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clockwise, red buckeye, redbud and spruce pine, trillium underwoodii, all common in upland hardwood hammock of Torreya
Add Life to Your Landscape with Native Plants

Spring Native Plant Sale

Pinellas Chapter Native Plant Society and Wilcox Nursery

Native Plant Experts to give guidance about adding natives to your landscape;
Literature and Information about environmental benefits of natives
Educational talks about enhancing your yard with plants native to your area:

9:30 Adding Beauty & Color to your Landscape with Wildflowers & Grasses:
Learn how to introduce color and texture into your landscape using Florida’s beautiful
native wildflowers. ~ Dr. Craig Huegel, Wildlife biologist & Naturalist

11:00 Butterfly Gardens without Borders, Your landscape as an Ecosystem’.
Though butterfly gardening, may need to be limited to small yard-sized garden plots,
find out how and why the entire landscape should be thought of as a butterfly habitat
to support a diversity of butterfly species and songbirds. ~ Bruce Turley, Landscape
designer & Nursery owner

1:30 Maintaining Your Native Landscape: Tending a native landscape is different
from a formal landscape. Learn the difference and the how-to’s. ~ Bill Bilodeau,
Landscape design & Maintenance.

Wilcox Nursery
12501 Indian Rocks Rd,
Largo, (727) 595-2073

Saturday, April 17th, 2010
9:00 am—4:00 pm
President’s Message
by Alexa Wilcox-Huegel

With the Chapter’s Camping/Field trip to Torreya State Park in north Florida behind us, I just have to stop and say what a fun time we had! It was a very memorable and special weekend; getting to know people better and enjoying the beauty of nature at the same time. It was a bit cold at night and a bit rainy on Saturday evening and Sunday morning, but the beautiful scenery this time of year far out passed the few inconveniences we encountered (See article in this issue, along with some great pictures on our Facebook site.)

It is now time to look ahead to what the spring and summer hold. One of our most important events of the year, the Annual Spring Plant Sale is just around the corner - April 17th. This is always a special event for us, not just because it is the main fund-raiser for our Chapter, but also because it is a wonderful educational opportunity and a way to reach the general public to make them aware of the benefits of landscaping with natives. It also is a great way for our members to learn more about the attributes of natives as well, both by attending some of the “mini-talks” (see Plant Sale Flyer/Agenda), and from helping customers write up their orders.

As our economic times create more and more need for us to live sustainably, using native plants in our landscapes and saving native habitats and ecosystems is becoming more important than ever. The education we provide through programs, field trips, literature, and scholarships may seem like a drop in the bucket, but it IS important. It will be up to groups like ours to remind our government officials that healthy habitats require the benefits that nature gives us. Natural areas preserve the natural functions of watersheds, serve to recharge the aquifer, and save trees and shrubs which convert carbon dioxide to oxygen. Natural areas also provide the food and habitat necessary for pollinators; the creatures that pollinate our food sources. Without the balance that occurs within a healthy natural environment, this world of ours will quickly unravel. It is important for us to provide a ‘voice of reason’ and make sure that message is not forgotten as our society tries to find ways to spend less. We also need to remind them that as people cut back, our natural areas are going to be more and more important for recreation. It is way less expensive for a family to spend a day hiking, camping or picnicking than it is to go to the movies or to Disneyland. Write to your politicians…. regularly and often.

Alexa

LinkedIn

Group: Florida Native Plant Society
Subject: Announcement from FNPS --

"We have 50 LinkedIn members now! Let's keep growing. Feel free to post questions or discussion topics."

LinkedIn is a social networking site for professionals. People post their resumes, job histories, etc. You can also "recommend" other people if you have worked with them and found them to be satisfactory. To find LinkedIn, go to LinkedIn.com. Creating an account is free. Once you have an account you can join groups. One of these is the FNPS group. There are also groups for architects, programmers, engineers, marketers, alumni groups, realtors, you name it.
Chapter Calendar

**April Program:** Wednesday, April 7
7:00 p.m. Pinellas County Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Rd., Largo

**Program Topic:** Working with Nature-Landscape Design for Your Yard

**Speaker:** Bill Bissett, ASLA, licensed Landscape Architect. Join us as Bill Bissett shares his unique and sustainable landscape design philosophy with us. Bill's program will focus more on detailing the concepts of good landscape design than on describing native plants and their characteristics, and is intended to make all of us better designers. During the twenty three years spent as principle landscape architect of his own firm, Bill has been recognized for his innovative design techniques and his use of native plants. His designs stress the necessity of environmentally functional landscapes and his approach has changed the face of environmental landscape designing throughout central Florida. His philosophy has led to many successful and sustainable design projects for which he has received many statewide awards. Bill is the co-owner with his wife, Nancy, of one of Florida's oldest native plant nurseries, The Natives, located near Davenport in Polk County and both Bill and Nancy were instrumental in founding the Heartland Chapter of FNPS. Please join us for a fun and informative program that may change the way you approach landscape design.

**April Field Trip:** Saturday, April 24
You must sign up for all Field Trips -- see info below.

**Location:** Historic Spanish Point, 337 North Tamiami Trail (US 41), Osprey, FL. Admission to park: $8.00 (Discounted rate… could be less if we get more than 20).

**Time:** Meet at 8:00 am if you wish to carpool, parking lot of Home Depot on 22nd Ave. N., St. Petersburg. If you drive down separately, meet at 10:00 am at Spanish Point parking lot.

**Description:** Historic Spanish Point is a 30-acre historical, archaeological and environmental center, overlooking beautiful Little Sarasota Bay in Osprey, Florida. The natural areas are diverse and include hardwood hammock, mangrove and coastal hammock. The coastal hammock is particularly unique and contains several listed plant species including prickly applecactus (*Harrisia aboriginum*). It also has large and beautiful examples of Jamaican caper, gumbo limbo, stoppers and other south Florida natives.

Unlike many of our trips, we will also explore the historical buildings and structures. Historic Spanish Point is the site of early homesteaders and their buildings have been preserved. It also was an important location for native peoples well before this. Experience prehistory by stepping inside “A Window to the Past,” an archaeology exhibition about the gulf coast region’s earliest people. This is the only place in the United States where you can be surrounded by a 15 foot high prehistoric shell mound called a midden. View a recreated dwelling from 1,000 years ago. See artifacts from the past. In addition, we will walk through the graceful Duchene Lawn and Classic Portal to the Butterfly Garden, which is the largest on the gulf coast. An aqueduct empties over a shell cascade in the Jungle Walk. Here several interesting native species occur, including soapberry (*Sapindus saponaria*) and Carolina buckthorn (*Rhamnus caroliniana*).

This will be relatively easy walking on good trails with access to restrooms and occasional shade. There are beautiful views of Sarasota Bay and we will plan to eat lunch there once we are finished with the tour. Bring a picnic lunch and dine under the graceful branches of a majestic Southern Magnolia. We will plan to leave for home around 1:00 pm.

**Sign-up/Information:** Contact Alexa Wilcox-Huegel at 422-4792 or E-mail alexa776@tampabay.rr.com.

**May Program:** Wednesday, May 5
7:00 p.m. (or come as early as 6:30 p.m.)

**Program Topic:** Landscape Tour of the Pinellas County Cooperative Extension Plantings

The landscape around the Cooperative Extension office contains the largest collection of native plants in any public landscape in Florida. Currently, there are 164 species of native trees and shrubs and approximately 66 wildflowers and grasses within the grounds. Many of these were planted more than 20 years ago and offer us an ideal opportunity to see mature specimens and evaluate them for our own yards. We will meet inside in the auditorium beginning at 6:30 pm and split off into small groups as we arrive. Each group will be assigned to a tour leader who can show you the plants and answer your questions. Tours will take about 45 minutes and we will return to the auditorium afterwards for refreshments and a short business meeting. If you have friends and neighbors that are interested in learning more about native plants, please bring them along.
May Field Trip:  Saturday, May 8
You must sign up for all Field Trips — see info below.
Location: Annuttilega Hammock, Hernando County
Time:  9:30 am, carpool meet at 8:00 am.

Description: Our May field trip takes us to one of the most unique and beautiful natural areas in west-central Florida; a region known for more than a century as the Annuttilega Hammock. Situated in the Brooksville Ridge and within the Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochie State Forest, the lands are higher in elevation than adjacent areas and contain limestone at and near the surface. The Brooksville Ridge has well-drained soils, karst limerock outcroppings, and is dominated by sandhills, upland hardwood forests and scrub communities. Despite its name, Annuttilega Hammock is largely sandhill and scrub, and this region supports black bear, red-cockaded woodpecker, indigo snake and a host of rare plants. The hammock forest is unique and contains many northern species as well as a few extremely rare ferns and Cooley’s justicia (Justicia cooleyi); found nowhere else in the world. The property is managed by the Florida Division of Forestry. We will be joined by State Forest Ecologist, Sid Taylor, and she has offered to guide us to some of the most beautiful sections of the Forest. After hiking the loop trail system in the Hammock, we will eat our lunches a few miles down the road at Tillis Hill – which has facilities. For those of you that wish a bit more exploring after lunch, Sid will then take us to the Withlacoochie Sinks (a few more miles away) for a short hike. The sinks contain some of Florida’s rarest ferns and is a very special place.

To carpool: meet in the parking lot of Perkins Restaurant, Gulf to Bay, just east of the intersection at US 19 by 8 am. We will leave promptly to get to the Hammock by 9:30 am. The Hammock entrance is off of County Rd 491, just north of its intersection with SR 98. We will take the Suncoast Expressway to Brooksville, turn north on SR 98 for about 10 miles, and then turn right (north) on 491. The public trail entrance is just a few more miles north on the lefthand side. On Your Own: Meet us at the entrance to the public hiking trail at CR 491 at 9:30 am.

Please Register: Times and plans can change. Please let us know you are coming so we can let you know if they do. E-mail Alexa: alexa776@tampabay.rr.com to register or for more information.

What to Bring: Portions of this walk will be relatively sunny. Bring sunscreen, water and a hat. You may wish to carry insect repellant as well. The walking should be relatively easy, but wear good walking shoes or boots and be prepared for some elevational changes (but, not like Torreya…). Areas may be wet. Cameras and binoculars will be useful if you have them. Bring a lunch and we will eat a few miles away at Tillis Hill after we return to our cars.

"Calling All Native Landscapes:
Nominate Yards for this Year's Tour"

For the last three years, the Chapter has sought and used good examples of landscapes for our annual landscape tour that demonstrate how native plants can be used. We showcase a variety of landscape styles including large and small, newly planted and well established, commercial and residential. Two tours are offered with one held in the north part of the County and the other in the south. Last year was very successful with over 300 people participating. We prefer to feature different landscapes each year and we can use your help in locating ones we have not used before. Our Chapter members live all over the County in a diversity of neighborhoods and we need you to let us know if there are landscapes in your neighborhood (or that you notice as you travel around the County) that are good examples for our purposes.

If you would like to nominate a yard for the tour (including your own), please see the selection criteria below:
1. Landscape should be at least 70% native species.
2. Can be either front yard, back yard or entire property.
3. Demonstrates micro-irrigation (if any irrigation is used).
4. Has a good diversity of native plants and/or utilizes unusual species not commonly seen in landscapes.
5. Should not have any Category 1 Invasive Pest Plants. (A few examples: Brazilian pepper, Punk tree, Chinese Tallow, Carrotwood, Chinaberry, etc) See Exotic Pest Plant Council list: http://www.fleppc.org/list/List-WWF09-final.pdf

Even if you aren't sure if the landscape you are thinking of nominating meets these criteria, please nominate them anyway. The landscape tour committee will review all the potential landscapes and select those that best represent native plants and are good examples. You can contact Jim McGinity with any nominations or questions at: jimmcginity@verizon.net. Thank you for helping us offer an even better tour this year!
Field Trip—Honeymoon Island State Park and Dunedin Hammock Park, 2/6/10
by Jan Allyn

On a chilly Saturday morning in February, a big group—29 people—assembled at Honeymoon Island State Park in Dunedin anticipating a breezy ferry ride across choppy water and a hike around Caladesi Island. Alas, the wind and whitecaps conspired to keep the ferry at the pier, and we were disappointed. But not too let down, as Honeymoon Island is also a fine place to explore. We hit the Osprey Trail, stopping to admire showers of white blossoms on the snowberry (Chiococca alba) bushes. Also growing along the trail were parasitic dodder vines (Cuscuta spp.) and salt-tolerant species like necklace pod (Sophora tomentosa), southern red cedar (Juniperus virginiana), and sea oxeye daisy (Borrichia frutescens). Ospreys are mating and nesting this time of year, and we saw many of them going about their business. We admired the large nest of a great horned owl, but its occupants didn’t show themselves. Craig pointed out several small yellow wildflowers in the rock rose family (Cistaceae) which Ray Dabkowski and Tim Marshall identified as Helianthemum corymbosum, pinebarren frostweed. Wax myrtle bushes (Myrica cerifera) were laden with berries, ready to feed spring-migrating yellow-rumped warblers. We rounded the bend in the trail and headed back toward our starting point, but recent rains made many segments a mucky mess and a few detours were required to get us back to the trailhead. Although it was still breezy and a bit cool, we enjoyed our bag lunches in bright sunshine, and it was such a beautiful day that nearly half the group decided to continue on to nearby Hammock Park.

In contrast with the open, coastal environment at Honeymoon Island, Dunedin’s Hammock Park is green and lush. The sheltering hardwoods there include live oaks (Quercus virginiana) festooned with resurrection fern (Pleopeltis polypodioides), pignut hickory (Carya glabra), sugarberry (Celtis laevigata), and sweetbay (Magnolia virginiana). Exotic invasives have been a problem there, but are less evident than in years past due to the intervention of volunteers from Hammock Park’s “Friends” group. Major construction is now going on, as Dunedin’s Public Works Department works to redirect stormwater to once-swampy areas that are now too dry, as well as to control erosion and filter runoff before it traverses Cedar Creek on its way to Clearwater Harbor. When complete, the work will be a boon to moisture-loving trees like magnolias, bays, and gums that are suffering because of changes in topography caused by development around the park. A small dam has been built, and a large retention/detention pond is being completely replumbed, with littoral shelves being sculpted into its banks to enhance habitat value. The highlight of our trip to the hammock were the many blooming jack-in-the-pulpits (Arisaema triphyllum). This herbaceous perennial is rarely seen in Pinellas County. An aroid, it has striped, spathe-shaped flowers that are distinctive and vary in color from green to dark purplish-brown.

On another day with better weather we’ll undoubtedly make it to Caladesi Island. But our “diversions” to Honeymoon Island and Hammock Park were quite satisfying!
Plant Profile: Red Buckeye
by Craig Huegel

Coming from Wisconsin, it is generally hard for me to say anything positive about “Buckeyes”, but I can always make exception for one of our most beautiful spring-blooming understory trees – the red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*). The red buckeye is our only native member of this widespread genus and occurs naturally in north and central Florida; to nearly our latitude. Throughout its range, it is an understory tree and resident to deciduous hammocks where it gets ample winter and early spring sunlight and filtered light the rest of the year. It is a deciduous tree, somewhat slow growing, that may eventually reach 20-30 feet tall. It is sometimes multi-trunked, but I have usually seen it as a single-trunk tree.

Red buckeye, like its many close cousins, has very interesting 5- or 7-parted compound leaves. The leaflets are palmate; looking something like the five fingers of your hand. They are deep green and slightly toothed, and attached to the main stems on long stalks. During most of the year, it is a beautiful foliage plant and it adds a lot of character to a woodland understory planting.

What really sets it apart, however, is its show of spring flowers. As the leaf buds swell and uncoil in early March, a flower stalk is revealed inside each. Once the leaves have fully spread, this flower stalk extends 6-12 inches long and is composed of about two dozen flower buds. By late March, these have opened and the entire crown is ablaze with crimson red tubular flowers.

I saw my first flowering red buckeye at the Christmas, Florida native plant nursery of David Drylie – Green Images. He had a six foot tall specimen in a 15-gallon container at the back of his nursery and a cloud of cloudless sulphur butterflies were hovering around it. I’ve admired this native plant ever since. Of course, red buckeye is also a wonderful hummingbird plant. In winters like we’ve just experienced where our firebush are frozen to the ground, a red buckeye becomes the major hummingbird nectar source in the home landscape. Pollinated flowers ripen into nuts and these are of interest mostly to squirrels. If they bury one, a new plant emerges the next spring.

Red buckeye is quite easy to grow in Pinellas County. The two specimens I planted over 20 years ago at the County Extension office have thrived under natural conditions. Alexa and I have another one, much younger, at our home in Seminole. At the Extension landscape, new seedlings have sprouted up around the original plants; demonstrating their adaptability to our growing conditions. I planted the Extension specimens well before the canopy had developed. They got full sun, no irrigation, and fairly brutal conditions. Each summer those first few years, they dropped their leaves months before they should have
– but they leafed out again the following spring and eventually flowered. Red buckeyes bloom at a very early age and when quite small. Now that the canopy has formed, they are much happier. Do not plant this species in full sun or deep shade. It does best in a deciduous canopy and/or planted where it will get partial sun during the summer and fall. It is exceedingly drought tolerant, once established, and quite adaptable to soils, but it performs best given some organics and a bit of extra moisture.

Red buckeye should be used far more often in our landscapes than it is. Perhaps we have been largely afraid of it because it looks fragile or out of range, but it is neither. If you have an interest in adding an understory flowering tree, give it some consideration and you won’t likely be disappointed.

March Field Trip: Prologue
by Craig Huegel

With the success of our first-ever camping field trip to Ocala National Forest last October to encourage us, the Chapter took the even bolder move of scheduling a 3-night/4-day camping trip to Torreya State Park near Bristol, Florida this March. With very few exceptions, 22 members left Pinellas on Friday March 19 and returned on Monday March 22 for an unforgettable expedition to one of Florida's most beautiful areas. The weather was still a bit brisk in the evenings and we had some rain on Saturday night into early Sunday morning, but we made the most of it all, hiked through a number of especially wonderful areas, enjoyed each other's company, and had some campfire moments.

Friday was mostly spent just getting there, although we had a resurrection fern rescue at the Burger King in Perry... Saturday morning, we hiked portions of the main loop trail at Torreya State Park and visited the historic plantation on the Apalachicola River - Gregory House. Saturday afternoon was spent at the nearby Bluffs and Ravines Preserve, managed by the Nature Conservancy. On Sunday morning, we were joined by one of Florida's best naturalists - Dr. Gil Nelson, and he kindly led us around the loop trails at Florida Caverns State Park; a piece of private land near Chattahoochie that was a carpet of trilliums and other rare plants; and Angus Gholson Park in Chattahoochie that featured a field of rare trout lilies. On Monday, we got up early and walked the Weeping Falls trail near our campsite before packing up and heading home.

It was a very special weekend. The plants were about 2-3 weeks behind their normal blooming and leafing out schedule, but because of it we saw things that we would have missed otherwise. The articles below are written by two of our members; Jan Allyn and Ginny Nelson, and reflect some of their observations from different parts of the weekend.
March Field Trip, Day 1 (3/20/10): Apalachicola Bluffs & Ravines Preserve by Jan Allyn

The 3.75-mile “Garden of Eden” trail is a very enjoyable hike because it’s so diverse. When you arrive at this preserve, you’ll find a rack with a selection of sturdy walking sticks at the trailhead, thoughtfully provided by the Friends of the Preserve. Take one—you’ll need it. Although the trail begins in flat, sandy, open upland, it soon enters steephead forest and you find yourself surrounded by huge trees: southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), spruce pine (*Pinus glabra*), southern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), hickories (*Carya* spp.) and others. One southern magnolia we saw was easily 75 feet tall, probably more. Spruce pines are very prevalent, their straight furrowed trunks soaring skyward, unbroken by lower limbs, topped with a crown of green needles. The trail ambles up and down, taking you across delightful creeks with red anise (*Illicium floridanum*) and native pink azaleas (*Rhododendron canescens*) along their banks. Unfortunately, the late coming of spring meant that the azaleas were not yet blooming on our visit, nor were the dogwoods. Other flowers were lovely, though. Small violets, including the very rare halberdleaf yellow violet (*Viola hastata*) lined the trails. We also saw red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*), and eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*).

Continuing to the far end of the trail takes you to Alum Bluff, with a spectacular view of a bend in the Apalachicola River that is well worth navigating steep trails and climbing over tree roots. Andrew Jackson and his troops camped at the bluff on March 13, 1818, during the Second Seminole War on their way to establish Fort Gadsden. After a brief respite at the bluff, our group made its way back to the trailhead, with the last and slowest hikers rewarded with the discovery of a beautiful green luna moth, just emerged from its pupa. And we at last returned to the head of the trail, we replaced our borrowed hiking sticks in the rack, so they would be there for the next hikers, or for us when we return.

From top, luna moth and mayapple halberdleaf yellow violet -- one of the very rare species found only in the Apalachicola ravines, remnants of the oldest plant community in Florida.

Apalachicola River, from Alum Bluff
March Field Trip, Day 2 (3/21/10): Florida Caverns State Park  
by Ginny Nelson

I’ve probably lived in Florida just long enough to be nostalgic for a temperate-climate spring: cold nights and cool moist days so trees slowly leaf out in various shades of green, redbuds in bloom at the edge, and with a few spring-blooming perennials popping up. To my delight and amazement that is exactly the kind of weather and flora we had for the second day of our March camping trip when we ventured into Florida Caverns State Park. It reminds me of spring in the hills of Appalachia. Caverns State Park is in the middle of the unique Marianna Lowlands. The elusive Chipola River runs north to south through the center of the Park. We were excited and privileged to have Dr. Gil Nelson, author and botanist, lead our group through this Chipola River swamp environment.

We gathered at the edge of the woods, stepped down a small hill, and followed Dr. Nelson along the dirt path into the trees. We entered a floodplain forest, logged during historic times, but with several large bald cypress trees (*Taxodium distichum*) still standing, tall, and defiant. We stopped walking, searching for the survivors among the other tree species. Numerous here were tupelo or black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), loblolly bay (*Gordonia lasianthus*), and red maple (*Acer rubrum*). There was needle palm (*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*), mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), and growing closer to the ground, bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), whirling blue phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), and trillium (*Trillium maculatum* and *T. decipiens*). The beautiful little Walter’s violets (*Viola walteri*) were in groups along our path. This damp woods looks, smells, and feels familiar to me. It is sensory overload as I experience it and it recalls the forest of my youth.

As we moved along the path, it gradually steepened, and we had to maneuver around outcroppings of limestone. We had come to the transitional zone, the bluff community, between floodplain lowlands and the upland forest. In the bluff community we saw oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) and columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis var. australis*) growing in the thin soil covering the limestone boulders. We also found disjunct species: false rue anemone (*Isopurum biterнатum*) growing here, and in cedar-limestone glades the Tennessee leafcup (*Polymnia laevigata*). These species flourish here because the conditions are just right, but these populations are widely separated from the other places in the nation where they also occur. Fragmenting happens as river beds shift, sea levels rise or lower, and/or during mountain building. In the bluff community, we saw many species of mosses, liverworts, and spleenwort. Walking along the bluff path we looked down ten or fifteen feet to the floodplain swamp covered in water. Growing in the water were bald cypress, green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvania*), and pop ash (*F. caroliniana*) trees. The Chipola River isn’t visible from where we were standing, but the floodplain swamp suggests it is out there. Somewhere.

Eventually, we began to see some of the upland hardwood forest species like American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*), spruce pine (*Pinus glabra*), Eastern hop hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), and the rare herbaceous Allegheny spurge (*Euphorbia commutata*).

We left Florida Caverns after lunch and made our way to Angus Gholson County Park in Chattahoochee. Here we were met by a hillside covered in trout lilies (*Erythronium umbilicatum*) and another trillium (*T. underwoodii*). We walked the short loop trail and paused alongside an abandoned old city swimming pool that is slowly being reclaimed by the forest. We then climbed the steep trail and exited the woods onto a green lawn where we thanked Gil for a great walk. What started out as a rainy morning and some concern over the weather we might be facing had ended in a glorious day.
In Memoriam: Nancy L. Desmond
by Craig Huegel

Nancy Desmond passed away on February 21 and has moved on, leaving us the task of caring for the earth and each other. Most of us knew Nancy in some way or another. She was present at so many Native Plant Society functions over the past decade that it would have been virtually impossible not to have at least seen her. To those in the Nature Coast Chapter, she was the life force that kept the organization running. She took on nearly every role at one time or another; accepting any challenge in order to build the organization and get the message out about native plants. To us, in Pinellas and elsewhere, she was the face of Mike Kenton’s nursery business — Environmental Equities. She was the person who carted plants to our plant sales, answered our questions, and represented our interests at state meetings and local events.

To me, Nancy was a dear friend and I will miss our times together. Over the years, I visited Nancy often at the Hudson-based nursery she managed. I stopped by just to talk or to see what was new. I stopped with Alexa, and even my son Nathan once, during blueberry season to pick blueberries next door. It was a delicious excuse to head north and check up on her. Nancy was always eager to talk native plants and she was always interested in how I was doing. She was a truly genuine human being. No airs, no pretense. No matter how busy Nancy was, she would drop everything to talk. She wanted to share what she had learned, but she was even more interested in learning something new. Nancy was a sponge and she took in everything she could so that she could wring it back out to others.

Nancy was a perfect fit for Mike Kenton and Environmental Equities. Few others would have ever fully appreciated all of Mike’s esoteric plants. Nancy loved them all as much as Mike did and she shared Mike’s dream of propagating them and making them available to others. Nancy was always my “one best chance” of locating something odd. I would call her up and ask: “Nancy, any chance you might have ______?” and I would wait nearly breathless for her to answer. Nine times out of ten, she would have it tucked away somewhere at the nursery. Things no one around here should have had any reason to grow; Calamintha coccinea, Conradina glabra, Florida basswood — you name it. When Alexa and I got married, I wanted to add a tulip tree to our back yard in memory of our honeymoon to Torreya State Park. Nancy (and Mike) turned up a beautiful 7 gallon tree and gave it to us. She always knew where everything was and she always seemed to have at least one of everything.

I will miss whipping around the nursery with Nancy at the wheel of the golf cart. She would load me into it, no matter how short the walk, and weave her way around the pots and paths between them; pointing out everything she thought would be of interest, rattling off their Latin names as well as their common ones, and letting me know if this was their plant for cuttings or kept for seed. A ride around the nursery was always something I looked forward to — and something I never had to directly ask for. She just always knew I would want to do it.

Nancy Desmond was an educator and a pupil — one of the best I have ever known. She was as generous as any person I have known and always willing to give a piece of herself away if she thought it might make a difference. Her void will be noticed and her contributions will be lasting. Hers was a life well lived and we can only hope to follow her example in the time we each have remaining. Farewell, dear friend.

Photo by Elaine Fortier. "I have lots of pics of Nancy, but this is one that I know she would of loved…it’s of her and grandson, Sean in her backyard just two weeks before she passed…we were labeling her plants that she did not do because of her illness…it was a great day and she loved every minute of it" ..Elaine
Welcome New Members
Holly Bird, Todd Logan, Chris Rooney, Kathleen Durand

Chapter Directory

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Young torreya tree at Torreya State Park
Below group photo at Florida Caverns State Park
Contacts

Officers:
President: Alexa Wilcox-Huegel
Vice-President: Jim McGinity
Secretary: Jan Allyn
Treasurer: Jane Williams
Chapter Representative: Debbie Chayet
Past President: Bill Bilodeau

Board of Directors Members-at-Large:
Danie Cutler, Wilma Holley, Mary Jackson, Ginny Nelson, Mary Saunders

2010 Committee Chairs/ Coordinators:
Advocacy/Conservation: Ginny Nelson
ALP Representative: Bill Bilodeau
Displays: Marie Hughes
Education: Bill Bilodeau
Subcommittee-Scholarships: Cindy Peacock
Field Trips: Dr. Craig Huegel
Grant Writer: Debbie Chayet
Chapter Grants: Mary Sanders

Hospitality Coordinator: Mary Ann Beekman
Membership: Cathy Quindiagan
Newsletter Editor: Dr. Craig Huegel
Co-editor/Publisher/Artist: Cathy Vogelsong
Programs/Special Events: Alexa Wilcox-Huegel
Publicity: Danie Cutler
Sales/Merchandise: Jane Williams & Jan Allyn
Volunteer Coordinator: Mary Sanders
Speakers Bureau: Bill Bilodeau
Web Master/Pinellas News: Jan Allyn

Interim Committees:
Budget Committee: Jane Williams
Plants Sales: Alexa Wilcox-Huegel & Bruce Turley
Film Festival: Jim McGinity
Landscape Tour: Jim McGinity
December Conservation Celebration:
Wilma Holley & Cindy Peacock

See Directory of phone numbers and e-mail addresses on page 11

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Pinellas Chapter Info Line:
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FNPS Bulletin Board
http://fnps.org/phpBB

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