



Rhexia mariana ©Darel Hess



St. John's River Water Drawdown

Submitted by Brian Quinn

In the last few weeks, you have probably heard about the close vote for which the St. John's River Management Water District Board allowed a major amount of water to be withdrawn from the St. John's River.

This decision represents the evils of politics and political appointments, because the woman that cast the deciding vote was an executive for a Jacksonville utility company. She communicated a plethora of stale, tired, and unscientific reasons to explain why she approved the vampiric withdrawal from one of America's designated Heritage Rivers. Obviously, this decision was based on the needs of the vastly growing Orlando area, and their thirsty grass, laden with buried sprinklers that gush over 50% of their daily potable water use onto fertilizer-laced lawns, which drain into storm sewers, or worse, our aquifers and natural receiving waters.

Make no mistake, science was not the meter by which this decision was made, and only the misguided desire to reinstate an economy fueled by unchecked and poorly monitored development drove this vote to further harm the St. John's. I guess the obvious cure for future votes like this is for us to write more letters to Governor Crist in support of the inclusion of more scientists or individuals on these Water Management District Boards that truly respect and understand the scientific results presented to them.

Meanwhile, your tax dollars will be constructing a water pipeline system from the St. John's River to feed those hungry lawns north of Orlando. Won't it again be so nice to see sprinklers watering sidewalks and streets in the middle of the afternoon in yet another generic Florida subdivision, which is named for the plants that they removed to build it? Logic springs eternal.

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 September newsletter submissions is August 29th.

Monthly Meeting & Field Trip Info

Meeting: Landscaping with Native Plants, Round Table Discussion, pg. 4

Field Trip: No local field trip, but check out the state FNPS Conference May 21-24 in West Palm Beach, pg. 4

“Plant of the Month”

by Paula Russo

Sumac

At our April general meeting we were treated to a great talk by Ron Robinson on how to attract birds to our yards. Ron mentioned that sumac is a big lure. And, so, there was my inspiration for this month’s article. And, once again, Gil Nelson’s *The Trees of Florida* has excellent interesting information.

Sumac is in the *Anacardiaceae*, or cashew family. Its different species are known primarily for two things – feeding us (cashews, pistachios, mangos) or poisoning us (poison ivy, poison oak, poison sumac and mangos are, for some susceptible people, on the poison list as well as the feeding list).



http://www.floridata.com/ref/R/rhus_cop.cfm

Of the Florida native species Nelson goes on to say:

“Three species in two genera bear the common name sumac. The winged, or shining, sumac (*Rhus copallina*) is the most widespread of the three and is found throughout the state, with the exception of the Keys. It is a fast growing species that volunteers readily in a variety of circumstances, including suburban lawns and woodlands. It is most often recognized by the dense, conspicuous, terminal clusters of dark red fruit that matures in late summer and early fall. The plant is also an important wildlife food for a variety of animals. The fruits are consumed by a host of bird species, the leaves are savored by white-tailed deer, and the bark and branchlets are eaten by rabbits. It is most easily distinguished by its compound leaf with a winged rachis and its leaflets numbering more than nine.”



Rhus glabra
Photo by Walter Hodge
USF Herbarium Slide Collection

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

He continues to say that the smooth sumac (*R. Glabra*) does not have the winged rachis. It is also relished by wildlife and is naturally found only in the central panhandle.

Finally, poison sumac is the third native species which, once assigned to the genus *Rhus* has been reassigned to *Toxicodendron*. Nelson says that this species occurs widely across the eastern US but only sparingly in the northern panhandle and northeastern part of Florida. It is also an important wildlife food but the oils in all parts of the plant can cause a severe rash in humans.

A Successful Spring Native Plant Sale

Submitted by Brian Quinn

The spring native plant sale held April 10-11 at Morningside Nature Center was again a success. We had a very busy members-only sale on Friday night and a steady public sale on Saturday.

Considering the fact that it was Easter weekend and our economy is weak, I think the sale went over quite well. Many new plants found homes in our local yards and wild spaces. Our popularity has also grown in surrounding areas, because we had buyers from Ocala, Jacksonville, The Villages, Orlando, and Tampa drive a considerable distance to shop for natives.

I would like to thank all of our volunteers, especially Paynes Prairie members **Alice Tyler**, who used a stick to keep her cashiers in line, and **Howard & Lisa Jelks** who spend a great deal of time throughout the year taking care of all correspondence, planning, plant police and booth setup for FNPS. I would also like to thank all of the Friends of Nature Parks volunteers, youth volunteers, and City of Gainesville employees who participated to make this spring sale another success for FNPS and FONP.

April Program Report

Submitted by Claudia Larsen

Thanks for Ron Robinson for his informative talk about attracting birds to your yard. Ron shared his life-long experiences as a backyard birder and proof of his success were the pictures of many species of birds at his feeders including painted bunings, indigo buntings, ovenbirds, tanagers and red headed woodpeckers.

One of Ron's best suggestions is providing shrubby materials near bird feeders instead of sticking the feeder in the middle of a bare sunny yard. Everyone liked his natural use of stones with dripping water as realistic bird baths and homemade squirrel excluders and suet feeder logs.

He encourages use of plants with berries and plants that attract insects for birds to eat. Providing habitat, nesting and food for birds with our native plants makes a great difference supporting their distribution as residents and migrators to your area.



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.

May 19	Meeting: Landscaping with Native Plants, Round Table Discussion
May 21-24	Wake Up and Plant the Natives: Planting Today to Preserve Florida's Tomorrow, FNPS State Conference, hosted by the Palm Beach Chapter and Martin County Cocoplum Chapter, West Palm Beach, FL
June - August	Summer Break. Enjoy your summer everyone!
September 15th	Meeting: TBA

May 19, 2009 Chapter Meeting Information:

Instead of a conventional speaker, we have chosen to host a native plant landscaping roundtable discussion for our meeting on May 19. Please bring your plant germinating, growing, planting, and trimming questions to our expert FNPS panel. This is your chance to interact with a group of very experienced native planters who want to enhance your individual living spaces by suggesting the right plants and horticultural practices for your location.

Field Trip Information:

There is **WILL NOT** be a local field trip in May. We encourage any and all to try to make it down to the Stae FNPS Conference in West Palm Beach May 21-24. There are loads of great field trips, presentations, and speakers planned. It should be a great native plant extravaganza!

Wake up and Plant the Natives! **29th Annual Florida Native Plant Society Conference**

May 21-24 - West Palm Beach Marriott
Hosted by the Palm Beach and Martin county chapters
For Schedule, Field Trips and Registration go to:
www.fnps.org and click on "conference."

ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

MAY IS OUR LAST ISSUE OF RHEXIA AND LAST PROGRAM MEETING FOR SPRING 2009. PLEASE JOIN US SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER FOR FALL PROGRAMS AND THE FALL NATIVE PLANT SALE. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST SPEAKERS OR FIELD TRIPS PLEASE CONTACT PRESIDENT BRIAN QUINN, ANY OFFICER OR BOARD MEMBER LISTED IN THIS ISSUE. MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OUR MEETINGS:

SEPTEMBER 15, OCTOBER 20 AND NOVEMBER 17. SEE YOU IN THE FALL!!

FYI Page:

Register Now for May 13th Phenology Workshop

Submitted by Claudia Larsen

The Southeastern Regional Phenology Network (USA National Phenology Network—www.usanpn.org) is hosting a Workshop for Key Florida Collaborators, “Citizens-in-Science Monitoring for the National Phenology Network”

When: Wednesday May 13, 2009, 9:30 am–4:00 pm

Where: Austin Cary Memorial Forest Conference Center,
University of Florida, Gainesville

Cost: \$12.00 cash at the door covers the catered lunch and breaks.

Workshop Agenda:

- Overview of the envisioned Phenology Network in Florida
- Briefings on Florida’s existing phenophase databases accessible to citizen observers
- Critique of draft Web portal with on-line training/certification module for citizen observers
- Determination of key plant & animal taxa for widespread citizen monitoring in Florida
- Design of training & reference materials for citizens-in science, “master” volunteers, youth programs and K-12 school audiences
- Planning for Oct 2009 Launch & Overview via PolyCom in many County Extension offices

Registration: Contact George Kish at 813-975-8620, ext. 134 by May 4th with questions or to save your seat

For those—like me!—who read this and thought “whazzat?!”: Phenology is the study of periodic plant and animal life cycle events and how these are influenced by seasonal and interannual variations in climate. Also, there is an Invasive Plants Calendar available online from Karen Brown at the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council: I just stumbled across this and wish I’d known about it earlier in the year. Very cleverly done and a low-res file is available for quick viewing. Check it out: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/calendar.htm#print>

FLORIDA ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Annual Meeting

If you are interested in pollination biology you should check out the 2009 annual meeting of the Florida Entomological Society, July 26-29 at the Sanibel Harbour Resort and Spa in Ft Myers. One of the tracts will be about pollinator interaction with native plants and projects will be discussed that include research using Florida native plants. One-day registrations are available for \$80. Although the program was not available at Rhexia deadline you can check this website: www.flaentsoc.org.

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

Plant ID Workshop, April Meeting

Submitted by Paul Cohen

<i>Lepidium virginicum</i>	Virginia Pepperweed	Brassicaceae	Native
<i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i>	Woodsgrass, Basketgrass	Poaceae	Native
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i>	Common Yellow Woodsorrel		
	Creeping Woodsorrel	Oxalidaceae	Native
<i>Parietaria floridana</i>	Florida Pellitory	Utricaceae	Native
<i>Physalis walteri??</i>	Walter's Groundcherry	Solanaceae	Native
<i>Poinsettia cyathophora</i>	Painted Leaf		
	Fire-on-the-mountain	Euphorbiaceae	Native
<i>Rubus trivialis</i>	Southern Dewberry	Rosaceae	Native
<i>Smilax laurifolia??</i>	Laurel Greenbriar		
	Bamboo Vine	Smilacaceae	Native
<i>Syrinchium angustifolium</i>	Narrowleafed Blue Eyed Grass	Iridaceae	Native

Nomenclature derived from (<http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu>). Thank-you for all those who participated in the workshop.

Carolina Poppies, *Argemone albiflora*

Submitted by Brian Quinn

I recently heard a report about a possible opiate shortage, due the lack of opium poppies produced in Afghanistan and surrounding areas during the current wartime conditions, which could affect our supply of pain medications. Opportunistically, I heard this radio report while driving past some Carolina poppies (*Argemone albiflora*), a beautiful white wildflower that can be seen on many north Florida road-sides at this time of year. This species graces our motorway to work or play from March to May, depending on the timing of our last frost and nightly Spring temperatures.



Carolina Poppies have rough stems with armored seed pods, after a successful pollination, and prefer to grow in mostly sunny locations on limestone to neutral soils that are well-drained. Curiously, this plant is rarely found in cultivation, despite its creamy white flowers with yellow centers. Should you choose to grow this at your location, please don't try to use it for medicinal purposes, because it contains highly toxic alkaloids that could ruin your week (or life), and it has no narcotic effects. In any case, this tough native plant provides a good bit of color for our daily drives to destinations known.

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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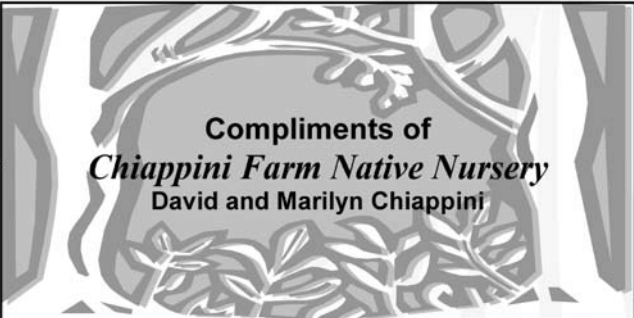
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Next Meeting
Tuesday, May 19th
7:00 p.m.
(Plant ID Workshop at 6:15)
United Church of Gainesville
1624 NW 5th Ave.
Gainesville, FL

FNPS Paynes Prairie Chapter Meetings
are held the 3rd Tuesday of the month
September - November and January - May
7:00 p.m., The United Church of Gainesville
1624 NW 5th Ave., Gainesville
Plant ID workshops precede each meeting
and start at 6:15 p.m.

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