



THE PAWPAW PRESS

Newsletter of the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society: January 2016

JANUARY MEETING

Florida's bounty of unique plants

At our January meeting, Pawpaw chapter members were treated to Paul Rebmann's presentation and talk, "Only in Florida."

Paul has spent many years collecting photos of plants and animals around our state. What makes this presentation so special is it deals with plants and some animals

that are found only in our state. We learned that Florida ranks fourth in the nation with so many endemic plants due to our geographic isolation as a peninsula as well as soil variations. Paul included pictures and explanations of our own little mascot, *Deeringothamnus rugelii*, also known as Rugel's false pawpaw.



We enjoyed learning how some of these plants got their names. Members also wanted to know how Paul captured some of

these photos, since many of them are so rare and often hard to spot. This is where Paul's sense of adventure kicked in and he delighted the crowd by sharing some of his experiences.

Paul will present "Only in Florida" this May at the conference in Daytona Beach. His photos will be available for purchase in the vendors' part of the show. For more information about Paul's photography, please see wildflphoto.com or paul-rebmann.pixels.com.

—Story and photo by Sande Habali

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Members will make year memorable

2016 is going to be an exciting year for our chapter. As everyone (hopefully) knows, we are the FNPS 2016 Conference host chapter. Things are rolling along but we are going to need additional help from our chapter's members. Whether it's helping on field trips, the meetings, or other activ-

ities associated with the conference, it will be up to each of us to ensure that we give the time and effort to make this the best conference ever!

Due to personal matters, Marvette Bagwell is stepping down from the conference chair. I want to thank Don Spence for taking over as chairper-

son. You'll hear more of how you can help within the next few weeks as the activities are finalized.

Finally, on behalf of Marvette and myself, we would like to thank everyone for their cards and thoughtfulness after the passing of her father, Marvin Panch.

—Kevin Bagwell

UPCOMING EVENTS: FEBRUARY

8

Pawpaw meeting: Volusia County recruits citizens for invasive plant removal

20

Wild Persimmon Trail field trip. Contact Peggy Yokubonus: pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP

A filling breakfast and way to walk it off

The Feb. 20 field trip will begin with a cook-your-own pancake breakfast at the Old Spanish Sugar Mill Grill and Griddle House in DeLeon Springs State Park. With stomachs full, we will begin a 4.5-mile hike on the park's Wild Persimmon Trail, which should actually be called the wild anise trail due to the predominance of so much fragrant *Illicium parviflorum* growing along the hydric hammock trail.

Be warned, there are numerous roots and narrow, low foot-bridge

spans to negotiate. Also, use insect repellent before starting the hike. Despite the cool weather, many hammocks have hungry ticks waiting for passers-by this time of year.

Breakfast reservations are required, and limited to 20. To reserve your breakfast spot, please contact Peggy Yokubonus at pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com or (386) 316-4085.

All must be in the park by 9 a.m. and ready to enter the Old Spanish Mill Restaurant by 9:15 a.m.

For the trail walk, meet at 10:00 a.m. at De-



Leon Springs State Park's visitor's center, north of the spring pool. As noted above, the trail walk should be considered moderate to challenging due to uneven trail and length of the walk.

Bring hiking stick, bug spray and drinking water.

Expect to pay the state

park entry fee of \$6 per car. (Breakfast prices include 18% gratuity.)

Reservations to leader: Peggy Yokubonus, (386) 316-4085 or pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com

Carpool coordinator: Sonya Guidry, (386) 690-1797 or guidry.sonya@gmail.com

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Snow squarestem is a year-round pollinator magnet

January's plant of the month was a dwarf variety of *Melanthera nivea*, commonly known as snow squarestem or salt and pepper. A robust perennial wildflower found throughout the state of Florida, *Melanthera nivea* is a bee and butterfly magnet, attracting numerous pollinators to your yard. The dwarf variety tops out at 24 inches in height and just as wide. White flowers adorn the plant throughout the year.

Snow squarestem grows well in full to part sun with minimal water



once established. It is also considered moderately salt tolerant. Native

habitats include edges of upland hardwood forests, hydric hammocks, mar-

itime hammocks, pine flatwoods, pine-oak-hickory woods, calcareous hammocks, coastal hammocks, and open areas.

It can get leggy during certain times of the year. If it does, don't be afraid to trim it back—it will recover beautifully.

Sande Habali was the winner of the plant raffle this month, adding a wonderful specimen of *Melanthera nivea* to her landscape.

—Story and photo by Kevin Bagwell



JANUARY FIELD TRIP

Ponce Inlet's paths reveal treasures

Ray Jarrett organized 21 people into carpools to avoid unnecessary traffic and parking issues. First stop was Ponce Preserve, Ponce Inlet's largest park, with approximately 41 acres. It stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Halifax River and is the home of the Green Mound Archaeological Site, an ancient Indian midden. Previously, Green Mound stood 50 tall, before much of it was hauled away for road-building.

In the 1920s, botanist John Kunkel Small commented that this spot was where the flora of the north met that of the south. He noted a large oak, with branches 2 feet in diameter, growing horizontal to the earth rather

than vertical.

Nearly 100 years later, the famous oak of Green Mound is even more impressive. Other plants seen nearby were snow-berry, marlberry, white stopper, frostweed, and wild coffee.

Participants traveled the ocean trail over a gnarled oak path to the palmetto-covered secondary dune. The park also has an entrance at Peninsula Drive to walk a boardwalk (completely handicapped accessible) and observe a saltwater marsh and a variety of mangroves. The marsh offers a scenic vista all the way to the river without a condo in sight!

Around the corner from the famous Ponce



Inlet Lighthouse is the Marine Science Center. Here, we found a heavily shaded hammock trail and a native plant garden constructed by Eagle Scouts. The day ended with a lunch at a nearby

restaurant.

No one attending Ray's FNPS conference field trip will come away disappointed!

—Story by Sonya Guidry, photos by Sonya and Warren Reynolds

PAWPAW PROTECTORS

Chapter's mascot gets a helping hand

Pawpaw members are very protective of their little mascot, *Deeringothamnus rugelii*, since it is only found in certain areas of Volusia County.

Thanks to unusual temperatures, some Rugel's pawpaws were spotted blooming in New Smyrna Beach, offering a chance to collect fruit and replant seed in a site that seemed to be favorable for this endemic plant to survive. Pawpaw members Sonya



Guidry and Dot Backes followed the advice of Dr. Eliane Norman, a retired Stetson University professor and field expert for the Rugel's pawpaw.

Dr. Norman has had success with germinating seeds from green fruit and recommended not waiting until the fruit began to wither on the stem. She also said planting would be more successful when immediately followed by rain. So, taking advantage of a predicted rainy cold front, Sonya and Dot harvested the fruit early in the morning, carefully removed the seeds and then replanted them in separate prepared spots.

It appears that intermittent mowing under power lines has been beneficial to Rugel's pawpaws in this area, keeping them from being overgrown by



other competing woody plant species. It is also helpful that this small population happens to occur along a right-of-way where development is not expected to kill it by paving over it.

Both the existing

mother-plants and the newly sown seed sites were marked for future follow-up.

So, we have an on-going experimental Rugel's project thanks to Sonya and Dot!—*Story and photos by Sonya Guidry*

STUDENT SCIENTISTS

3 students honored for science projects

The Pawpaw chapter on January 30 honored three students participating in the Tomoka Region Science Fair at Spruce Creek High School. Ria Gupta received the chapter's main award for work on dissolved oxygen in the Tomoka River. Ria will re-

ceive a Florida wildflower book, Palmetto magazine, a cash award of \$60, and student membership to FNPS.

Chapter representatives Danny Young, Don Spence, and Sonya Guidry felt that two other student projects were worthy

of honorable mentions. Those winners are Emily Keith for best materials for "bots" to use in pollination and Zane Wood for his study on "How does soil affect pH of water".

Pawpaw congratulates these young scientists.

—*Sonya Guidry*

FNPS CONFERENCE 2016

Donations needed for silent auction

Don't forget that one of the biggest fund raisers to support the FNPS annual conference is the silent auction. Please contact Ray Jarrett with any items that you wish to donate: rayjarrett1@gmail.com; phone: 386-295-0481.