



Rhexia mariana ©Darel Hess



“And Now For Something Completely Different”

Take notice! On February 17, 2009, our monthly chapter meeting will be held at the Paynes Prairie State Park Visitors Center **instead of** the United Church of Gainesville. There will be light refreshments and hors d’oeuvres, a raffle for free plants, plant identification, fellowship, and a movie (popcorn included)!

“Gimme Green” is a home grown documentary directed and produced by two University of Florida students, Eric Flagg and Issac Brown. It is an amazing, funny, and quirky look at America’s obsession with lawns.

Paynes Prairie State Park has graciously invited us after hours to their Visitor’s Center located at the main park facilities off S.R. 441. Sarah Herve, Park Services Specialist, and George Edwards, President of Friends of Paynes Prairie, will be our hosts.

We will start at 6:15pm with food, a raffle, and plant ID. The movie will begin at 7:00 pm. We are fortunate to have director and producer Eric Flagg present to introduce and discuss this fine documentary.

Directions to Paynes Prairie State Park from Gainesville: Drive south on State Road 441 (aka 13th Street) across the Prairie, don’t be distracted by the setting sun. Approximately 7 miles from the 441/Williston Road intersection you will see signs for the Paynes Prairie State Park entrance on the left (east). If you get to Micanopy you’ve gone too far. Enter the park, if anyone is still at the main gate, let them know you are there for the Florida Native Plant Society event. Drive slowly and follow the signs to the Visitor’s Center. Join us for this special Paynes Prairie FNPS event!

Rhexia Article Submissions

Please! Submit unformatted word documents only.

Submit pictures as separate jpg, tiff, or pdf files.

Send all article submissions to:

rhexia@gmail.com

Deadline date for March newsletter submissions is February 27th.

Monthly Meeting & Field Trip Info

Meeting: “Gimme Green” Movie at Paynes Prairie Visitors Center, US 441 near Micanopy

Field Trip: Trek to Barr Hammock with Busy Kislig-Shires Byerly, Director of Conservation Trust of Florida

“Plant of the Month” by Paula Russo

Looking around my yard I was trying to decide what kind of plant I should write about this month. Remember, I am from urban south Florida where most plants in the landscape are not native and everything looks tropical. Any plant seen losing its leaves is assumed to be dying. So, I hope you will understand when I say that the winter scenery around these parts is a bit bleak to my eye. But, standing out bright green against all the grey I see my beautiful cedars—and so, my inspiration for this month’s column. Here is an excerpt from Gil Nelson’s most excellent book “*The Trees of Florida, A Reference and Field Guide*”, copyright 1994:



<http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu>

The Cedar Trees

The eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) is Florida’s most common cedar tree and is found in all but the state’s most southern counties. It is a sun living tree, often growing best on its most sun-exposed side. Female red cedars produce bluish, berry-like cones that are most apparent on the tree throughout the winter. The berries are a favorite food of birds, which partly explains why lines of cedar trees are common along old fence rows. Birds eat the berries, perch on the fence, and then sow the seeds with their droppings.

Although similar in appearance to the red cedar, the Atlantic white cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*) is of more limited distribution. It is most commonly found west of the New River, a swampy creek through the swamplands of south-central Liberty County, in the heart of north Florida’s Apalachicola National Forest. However, the species is also reported in swamps and along streams in Marion and Putnam counties. Three of the best places to see this tree in abundance are near the floodplain of the middle reaches of the Apalachicola River, along the banks of the Blackwater River in the western panhandle, and in the Morman Branch scenic area of the Ocala National Forest. In the later two sites, especially, the trees are tall and straight, and tower over the understory in beautiful stands.

One of the most interesting features of the white cedar in its Morman Branch location is its close association with climbing pieris (*Pieris phillyreifolius*). Pieris is a woody heath that sometimes appears as a weakly erect shrub that is often associated with cypress trees. In the Morman Branch area, however, it is more commonly observed ascending the inner bark of white cedar trees. The plant is not parasitic and apparently does no harm to its host. Its leafy branches emerge from under the white cedar’s bark at various places along the cedar’s trunk, often as much as 3 m or more above the ground. The red cedar and white cedar look similar, differing mainly in the shape of their twigs and the appearance of their fruits. The twigs of the former are squarish or angled when viewed in cross-section; those of the latter are more flattened. The white cedar also lacks the red cedars’ bluish, berry-like cones.

January 2009 Meeting Report:

FNPS Executive Director Visits Paynes Prairie Chapter

Submitted by Claudia Larsen

We thank Karina Veaudry for sharing information at our January meeting on the workings of the Florida Native Plant Society at the state level. As the societies first paid Executive Director, Karina has had the opportunity to visit 34 of the 37 chapters statewide and gather information on the state of conservation in Florida. Karina also represents FNPS in meetings with regional government planners and regulating agencies. She says the targets for our future environmental battles will be not only land conservation, but also surface water preservation and permitting.

23% of Florida’s land is now preserved, but in order to develop critical corridors for animals and plant habitat there is a need to increase this to 33%. We need to help this happen as soon as possible since Florida’s population is expected to double in the next 50 years.

An interesting piece of information Karina demonstrated was the CLIP mapping system (Critical Lands and Water Identification Program) by

the University of Florida Geocenter. Their unbiased researchers have prepared many maps that can be overlaid to help show areas with special environmental value such as under-protected natural areas, water recharge areas, ecological greenways, etc. These biodiversity hotspots will hopefully be given priority as permits for roads and development continue to fill Florida. Florida still contains one of the most ecologically diverse areas with dozens of ecosystems and large numbers of endemic plant, fish and animal species. She encouraged us to make our voices heard to our local and state government representatives and support all land conservation programs. Our advocacy can make a difference. The FNPS.org website now contains an Action Alert center to help keep track of statewide environmental concerns. Your help is needed to write letters/emails of support.

Karina is interested in hearing your ideas and concerns about the Florida Native Plant Society and welcomes suggestions on how the state organization can help the local chapters or further the mission of native plant preservation, conservation and education. You can reach her at email Executedirector@fnps.org.

**Preserving Critical Corridors:
Barr Hammock Preserve
Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc.
Site of this February's Field trip**

In 2002, the Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc. (CTF) nominated this magnificent tract for acquisition to the Alachua County Forever Land Conservation Program. Barr Hammock is truly a "crown jewel," and it is one of the highest ranked parcels of land that ACF has considered. From an ecological perspective, Barr Hammock is one of the most critical parcels that could be targeted for acquisition in Alachua County. This prairie and surrounding uplands are one of the most ecologically intact examples of prairie/lake ecosystems in north central Florida. It is also very important hydrologically, as it connects to Paynes Prairie State Preserve and also helps to create a wildlife corridor that connects the Ocala National Forest to Goethe State Forest, through southern Alachua and northern Marion counties. Landscape-level corridor connections are one of the most important methods to protect our remaining intact ecosystems and their wildlife populations. The property also has significant prehistoric archaeological sites and is named after J.J. Barr who was a citrus grower in the early 1900's.



The Alachua County Commission voted unanimously on July 11, 2006 to purchase the 2,300-acre Barr Hammock property utilizing \$10 million dollars in Alachua County Forever (ACF) funds. When the Commission voted, the crowd spontaneously cheered and clapped. It was a great victory for Alachua County. Once the management plan finalized, the property was opened to the public for passive recreational activities such as bird watching and hiking.

Procrastination Pays Off

Submitted by Putnam County FNPS member, Karen Ahlers

Since Thanksgiving, Jim and I have been meaning to mow our "wildflower" garden in the back yard. Everything had gone to seed and it looked brown and drab. Well, procrastinators that we are, the dead plants still stand, many, including the Spanish Needles, holding onto thousands of seeds.

This morning I stopped berating myself for being such a lax gardener. The yard is full of Gold Finch and I couldn't believe my good fortune to see them feasting on those annoying stick-tights, Spanish Needles! The brown thicket just a few feet off the back deck is full of small birds flying in and out, taking turns as if they had found a full thistle sock.

We also have lots of dead Pokes that Mockingbirds, Cat-birds, woodpeckers and others are enjoying the remaining dried berries.

So much for a tidy yard. I'll take birds in winter every time!

It's in the Numbers

Submitted by Karina Veaudry

Douglas Tallamy, Ph.D., who wrote the book published in 2007, *Bringing Nature Home*, has co-authored a paper published in *Conservation Biology* which describes a study which examined six suburban sites in Pennsylvania. They were similar in size; total plant cover; number of plant species; presence of bird boxes, feeders, baths/water sources, and surrounding characteristics. The only difference between paired sites was that one was landscaped entirely with native tree canopy and plants, while the other was a more typical suburban mix of native canopy and non-native shrubs and groundcovers.

The results were profound:

- The all-native plant sites had four times more caterpillars (an extremely important source of food for birds, and the main source of food for nestlings)
- Birds were 54% more abundant in native sites.
- There were 66% more bird species in native sites.
- There were 77% more pairs of breeding birds in native sites (and 117% more native bird species on native sites)

Here's the bottom line: By not planting native plants in our urban and suburban communities, we are reducing insect food availability for birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Non-native plants—whether they are invasive or not—are indirectly reducing bird abundance even in landscaped suburban areas.

Dr. Tallamy will be the keynote speaker at the 2009 FNPS Conference hosted by the Palm Beach and Martin county chapters. Mark your calendars now for May 21-24!

2009 Calendar of Events

Please check the Paynes Prairie chapter page at www.FNPS.org for most current information and directions to field trips. All 2008 meetings will be held at the United Church of Gainesville, 1624 NW 5th Ave, Gainesville, 7:00-8:30pm. The plant ID workshop prior to the meeting begins at 6:15.

February 17	Meeting: "Gimme Green" Movie at Paynes Prairie Visitors Center, US 441 near Micanopy
February 21	Field Trip: Trek to Barr Hammock with Busy Kislig-Shires Byerly, Director of Conservation Trust of Florida
March 17	Meeting: To Be Announced
March 14	Field Trip: Suwannee River State Park in White Springs
April 10-11	Spring Native Plant Sale, Morningside Nature Center, (www. Natureoperations.org)
May 19	Meeting: TBA
May 23	Field Trip: TBA

February 17, 2009 Chapter Meeting Information: Come join the fun at the Paynes Prairie Visitors Center as we gather to watch the amazing, locally produced film, "Gimme Green." To read more about this film and see all the awards it has won and been nominated for, go to: <http://www.gimmegreen.com/home.htm>. For details about and directions to this month's meeting, see page 1.

February 21, 2009 Field Trip Information: We are fortunate to have Busy Kislig-Shires Byerly, the Executive Director of the Conservation Trust of Florida as our February field trip leader. Busy will be trekking us through the wilds of Barr Hammock (see page 3) on February 21. All interested parties should meet at the Town Hall in Micanopy (just behind the basketball court at the intersection of Early Street and Cholokka Blvd.) around 8:15, so we can leave for the site by 8:30 am. We want people to carpool from there, since we have to drive through a neighborhood to access the site, and we need vehicles that can drive on sand. Please bring the usual – hats, good walking shoes, reference books, binoculars, and water. The trip is supposed to last around 2 hours, so eat accordingly. We would like a head count for this trip, so please RSVP with our Field Trip Coordinator, Mary Rhodes (dockone@windstream.net).

Welcome Ellie !

We welcome Ellie Sommer as our newest chapter board member. On her blog Ellie describes herself as a writer, editor, gardener, and wise



woman herbalist. From her blog biography she shares:

"Looking from my back porch in north central Florida, I revel in the views and sounds of a uniquely diverse landscape including sandhill, mixed hardwoods wetland, and a lovely creek that empties into an important area watershed. I share this land with all the critters who live here, with the ghosts of Native Americans who lived here previously, and with my husband and our 100-pound yellow Lab-German shepherd mix, Max, who believes he is a puppy (think Marley!). Our proximity to Paynes Prairie means we are privileged to have as part of our environment both resident and visitor sandhill cranes. I never tire of their distinctive call and always use their flybys as impetus to get away from the computer and stretch my legs while watching them in formation overhead as they fly to or from the prairie."

We look forward to Ellie's suggestions and ideas for upcoming chapter events.

FYI Page:

County Votes to Preserve Levy Prairie

The 3,317-acre Levy Prairie project is one step closer to protection. The Alachua County Commission voted to approve the purchase on December 9, 2008! The Conservation Trust nominated the property for acquisition to the Alachua County Forever land conservation program and both organizations co-submitted a Florida Communities Trust grant for matching funds. The grant was awarded to the County in November 2007. The proposed Levy Prairie project forms the entire northern border of the 2,303-acre Barr Hammock Preserve, which was nominated by the Conservation Trust and purchased by Alachua County in 2006.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

12th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count
February 13 – 16, 2009

COUNT FOR FUN! COUNT FOR THE FUTURE!

Dear Great Backyard Bird Count participant:
The twelfth annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is fast approaching—February 13 is less than a month away! Plan to join tens of thousands of other bird watchers across North America as we tally the birds over these four days. Count on your own or with family, friends, and neighbors to make this the biggest, best GBBC ever! If you know someone who might be interested in joining the GBBC for the first time, please pass along our website: www.birdcount.org

Free Lecture: Pulitzer Prize-winning biologist E.O. Wilson Stetson University, DeLand, Florida

Stetson University invites the public to attend a free lecture by one of the world's most respected scientists, the Pulitzer Prize-winning biologist Dr. E.O. Wilson, at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 9, in the Edmunds Center, 143 E. Pennsylvania Ave.

The featured speaker for the university's James A. Stewart Lecture, Wilson will discuss "Can Nature Be Saved? Science, Religion and Our Future."

Tickets are not required for the program. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. For further information about Wilson's lecture at Stetson, contact Lisa Guenther in the Department of Religious Studies, 386-822-8930 or ljguenth@stetson.edu.

PAYNES PRAIRIE CHAPTER OF THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



The Rhexia is published monthly September - November and January - May by the Paynes Prairie Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. See our website at: www.fnps.org.

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Paul Cohen/paulcohen2002@yahoo.com

January Plant ID Workshop

Submitted by Paul Cohen

<i>Fatoua villosa</i>	Hairy Crabweed	Moraceae	Non-native
<i>Oxalis debilis</i>	Pink Woodsorrel	Oxalidaceae	Non-native
<i>Drymaria cordata</i>	West Indian Chickweed	Caryophyllaceae	Native
<i>Parietaria floridana</i>	Florida Pellitory	Urticaceae	Native
<i>Asparagus setaceus</i>	Common Asparagus-Fern	Asparagaceae	Non-native
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Goosegrass		
	Spring Cleavers		
	Stickywilly	Rubiaceae	Native
<i>Stachys floridana</i>	Florida Hedgenettle		
	Florida Betony	Lamiaceae	Native
<i>Illicium anisetum</i>	Japanese Star Anise	Illiciaceae	Non-native

Thank-you all participants. The workshop is not a Plant ID service. Nomenclature is based on "Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants" (<http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu>)

Geography of *Illicium*

Submitted by Paul Cohen

The genus of Anise (*Illicium*) seems to be scattered throughout the Southeastern United States and Eastern Asia. There are very isolated native populations in Mexico. It stands to reason that *Illicium* was much more widespread before it became confined to these regions. There may be an interesting explanation for this distribution.

Tom Wood of Gingers Galore in Archer notes Floridians are blessed to live amongst relics of early angiosperm evolution. He suggests that notable living fossils are not only Anise (*Illicium*) but also include Sweetshrub (*Calycanthus*), Lizards tail (*Saururus*), and Starvine (*Schizandra*). These genera exist primarily in the Southeastern United States and South East Asia. By Wood's explanation, Asia and the Southeastern United States once comprised the same continent of Laurasia 80 to 90 million years ago. He feels the genus *Illicium* may have evolved during this time. The environments of the South Eastern United States and Eastern China have remained temperate for millions of years, Wood notes. According to Wood these genera have survived here and died off in other regions because of "glaciations" and "aridity".

According to Kent Perkins of the University of Florida Herbarium, "the *Illiciaceae* and the *Schizandraceae* families are excellent examples of the groups that occur in Eastern Asia and Eastern North America." Karina Veaudry, executive director of the Florida Native Plant Society feels a reason for natural preservation is to maintain populations of plants which live only in Florida (endemic species). She pointed out in her presentation at the January Payne's Prairie Chapter meeting that Florida has a high abundance of endemic species (228 according to (<http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu>)). Could preserving the environments that endemics live in benefit science and technology? It seems it may if similar endemics exist in Eastern Asia.

Aunt Betty's Brush Pile

Submitted by Brian Quinn

There are three classes of brush people. First, we have the urbanites and suburbanites who pile their fallen or cut limbs on the curb where they are then taken to Never Neverland. Next, we have the burners – these folks like to see most or all brush piled up and burned to keep the property clean. Finally we have the brush pilers, who are usually switched on to the wildlife value brush piles bring to your property. I encourage people who live in all possible areas to create and maintain a brush pile. These insect, bird, and mammal magnets can be created in any available yard space, from deep country to subdivision. One of my friends has an Aunt Betty who raises cattle and hay in Missouri, and her brush piles are works of meticulous art. According to Aunt Betty, there are two tenets of creating a clean, compact brush pile. First, cut the branches into smaller lengths, like 6' or less, then turn the branch upside down to where the upside of the leaf is facing towards the ground. Remember to feed the pile from all sides, and shazam, an instant wildlife magnet has been created. You can restock your brush pile at any time using all of the woody plant material from your yard. When you start seeing birds and other critters hanging around your new creation, you can thank Aunt Betty for finding a most efficient way of keeping the carbon produced in your yard on the premises and providing an outdoor television.

On the Web: "Top Five Invasive Plants Threatening Southern Forests"

Check out this article on [sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com) to learn about these five bad invasive plant species to be on the lookout for:
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/01/090112201210.htm>

Advertisements are now being accepted for the Rhexia newsletter!

If you would like to support the Paynes Prairie chapter please send a business card size ad to Erick Smith at urbanforester@gmail.com. The ads cost \$100 and run from October 2008 to September 2009.

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Florida Native Plant Society
Paynes Prairie Chapter
Post Office Box 110670
Gainesville, FL 32611

Next Meeting
Tuesday, February 17th
7:00 p.m.
(Plant ID Workshop at 6:15)
Paynes Prairie Visitors Center
Hwy 441 in Micanopy

Monthly Meetings
Regular monthly meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday
September - November and January - May at 7:00 p.m. at the:
The United Church of Gainesville (usually!)
11624 NW 5th Ave., Gainesville

Plant ID workshops precede each meeting at 6:15 p.m.

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