



THE PAWPAW PRESS

Newsletter of the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society: March 2017



Paul Rebmann

MARCH MEETING

Purposeful plants: intro to ethnobotany

Georgia Zern, an environmental specialist with Volusia County, took us on a fascinating journey from manatees to ethnobotany at the March meeting, and introduced us to some of the tra-

ditional uses of native plants from our area.

She offered the intrepid amongst our members the chance to sip the Timucua peoples' notorious "black drink" brewed from Yaupon holly (albeit in a much-diluted form) and the less brave the chance to sample a pleasant pine-needle tea.

BOOK LAUNCH

Plants of the ACA debuts on home turf

Plants of Atlantic Center for the Arts, a photo-field guide by Dr. J Cho of Bethune-Cookman University, had a launch party on March 18 at, appropriately, the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach. Many Pawpaw members were on hand for the festivities.

Along with Dr. Cho,

her Bethune-Cookman colleague Dr. Michael Reiter, and Doug McGinnis, our own Pawpaw Chapter members, Dr. Don Spence and Ray Jarrett, served as co-authors of the book and speakers at this well received presentation.

The event included a guided botanical tour of the grounds with Don, Ray and apiary specialist



Doug McGinnis (above), who will be the chapter's speaker at the April 10 meeting.—*Story and photo by Sonya Guidry*

FNPS GATHERS

The 37th annual conference of the Florida Native Plant Society (May 18–21 in River Ranch), offers four days of field trips, informative sessions with guest speakers, and great socializing with fellow native plant enthusiasts. For details, visit fnps.org/conference.

UPCOMING EVENTS: APRIL

10

Pawpaw meeting with Doug McGinnis: "How Flowers Taught Bees to be Vegetarians"

15

Field trip to Grace Barack North Beach Park. Contact: guidry.sonya@gmail.com

How Pawpaw got its start

The Pawpaw Chapter traces its roots to Joanne Ash, horticulturist for the gardens at the Casements in Ormond Beach at the time. She had attended a “Gardening with Natives” workshop in southwest Florida in the fall of 1989 and returned so inspired that she arranged for the FNPS founder, Bill Partington, to travel up to Ormond Beach to mentor a small group through their first steps to becoming members of the Flori-

da Native Plant Society. From this small seedling of a start in early 1990, a thriving chapter has grown. It split off to form West Volusia’s Lyonia Chapter within the first decade, and now after 27 years has a current membership of 116. Even more amazing, thanks to the leadership of Don Spence, we have hosted two FNPS conferences here in Daytona Beach. We have come a long way! As we continue

to conserve, preserve and restore natural areas in Volusia and Flagler counties, I hope we continue to honor the legacies of Joanne Ash and Bill Partington.

We are fortunate in having a current member who is also a founding member of the Pawpaw Chapter. Jane Culpepper



(seen above in a photo from a 2012 chapter field trip to Bulow Plantation Ruins Historical Park) is now living in her new residence at John Knox Village in Orange City. She recalls that in January of 1990, she came to that first organizational meeting held by Joanne Ash at the historic little church at River Bridge Gardens in Ormond. At that time she was surprised that so few people actually attended, and even now exclaims, “No one was there!”

Some Pawpaw Chapter members still remember the field trip we took to visit Jane’s beautiful butterfly garden installation at the Palm Coast Library.

Jane, now happily ensconced at John Knox Village, invites longtime Pawpaw friends to come for a visit. Since arthritis limits her mobility, she is especially happy when visitors volunteer to take her dogs for an afternoon walk.—*Story and photo by Sonya Guidry*

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendar

APRIL 1 Spring Fest, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Canal Street, New Smyrna. Contact Sonya Guidry: guidry.sonya@gmail.com

APRIL 2 Pawpaw Chapter board meeting, 3:30 p.m., home of Don Spence, Daytona Beach. Open to all. Please RSVP to Doug at shalehill@gmail.com.

APRIL 8 Master Gardeners’ Faire. 8:30 a.m. to noon, Volusia County fairgrounds, DeLand. Contact Paul Rebmann, wildflpaul@earthlink.net

APRIL 10 Pawpaw Chapter meeting, 7 p.m. Pig-gotte Center, 504 Big

Tree Road, South Daytona. Doug McGinnis on bees.

APRIL 15 Field trip to NSB’s Grace Barack North Beach Community Park (Sapphire and North Peninsula) for an easy plant ID walk on paved paths winding through natural xeric coastal woods. Picnic lunch overlooking the coastal scrub and ocean. Contact Sonya Guidry: guidry.sonya@gmail.com.

APRIL 17 Chapter work day at the Park of Honor on Olive Street, South Daytona, starting at 9 a.m.

APRIL 17–22 FNPS six-day guided tour of North Alabama. Contact Devon Higginbotham at 813-478-1183 or email indigotravelcompany@gmail.com.

APRIL 20 Earth Day at Ormond Beach, 11 a.m.– 2 p.m.

APRIL 22 Education outreach at the Agriculture Museum in Flagler County. We need a contact person for this.

MAY 7 Milkweed-related field trip led by Scott Davis

MAY 8 Pawpaw Chapter meeting, 7 p.m. Pig-gotte Center, 504 Big Tree Road, South Daytona. Scott Davis on monarchs and native milkweed.

MAY 13 Rugel’s Roundup. Details TBA.

MAY 15 Workday at Park of Honor

MAY 18–21 FNPS annual conference, River Ranch Resort. For details and to register, visit fnps.org/conference.



MARCH FIELD TRIP

In Deltona park, diversity abounds

On March 25, 10 Pawpaw members explored Audubon Park's passive walking trail through its surface water treatment system of ponds, ditches and uplands.

There was an interesting mix of plant-community surprises, from drought-stricken muddy wetlands and ponds to hydric, mesic and xeric woodlands.



Folks enjoyed extending their walk to explore a small section of the new shady East Central Rail Trail, taking care to avoid occasional speeding cyclists. All that walking had us all primed for our lunch at Osteen Diner.

Before the official walk Dave Anderson led the group into a fascinating small sandpine scrub opposite the parking area. Deerberry, shiny blueberry, flag pawpaw and pinebarren frostweed were in bloom.

Deeper inside was a secret island of garberia and deermoss lichens. Prickly pear cactus had tufts of white cutchinea (dye) bugs.

—Story and photos by Sonya Guidry

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Attractive, care-free varnishleaf: Try it!

Varnishleaf (or Florida hopseed), *Dodonaea viscosa*, belongs to a large family, *Sapindaceae*, of mostly tropical/sub-tropical taxa that include carrotwood, soapberry, golden rain tree and lychee. Maples and buckeyes are generally included as part of this family.

Its cold hardiness is listed as Zones 9–11, but it is vouchered as far north as St. John's County. It is perhaps a good species to monitor for indication of global warming.

It becomes a large shrub of up to 10 feet in height (or greater), with attractive clusters of pale yellow seed-covers and glossy, ascendant and deep-veined leaves. Leaves are often tacky to the touch, hence the species name.

The plant appears tardively deciduous; the old leaves turn yellow and fall off only after the emergence of new leaves, so that the plant is functionally evergreen.

The flowers are without petals and seldom noticed, but they

do contain abundant nectar. The showy parts of varnishleaf, however, are the seed-covers, which are in clusters, emerging with individual petioles from the leaf axils. Gosh, are they ever pretty!

Varnishleaf grows well in sand, has a long taproot, is very salt-tolerant and sometimes self-seeds abundantly (as participants in chapter work days at the Park of Honor can attest). The plant has little commercial or ethnobiological importance, but makes a very attractive, care-free landscape plant that offers a difference from the usual (over-used) nursery offerings.

Try it! If you like it, don't tell anyone.

—Mark Wheeler/photo by Doug Hunt

