A Message from the President

Volunteers! What would we do without you…

When one of our wonderful members first mentioned taking on the Florida State Fair Display Competition, I wondered how we would manage. Would we have the people needed to help, did we have the ideas, plants, expertise? Well, I should not have worried. More than 60 people have volunteered to help out! I knew you were great, and this is proof. Our newsletter editor, Karen, of Karen’s Wildflowers, has taken on the plant sale portion. Greg, of Rainbow’s End Native Nursery, has provided the plants for the display. Others have donated material and expertise for the big display. And so many of you are helping during the state fair to keep the display maintained and answer questions. This just confirms what I should have known all along, which is that people who believe in native plants care. And our Nature Coast Chapter Members are among the most talented and giving in the state.

But I think we have just scratched the surface of talents and skills. The skills you acquire during your career can certainly be put to use in the chapter and at events. If you are a photographer, artist, administrator, writer, computer expert, contractor, sales person, baker, parent, musician, we need you. Whenever asked, people have come forward, but do not wait to be asked. You may have an idea or skill we need and we just have not found you yet.

The Florida Native Plant Society is a volunteer organization. Even the few contract people in administration give much more than they receive. We have no office, people work from their homes. The State Conference brings people together once a year to learn, share ideas and meet each other. I hope many of you will attend this year’s conference at Westgate River Ranch May 17th to May 21st. Not only will you meet the movers and shakers, but the field trips will be in places you might not otherwise have the opportunity to visit.

Thank you for your work at the state fair. The next and most important event of the year is our Spring Plant Sale on March 25th, 2017. Please offer to help and ask everyone you know to come and buy plants.

There will be lots of opportunities to volunteer and it is easy and fun. We make friends and help our environment. What more can you ask in life!

Jonnie Spitler

Monthly meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m.

Location: Land O’ Lakes Community Center, 5401 Land O’ Lakes Blvd (US 41), Land O’ Lakes, FL 34639 in the back meeting room. Entrance is off the courtyard on the south side of the building.

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Meetings/Programs

Florida Wildflower Foundation  
Speaker: Lisa Roberts  
March 14

The mission of the Florida Wildflower Foundation is to enrich lives with Florida native wildflowers through education, research and planting projects. The Foundation is known worldwide as the most reliable source of inspiration and information about Florida native wildflowers. We will learn about the importance of wildflowers to our state’s culture, economy, ecology and beauty and the initiatives FWF is under-taking to promote our Native Wildflowers.

Speaker Bio: Lisa Roberts became the Florida Wildflower Foundation’s executive director in 2008. Under her direction, the Foundation established its annual Florida Wildflower Symposium and the popular Seeds for Schools, Viva Florida and La Florida Community Plantings grant programs; launched a new website and wildflower research literature database; developed multiple publications, including a Panhandle brochure that outlines wildflower viewing routes. Before joining the Foundation, Lisa worked at the Orlando Sentinel for many years as an editor and writer, during which she often wrote about Florida's outdoors. She is a certified Florida Master Naturalist and a member of the Florida Native Plant Society.

AlterNatives  
Speaker: Rita Grant  
April 11

Rita talks to many gardening groups about using native plants (and Florida Friendly plants) instead of exotics. The program covers native trees, shrubs and ground covers as alternatives to exotics.

Speaker Bio: Rita Grant is a Hernando County Master Gardener, member of the Florida Native Plant Society, Hernando Chapter and a member of the Ocala Button Collectors, yes buttons. She moved to Florida in 1996 and lived in Pasco County until 2001 when she moved to Hernando, joined Native Plant in 2002 and was a volunteer at the Chinsegut Conservation Center for many years. Rita has a small native plant nursery at her home that keeps her very busy.

To suggest a program contact Pat Kelly at (352) 588-0266 or patriciak03@gmail.com

FNPS Nature Coast Chapter  
Spring

Native Plant Sale  
Saturday, March 25  
10 AM to 2 PM

Land O' Lakes Community Center  
5401 Land O’ Lakes Blvd./US 41 * Land O' Lakes 34639

- We will have a large selection of quality nursery grown plants and books for sale, free literature and a Pasco Master Gardner information table.

- A plant profile is provided for each species of plant purchased.

For more information, contact us at naturecoastfnps@gmail.com or visit www.pasconativeplants.org

Volunteers Needed

8:00am-3pm for set up, outreach, & break-down.  
Sign up at the Chapter’s meetings February 14 & March 14 or contact Pat Kelly (352) 588-0266, patriciak03@gmail.com.
Field Trips

Leu Gardens with Annual Plant Sale
1920 North Forest Avenue
Orlando, FL 32803

SATURDAY, MARCH 11
9AM (for carpooling)

The gardens we will focus on will be: Butterfly garden, herb garden, native wetland garden and the vegetable garden. After garden tour we will visit plant vendors for those who may want to buy plants and there will be food vendors on site http://www.leugardens.org/annual-plant-sale

Carpool - meet at McDonalds at SR 54 & I-75. It should take 1hr & 45 minutes from this location

FREE Admission during plant sale weekend

Leader: Gail Parsons  813-928-1412 (cell)
gailpar1@verizon.net

Chassahowitzka River and Coastal Swamps
7940 Burnt Bridge Road
Homosassa, FL 34448

SATURDAY, APRIL 15
10AM

Access at end of Burnt Bridge Road, a dirt road that goes through the Withlacoochee State Forest (Homosassa WMA) to the property. Parking available at access point Burnt Bridge Rd is on west side of US 19 approximately 1.5 miles north of intersection of US 19 and US 98. This property is approximately 5600 acres. A lot of room to explore. It is surrounded by other government owned lands.

https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/recreation/areas/chassahowitzka.html

Leader: Gail Parsons 813-928-1412 (cell)
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Florida State Fair 2017 Exhibit

Florida State Fair 2017 Plant Sale Table

West Pasco Audubon Society program
“Florida Butterflies”

At the April 1st meeting, Ron Smith, author of A Birder’s Guide to Pinellas County will be the speaker. He and his wife, Lor, took a year off from chasing birds to pursue and photograph Florida’s butterflies. Their list topped 120. See his photos and hear his butterfly stories. Ron is the listserv owner of Birdbrain.

Date: April 1, 2017
Time: 11 AM
Location: Starkey Education Center
10500 Wilderness Park Blvd.
New Port Richey, FL 34655

FNPS keeps records of VOLUNTEER HOURS for grant purposes.
Meetings, field trips, any volunteer time and miles driven should be emailed to Mary Ellen Gotto
mefgotoh@aol.com
Please include your name, date, hours, what you did, and location.
Pack your bags for April 17 – 22nd 2017 as FNPS travels to northern Alabama to discover the native plants in the Bibb County Glades, the Bank Head Wilderness, Cane Creek Canyon Preserve, Little River Canyon National Preserve, in the southern terminus of the Appalachian Mountains.

We will be joined by members of the Alabama Wildflower Society (their native plant society) and local, expert native plant guides for 6 days with two departure points – Orlando and Tallahassee. Indigo Travel Company will donate $100 to FNPS for each member participant.

Find out how two school teachers made a HUGE difference in preserving native habitat, why there is a 56 foot tall statue of a half-naked man in the middle of Birmingham, the largest cast iron statue in the world, and see the effects of recent earthquakes underground!

Stay at a 125-yr-old abbey. A $50 deposit will reserve your spot on what is certain to be a sell-out tour! First come, first served! Click here for itinerary and more information: http://www.fnps.org/news/society-news/alabama

Cathedral Canyons

Little River Canyon

Kaul Wildflower Garden

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OBLONGLEAF TWINFLOWER

By Peggy A. Gretchen
FNPS Member
Pasco Master Gardener

Botanical Name: Dyschoriste oblongifolia

Common Name: Oblongleaf Twinflower, Oblongleaf Snakeherb.
The name Snakeherb relates to its medicinal use by Native Americans and early colonists as a poultice to treat snakebites.

Family: Acanthaceae (Acanthus)

Type of Plant: Native usually erect to sprawling evergreen perennial wildflower/groundcover. Semi-dormant in winter.
Height: up to 8 – 12 in. Width: Will spread by underground rhizomes and form colonies. Give plenty of space or it may be shaded out by taller plants.

How to Identify
Leaves: Opposite, sessile (lacking a stalk or petiole), and oblong-elliptic; margins entire. Stems and leaves pubescent (dense covering of soft, short hairs).

Flowers: Light lavender – purple with darker purple dots or streaks; five-lobed; four stamens; about 1 in. long; calyces (sepals) pubescent, five-lobed; lobes bristle-like. The funnel-shaped flowers are borne in pairs near tips of stems, in the leaf axils, hence the common name. Flowering Time: Late Spring – Fall. March – November. Sometimes into early Winter, if mild. All year southward. Most abundant blooms in late Spring to early Summer.

Fruit: A tightly closed small capsule.

Habitat: Common in sandhills and pine flatwoods. Also in upland mixed woodlands.

Distribution: Mostly throughout peninsular Florida, and west to central panhandle. Hardiness Zones: 8B -10A.

Landscape Use / Wildlife Benefit: This beautiful and low maintenance Florida perennial wildflower may be used in flower gardens or as a groundcover. Will fill in open, sunny areas over time. Plant in groups for best effect. Extended flowering period, especially with warm temperatures and adequate soil moisture. Attracts butterflies for nectar. Larval host plant for the Common Buckeye butterfly.

Cultivation: Virtually carefree.

Soil: Sandy, well-drained.

Light: Full sun best to partial sun.


Miscellaneous: Slowly spreading by underground rhizomes and/or self-sown seed. Prune old stems annually. Low salt-tolerance.

Propagation: By seeds, cuttings, or division.

Availability: See www.plantrealflorida.org! Or visit your local native plant sale!

Comment: There are 3 species of Twinflower in Florida. Dyschoriste oblongifolia or Oblongleaf Twinflower is the largest, most robust grower, and most ornamental species. Two other species are more delicate and diminutive. Dyschoriste humistrata or Swamp Twinflower is frequently found in floodplain forests or edges of swamps in North and Central Florida. It has smaller flowers and tolerates more moisture than D. oblongifolia. Dyschoriste angusta or Pineland Twinflower is found in moist pine flatwoods in South Florida. It also has smaller flowers and very narrow leaves as compared to D. oblongifolia.

References:


