The Nature Coastline

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

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2019

In this issue:

Meetings/Programs
By Pat Kelly

In The Spotlight

Pollen Packin Mamas
By John Lampkin

Lessons from the Landscape
By Julie Wert

Field Trips /Calendar

Plant Profile:
Elliott's Aster
(Symphyotrichum elliottii)

A Message from the President

Learn, meet new friends with like interests and have some fun…….

As we know September and October is the height of hurricane season. Hopefully, after all the rain we have had this summer, the hurricanes will pass us by. Our landscapes have become jungles and the ground is saturated. But... wildlife loves it! The cacophony of the frogs at night is like a crazy concert. It is fun trying to name some of the sounds. Other critters that are thriving in my yard are the nasty lubber grasshoppers and grubs. The raccoons have appreciated the grubs but between the two much of my groundcover and new plantings have been upended or destroyed. The numerous colorful pollinators are having a great time and the birds are chowing down on all the berries so I know the native plants are doing their job.

Isn't it amazing to watch the change in your landscape from one year to the next? Nothing seems to stay the same. What you planted last year has decided to move elsewhere. Professional landscapers tell us to have a plan. Has a native plant enthusiast ever been able to keep to a plan? One thing I noticed about our members is that we are flexible and we just want MORE. If a plant does not make it in the garden, we put something else in. And then watch out; a million of them will grow. This is how we get so many lovely plants for our monthly auction. Nature thanks all of you for being such enthusiastic native plant growers. And thank you for being Nature Coast Chapter Members.

Inside the newsletter: Check out the outreach activities for the fall. Think about volunteering for one of them near you. We learn when we volunteer and we meet great people as we spread the word about the importance of Florida native plants.

Jonnie Spitler, president NCC

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:

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.

Chapter website: pasconativeplants.org
Chapter E-mail: naturecoastfnps@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/PascoNativePlants
twitter.com/NatureCoastFNPS
FNPS website: http://www.fnps.org/

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,

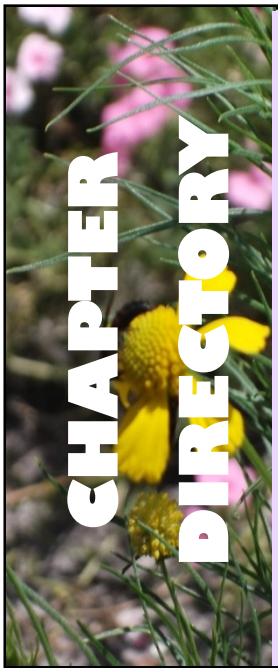
The Society fulfills its mission through:

- 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 FNPS.org and click on "Join/Support" at the upper right-hand corner of screen. Print form, complete, and mail form to FNPS, or call. You may also join at a chapter meeting.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS
Gold $500
Patron $250
Business $150
Non-Profit $150
Supporting $100
Household $50
Individual $35
Full Time Student $15

OR BOOST YOUR SUPPORT by renewing as a Sustaining Member -- easy $10 monthly payments automatically and securely charged to your credit card. CREDIT CARD PAYMENT REQUIRED. No checks/invoicing. Sustaining membership remains in effect as long as you wish and your card number is valid.



OFFICERS:

President:	Jonnie Spitler	813.435.8143	jspitler1120@gmail.com
Vice President:	Mary Ellen Gotto	727.264.8701	mefgotoh@aol.com
Treasurer:	Peter Gonzalez	813.416.2375	petergonzalez0205@gmail.com
Secretary & Website Coordinator:	Cheryl McAloon	813.928.7724	cherylmcaloon@me.com
Chapter Representative, Field Trip Chair & Facebook Administrator:	Gail Parsons	gailpar1@verizon.net	813.920.2730

CHAIRPERSONS:

Newsletter Editor:	Karen Wright	813.468.9201	jwrigh15@tampabay.rr.com
Publicity Chair:	Sandra Vanno	727.207.1853	svanno@tampabay.rr.com
Membership:	Deb Tribbey	727.857.6583	bdtrib@hotmail.com
Library Chair:	Sharon Holding	727.247.7367	shrnholding@gmail.com
Refreshments:	Rebecca Dance	813.368.9041	rstarrdance@aol.com
Conservation Chair:	Jan Howie	727.848.7689	janicehowie@aol.com
Program Chair:	Pat Kelly	352.424.2224	patriciak03@gmail.com
Plant Sale Coordinator:	Peggy Gretchen	813.991.4812	herculesmpg@hotmail.com
Volunteer Coordinator:	Jean Nixon		giginixon@gmail.com

Meetings/Programs

SEPTEMBER 10, 7 PM

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Speaker: Christine Rowland

Learn more about this most common local Hummingbird, its life, habits and migration. Want to attract them to your garden? We'll cover their favorite native plants as well as best practices for hummingbird feeders. Want to help researchers learn more about these hummingbirds? Discover ways you can help with their study and conservation. Christine will also provide an introduction to the Audubon Plants for Birds program.

Christine Rowland is the President of West Pasco Audubon, our local chapter of the National Audubon Society. Christine inherited her interest in birds from her father who, at 91, just bought another pair of bird watching binoculars. She started attending the West Audubon Society meetings after she and her husband moved to Florida from New York City where she was a High School teacher. Christine has been president of the West Pasco Audubon Society since January of this year.

OCTOBER 8, 7 PM

The Importance of Native Plants

Speaker: Craig Huegel

Developed landscapes are intricately connected to the world around us, yet for too long we have not fully grasped their ecological importance or their role in preserving biodiversity. Aesthetics is an important consideration, but we need to rethink our concept of what that constitutes. Plants form the foundation of an ecological landscape and native plants fulfill that role in ways most non-natives can't.

Craig Huegel, PhD is a wildlife biologist with a special interest in plants and their role in creating ecological landscapes in developed areas. He helped found the Urban Wildlife Cooperative Extension Program at the University of Florida and served as the Environmental Lands Division Director for Pinellas County before working as an environmental consultant and educator. He currently teaches in the Biology Departments at St Petersburg College and the University of Tampa. He has written five books on native plants and landscaping and his sixth, The Biology of Plants: An Introduction to How Plants Work, was recently published by the University of Florida Press

With Sympathy

We mourn the passing of John Robinson, husband of Nancy Heusted and faithful member and volunteer of our chapter. Without being asked, John brought his utility vehicle to every plant sale to help move the plants people bought to their cars. Our heartfelt sympathy to Nancy for her loss.

In the Spotlight

Member Spotlight is on James Bright

Five year member of Florida Native Plant Society Nature Coast Chapter (my plant family!)

How did your interest in native plants begin? I have always been interested in plants, animals and nature, having worked in some varied parts of the nursery and landscape business but the way things were done seemed to do more harm than good for the environment. I started seeing the inherent flaws of the chemicals and fertilizers excessively used, the excessive water used then polluted and the pollution created by all of the power equipment used in maintaining the landscapes full of exotic or non-native plants that really contributed nothing back to the local ecosystem. As my career progressed, I ended up in construction and moving to Florida. I will say that seeing what is happening from a construction point of view, added clarity to the need for responsible handling of any green space that is left. These spaces need to provide food and refuge for the birds, insects, pollinators and animals. I work for Preferred Materials in Odessa, a division of Oldcastle Materials. Our company has partnered with the Wild Life Habitat Council who has helped us and many other companies create, manage and monitor many habitat restoration projects. The projects can be tracts of 1000's of acres to a city garden. The projects all are based on native habitat restoration or enhancement and community involvement through education. The dedication and work done by the employees of the many companies that have chosen to start giving back to the communities and environment is absolutely inspiring. My long time love for plants was known by my boss, whom I have known for over 20 years. He came to me and asked me to head the Wildlife Habitat Council project for our facility in Odessa. This is where I started learning about native plants and the need for education and restoration.

Describe some of your achievements: Our certified native garden project started with over 3000 native plants, 600 feet of pervious concrete walk ways and a lot of mulch. This project has had its highs and lows and is in a state of change to make it more manageable. The garden has, on average, 85 varieties of native plants and sees scores of birds, animals and pollinators every year. We even have hives of bees that move to our site because of the abundant food source. We have introduced countless natives back to an area that was mowed turf. We have added a great way-station and or home for so many of our native pollinators. One year, we hatched in excess of 100 new monarchs from a milkweed project.

Describe one of your native plants disasters you would like to share with others. The vision for this garden was much larger than we had the volunteer resources to maintain once we installed it. It has been a project full of lessons for the next time. From the stand point of a nice walk through garden as it was envisioned this project was a failure. The failure was due to the size of the project and Florida really never stops growing. From an ecological point of view, this garden is a resounding success.

What are your favorite native plants? Blue-eyed grass is one of my favorites. Tampa Vervain is a beautiful ground cover. Giant Porterweed is a great pollinator and it blooms most of the year. Rouge plant is a strong pollinator and keeps a polite size and shape. Beautyberry is a favorite from childhood. Bald Cypress stands are always an interesting feature of the natural landscape. Long Leaf Pines and Palmettos are classic Florida but not used as often.

What advice can you give to other native plants enthusiasts? Lessons learned universal to all gardeners:

1. Start a project in sections and prepare the site completely before the first plant is tucked into the soil.
2. Do your research about what varieties of natives will fulfill your goal for your garden. Take into consideration sun exposure, soil moisture, soil condition, size of your area and what kinds of creatures you are wanting to attract.
3. Native plants may not stay where you put them. They will seed or run to a place that they like. Each plant evolved to a specific purpose and conditions so they will always do better serving the purpose for which they evolved.
4. Understand the true nature and growth patterns of the plants you want to put in. For many plants, native or exotic, once you plant them, you will forever have them. Sunshine Mimosa OMG!!!

"Pollen-packin' Mamas"

Images and text by John Lampkin

Florida is home to well over 300 bee species so understanding plant/bee ecology might seem like an enormous challenge—and it is! However, there are only six families and only three are common state-wide: Apidae, the honey, bumble, cuckoos and kin; Halictidae, the "sweat" bees and kin; and Megachilidae, the leaf-cutters and mason bees and kin. Thus, in terms of some basic bee identification there is hope, even for the bumbling novice (so to speak).

Many female members of these three families can be recognized in the field by the unique ways in which they gather and transport pollen to their nests to feed their offspring. Honeybees and bumblebees (Apidae) collect and often moisten pollen with a complex array of mouthparts, then pass it rearwards where it is crammed into expandable "baskets" called corbiculae on their hind leg tibias. Voila, saddlebags:

Photo on left

Sweat bees (Halictidae), lack corbiculae but instead have scopae, packets of coarse branched hairs on hind legs and abdomen which become electrostatically charged in flight. A common halictidae workflow is similar to the apidae's. Here, a bee is holding a moistened pollen clump with its foreleg tarsus. Photo on right

Look at that forest of white pollen in the thistle! The anthers without white caps have had the pollen harvested. Here a bee is making the transfer to the scope. Photo on left

Fully loaded, scopae resemble saddlebags, but note that they are on the femurs, not the tibia. Photo on right

For a nice video of a *Lassioglossum sp*. (sweat bee) making the transfer from mouth to foreleg to middle leg to scopa, watch this, starting at about 16 seconds in. The coordinated move takes less than a second!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvyOf7XcPeE
[Shirley-set hot link]

The Megachilidae use a different method of gleaning pollen. The charged scopae are on the abdomen, not the legs, and a "belly dance" against the anthers attracts and traps the pollen giving the loaded bees a distinctive sway-backed posture.

What about bees lacking a pollen transport method? For the most part, those are kleptoparasitic species or males, which present their own set of ID challenges. So for today we are content to salute these hard-working ladies who are so vital to the health of our native plant communities. Photo on left

Lessons from the Landscape By Julie Wert

In 2013, I had a Passiflora pallens growing on my vegetable garden fence. My friend Carol, a Passionfruit enthusiast and skillful photographer with a remarkable memory, sent me a photo she had taken, as proof. I asked her about it because I found a P. pallens growing 200 feet from the garden, up the side of the house to the second story roof. I immediately thought of Carol, thinking she had given me a seed and I forgot I had planted it. Normal stuff for me. However, Carol remembered I had torn it out because it was taking over.

The Atlas of Florida Plants tells me P. pallens, Pale Passionvine or Pineland Passionvine, is only vouchered in the four most southern counties of Florida. It's also state endangered, found in places like Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, in habitats like bayheads, coastal berms and strand swamps. Craig Huegel speculates in his excellent blog, Native Florida Wildflowers, that Pale Passionvine may not be cold tolerant.

So how did this plant, rare in our part of the state, travel 200 feet over 6 years and pop up on a trellis to grow 30 feet up, all the while disguising itself as the vine that formerly covered the space? It produced three beautiful flowers and subsequent fruit before finally being noticed.

Research has shown plants have many traits previously attributed only to the animal kingdom. We know they communicate with other plants with many methods, for many reasons. They tell time, using circadian cues to help them adapt to their changing environment. They have chemical and physical defenses for the hazards of life as a plant. Reading about these significant abilities makes the idea that a plant could decide on a better place to live, and then move there over a six year time period, seem less improbable.

If a person walks by a plant many times, failing to remark on its unusual nature, is that plant disguising itself? Or is the person merely inattentive? I believe skunk vine and Bidens can alter their appearance enough to avoid being pulled as a weed, at least for the time a human eye and hands are near. Plants are remarkable organisms, but do require patience and persistence to observe them. The rewards are always interesting, even with the surprising conclusion you really aren't in charge. But that's OK, it's still fun and satisfying enough to practice every day.

Photo by Carol Gula

Photo by Julie Wert

UF/IFAS Pasco Extension Programs

Aug 08, 2019

8-8-19 Propagating from Seeds #101

New Port Richey Library 5939 Main Street New Port Richey, FL 34652

Attractive and productive gardens are attainable on a budget. Join us at this FREE UF/IFAS Pasco County Extension seminar to learn some tricks of the trade to successfully germinate seeds and raise the seedlings to beautiful plants.

Registration recommended.

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/8-8-19-propagating-from-seeds-101-tickets-62058333145

Sep 07, 2019

9-7-19 Hummingbirds in the Garden

One Stop Shop (formerly Stallings Bldg.)
15029 14th Street Dade City, Florida

Learn from an accomplished hummingbird lover and birder how to attract these unique birds to your yard, including species that rarely make Florida their home. This seminar will highlight the best plants, trees and shrubs as well as where to locate them. The importance of feed and water to help you create the perfect hummingbird home. Join us at this FREE UF/IFAS Pasco county Extension seminar.

Registration recommended.

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/9-7-19-hummingbirds-in-the-garden-tickets-

The Dade City Youth Council and the Dade City Garden Club are sponsoring a free, fun, family event to aimed to educate and celebrate the Monarch Butterfly in Dade City, FL. The event will feature environmental educators, informational booths, presentations, native plant sale, and hands on activities for the kids!

Member Spotlight

We want to shine a spotlight on you

Show off your native plant garden

Share your experiences with members

Contact Karen Wright to schedule and she will take photos and write a short article for the newsletter.

jwrigh15@tampabay.rr.com

Field Trips

Sunday September 22, 9:30am Colt Creek State Park, 16000 SR 471, Lakeland, FL 33809

Katie MacMillen, our own wildflower guru, will guide us for a fun walk just as all the fall wildflowers are beginning to bloom. The park offers over 12 miles of beautiful, multi-use trails and meanders through pine flatwoods around cypress domes, bottomland forests and pastures. Three tributaries flow through the park and there are 3 lakes. We may come across some native wildlife including Bald Eagle. There have been 150 bird species and 79 butterfly species spotted in one year alone. Bring your camera and wear good shoes because there may still be some wet spots from our wet summer. Carry bug spray, water, and maybe your favorite wildflower book. We will decide if we want to picnic or go out to lunch, TBD.

Carpooling will be from Big Lots parking lot in Land O' Lakes at 8:30am Sunday, Sept 22nd. If you drive yourself we will meet at the Main Entrance at 9:30 and drive to the appropriate parking lot.

Colt Creek State Park is south of the Withlacoochee River, 16 miles north of Lakeland off State Road 471. (Directions: From I-75 take exit 301 and proceed east 13 miles, turn right onto SR471. The entrance is 3.8 miles north of US98 and 17 Miles south of SR50.

Sunday October 13, 10am, Lake Lisa Park, 7021 Maplehurst Dr. Port Richey 34668

Sharon Holding, one of our long term Nature Coast Chapter members has taken Lake Lisa under her wing and planted several beds of native plants transforming the park into a beautiful landscape. She works on it weekly and has planted many unusual natives. This trip will inspire our members in our own landscapes and show our support to Sharon for the hard work and planning she has done.

And don't forget, the following week is our plant sale where you can acquire some of the plants Sharon will point out to us. We will meet at the parking lot by the playground at 10am. Call Sharon with questions at 727-619-8399.

Calendar of Events

September 3: Nature Coast Chapter Board Meeting, 2pm at the Heritage Park Community Center, Land O' Lakes. Everyone is welcome. Your ideas and participation are invaluable to our chapter.

October 5: 365 Festival, 12200 Main Street San Antonio, FL 9am-12 noon

October 12: Monarch Butterfly Festival, Hibiscus Park, 7th Street & Bougainvillea Ave., Dade City 10am-3pm

October 19: Nature Coast Chapter Fall Plant Sale, Heritage Park 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd, Land O' Lakes

November 9: Native Plants 101 with Mary Ellen Gotto 10am - 12 noon at the Land O' Lakes Heritage Park Center. Mary Ellen will define what a native plant is and why we should use native plants both for conserving natural resources (water, soil) and sustaining wildlife. She will talk about purchasing and planting native plants and container gardening for those who are unable to "get down" and dig in the soil. Mary Ellen will also mention how she worked around the rules about plantings in her deed-restricted subdivision. There will be photos of her garden plants and handouts.

November 16: Upcycle Festival 10am-5pm Heritage Park
5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd, Land O' Lakes

December 7: FNPS 3 Chapter Mini-Conference, Brooker Creek 9am-3pm

December 10: Nature Coast Chapter Xmas Party and silent auction - Start thinking about your donation. Jean Nixon and Nancy Heusted are co-chairs.

January 4, 2020: Audubon and Nature Coast Chapter combined presentation, Starkey Park.

ELLIOTT'S ASTER

By Peggy A. Gretchen
FNPS Member
Pasco Master Gardener

Botanical Name: Symphyotrichum elliottii, formerly known as Aster elliottii
Common Name: Elliott's Aster
Family: Asteraceae

Type of Plant: Native, erect, deciduous, long-lived herbaceous perennial wildflower/groundcover. Multi-branched with leafy stems and densely flowered crown. Forms dense colonies by way of slender, creeping underground rhizomes. Dormant in winter. Height: usually 3 – 5 ft., up to 8 ft. in bloom. Width: Suckers aggressively and spreads to form dense colonies.

How to Identify:
Leaves: Alternate, simple, obovate to oblanceolate, toothed margins; slightly rough to the touch above and smooth below. Lower leaves 3/8 – 1.5 in. wide.

Flowers: Numerous showy heads on terminal many-branched leafy stems with lavender-pink to white or violet-purple ray florets and yellow to yellow-orange/red disk florets. About 1 in. diameter. Several rows of overlapping green-tipped bracts characteristic of asters. Mildly fragrant. Borne in dense clusters across the crown.

Flowering Time: Summer – Late Fall, usually September – November.

Fruit: A flattened achene (one-seeded, non-splitting, hard, with thin wall separable from seed) topped by pappus (modified calyx) of numerous fine bristles found in Asteraceae. Will self-seed.

Habitat: Occasionally found in bogs and swamps, freshwater or brackish marshes, roadside ditches, and other wet areas, such as edges of wet thickets, wet flatwoods and hammocks, and along pond edges.

Distribution: Nearly throughout Florida peninsula and west to central panhandle. Also, coastal plain of the Carolinas and Georgia and west to Louisiana and north to Virginia. Hardiness Zones: 8A – 10B/11A

Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit: This showy, robust aster makes a spectacular display in moist to wet areas with sufficient sun. Give it plenty of room and plant behind shorter plants in a bed or border. Good choice for naturalistic landscapes and for pond edges. Suckers may be a problem in more formal landscapes, unless you are prepared to thin them regularly during the growing season. Excellent nectar and pollen plant for many butterflies, native bees, and other pollinators. Potentially a larval plant for the Pearl Crescent Butterfly.

Cultivation:
Soil: Sandy to organic, fertile.
Light: Full sun (best for flowering and compact habit) to partial sun. If grown in shady areas will become leggy and fall over.
Water: Moist – Wet. Can tolerate moderately dry once established.
Miscellaneous: Forms dense colonies. Allow room to spread or be prepared to remove suckers (easy to do). Will self-seed. May prune to maintain shape. Not salt-tolerant.
Propagation: By seed or root division. Sow seed in the fall.
Availability: Florida native plant sales and Florida native nurseries. See www.plantrealflorida.org! For seeds, see the Florida Wildflowers Growers Cooperative at www.floridawildflowers.com

Note: Of the 26 species of Aster native to Florida, several (including Elliott's) are commercially available and are well-suited for use in the landscape.

References:Florida Native Plant Society website: FNPS.org.

Huegel, Craig N., Native Wildflowers and Other Groundcovers for Florida Landscapes, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2012.

Minno, Marc C., Jerry F. Butler, and Donald W. Hall, Florida Butterfly Caterpillars and their Host Plants, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2005.

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

Taylor, Walter Kingsley, The Guide to Florida Wildflowers, Dallas, Texas, Taylor Publishing Co., 1992.

Tobe, Dr. John D. et al., Florida Wetland Plants An Identification Manual, Tallahassee, Florida, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 1998.

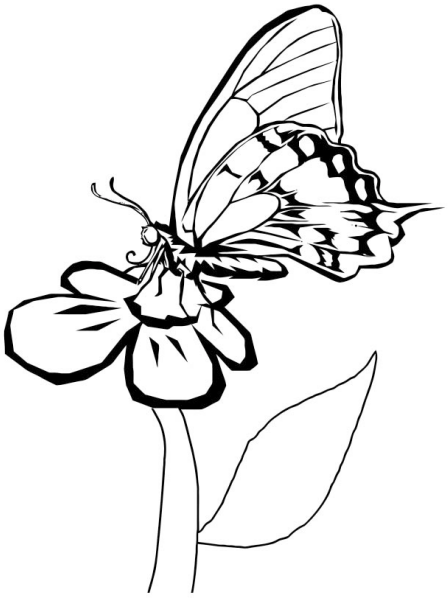
Traas, Pamela F., Gardening for Florida's Butterflies, St. Petersburg, Florida, Great Outdoors Publishing Company, 1999.

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

http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/photo.aspx?ID=1528 Wunderlin, R. P., B. F. Hansen, A. R. Franck, and F. B. Essig. 2018. *Atlas of Florida Plants* (http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/). [S. M. Landry and K. N. Campbell (application development), USF Water Institute.] Institute for Systematic Botany, University of South Florida, Tampa.

Nature Coast Chapter
Florida Native Plant Society

Native Plant Sale



Land O'Lakes Heritage Park

5401 Land O Lakes Blvd (US 41)
Land O Lakes, FL 34639

Sat. - Oct 19

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

- ***Large selection of quality nursery grown plants***
- ***Native plant books, literature & nursery info***
- ***Members on site to answer questions***
- ***Plant profile for each plant purchased***
- ***Carts for plant transportation***
- ***Master Gardener Information table***

Web Sites: Florida Native Plant Society: ***fnps.org***
Nature Coast Chapter: ***pasconativeplants.org***
Facebook.com/PascoNativePlants/
Florida Association of Native Nurseries: ***fann.org***