October has been proclaimed "Florida Native Plant Month" by elected officials throughout the state of Florida to recognize the importance of native plants in our state. Native plants are necessary for a healthy, sustainable environment that supports people and wildlife.

Please join us in celebrating native plants by attending an event sponsored by the Pinellas Chapter FNPS or attend a proclamation in Pinellas county. See page 3 for list of events.
Upcoming Programs

Member meetings are usually held at Moccasin Lake Nature Park from 7 - 9 pm on the first Wednesday of the month. Exceptions are noted below*. If the gate is locked, call Jan Allyn at 727-244-0312. These events are organized by the Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society -- free and open to the public, featuring refreshments, seed swap, and silent auction of native plants. For more information visit: http://pinellas.fnpschapters.org.

Moccasin Lake Nature Park, 2750 Park Trail Lane, Clearwater, FL http://goo.gl/maps/Zofh0

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### 7 October 2015
Wednesday 7 pm

**Environmental Restoration Projects in Pinellas County**

**Debbie Chayet**

Debbie Chayet will give us a virtual tour of various restoration sites around Pinellas County, where habitat has been improved, flood/stormwater treatment is better, biodiversity has been increased, and recreation opportunities have been created. Find out how your tax dollars have been put to work for the benefit of County residents and the environment!

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### 4 November 2015
Wednesday 7 pm

**Annual Membership Meeting and Potluck Dinner - Forensic Botany**

**Dr. David Hall**

Dr. David W. Hall, a forensic botanist and recognized expert in plant identification, will share with us the way in which botanical evidence is identified, collected and analyzed in criminal cases. Through simple collection methods and standard plant analysis in the course of an investigation, these collections may be necessary to link or exclude evidence to or from a crime scene.


This meeting mixes business and pleasure. It’s time once again to elect new officers and board of directors, and acknowledge the special contributions of some of our members. Bring a dish to share, finger food, side dishes, casseroles, or desserts (turkey will be provided). Enjoy a relaxing evening with friends as we share good food and good company. If you want to be eco-friendly, feel free to bring your own plate and silverware and a bag to carry them home. This will help reduce the amount of disposables used.

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### 2 December 2015
Wednesday 6:30 - 9:30 pm

**Annual Holiday Conservation Celebration**

**Craig Huegel**

Craig Huegel will speak about *The Importance of Native Plants*. It's not just gardening or landscaping. It's preservation, conservation and restoration!

The Annual Holiday Conservation Celebration” is sponsored by the Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and features educational exhibits by local environmental organizations, a silent auction of giftable nature-themed items, and a special presentation. Craig is also an author and will have his books at the meeting to sell (cash or checks only). We hope you will join us for this very special program. Please bring your friends and a festive refreshment; guests are always welcome at our meetings. See flyer page 9.

This event is free and the public is invited.

Please join us at

*Brooker Creek Preserve Tarpon Springs

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Future Programs and Field Trips

For updates to future events, visit the FNPS Pinellas Chapter online calendar.

or check us out at meetup
OCTOBER EVENTS TO CELEBRATE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT MONTH

Proclamations recognizing October as Florida Native Plant Month will be made by the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners and the cities of Clearwater, St. Petersburg, and Dunedin, with the goal of emphasizing the vital role native plants play in sustaining healthy, diverse ecosystems. For more information about Florida Native Plant Month, please visit www.fnps.org/news/plantmonth.

Proclamation Schedule

September 24, 2 p.m.
Pinellas County Commission Meeting
315 Court Street, 5th Floor, Clearwater

October 1, 6 p.m.
Clearwater City Council Meeting
112 S. Osceola Avenue, Clearwater

October 8, 3 p.m.
St. Petersburg City Council Meeting
175 5th Street North, St. Petersburg

October 15, 6:30 p.m.
Dunedin City Council Meeting
750 Milwaukee Ave., Dunedin

Fall Native Plant Festival

17 October 2015
9 am - 4 pm

Wilcox Nursery & Landscape
12501 Indian Rocks Road, Largo

A Fall Native Plant Festival will be sponsored by the Pinellas Chapter as part of the Florida Native Plant Month celebration. Four speakers are scheduled and specialty vendors will also offer their goods and services. FNPS members will be on hand to provide information and encouragement for attendees to learn about using native plant species in residential landscapes.

See flyer on page 5 for speaker schedule.

Pinellas County Recognition

The Pinellas Board of County Commissioners announced October 2015 as Florida Native Plant month at the meeting in Clearwater on 24 September. Members in attendance (left to right), Ellen Raabe, Sue Taylor, Debbie Chayet, Lisa Boing, Mary Sanders, Jane Williams, Commissioner John Morroni, Andy Taylor (FNPS Director of Development), Jan Allyn, Donna Trott, and Cathy Quindiagan.

Photo by Debra Landsdowne, Pinellas County Communications Department
HABITAT FOR THE MOORHEN

by Ernie Franke

Providing Urban Habitat

Even though the common moorhen or gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*; gallinule means “little hen”) is an abundant bird in North America, local populations can be threatened due to lack of good habitat. As wildlife habitat shrinks with urban development, alternate freshwater habitats for waterfowl are needed. Reservoirs and artificial wetlands can increase habitat available to the common moorhen, if small islands of vegetation are provided. The islands provide habitat, food, cover, nesting material, and protection from predators.

Many Florida development projects include lakes and ponds that serve as retention areas for stormwater run-off control. The Wetlands Committee of The Shores of Long Bayou Condominiums duplicated nesting habitat by forming small breeder islands with native vegetation in several stormwater retention ponds. The advantage of forming these islands is isolation. The moorhen loves to have the security of an island it can call its own. Water forms a barrier against both raccoons and people. Condominium residents love to track their moorhens. Everyone wins.

Nesting

A wide bowl of grasses and sedges, taken from near the nest site and anchored to emergent vegetation, provides the nest for the common moorhen. They build nests above water level and close to shore with a ramp leading to the water. We provide maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon*) for concealment, which when matted down forms a ramp from the nest leading to water. Maidencane is preferred because it is native to Florida. The pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*) around the perimeter is used for nesting material. Other native Florida wetland plants included in the pond restorations are: water lilies (*Nymphaea mexicana*), canna (*Canna flaccida*), duck potato (*Sagittaria latifolia*), alligator flag (*Thalia geniculata*), and blue flag iris (*Iris virginica*).

The common moorhen is omnivorous (eats seeds, plant material, small aquatic prey, and insects) and feeds while walking on plants or floating on the water. The moorhen can be quite conspicuous, appearing to walk-on-water as it uses its long toes to walk atop floating vegetation, giving it the name of “Jesus Bird”. They resemble black barnyard chickens with red frontal crests and yellow beaks, and can be distinguished from coots which have a white frontal crest.

To read more about this and other projects by Ernie Franke go to: http://pinellas.fnpschapters.org/index.php?id=ernie
FALL NATIVE PLANT FESTIVAL

Saturday, October 17th, 9am to 4pm
Wilcox Nursery & Landscape
12501 Indian Rocks Road, Largo

Learn to garden sustainably with help from the Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society!

Informative speakers:
10 a.m. Native Herbs, Berries & Other Edibles – Hilary Edenfield & Bruce Turley (Wilcox Nursery)
11 a.m. Sustainable Urban Agriculture – Bill Bilodeau
Noon  It’s All About the Weeding – Darcey Phillips (Detail Divas)
1 p.m. Milkweed & More: Gardening for Pollinators – Chris Parisi, Restless Natives Nursery

FNPS members receive a 10% discount at Wilcox Nursery year-round! Join at the festival and receive a free book!
The Pinellas Chapter had to cancel its annual fall Tour of Native Landscapes this year because we just didn’t have enough volunteers to do the planning and legwork to make it happen. It takes time and energy to find appropriate sites on a reasonably compact route, make and distribute plant lists, signs, and other materials, round up volunteers, et cetera. We hope to reinstate the tour next year with our members’ help. If you’d like to help organize the 2016 landscape tour, please contact the chapter at pinellas@fnpschapters.org.

In the meantime, consider hosting your very own tour! Recently, one of my neighbors created a social media site for our neighborhood and two neighboring ones (about 700 homes total), and I used it to issue an invitation to its followers who were interested in landscaping with natives to come for a tour of my yard. Several expressed interest, and we set a date and time to meet. After snacks, we discussed gardens generally, and natives in particular. We made the rounds of my yard and I told them about my “plant collection”. I previously knew only one attendee, so I made new friends! One was a recent transplant from New York who was anxious to learn about gardening in Florida, very different from her home state. All turned out to be environmentally conscious and they were genuinely interested in sustainable landscape principles. We are going to reconvene in a week to visit two of their yards which are next door to each other. We had a wonderful time! A few ideas for hosting your own garden party:

1. Get the word out: Many homeowners’ associations have newsletters, websites, Facebook or other social media sites (ours uses NextDoor.com). Use these to issue an invitation for anyone interested to contact you by phone or email to learn about natives and take a tour of your yard. Once you get enough takers, find a time and invite everyone who has contacted you. You could even host an “open house” for a few hours on a weekend afternoon and invite all comers. Put a sign in the front yard with balloons to create a festive atmosphere!

2. Make a list: People who are not familiar with natives will not remember all the names of plants that you recite. Prepare a list of the native plant species in your yard with a note for each (red flowers in spring, larval food for butterflies, likes shade) Make copies for each guest. You could also give them copies of the “Real Florida Gardeners” booklet from FANN or the “Welcome to Florida Gardening” handout we distribute at our meetings.

3. On your plant list include a list of websites where they can find information about native plants for landscapes. You might also list books that you have found helpful. Here are a few websites to suggest:
   - www.fnps.org
   - plantrealflorida.org
   - flawildflowers.org
   - hawthornhillwildflowers.blogspot.com

4. Feed them: Offer your “yard tourists” a glass of wine or lemonade, cookies, fruit, and/or cheese to create a garden party atmosphere. Put out some lawn chairs and invite your guests to stick around and socialize, sharing landscaping tips and ideas.

5. Give them a starter plant: Pot up some of your volunteers and give a plant to each guest, along with information about how/where to grow it.

6. Let them reciprocate: Your neighbors may have non-native yards, but if offered a tour of their landscapes, go! Then, if they ask for your input, suggest native plants appropriate for their growing conditions. If you see invasive plants, (gently and tactfully) bring these to their attention and suggest better alternatives. Above all, encourage their efforts to grow native plants and landscape sustainably with helpful information, friendliness and positivity!

7. Let your guests know about Pinellas Chapter meetings and activities, and invite them to join you!
Summer Camp Scholarships

Summer camp scholarships were offered this year by Pinellas Chapter FNPS to assist children with financial needs. Supported camps included Naturemania Camp (Largo), Weedon Island and Boyd Hill (St. Petersburg), Dunedin Nature Center, and Brooker Creek Preserve (Tarpon Springs). Camps cover wildlife, plant diversity, non-native species, fire ecology and ecology in general. Instructors and campers appreciate the support from FNPS. The programs connect children with nature through environmentally-oriented day camps and encourage them to respect and preserve our natural environment. The Pinellas Chapter believes environmental camp programs can expand a child's awareness of the role of native plants in a healthy environment.

Did you know?

that up to 50% of household water use in Florida is used outdoors as irrigation for lawns and gardens

In addition, almost 90% of our water supply is from Floridan aquifer groundwater. Over-pumping of regional groundwater can result in sinkholes, saltwater intrusion, and less water supply.

that Water-Wise landscaping is based on the need to conserve water

Even though Florida has lakes, rivers and wetlands, as well as rainfall, not all that water is reliable or available for human use. Water shortages do occur. Water conservation helps to ensure that water continues to be available for all water needs.

that Florida-Friendly plants are adapted to regional growing conditions and require little water, fertilizer, or other resources

While they are not all native to Florida, Florida-friendly plants are not invasive and generally do not interfere with natural plant communities. Selecting landscape elements that are adapted to the existing environment is in line with the principle of “right plant in the right place”.

that Florida native plants are both Florida-friendly and Water-Wise

When a native Florida plant is in tune with the growing conditions, it can thrive without help - and can be the start of a healthy ecosystem that supports you and wildlife.

To read more go to: Waterwise Landscapes

“Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.”

— William Arthur Ward
by Belinda Lambert

It is summer and those of us who can tolerate the heat are likely to be spending time outdoors one way or another. So that we can be safer and more comfortable, Consumer Reports evaluated bug sprays in their July 2015 issue article “How to Win the Battle of the Bugs”. Following is the short version of their five top recommendations listed in order.

1. Sawyer Fisherman’s Formula Picaridin (20% Picaridin)
2. Repel Lemon Eucalyptus (30% Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus)
3. Repel Scented Family (DEET 15%)
4. Natrapel 8 hr (Picaridin 20%)
5. Off! Deep Woods VIII (DEET 25%)

*****

According to their research, the most effective repellent ingredients (against *Aedes* sp. and *Culex* sp. mosquitoes, as well as *Ixodes* sp. ticks) were:

- Picaridin @ 20%
- Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus @ 30%
- DEET @ 15%

Although Picaridin and Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus are chemically synthesized compounds (not natural), their side effects are much less severe than DEET. Sawyer Fisherman’s can stain leather and vinyl, so be careful when using it. And for those of you who do your gardening and pull your weeds barehanded like I do, both Sawyer’s Fisherman and Repel Lemon Eucalyptus can take off nail polish (OH NO!).

Unfortunately, their research found that natural repellents (e.g. citronella, lemongrass and rosemary) are not very effective. Avon’s Skin So Soft was ineffective when last tested in 1993, and the newer formulations now marketed as repellents have not yet been tested.

Some of the insect-borne summer hazards we have here include the West Nile Virus, Dengue, and Chikungunya viruses from mosquitoes; along with the Powassan virus and a number of bacterial infections such as Lyme Disease, Ehrlichiosis and Rocky Mountain Spotted fever from ticks.

So spray on the Sawyer and stay safe!
Registration is required. To register, please visit Eventbrite, http://www.eventbrite.com/
Have silent auction items to donate? Contact Katy: (727)726-1455, kroberts@tampabay.rr.com

Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2015

Free Admission with registration – Public Invited

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Mix & Mingle ✿ Refreshments ✿ Book Signing by Craig Huegel ✿ Silent Auction (books, plants, crafts, holiday gift items) ✿ Exhibits ✿

7:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Welcome ✿ Announcements ✿ Awards ✿ Introduction

8:00 – 9:30 p.m.
The Importance of Native Plants by Craig Huegel ✿ Claim Auction Items

Plants native to Florida play a special role in the landscape that is not shared by others. Native plants create living landscapes, they have evolved to provide the habitat needs of pollinators, songbirds and other wildlife and, when carefully matched to your landscape conditions, they don't require the use of pesticides, fertilizers, or additional water. Native plant landscapes also connect us to nature and create interest that cannot be matched by so-called Florida Friendly non-natives or by the vast majority of other non-native plants so widely used in developed landscapes. In this program, Dr. Craig Huegel will discuss the special roles native Florida plants provide.

Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and Friends of the Brooker Creek Preserve
Pinellas/UF IFAS Extension

Map & Info: http://goo.gl/maps/zr7fg
Pinellas Chapter Florida Native Plant Society: http://pinellas.fnpschapters.org
NOTICE: A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Florida Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within the state (800-435-7352, reg. no. CH4271). Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.
Butterfly Gardens

Butterfly gardens are a favorite pastime for many residents. There is something irresistible about watching eggs become caterpillars, caterpillars devouring leaves, and a butterfly emerging from the chrysalis to flit about the garden from one flower to another, and finally finding another butterfly of its own kind to start the cycle over again.

Many native Florida plants are larval host plants or nectar sources for butterflies and moths. Some host and nectar plants can be grown in pots. If you want butterflies, plant the larval food source and butterflies will come to your garden to breed. If you plant nectar sources, the butterflies will continue to visit your garden to feed.

Some Butterflies and Their Food Plants

- Zebra Longwing Butterfly - *Heliconius charitonius* - uses native passion vines, especially corkystem passionvine for larvae
- Monarch Butterfly - *Danaus plexippus* - uses several native milkweed species for larval host plants
- Giant Swallowtail - *Papilio cresphontes* - uses native plants like wild lime and Hercules club for egg-laying

For more information on butterflies and their food sources in Florida go to: [http://www.floridasnature.com/florida_butterflies.htm](http://www.floridasnature.com/florida_butterflies.htm)

Did you know?

- butterflies are choosy about the type of plant they use for egg-laying
  Plants used for egg-laying are called “larval host plants” and are eaten by the growing caterpillars.
- Florida has a State Butterfly
  The Zebra Longwing is Florida’s State Butterfly.
- the Giant Swallowtail is the largest North American butterfly
  The Giant Swallowtail has a wingspan of 4- 6 inches.

Silent Plant Auction

Do you have native plants volunteering in your garden? Please pot them up and bring to a monthly program (see Page 2). A silent auction of donated plants is held each month. Your extra plants will go home with someone trying to establish natives in their own yard or community project AND the proceeds benefit the Pinellas Chapter FNPS!
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

FNPS encourages everyone to celebrate Florida Native Plant Month. Attend an event, plant natives, or visit your local nature preserve. Using native plants in the landscape promotes a healthy environment by reducing the need for irrigation, fertilizers and pesticides. Native plants are also the preferred choice for attracting birds, butterflies and other wildlife to the garden.

FNPS is a nonprofit organization whose mission is the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. FNPS was established in 1980 in Winter Park and now has over 3500 members statewide. The Pinellas Chapter, with over 200 members, is one the largest of the 37 FNPS Chapters in Florida. All meetings, field trips and other FNPS activities are free and open to all.

Pinellas Chapter of FNPS plays an active role in community outreach with booths at environmental events, field trips, plant festivals, and monthly programs. If you are interested in participating, please visit our website Pinellas Chapter FNPS or contact the Chapter via email: pinellas@fnpschapters.org.

Our volunteers are the best. Thank you to our members, new and old, and thank you to our business members. They support the Florida Native Plant Society. Please support them.

This is your newsletter. As always, please feel free to contribute. Understory Editor, Ellen Raabe
Chapter Directory

“Green is the prime color of the world, and that from which its loveliness arises.”
~ Pedro Calderón de la Barca

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Membership Coordinator: Nancy Bickner
Programs/Field Trips: Vacant
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Understory Editor: Ellen Raabe
Volunteer Coordinator: Vacant
Web Master: Jan Allyn
The mission of the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

Join us at monthly meetings for inspirational speakers, on field trips to see natural habitats, at plant sales, or visit local plant nurseries specializing in native plants. Visit us online.

Pinellas Chapter web address: http://pinellas.fnpschapters.org/
FNPS Blog: http://fnpsblog.blogspot.com

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Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

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