



THE PAWPAW PRESS



Newsletter of the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society – June/July 2026

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



June Field Trip:

DeLeon Springs

– by Sonya Guidry

– photos by S. Guidry & Amy Spies



The last time we toured DeLeon Springs State Park was in March 2020, just prior to the covid and masking mandates. Our guide for that visit no longer works there, and the ranger at the entry gate said they would LOVE to have some volunteers re-establish their native garden section.



Paul definitely came up with a great summer field trip idea! Some of the boat tour folks followed his advice and arrived early to take a "walk about" on one of the park trails to visit the handsome 500-year-old cypress dubbed Old Methuselah.



Our boat pilot, Captain Mike, told us a recent hurricane actually reversed the flow of flood waters up and over this spring basin spillway!

Battling the Invasive Air Potato in Ponce Preserve

— by Barb Davis



Thanks to the many Pawpaw Chapter volunteers and Ponce Inlet “Preservers”, the air potato vines at Ponce Preserve are becoming manageable. In August 2023, the Town allowed volunteers to begin removing not just air potato vines but all invasive species in the Preserve. The Preserve was obtained through a series of state grants, including a lease for Green Mound. The management plan for the Preserve requires removal of invasive species. Pursuant to an environmental survey and a reconnaissance visit by Sande Habali and Judi Van Horn, at least 10 invasive species were identified and removal began.

^ Danny Young and volunteers ready to attack.

Shortly thereafter, we learned of a Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) program that provided leaf-eating beetles. In September 2023, the beetles were delivered to the Town and released in Ponce Preserve. More recently, in August 2025 FDACS revealed the availability of a tuber-eating beetle. Those beetles were ordered by the Town and also released at the Preserve.

The leaf-eating beetle upon release:



The tuber-eating beetle:



126 pounds of potatoes (not including vines) were harvested.



It appears the beetles, combined with years of volunteer service and programs by Young Bear Environmental, have reduced the impact of the air potato vines.

Ponce Preserve before and after:



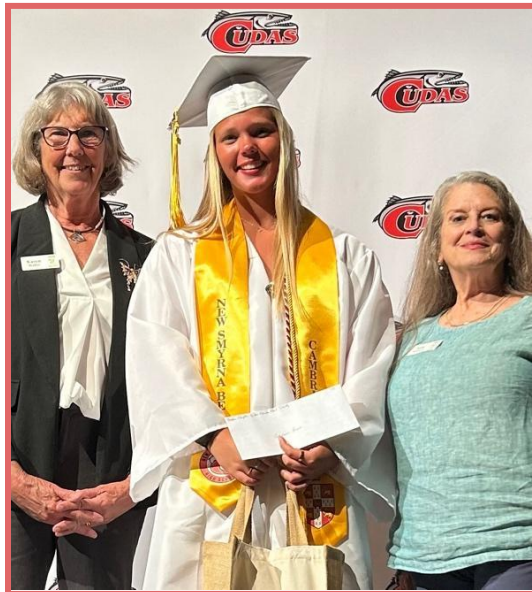
For further information and to order the tuber-eating beetles, contact the Department of Agriculture at: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Pests-and-Diseases/Plant-Pests-and-Diseases/Biological-Control/Air-Potato-Vine-Biological-Control>

They will ask you to fill out the Air Potato Vine Report Form below. Note that the expected delivery date for beetles is approximately three months after the report has been submitted. Beetles were ordered not only for Ponce Preserve, but also for Sailfish Drive, a scenic/historic dirt road in Ponce Inlet.

[Air Potato Vine Report Form](#)

Pawpaw Board Members Present Scholarships to Deserving Students

– by Kate Muldoon



Over three May evenings, Pawpaw President Karen Walter and Board member Kate Muldoon presented the first ever Warren Reynolds Scholarships totaling \$2,000 to five deserving students during their high school graduation award ceremonies. The scholarships, named in honor of longtime Pawpaw member Warren Reynolds, our fearless field trip leader, provided three students awards of \$500 each to pursue their passion in environmental fields. These students are: Sonia Gandhi, Deland High School; and Brian Begnoche and Calise Moore, both of Spruce Creek High School. Two graduating students who received awards of \$250 each are: Addison Larson, New Smyrna Beach High School and Logan Vandell, Deland High School. We congratulate these hard-working students and wish them the best in their college careers!

^ L-R: Karen Walter, Addison Larson and Kate Muldoon at the New Smyrna Beach HS Awards Ceremony.

Native Plant Garden Work Updates...

South Daytona's Park of Honor

– by Sonya Guidry

Our Park of Honor garden curator Judi installed a fringe tree, replacing the frozen teabush we had planted in memory of Warren Reynolds. We think this tree will hold firm and represent Warren's spirit through all weather events. We can imagine him enjoying the view out over the pond.

Despite the February freeze, we see the garden springing back to its lush full potential!



The June 15th Park of Honor group of six worked to trim, weed and install blue trailing porterweed. Some will become a ground cover behind Warren's fringe tree.



We had to take a photo of the bright green Coontie plant by the garden path...before the Echo moth caterpillars ate them all!

Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center

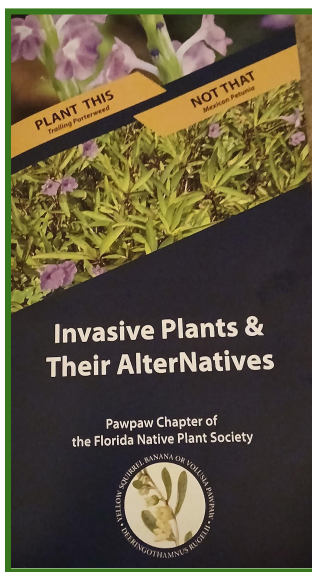
Leslie Nixon shared these photos of the wildflower and pollinator gardens at the OB EDC.



Creative Pawpaw Members Create Brochures...

AlterNatives: Plant This, Not That!

— by Sande Habali



The AlterNative brochure is a result of the hard work of seven dedicated Pawpaw members, representing Flagler County and Volusia County. We also have Tropical Enterprises and its representative Casey to thank for patiently putting up with all the changes we came up with, plus developing an attractive, easily-understood brochure. We limited ourselves to the 20 most common invasives in our area, in the hopes that educated homeowners would not consider buying or obtaining these. We offer two alternatives which can be used in their place. It is the sincere wish of the Pawpaw chapter that homeowners put more native plants into their yards and remove invasive ones to benefit pollinators and wildlife.

Ponce Preserve Plant ID

— by Barb Davis

Thanks to many hours of Sonya Guidry identifying and supplying the scientific name of plants, the Ponce Preserve brochure is now in three display boxes for visitors to use on the trails. The signs include the scientific name plus a QR code that links the visitor to the FNPS website. The brochure is sponsored by the Pawpaw Chapter which conducts hikes in the Preserve not only for native plant enthusiasts but also for ReGrow Volusia and Ponce Inlet programs.



THE OBSERVATORY



Despite the February 1st killing freeze,
March brought some fantastic surprises to Sonya's native plant sanctuary:



"Having a native yard...is an adventure. Every season and each new year brings new surprises and possibilities. I compare it to being a naturescape artist...it is an ever-changing artist's palette. The real bonus is being entertained by all the birds, pollinators and small critters that find a refuge in your ever-changing landscape." – Sonya Guidry

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: geomeado@gmail.com

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

Scenes from the May 11th general meeting:



President Karen announced the Warren Reynolds scholarship winners. Treasurer Lisa announced the huge financial success of our April plant sale.



Leslie dressed appropriately for the presentation of her outstanding power point program: "Save the (Native) Bees".



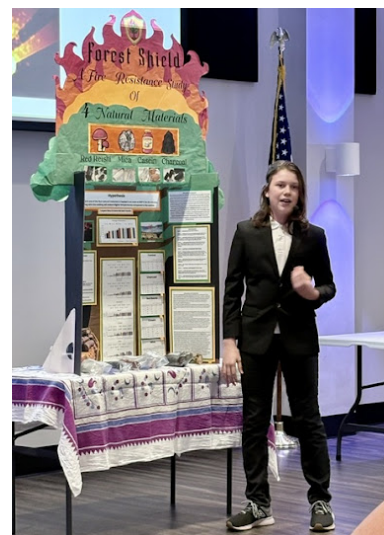
Danny came through with a surprising AlterNative plant of the month to replace Brazilian Pepper: use lagoonside-friendly buttonwood.

Scenes from the June 8th general meeting:



<< Mr. Chad MacFie was our main speaker for the June meeting. In addition to being the director of Volusia County's Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet, we learned he is also a history buff and fishing buff.

Dante Caceres, >>
the Junior Level Science Fair Pawpaw Chapter award winner at the January Tomoka Regional Science and Engineering Fair gave a dazzling report on his winning project: "Forest Shield: a Fire Resistance Study of Four Natural Materials".



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, July 13th *****

Meeting starts at **6:30 pm**, doors open at 6 for socializing
Guest Speaker: Terri Propst, from the Coastal Division of Volusia County
Topic: "Beach Restoration"

Coming up August 10th: Ray Jarrett, "Trees and the Urban Landscape"

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/>

Upcoming Field Trips & Events:

Monday, July 20th, 10 am – 12 noon: Marine Science Center
100 Lighthouse Drive, Ponce Inlet, FL 32127

The July field trip will be a private tour of the Marine Science Center (MSC) in Ponce Inlet led by Chad Macfie, Aquarium Manager, Curator, and Manager of the MSC. Since its opening in 2002, the MSC has exceeded expectations as an environmental learning center. More than a million visitors have experienced the center's rich and varied offerings. The combination of marine education and outreach with a sea turtle and seabird rehabilitation center provides a significant service that is unique. To our knowledge, there is no other county-funded and -operated sea turtle and seabird rehabilitation facility in the United States. This remarkable project has allowed Volusia County to stand at the forefront

of county government efforts to educate our public about the marine resources of our area and to rehabilitate and release sea turtles and seabirds.

For more information, contact: Barbara Davis barbaracdavis@gmail.com (386) 898-4977.

** Optional lunch, and beautyberry insect repellent workshop at Barbara Davis' house nearby afterwards. **

Saturday, August 15th, 9 am: Cracker Creek Pontoon Tour on Spruce Creek

1795 Taylor Road, Port Orange, FL 32128

** Plant Swap and picnic lunch afterwards at their pavilion. **

Meet at 9 am to put the plants you bring for the plant swap (if any) in the pavilion and pay \$12 per person. Boat tour starts at 9:30 am, plant and picnic swap to follow.

Upcoming ReGrow the Loop Events:



RE-GROW VOLUSIA OFFERS
A FAMILY FUN EVENT



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

The Important Role of Pollinators

Enjoy a morning of learning and fun for children and their parents. The New Smyrna Beach Garden Club and the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will host a family event geared for children 4 - 8 yrs old. Families will enjoy learning about the importance of native flowers and their pollinators. All family members are welcome.



Saturday, August 22
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Marine Discovery Center
Learning Lab
520 Barracuda Blvd
New Smyrna Beach, FL



R.S.V.P. with QR code
or email
Email pawpaw@fnps.org



Pawpaw
Chapter FNPS



Local Native Plant
Nursery,
Asclepias Acres will be
on hand for native
plant sales from
11:30-12:30

Saturday, October 4th: A Sunday Matinee at the New Smyrna Beach Library
Featuring Doug Tallamy's "The Extraordinary Caterpillar"

Haleigh Ray, an Entomologist from Stetson University, will be there to answer questions about caterpillars and butterflies.

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