



THE NATURE COASTLINE

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 in Hudson (34667). (One mile west of Little Road on the south side of SR 52 next to St. Michael's Catholic Church). Parking for the Fellowship Hall is at the rear of the property.

Executive Committee meetings will be held the 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the New Port Richey Library, 5939 Main St. in New Port Richey, 34652. Meetings are open to all members; ask at the circulation desk for room location.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

March 9th Meeting: "Invasive Exotic Plants & Their Control" presented by Debbie Chayet. currently a grants specialist for Pinellas County funding projects such as large habitat restoration, environmental land acquisition, and park development. She is a botanist, horticulturist, and environmental educator. She has extensive experience in land management. Invasive exotic (non-native) plants are becoming a greater problem in residential, as well as natural areas. Please join us and learn to recognize some of Florida's non-native, invasive plants and how to remove and prevent invasives on your property and on public lands.

March 13th: Nature Coast Chapter Native Plant Sale at March for Parks - Noon to 4 p.m. - see pg. 4 for details.

March 14th Field Trip: Sunday at 10am: Werner-Boyce State Park in Pasco County - see page 2 for details.

April 13th Meeting: "Spring Blooming Wildflowers" presented by Sid Taylor. Sid has been with the Fl. Dept. of Agriculture since 1993 and is the Resident Park Naturalist at Tillis Hill in Citrus County. Come see a sampler of our Central Florida spring blooming wildflowers with an introduction to families and the significance of species. After our cold winter we'll be glad to see spring flowers and she will teach us what to call them and why!

April 18th Field Trip: Sunday at 10am: Tillis Hill in Citrus County - details page 2.

April 24th: Nature Coast Chapter Plant Sale at Earth Day at Crew's Lake Park - 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. - details below.

EARTH DAY AT CREW'S LAKE PARK - SAT. APRIL 24TH: 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Nature Coast Chapter Florida Native Plant Sale : Park located at 16739 Crew's Lake Dr., Spring Hill 34610 (off Shady Hills Rd. between Hwy 52 & County Line Rd.)

This is a great family day with activities for the kids. We will have free literature, seed kits for kids, plus native plants, wildflower seeds and books for sale. **Volunteer sign-up sheet at March & April meetings.** or contact Co-ordinator: Mary Horan at: 727-849-2335 or e-mail at: horansmo@earthlink.net Plants and supplies need to be at the park by 8 a.m. Our usual location is left of the covered pavilion.

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New Members
Thomas Crennan
Jonnie Spittle

Renewed Members

Nancy Brown Doris Bareiss
Nancy Desmond Judy Gregory
Kay Haywood Sharon Holding
Sandra Vanno Susan Vaughn

Announcements

Position openings:

Chapter Representative: call Julie Wert for details on duties.

Newsletter Editor: contact Mary Horan - she will help her replacement with learning how to do this but needs to step down after 5 years.

Field Trip Information

March 14th Field Trip: Sunday at 10am: Werner-Boyce State Park in Pasco County

After observing examples of invasive plants near the parking area, we'll walk a trail passing through several natural communities including uplands, wetlands, and salt barren. Conditions could be wet and/or muddy in places, but otherwise not difficult. The walk should take about two hours. There are no facilities. Directions: Meet at the far west end of SR52 (west of US19) at 10 am.

April 18th Field Trip: Sunday at 10am: Tillis Hill in Citrus County

Sid Taylor will take us to a sandhill area that was burned in January, so it should be lush with new growth & wildflowers. We may also see red-cockaded woodpeckers and fox squirrels. Pack a bag lunch, and we'll eat in the picnic area after our 2 hour walkabout. Directions: Tillis Hill is located in Citrus County at 925 W. Stage Coach Dr. (CR491) Inverness, 34452. To carpool from west Pasco, meet at 8:45 am in the strip plaza on the NE corner of US19 & SR52 near Save-a-Lot. (NOTE NEW LOCATION!)

Upper Cotee River Preserve Project: Volunteers Needed
Spring Planting Day! Saturday, April 17, 9 AM till finished.

Our chapter will add dozens of flowering perennials and groundcovers, plus some shrubs and flowering trees, to complete our landscape project for the front yard of the nature center. Please call/email Peggy Gretchen to volunteer: 813-991-4812; herculesmpg@earthlink.net. Thank you for your help!



FRINGETREE by Peggy A. Gretchen, FNPS Member, Pasco MasterGardener

Botanical Name: Chionanthus virginicus

Common Name: Fringetree, White Fringetree, Old-Man's Beard

Family: Oleaceae (Olive)

Type of Plant: Native small deciduous flowering tree, often multi-trunked, with grayish, slightly fissured bark, and a rounded crown. Slow growing, and sometimes retains shrub-like stature. **Height:** 15 – 30 ft. **Width:** 8 – 20 ft.

How to Identify: **Leaves:** Simple, opposite, entire, oval or elliptic, 3 – 8 in. long and mostly at the tips of branches. New leaves appear in late spring and drop in early fall.

Flowers: Showy clusters of creamy white, fragrant, fringe-like or strap-like petals (4); borne in loose, hanging panicles before leaves appear in spring. Common names derived from appearance of flowers.

Flowering Time: Early spring – summer. Usually late March – April – May. **Fruit:** A green, turning dark blue drupe (fleshy, one seed) when mature, similar to an olive. Borne in hanging clusters, each fruit ½ - ¾ in., in summer and fall.

Habitat: Wet hammocks, floodplain forests, stream banks, and sometimes sandy uplands.

Distribution: Pennsylvania and New Jersey southward to North Florida and Central Florida and west to Texas. **Hardiness Zones:** 3 – 9/10.

Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit: Fringetree is a long used and much loved southern landscape plant. Highly prized for its showy spring display, followed by clusters of olive-like fruit which attracts many birds and other wildlife. Useful as a small specimen tree or shrub, grouped in borders, and along foundations. May be used in a naturalistic landscape, especially along edges of wooded canopy, or for showy roadside plantings.

Cultivation: Hardy **Soil:** Fertile, moist to well-drained, acidic with pH 5.5 – 6.5. **Light:** Full sun – part sun. Full sun for best flowering; often occurs naturally in shady sites. **Water:** Moist conditions preferred, but quite drought tolerant. **Miscellaneous:** Slow-growing, but moderately long-lived – well over fifty years.

Comment: Pygmy Fringetree (*C. pygmaeus*) is a closely related species that is endemic to Central Florida scrub and also used for landscaping. It is much smaller than *C. virginicus*, usually not exceeding 12 ft. in height, and has smaller flowers. It occurs naturally in well-drained, deep sandy soils.

Propagation: By seed (stratified or double-stratified) and grafts. With difficulty by cuttings (softwood).

Availability: See your Association of Florida Native Nurseries (AFNN) Directory!

References:

Haehle, Robert G. and Joan Brookwell, Native Florida Plants, Houston, TX, Gulf Pub. Co., 1999.

Huegel, Craig N., Florida Plants for Wildlife, Orlando, FL, FNPS, 1995.

Nelson, Gil, Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants, Gainesville, FL, Univ. Press of FL, 2003.

Taylor, Walter Kingsley, The Guide to Florida Wildflowers, Dallas, TX, Taylor Pub. Co., 1992.

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

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

Florida Native Plant Society

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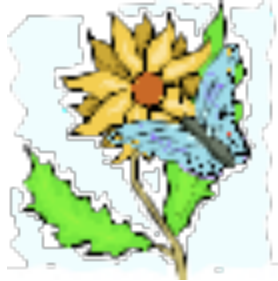
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**NEXT NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE: April 11th**

March for Parks

NCC Florida Native Plant Sale

Saturday, March 13th: Noon - 4 p.m. @ Cabin #1

*J.B. Starkey Wilderness Park, 10500 Wilderness Park Blvd.
New Port Richey, FL 34655*

INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

This is a good way to see lots of native plants and learn about them. The sign up sheet will still be at the March meeting or contact sale coordinator Peggy Gretchen at (813)991-4812 or by e-mail at: herculesmpg@earthlink.net)

Volunteers should plan to be at Cabin #1 on the cabin loop area of the park by 9:30 a.m. to help set up. From Highway 52 or 54 take Little Road to DeCubellis Rd. and go east to Starkey Blvd. Turn right and go to first street (Wilderness Park Blvd.) and turn left. Go into park to Ed. Center/kiosk and turn right and make next right to go the cabin area. After dropping off plants, wagons, supplies remove your car to the parking area across from the gate. **There is no parking in the cabin loop area.**

“The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.”

Nature Coast Chapter of FNPS

Newsletter Publication

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New Port Richey, FL 34652

