THE PAWPAW PRESS

Newsletter of the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society – November 2026

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



Hiking Hontoon Island State Park

– by Sonya Guidry
– photos by S. Guidry & Amy Spies

Braving the forecast, 20 people ventured west to DeLand for the field trip on Saturday, October 17th. Ranger Adam and Danny proved they were excellent all-weather botanizing leaders, while Ranger Lauren had her hands full herding us cats as we wandered the trails! Kudos to all those who hung in there and got their feet wet on this trip despite declining to walk the "wet trail".
So glad to finally see a jingle bell orchid with fruit if not flower! Other observations included a pair of limpkins and a sizable pygmy rattler.







L-R above: jingle bell orchid's tiny seed capsules; Danny shows off a dogwood leaf and how, when gently pulled apart, the parallel leaf veins keep the two pieces connected; comparing native bristle basketgrass *(Oplismenus setarius)* with its tiny reddish blooms on the left with non-native Burmann's basketgrass *(Oplismenus burmannii)* displaying wavier leaves.



Happy Trails!

– by Leslie Nixon

On September 26, Kristen Okarski and Leslie Nixon held a native plant event at Kristen's home in the Trails Subdivision in Ormond Beach. They dispensed over 30 propagated native plants, each bringing in a $2 donation to the Pawpaw Chapter. Everyone admired Kristen's native plantings while collecting ecologically beneficial plants to put in their own landscapes. More and more homeowners are learning how rewarding native plants can be!

THE OBSERVATORY 📝 🎨 🖼️

A letter to my native plant garden

Dear Native Plant Garden,
I am sorry I failed you. For
the first few years, when
you were small and discreet,
you welcomed all nearby
pollinators seeking new
sources of nectar. I delighted
in watching bees, wasps,
butterflies, moths, and
beetles new to me. As I
added more plants,
you overgrew your boundaries,
invited in your invasive friends,
and became impenetrable
even to the anoles.

Your abundance overwhelmed me.
I stopped curating you as a
demonstration garden for the
neighborhood. I removed the
"Native Garden" signs, afraid
my neighbors would call the Zoning
Dept. Now, the invasives are
dominating the landscape. I think
I might have to take the Root Slayer
to you. Oh, native garden, let's welcome
autumn so you can enter senescence,
and I can assuage my guilt.

Kate Muldoon
October 2026

This Dot Backes' painting of Spruce Creek Bluff was donated for the silent auction to be held at the 2027 FNPS Conference. An old Florida children's song begins: "I wanna wake up in the morning where the orange blossoms grow…"



Dot wrote this parody:

I wanna wake up in the morning
In my condo by the sea
Where the swimming pool is shining
And no sharks can bite on me

I wanna wander through the strip malls
where the wildwoods used to be
When the days are hot and muggy
In my condo by the sea.

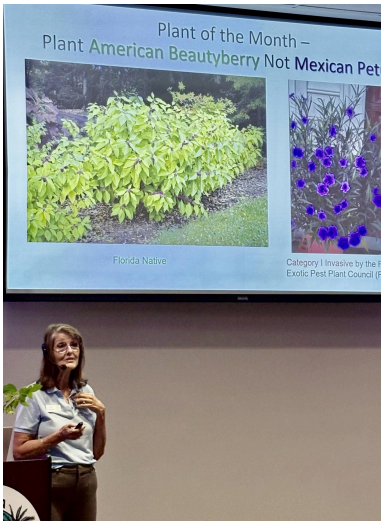
Check this out…

In Defense of Plants 🌱🌿🌳

Sonya recommends this weekly podcast!
On Apple: https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/in-defense-of-plants-podcast/id1245995247
and other systems: https://www.indefenseofplants.com/podcast/category/Podcast

Also, this Science Friday segment features author Margaret Renkl (*The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year* and *Late Migrations: A Natural History of Love and Loss*) with a surprise guest: Doug Tallamy! – *ed*
https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/scifri-book-club-reads-the-comfort-of-crows-a-backyard-year/

Scenes from the October 12th general meeting:

Guest Speaker	Plant-of-the-Month (POM)	Library Spotlight
		
Florida Wildflower Foundation's Executive Director, Stacey Matrazzo presented a bold power point on "Native Alternatives - Winning the Battle Against Invasive Plants".	Inia's presentation titled "Plant American Beautyberry - Not Mexican Petunia!" was a timely followup, along with this year's POM theme: "Invasive Plants & Their AlterNatives".	Closing the night's program on a high note, Leslie featured Stacey Matrazzo's very own great guide book, "Native Plants for Florida Gardening", published in 2020.

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, November 9th *****

Meeting starts at 6:30 pm, doors open at 6 for socializing
Guest Speaker: Katie Tripp, Ph.D.,
owner of *Natural Beauty Native Florida Landscapes*

*** Save the date: Monday, December 14th ***
Annual Pawpaw Holiday Potluck and Plant Auction!

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/

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

Upcoming Field Trips & Events:

Saturday, November 14th, 10am: **Mala Compra Hiking Trail, Palm Coast**

Enjoy a pleasant stroll through a lovely coastal hammock in Flagler County. This easy, three-mile loop remains mostly in the shade. Park and meet across the street at Bings Landing where we will follow the field trip with an optional lunch at Captain's BBQ. Wear clothing appropriate for the weather, Bring water, insect repellant and optional binoculars. Trip leader: Paul Rebmann. Registration closes at 8 am Friday, November 13th. Register at Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pawpaw-fnps-chapter-mala-compra-hiking-trail-field-trip-tickets-2003315452446?aff=erelpanelorg

Saturday, December 12th: **Eden of Wings in Enterprise, Florida**

Native plant nursery, pollinator garden and mini Scottish Highland cattle farm!

Upcoming ReGrow the Loop Event:

Saturday, November 7th, 10 am: **Bring Life to Your Landscape in Fall and Winter with Florida Native Plants**

Ormond Beach Regional Library, 30 S. Beach Street, Ormond Beach
Leslie Nixon, Master Gardener and Pawpaw Member

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