



THE PAWPAW PRESS

Newsletter of the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

FEBRUARY MEETING

Sending a welcoming message to butterflies

Pawpaw members and visitors were treated to a pre-Valentine's Day talk by Jon Pospisil. Jon shared his personal experiences and research in photo form about plants, vines, ground coverings, and grasses that appeal to butterflies. Couples went home with a plant, provided by Jon, to begin their own activities with butterflies and other pollinators. In addition, Jon shared his list of plants



from his talk so folks may go out and get their gardens ready for spring. Jon also encouraged

those who are not yet members of the Florida Native Plant Society, to choose this group as a way to help conservation.

The Pawpaw chapter is most grateful to Jon Pospisil for his generosity in providing advertising for our meeting and offering an incentive to get new people out on a rainy evening. He sets an example for all members to continue to "pollinate" the missions of the Florida Native Plant Society.

—Sande Habali

ACTION ALERT

A threat to Tiger Bay

Tiger Bay State Forest west of Daytona contains a substantial portion of the known populations of our namesake Rugel's pawpaw, *Deeringothamnus rugelii*. A bill has been filed in the Florida State Legislature that, if passed, would require allowing off-road vehicles on all forest roads (currently most forest roads are closed to non-Forest Service traffic) and on a certain portion of forest land.

These vehicles can cause extensive

damage to both forest roads (especially during wet conditions) and habitat.

The Florida Forest Service, Volusia County Council, and many concerned citizens have acknowledged that serious environmental concerns outweigh benefits of off-road vehicle use in Tiger Bay State Forest.

The chapter encourages you to contact your state legislator about attempts to override the Forest Service's position against off-road vehicles in Tiger Bay.

If you don't know your district, see: volusiaelections.org/PublicOfficials/state.htm

UPCOMING EVENTS: MARCH

9

Pawpaw Meeting: Native orchids, presented by Mike Parsons

14

Field trip to Hontoon Island. Contact Renee Luedke: reneeledke@bellsouth.net

Chapter sponsors member's study

Pawpaw member Renee Luedke participated in her first Florida Master Naturalist Program. This is a series of adult education courses sponsored by the University of Florida. The following information comes from their home page:

The mission of the Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) is to promote awareness, understanding, and respect of Florida's natural world among Florida's citizens and visitors.

The Florida Master Naturalist Program is an adult education UF/IFAS

Extension program developed by the University of Florida and provided by many Extension offices and participating organizations throughout the state of Florida.

The FMNP consists of three core modules: Upland System, Coastal Systems, and Freshwater Systems. For more, see: masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/

It was Pawpaw's honor to sponsor Renee to take the first course. If another member would like to begin the journey to become a Master Naturalist, please let us know.

Renee's experience

My first course in the Master Naturalist program was the Florida Freshwater Wetlands course. We took several field trips, including one to Hontoon Island State Park, where we also had a guest speaker from Jungle Adventures in Christmas, FL. He brought with him both native and non-native reptiles.

We also went to Sellars Lake in Ocala and to Blue Spring State Park in DeLand. The Master Naturalist Program is a very educational experience and a lot of fun as well! One of the focuses of the courses is to promote conservation through education. To complete the course there are three separate classes. There is a project due on the last class.

My final project for the class was on cicadas. They are mostly known for their song, but only the males "sing." The females can also make sounds, but they are not the same songs that they are known for.

I enjoyed this experience so much that I plan to take another course in the fall. I hope to complete the program.

—Renee Luedke



PLANT OF THE MONTH

False pennyroyal (*Piloblephis rigida*)

Checking Daniel Austin's *Florida Ethnobotany* we see the derivation of the name *Piloblephis*. Greek "pilos" = hair; "blepharis" = eyelid. So the hairy-eyelid genus name refers to the sepal pubescence. The species name, *rigida*, refers to the plant's stiff short leaves.

For some time *Piloblephis rigida* was thought to be an exclusive Florida endemic, but discoveries of a few populations in South Georgia and the Bahamas negate that claim. It is the sole member of its genus found in peninsular Florida.

False pennyroyal is a low sprawling evergreen perennial shrub with aromatic, needle-like leaves, commonly found in dry, sandy, well drained palmetto scrubs, sand-hills, open woods, and pine flat-woods. It has small two-lipped fragrant lavender flowers that are borne

in dense showy terminal clusters, giving each the appearance of a fuzzy rabbit's foot. Their late winter to spring bloom time, when other native flowers are scarce, makes it particularly attractive to butterflies, bees, and other pollinators.

This plant prefers dry, well-drained, moderately acid sandy soil with full sun. But it is not salt tolerant! The only downside of using false pennyroyal as a ground cover is that it tends to die out after a few years, but it can easily be replaced with newly rooted plants.

False pennyroyal can be planted along walkways and paths, or in front of planting beds. If planted in a mass, individual plants should be 12 inches apart. Try to minimize root disturbance when planting.

—Sonya Guidry



FIELD TRIP

Moses Creek

Members of three FNPS chapters—Pawpaw, Lyonia, and Sea Oats—along with three unaffiliated local off-road bicyclists, braved the Valentine’s Day chill to explore Moses Creek Conservation Area.

Great trail camaraderie developed on the 2 1/2 hour walk, with the locals showing us more than we had expected to see of Moses Creek’s neat 20-foot bluffs overlooking the marshy tidal creek with a perfect view of an active eagle’s nest.

Spotted on the walk were the pink bell-shaped blooms of fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*) along with other winter-blooming natives including yellow jessamine or Carolina jasmine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*); innocence (*Hedyotis procumbens*), with its shy ground-hug-

ging mass of white four-petal blooms; and blackberry (*Rubus spp.*), with snowy-white open blooms. There were also some early blooming shiny-leaved blueberry (*Vaccinium myrcinites*). A nice surprise found in the poorly drained flat pine-wood section were little blue butterworts (*Pinguicula spp.*).

The socializing and sharing continued over a noisy lunch at nearby South Beach Grill. A plus for the three Pawpaw folks was getting to know and network with outgoing Sea Oats Chapter President Eric Powell and vivacious Chapter Rep Judy Zinn.

Sonya is hoping to get Eric to lead a FNPS field trip to this habitat-rich area during our upcoming 2016 FNPS conference.

—Sonya Guidry



Weekend of walks and talks

Sonya Guidry and Dot Backes drove down below Sebring to the Archbold Biological Station campus to attend the two-day February Retreat. While they participated in the newly formed Council of Circles meetings, the down-sized FNPS board of directors tended to its affairs.

FNPS is eager for its chapters to know that it is working on ways it can help the chapters improve their growth and outreach, while keeping focus on the FNPS mission: conservation, preservation and restoration of Florida's native plant communities.

The Council of Chapters is still fine tuning its role in the FNPS structure. Some prefer to work with other chapters on special initiatives, like the "Landscaping with Natives" initiative that I selected. Others prefer to have a more regional collaboration. This brings a troublesome third layer to the administrative tier of FNPS, so the jury is still out.

As for the Archbold Biological Station, it is always a pleasure to visit this elevated, ancient



dune-like scrub habitat. It is just one of a string of "islands in time" along the Lake Wales Ridge, which during Florida's periods of inundation allowed for subtle differences in plant and animal evolution. That is why there are some endemic species present that are like nowhere else in the

world.

Dot and I took several scrub trail walks sorting out the oaks (*Quercus geminata*, *Q. myrtifolia*, *Q. chapmanii*, and *Q. inopina*).

On one trail we were pleasantly surprised by a small friendly family of scrub jays. Despite this acorn-rich habitat provid-

ing ample winter fare for its family, the little beggars were still hoping for a hand-out.

Another thrill for me was seeing the first pair of red-headed woodpecker I have seen in years. Oh happy day! Proving once again that "no day spent outdoors is ever wasted."

—Sonya Guidry

ROAD TRIP

A wildflower walk with Craig Huegel

Two of Florida's most recognized wildflower experts, Roger Hammer and Craig Huegel, will co-lead a pair of wildflower walks at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve, 33104 NW 192nd Ave., Okeechobee, FL, on April 25. Hammer and Huegel will combine their personal passion and

extensive knowledge of Florida's flora, along with their well-known wit and humor, to educate and entertain. Participants may also sign up for a free 45-minute buggy ride in the prairie.

The morning and afternoon walks are limited to 20 participants each and

sold out quickly when offered last fall, so act quickly to ensure a spot.

To register, visit: friendsofkissimmeeprairiepreserveinc.wildapricot.org/page-1458219?EventViewMode=1&EventListViewMode=1

Opportunities for involvement



Hontoon Island field trip

The Pawpaw March field trip will take place at Hontoon Island State Park on Saturday, March 14. The park is located on the St. John's River in DeLand and is only accessible by boat. Members and non-members are welcome. Sign up at our meeting on Monday, March 9, or contact Renee Luedke: reneeluedke@bellsouth.net.

Meet at the Hontoon Island parking lot at 9 a.m. to take the official park ferry shuttle and begin the 9:30 walk on the island. A carpool will meet at the NSB Walmart behind McDonalds on SR 44 at 8:30 a.m.

We will take a 1 1/2-2-hour walk starting on the nature trail and then taking Rabbit Road back to the picnic areas for a picnic lunch on the river. Admission to the park is free, but donations are accepted.

Bring: Water, insect repellent, picnic lunch and appropriate weather gear

Optional: plant ID books, binoculars, camera

Address: 2309 River-ridge Road, DeLand, FL

There is a parking lot on the St. Johns River where the ferry picks up passengers. Just follow the brown signs!

For more information about the history and terrain of the park: www.hontooncso.com/parkinfor.htm

—Sonya Guidry

Water-Wise Garden Fair

Join Sonya Guidry at the New Smyrna Water-Wise Garden Fair on Saturday, March 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the New Smyrna Beach Utilities Commission parking lot, 200 Canal St. The Utilities Commission is looking for a speaker for a lecture session in its DeBary Room. Anyone who has a native plant program they can present would be terrific!

Our chapter is a perfect fit for the focus of this event. There will be

a water-wise exhibition garden on the premises, a scavenger hunt, and a painted rain barrel raffle, all co-hosted by Lindley's Nursery and held in conjunction with the Downtown Music Festival. This is a great way to meet and greet kindred gardening people, who might now include some native species.

Sonya will have some free FNPS information, native plant books, and plants for sale.

—Sonya Guidry

Master Gardeners' Faire

The Florida Native Plant Society wants members to reach out and tell others about the importance of using native

plants in their landscapes. April is a great time to encourage homeowners to get their landscapes ready for spring.

Come visit us at the Master Gardeners' Faire on Saturday, April 11, at the Volusia County Agricultural Center, 3100 E. New York Ave., DeLand. We'll be setting up around 7 a.m. and taking down around noon. If you have been propagating natives for his event, please let us know!

We also need your help on Thursday, April 23, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you can donate an hour or more on this date, please let Sande know at Sadehab@aol.com

—Sande Habali

And save these dates:

March 9: Pawpaw Chapter meeting, 7 p.m., Pigotte Center, South Daytona. "Native orchids," presented by Mike Parsons

March 14: Work day, Park of Honor, Olive Street, South Daytona. Contact person: Stephen (386-233-4017).

April 13: Pawpaw Chapter meeting, 7 p.m., Pigotte Center, South Daytona. "On This Day: A Year in Photos," presented by Paul Rebmann

April 18: field trip, TBA

April 23: Earth Day Celebration, Ormond Beach City Hall Plaza, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.

May 28–31: FNPS Annual Conference, Challenger Learning Center, Tallahassee