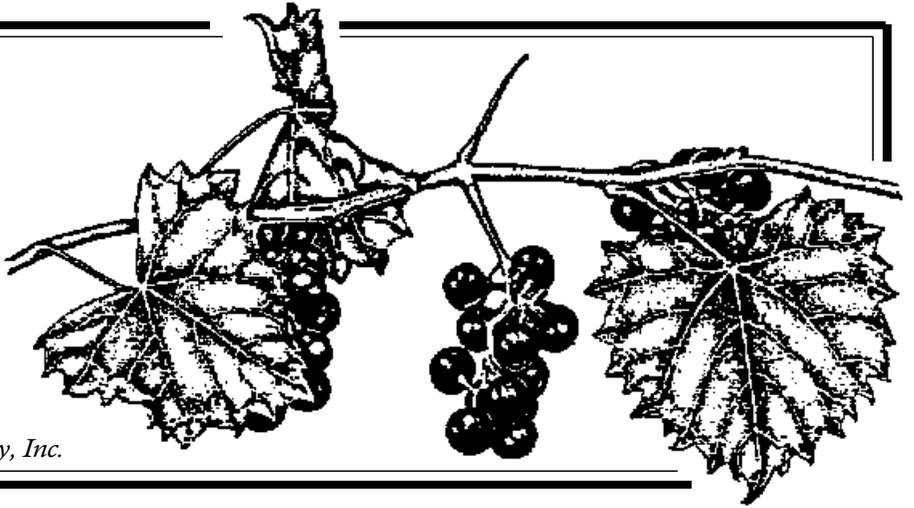


www.suncoastnps.org

The **Suncoast Grapevine**

Newsletter of the Suncoast Native Plant Society, Inc.



Volume 32 Number 4

April 2015

FNPS

**Presented by Anne Cox
Wednesday, April 15 2015, 7 PM**

Florida native plants are the lifeblood of our environment. Without viable native plant populations, our native wildlife will not survive, and our state would be more susceptible to harmful invasives. While growing native plants is fun, and great for the environment, there is so much to be done. Come find out how you can join and support the FNPS Mission!

Anne Cox, President of the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) will speak at the April 15th meeting of the Suncoast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. She will discuss the many activities and initiatives that the state organization supports to fulfill its mission to promote the preservation, conservation and restoration of the native plant communities of Florida. Members and non-members of FNPS should attend this meeting to learn more about the Florida Native Plant society's role as a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to preserving Florida's native plant legacy through science, education and grassroots advocacy.

Anne, President of FNPS since 2014, will discuss various ways the society fulfills its mission through support for conservation, land management, education, public policy, research, and friendly landscaping practices that preserve Florida's native plant heritage. She will talk about the ongoing practices and current initiatives of FNPS state-level committees and council of chapters in those areas.

Anne will also give us a preview of the upcoming 35th Annual Conference, "Born to Burn: Conservation, Preservation, Restoration on Public & Private Land, May 28-31 in Tallahassee, Florida.

Our meetings include light refreshments and a native plant auction after the speaker. Please come and join us.

- submitted by Donna Bollenbach

The Florida Native Plant Society was organized in 1980 to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. For more information about the Florida Native Plant Society, please visit our web site: www.fnps.org

Suwannee River State Park



Suwannee River

SNPS had another successful camping trip in March. We are a lucky chapter to have excellent fieldtrips mostly to due to our outstanding fieldtrip leaders. Shirley Denton came up with a great itinerary and a person willing to show us the local flora. Rick Cantrell is obviously a tree lover, he showed us his favorite swamp chestnut oak as we wandered through the park on Friday.

Lot of good memories were made during the 3 night visit to Suwannee River SP. Hiking, talking, eating, sharing and learning among friends with similar interests, who could want more? Spring green was everywhere on Friday and the lovely reflections in the river were well worth a picture and a few minutes of taking in the sight.



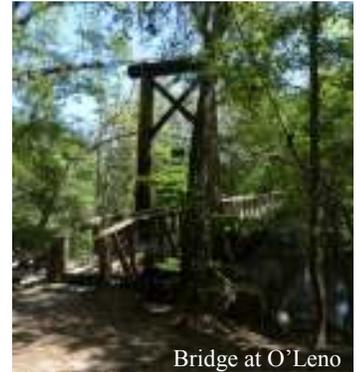
O'Leno State Park

Saturday was blue, peacock blue to be more specific- the water at Peacock Springs State Park was a wonderful shade of blue. A popular diving spot, we were surprised at one small pool of water when a couple divers popped up from the caves and tunnels underneath.



Sunday was pink and white at O'Leno SP with the blooming azaleas and fringe trees. The CCC era feel of the park was a good way to end the trip. I felt sad on the way home as I left the glow of being outdoors with friends.

-Janet



Bridge at O'Leno

Friends on the old bridge
by Donna Bollenbach

UPCOMING SPEAKERS-

May 20 – Open Mic – Members share information about their yard, favorite plants, questions. Each person will have 5–10 min to present their pictures or questions to the group. Always interesting and fun!

June 17 – Tom Palmer – Lakeland Ledger columnist, Ridge Ranger , topic TBD

July 15 – Joint meeting with Sierra and Audubon at Nature's Classroom– more details to come

Sept 16 – Corey Walk – Forester with Florida Forest Service, talking on Florida Champion Trees. The Champion Tree Program was created by the American Forests organization in 1940, to recognize the largest known tree of each species in the United States.



Thanks for helping with the February meeting -

Cliff Brown, Mike Fite, Eileen Reed and Janet Bowers
for providing plants for the auction

Devon Higginbotham for bringing the refreshments

Letter from the President

Spring on the Suwannee River

Another SNPS camping trip has come and gone. Did you miss this one? The weather was good, we saw a lot of plants and I am loving my new camera. My camping friends claim that renting a cabin is not camping and that may be true but it was pretty handy to have a fridge, stove, bathroom and the porch was awesome. Complete with a swing, picnic table and rockers, the



Rain lily



porch alone was worth the trip. Once again I forgot the marshmallows but I did get to light the campfire and that made me happy!

Rick Cantrell was our leader and he knew his trees, he led us to some great ones. I saw several things for the first time, like green dragon with its spath, cedar elm and leather flower. We explored a newly burned area, lovely peacock blue springs and a river rimmed with blooming fringe trees and native pink azaleas - pretty and fragrant. Lots of rain lilies were out and about 5 miles of partridge berry.

I appreciate everyone who brought food to share, cooked food, put up with my whining and shared in the experience. Being tired from outside activity is a good feeling. I hope to see you next time, I'm looking forward to Kissimmee Prairie in the fall - it will be tents only but an air mattress makes all the difference and there are friends to help if I forget to bring something or need help with my tent.



Partridge berry

Respectfully, Janet Bowers

Volunteer Opportunities

Currently, we need volunteers to fill the following roles:

- ◇ **Fall Plant Sale Coordinator** - schedule volunteers, lead plant sale planning and execution, contact Troy Springer
- ◇ **Outreach Chair and Volunteers** - we have many opportunities to do outreach but not enough people (June 27-28 is a USF event), contact Devon Higginbotham
- ◇ **Meeting Snack provider** - please contact Bunny to see what months are open
- ◇ **Board of Director** members for 2016 - contact the nominating committee in the late summer

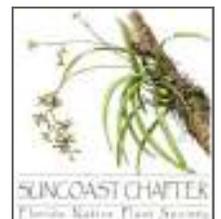
It takes a village to keep our operations running smoothly and we need your help.

To achieve the FNPS mission of conserving, preserving, and restoring native plants and native plant communities, it is critical that we have the full participation of our members!

Need a Speaker for your group or class?

Need a speaker for your civic group, gardening club or homeowner's association? The Suncoast Native Plant Society has speakers with a wide range of knowledge, eager to speak about the virtues of native plants.

Contact Devon Higginbotham (archiveproperties@gmail.com).





LEARNING FROM CALIFORNIA

BY Devon Higginbotham

Today, because of the drought in the southwest, the City of Palm Springs, CA, long considered a desert oasis, is returning to native plants. According to the New York Times, "Palm Springs has ordered 50 percent cuts in water use by city agencies, and plans to replace the lawns and annual flowers around city buildings with native landscapes. It is digging up the grassy median into town that unfurled before visitors like a carpet at a Hollywood premiere. It is paying residents to replace their lawns with rocks and desert plants..." (See link at bottom for the entire article)

It's too bad it takes an event as drastic as a drought to bring attention to the benefits of native plants, but once people realize the rewards to wildlife and the state's water system, it becomes obvious, both in California and Florida. Hopefully California will learn and adapt to their climate and 20 years from now will "look" like an arid landscape should look.

No doubt, the California Native Plant Society is revving into high gear, promoting the use of native plants in desert habitats. Every homeowner should be learning how to convert their yards to natives and conserve water, not just for a year but forever. Unfortunately there will be naysayers, like the man in the Times article that said, "I'm not going to stop watering," said Matthew Post, 45, referring to the gardens around his Benedict Canyon home. "The state does not know how to arrange the resources they have, and so we have to pay for it..." What can we learn from California? Don't wait for a crisis to change our concept of what is beautiful. We must be actively promoting and speaking out.

For the first time since 2007, FNPS is poised to top the 3,000 mark in membership. This is a monumental point in our growth which was diminished by the drop in the US economy. Because of the graceful stewardship of Jonnie Spittle, FNPS now has a very capable Membership Chair who is uniting and supporting all the chapter chairs. We have a new FNPS brochure on the way to the publishers, smaller chapters are getting support and membership is growing.

Also this year, we have a new chapter, The Villages, in Sumter Co which has grown in just a few months to over 60 members. Interest in Florida Native Plants is sparking in homeowners, politicians and governmental officials. But we need to continue growing and that means more members, more feet on the ground, more neighbors talking to neighbors!

Last summer we started a membership drive to become the 4th largest chapter in the state and not only reached our goal but far exceeded it. Special thanks to all who contributed to helping us reach our goal. But this is only the beginning of our growth.

Heather Cooley, water program director for the Pacific Institute, an environmental research group based in Oakland said, "This will change what Californians see as beautiful". Let's not wait for a drought or dried lakes and streams or murky springs to change what we see as beautiful.

http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/04/05/us/california-drought-tests-history-of-endless-growth.html?_r=0

Mark Your Calendar

April 11-12	USF Spring Plant Sale - Saturday 10 - 4, Sunday 10 - 3
April 19	Sweetwater Organic Farm Workday - 8:30 AM
April 22	Earth Day
April 25	Kissimmee Prairie Preserve - Huegel and Hammer walk
May 28-31	FNPS Conference in Tallahassee - 'Born to Burn'



April 18 - Field trip to Duette Preserve

Where: 2649 Rawls Road Duette, FL 34251

When : 8:30 AM

At over 21,000 acres, the Duette Preserve is the largest Preserve in the Manatee County system. It is located in the eastern part of the County and contains the headwaters of Manatee River. It is a well managed property with lots of native plants and wildlife, but because it is open to hunting during different parts of the year, it is difficult to work in a fieldtrip to this location, so you will not want to miss this one.

Duette is host to many of the native plant communities of Manatee County, providing protection and preservation of pine flatwoods, hardwood swamps, xeric oak scrub, depression marsh, and vast dry prairie. The current plan is to walk in at 8:30 and then drive into the preserve at 11:30 to see some areas less accessible so bring your lunch and plan to stay longer than normal. (Drive in fee is \$3 per car.) We are working with preserve management to have access to areas that are deep in the Preserve, so stay tuned for additional details as we firm up our itinerary.

As usual we recommend - a wide brim hat, sun-screen, sunglasses, close-toed shoes, long pants, a snack and especially water!

Contact person: Shirley Denton



April 19 - Sweetwater Organic Farm Workday

See you at 8:30, bring your gloves, water and sunscreen!

The parking address is 7318 W. Comanche Dr.



Please help us continue the work to clear a path for a Native Plant walk. We will provide bagels to get your morning started and there will be great food vendors starting at noon. Hundreds of school children come to Sweetwater fieldtrips to see where food comes from and now they will have a chance to see natives too.

Come and make a difference!

2015 Field Trip schedule

May 24 (Sunday) - Florida Botanical Garden in Largo - <http://www.flbg.org/> More than 30 acres of cultivated gardens and 90 acres of natural areas. Our focus will be on the native plant areas, and those are huge. Starting with the parking lot plantings, it is entirely native. There is a wide array of natives around the extension office building, all labelled. For more info: http://fnps.org/natives/garden/fl_bot_gar_largo. Free admission, we will likely meet for carpooling.

June 20 - TBD

July 18 - Buying trip to a native nursery

August 22 - Kayak trip (FNPS members only please)

Sept 19 - Depends on what area is blooming, maybe pine lilies

Oct 23-25 - Kissimmee Prairie campout (no cabins at this park, FNPS members only)

Nov 15 - Rhodine Scrub Preserve





A Bark of its Own

Submitted by Donna Bollenbach



Quercus virginiana _Live Oak



Diospyros virginiana, Florida Persimmon

Persimmon, *Diospyros virginiana*. The bark is composed of distinct blocks that fit loosely together like a puzzle. When photographed close-up it reminds me of a gray stone wall.

The Eastern Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana*, adds to the palette of colors in the forest. The bark on the trunk is a rich reddish brown, thin, and fibrous, tears off in linear strips. Underneath it is gray, resulting in a contrast of color and texture.

Look at the bark of a tree and you will see miniature gardens of moss, lichen and ferns. Look closer and you will see colonies of insects and spiders. Look underneath and you will find lizards and toads. A tree's bark is more than a covering, it is a unique and integral part of the forest community.

Tree bark has always intrigued me. Each has its own texture and color. Some trees are smooth and some are rough. Some have scales, some grooves, some are blocky and some have thin papery layers that peel and curl. Along with leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds, tree bark will help you identify trees.

On the recent SNPS camping trip to Suwannee River State Park we saw lots of trees. Many of us felt overwhelmed trying to learn their names. Luckily, Rick Cantrell, our guest leader for the Friday and Saturday hikes, really knew his trees and patiently shared with us his methods of identifying them. While leaves, flowers and seeds were certainly important, tree bark was also a characteristic that could distinguish one tree from another.

One of the most fascinating trees for its unusual bark was the Florida



Juniperus virginiana _Eastern Red Cedar

Musclewood or American hornbeam, *Carpinus caroliniana*, is aptly named for its sinuous, smooth bark and a trunk with deep furrows, giving the impression of a toned muscle.



Overcup Oak, *Quercus lyrata*

One of the white oaks we saw in the forest is the Overcup oak, *Quercus lyrata*. The bark of the Overcup oak is light gray and furrowed into scaly plates and ridges.

Another white oak in the Suwannee forests is the Swamp Chestnut Oak, *Quercus michauxii*. It's bark is light gray, very scaly, giving it a somewhat shaggy appearance.



Swamp Chestnut Oak, *Quercus michauxii*

Of course, we could not leave out the Southern Live Oak tree. Unlike most oak trees which are deciduous, southern live oaks are nearly evergreen. It's bark is dark gray to black with narrow furrows and scaly ridges.



Musclewood, *Carpinus caroliniana*



Bob's giraffe.

Wildlife in the Trees

Thanks to my husband's vivid imagination, we also got to see some unusual wildlife in the trees of the Suwannee forest. Bob pointed out a giraffe and otter. Lucky for us they didn't move a muscle when we photographed them.



Bob's otter.

The Suncoast Native Plant society, joined by other FNPS members, spent three lovely days hiking the forests and springs of North Florida. We camped in Suwannee State Park. On Friday, Rick Cantrell led us through the forests and spring runs in Suwannee. On Saturday he guided us at Peacock Springs. We also made a side trip to Falmouth spring. On Sunday we convened at O'Leno State Park just north of Gainesville for a final hike. It was so much fun! Consider joining us on our next camping trip to Kissimmee Prairie Preserve in the fall.

New Tote Bags

Donna Bollenbach lead the effort to get some tote bags to offer at the plant sale and membership meetings. They are dark forest green and made from recycled materials.

\$2.50 each. Buy a few and help support SNPS!



More T-Shirts Available!

We have a supply of Women's and Men's T-Shirts for sale at \$20 each. We will have them at the plant sale and the April membership meeting.



Front



Back

Florida Bat talk at the Hernando Chapter Meeting

The May 4th program for the Hernando Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will be presented by Colleen Werner. Colleen is a Withlacoochee State Forest Biologist with the Florida Forestry Service, and will present a talk on Florida Bats. Colleen has helped with conducting Tri-colored bat surveys, Withlacoochee State Forest cave management and initiated cave protection measures to protect Southeastern myotis bat colonies. She will share with us the ecology of Florida bat species and how we can attract them. At the end of the evening a special trip to nearby Chinsegut Conservation Center will take place to watch the bats leave their roosts in several bat houses.

6:30 PM at Chinsegut Hill, 22495 Chinsegut Hill Rd., Brooksville, FL., 34601. A map to the location can be found at www.hcfnps.org. Any questions should be directed to hcfnps@gmail.com

-Submitted by Mark Hutchinson



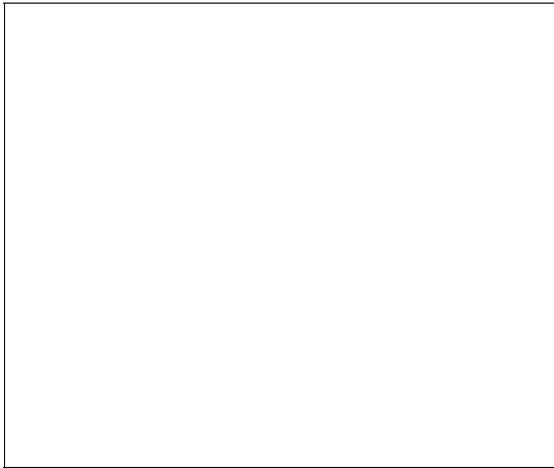
April 22, Earth Day

I remember the first Earth Day, I was in 7th grade and we went out to the road to pick up trash during school. I wandered down the road with some other girls and ended up hitch hiking back to school. Probably not a great idea but it was pretty exciting at the time.

Today, as an adult, Earth Day is a lot more complicated. We have to do more than pick up the trash by the road, we have climate change, drought (see page 4), loss of natural lands (see page 9), fossil fuel over use and waste in general. It is kind of like trying to lose weight, any short term change of diet is not going to work, it is a life style and internal belief change. Your reaction to change can always be positive, the choice is yours. Maybe this Earth Day you could make a resolution to live in a more Earth friendly way, just try one new thing that is less wasteful. Planting natives is one way for me to actively heal some little part of my local earth.

One of my favorite authors, Janisse Ray is my role model as a person who is paying attention to food sources, environmental heritage and living simply. Just in the past couple days, I have reflected on the fact that the natural areas in Hillsborough and nearby counties hold a wealth of botanical treasures. I can see that the need to travel far and wide to explore new places and experience wonders is not a real priority for me. Within 2 hours of my house is a nature wonderland that I plan to take my future grandchildren to visit, so I want to be sure that it stays the way it is or is improved through land management. Take time on Earth Day to visit an area near you!

-Janet Bowers



Tallamy in the NY Times



Did you see the Op Ed piece from Doug Tallamy in the March 11 New York Times? It was great to see his message about why natives are important in your yard on a world wide platform. He drew a big crowd to the 2012 FNPS conference and the Wild-flower event at Bok Tower last year.

We may feel that we have little influence on the world but a small change can lead to big things!

-Janet Bowers

The FNPS Policy and Legislation Committee is currently reviewing lands proposed for ‘surplussing’ by the Southwest Florida Water Management District. More information can be found on the District’s website at <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/surplus-lands/>.

This isn’t the first time this water management district has undertaken a review of its landholdings to identify “surplus” parcels. Most of the state’s public agencies that have responsibility for purchasing and managing conservation lands have undertaken at least one such review of its lands. The current proposal includes 3,500 acres spanning the length of their jurisdictional area, extending from the Flying Eagle Ranch in Citrus County to the Deep Creek Preserve located on the Peace River in DeSoto County. **More than 900 acres of the Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve alone, located in Polk and Pasco counties, is proposed for surplussing.**

Public meetings on the topic ended on April 2 and the last discussion before the Governing Board finalizes the list on May 19 will be at a meeting of their Environmental Advisory Committee on April 14. Maps that identify the 3,500 acres of proposed surplus parcels are posted at <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/surplus-lands/evaluation-list.php> and the website page where you can enter and submit comments is <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/surplus-lands/>. The Society is generally supportive of surplussing lands that have no conservation value. Why should Florida residents pay for the perpetual protection and management of lands that have no value to the public? However, much of the land proposed for surplussing DOES HAVE CLEAR CONSERVATION VALUE. The public has made a tremendous investment in purchasing these lands to protect the natural resources conserved within them. We need to combine our voices and protest this action when it attempts to sell off lands that should be retained under public ownership. At a time when the public has clearly expressed its support for land conservation through the overwhelming passage of Amendment 1, it has become equally clear that many decision-makers do not share our values and sense of responsibility to conserve natural resources.

Join or Renew FNPS on-line - <http://www.fnps.org/participate/membershipinfo>

Florida Native Plant Society Membership Application

Membership in the Florida Native Plant Society enables you to receive their wonderful quarterly magazine *The Palmetto*. Joining the SNPS also entitles you to membership privileges in the Suncoast Native Plant Society and a subscription to their monthly newsletter *The Suncoast Grapevine*. Contact the SNPS membership chair, Devon Higginbotham, at 478-1183.

New Member Renewal
Name _____
Business name or organization _____
Address _____
City, State and Zip _____
Home phone _____ Email _____

Check pertinent category:

- Individual/Renewal \$35
- Full time student \$15
- Library subscription \$15
- Family or household \$50
- Contributing \$75
- Life \$1,000
- Not-for-profit organization \$50
- Business or corporate \$125
- Supporting \$100
- Donor \$250

Make check payable to **FNPS**.

Detach and mail to:

**FNPS
P.O. Box 278
Melbourne, FL 32902-0278**

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Field Trips

Shirley Denton 986-6485
Steve Dickman 326-0221

Publications

Dick Wunderlin 977-6484
George Kish 920-0853

Librarian

Vikki Sinclair 989-2896

Membership

Devon Higginbotham 478-1183

Newsletter Editor

Janet Bowers 759-2822
Mike Fite, Assistant 977-0892

Programs

Donna Bollenbach 679-5597

Publicity/ Social media

Donna Bollenbach 679-5597

Outreach

Open

USF Plant Sales - need volunteer

Troy Springer 967-4538

USF Botanical Garden Liaison

Kim Hutton 974-2329

Chapter Representative

Janet Bowers 759-2822

Webmaster

Donna Bollenbach 679-5597

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Troy Springer
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Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for the next issue:

May 1, 2015

Please send articles and original artwork for The Suncoast Grapevine to **Janet Bowers**, by the deadline above- jbowers27@yahoo.com

SNPS Web Address

<http://www.SuncoastNPS.org>

We're on Meet Up & Facebook



Meetings are normally the third Wednesday of the month at 7 PM. (no December meeting)

DIRECTIONS TO:
Hillsborough County
Extension
5339 County Road 579
Seffner

Take I-4 to Exit 10 (just east of I-75). Go south on 579 for two blocks. Turn left on Old Hillsborough Ave and park on the North side of the office.

Suncoast Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 1158
Seffner, FL 33583-1158



Please deliver to: