



THE PAWPAW PRESS

Newsletter of the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

DECEMBER MEETING

A feast of plants and plates

The annual auction and covered dish dinner was enjoyed by all. Harriet Damesek used fresh palmetto fronds and beautyberry cuttings to compliment the red and green colors already on the table.

Plants propagated by members, as well as samples from Full Moon Natives, were auctioned off by Paul Rebman and Vice President Carla McDougal. Plants were explained and discussed so everyone learned the best conditions for successful plantings.

The nominating committee presented a slate of

officers for election. The following officers have been selected:

- President: Sande Habali
- Vice President (Program Chairman): Carla McDougal
- Secretary: Carolyn Kiel
- Co-treasurers: Carol Hawkins and Mary Jo Mercier

A Board meeting will be held Saturday, January 10th at 11:00 at Full Moon Native Plants Nursery. Everyone is welcome to participate and help in the planning for our chapter in 2015.

—Sande Habali
(Photos by Sonya Guidry)



UPCOMING EVENTS: JANUARY

10

Board Meeting, 11 a.m., Full Moon Natives

12

Pawpaw Meeting, 7 p.m., Piggotte Center

17

Field trip to Dunn Creek. Contact Sonya Guidry

NOVEMBER MEETING

Making the case for Florida's wildflowers

Lisa Roberts, executive director of the Florida Wildflower Foundation, was Pawpaw's November speaker. She emphasized the importance of protecting roadside wildflowers as well as incorporating them into our landscapes. Those who advocate Florida native plants are the perfect candidates to participate in the foundation's "Wildflowers, Naturally" program. There is a great deal of information on their website, <http://flawildflowers.org/>. Who will be the first chapter member to proudly display the Wildflower Foundation flag or sign?

—Sande Habali



Do a monarch a favor: plant Florida's native milkweeds

Florida's native milkweed plants, such as butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), right, are vital to the survival of the monarch butterfly. But well-meaning consumers who want to attract and host the butterflies in their landscapes often purchase widely available non-native tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*), by far the most common commercially available species.

Unfortunately, those red-and-yellow flowering plants can mean trouble for monarchs, says Dr.



Jaret Daniels, assistant curator and director of the McGuire Center for Lep-

idoptera and Biodiversity at the Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville. Because tropical milkweed grows throughout the year (weather permitting) in most of Florida, it can enable monarchs to

continue breeding well into the fall and winter, potentially disrupting their normal migratory cycle. Prolonged breeding also can cause higher than normal infection rates by a lethal protozoan parasite, *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha*, or OE for short.

What can you do to help save monarchs, which are on the brink of vanishing altogether? The simple answer is to

go native, Daniels says. Incorporate native milkweeds into your landscape whenever possible.

The challenge in doing that often is finding a reliable supply of nursery plants or seeds. To overcome that obstacle, use www.PlantRealFlorida.org/plants to search for native nurseries in your area that offer milkweed (search for individual species by typing the word *asclepias* into the search window).

Meanwhile, Daniels advises that if you have tropical milkweed in your landscape, an ecologically sound alternative would be to cut it to within several inches of the ground in late fall (read: now) so that it is unavailable to migrating monarchs.

—Article by the Florida Wildflower Federation
(Photo by Stacey Matrazzo)

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Frogfruit, *Phyla nodiflora*

Paul Rebmann presented information prepared by Carol Hawkins. Formerly classified as *Lippia nodiflora*, it is also called Turkey Tangle Frogfruit, Creeping Charlie, and Matchstick. This low-growing groundcover is the host plant for Phaon Crescent, Common Buckeye, and White Peacock butterflies and an excellent nectar source: <http://www.fnps.org/plants/plant/phyla-nodiflora>. Frogfruit plants were raffled.

FIELD TRIP

Sanford Zoo

We had a lovely day for this outing—not too hot, not too cool, no rain.

We began by exploring the board walk through the wet hammock.

Despite the boardwalk being partly closed, I think we got a good look at the plant life of the area. There was a good assortment of native trees, shrubs, vines, ferns, etc. Since this has been a long-settled area and previously cut over property, there were also non-natives—some long-standing invasives (100 years or more in Florida), such as Brazilian pepper and camphor tree, as well as newer invasives, including Chinese tallow and air potato.

Although the zoo area has been mostly cleared, there were a good many existing older trees, including sabal palms, hardwoods, and shrubs, as well as some exotics. Recent plantings, including shrubbery, flower beds, and butterfly gardens contained many natives, as well as non-natives not considered as pest plants. Some plants were labeled, especially in the new beds.

We had lunch in Sanford at the Breezeway Restaurant. Large sandwiches, excellent salads—and a bit loud on the music!

—Dot Backes



(Photos by Sonya Guidry)

FIELD TRIP

Gillespie Museum

Touring Stetson University's Gillespie Museum both inside and out was a lucky mix of Girl Scouts and Pawpaw Chapter members this past November 8th. Dr. Karen Cole reminded us that along with collecting rocks, minerals and fossils, it is equally important to document information about the site from which it was collected.

After the inside tour, our seven Pawpaw folks enjoyed the museum's clever "Mostly Green Scavenger Hunt," which set us searching for specific native plants in the landscape. Each had a uniquely numbered tag which we were to record on our master sheet. I for one was happy to see not one but three small fringe trees.

We were also pleased to meet Dr. Cindy Bennington on the grounds. She pointed out Stetson's sand hill restoration project, now going into its third year. The long leaf pines are almost 4 feet tall now. It was a fun day...topped off by a nice leisurely lunch at Cook's Buffet.

Our fair weather participants were Sande, Renate, Bill, Carolyn, Dot, Harriet and Sonya.

—Sonya Guidry

(Photos by Sonya Guidry and Sande Habali)





FIELD TRIP

Camp Blanding

Five Pawpaw Chapter members—Sande, Mark, Mike, Gail and Sonya—trekked to Jacksonville on December 2 for an event sponsored by the North East Florida Scrub Working Group.

Scrub? As it turns out the “Still Hunt Area 2” that we visited at the south end of Camp Blanding had many more acres of sandhill restoration than scrub. What is significant about this scrub, however, is that this is the most northerly location in Florida that scrub jays are found. Three individuals have been observed in this area.

Camp Blanding is actually state owned. Since WWII it has been permanently designated for military purposes and will always be used by the various federal branches of

the military for training exercises. The state manages the natural resources in the designated, shared areas of Camp Blanding.

A tip shared by some scrub jay experts on this field trip was that when restoring a site to scrub, getting rid of all the sentinel trees is not necessary. The area just has to be cleared of enough tall cover that the scrub jays can see the cooper’s hawks on the occasional perch to stay clear of danger.

The Pawpaw Chapter members who toured this unique scrub and sandhill restoration project came away with a huge respect for the challenges and creative solutions it takes to make it a restoration work.

—Text and photos by Sonya Guidry

