



THE PAWPAW PRESS



Newsletter of the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society – April/May 2026

The Florida Native Plant Society's mission is to champion Florida's native plants and their habitats.

Another Fantastic Pawpaw Plant Expo!



Mother Nature provided a beautiful spring day on Saturday April 25th, perfect for the occasion!



L-R above: Connie and Nancy greet visitors at the Pawpaw Membership/Information booth while former VP Carol, Treasurer Lisa and Master Chef Sara tend the bank. Aside from the early start preceding the long day of the sale, the success of the event depends upon hours of work during the days and months leading up to it.

L-R below: The Piggotte Center filled with plants the day before the sale as Pawpaw members sort and label. Lisa and our President and Sale Committee Chair Karen relax a moment during their inventory of the delivery from Green Isle Gardens.



L-R above: Where do the plants end and VP Barb's overalls begin? Melissa admires Paul's beautiful photowork. Sonya and Leslie share their enthusiasm for native plants.

– photos by Amy Spies and Sonya Guidry



EARTH DAY 2026

– by Barb Davis, Sonya Guidry & Karen Walter

Pawpaw members saturated the county on Earth Day as they spread the word about the importance of native plants in our environment and communities! From Ponce Preserve in Port Orange to Ormond Beach where events were held at the Environmental Discovery Center (left), Regional Library and a trade show in The Trails development.

Sande Habali did an excellent job of marshaling the troops for Ponce Preserves the Planet on April 18 at Ponce Preserve in Ponce Inlet. Five hardy souls from the Pawpaw Chapter educated visitors on native plants and handed out materials. Several children enjoyed crafts and about 40 visitors received FNPS handouts at our outreach table on the Ponce Preserve trail. We also took turns going to the presentation by Jim Sawgrass, a native Muscogee Creek descendent.



L-R above: Judi Van Horn, Amy Legare, Sande Habali and Amy Spies help visitors at the Pawpaw table. Jim Sawgrass speaks with attendees, his traditional hoop dance is always a big draw.



Meanwhile, at the Ormond Beach library, Inia Burginger gave an excellent powerpoint presentation titled "Pollinators and Plants: Who Eats What" to an engaged audience. About 20 attendees asked great questions and received additional information at our display table between the next two presenters that afternoon. She explained why we need native plants to feed pollinator insects which are attracted to floral nectar sources, but also need those coevolving native plants to supply the unique foliage their larval stages require to become adults. This abundance of caterpillars is perfectly timed to feed newly hatched baby birds!

New Smyrna Beach Utilities Springfest

– by Sonya Guidry

Saturday, March 7th included a good outreach morning in NSB. Almost two pages of interested folks signed up for more Pawpaw Chapter information, donations were made for seed packets and most of our free materials were gone by the end of the day. So many people are out there looking for native plants!





Karen and Sue at the outreach table. Karen and Lou came early with the tent, table and most of the supplies, then Sue and Sonya helped "set up".



Nancy came along mid-morning to help with outreach and stayed to help with "take down".



Having Ryan from Asclepias Acres nursery selling native plants next to us was a plus!

More Spring Events ...



On Saturday, March 21 Barb, Karen and Sonya led a Ponce Preserve field trip.



A week later the Pawpaw Chapter outreach table was very busy interacting with folks buying plants from three local vendors also participating in the DeLand Wildflower Festival: Katie's Natural Beauty Native Florida Landscapes; Jonathan's Mockingbird Nursery; and Damien's Asclepias Acres.



Also on March 28th: Jane Andrews was busy at the Oak Hill Community Garden's Lunch & Learn event. She co-manned a table in front of the recently installed (Pawpaw Chapter-grant awarded) native plant section there.

Community Garden Workdays ...

— by Sonya Guidry



Marine Discovery Center

MDC's Award winning FNPS "Garden of Excellence" – despite freeze damage – is still excellent!! But it has taken Karen organizing three separate MDC garden work days this week to finally get some much needed deadwood pruning done!



Park of Honor, Part 1:



On March 16th, six people pitched in to do some hard pruning at South Daytona's Park of Honor. Judi, Amelia, Sonya, Sande, Marcia and Carol all donated some sweat equity! After cutting firebush, wild coffee and necklace pod down to "their ankles", they had a real challenge trying to reach high to saw off most of the bare fiddlewood branches. Our fiddlewood now has knee-high lush new growth at the base, and we see small green leaves erupting from the remaining bare branches. Surprise...You can actually see the pond now as well as the redbud tree loaded with bright pink blooms.

Park of Honor, Part 2:

It is amazing at how quickly nature can recover from the rare hard freezes we experienced this past winter! Six members came to South Daytona's Park of Honor on Monday, April 20 to finish pruning and weeding so the native garden could be presentable for visitors at our Pawpaw Chapter's Saturday April 25th Native Plant Expo.



L–R above: Peter took his trusty Little hand saw to finally cut off the large sky-reaching dead limbs of fiddlewood so it looks much better. We wondered, how many elderberry sprouts do we need in this part of the garden?

The Great 2026 Rugel's Roundup!

– by Sonya Guidry



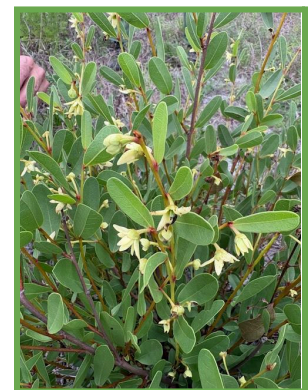
On May 2nd, Danny Young coordinated Pawpaw Chapter's 14th annual Rugel's Roundup, held again at Carter Quail Ranch Preserve, which is not yet open to the public. Tommy Nordmann, Volusia Outdoors Program Naturalist, took his Saturday off to supply Eco Buggy transportation for our 20 citizen science volunteers. Pawpaw Chapter was especially delighted to have five Bethune-Cookman Native Plant Club students join us on this citizen science project.

This year, Danny had us survey a large Immokalee soil (hot-spot) area. We formed two ten-person-wide walking survey teams to confirm there were indeed at least 50 plants thriving in this mowed area. Out of this population, Danny directed volunteers to collect 10 different leaf tissue samples which were sent overnight to Cincinnati Zoo for storage in their frozen tissue bank for future study.



Other remarkable findings on this property were three active gopher tortoise burrows and a turkey hen that was flushed from her nest. Our field trip coordinator, Paul, discovered the remains of deer.

Our FNPS Pawpaw Chapter proudly named itself "Pawpaw" to honor the Volusia County endemic Rugel's Pawpaw (*Deeringothamnus rugelii*). It's a bit puzzling to think that this unique little shrubby plant bearing tiny, fleshy yellow-petaled flowers grows nowhere else in the world but here in Eastern Volusia County. Retired Stetson professor Dr. Eliane Norman once suggested that in the broad stretch of time, it may be a species that is either coming or going.



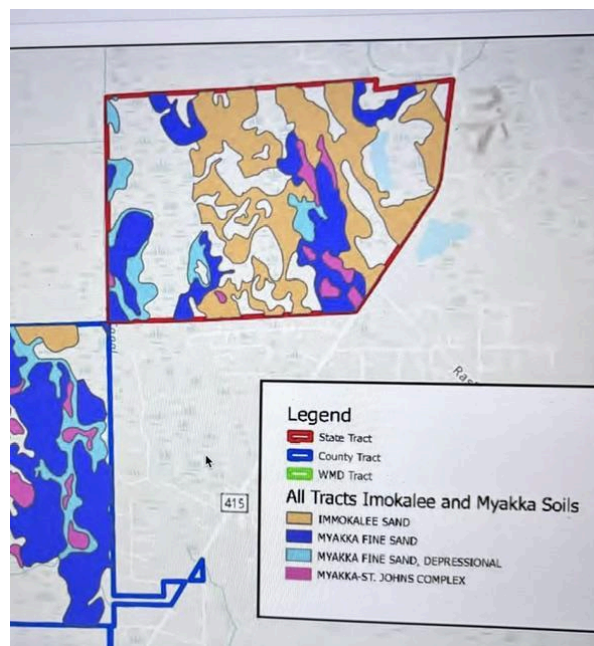
Thanks to Danny Young's persistent guidance, our Chapter has been monitoring this mysterious scruffy little yellow flowering shrub since 2012!

Carter Quail Ranch Threatened!

— by Sonya Guidry

As a member of the local FNPS, I was invited to participate in the Deep Creek Planning Management Advisory Group on April 28th. During the Pawpaw Chapter's Rugel's Roundup last year at Carter Quail Ranch (within Deep Creek Preserve), we were delighted to find its Immokalee soils did indeed provide just the right habitat for Volusia County's endemic *Deeringothamnus rugelii*; a number of plants were identified! At this year's Roundup in a new location, 20 citizen science volunteers confirmed 50 plants growing in one area alone. Finally we have this wonderful conservation land where numerous federally-listed Rugel's pawpaw plants are present and can now be managed to maintain a healthy population.

So it was shocking to see the proposed recreation plan for this Carter Quail Ranch parcel of Deep Creek Preserve. Along with the usual passive trail systems for hikers, bikers and horseback riders, it includes such uses as Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) riding, a large area designated for small game hunting, setups for roadside equestrian RV and camping sites, and several small cabins.



^ This soil map of Carter Quail Ranch shows the many tan-colored areas that indicate Immokalee soil, the preferred habitat for federally-listed Rugel's pawpaw.

We, the public, do have a chance to voice our opinions on how it this land should be used at the upcoming public hearing on June 11th at the DeLand Ag Center Auditorium, or by written comments sent to Ashlyn Russell at her work email: ARussell@volusia.org



^ Conceptual Recreation Plan being submitted for approval by State agencies.



^ The most intensively developed plans for the area are around the former owner's huge sand borrow-pit "lake" where numerous Rugel's pawpaws were recently found.

Pawpaw Chapter FNPS recommends:

1. Before planning for recreation usage or trail designations, it's imperative that thorough official surveys are made, especially for Rugel's pawpaw, as well as other listed species of concern.
2. Due to OHV incompatibility with protecting conservation lands, especially those considered linkage, and the Volusia wildlife corridor: eliminate the use of OHV's on the Carter Quail Ranch to comply with existing State of Florida and Volusia County laws.
3. Eliminate hunting within the Carter Quail Ranch parcel.
4. Any logging should be considered part of a habitat restoration plan, rather than continued intense silviculture.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.volusia.org/services/community-services/resource-stewardship/land-management/>

Scenes from the April 13th general meeting:



In Karen's absence, VP Barb Davis presided flawlessly over the busy meeting attended by 39 Pawpaw members and visitors.



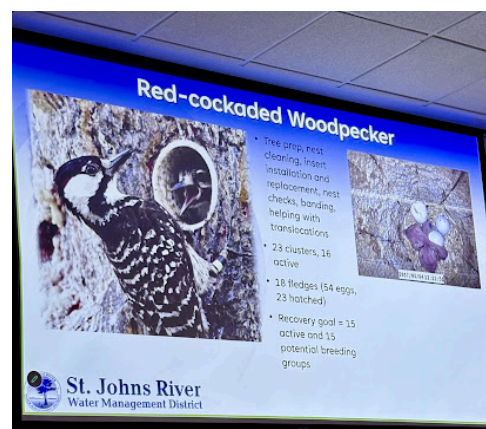
Bruce lines up the powerpoint for Leslie's Plant of the Month presentation: "Just say No to Multi-Colored Lantana A Category 1 Invasive Plant"



Our Library SpotLight featured Doug Tallamy's The Nature of Oaks, presented by enthusiastic new member Laura Duren.



Our guest speaker was Katrina Noland, Conservation Lands Manager with the St. Johns River Land Management District. She explained her diverse land management responsibilities, including selection of the best methods for successful prescribed burns.



But her most delicate management responsibility is helping to manage their environmentally-threatened red-cockaded woodpecker population.

Join us!

Monthly meetings take place the second Monday of the month at the Piggotte Community Center, 504 Big Tree Road, South Daytona

***** Next Meeting: Monday, June 8th *****

Meeting starts at **6:30 pm**, doors open at 6 for socializing

Videos of our monthly speakers and plant of the month presenters are available...
on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/PawpawChapter>
and website: <https://pawpaw.fnpschapters.org/meetings/recordings/>



THE OBSERVATORY

< In late March, Suze Peace from DeLand sent Sonya this beautiful photo of a large flowered pawpaw (*Asimina obovata*) . She calls them her “piney woods pawpaws”!

Dave Anderson captured the lovely Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*) blooms early this spring at Dunlawton Sugar Mill Gardens in Port Orange. >



Submissions to the newsletter are welcome! Send in short articles, poems or photos related to native plants! Share recent discoveries or pictures taken at Pawpaw events!

Email them to the editor at: georgannmeadows@yahoo.com

*** We are still looking for a new editor (or ideally a team of editors!) and publicity coordinator. ***

Upcoming Field Trips & Events:

Friday, June 12th: DeLeon Springs \$20 boat trip with lunch at Old Spanish Mill

The June Pawpaw Chapter field trip will be a pontoon boat tour out of DeLeon Springs State Park. The DeLeon Springs River Cruise journeys for 50 minutes through DeLeon Springs State Park and Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge. The boat takes passengers on a relaxing trip filled with extraordinary close-contact experiences with the local wildlife. During their journey, guests will also learn about the area's rich 6,000-year history, the spring's “healing waters”, how the Fountain of Youth story originated, and the animals that call it home.

ADA Accessibility:

Each tour can accommodate a few manual wheelchairs, but not motorized wheelchairs. DeLeon Springs is a very popular park. Lines to enter the park can be long in the early morning and at peak times. Plan to arrive more than one hour early to ensure you make your tour.

If you plan on eating at the Old Sugar Mill, make sure to get your name on the list before boarding to decrease your wait time on shore. The restaurant opens at 8 am in case anyone wants to have breakfast there before the tour.

What to bring:

Binoculars, camera, sunglasses/hat (the boat is totally shaded, but sun exposure varies with the movement of the boat), bug spray.

Tickets are \$20.00 each (which includes all fees and service charges).

Unless you already have a state park pass, you will also have to pay to enter the state park: \$6 per vehicle (two to eight people), \$4 single-occupant vehicle, \$4 motorcycle, \$2 pedestrian, bicyclist and extra passengers.

Register at Eventbrite (Registration closes at 10 am June 9th):

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pawpaw-chapter-field-trip-deleon-springs-pontoon-boat-tour-tickets-1989228296383?aff=odd_tdt_creator

Monday, July 20th, 10 am: Tour Marine Science Center, Ponce Inlet

Saturday, August 15th: Cracker Creek Pontoon (price to be determined) on Spruce Creek followed by a Plant Swap and picnic lunch at their pavilion

Upcoming ReGrow the Loop Event:

Saturday, May 16, 10 am – 12 noon: Herbicides & their Impact on Trees in the Landscape
Ormond Beach Regional Library, 20 South Beach Street, Ormond Beach

Native Plant Garden Workdays:

- * Park of Honor, 9 am – 12 noon every third Monday, 755 Olive Street, South Daytona
- * Dunlawton Sugar Mill Gardens, 9 am – 12 noon, every Wednesday and Saturday
950 Old Sugar Mill Road, Port Orange
- * Environmental Discovery Center, 8:30 – 9:30 am Fridays following the monthly meeting
601 Division Avenue, Ormond Beach
- * Mary Harrell Black Heritage Museum, 9 – 11 am Fridays following the monthly meeting
314 Duss Street, New Smyrna