



## Fall Native Plant Sale at Morningside Nature Center

Welcome back to all our rested members! It's time to roll up our sleeves and start planning our fall landscaping. We have the perfect opportunity for you to replace all those exotic plants that couldn't take the dry early summer. Our Fall Native Plant Sale, September 25 and 26, is just around the corner to rescue your drab and sad yard.

The Native Plant sale features hundreds of beautiful native wildflowers, ferns, shrubs, grasses, vines, and trees grown at area nurseries. Vendors are members of the FNPS and certify that plants are nursery propagated and grown rather than taken from wild populations.

Friday night's (September 25) sale is for members of the Florida Native Plant Society or Friends of Nature Parks and runs from 4:30 p.m. until 6:30 pm. Saturday's sale, which runs from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., is open to the public and includes food, children's activities, a local book seller, a guided wildflower walk (at 11:30 a.m.), and of course our FNPS booth, where our members offer advice and personalized shopping guidance.

The ingenuity of the Park-a-Plant allows for hands-free shopping. But remember: only cash and checks are accepted.

Morningside Nature Center is located at 3540 East University Avenue on the north side of SR 26 about 3 miles east of downtown Gainesville. Proceeds from the sale benefit environmental and cultural history programs offered by the Gainesville Nature Operations Division.

For information about this event, joining FNPS or FNP, or programs offered by the Nature Operations Division, call Morningside Nature Center at 334-3326 or visit <http://www.natureoperations.org/>. Hope to see you there!

### Monthly Meeting & Field Trip Info

**Meeting: September 15, "Restoring Florida's Native Plant Communities from the Ground Up", Kent Williges, see page 3.**

**Field Trip: *Sunday*, September 20, Marshall Swamp Scenic Trail / Marion County, see page 4.**

#### Rhexia Article Submissions

Send all article submissions to:  
[rhexia@gmail.com](mailto:rhexia@gmail.com)

with the subject line: October\_rhexia.

**Please!** Submit *unformatted* word documents only. Submit pictures as separate jpg, tiff, or pdf files. **Deadline date for October newsletter submissions is September 19th.**

# Message from the President

Brian Quinn

Happy autumn (well almost) Native Planters! I hope you have enjoyed your summer that finally brought ample rain to our area. The plants in my yard have really taken off this year, including my neighbor's kudzu patch. We have many activities planned for fall, including a plant sale with many great vendors, field trips, festivals, and speakers. I hope you have the chance to participate in multiple activities and welcome your involvement in any of our FNPS functions.

For those of you in neighborhood areas where your yards are patrolled by the "secret garden police," who look for any plant species on your property not found on some list drawn up by "those you must obey," you have some welcome relief. A law was passed by the Florida Legislature that allows you to plant Florida Friendly plants in portions of your yard. These plants must be drought tolerant and hearty enough to stand up to our constantly changing weather. Natives are the first choice to

fit that slot in your yard. Break the constraints put on you by controlling neighborhood associations and brighten your yard with native plants. Our fall plant sale should provide you with a vast number of choices to beautify your little section of Earth.

One practice from which I hope you will refrain is wholesale pesticide applications in your yards. Once you have planted flowers, trees, and butterfly host plants, insects will come into your yard to feed on nectar or lay their eggs, which is exciting to watch. However, if you install these plants and continue to spray pesticides around or on them, you are promoting the worst type of "attract and kill" philosophy. Butterfly larvae need to feed on plants not tainted by pesticides. Bees need to feed on nectar from flowers that have not been sprayed. Let nature be natural in your native plantings. It takes far less effort, time, and money to just let the bees be. 🐝

## Plant of the Month: Butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

By Paula Russo

A few months ago I planted two butterfly-weed plants each about three inches tall, one on either side of my walkway. Talk about "plant it and they will come!" I don't think two hours had passed and there was a caterpillar on it chomping away. Chomped that little plant right down to the ground stem and all. Interestingly, the other plant, not two feet away, was untouched. Lucky for me, because it continued to grow and about the middle of August it put out flowers of the most gorgeous color of orange.

Butterfly-weed, one of the milkweeds in the

genus *Asclepias*, is named for the Greek god of medicine, which refers to the medicinal properties of that



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

genus. In past times a tea brewed from the root was used to induce sweating and as an expectorant to treat respiratory ills such as whooping cough, pneumonia, and pleurisy. This gave rise to the name pleurisy root in parts of its native range, which is most of the United States. But, the plant is poisonous if eaten in quantity, so, as they say, don't try this at home.

Milkweeds are the food source for monarch and

continued on page 3

## September 15, 2009 Chapter Meeting and Speaker Information: Kent Williges, MS, To Speak About Habitat Restoration

Kent Williges, associate research scientist, with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Research Institute, will present the work of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) restoration of approximately 1.4 million acres of land in the state of Florida, which includes large tracts of degraded habitat and agricultural lands.


Kent has 19 years experience working as a botanist conducting plant ecology studies in native plant communities of Florida and southeast Georgia. A native of Texas, his career in Florida began in 1990 while employed as a Biological Scientist at the University of Florida's Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit. His main research at UF included investigating nutrient cycling, productivity, litter decomposition, and seed bank dynamics in the littoral zone of Lake Okeechobee in South Florida. He also studied the effects of the Suwannee River Sill on plant succession and zonation at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in southeast Georgia.

He joined the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in 1995 where he was involved in phosphate mine reclamation in Central Florida. While at FDEP, he conducted damage assessment for the State of Florida regarding the impacts to Alafia River plant communities resulting from an accidental acid spill in 1997. He joined the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission in 1998 where his current research has focused on the effects of cattle grazing on native plant communities, restoration of scrub habitat, and developing best management practices for pine flatwoods ecosystems. His research interest continues to focus on the response of plant communities to various disturbance mechanisms.

Since 2005, FWC has been restoring many of these lands to native ground cover, including areas of improved or semi-improved pasture, in order to enhance wildlife habitat and ecosystem functions. To date, most restoration efforts have been aimed at restoring the historical native hydric to mesic flatwoods natural communities that many of these improved pastures were prior to human alteration. The goal is to eliminate the exotic groundcover and


replace it with a functional native groundcover base typical of a flatwoods ecosystem.

There are currently about 20 projects in progress across the state ranging from Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area in the panhandle to south of Lake Okeechobee at Okaloacoochee Slough Wildlife Management Area.

The restoration process typically involves the use of herbicides to eliminate the exotic pasture grasses, prepping the site for a mineral soil seed bed, and then planting with native seed harvested from intact flatwoods communities. FWC uses specialized equipment called flail-vacs to harvest its own native seed from donor sites. The native seed is planted with another specialized implement called a grasslander, which is typically pulled behind a tractor. After planting, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Research Institute monitors the restoration sites for a period of five years in order to track changes in the plant community over time, and to evaluate the site with respect to the restoration objectives. 

### Plant of the Month, continued from page 2

queen butterfly caterpillars. And the caterpillars don't have to worry about how much they eat because they aren't bothered by milkweed's poison, which actually protects them from predators. Any animal that tries to eat a caterpillar that has dined on *Asclepias* gets a toxic yucky surprise which it remembers ever after.

There are more than 20 species of milkweed native to Florida—suitable for habitats from very dry to very wet and sun to shade. Butterfly-weed is must larval food source for monarch and queen butterflies and a nectar source for many others. Scarlet milkweed (*A. curassavica*) is a non-native species commonly used in Florida to attract butterflies. It has orange-yellow flowers that can make it difficult for some people to distinguish it from our native butterfly-weed (*A. tuberosa*). One sure way to tell the difference is to break a leaf or stem. If milky white sap runs out it is *curassavica*. If clear it is butterfly-weed. 

### 2009 Calendar of Events

Please check the Paynes Prairie chapter page at [www.FNPS.org](http://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.

- September 15** Kent Williges: "Restoring Florida's Native Plant Communities from the Ground Up"  
**September 20** Marshall Swamp Scenic Trail  
**October 20** Tim Kaiser: Retrofitting a House for Solar Energy  
**October 24** Interlachen Solar House and Native Landscape  
**November 3** Fall Chapter Planning Meeting  
**November 17** Linda Tyson, Professor, Santa Fe Community College  
**November 21** San Felasco State Park  
**December** No Meeting, Happy Holidays!

(Spring program meetings will be January-May, 2010)

**Sunday, September 20, 2009**

### Field Trip Information:

### Marshall Swamp Scenic Trail Marion County Sunday, September 20

We will explore the Marshall Swamp in the Cross-Florida Greenway east of Ocala in Marion County. The six-mile loop trail meanders through a floodplain forest of oaks, dense palms, and hidden ponds. We may see otters and ground orchids.

Rating: Moderate. Up to six miles of walking on a shaded loop trail. Those who want to walk a shorter distance can easily do so.

Bring: Lunch, water, rain gear, sun hat, sturdy closed walking shoes, insect repellent. Meet Time: Meet at 10 a.m. at the trailhead. To carpool, meet at 8:45 a.m. at the Publix on Williston Road at SW 34 Street.

Directions: The trailhead is a one-hour drive from Gainesville. Find your way to Marion County to the intersection of State Road 40 and County Road 35 (Baseline Road) at Silver Springs. Take CR 35 south about 2 miles to Highway 314 (NE 7 Street). Take 314 east 2.3 miles to the trailhead on the south side of the road. The trailhead is at a park with restrooms, picnic shelter, drinking water, and BBQ grills.

Contact: Call Carol Lippincott at home at 377-8693 for more information.



### Volunteers Needed!!

Fall Plant Sale volunteers are needed for both Friday night's check-in table and at the FNPS booth on Saturday. Please contact Lisa Jelks at [jelkslg@ufl.edu](mailto:jelkslg@ufl.edu) or 373-3028 if you can help out. Also, Alice Tyler ([pinetyl@atlantic.net](mailto:pinetyl@atlantic.net)) can always use a few more cashiers.

### Invitation to Lubee Bat Festival

To the Members of the Florida Native Plant Society:

On behalf of the Lubee Bat Conservancy I would like to invite you to the Lubee Bat Fest. This year's Bat Festival promises to be an even more popular, fun-filled event, as we aim to bring in more local businesses and conservation groups. Attendance is expected to increase by around 43% to over 2,000 visitors! We are adding exciting games and have collectible comic books for children featuring bat super heroes. There will also be fun crafts, engaging activities, live music, a bat costume contest, and bat themed merchandise. Food and drinks will be available to enjoy throughout the day. Festivities will be held on Saturday, the 10th of October from 10:30am until 3:30pm.

Sincerely,  
Susan Mulder  
[BatFest@Lubee.org](mailto:BatFest@Lubee.org)  
Bat Fest Coordinator: Lubee Bat Conservancy

## Upcoming Events of Interest

### Jean Dorney Memorial Wildflower Walks

Enjoy the spectacular fall wildflower bloom at Morningside Nature Center with a guided walk every Saturday in October from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Meet at the Education Office at Morningside Nature Center. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring field guides that you may like to use along the way. This program is free and sponsored by Friends of Nature Parks.



### ***WHAT IS THAT BIRD? BIRD IDENTIFICATION MADE EASIER!***

*TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 7:00 p.m.*

*Trinity Episcopal Parish Hall*

*SR 26, Melrose*

***Jim Swarr, Speaker***

*With more than 700 North American birds on his life list, Jim Swarr has traveled extensively to find and identify birds. Florida is a major migratory flyway and over 400 species have been identified in our state. Jim will teach us to use a systematic approach to begin sorting through the various species that migrate through or reside year-round in our area.*

*A bird walk is scheduled for the following Saturday, September 26. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Homemaker's Club in historic Melrose. Marcy Jones, leader.*

***Everyone welcome!***

**Would you like to see the Rhexia in color?** There are two ways: you can receive the Rhexia digitally, or you can view the current issue at: <http://www.fnps.org/pages/chapters/chapterpg.php>. To receive the digital version of the Rhexia, please contact Goldie Schwartz who manages the member's list for our

FNPS

chapter, at: [afn49@mindspring.com](mailto:afn49@mindspring.com).

## Paynes Prairie Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

See our Web page at: [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org)



The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

*The Rhexia* is published monthly  
September - November and January - May.

### 2009 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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# Ruminations on Genetics

Submitted by Joe Durando

First off, let me establish that I'm not a "hard-core natives only" gardener. I have my share of non-invasive, low maintenance non-natives. The yard just wouldn't smell the same without a couple of gardenias. I even believe some non-natives can be very good wildlife plants. There, I said it.

But at the risk of pissing off a few people, I will also say that with few exceptions, I have no use for cultivars of natives. "Impostors," I say, pretending to be native. I can hear the groans now... "What's wrong with cultivars like Dwarf Yaupons or Dwarf Magnolias in urban/suburban landscapes when there's no room for full size?" Or, "They're still low maintenance," or "At least they're not invasive." Or are they? I can't argue with the low maintenance statement. But, as far as design criteria, I've always felt there would be a good substitute if we're willing to install some of the underused species. But that last comment? Are they invasive? Think again.

Students of island population genetics are familiar with the term "grandfathering effect." Basically, this means the genetics of the individuals of a founding population will be concentrated through generations and will be disproportionately represented in the new population if it remains isolated. For example, plant A has mostly red flowers and rarely white ones. By chance, a couple of white flowered individuals get to a remote island and thrive. This new population over time may end up with mostly white flowers. Obviously, many things come into play here, the nature of the genetics, selection pressures, etc. but you get the idea. Also remember that traits in question may be hidden, for example, pest and disease tolerance and phenological characteristics.

We have also learned from our beleaguered native lantanas that this process can happen in reverse. In this case, closely related species are genetically overwhelming the native. They're not so much physically invasive, as genetically invasive via the pollen.


Pondering these weighty thoughts over my favorite beverage, I have to wonder, can this be happening



subtly on a grand scale. Lets take a hypothetical situation in South Florida (since we love to hate what's been done in that region.)

The South Florida coastal scrub and the coastal subtropical hammock are all but extinct, reduced to a few isolated parks and preserves. Individuals in both these plant communities are vastly outnumbered by hundreds of square miles of urban/suburban sprawl and their associated landscape plants. In the landscape/nursery industry,

being what it is, if someone comes up with a white flowered firebush, soon everyone will have a white flowered firebush. From Fort Pierce to Key West. So, if you're a land steward in one of those isolated preserves or parks trying to manage your local population of firebush, you're in trouble. And if that trait for white flowers happens to be linked to detrimental survival traits, you're sunk. In this case, I think a gardenia would be better.

Here in Alachua, we are suffering from a plague of "Little Gem" and other dwarf magnolias. And its getting worse. At what point will they going to genetically overwhelm the locals? It will be years before we know, and by then it will be too late. Forests full of dwarf magnolias. How sad. Definitely, a gardenia would be better. 

## Wanted: Photo Gallery!

We would like to start a new column highlighting plants in Alachua and surrounding counties. This is your chance to show off a great plant combination in your garden, a special flower on a shrub or tree or maybe a scene you enjoyed at a local park or nature area. We will accept up to 3 digital pictures per person each month. Please email those to our newsletter publisher Mary Santello.

Include your name and identify the plant, and where the picture was taken. (Pictures will be published and edited at the Rhexia editor's discretion to fit newsletter and the pictures will not be used for any other purpose without the creators permission.)

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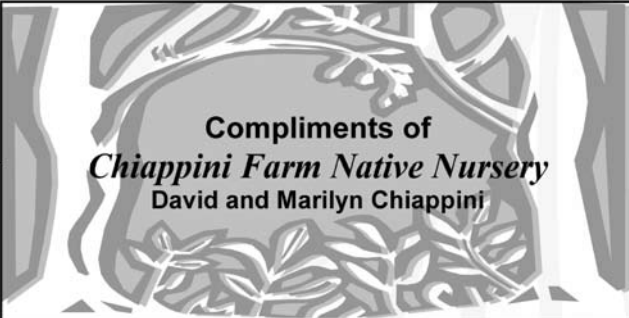
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Paynes Prairie Chapter  
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**Next Meeting**  
**Tuesday, September 15**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
*(Plant ID Workshop at 6:15)*  
**United Church of Gainesville**  
**1624 NW 5th Ave.**  
**Gainesville, FL**

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.

**Florida Native Plant Society Membership Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Please mail completed form to: Florida Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 278, Melbourne, FL 32802-0278**

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendations by the state.