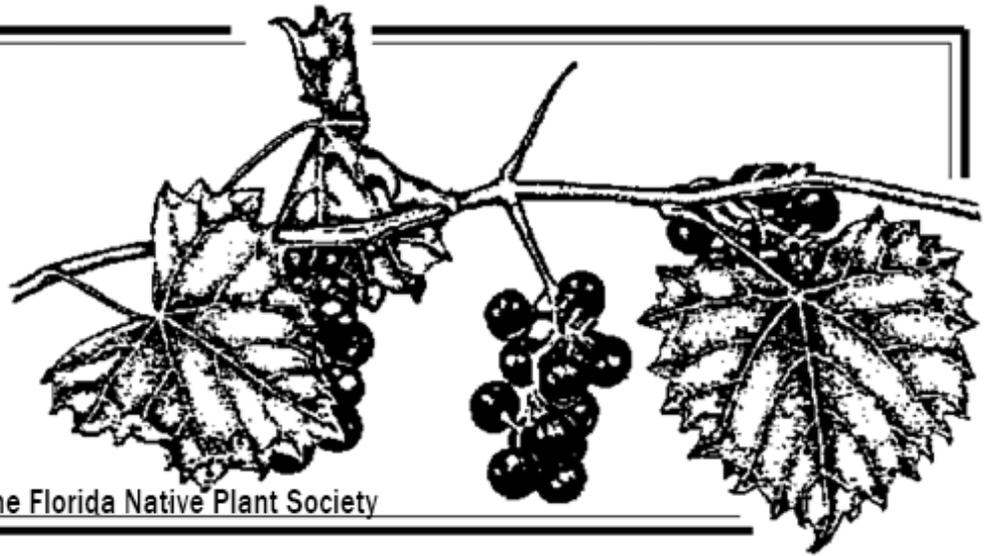


The Suncoast Grapevine

Newsletter of the Suncoast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society



March 2021

Volume 38, Number 3

*This is an online meeting. We will send you a link the day before the meeting.
We will be back with in-person meetings as soon as our venues are open and safe.*

March 17, 7:00 pm



Program

Roadside Wildflowers

By Jeff Norcini, PhD

Dr. Norcini's presentation will feature late winter and spring native wildflowers of central Florida roadsides. There will also be an update about what FDOT and the Florida Wildflower Foundation are doing to increase roadside pollinator habitat.

Jeff Norcini is a former Associate Professor of Environmental Horticulture at University of Florida/IFAS. He has long been a champion of planting native wildflowers along Florida's highways, and he provides consulting on the establishment and management of native roadside plantings.



March Field Trip

Saturday, March 27

Fort Desoto Park in Pinellas County. This should be a really good time to visit this coastal park. Plan on seeing several coastal ecosystems. It is also the time when migrating birds should be heading north, and often birds can be seen sitting on low branches, resting after their long flight over the gulf.

Contact Tina Patterson for time and meeting location and to register.. The trip is restricted to 10 FNPS members and we will be social distancing. Masks are required. There is a \$5 fee for park entry.

Plant Swap – Bring One, Take One

Saturday, March 20

FNPS Members Only, Masks and Social Distancing Required

No money is involved, just potting up some plants and bringing them to share. The only rule is that you take home only one plant for each plant that you bring. •**Plants or seeds should include a card or envelope with: scientific name, water and light requirements and mature size.** They can also include information like common name, value to wildlife, pest or disease problems etc. We think we will also have some seeds (we won't call each seed a plant!). And if we have extras, we'll have a "grab what's left" at the end.

Please RSVP to Tina Patterson, mablepatterson@hotmail.com, to get the location and directions. Plan to social distance and wear a mask.

Camping Trips

We have several camping trips planned this year.

1. Highlands Hammock – October 22-24. Visit primeval live oak forest, walk the boardwalk, and visit an ancient Lake Wales Ridge scrub filled with rare plants. We arrive Friday evening and depart Sunday around 1 pm. The park is varied and the walking is easy.
2. Collier-Seminole State Park and Fakahatchee Strand – December 9-13.. Plan on camping in a semi-topical setting and going on a compass wade into Fakahatchee Strand. We will arrive Thursday evening and depart Sunday morning giving ourselves 2 full days in the woods. Plan on wading in deep water and mud.
3. Informal – Several of us are planning to be at Moss Lake Park when we do our Split Oak field trip. Contact Steve Dickman or Shirley Denton for updates. This is an Orange County park.

We recommend that you make reservations for the two state parks now. Tina has reserved several sites – contact her for information (we can put 2 tents and up to 8 people on each site).

Prosthechea cochleata at Fakahatchee Strand State Park. It will likely be blooming in December. Photo by Shirley Denton



Tentative Schedule

March	17	Meeting Topic: Roadside Wildflowers – Jeff Norcini (confirmed)
	20	Plant Swap – Suncoast members only
	27	Field Trip – Fort Desoto Park, Pinellas County
April	10-11	Plant Sale – Botanical Gardens Spring Festival or Suncoast Chapter Plant Sale
	21	Meeting Topic: Possibly “Cyperus”
	24	Field Trip: – TBD - Suncoast Only –
May	8 (tentative)	Field Trip – TBD
	14-16	FNPS Conference – virtual
	19	Meeting Topic: History of Lettuce Lake Park – Joel Jackson
June	16	Meeting Topic: TBD
	19	Field Trip– TBD
July	TBD	Joint meeting with Sierra and Audubon – Suncoast is not the host
		Field Trip– TBD
August		Meeting Topic: Council of Chapters – I’d like one of the Council leaders to speak
		Field Trip–Split Oak Forest? Depends on COVID-19 status
September		Meeting Topic: TBD
		Field Trip– TBD
October		Plant Sale – USF
		Meeting Topic: TBD
	22-24	Camping Trip– Highlands Hammock
November		Meeting topic: Elections, program TBD
		Field Trip– TBD
December	TBD	No meeting – Holiday Party
	9-13	Camping Trip – Collier-Seminole & Fakahatchee Strand

Board Meeting: March 9, 7:00

All members are welcome. You can propose agenda items.

Contact Tina Patterson for more information. This will be an online meeting.



FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
40TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

FNPS Conference? Don't Forget

If no, this may be your opportunity to enjoy the speakers and their programs from the comfort of your home. The conference will be virtual. The program is being designed to have you benefit from inspirational and educational programs.

No hotel needed. Cost will be much lower than in-person conferences.

Register now for May 14-16, 2020

When Natives Are Not – The Case of *Gaillardia pulchella*

By Shirley Denton

There is no one definition of a native plant. In North America, most definitions include the concept that natives evolved in place and that they were not brought in by humans. One simple but more-encompassing view was published in 1998 by Andy Wasowski in *The American Gardener*: Native plants should be defined as those that have evolved and adapted to a specific location and have remained genetically unaltered by humans. This last definition recognizes a modern reality, namely that humans can and do alter native plants to the extent that we might want to reconsider their nativity – more on that in a future article.

In Florida, we have a very specific definition of a native plant: it is those species that were here in Florida at the time of first European contact.

Gaillardia pulchella, firewheel, blanketflower, or just gaillardia, has been documented in over half of Florida's counties, but likely occurs, unplanted, in disturbed settings in all of them. It is listed as native in the Florida Plant Atlas (<https://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Plant.aspx?id=730>). But evidence has been building for many years that this plant almost certainly does not fit the Florida definition of a native plant, namely, it was likely not growing on its own in Florida prior to European contact. Weakley et al. (2020) state “an analysis of historical accounts of *Gaillardia pulchella* (Asteraceae) strongly suggests that its modern occurrence east of Texas is adventive, rather than native.” In essence, it is a North American prairie plant, but not a Florida native.



Should you still grow this plant? Should you grow any plant that is not native? This question will have a personal answer. *Gaillardia pulchella* is “Florida friendly” as defined by IFAS. It is not invasive, at least in central Florida – it grows on its own on some roadsides and some disturbed areas, but it does not pop up and persist in natural areas. It does grow on its own in some coastal plant communities in northern Florida to the extent to which being non-invasive could be questioned. Despite what sometimes get said, our personal gardens are not replicas of naturally occurring ecosystems, and many generalist North American insects do find gaillardia useful as a nectar and pollen source, and they almost certainly are adapted well enough to it to find it nutritious.

For me, personally, I will not call it native, but I'm not going to take on a campaign of eliminating this pretty, insect-friendly North American native from my home landscape.

REFERENCES

Wasowski, A. 1998. Provenance, defining our terms (native plants). *The American Gardener* 77.6 (Nov-Dec 1998).

Weakley, A. S., Poindexter, D. B., Medford, H. C., Sorrie, B. A., McCormick, C. A., Bridges, E. L., Orzell, S. L., Bradley, K. A., Ballard, Jr., H. E., Burwell, R. N., Lockhart, S. L., & Franck, A. R. 2020. Studies in the vascular flora of the southeastern United States. VI. *Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas*, 14(2), 199-239. <https://doi.org/10.17348/jbrit.v14.i2.1004>.

Lance-leaf Blanketflower (*Gaillardia aestivalis*)

By Shirley Denton

Family: Asteraceae

Type of Plant: Short-lived perennial wildflower up to 18 inches tall. Will self-seed to become a long-term plant in dry garden settings.

Leaves: Narrow, coarsely toothed to entire, alternate.

Flowers: Blooms from April to October. Ray flowers vary from yellow to pinkish-orange to purple to white. Disk flowers may be yellow or dark purple-to brown.

Fruits: Small achenes.

Habitat: Found in open settings including sandhills, scrub, and dry roadsides.

Soil: Sandy, dry.

Light: Full sun.

Water: Thrives in dry to very dry settings.

Propagation: Seed. Will self-seed.

Landscape Uses: Pollinator gardens, meadows, borders. Smaller and less aggressive than *G. pulchella*.

Availability: Not advertised for sale by any native nursery in Florida. Said to be easy to grow, but please don't steal it from the wild. Cultivars exist and are in the nursery trade outside of Florida. Collecting seeds is the best way to get it (please collect only where you have permission to do so).

Wildlife uses: Used by native bees including sweatbees and bumblebees. Nectar attracts butterflies.

Native Range: Southeastern United States from Kansas to North Carolina to central peninsular Florida.

KEY REFERENCES

Flora of North America. http://floranorthamerica.org/Gaillardia_aestivalis.

Florida Wildflower Foundation. <https://flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-gaillardia-aestivalis/>.

North Carolina Extension Gardener. <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/gaillardia-aestivalis/>



Gaillardia aestivalis on a roadside. Photo by Shirley Denton

This Gaillardia is Native!



Suncoast Volunteer Hours,

By Tina Patterson

Every month I report volunteer hours to FNPS for our chapter and wanted to share some of those results with our members.

Volunteer hours are unpaid work that you do as a member of Suncoast to promote the use of native plants, to preserve natural ecosystems and to educate the public about the benefits of natives.

I count meeting and field trip attendance, planning and preparation for plant sales and other club activities, speaking to organizations about native plants and maintaining community gardens featuring native plants. Some other volunteer activities are participation in research projects and surveys or in land management plan reviews.

Since I began reporting in 2017, SNPS has logged over 10,000 hours of volunteer time. We grew from 1400 in 2017 to almost 4000 in 2019. The closures, restrictions and postponements of the past year dropped us back significantly to 2000 hours reported. That is still a lot considering we had no USF Spring Plant Festival and parks were closed for up to 3 months. Meetings and field trips continue to be limited and the county has not yet approved Plant Walks or larger volunteer activities.

I hope we can increase our volunteer hours for 2021 back to near record levels. I encourage everyone to participate in raising awareness of Florida native plants and then REPORT your activities to me!



Volunteer-managed garden at Flatwoods Park. Photo by Tina Patterson

Ongoing Lunch and Learn

Don't forget that FNPS has an online Lunch and Learn on Fridays. This is made available to FNPS members as a benefit of their memberships.

It brings an opportunity to meet excellent biologists, native plant landscapers, ecologists, etc. who are known state wide. These are live programs and there is an opportunity for you to ask questions.

The links to both past and upcoming Lunch and Learns are in your email inbox in our Monday Lunch and Learn update email. These seminars are on-line and for members only.

Come have fun while watching an educational program.

Communications@fnps.org
386-852-2539

Upcoming Programs

3/12 10 Native "Weeds" for 19 Butterflies with Andee Naccarato

3/19 A Bird's-Eye View of Native Mints with Alex Abair

3/26 Best Practices to Reach Diverse Audiences with Eva Pabon

5/28 The Bluecurls of Florida - the Genus *Trichostema* with Kevan Schoonover



Nature is the inspiration
for all ornamentation.

Frank Lloyd Wright

quotezancy

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Newsletter Submissions

Deadline for April Newsletter: Mar. 20

Send contributions to Shirley Denton at ecotypes@outlook.com.

Contributions should be original, with references where appropriate. Photographs and drawings should belong to the submitter or submitted along with written permission from the owner, and be of appropriate resolution for printing (a width of 1000 pixels is generally adequate for this newsletter, but err toward larger so that they pictures can be cropped if needed). All submissions should be in formats standardly used in documents and readable on Windows PCs.

Submissions will be reviewed for accuracy with preference for being relevant to the FNPS mission and local environmental events.



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