida Native Plant Society 2023Conference

The Florida Native Plant Society 2023 Annual Conference will be held as a virtual meeting, April 29 and 30, 2023.The Research Track of the Conference will include presented papersand a virtual poster session using the Whova platform on April 29 and 30. Poster presentations will be uploaded to the Whova site one week prior to the meeting (April 21, 2023)

Researchers are invited to submit abstracts on research related to native plants and plant communities of Florida including preservation, conservation, and restoration. Presented papersare planned to be 20 minutes in total length (15 min. presentation, 5 min. questions).

Abstracts of not more than 200 words should be submitted as a MS Word file by email to Paul A. Schmalzer paul.a.schmalzer@nasa.gov by January 15,2023**.** Include title, affiliation, and address. Indicate whether you will be presenting a paper or poster. Details on preparing and uploading a virtual poster will be provided when the abstract is accepted.

Calendar of Events - January Meeting

Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Heritage Park Community Ctr

Title/Topic: Central Florida Native Orchids

Orchids are one of the most successful of the families of flowering plants. This means there are thousands of different species found all over the world. This presentation will explore the wild orchids of Central Florida, their identification and ecology. You will be surprised to learn where and how our native orchids survive in our state! The presentation will be about identification and ecology, not about cultivation.

Presenter: James Stevenson, an Extension Specialist with the University of Florida IFAS Extension Services in Pinellas County, works out of the Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center in Tarpon Springs. There he teaches classes on a variety of natural resource conservation topics, including: plant identification, botany, entomology, ecology and particular groups of native plants such as orchids.

Exploring the natural world has been James' passion since growing up in Clearwater. He received his Bachelor's degree in Plant Ecology from the University of the South in Sewanee, TN and then worked in botanical gardens around the world; from North Carolina to Europe & Israel. Before returning to Florida in 2006, James worked in the UK on his advanced degree at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and as the Assistant Curator at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden. James doesn't really understand gardening in Florida, so he now grows orchids and watches birds.

Calendar of Events - February Meeting

Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Heritage Park Community Ctr

Title/Topic: Florida Native Edible Plants

There's food all around us. even in your native yard! Let your curiosity get the best of you and sample some native foods foraged and grown in Central Florida. Have a look at pots of cultivated natives brought over from Green Isle. Valerie will go over common wild edibles found in Pasco County and prepare you for the upcoming field trip.

Presenter: Valerie Anderson is the second-full time staff person for FNPS, hired in September 2018 as the Director of Communications & Programming. She runs the virtual FNPS educational programming and assists with many aspects of running FNPS. She lives in Kissimmee with her wife and two dogs, where she is active in her local chapter (Pine Lily), botanizes, lifts weights, and does sprint triathlon.

Calendar of Events - January Field Trip

January Field Trip - Walking tour of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
Location: 1534 Mound Street Sarasota, FL 34236
Date and Time: Saturday, January 14, 2023 9:30 am
Cost: $18.00 per person includes tour and general admission
Sign up at the January meeting or email Jonnie jspitler1120@gmail.com or call 813-435-8143. Pay by Thursday, January 12, to reserve your spot.

Meet at Paynes Mansion Gate at 9:15 am to enter by 9:30 am
Wear good walking shoes, a hat and sunscreen.

Tour guide: Elizabeth Gandy, Assistant Curator of the Herbarium, Marie Selby Gardens
We will be touring the Wildflower Garden, Butterfly Garden, and Florida Native Lagoon and Hammock at the Downtown Sarasota campus with horticulturalist Elizabeth Gandy. She will take us on a walking tour that will highlight the plants, their role in local ecology, and for the native species, the natural communities and parts of Florida where they can be found. She will also talk about the history of these Garden areas, how and why they developed as well as general discussion about the mission of Selby Gardens and the importance of the plant collections at the Gardens. The tour will be from 9:30 to 10:30 after which time we will be free to roam the Gardens, the Museum of Botany and the Arts and the Tropical Conservatory at our own pace and have lunch in the Cafe if you like.

Cafe Menu: https://selby.org/wp-content/uploads/Selby-Cafe-Menu-Mapplethorpe-2022-OPTISIGNS.png

Elizabeth Gandy is the Assistant Curator of the Herbarium. She is responsible for the day-to-day curation of the preserved collections here at the Gardens, which includes over 119,000 dried and about 35,000 liquid-preserved specimens. She also works on conservation projects in Florida including aboriginal prickly apple cactus (*Harrsia aboriginum*) and giant air plant (*Tillandsia utriculata*) preservation, as well as botanical inventories on private and public lands in the region and internationally. Prior to her time at Selby Gardens she was the botanist for the Southwest District of the Florida Park Service, which gave her the opportunity to botanize over a broad region and in many different natural community types, including into Hernando and Sumter Counties. She has been actively involved with talks and tours for our local Serenova Chapter of FNPS and members have also been active as volunteers on Selby Gardens' field trips over the years. She has always enjoyed the company and expertise of FNPS members and look forward to meeting all of us.

Directions: Drive yourself and meet at the Paynes Mansion Gate at 9:15 am
https://goo.gl/maps/ihNvHNZJNdTAnCRWA
Follow I-75 S and follow signs for Naples for 64 miles Take the exit toward FL-780 W/Fruitville Rd. Keep right at the fork, follow signs for FL-780 W/Sarasota/St Armands and merge onto FL-780 W/Fruitville Rd. Continue on FL-780 W/Fruitville Rd. Drive for 5 miles. Use the left 2 lanes to turn left onto N Washington Blvd. Turn right onto Mound St and then turn left onto S. Orange Ave. and you will arrive at Selby Gardens.

Carpool: For those that would like to carpool, drive or ride, I will send out instructions on a location to meet on SR56 at 7:00 am after the January meeting.

Stay overnight in Sarasota
For those that would like to stay over Friday night and avoid the early morning drive there is a Comfort Inn and Suite within a 15-20 minutes right off the Interstate at the Fruitville Road exit. https://www.choicehotels.com/florida/sarasota/comfort-inn-hotels/fld14/rates?adults=3&checkInDate=2023-01-13&checkOutDate=2023-01-14

Becky Clayton call or text 813-416-5672 or raclayton01@yahoo.com with questions.

Calendar of Events - February Field Trip

February Field Trip - Edibles in the Wild
Location: Aripeka Sandhills Preserve
18000 Aripeka Road
Hudson, FL 34667
Date and Time: Saturday, February 18, 2023 10:00 am

Field Trip guide: Valerie Anderson, Director of Communications and Programming, FNPS
Valerie will follow up her presentation at our February meeting with a field trip to the Apripeka Sandhills Preserve. She will primarily focus on learning to identify our native blueberries in the offseason. Valerie will point out habitat for chanterelles and boletes (edible mushrooms). We will also discuss and find edible native mints and other native plants.

The Preserve was acquired as part of the Weekiwachee Preserve on November 8, 2007. This was a joint acquisition with the Southwest Florida Water Management District and Pasco County. The funding from Pasco County was provided by Penny for Pasco. The preserve is managed by the Southwest Florida Water Management District as a part of a regional system of conservation lands that extends up to Crystal River Buffer Preserve, preserving the southernmost coastal hardwood hammock in western Florida. As part of this large preserve, Aripeka Sandhills preserves important habitat communities such as dense hardwood swamps and pine-covered sandhills

Valerie Anderson is the second-full time staff person for FNPS, hired in September 2018 as the Director of Communications & Programming. She runs the virtual FNPS educational programming and assists with many aspects of running FNPS. She lives in Kissimmee with her wife and two dogs, where she is active in her local chapter (Pine Lily), botanizes, lifts weights, and does sprint triathlon.

Directions:
From Heritage Park in Land O' Lakes. Head north on Land O' Lakes Blvd/US Hwy 41 N for 6.5 miles to State Rd 52 W and turn left. Travel for 1.9 miles and turn right on to Shady Hills Rd for 4.7 miles. Turn left onto Peace Blvd/Platinum Dr and continue to follow Peace Blvd for 2.9 mi. Continue onto Denton Ave for 3.7 miles. Turn left onto Little Rd for .7 miles. Use the right 2 lanes to turn right onto US-19 N. Stay on US 19 for 1.3 miles then turn left onto State Hwy 595. The destination will be on the right.

Becky Clayton call or text 813-416-5672 or raclayton01@yahoo.com with questions.

Future POP Up Garden Tours

If you are interested in hosting a Garden Tour at your place in 2023

Send an email to nature-coastfnps@gmail.com

January POP-UP Garden Tours

Karen Watrous

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

11:00-3:00

21930 Carson Dr., Land O Lakes, FL 34639

For directions contact Terry at (813)949-6659

Florida State Fair

Feb 9-20, 2023

FNPS exhibit

Native Plants

yard to yard = Homegrown National Park

FNPS Nature Coast Chapter Native Plant Sale

Sat. - March. 25 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

(New Location)

Harvester United Methodist Church

2432 Collier Parkway, Land O Lakes, FL 34639

WILD PETUNIA

By Peggy A. Gretchen FNPS Member Pasco Master Gardener Volunteer

Botanical Name: Ruellia caroliniensis

Common Name: Wild Petunia, Carolina Wild Petunia

Family: Acanthaceae (Acanthus)

Type of Plant: Native long-lived herbaceous perennial wildflower. Form and growth habit can vary widely, from prostrate to the more usually erect, and from compact and shrubby to taller and more open. It is winter dormant; usually dies back to the ground each winter and returns in early spring. It will readily spread by self-sown seed into open areas, but it is not an aggressive plant like the non-native Mexican Petunia and the seedlings can be easily thinned. It is called wild petunia because the flowers resemble the cultivated petunia; however, it is not a true petunia which is in the nightshade family (Solanacea).

Height: Usually 6 – 18 inches, up to about 2.5 feet, depending on site conditions.

Width: 0.75 – 2.0 feet. Spacing: 1 – 2 feet.

How to Identify:

Leaves: Opposite, simple, entire, stalked, ovate to elliptic to lanceolate, up to about 4 inches long. Upper and lower surfaces are usually covered with soft fine hairs as are the 4-angled multi-branched stems.

Flowers: Showy, pale blue – lavender to darker shades of purple, funnel-shaped with the tube connected to 5 fused petals or lobes, up to about 2 inches in diameter. They are sessile (lacking a petiole or stalk) and solitary or in axillary clusters along the stems, usually near the ends. White and pink forms occur. The calyx (sepals) are linear, 5-lobed, and hairy and distinguish this species by being long-pointed and bristlelike underneath the flowers.

Flowering Time: Spring to late Summer to Fall. Year-round further south.

Blooms usually last a single day, but successive blooms over months.

Fruit: Green, ½ inch, elliptic seed capsules appear near the leaf axils after blooms, turning brown after about 2 months. Like other members of the Acanthus family, the mature brown seed capsules will explode open, sending seeds far and wide from the parent plant. Either bag the seed capsule when it turns brown to eventually collect the seeds for propagation or let them self-seed in place.

Habitat: Common in sandhills, flatwoods, and dry to moist/wet hammocks.

Also found along roadsides and in disturbed areas. Both wetlands and uplands.

Distribution: North Carolina south to nearly throughout Florida and west to Texas. Hardiness Zones: 8A – 11.

Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit: This showy perennial wildflower is an excellent low-growing groundcover when planted in masses about 12-18 inches apart, or when used in mixed wildflower beds with other low-growing wildflowers, or in the front half of the bed. Also, use in borders, or along walkways, or grow it in a hanging basket or large, well-drained container. Wild Petunia will grow in a wide variety of site conditions: sun or shade, dry or moist, sandy or organic.

Very useful in butterfly and pollinator gardens. Plant in groups for best visual effect and to attract the pollinators. The flowers will attract butterflies, honey bees, native bees and bumblebees, even hummingbirds for nectar and pollen.

It is a larval host plant for the Common Buckeye butterfly and may also be used by the White Peacock butterfly and the Malachite (south Florida).

Cultivation: Adaptable and easy to grow!

Soil: Prefers sandy, well-drained, but tolerates a wide range of soil types.

Plant grows larger and with more flowers in rich, organic soils.

Light: Full Sun to Partial Shade to fairly dense Shade. Full sun for best flowering. Will grow taller, lankier, and fewer flowers with more shade.

Water: Dry – Moist. Usually moist, occasional inundation to somewhat long, very dry periods. Water until well-established, then drought-tolerant.

Miscellaneous: Some tolerance to salty winds, but not tolerant to direct salt spray or salt water inundation. Readily reseeds and will fill an open area nicely by the second season. Prune halfway through the growing season, around mid-summer, to promote new growth and blooms. Remove 3 or 4 internodes (4-6 in.)

Annual pruning to remove old stems as desired.

Propagation: By seed, summer cuttings, or division once the plant is about 2 years old. To collect seed, use the bag technique previously described. Seeds must be cold stratified to ensure germination.

Availability: Frequently available at Florida native plant sales and at Florida native nurseries. See www.plantrealflorida.org! Also, seed may be available at www.floridawildflowers.com.

NOTE: We have 5 native Ruellia species in Florida. In addition to the widespread Ruellia caroliniensis, there is R. ciliosa, R. noctiflora, R. pedunculata, and R. succulenta (endemic). The non-native and highly invasive Mexican Wild Petunia or Mexican Bluebell or Britton's Wild Petunia, Ruellia simplex (synonyms are R. brittoniana or R. tweediana), is native to Mexico, Carribean, Central and South America. It has escaped from cultivation into our natural areas, crowding out native species, and should not be cultivated. Use sterile (meaning it does not produce seed) cultivars with caution and manage to prevent escape. However, be aware that even the sterile cultivars will spread aggressively by underground rhizomes in Florida where they are winter hardy and difficult to control or eliminate. See UF/IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas.

References:

assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/assessments/ruellia-simplex/

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