



THE PAWPAW PRESS

Newsletter of the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society: July 2022



June field trip to Green Springs Park:

A walk on the wild side!

Our June field trip to Green Springs Park was a walk on the wild side! The plant lists that Warren passed out to the 20 trip participants had plenty of red ink indicating non-native plant species. We did find native plants, but truthfully it was more of a walk through an "exotics-gone-wild" site! Over the years since well-meaning early gardeners must have tried to "beautify" the grounds around the historic green springs and nearby hotel, Green Springs has morphed into a jungle of invasive exotic plants. Tuberous sword fern and air potato vines; the Green Arrowhead vine; exotic giant leather ferns; pinecone ginger; "Scratchthroat" or Coral Ardesia (which some folks mistake for native wild coffee). The one thing that was appreciated by all as they explored the trails was the deep shade that this hardwood hammock offered. And the jade-colored spring waters were still a sight to be seen! Dot Backes, who grew up in Sanford, said she often swam in its cool green waters when she was a kid. But today, posted signs strictly state: "No Swimming!" One good reason to avoid diving in could be the 4-foot alligator we saw swimming there!

-- Sonya Guidry (more text & photos on next page)

Greetings from Cindy Bennington, our new program chair

Hello everyone. I grew up in a small town in northeastern Maryland and received my Ph.D. from West Virginia University. I am currently a Professor of Biology at Stetson University where I teach Plant Ecology and Flora of Florida, among other courses. As an evolutionary ecologist, I have focused most of my research on plant adaptations to their environment. My current research is centered on the ecology of Florida sandhill ecosystems, including the ways in which plant-soil interactions are impacted by human land use history. In addition, I collaborate with Dr. Karen Cole to manage a small habitat fragment, the Volusia Sandhill, on Stetson's campus. I have two children and live in Deland with my husband Peter May and our dog Luna. -- *Cindy Bennington*

PAWPAW CHAPTER FNPS WELCOMES YOU!

- **Our meetings:** first Monday of the month, 7-8:30 pm. **(NOTE: Meeting locations different all summer due to Piggotte Center renovation. Also, NO MEETING IN JULY 2022.)**
- **Our Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/PawpawChapter>
- **Our website:** <http://pawpaw.fnpschapters.org>

SR-40 "Adopt-a-Highway" project update

The weather on our June outing was good and the heat bearable. Litter was less than in the past and easier to pick up. The five of us checked out individual sections solo and recorded 39 species on iNaturalist, many of which were "new" additions to our records. The restricted mowing policy is having positive results. More seeds produced should result in even more flowers next year. Our plant records are catalogued on an Excel spreadsheet. To summarize: We have made 14 visits, recorded 184 species (some duplications) including 14 non-natives. From now on I will only enter what we recorded on iNaturalist at each visit, i.e. what new information we have gained. Join us next time September 26 at 8am; and December 12 at 9am! (If you have never participated before and would like to, please contact me, peter@sigmann.net) -- Peter Sigmann

Green Springs Park field trip (continued)



Photos left to right, starting at top: **1)** Tuberous sword fern and air potato vines swarmed many of the off-the-beaten-trail paths. Peter and David, followed by Vicky and Susan, had to navigate over fallen logs to reach a sweet clear stream as it rippled on its way down to Lake Monroe. **2)** The Green Arrowhead vine that has often been used as an indoor plant has escaped and covers the ground, climbs tree trunks and overwhelms everything in its path. (Scary!) **3)** Vicky, Dennis and Judi must have felt as if they were in a Tarzan movie set with all these exotic giant leather ferns spreading over the ground, then climbing tall native Sabal Palms and live oaks alike. **4)** Pinecone ginger is another exotic popping up from the jungle undergrowth. **5)** Then another Category I Invasive, "Scratchthroat" or Coral Ardesia that some folks mistake for native wild coffee, has spread everywhere in the shady Hammock undergrowth. **6)** Susan on shaded Green Springs Park's trails unpaved trails; she must be checking her iNaturalist! **7)** Field trip leaders Mike, Marcia and Warren on the pre-trip recon, where all heads get together on making up those plant lists with common and botanical names ... which can take longer than the walk itself to get it right! **8)** The group gathers at the green spring overlook to gawk at a little gator (to see the actual gator for yourself, see photo by Amy Spies on last page of this newsletter)! **9)** We actually got a post-trip photo with most participants still lingering to chat. -- Sonya Guidry

Our June meeting was also a field trip: Yaupon Brothers Tea



With the Piggotte Center closed for renovation, we searched for another meeting location. Through inquiries for a field trip came the solution, coupled with a fascinating speaker and tour of the Yaupon Brothers American Tea Company in Edgewater. What a perfect opportunity to mix it up! It was a triple-header social event. We had a chance to chat while sampling some tasty Yaupon Tea blends; Shelly (Tea Company CEO) gave us a great tour of the grounds and Yaupon tea factory; and then had seating set up for our Pawpaw meeting out on their covered patio.

Although we changed the meeting location and several of our usual leaders were out of town, at least 28 people found their way to this off-the-beaten-path event! At least five new faces joined us. There was Heather (naturalist/ photographer) and Tony from NSB, Melissa (biology teacher) and Ed from Ormond, and Jasmine (Hontoon Island Ranger) from West Volusia.

As for the grounds tour, who knew there were so many different varieties, forms, and cultivars of Yaupon shrubs?! Or that Yaupon was being grown as a native cash crop as far away as Mississippi! The factory tea processing tour was even more surprising. Leaves dehumidified, sterilized, shredded and roasted to perfection, so the tea bags could be assembled and packaged by hand, ready for local sales or shipping.

Our Treasurer / Chapter Rep, Karen Walter, filled in for President Susan while she was out of state. Though no real business was carried out there was the anticipated introduction of our new Chapter Vice President, Amber Stevenson, as well as announcements of upcoming field trips, public gardening opportunities, a botanizing adopt-a-highway quarterly cleanup event, and immediate environmental actions that members could support.

Stetson profs Cindy and Karen were already networking with Jasmine regarding Fall student field excursions to Hontoon Island. Doug's Italian visa had finally come in, so some of us had a final opportunity to give him a hug and wish him a happy journey to his new home in Assisi ... where he can begin to smell the Mediterranean wildflowers!

Pawpaw Chapter expresses a huge thank you to Yaupon Brothers Tea Company for hosting our meeting and making it so successful.
-- Sonya Guidry



Upcoming events

Thursday July 14: Environmental Discovery Center (Ormond) native garden workday 8am

Saturday July 16: Pawpaw field trip -- Blue Heron River tour

Monday July 18: Park of Honor (South Daytona) workday 9am

--> For details about the events visit our website <http://pawpaw.fnpschapters.org>

So much life at Hontoon Island!

Pawpaw member Amy Spies made an outing to Hontoon Island recently -- and luckily for all of us, she took her camera along. Amy's photos highlight the beauty of this great natural sanctuary, and the value of conservation lands in general. Amy reported on her walk: "Luckily the trail was dry today so I made it to the mound (but had to pause while a Pygmy rattler decided to take its time before crossing the trail so I could walk past). But that delay made it perfect timing so that when I got to the lookout at the river I got to watch manatees munching away. And the recent controlled burn had beautiful plants emerging, that the gopher was enjoying!"



The Observatory

Thank you always everyone for your beautiful photos!



Above:

Butterfly orchid (*Encyclia tampensis*) ("Sonya gave me about 3 years ago"); by Leslie Nixon.

Prickly poppy ("I got him from Karen; he's having a great summer"); by Carol Hawkins.

Camphor weed (*Heterotheca subaxillaris*) ("thriving in my neighbor's pollinator meadow-yard, even through our extra hot, crispy, virtually rainless June and early July on the beachside"); by Jenny Nazak.

Below:

Amy Spies photos from Green Springs field trip, left to right and top to bottom: Wild Petunia, *Ruellia caroliniana*; American alligator; Tall Ironweed, *Vernonia gigantea*; Man-of-the-earth or a true native "Wild Potato Vine" *Ipomoea pandurata*; Small Flowered Pawpaw with fruit, *Asimina parviflora* managed to hold its ground despite being surrounded by invasive *Coral Ardesia*.

