



# Sabal minor

**A bi-monthly newsletter for the members of the Florida Native Plant Society**

## **SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2020 | VOLUME 22, NUMBER 5**

Chapters are encouraged to print copies of the newsletter to have on hand at their monthly meetings for members who would prefer a print version.

Message from the President   <i>Bonnie Basham</i> .....	1
Message from the Executive Director   <i>Juliet Rynear</i> .....	2
Articles.....	3
Native Agriculture   <i>Bryon White, Yaupon Brothers</i> .....	3
Chapter News, Events, and Programs .....	4
Longleaf Pine Chapter   <i>Submitted by Lizzy Jenny with Duane Tant, Gabriel Campbell and others contributing</i> .....	4
Hernando Chapter   <i>The Best Laid Plans: Wildflowers and Realities of Process   Cindy Liberton, PR</i> .....	5
Lake Beautyberry Chapter   <i>Fern Scavenger Hunt @ Maude Mason Preserve   Lavon Silvernell, President</i> .....	9
Lunch and Learn Archives .....	10
Et cetera .....	11

### **Message from the President | *Bonnie Basham***



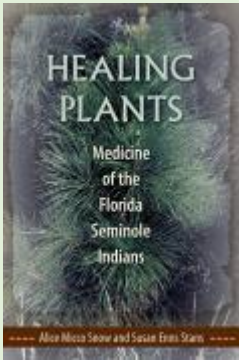
Up here in north Florida, it's still hot, humid and breathless but according to the Farmer's Almanac, the "dog days of summer" should have slunk away around August 21. That means we should be experiencing cooler weather so I'm thinking the Almanac should be edited to reflect climate change! Nevertheless, we look forward to fall when working in the garden can take place most any time of the day.

Even the heat of the mid-day sun has not prevented your staff and FNPS volunteers from continuing to work on restoration projects on the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway, Silver Glen Springs, Lake Louisa State Park and Horseshoe Creek Scrub and our ongoing plant rescue in Clermont.

Recently, I was pleased to join Deborah Curry, President of Marion Big Scrub, Tom Russell, Juliet Rynear, Valerie Anderson and our energetic summer intern Johanna Munoz for several hours of restoration work on the Ross Prairie Tract of the Cross Florida Greenway. Thanks also to our enthusiastic volunteers Dalton Maddox and Daisy Lopez who have become regular volunteers for our Central Florida projects. Deborah pointed out several healthy *Dicerandra cornutissima* in the area we were restoring, and it was exciting to see this marvelous mint growing in the wild. My husband, Woody, [flew his drone](#) over our area and the video is up on our various platforms.

I want to send a special shout-out to Valerie Anderson, Communications Director, for the wide variety of Friday Lunch and Learn sessions she has enabled us to enjoy. They are linked in the most recent Sabal minor Vol 22(4) if you want to watch one again or enjoy one you have not seen yet.

Thanks also to Valerie for working with our chapters so virtual meetings can continue to take place. I know we all are anxious for in person meetings to begin again but in the meantime, check the [Society Calendar](#) or the chapters' section of the website to find the schedule for chapter meetings you might wish to attend in a virtual way.



I recently came across a book entitled *Healing Plants: Medicine of the Florida Seminole Indians*. It is published by University Press and written by Alice Micco Snow and Susan Enns Stans. It was first published in 2001, the paperback was published in 2015. It is a fascinating look at the Seminole Indian culture as well as their use of native plants for medicinal purposes. The book describes how native plants are used in Seminole traditional medicine and offers recipes for using native plants to treat a wide range of ailments.

I recommend the book to you and would be interested in knowing what books you are reading, have read, or consider to be your “go to” book about Florida native plants. *Please send me the titles/authors of your favorite book to [president@fnps.org](mailto:president@fnps.org) and include a sentence or two about why they are special to you. I'll share the list here over the next several months.*

## Message from the Executive Director | Juliet Rynear



tuned.

Happy September! Of course, that means that October Native Plant Month is right around the corner. This year, we will be partnering with the University of Florida to help promote an education and awareness campaign on the importance of insects: **The Insect Effect: Insect Decline and the Future of Our Planet, Tagline: Respect the Insects.** We will be sharing information on our website and social media (Facebook, blog, Instagram, etc.), so stay

**Big news**—we have been working on a new website and you can check it out here: <http://fnps.website/>. Please note that this is a temporary address for the new website. When we “go live” in about a week, the new website will have the same web address as our current website does now ([www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org)). On the weekend of September 12-13, we will transition from the development site to the regular address. It's a complicated process and we are extremely fortunate that our Web Team - Paul Rebmann and Shirley Denton—are so generous with their talents and their time!

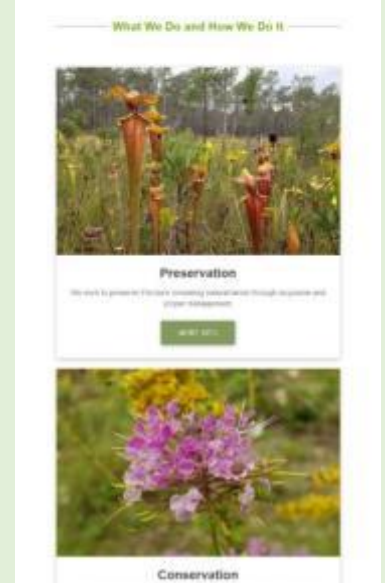
We could definitely use photos for website maps - the Interpretive Trails and the Native Plant Hotspots. If you have time, could you review the places in your region and let us know if you have updates and/or photos to share? Information can be sent to [webteam@fnps.org](mailto:webteam@fnps.org). Also, check out the [new native plant database](#) (consistently the most popular feature on our website).

**Great news**—after a steep decline during the Covid-19 quarantine, our Society membership is back up! Please join me in welcoming all of our new members! And a HUGE thanks to all of our current members for your continuing support of our mission to preserve, conserve and restore Florida's native plants and plant communities!

**More great news**—we are working with the Florida Wildflower Foundation and the Florida Department of Transportation on a task group to create guidance documents and protocols for plant rescue prior to construction activities. We are also working to promote and protect Florida's native plants in FDOT rights-of-ways.

**The good news just keeps coming!** As we reach the end of 2020, we are also in the final stretch of our 2018-2020 Strategic plan. We set some strong goals in this plan and I am happy to report that we have reached every one of those goals!

1. Increase and Diversify Revenue by 10% - 20% annually
2. Build Organizational Capacity (hire staff)
3. Upgrade Website to Support Organizational Structure
4. Improve Annual Conference
5. Continue to expand our mission-driven programs (conservation, habitat restoration, policy initiatives, research, and educational programming)



# Articles

## Native Agriculture | Bryon White, Yaupon Brothers



Anyone who's even remotely paying attention can see that vacant land in Florida is a hot commodity. The once pristine expanses of natural lands in Florida are now, on the whole, a coast-to-coast commercial cesspool. There are exceptions, of course. Municipalities in some areas have doubled-down on conservation efforts, and grass-roots campaigns to protect and preserve sensitive habitats have seen real progress. However, little is often discussed about what businesses are doing to offset and mitigate environmental degradation. The world has often been shaped by entrepreneurial ingenuity. Entrepreneurs experience the same problems and inconveniences as everyone else, but in them they also see opportunity. That's what I saw in the diminutive Yaupon Holly, (*Ilex vomitoria*). For those of you who don't already know, Yaupon is the only caffeine-containing plant species to naturally occur in the United States. It's endemic to the southeastern coastal plain and occurs widely in north and central Florida in a varied range of habitats. Yaupon can tolerate piney flatwoods and salty coastal dune systems with equal enthusiasm. It also occurs quite prolifically in the maritime hammocks of coastal Volusia County, where our Yaupon Brothers tea is harvested to this day. Yaupon is not a fan of fire, so it is very at home in the shaded and ancient hammocks, mostly an understory and mid-story shrub or small tree. Yaupon reaches heights of up to thirty feet and can attain great age. The indigenous Timucua people, who inhabited north and central Florida for at least a few thousand years, revered the Yaupon and so did the conquering Spanish. The reason for their reverence is the same reason most of us cannonball coffee, tea and energy drinks on the regular---caffeine. Sweet, glorious nectar of productivity and insomnia.

To say that American consumers have a love affair with caffeinated beverages is an egregious understatement. When considering tea alone, (*Camellia sinensis*), Americans consumed over 150 million servings of tea each day in 2017, (EDIS). The resulting demand in tea imported to the U.S. that year exceeded 250,000 tons. All of that tea had to travel on ships for 8,000 miles to get here, and all the while we have a native plant species in Yaupon that can fill that caffeinated consumer niche. What also presented as an opportunity was the chance to pitch Yaupon as a native plant for farmers to grow in place of more conventional crops. Agricultural activity is a major contributor to deforestation and pollution. Crops require large amounts of nutrient inputs, which eventually contaminate our waterways and cause algae blooms and other maladies. Florida is a farm-rich state, with over 9.45 million acres of the state dedicated to agriculture in 2017, (FDACS). Florida leads the nation in the production of at least seven types of crops and is in second place for at least five more. The most famous of these non-native monocultures is undoubtedly citrus. Citrus, which was first brought to Florida by the Spanish centuries ago, became synonymous with Florida. In its heyday, Florida's citrus crop injected \$8 billion into Florida's economy each year, and it employed approximately 80,000 people. However, the citrus industry has lost 60% of its value and yield over the past decade due to the bacterial pathogen, HLB, which is vectored by a psyllid fly. There is no cure for the resulting fatal disease, and this has Florida's citrus growers on the rails. When the economic and environmental pressures on farmers are laid bare, a native crop choice really begins to make sense. Through our partnership with UF/IFAS, we've helped seven farms convert conventional non-native crops to Yaupon. This results in more control and agency for the farmer, and fewer inputs and nutrient pollution as a result of the tree's flavor for Florida's natural conditions.

And there is also wild-crafting, which is harvesting from wild Yaupon plants. Like many forest products, Yaupon can be managed using sustainable practices. For example, Yaupon Brothers does not harvest greater than fifty percent of a plant's height and width. Mature plants over ten feet are not used for harvesting, nor are fruiting female plants which are an important food source for wildlife. In New Smyrna Beach, Yaupon Brothers owns twelve acres of certified organic maritime hammock. We've harvested there for the last four years and removed hundreds of invasive Brazilian Pepper trees and Coral Ardisia plants. We have a contract with the City of New Smyrna Beach to harvest from sixty-seven acres of hammock, and in exchange, we remove Brazilian Pepper from the area. We also propagate our trees for farms using material from these maritime hammocks, where the growing conditions result in a much larger leaf structure that makes them easier to process. All of the lands we own or harvest have been certified as organic, meaning fertilizers, pesticides, and other inputs are not used. We require that our partner farms also adopt the organic certification to ensure that we are owning up to our commitment to reduce nutrient pollution.

The takeaway is that consumers have the power to change the world with the choices they make and the products they choose to buy or not buy. We all vote with our credit cards. Yaupon Brothers has helped people see that great products can be made from indigenous plants and ingredients, which can reduce the negative impacts of food production. Consumers aren't required to stop enjoying what they buy, and businesses shouldn't assume that creating economic opportunities and supporting conservation are mutually exclusive. We can have our tea and drink it, too.



# Chapter News, Events, and Programs

## Longleaf Pine Chapter | Submitted by Lizzy Jenny with Duane Tant, Gabriel Campbell and others contributing



The Longleaf Pine Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society strives to develop as an educational resource on multiple levels- from the simplest question of *where to purchase native plants for home gardens*, to the latest research developments related to our unique plants such as this Western Panhandle carnivorous plant, Tracey's Sundew, *Drosera tracyi*. This individual was found in restored wet prairie at Deer Lake State Park in Walton County.

### *The Quest for Native Plants in Northwest Florida*



The native garden installed by Longleaf Pine Chapter at UF/IFAS WFREC in Milton



Chapter Rep Gabriel Campbell



Tracey's Sundew, *Drosera tracyi*

Access to native plant materials in the Pensacola area is limited; the nearest native plant nursery is a 1-½ hour, 80-mile drive. This contributes to the overall low use of natives in residential, commercial, and conservation and restoration projects. Responding to this deficit, we're partnering with other organizations to make native plants more readily available locally.

In the last year, our President Duane Tant, started a small nursery named Luna Hill to begin building inventory to be sold weekly at the downtown Pensacola Palafox Market in a post-covid world. This summer our chapter began organizing an LPC plant sale that is currently targeted for spring 2021. Local resident and former nursery owner Emily Peterson, has continued to grow for her own personal use and small-scale consultations, but also began sharing

wisdom and experience with a new nursery owner Mark Guerra of Guerra Tree Farm Nursery. Guerra Tree Farm serves professional landscapers with wholesale products as well as traditional retail customers. While they do not anticipate transitioning into an entirely native plants nursery, they are interested in working with customers and FNPS to order natives from nearby growers. Several other nurseries in the area are now stocking more natives in addition to their traditional, ornamental plants.

Our Chapter Representative Gabriel Campbell, a graduate student at University of Florida (UF) in Milton, FL, has propagated a few hundred species in order to supply local growers with stock plants. He and a dedicated volunteer crew have grown plants for, designed, and installed two native gardens at the at the Blackwater State Forest admin building in Munson and at the UF West Florida Research and Education Center in Milton. All plants used in the

gardens were grown from local ecotype plant material. Lizzy Jenny, Liz Langston, Ashley Moore, and Rowan Hoff collected seeds and cuttings, propagated and cultivated plants, and installed and maintained the beds.

### *Researchers to the rescue*

Longleaf Pine Chapter members are also actively involved in cutting-edge Florida native plant research. Ashlynn Smith, with both the Atlanta Botanical Garden and UF, is researching restoration methods that increase biodiversity of imperiled and long fire-suppressed wetlands encroached with black titi (*Cliftonia monophylla*). Her work at Deer Lake State Park and across Florida also includes surveying and collecting demographic data on rare and threatened flora in order to prioritize conservation efforts. She says this work would not be possible if not for the abundance of native plant enthusiasts and professionals in Florida!

Our very own native plant superstar, Jim Burkhalter, continues to collect, artfully prepare, and induct herbarium specimens continuing his decades long contribution to scientific botany as curator of the Michael I. Cousens Herbarium of the University of West Florida. Founded on October 30, 1974, Jim has brought the collection to over 27,250 specimens in his tireless quest to document the flora of Pensacola and the surrounding region.





Over time we eliminated much of the canopy and fought back exotic species, showcasing an array of showy plantings from the sandhill community. By 2016 the garden was rich with *Garberia* and *Calamintha*, *Liatris* and *Hypericum* and much more.



*Before and After Panoramas. Caption. Hard work pays off in the sandhill section of the native plant garden.*

But by 2018 we wanted to step up our game; we had some energetic volunteers who wanted to unite around a project. Because our native plant garden is embedded in a flowery botanical garden full of exotic species we were determined to show the potential for year-long beauty using Florida's natives.



*Competing with Exotics—The Native Plant Garden exists in a world of exotic color from the surrounding garden. \* Photo by Cindy Liberton*

The road is paved with great intentions. We needed to add floral drama and bump up the interpretation. Without ID labels, our plants were not valued, occasionally trod upon by visiting dogs and toddlers. We made plans for educational programming and better labeling, produced lists of existing native plant species in the garden, and successfully applied for the Florida Wildflower Foundation's Viva Florida Grant Program.

As in any project, you must start with assumptions, and we were off base on a few, necessitating mid-course corrections.

#### **ASSUMPTION: Things will proceed on schedule.**

Where does the time go? Our original plan for planting was to begin in Fall 2019, with phased plantings in October, November and January 2020. The actual planting schedule commenced in February and was completed in June. So, what happened?



Underestimated site prep time, forgot about winter. We had anticipated that the site on the east fence line would require additional clearing prior to planting, both mechanically and with a judicious application of herbicide where necessary. An unexpected eruption of Air Potato set us back. After October and November Chapter work days on site preparation and maintenance, we were out of time for planting for the year. Members were concerned that we'd have a hard freeze that would kill our investment. It was agreed to delay until danger of freeze was reduced.



*Hernando Chapter Volunteers come together for a November Prep day. Photo by Cindy Liberton*



*Neither rain nor pandemic can stop a native plant enthusiast on a mission. The second large planting was accomplished in June 2020. Photo by Gary Scheffler*

PANDEMIC! Fortunately, we completed our primary planting February 23 just before the ball dropped. Since then small groups have volunteered at the garden to plant and maintain while social distancing and wearing masks for close work. We all enjoy this time together very much, even with masks. It's good exercise and so nice to see the results of our work. But we lost March completely, and had to suspend our educational program. Our final large planting was on June 13, a nice rainy day.

**ASSUMPTION: Our preliminary blueprint is accurate.**

The original plan was to introduce mass wildflower plantings in three locations: up front, on the perimeter and within our sandhill planting. As of this time, we have combined the new majority of plantings in a long perimeter bed in the rear of the demonstration garden. Why?

**If you think there is enough sun, there isn't.**

Despite efforts to reduce the canopy (removing 5 large trees), the initial failed planting of coastal species such as Beach Verbena and Dune sunflower and Gaillardia showed us we had work to do. The remainder of stray oaks and extra shrubs were surrendered (at times painfully). We reserved the hot spots for the most sun-loving species. The shady front beds will host shade loving species, but this will occur later than planned.

**Plants are picky about irrigation.**

On the original planting plan we neglected to mark the sprinkler heads. This caused a bit of species swapping. Too much water would kill some, too little would make others fail to establish or thrive. The irrigation system was changed to address the correct plant groupings with the right amount of water and we are off and running.



*Much shuffling occurred in the original landscape plan was due to unanticipated roots and sprinkler head placement. Photo by Gary Scheffler*



*The sandhill is full to capacity! Photo by Cindy Liberton*



## At the root of all evil.

It was hard to anticipate the extent and toughness of roots in the planting bed. Some plant species could not be placed as planned; we bought new tools and attacked the root of the problem, or just worked around it.

## Protecting the Integrity of the Sandhill

Several members felt that the sandhill section should stay true to sandhill plants. Also, the sandhill section was growing so well that there wasn't room for many additions. We added a mass planting of Softhair Coneflower (*Rudbeckia mollis*), added more milkweed and some additional species such as silkgrass (*Pityopsis graminifolia*) here and there.

## ASSUMPTION 3: We'll just label everything.

What to label, how to label. We originally planned to purchase new plant ID signs for existing species and the species we were adding to the garden. Further discussion led to reserve large costly ID signs for plants that were sure to stick around; for ephemeral or seasonal plants, we elected to use waterproof labels on small metal plant tags. They have all been identified and this is underway.



Buried cans of cement dissuade visitors from pulling up signs to read them and returning them to the wrong plant. Photo by Jason LaRoche

We sunk the large metal labels in cement so visitors are less likely to pull them up and move them. We are still pondering how to position labels so visitors don't damage plants walking into the beds to read labels, and are tossing around ideas. Let us know if you've got one!

## WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

We've learned a lot, engaged our members, and the native plant demonstration garden looks better than ever. The plants really don't care about our germs and continue to grow as long as we pay a little attention.

We are thankful for grant funding from the Florida Wildflower Foundation and the State of Florida to purchase the plants. And we

certainly appreciate the ongoing support from the Nature Coast Botanical Garden and Spring Hill Garden Club. Their board approved funds for upgrades to the irrigation system and tree removal. They also

welcomed the Saturday morning education program about native plants. Finally, the Hernando Chapter thanks the Master Gardener Volunteers who prepared and presented the programs.

We are looking forward to the time when we can continue our interpretative work and once more share information with garden guests as they stroll by. We are currently developing the interpretative signs. If you're in the area, please come by!



Wildflowers thrive in their new home and bring color to the garden. Many are now reseeding for next season. Photo by Cindy Liberton





Join Lake Beautyberry Chapter of FNPS for a trip to Maude Mason Preserve, Sunday, September 13th at 4:00 p.m.

To facilitate distancing this event will be a Scavenger Hunt for Ferns

Sara Maude Mason Preserve is a little wetland park in Howey in the Hills in Lake County. It has a trail and boardwalk that winds under a canopy of ancient hardwood trees. As visitors walk, the shady forest floor on either side transitions from: moist ground, to saturated soil rich with organic material, to standing water. This habitat diversity leads to species diversity, while our focus will be on plants it will be hard to ignore other wetland attractions from birds in the canopy to frogs in the swamp. But for this fieldtrip our goal will be to identify at least 12 species of Florida native ferns and 1 exotic.

To make the challenge more fun and encourage distancing, this will be a Scavenger Hunt. Each individual or small group will receive an information sheet with some basic fern terms and a description of the ferns easily found at Maude Mason. The goal will be to match fern descriptions with numbers placed on the trail and boardwalk for this event. There will be friendly native plant folks around to help if you want to pull up your mask and ask them a question.

The fieldtrip will begin at 4:00 p.m. at the trailhead entrance (see address below) and the fieldtrip will end about 6:00pm. The park does not close until dusk. It is not necessary to arrive exactly at 4:00 to participate (staggered arrivals will help to spread us out on the trail). There is no charge for this activity, but to ensure that we do not have too many participants, even with distancing, pre-registration is required. Email: [lakebeautyberry@gmail.com](mailto:lakebeautyberry@gmail.com) or contact: Lavon at [lavonsilvernell@gmail.com](mailto:lavonsilvernell@gmail.com), or 352-223-4761.

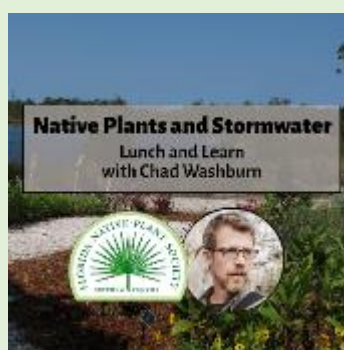
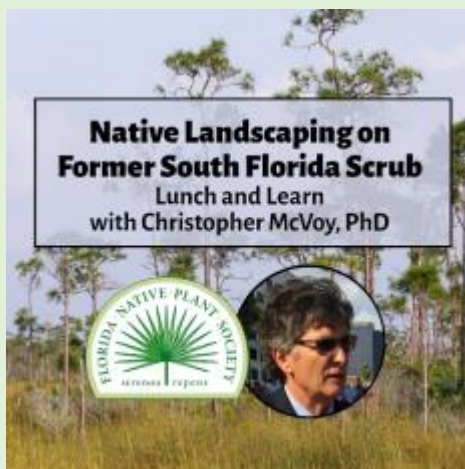
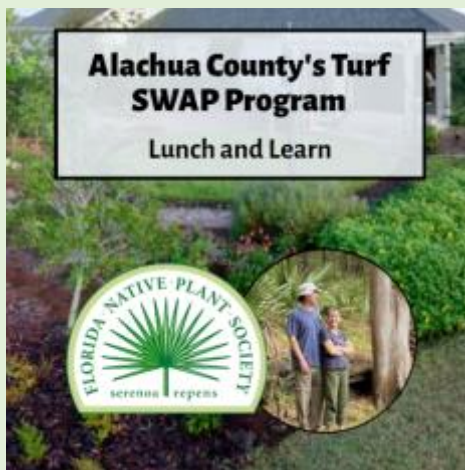
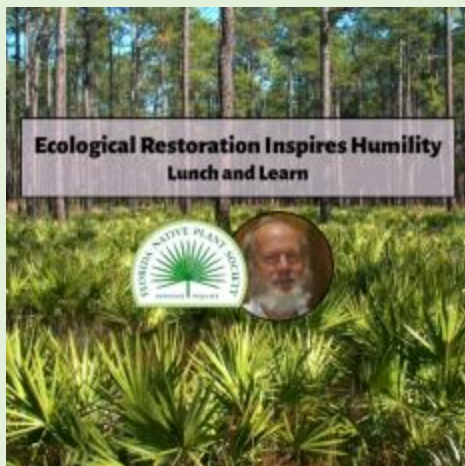
While this activity is outdoors, one of the safest places for people to be to avoid the spread of “germs,” we request you have a mask and wear it if you enter the space of another individual not in your social group.

Address: 23881 N Buckhill Rd, Howey-In-The-Hills, FL 34737, this address will take you to an old playground. There is a trail from the playground to the park entrance and the beginning of the Scavenger Hunt. There is also parking behind Lake Hills School on S. Lakeshore Blvd, directly across the road from the park entrance.





## Lunch and Learn Archives





## Et cetera



Paul Strauss, photographer and Martin County Chapter member, won an Honorable Mention in the North American Butterfly Association's 2020 National Photo Contest for a Gulf Fritillary on Pickerelweed, *Pontederia cordata*, in Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park. [Paul's twitter](#).



The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry has an incredible regular publication called [Tri-Ology](#) that includes a report on their various activities. The botany section is written by Dr. Patti Anderson and Alex de la Paz.



Joseph Montes de Oca (@joemdo) of Dade Chapter has created a [how-to video](#) for using observation fields in iNaturalist for collecting and exploring pollinator/plant interactions. Check out his great video he posted in August of the insects of the Pine Rocklands of Long Pine Key. Blazing Stars (*Liatriispp.*) and Pineland Croton (*Croton linearis*) are heavily featured.

The Pine Lily Chapter has been live-streaming their meetings to YouTube using OBS. Cody Miller of The Nature Conservancy presented on the [Invasive Species of Central Florida](#) for their August meeting.



Cuplet Fern Chapter offered a collegiate online/hybrid internship program that accommodated experiential learning during COVID-19. The student learned different aspects of the native plant industry- from gardening, to ongoing scientific research, to plant propagation, and invasive plant management. Cuplet Fern has been livestreaming speakers and presentations since the beginning of the lockdown in the past few months they have posted a tour of their [Seminole IFAS Idea Garden Patch](#), their [Ten Year Anniversary celebration](#), their August meeting 'Our Natural Lands and CISMA' with Amanda Lindsay and Allegra Buyer.

The Citrus Chapter live-streamed their August and September meetings on YouTube Live using StreamYard. Courtney Schoen of the Think About Personal Pollution Campaign presented on [Rain Gardens](#) in August and Jeffrey Rundell presented on ["Up in the Air" Plants](#) in September.

**Thank you to Heather Blake of Sparkleberry Chapter and Paul Austin of Conradina Chapter** for dedicating their Facebook birthday fundraisers to us!

October is Native Plant Month! Please let us know how you're celebrating.

*Celebrate*  
**FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT MONTH**  
October 2020

Patti Anderson, PhD sang [This Palm](#) during her Lunch and Learn on Florida's Palms on July 10. The song is now up to watch and share.



Cassie Valenti, the Membership Chair of the Coccoloba Chapter, created and edited a [video](#) on one of their major chapter projects – the establishment and maintenance of Cutting Horse Eco-Center in Bonita Springs.



We're proud to be partnering with the University of Florida (UF), Association of Native Nurseries and the League of Environmental Educators of Florida in a four-month-long awareness campaign on the importance of insects headed by the UF Thompson Earth Sciences Institute (UF TESI): "The Insect Effect: Insect Decline and the Future of Our Planet". UF TESI has created a number of excellent videos, a BioBlitz, and a pledge you should definitely take. Check out their Insect Effect website [here](#).

Past issues will be available on our **new website**. Please consider submitting an article to the Sabal Minor - email the editor to discuss your story ideas – [sabalminor@fnps.org](mailto:sabalminor@fnps.org).