



The Nature Coastline

Newsletter of the Nature Coast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

January-February 2012

Monthly meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Land O' Lakes Community Center 5401 Land O Lakes Blvd (US 41) Land O' Lakes FL 34639, in the rear meeting room with entrance off the courtyard on the south side of the building.

Meetings and Events:

The Chapter has exciting news! We're moving our meeting location. *Beginning in January*, to be closer to the center of Pasco County, the Nature Coast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society is moving! Starting in January we will meet at the Land O Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O' Lakes Blvd (US 41). Land O'Lakes Community Center is located on Highway 41 between SR 52 and SR 54 on the west side of the highway (7 mi. S of SR 52 and 3.2 mi. N. of SR 54). Enter the rear meeting room from the courtyard on the south side of the building. The second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm remains the same. We hope you can join us in this new location in central Pasco County for interesting speakers, native plants and information on using them in your landscape.

January 13 program: Phenology and the USA National Phenology Network

Presented by project manager George Kish of the Suncoast Chapter of FNPS. Phenology is the study of periodic plant and animal life cycle events and how these are influenced by seasonal and inter-annual variations in climate. (contd p2..)

Field trip: Sunday, January 15, Lettuce Lake Park 10am located at 6920 E Fletcher Ave, Tampa, FL 33637. Phone (813) 987-6204 Lettuce Lake Park is a Hillsborough County Park consisting of a 1.8 mile loop along the Hillsborough River (contd p2...)

Feb 14 Program: Creating Water Gardens and Rain Gardens using Florida Native Plants.

Presented by Darryl Frick, owner of Water Gardens by Design and Rita Grant, Hernando County Master Gardener and Native Plant Nursery owner (contd p4...)

Field trip: February 19th, Sunday, 10am Withlacoochee River Park located at 12449 Withlacoochee Blvd, Dade City, FL 33525. The Withlacoochee River Park is a Pasco County regional park near the Withlacoochee River, with 5.2 miles of trail developed and maintained by Florida Trail Assoc. It includes 246 acres of the Green Swamp – West tract as well (contd p4...)

Welcome new members: Brian Witt; **and renewed members:** David M. Barnard, Betty Candelora, Gregory Cardinal, Peter and Lois Day, Elaine Fortier, Alexandra 'Alice' Gelweiler.

Chapter contact information

OFFICERS:

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Program Coordinator: (open position)

Chapter website: pasconativeplants.org

January 13 program (contd..)

The project is called Nature's Notebook which is a volunteer observation program to collect valuable observed information to help scientists, educators and others understand how plants and animals are responding to climate and other environmental changes. Your observations can make a difference!

George has degrees in Biology and Environmental Science. He's a hydrologist with the US Geological Survey in Tampa, and an adjunct professor at St. Petersburg College. He's a past president of the Suncoast chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, and a Director-at-Large of the state FNPS. George enjoys spending time in his backyard ecosystem

Field trip: January 15, Lettuce Lake Park (contd..)

It is a haven for nature study. Several naturalist groups use this venue to study cypress swamp and fresh water vegetation. An interpretive center featuring exhibits leads to two boardwalks and an observation tower where visitors can view the cypress swamp with its abundance of birds and other wildlife. This will be a self-guided walk, so bring your books and we will have fun discovering and sharing our findings.

The cost is \$2 per vehicle up to 8 people. We will meet at the visitors center, which is located toward the center of the park, at 10am and begin our walk from there.

Directions: South on I 75 to exit 266, Fletcher Ave, travel East 1.7 miles. The park is just past Telecom Dr. **Carpooling** Everyone can meet at 9:30am at the Hampton Inn at the junction of I75 and SR 56 at exit 275 in Land o Lakes.

Plant profile: **SCARLET HIBISCUS**

by Peggy A. Gretchen,
FNPS Member, Pasco Master Gardener

Botanical Name: *Hibiscus coccineus*

Common Name: Scarlet Hibiscus, Scarlet Rosemallow

Family: Malvaceae (Mallow)

Type of Plant: Native large, erect, semi-woody shrub or herbaceous perennial where freezes occur.

Height: 4 – 6 ft. **Width:** 2 – 5 ft

How to Identify:

Leaves: Alternate, palmately veined and deeply divided into 3 – 5 lobes. Unique and showy, reddish-green. Deciduous.

Flowers: Showy, large, bright red, 4 – 8 in. in diameter, with 5 well-separated petals. Flowering Time: Late spring – summer.

Fruit: An ovoid capsule, 1 – 2 in. long, containing many large hard seeds.

Habitat: Edges of swamps and wetlands.

Distribution: Coastal S. Carolina southward to throughout Florida and west to Texas. Hardiness

Zones: 8 – 11.

Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit: Attractive flowering perennial for moist and wet sites. Will attract hummingbirds and butterflies for nectar. Grow in a pot without drainage, either alone or with other wet-loving native perennials, such as cardinal flower, yellow canna, blue-flag iris, or the related species *Hibiscus grandiflorus* (Swamp Hibiscus) with its large pink flowers.

Cultivation: Easy and fast to grow.

Soil: Prefers moist to wet, fertile soils, but will adapt to most well-drained soils if kept moist.

Light: Full sun – partial sun/shade.

Water: Prefers moist to wet.

Miscellaneous: Dormant in winter. Prune or mow to ground in fall. Will return from the roots year after year. May slowly spread by self-sown seed in wet open sites.

Propagation: From seed or cuttings.

Availability: See your FANN (Florida Association of Native Nurseries) Directory or www.plantrealflorida.org!

References:

Nelson, Gil, Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2003.

Osorio, Rufino, A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 2001.

Taylor, Walter Kingsley, The Guide to Florida Wildflowers, Dallas, Texas, Taylor Publishing Co., 1992.

Tobe, Dr. John D. et al., Florida Wetland Plants An Identification Manual, Tallahassee, Florida, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 1998.

Wunderlin, Richard P., Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 1998.

Feb 14 program: (contd...)

Water and Rain gardens are perfect additions to your landscape and this program will help you decide which one would be best for you as well as which plants to use and how to avoid non-native species. We will talk about plants that bloom spring, summer and fall. These gardens help to control rain water run-off and provide wildlife habitat.

Bio

Darryl is based out of Clearwater Florida, does waterfall, pondless waterfall, stream, koi ponds, fountains and water features, new construction and design, rebuilds, rainwater harvesting, repair and consultations. Rita lives in Brooksville and has a native plant nursery on her property. She is a Master Gardener in Hernando County, a longtime member of the Florida Native Plant Society, does talks for local garden clubs and the Hernando County Extension.

Field trip: February 19th Withlacoochee River Park (contd...)

The park offers access to a wild and scenic portion of the river and a mosaic of habitat communities, from high sandhills to low riverine swamp. There is a replica of a Native American Village on the trail which we may visit since this is also Living History Arts Festival Weekend at the park. Bring your books for plant identification and dress appropriately for walking. Restrooms and drinking fountains are available.

Carpool : West side of the County can meet at SR 52 and Hays Rd at the Publix Shopping Plaza (14851 SR 52) in Hudson at 9:30am. The East side of the County can meet at the Hampton Inn at the junction of I75 and SR 56 at exit 275 in Land o Lakes at 9:30am.

Directions: SR 52 East, turn right on Prospect Rd, take first left on Clinton Ave which becomes Enterprise Rd and left on Auton Rd. Turn right on Withlacoochee Blvd . **We will meet at the pay station at 10am which is on Withlacoochee Blvd.**

Chapter announcements:

We still need a Program Coordinator! Please consider making a modest donation of your time to our chapter and volunteer to do this important job.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Our Spring Native Plant Sale will be on Saturday, March 31, 2012 from 10 AM to 2 PM at the Land O'Lakes Community Center on US 41.

Volunteers will be needed! Please contact Peggy Gretchen (herculesmpg@earthlink.net or 813-991-4812) or sign up at our February or March meetings.

Looking for native plants? Check out the website for the public on native nurseries is:

www.plantrealflorida.org.

Do you have an FNPS member on your gift list who might like a T-shirt or mug or baseball cap with the FNPS logo?

Do you have a nature lover on your list who would like a nature-themed calendar, native plant mugs, gift cards, artwork, or a calendar?

You can find these and much more on the FNPS Store.

When you buy at the FNPS Store, FNPS receives a contribution. In some cases, such as the calendars, or the FNPS logo items, all profits benefit FNPS and our chapters.

Other items support local Florida artisans.

Check it out at [http://www.thefnpsshop.com/!](http://www.thefnpsshop.com/)



In the mood for more pix? <http://goo.gl/ioKY6> share yours!

Important News from Chapter President Julie Wert

The Chapter has exciting news! New year, new location! **We're moving our meeting location, beginning in January**, to be closer to the center of Pasco County.

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New year, new way to stay informed about the Chapter! Our Chapter has a Facebook page, thanks to our new Secretary and Social Media Chair, David Peterson. Here is the link to our chapter's official Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nature-Coast-Chapter-of-the-FL-Native-Plant-Society/278001782242774>.

Please click "Like" in the upper right corner, and then click "share" in the bottom left column and help generate traffic to the page!

The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.



FNPS Website: www.fnps.org
Newsletter Publication
Nature Coast Chapter of
the Florida Native Plant Society
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