



THE PAWPAW PRESS

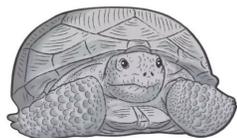
Newsletter of the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society: May 2021

How your yard can help tortoises

Florida celebrates April 10 as Gopher Tortoise Day to mark the importance of this keystone species. State law requires that gopher tortoises be relocated before any land clearing or development takes place, and property owners must obtain permits from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission before capturing and relocating tortoises.



Gopher Tortoise Friendly Yard



This property owner is helping conserve gopher tortoises

[MyFWC.com/GopherTortoise](https://myfwc.com/GopherTortoise)



But because gopher tortoises are losing so much of their habitat to development, these mitigation sites are filling with gopher tortoises as well. To encourage private land owners to help provide food and habitat for the gopher tortoise, the FWC has developed a Gopher Tortoise Friendly Yard program. Chapter members Fred and Suze Peace's yard was recently recognized

as part of this program.

The FWC has also developed a guide to help you choose gopher tortoise-friendly plants for your yard. It lists forage food quality, from high value to low. Fred says he was surprised to see coreopsis and blanket flower listed as high, but expected to see the included prickly pear cactus, Spanish needle, Florida pusley, wild grape, and gopher apple. You'll find the plant guide here:

<https://myfwc.com/media/1798/forageplant.pdf>

To apply for the yard recognition program, visit: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/9c1298742e7c440fb1e4a-b33987aa6a9>. —Story and photo by Fred Peace



When ugly is part of the plan

This is the story of the ugly caterpillar in the butterfly world. Let's just say it: This little critter is supposed to look like bird droppings. Four to 10 days after a female giant swallowtail, *Papilio cresphontes*, lays her tiny amber-colored eggs on a host plant, they develop into larvae, which will feast on leaves of wild lime, Hercules-club, wafer ash and various cultivated citrus trees for about three weeks, going through five instars.

Larvae reach a mature size of about 2 inches, after which they pupate, forming an equally ingenious chrysalis: It resembles a nub on the bark of the tree, completely camouflaging itself while the magic hap-



pens. After about 10 days, the largest of the North American butterflies emerges.

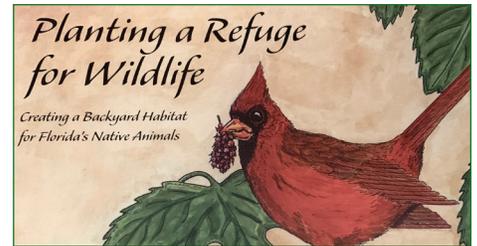
The giant swallowtail has a wingspan of 4.5–5.5 inches and often seems like a bird as its wings carry it high in the trees.

Stopping to nectar at colorful flowers, they use their long proboscis to reach many flowers that might not support their weight. The giant swallowtail is a delight to watch as it gracefully swoops and flutters on to the next nectar site, frequenting woodlands and pastures, suburban gardens and orange groves. And maybe your yard!

—Story and photos by Karen Walter.

Guide to welcoming wildlife

The chapter has ordered a supply of *Planting a Refuge for Wildlife*, a 40-page booklet produced by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. It is full of great ideas and thoughtful considerations when planting natives for attracting wildlife. Get one for yourself or as a gift. Books are \$5 each. Contact Karen at Pawpaw@fnps.org to obtain yours.



Mark your calendar for programs, field trips

FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS

- June 19: Field trip, Martin Dairy trailhead, New Smyrna Beach
- June 21: Park of Honor work day, 9 a.m., Olive Street, South Daytona
- July 17: Field trip, St. John's River pontoon boat ride
- August 16: Park of Honor work day, 9 a.m., Olive Street, South Daytona
- August 21: Plant swap, Buschman Park, Port Orange

PROGRAMS

- June 14, Samantha West, Volusia County Environmental Specialist III and ISA Certified Arborist, on environmental planning

The Observatory

Although only planted in December, columbine is growing well at Katie's house and already blooming. Renate made a discovery of false indigo in full bloom. Share your delights and discoveries by e-mailing your photos to Doug at shalehill@gmail.com.

