May-June 2016

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

A Message from the President

Spring is in the Air

This is one of my favorite times of the year. So is the fall, but let's concentrate on ***SPRING***! Everything is popping out and we are putting in new plants. The plant sale was a roaring success and we are adding to our gardens with our native plants. What do you see when you look out at the new growth? Bees, birds and all kinds of wildlife. That is why we do this.

People may fool themselves thinking "plant native and you do not have to work in the garden again". We know differently. Gardening never ends but it is our passion and we see results when we see a native bee or insect, and birds happily eating the native berries we provide. That little hummingbird enjoying the coral honeysuckle or bee hovering over the flowering fringe tree, or the tiny birds eating insects from your native trees makes our day a happy one. And the coreopsis is blooming and providing early nectar for the butterflies. Enjoy the spring and breathe in the oxygen our trees and plants are providing us.

Our first Native Garden Tour is around the corner! Join us on April 24th and visit seven diverse landscapes in Pasco County. The site owners are excited and working hard to prepare their properties and plant lists for the tour. We will show everyone how you can incorporate native plants into your landscape for varied purposes.

Everyone wants to have a wildlife habitat to some degree, because we want to give back to nature what we have taken when we built homes or businesses. This tour will show people how we can create small as well as expansive habitats. You do not need to own a preserve to make nature happy. You can live in a gated community and still enjoy native plants and keep your neighbors happy.

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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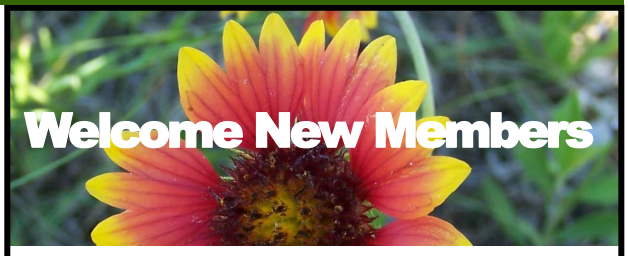

Arvilla Catharine

Karen Larsen

Meetings/Programs

Date: May 10

Speaker: Prem Subrahmanyam
Program: Orchids in Our Backyard - Florida's Wild Orchids

This program will introduce the audience to orchids growing wild within our great state of Florida, which is home to over half the species of orchids found within the United States. This presentation will cover species both common and rare within the state, along with scientific information, anecdotes, and beautiful photographs of these appealing and interesting flowers.

Speaker Bio:
Florida native orchid expert, Prem Subrahmanyam became interested in orchids at a young age and soon located native orchid species growing in wild areas near his boyhood home in Tallahassee, Florida. This launched a journey of discovery of Florida's amazing native orchids. He has spent some thirty years tracking down species both common and rare within the wilds of Florida, including the rare and elusive Ghost Orchid. He can often be found hiking out into the wild with his camera, his wife and a few of their fifteen children in tow as photographer's assistants.

His personal goal is to educate the public concerning our native species and advocate for their preservation before they are driven to extinction by the people of Florida.

Date: June 14

Speaker: Lara Milligan
Program: The Coyote in Florida

The coyote is a relatively new resident to the Tampa Bay area, and Lara will explore the life history of the coyote as well as its ability to adapt and survive in urban environments. If you have seen a coyote, you are not alone. Come and learn about this nocturnal creature and its presence in our area.

Speaker Bio:
Lara Miller is the Natural Resources Agent for UF/IFAS Extension in Pinellas County. She is stationed at Brooker Creek Preserve in Tarpon Springs, but has county-wide responsibilities. Lara works on a variety of natural resource issues with a focus on public education. Her areas of focus include: wildlife, water, invasive species, backyard habitat, and urban forestry. Before starting her current job, Lara attended the University of Florida where she earned her Bachelors and Masters degree in Natural Resource Conservation with a certificate in Environmental Education.

To suggest a program contact Pat Kelly at (352) 588-0266 or patriciak03@gmail.com

Message from the President (cont'd)

Get tickets at our Tuesday April 12th meeting, or call Steve at 813-767-3131 to buy on-line, or purchase on the day of the event at site #1, Preferred Materials Inc., 11913 SR54, Odessa, FL 33556.

I would also like to mention that you are a great chapter. We acquired about 40 new members in 2015 and we are growing. Membership is important because that is how FNPS proves to the state of Florida that we believe in the mission to preserve, conserve and restore native plant and native plant communities. Too much development without restoration or preservation kills wildlife and our beautiful environment. Every friend or neighbor you bring to a meeting gives us the opportunity to share our mission. *Jonnie Spitler*

Field Trips

Up Close and Personal with Florida Native Butterflies
MOSI BioWorks Butterfly Garden
4801 E. Fowler Ave (across from USF campus)

Wednesday, May 11th
10 AM

You won't want to miss this special field trip to MOSI Outside. MOSI (Museum of Science and Industry) in Tampa. We will browse through the outside butterfly garden, the Savage Garden and then go inside for the Butterfly Encounter. Then we will continue our outside adventure by visiting the Historic Tree Grove where you will see a tree that grew from a seed that went to the moon and back as well and other trees with their roots in history. And finally a walk in the 25 acre woods behind MOSI. Kristen, the only staff person with BioWorks, will lead our tour.

There is no entrance fee to Outside Mosi, but there is a $5.00 parking fee per car. I suggest that we meet at Texas Longhorn at SR56 and I75 to carpool at 9:30AM. Bring lunch or you can purchase lunch at the "Everything's Fresh Market". It features fresh salads and panini wraps seasoned with fresh herbs from MOSI's own herb garden. In addition, it has a frozen yogurt station with an extensive toppings bar.

Please email field trip leader, Gail Parsons, if you plan on attending. Gailpar1@verizon.net Cellphone 813-928-1412

Paddle With the Manatees on the Homossasa River
Riversports Kayak
5297 S. Cherokee Way 352-621-4972

Friday, June 17th
9:30 AM

This will be a fun adventure to watch the manatees and catch some glimpses of wild native shrubs growing along the river. We will watch the monkeys on Monkey Island at the beginning of the trip and then paddle upstream to Homosassa Springs State Park where the wild manatees gather. (We will not be entering the park.) We can have lunch at the Yardarm at Riverside Resort across the parking lot from Riversports Kayak.

Please email field trip leader, Gail Parsons, if you plan on attending. Gailpar1@verizon.net Cellphone 813-928-1412

Chapter Representative News

One of the perks of my job as Chapter Representative is that it takes me to some interesting, often unexpected places that otherwise I might not have taken the time to visit. The annual Retreat for the FNPS Board and Council of Chapters was held in March at Camp Kulaqua in High Springs.

This neat and tidy Camp is located on a spring fed branch of the Santa Fe River and just south of two fascinating State Parks, O'leno and River Rise Preserve. Both of these Parks have a variety of terrains, habitats and accompanying plants, many different than places closer to home. For me, seeing Florida natives growing in natural places is the best way to learn the right plant, right place.

There are many ways to decide what the right plant is for your landscape. We can read books, look at web sites and ask advice from knowledgeable people. But none of that is as much fun, or as useful, as visiting that plant in the place it grows without help from humans. Observing conditions that are usually written or spoken words extends understanding of what that right plant really is for that place in your landscape. Besides, it's fun to be outside, especially with others also interested in seeing what our wild and natural places have to offer! Being a member of the Florida Native Plant Society offers many benefits. For me, the best is the opportunity to expand understanding of our state's natural beauty and bring that knowledge back to my home and garden. To paraphrase a great quotation, you can teach yourself to understand what you love in order to better conserve it.

Take opportunities provided by membership in FNPS such as Chapter field trips and travel to other parts of Florida to see what you can learn. One upcoming special event is the Annual Conference, held this year in Daytona Beach. 22 guided field trips are offered as well as speakers, workshops and landscape tours. One is billed as "a workshop designed to help those of you who are just beginning the process of designing and installing a native landscapes." You'll be encouraged bring a sketch of your landscape for help to find the "right place for the right plant, based on where you live, your aesthetic goals, and unique characteristics of your site." Hope to see you there! *Julie Wert*

Nature Coast Chapter

Florida Native Plant Society

Native Garden Tour

Sunday April 24, 2016

10:00 AM—4:00 PM

Native plants add beauty and supply wildlife with shelter & food sources, elements often missing in conventional landscapes. See how central Pasco county residents have incorporated Florida Native Plants into their lives.

TOUR INCLUDES:

- **A one-acre native plant landscape created by a local business.**
- **Five residential native plant gardens and/or landscapes.**
- **Local native plant nursery.**

Tickets

$10 adults/$8 FNPS members
You will receive addresses, directions and a map.

To purchase tickets with credit card via phone, call Steve Joyce at 813-767-3131 .

You can buy tickets at full price the morning of the event at Site #1, PMI, 11913 SR 54, Odessa, FL 33556

For more information email naturecoastfnps@gmail.com

pasconativeplants.org (chapter website)

www.fnps.org

twitter.com/NatureCoastFNPS

www.meetup.com/Nature-Coast-Native-Plant-Society/

www.facebook.com/PascoNativePlants

Create a Garden to Bring Nature Home

I am going to call it a habitat garden. People are stuck on a concept of a butterfly garden which usually consists of nectar plants AKA flowers. A butterfly garden will have larval host plants for food for the caterpillars. A habitat garden includes it all – food, shelter, nesting and water for all critters from birds to pollinators to herpetors (lizards, frogs, snakes, etc.) to the life under the soil. All those creatures have evolved to make the ecosystems work. They work for us who are at the top of the food chain. Sadly, sadly, sadly, their habitats are being lost forever because of us. It is up to us put back what is being destroyed, one garden at a time. No garden is too small. Sharon Holding, our secretary and bookseller, won a FNPS landscaping award for her patio garden potted with native plants.

When choosing a plant, ask "Does it provide food, shelter, or nesting?"

When a plant is chosen to go into a garden, ask, "What does it do?" Does it provide food, shelter, or nesting? An alien/exotic plant may be green in a landscape; a plant should be more than decorative.

Too many humans have replaced the natural areas with cities, housing developments, malls and agriculture. These have been landscaped with cheap alien plants that do not provide the necessities to sustain wildlife. Only 5% of pristine natural areas remain in the USA. It is so necessary to landscape within a food web. As the number of species decreases, the function of the ecosystem decreases; as the number of species increase, the ecosystem function increases. Why do we need an ecosystem to function? Ecosystems create services which support humans.

Bugs support ecosystems.

Bugs support ecosystems. They are "the little things that run the world". (E.O. Wilson) Plants are the first trophic level, the energy that sustains life. Plants and animals are in a symbiotic relationship. Bugs recycle nutrients, provide pollination, sequester calcium, which is essential to the earth, and birds eat the bugs.

A member of the DC garden club picked the caterpillars off a plant because they were eating it, then she complained she no longer saw as many birds in her yard. OMG! She just killed off a food source for the birds by killing off the caterpillars. The bugs are part of the ecosystem. As Chris Parisi (speaker on native milkweeds, February 2016) said, to paraphrase, *a native plant should be chewed.*

Try this experiment – pick two days towards the end of May or June. Pick four plants: two natives, two alien/exotic/non-natives. At eye level on each plant, count the life using the plants, the caterpillars, the pollinators, the birds. How many are on the native plant species? How many are on the alien? Stand back. Can you notice much damage done to the plants? Insects, which pollinate the plants which feed the birds, etc., have evolved together.

It is important to grow plants which are native to the area. These lives have evolved together. A native plant from Tennessee will not be the same native in Florida, even if has the same name and is genetically the same plant. The insects and the plants time frames for blooms, etc. are different from central Florida. Central Florida, south Florida, and north Florida are different from the rest of the country, from the rest of the world. Alien species are native to their country's fauna so do not have natural predator controls here; that is how they can become invasive. Invasive plants take up 1/3 of the vegetation in natural areas.

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CREATING THE GARDEN

1. Set goals. Start small, one plot at a time. Is the area wet, dry, sunny, shady? Get something to drink. Peruse the books and plants lists.
2. Prepping the site: Hire a young person with a strong back. Pay them to clean out the area. Provide water and snacks. Or for a fall garden: lay down thick layers of newspaper and cardboard then cover with mulch (pine straw and/or oak leaves are the best). Drink water and eat snacks. Peruse the books and plant lists. Wait until fall for papers, cardboard and mulch to shade out the weeds.
3. Summer: peruse the books and make plant lists. Plan a budget to get plants at the fall plant sale 3rd Saturday in October.
4. Planting: to be continued in the July/August or September/October newsletters.

Most insects are host plant specialists; they have adapted to the chemical defenses of the particular plant. It is the main reason to have a diversity of plants! A diversity of plants provides for a diversity of wildlife. The monarch butterfly larvae feeding on the milkweeds is a perfect example of this. Any larval/host plant for any insect, butterfly, pollinator and predator, is a perfect example of how the ecosystems have evolved together to make a perfect world.

Start with a set of goals.

When planning an ecosystem habitat garden, start not with a set of objects (plants) but with a set of goals to insure the landscape is beautifully layered, biologically diverse and broadly functional. Build the landscape in layers. Different animals/ wildlife live in different layers: ground level, herbaceous layer, understory, and canopy.

Look up to the canopy, the trees. They provide food and shelter for a myriad of wildlife: mammals, birds, insects, frogs. They give us shade and oxygen. What does it feel like when you walk under a tree? AHHHH. It is said before the Europeans arrived on this side of the Atlantic, a squirrel could go from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River without touching the ground. Every place I have lived, I have planted with the construct of a squirrel being able to go around the periphery of my yard without touching the ground.

Under the trees is the understory tree layer which offers various heights, textures forms, colors and flowers. These plants offer a protection option when the canopy layer is too high. With their density, height, and food sources, the shrub layer occupies the spaces beneath the understory. It has more to offer in a diverse range of insects and wildlife. It also has the most versatility in design element.

The herbaceous layer is the lowest above the ground layer. It has the most botanical diversity with more species than all woody plants. This layer offers more cover and shelter for wildlife. It has a succession of food sources in blooms, fruits and seeds for staple foods sources and for aesthetics.

The ground layer has the least amount of diversity as it is mostly mown turf. Use this level to designate walks that connect sitting areas and garden beds.

One yard connects to the ones next door. Even as a single lot, your yard, it can be stopover food source. Maybe your neighbors will see how alive your garden is and be inspired to plant natives in their yards. Maybe if they are educated to the why it is so important to plant Florida native plants, they will be convinced to replant their environs to become an ecosystem.

We need to put back the ecosystems that have been removed. WE NEED TO BRING NATURE HOME - ONE GARDEN AT A TIME! To quote Doug Tallamy: "Garden as if life depends on it". It does.

On WUSF-PBS, usually 11:30am on Saturdays and Wednesdays, and WEDU-PBS, 7am on Saturday, is a great half hour gardening program, Growing a Greener World. It is based in the South. If you miss it, the website is the same as their name, GrowingAGreenerWorld.com. This article was inspired by host Joe Lampl and author Doug Tallamy.

I have not discussed particular plants as there are books and websites for them. The books I have used for references are available on our book table.

Annie Johnson

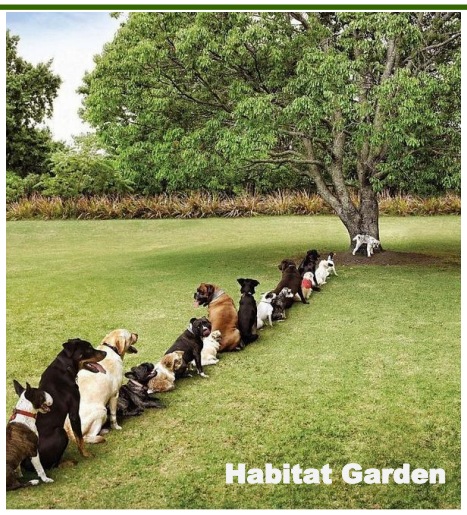
Discover something new.

Photo by Julie Wert

BOOKS:
Bringing Nature Home by Doug Tallamy
Native Plant Landscaping for Florida Wildlife, Native Florida Plants for Shady Landscapes, Native Wildflowers and other Ground Covers for Florida Landscapes all by Craig N. Huegel
Natural Florida Landscapes by Dan Walton and Laurel Schiller
Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants, 200 Readily Available Species… by Gil Nelson

GARDENING TIP – the wine carriers you can get for 'free' if you purchase enough wine at the grocery stores make great garden totes. They hold hand tools, gloves, and drink in the pockets. Don't put the sharp ends of any tools point down as it tears a hole in the bottom of the totes. When the totes wear out, it is time to buy more wine.

Anyone who bought a Purple Passionvine, Passiflora incarnata, from Gregg Jones/Rainbow's End Native Nursery at our 2015 Fall Plant Sale may have a refund. It has been confirmed to be a non-native hybrid Passionvine.



What You Missed—Program Synopsis

2/11/2016 – Chris Parisi – Florida's Native Milkweeds in the Wild and in your Garden

If you missed February's program, Chris Parisi gave a fabulously informative program on native milkweeds. His degrees in biology and chemistry have taught him how to do research which he has focused onto an endangered species, *Ascelpias*. He can spot a milkweed at 40mph as he travels the state for his day job.

There are 140 species of milkweed in North America. Florida has 21 native species. Chris discussed which plants require which soil, moisture, light conditions. Right [milkweed] plant, right place. Some of the *Ascelpias* are easier to grow; some take several years to come to seed. The native *Ascelpias tuberosa* disappears, but will appear in time for the monarch butterflies to lay their eggs.

Unlike the big box plants sprayed with systemic pesticides to look 'good', native milkweeds are meant to look ugly. They are meant to be chewed because they are a food source for the monarch butterfly larvae. The milky sap of the milkweed is toxic to livestock; it can cause heart-attacks. However, the alkali makes the caterpillars taste nasty to the birds, thus insuring the survival of the monarch species.

A variety of milkweeds [and other native plants] brings beauty to your garden. The simpler the flower, the better it is for the pollinator. Simple flowers allow easy access to the nectar and pollen. Milkweeds have simple flowers.

For now, the challenge of milkweeds is their availability. With demand comes supply. More native nurseries are growing more native milkweeds because we native gardeners are asking for them. More native plant sales and native plant nurseries are carrying the true native milkweeds. The tall ones with dark green foliage and orange & yellow flowers are tropical milkweed from South America, *Ascelpias curassavica*. In Florida, it carries a protozoan parasite, Ophryocystis elektroscirrha (OE). Caterpillars that feed on OE infested plants emerge from their chrysalises covered in spores that may kill them outright or shorten their lifespan. A simple solution is to cut back the tropical milkweed at least once in the season (October-March). Discard the cuttings in a closed plastic bag into the trash.

Chris brought a variety of species of native milkweeds to our plant sale in March. His 100 plants were the first to sell. He owns Restless Natives Nursery in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

3/8/2016 – John Lampkin's macrophotography for 'Bugs in Your Bloomers' was macro-spectacular. He calls himself a 'musical entomologist' as his career has been as a professor of music. He also is a creator of crossword puzzles for the New York Times and other papers if the puzzles involve bugs. His favorite hobby is macro-photography. A camera setup can cost $3000+; it will enlarge a ¼" insect 1000 times. By getting out in nature, he makes acute observations on insect's interactions with plants and other insects. The humor and 'ditties' he wrote and shared with his program were most entertaining. The photography and the knowledge were awe inspiring.

There are 31 orders of insects; only 5 are frequent visitors to flowers. The 5 orders are: 1) Lepidoptera-scale wings= butterflies, 2) Hymenoptera=ants, bees, wasps & parasitic wasps, 3) Diptera-two wings=flies, 4) Hemiptera-half wing=true bugs (800 species in Florida), 5) Coleoptera-sheath wings=beetles (5000 in Florida). Dr. Lampkin had several photographs of each order interacting in nature. It was fascinating to see in macro. His favorite plants are *Bidens* (Spanish needles), *Serona repens* (saw palmetto), and *Piloblephis rigida* (native pennyroyal).

Because they are good for nectar and pollen, they attract insects. Composite flowers are made up of lots of little flowers to look like one big flower is best for pollinators and nectar gatherers. Most composites are in the *Asteracea* (aster) family. All of these grow well in our zone so will grow well in your garden.

Most birds feed on insects which is why it is important to have a garden that attracts insects. Happy plants, happy bugs, happy birds, happy you. As John Lampkin said, he had learned a lot by observation, by watching nature. I have a new appreciation of life when I go outside to my garden.

Increasing the Odds that Your New Native Plants will Live Long and Healthy Lives

By Gregg Jones – Rainbow's End Native Plants
(Additional Sources – Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Handbook)

So you went to the Nature Coast Native Plant Sale, bought some beautiful native plants, brought them home, and now you're having a panic attack because your track record of keeping plants alive six months after you planted them is downright embarrassing. Try not to beat yourself up too severely over this because successful landscaping is a complicated business and despite what some people might tell you, no one is born with a green thumb.

I own a fairly large piece of property that I've been adding native plants to for almost 15 years and even though I've read everything I can get my hands on to help me keep my plants alive and healthy, most of what I've learned has resulted from good old trial and error. So here are a few of the most important lessons I've learned about keeping native plants alive, followed by a step by step guide to actually putting the plants in the ground. I'm happy to share all of this with you in the hopes you'll avoid some of the expense and frustration of repeatedly watching your healthy native plants wither away before your eyes.

Lesson 1 – the Plant-Killing Soil Next to Your Home

Many homes were built on a raised platform of compacted "fill dirt" brought in during the construction process. This dirt is nutrient poor, doesn't absorb water readily, and restricts healthy root growth of plants. To add insult to injury, home builders frequently bury the debris left over from construction in the fill dirt. This debris can include chunks of cinder block, stucco, paint, and other materials that can increase the alkalinity of the fill dirt to levels that far exceed the natural acidity of our soils. Most plants planted in this material never thrive or look healthy and waste away over time until they finally die. Unless you have a lot of extra time and money and have the ability and desire to dig like a Gopher Tortoise, you probably aren't up for removing all of this material from around the house and replacing it with quality soil. So here's the next best thing: remove the fill dirt to about twice the diameter and 6 inches deeper than the root ball of the plant you're planting. Replace the 6 inches beneath the plant with good potting soil, place the plant in the hole, and fill the rest of the hole surrounding the plant with the potting soil.

Lesson 2 – Get to Know Your Soil during Wet and Dry Periods

Most of us know that drought-tolerant plants thrive on elevated dry spots or in windy areas, but can quickly succumb to root diseases and pest problems if planted in areas that tend to stay wet. What complicates this is the possibility that areas of your property that seemed as dry as the Sahara Desert from October through May can get quite wet as the water table rises during our June to September rainy season. Many of your drought tolerant plants will either die or decline during this four-month period before the soil dries out again. Telltale signs of these areas during the rainy months include standing water and muddy areas that sink in when you walk on them. Plant your moisture loving plants in these areas and plant your drought tolerant plants elsewhere.

Lesson 3 – Spring May not be the Best Time to Plant

What! Spring is not the best time to plant? Sacrilege! Why do we plant our plants in the spring? Because most of us came from up north where spring really is the best time to plant. It rains a lot (April showers bring May flowers) and this helps to get the plant established. Also the cool temperatures help keep the new plant from getting stressed. However, things are very different in the Tampa Bay area. Up north it's "April showers bring May flowers", but in central Florida it's "April's drought dries your plant right out". Our spring months, March, April, and May, are usually very dry and hot. New plants will dry out and die quickly unless you plan to be out there with the hose literally every day. I like to plant late in June after I'm sure our summer rains have fully kicked in. If I'm lucky, I may not have to hand water at all and by the end of the summer, the plant may be well established. Yes, it's brutal to be out there planting in the blast furnace of June but if you do it early in the morning it's tolerable.

Lesson 4 – Consider the Size of a Plant at Maturity

Most plants are not full-grown when purchased so many of us, in trying to achieve a full and mature landscape right from day one, have committed the cardinal sin of placing plants too close together. Don't give in to this temptation because you'll regret it in the extreme much sooner than you think. Make sure you know how large a plant will grow before purchasing it, and consider buying dwarf species for smaller spaces to reduce pruning needs and overcrowding. Always give plants enough room to grow to full size. Don't plant trees that grow large beneath power lines, close to your house, or in other potentially hazardous sites.

Lesson 5 – Soil

When you try to learn about the relationship between soil and keeping your new native plants alive and healthy, you can be quickly overwhelmed by information on soil testing, pH, acidity, alkalinity, micro and macro nutrients, soil microbial activity, and on and on till you feel like you need to get a PhD in soil science just to be qualified to put your first plant in the ground. Here's all you really need to know about soil:

1) Most soils in areas away from the coast are slightly acidic and most native plants are adapted to these soils.

2) Unless you're planting in the toxic soil right next to your house (see lesson 1) it's not necessary to add soil enhancements such as cow manure, top soil, peat moss, fertilizer, and compost to the planting hole because plant roots need to adapt to their surroundings to be healthy.

3) Make sure you pay strict attention to whether a plant likes dry or wet soils, that you get very familiar with the moisture

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characteristics of your property (see lesson 2), then be very careful to plant accordingly.

Now it's Time to Plant!

Ok, so now you've learned enough to greatly increase the chances that your plant will actually grow and do what you want it to do. Now let's get your native plants in the ground with the following simple steps:

1) Dig a wide, shallow hole that is one and one-half to three times the width of the root ball.

2) Turn the plant upside down, curl the fingers of both your hands over the edge of the pot, very gently thrust your hands toward the ground and back once or twice until the plant comes free of the pot. Make sure your fingers keep the plant from falling completely out of the pot. Carefully slide the plant out of the pot and turn it right side up while holding on to the bottom of the root ball.

3) Find the point where the topmost root emerges from the stem or trunk, known as the trunk flare, root flare, or root crown.

4) Place the plant into the planting hole, place the trunk/root flare slightly above the surface of the landscape soil and begin to fill the hole with the excavated soil, making sure the plant is straight.

5) As you add soil, use a spray nozzle on a hose to compact the soil beneath and around the plant. Keep doing this until the hole is filled. Never push the soil down around the plant as this can damage the root ball.

6) Cover the backfill soil with mulch.

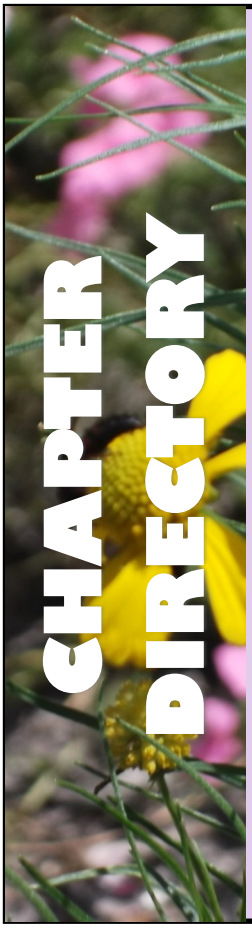
7) Top-heavy trees might require staking, especially in times of high winds like during summer thunderstorms. Staking holds the root ball firmly in the soil.

8) If you do decide to plant in the spring when it's hot and dry, daily, light watering is a necessity. You can taper off as the rainy season starts in mid-to-late June, then stop altogether when the ground becomes continuously saturated.

9) You don't really need to fertilize native plants if you plant them in the proper place. They'll respond to sunlight, rainfall, temperature, and humidity and grow at a naturally sustainable rate. To encourage faster growth, you can fertilize lightly with a slow release organic fertilizer but only four to six weeks after planting.

Ok, so now your plants are in the ground the way they're supposed to be and a year from now you can show them off to your friends and neighbors. As they complement you on your green thumb, you can humbly acknowledge their praise and tell them that it's something that has just always come naturally to you!

Gregg Jones has a PhD in hydrogeology and has worked on groundwater issues in the Tampa Bay area for past 30 years. During the past 7 years he's worked to turn his hobby of growing and landscaping with native plants into a business. The idea for the business began when he purchased an 11 acre horse farm and decided to landscape a large portion of the property with native plants. He soon learned that accomplishing this goal would not be easy because of the difficulty in finding native plants and their high cost. He solved that problem by learning how to propagate native plants and he soon had more than he could use. When neighbors and friends began to buy his excess supply, the idea for a native plant nursery business, Rainbow's End Native Plants, became a reality.



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LOCAL FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT NURSERIES

Please call for hours opened or to make an appointment

Karen's Wildflowers
21930 Carson Drive
Land O' Lakes, FL 34639
(813) 528-2368
karen_watrous@yahoo.com
Karen P. Watrous

Cypress Acres Nursery
Dave Barnard
8632 Ehrens Cutoff
Land O'Lakes, FL 34639
(813) 388-3111

Rainbows End Native Plants
Wesley Chapel, FL
(813) 991-4808

Hawthorn Hill
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Wilcox Nursery and Landscape
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Twigs & Leaves
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St Petersburg, FL
(727) 822-5400

Carencia Native Nursery
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(813) 920-2737

Florida Natives Nursery Inc.
4115 Native Garden Dr,
Plant City, FL
(813) 754-1900

Hickory Hill Native Nursery, Inc.
27212 Hickory Hill Rd
Brooksville, FL
(352) 754-9701

Rita's Nursery
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Green Isle Gardens
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Groveland, FL
(321) 436-4932

Sweet Bay Nursery
10824 Erie Rd
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(941) 776-0501

Florida Native Plants Nursery & Landscaping
730 Myakka Rd
Sarasota, FL
(941) 322-1915

WEB SITES

Florida Native Plant Society
www.fnps.org

Nature Coast Chapter
www.pasconativeplants.org

Florida Association of Native Nurseries
www.afnn.org

Gardeners & Homeowners
www.plantrealflorida.org

GALLBERRY

By Peggy A. Gretchen
FNPS Member
Pasco Master Gardener

Botanical Name: Ilex glabra

Common Name: Gallberry, Inkberry

Family: Aquifoliaceae (Holly)

Type of Plant: Native evergreen shrub; small to medium-sized, erect, multi-stemmed , colony-forming, with an irregular, informal habit and smooth gray bark.
Height: 3 – 7 ft., maybe more. Width: 2 – 4 ft.

How to Identify:

Leaves: Alternate, shiny green above, 1 – 2 in. long, apical leaf margins (tips), usually with small blunt teeth. Elliptic to oblanceolate. Evergreen.
Flowers: White, usually with 6 petals (5 – 8), small and inconspicuous. Male and female flowers borne on separate plants (dioecious). Male flowers in axillary clusters; female flowers usually solitary. Flowering Time: Primarily spring. Late winter to early summer.
Fruit: A showy, round, shiny black, ¼ in., bitter-tasting, hard drupe – a fleshy fruit with 1 seed surrounded by a hard covering, like an olive. Borne on female plants only in fall and winter.

Habitat: Common in pine flatwoods, swamps, bay heads, bogs, and other wet areas. Also in mesic hammocks and dry prairies.

Distribution: Massachusetts south to nearly throughout Florida and west to Mississippi. Hardiness Zones: 5 – 10.

Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit: Good for foundation or open screen or mixed hedge or shrub border. Especially useful in naturalistic landscapes and for wet, acidic sites. The shiny, evergreen leaves and showy, shiny black fruits lend some landscape appeal. May prune to maintain a more compact form. Tends to spread by underground stems and form colonies. The numerous small white flowers attract bees. The black fruits are used for food by birds and other wildlife. However, the bitterness of the fruits ensures that they remain well into the winter months. An excellent native replacement for the black-fruited Japanese Holly (Ilex crenata).

Cultivation: Adaptable. Hardy.
Soil: Prefers moist to wet, acidic, with pH 4.5 to 7.0. Tolerates low soil oxygen, as in wet soils. Moderately salt-tolerant.
Light: Full sun to partial shade. Prefers full sun. Will become more dense without pruning in full sun.
Water: Moist – wet. Should be kept moist. Irrigate until well established.
Miscellaneous: Low to moderate salt-tolerance. Colony-forming. Plantings may be long-lived due to Gallbery's clonal nature. Prune to maintain compact form. Mulch well to keep roots moist.

Propagation: By seed, cuttings, and division.

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

Note: Ilex glabra 'Compacta' is a more compact, oval variety available in the nursery trade. Other compact cultivars are available. Also, there is a white-fruited form.
Ilex coriaceae, or Large Sweet Gallberry, is similar to Ilex glabra, but is taller and has larger fruits and prefers very wet sites. Not readily available.

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- **Sabal Minor**, our bi-monthly newsletter that will keep you up to date on FNPS news and activities
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- Publications (10% discount)

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