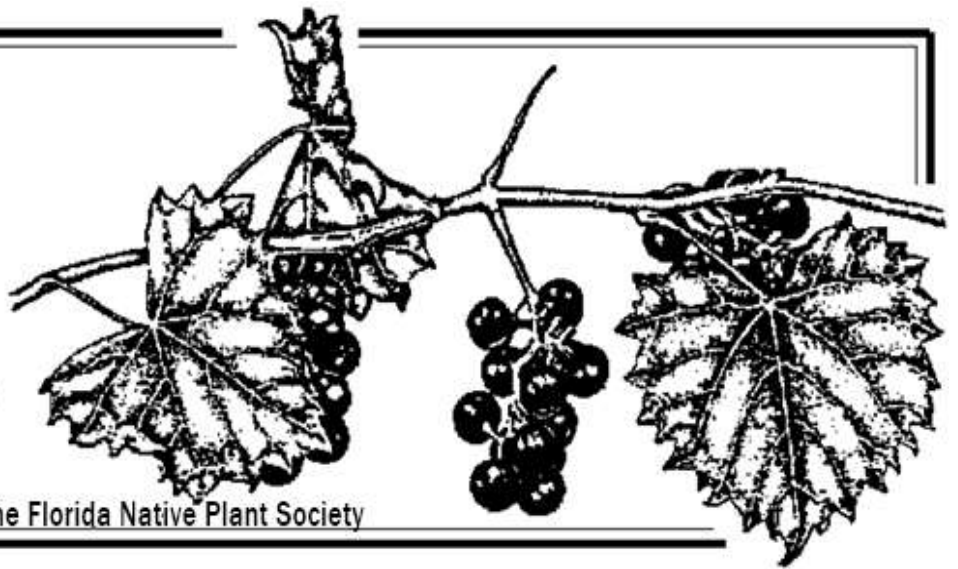


# The Suncoast Grapevine

Newsletter of the Suncoast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society



September 2023

Volume 40, Number 8

## Program

September 20, 12 to 1:00 pm

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4697814198?pwd=aXZ2MVVzNFo5RE1YeVRWYXFuUE9Qdz09>

Speaker: Michael Jenkins, Florida Plant Conservation Program Biologist at FDACS

Mr. Jenkins will be presenting on the Florida Plant Conservation Program, and this is the summary of his presentation topic:

The Florida Endangered and Threatened Plant Conservation Program is housed by the Florida Forest Service and funded by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act. Its purpose is for the recovery of federally listed plants. The program provides grant funding for rare plant conservation and some land acquisition, statewide, to public and private organizations. Local rare plants (those found around the Suncoast Chapter's purview) and their needed management will be covered in this presentation. This includes such topics as prescribed fire, plant identification, and invasive plant management.



*Our local and most obvious federally endangered plant: Chrysopsis floridana.*

## Suncoast Chapter Anniversary

By Janet Bowers, Dick Wunderlin, and Tina Patterson with Edits by Shirley Denton

**September 21, 1983** marked the first ever official meeting of the Suncoast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. In 40 years, our organization has seen many changes, but we have always kept the mission in mind – “to preserve, conserve and restore native plants and native plant communities of Florida”.

Over the years SNPS has completed many significant projects, participated in numerous outreach events and weathered the volunteer leadership rotation and constant need for new members. In our storage locker we have hundreds of old newsletters from our chapter, other chapters, and FNPS. We have newspaper clippings, awards, legal documents and old correspondence from the days before email.

**The first decade - 1983-1993**, from a 20th anniversary insert written by Richard Wunderlin (who cited articles by Sheryl Bowman and William Moriarty that appeared in the 10th anniversary issue of the newsletter):

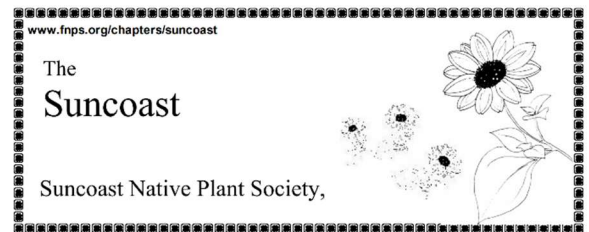
- The Suncoast Florida Native Plant Society was founded as a chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society in in 1983. The founders included Will Moriarty, Dick Wunderlin, Sydney Park-Brown, Bob Scheible, John Beckner, Mike Ken-ton, Allen Burdett, Bill Ackerman, Tony Arcuri, and Rita and Jim Lassiter. September 21, 1983, the first official meeting was held and the second meeting was in November.
- The original Suncoast Chapter included Citrus County to south of Sarasota but soon after inception, the Serenoa chapter split off. In 1990, the Pinellas, Citrus, Hernando and Nature Coast chapters formed. Suncoast was left with Hillsborough County. On September 21, 1983, the first official meeting was held ,and the second meeting was in November.
- An opportunity to take action happened when the Australian pines at Picnic Island died in a freeze and SNPS formed a committee to address what should be planted in their place.
- The first newsletter was produced September 1984, (and we still have a copy of it! The newsletter was named the Grapevine in a contest where alternative names included Botanique, Suncoast Blaze, Suncoast Breaker, Suncoast Splash and The Lizard’s Tale. Rita Lassiter submitted the winning name. The sunflower logo was used on the newsletter and was drawn by John Beckner; it originally appeared on the cover of Daniel Ward’s Checklist of the Vascular Flora of Florida, Part I, 1968. By 1991, the newsletter was using what was essentially the header that we use today.
- In 1985, Suncoast had 90 members. Meetings were held at the HCC Dale Mabry campus. Chapter field trips included Archbold, various county parks and a canoe trip on the Hillsborough River. Fund raising was done with plant sales, partnering with Central Florida Native Flora Nursery. The chapter also benefited from sale of the Checklist of Vascular Plants of the Florida Suncoast, produced by Dick Wunderlin, Glenn Fleming and Bruce Hansen of the USF Herbarium.
- In 1986, the Suncoast Chapter hosted the 6th annual FNPS conference at USF. Dick Wunderlin was the conference coordinator, and many members helped support the effort. In 1987 Dick Wunderlin was FNPS president. SNPS held their meetings at the Seffner extension office in 1987. Several SNPS members held positions in the FNPS leadership over the next few years. In 1988, FNPS had over 1,200 members and Suncoast had well over 100 (about where we are today).



- During 1990 SNPS was mentioned in the press for its I-275 wildflower plantings thanks to Pat Chellman. Debbie Butts served as FNPS president.
- Our chapter provided Society leadership with leaders including Dick Wunderlin (President), Steve Dickman, and Debbie Butts.

**The second decade - 1994 to 2003**, -- summarized from a 20th anniversary insert written by Harriett Wright.

- SNPS continued with Education, Outreach and Community Service efforts. Many members planted natives in their yard.
- In 2000, Fred Mulholland was awarded first place in the FNPS' Design with Natives Landscape Awards Program.
- Community Service included plantings at English Creek Environmental Center, Cockroach Bay, Lowery Park Zoo, Hillsborough County Greenways and the USF Botanical Garden.
- Outreach included Earth Day celebrations, Plant Park Greenfest, Kerby's Nursery and even a Home Depot garden center to promote natives.
- Fieldtrips included Avon Park Bombing Range to see blooming pitcher plants, canoeing on Little Manatee River, Balm-Boyette Scrub to see endangered Florida goldenasters, Dead River to see *Tillandsias* and orchids, and Bell Creek to see pine lilies. I
- In 1997, SNPS published the book Right Plants for Dry Places: Native Plant Landscaping in Central Florida and distributed a brochure on alternatives to Cypress mulch, written by Barbara Waddell.
- Presidents included George Kish and Richard Wunderlin among others.
- Late in 2003, the Chapter changed its newsletter name and chapter logo to a dune sunflower.



**The third 10 years - 2004 to 2013** - submitted by Janet Bowers

- Harriett Wright spent 2 years as Vice president and then 3 years as President! Other Presidents included George Kish (more than 4 years), Daphne Lambright, and Shirley Denton.
- Daphne Lambright was Treasurer for 4 years! Many others served on the Board and committees. Some brave souls like Cliff and Debbie came back for second rounds on the Board.
- Suncoast provided multiple state-wide leaders during this period including Shirley Denton (President), Daphne Lambright (Treasurer), and Devon Higgenbotham (Vice President for Finance).
- Carmel VanHoek inventoried many of the plants at Hillsborough River State Park
- The SNPS website was created to be a place to find SNPS information. Newsletters, photos, flyers and current events were found there thanks to Shirley Denton and Ron Huston.
- In addition to our website, we increased our internet presence with a Facebook page and a Meetup group.
- In 2005, the newsletter morphed back into being the Grapevine, but the chapter logo remained a beach sunflower.



- During 2005, a vote was taken and the monthly meeting location was moved (back) to the Seffner extension building. Thanks to JoAnn Hoffman for enabling us to have a great location for our meetings.
- A wonderful display board for outreach events was created featuring native plant pictures.
- We have been back to Archbold, Bell Creek, Upper Tampa Bay Park on fieldtrips as well as trips to places even farther away like our recent camping trip to Kissimmee Prairie State Park
- We planted plants at WMNF community radio station (twice) and at Hillsborough River State Park.
- We (mostly Mike Fite and Mary Miller) took up gardening tools to get the SNPS native plantings at Flatwood Park and nearby parks back in shape.
- Troy Springer took on the jumbo task of 2012 FNPS Conference Chair. Everyone pitched in to help, including the Hernando chapter, and Plant City was host to the 2012 FNPS conference. We had great fieldtrips and socials in addition to the speakers, vendors and venue being outstanding. We won a Green Palmetto award from FNPS for our efforts.
- We created a new 'Bring home the Natives' handout to share with interested newcomers who want to know 'what is a native and where do I get them?'
- Our USF plant sales continued to attract native plant lovers; we had a great selection of quality plants. We started taking credit cards in 2012. Three years in a row, we participated in the Plant City Garden Fest.
- In 2013, SNPS supported the Hillsborough County resolution to encourage wildflowers on county rights-of-way

#### **The fourth decade - 2014 - 2023**, submitted by Tina Patterson, Suncoast Secretary

- SNPS had 4 different presidents in 10 years- Devon Higgenbotham, Janet Bowers, Donna Bollenbach and Virginia Overstreet. We even went without a president from September 2017 to January 2020! Kudos to Virginia for acting as both president and vice president during that time.
- In 2019, the Suncoast Native Plant Society changed its name to The Suncoast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, Inc. to be in compliance with FNPS policy.
- Suncoast Chapter lost many of its past leaders to relocation, change of circumstance or death. We honor the contributions of Devon Higgenbotham, Donna Bollenbach and George Kish who have moved away and of leaders like Troy Springer, Bunny Worth and Janet Bowers, who have taken up new duties. We also gratefully remember Gar Reed (Treasurer and Plant Sales, passed 2020), Fred Mulholland (2020) and Lucy Fuchs (2018).
- New leaders emerged this decade as Virginia Overstreet, Niki Cribbs and Tina Patterson joined Shirley Denton to provide a core for the Board. Mike Fite, Janet Bowers, Steve Dickman, Anita Camacho, Linda Steele-Green and Susan Heyer have also served as directors.
- Our digital journey continues. Shirley Denton made the website more accessible to mobile devices in 2014 and 2020. In 2023, Kat Jones, media coordinator for our Facebook page, added an Instagram account to our social media presence. Tina Patterson has been effectively using email to keep members well reminded before meetings and key events.
- Suncoast members were recognized at state conferences: Mentor awards went to Carmel VanHoek (2015) and Shirley Denton (2018); Silver Palmetto award to Devon Higginbotham (2016); Green



Palmetto awards to Troy Springer (2014), Joel Jackson (2016), Steve Dickman (2022) and Tina Patterson (2022). Steve also won several plant id contests!

- Profits from the USF Botanical Garden Plant Sales were used to fund native plant projects at Terrace Community School, Middleton High School, HCC Plant City Community Gardens, UF/IFAS Extension and King's Point Community Garden in Sun City. We also supported the USF Herbarium, FNPS Conference, county park native gardens and many environmental organizations with donations and volunteer hours.
- Donna Bollenbach began a partnership with Hillsborough County CELM in 2015. Suncoast hosts native plant walks and garden workdays at Lettuce Lake and has participated in Hiking Spree activities, wagon tours and outreach events. Joel Jackson was honored for his many contributions to county conservation efforts in 2022 when the visitor center at Lettuce Lake was renamed the Joel E Jackson Nature Center.
- 2020 moved all of our meetings to Zoom for a time as Covid sent the world into seclusion. We proudly continued field trips and camping trips continued throughout the pandemic emergency as we practiced safety, and found safe, outdoor activities in great locations. Camping trips ranged from Torreya SP (2014) to Collier-Seminole (2021) and across the state from Jonathan Dickenson SP (2016) to Ochlockonee River SP (2022).
- In 2014, Suncoast introduced its new *Encyclia tampensis* logo, designed by Elizabeth Smith. The design was used for t-shirts in 2014-2017. The West Coast Native Landscape brochures were first published in 2016 and remain in use today.
- In 2022, a new Good Citizen brochure was released. Suncoast members, particularly Donna Bollenbach and Virginia Overstreet, assisted with these FNPS publications.
- The chapter is experimenting with meetings at different locations, times and delivery methods to increase attendance. Joint meetings with Sierra and Audubon included Nature's Classroom to Zoom to Tampa Garden Club.



Our 40 years of history echo some of our recent FNPS conference themes, “Connections”, “Transitions” and “Adaptations”. Did you know that some of our founding members (Will Moriarty, Bob Scheible and Dick Wunderlin) still belong to our chapter? Or that Mary Miller and Mike Fite have maintained native gardens at county parks after over a decade of service? Troy Springer began in the 2004-2013 decade as an SNPS board member and officer and has gone on to develop a successful native landscape business and retail nursery, while still supporting Suncoast at plant sales. Steve Dickman still leads field trips and offers us new locations every year. Joel Jackson has been creating and delivering educational programs for many years and his legacy continues, as the Lettuce Lake Nature Center was renamed in his honor last year. Vikki Sinclair finally retired from her librarian duties in 2022 after many years of hauling cases of books to meetings, and JoAnn Hoffman continues to make meetings possible at the Extension Service.

Past President, and current Vice President and newsletter editor, Shirley Denton, continues to be active at the Society and chapter levels, while President, Virginia Overstreet, stepped up at a time of great need and has steered us through the many transitions of the last 7 years. Suncoast will continue to adapt as our county grows more urban, our environment faces new challenges, and our members’ needs and interests evolve.

**Where will we be in another 10 years? You can help write that story.**



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*The mission of the Florida Native Plant Society is to preserve, conserve, and restore the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.*

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## Flatwoods Park Native Garden Workday

By Mary Miller



On August 16, a group of six dedicated native plant gardeners, with the help of Ranger Jenni Church, met at the Flatwoods Park Native Garden (14302 Morris Bridge Road, Thonotosassa, FL), in front of the Ranger Station on Wednesday, August 16, to weed and prune the plants. It was a very hot morning, but within two hours, we had made a tremendous improvement in the landscape. But the real reason everyone showed up was evident afterwards when I brought out the donuts! So the accompanying picture shows us all at the picnic table enjoying our donuts.

*Left to right are Janet Amendola, Ranger Jenni Church, Steve Corcoran, Michael Keller, Tina Patterson, Mary Miller, (not shown is John Miller who is taking the picture).*

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### **Board Meeting**

*Sept. 11, 7:00pm*

*All members are welcome. You can propose agenda items.*

*Contact Tina (305-298-6381  
([mablepatterson@hotmail.com](mailto:mablepatterson@hotmail.com)) for more information.  
This will be an online meeting.*

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### **There is Still Time**

Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park. Fall camping Thurs. night Oct. 19 departing on Sun. Oct. 22. Some cabin and tent sites are available (contact Tina) or reserve your own. It should be the height of fall wildflowers.

## Volunteer Opportunities

**Chapter Representative** - Do you know what a Chapter Representative does? Do you like meeting people with similar interests? Would you like to help create educational materials relevant to our area?

Most meetings are virtual (Zoom), but there are occasional opportunities to travel and see new places.

If you are interested, contact Virginia Overstreet.

**T Shirt Sales Coordinator** - It's been quite a few years since our chapter ordered T shirts. We are looking for someone to coordinate T shirt sales. We plan to use a company that allows members to order their own shirts in colors of their choice. We can provide a file with the chapter logo for the front of the shirts.

Contact Virginia, 8135413187, if you have any questions about these volunteer opportunities.

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Native Plant Garden Maintenance

Our chapter coordinates with the Hillsborough County Parks to maintain native plant gardens at Lettuce Lake, Morris Bridge, Flatwoods, and Trout Creek parks.

To volunteer, contact the lead green thumbs for the gardens as follows:

**Lettuce Lake:** Workday every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday. Tina (Mable) Patterson, email [mablepatterson@hotmail.com](mailto:mablepatterson@hotmail.com) or phone (305) 298-6381, text or call and leave name and message.

**Morris Bridge:** Mike Fite, email [fitemf@gmail.com](mailto:fitemf@gmail.com).

**Flatwoods Park:** Mary Miller, email [limpkin1945@verizon.net](mailto:limpkin1945@verizon.net)

**Trout Creek:** Mike Fite, email [fitemf@gmail.com](mailto:fitemf@gmail.com).

Thank you to Merrilee Wallbrunn for volunteering to be our new **Site Visit Coordinator** - We offer site visits to new members who want help identifying plants in their landscapes. We also conduct site visits when an organization submits a request for a grant to plant a native garden. These site visits are interesting and educational for those of us who participate. You don't need an advanced level of plant knowledge to join this team. This is a fun way to help the chapter.

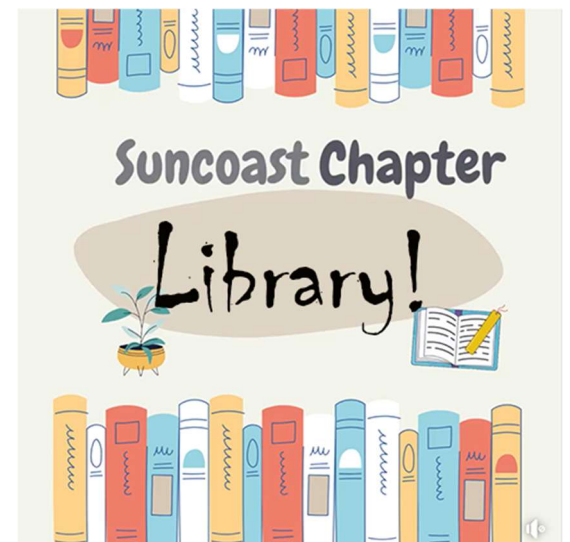
## Library Books

Books are being kept at our storage location and we will only be bringing requested volumes to meetings.

To check out books from the library:

Review the list of books available in the library and available at <https://suncoast.fnpschapters.org/data/uploads/pdfs/suncoast-library.pdf>.

Select a book from the link below and contact [mablepatterson@hotmail.com](mailto:mablepatterson@hotmail.com). You must be a current member on file in our data base. The book will be brought to the next in- person meeting or workday and you will need to sign the checkout form. Books must be returned at the next in- person meeting. The 2 reference-only volumes can be viewed at meetings by request.



## Special Event –

### Garden Work Day at Troy's House

Sept 23. 9:00 am.

As many of you know, Troy Springer has been ill and unable to maintain his meadow garden at his house. He has also been unable to return full time to his business, Springer Environmental Services, Inc.. Troy is a past President of our chapter and continues to serve an important role by helping with our plant sales at USF in April and October. We will have a garden work day at Troy's house on Saturday September 23 at 9:00.

After a couple of hours of tidying up the garden, we will have a picnic lunch. The chapter will provide sandwiches, chips, and tea. Bring your water bottles and also bring a chair.

Troy is very excited to have this help with his meadow garden, but he is even more excited about seeing some of his native plant buddies.

Please join us to help Troy and enjoy a picnic in his beautiful meadow garden. Please RSVP to Tina Patterson (305-298-6381 ([mablepatterson@hotmail.com](mailto:mablepatterson@hotmail.com))) if you plan to attend.



## Fall Plant Sale

We will be needing helpers on October 13-15. The 13<sup>th</sup> is setup.

## USF BOTANICAL GARDENS FALL PLANT FESTIVAL

Date and Time : October 14 & 15, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Contact Tina to volunteer.

## September Field Trip – SPECIAL DAY – Sept. 30

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Bell Creek Preserve. Pine lilies should be blooming. Watch our website <https://suncoast.fnpschapters.org> and your email for further information.

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## Plant Profile – Lopsided Indiangrass

Information Compiled by George Kish, Updated by Shirley Denton

**Scientific name:** *Sorghastrum secundum* (Elliott) Nash

**Family:** Poaceae or Gramineae (Grass)

**Type of plant:** Clump-forming, perennial grass

**Size:** Clumps 2-4 feet tall, flower spikes 4-6 feet tall.

**Leaves:** Elongated, flat, becoming turned-in at the tips; leaf surfaces are rough.

**Flower:** Spikelets (flower heads) are paired, brownish to golden brown on one side of branch and drooping. Long, twisted, hairy awns occur on spikelets; large yellow anthers.

**Flowering time:** August to December.

**Habitat/distribution:** Sandhills, pine flatwoods, scrubs, somewhat moist to dry woods and meadows; zones 8-11.

**Landscape use:** Mass planting in wildflower garden. Plant toward the back as these are tall.

**Wildlife benefit:** Seed source for small birds.

### Cultivation:

Soil: Neutral to acid, sandy.

Light: Full sun to light shade.

Water: Dry to somewhat moist. Drought-tolerant once established.

Propagation: By seed.

**Availability:** Some native plant nurseries.

### References:

Haehle, Robert G., and Joan Brookwell, 1999, *Native Florida Plants*, Gulf Publishing Company, Houston, Texas, 360 p.

Osorio, Rufino, 2001, *A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants*, University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 345 p.

Taylor, Walter Kingsley, 1998, *Florida Wildflowers in Their Natural Communities*, University of Florida Press, Gainesville, Florida, 370 p.



*Photos by Shirley Denton*

## Local Native Nurseries

Our local native nurseries are our fans, and they need our business. Call for retail days and hours.

### Hillsborough County

**Little Red Wagon**  
4113 Henderson Blvd  
Tampa, Florida 33629



Phone: 813-755-9579  
Website: <http://www.littleredwagonnativenursery.com>  
Email: [Info@ButterflyTampa.com](mailto:Info@ButterflyTampa.com)

**Springer Environmental**  
5926 US92, Plant city, FL 33566



Retail:  
M-F 9:00-4:00,  
Sat. by appt.  
Phone: 813-659-0370  
Website: <http://springerenvironmental.com>  
Email: [troy@springerenvironmental.com](mailto:troy@springerenvironmental.com)

### Manatee County

**Sweet Bay Nursery**  
10824 Erie Rd, Parrish, Florida 34211



Phone: 941-776-0501  
Website: <http://sweetbaynursery.com/>  
Email: [sweetbaynursery@gmail.com](mailto:sweetbaynursery@gmail.com)

**Green Seasons**  
12340 FL-62  
Parrish, Florida 34219



Phone: 941-776-1605  
Website: <http://www.greenseasonsnursery.com>  
Email: [seaoater@gmail.com](mailto:seaoater@gmail.com)

### Pinellas County



**Wilcox Nursery & Landscape**  
12501 Indian Rocks Rd  
Largo, Florida 33774-3037

Phone: 727-595-2073  
Website: <http://www.wilcoxnursery.com>  
Email: [Wilcox12501@gmail.com](mailto:Wilcox12501@gmail.com)

**Twigs & Leaves**  
610 27th St S  
St Petersburg, Florida 33712



Phone: 727-822-5400  
Website: <http://www.twigsandleaves.com>  
Email: [twigsandleavessp@gmail.com](mailto:twigsandleavessp@gmail.com)

### Lake County

**Green Isle Gardens**  
11303 SR 33  
Groveland, FL 34736



Phone: 407-948-8980  
Website: <http://greenislegardens.com>  
Email: [gignatives@gmail.com](mailto:gignatives@gmail.com)

### Polk County

**The Nectary**  
1047 E Main St.  
Lakeland, FL 33801



Phone: 863-937-7879  
Website: <http://thenectarylakid.com>  
Email: [thenectarylakid@gmail.com](mailto:thenectarylakid@gmail.com)

## Officers and Board of Directors

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## Newsletter Submissions

### Deadline for October Newsletter: Sept. 25

Send contributions to Shirley Denton at [ecotypes@outlook.com](mailto: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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Photo by Jenny Welch