



The Rhexia

Paynes Prairie Chapter
Florida Native Plant Society
January 2012

Florida's Springs - An Endangered Ecosystem

Robert L. Knight, Ph.D.

Monthly Chapter Meeting and Field Trip Information

Chapter Meeting,
January 17, 2012

Robert L. Knight Ph.D.
Director, Howard T. Odum
Florida Springs Institute
and
President, Wetland
Solutions
Florida's Springs -
An Endangered Ecosystem

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Field Trip
January 28, 2012
13th Annual Great
Air Potato Roundup
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Dr. Knight is an environmental scientist/systems ecologist with over 37 years of experience in Florida. His doctoral work included an ecological assessment of Silver Springs and Silver River under the direction of Dr. Howard T. Odum. He recently completed assessments of the quantitative basis for establishing a minimum flow regime for protection of water and human-use resource values (WRV's) in Volusia County Blue Spring; a 50-year retrospective study of the ecological health of Silver Springs; the basis for establishing pollutant load reduction goals and WRV's for the Wekiva River and Rock Springs Run; and a comparison of the ecology of twelve of Florida's artesian springs. Dr. Knight is president of **Wetland Solutions, Inc.**, an environmental consulting firm that specializes in wetland and aquatic ecology and is director of the **Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute**, a non-profit organization dedicated to the restoration and wise management of Florida Springs.

Florida's artesian (deep groundwater) springs are an important natural resource, providing the basis for extensive plant community and wildlife support, as well as human recreational opportunities. These springs are under increasing threats

from human activities, including flow reductions, nutrient increases, aquatic weed management activities, recreational impacts and a variety of water resource development projects. A growing awareness of these problems is leading to a rapid increase in demand for knowledge about the basic chemistry, biology, and ecology of springs to be used for improved resource management.

The presentation will provide an overview of the current understanding of how springs are a product of their environmental surroundings, how they respond to management decisions and the types of measures that will need to be accomplished to restore and protect their ecological diversity.

The Florida Springs Institute has identified the urgent need for a Restoration Plan for the Santa Fe River Basin Springs so that the negative flow and nitrate trends increasingly apparent at these springs can be reversed.

The Santa Fe River Basin includes springsheds that are relatively small less intensively developed and with fewer stakeholders. Thus, identifying and implementing changes should be more tractable than in larger more complex springsheds.

President's Message from Claudia Larsen

New officers for 2012 for the Paynes Prairie Chapter were installed at the November business meeting and you may recognize some familiar faces. I was motivated to accept the role of president after realizing the position might be vacant for the second year in a row. As 2011 Vice-president, Joni Ellis graciously filled responsibilities that are assigned to the presidency... coordinating field trips and invitations to speakers, presiding at meetings, writing newsletter articles and being an FNPS liaison to the public. Thank you, Joni, for going beyond the call of duty!

As many of you know, I have a bit of experience serving the chapter as a previous president and participating in FNPS activities for 25 years. This has given me a unique insight on chapter dynamics and our valuable membership. As volunteers we usually learn as we go; and although continuity is important to a non-profit organization, so too is change and new perspective.

Through the years I have seen FNPS members become a lot more interested and knowledgeable about native plants, and I hope Paynes Prairie activities have assisted in this. My vision for the next year includes more programs and demonstrations on native plant identification and landscaping, and a continued concern for local and state natural resources protection.

Our chapter members create a nice diversity of new and seasoned gardeners, environmental and political activists and professional consultants, botanists and land managers. I see that everyone enjoys sharing their experiences of enjoyment of the natural world. We are fortunate that Alachua County has no shortage of special places and wonders to explore together.

Thank you to everyone who contributes at meetings and planning sessions. I look forward to working with our Board Members and officers:

Lisa Jelks, our new Vice-president, also brings a wealth of experience and knowledge as a long-time member and coordinator of our popular plant sales. She will be helping me arrange great programs and also motivate our Board of Directors to engage the chapter in our FNPS mission to educate the public on the importance of native plants and local natural areas.

Goldie Schwartz is our new Treasurer. Goldie has been our Membership Chair for several years, keeping our list up to date and maintaining the newsletter mail and email list. She not only accepted this new job, but also is our new Rhexia editor. We are lucky to have such a great person generously donate her time and talent to our group.

Ellen Thoms, another long-time chapter member, has agreed to serve again as our Secretary. Besides keeping minutes, she is reorganizing past documents to create a compact historical file of chapter activities. Having accessible records will no doubt help in transition processes as new members (hopefully) take office in the future. Ellen is also a great source of suggestions and inspiration to help the chapter activities remain vital and interesting to all our various members.

Sandi Saurers will continue as our FNPS Chapter Representative. She attends quarterly meetings with other reps from across the state, serving as our information conduit. We should all remember we are a part of a larger state organization that works on our behalf as a voice for preservation of Florida's natural areas. Check out www.FNPS.org to see what's going on, get updates on the annual conference and visit other chapter pages.

In closing I would like to ask *your* help in 2012 to make Paynes Prairie Chapter activities exciting and informational.

- *Can you contribute pictures or an article to the Rhexia newsletter (Rhexia@gmail.com)?*
- *Can you give a program or workshop for our chapter?*
- *Can you bring a friend to our monthly program?*
- *Can you volunteer at our spring or fall plant sale?*
- *Can you suggest a topic for a program or a great place for a field trip?*

Comments are welcomed by all officers and our contact information is listed in the Rhexia and on chapter page at www.FNPS.org. I hope you're looking forward to this year as much as I am!



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

Alachua Audubon is pleased to present a talk by Fred Bassett, noted hummingbird researcher on Sunday, January 22 at 2:00 p.m. Presentation will be held at the newly opened Senior Center at 5701 NW 34th Street, Gainesville. Tickets are free but must be picked up at Wild Birds Unlimited at 4215 NW 16th Blvd. before the event. Visit Fred's web site at <http://www.hummingbirdresearch.net/>. Questions? 372-7545

Alachua Audubon Society Wildlife-Friendly Yards Tour Saturday, January 28, 2012 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Interested in making your yard more attractive to birds and other wildlife? The Alachua Audubon Society invites you to take a self-guided tour of six local yards that are wildlife havens.

Tickets are \$10 per person and will be available for purchase beginning January 2 at Wild Birds Unlimited 4215 NW 16 Blvd. Gainesville, FL 32605

Ticket holders will receive addresses and maps to each location at the time of ticket purchase.

Florida Crane and Nature Festival January 14, 2012 Presented by Florida Trail Association Centered at the Prairie Creek Lodge and Paynes Prairie State Park

Price \$60 Contact Lauraine Lynch 352-378-8823 ext. 7005

One day event will celebrate the wintering Northern Harriers, Wood Stork and more than 100 species of birds that call Alachua County a second home.

MEMBERS SHARE



Summer burns at Longleaf Ecology and Forestry Society (LEAFS) property on CR 1471 south of Waldo produced a profusion of deer tongue blooms this fall. Pictured here are *Carphephorus panicultus*, still showy in November. Blooming a little earlier were *C. odoratissimus* and *C. corymbosus*. Visitors are welcome at LEAFS at any time. John Winn

Be kind to yourself and your planet too
Never use fossil fuel when muscles will do.

Peggi Young

Welcome to the members who joined or renewed:

Jackie Sroka	Erick Smith
Barton Wilder	James Yale
Lynn & Paul Lefebvre	Don & Patty Yeomans
Marston Science Library	Terry Zinn
Rob Brinkman	
Jaret Daniels	
Katherine & Art Edison	
Mark Elliott	
William Heacock	
Bruce Mcelroy and Danny Martin	
Peter & Laura NeSmith	
Jane Nogaki	
Gary E. Schultz	
Alan & Ellen Shapirto	

Calendar of Events

Please check the Paynes Prairie chapter page at www.FNPS.org for most current information and directions to field trips. All 2012 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

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|-------------|--|
| January 17 | Meeting: Robert Knight Ph.D.,
Florida Springs-An Endangered
Ecosystem |
| January 28 | Field Trip: Great Air Potato
Roundup |
| February 21 | Lucy Tobias,
Florida Gardens Gone Wild |
| February 25 | Field Trip: Prairie Creek Preserve |

January Field Trip Saturday, January 28, 2012

13th Annual Great Air Potato Roundup.
**Just one Saturday morning can help make a difference for
Gainesville's natural areas! To sign up as a Site Leader or for
more information, contact Nature Operations Division at
393-8437**

Report on Watermelon Pond Field Trip Saturday November 19, 2011

Goldie Schwartz

Our group numbering ten individuals came out to enjoy perfectly cool hiking weather. We visited the 446 acre Gladman tract that lies completely within Watermelon Pond and is adjacent to portions of Goethe State Forest.

Watermelon Pond is hardly an appropriate nomenclature for this area; it has been mostly dry since about 1998. There were some distant puddles to view. Nevertheless, this area has been an important acquisition for Alachua County Forever because it is located on the Brooksville Ridge in an unconfined aquifer zone of Alachua County.

The area also includes a very rich diversity of plant species going from Deep Marsh to Mesic Hammock. Robert Freese, our very well prepared guide, came with a list of Watermelon Pond Preserve Plant Species which is available from the Watermelon Pond management plan. The total species on the list numbered 131.

The most striking visual memory of this field trip was the area we stopped at with several Red Bays. Out of three, one still appeared healthy while the other two were in decline. Most likely they were being attacked by the laurel wilt fungus that is decimating these trees.

We also came upon some Sparkleberry, *Vaccinium arboretum*, laden with fruit. A few of us tasted and agreed somewhat sweet but very dry.

We were fortunate to have some great Plant ID people with us, otherwise we might have just walked by and missed the Pink Sundew, *Drosera capillaries*, a wetland plant sitting in dry sand.

Buford Pruitt, a long-time member and wildlife biologist, described his experience of the trip on his blog, which he gave me permission to share <http://onrappel.blogspot.com>. Buford did a great job. See Photo page 5

Paynes Prairie Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

See our Web page at: 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.

2012 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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See Watermelon Pond Field Trip Report Page 4

Need help with your New Year's Resolution to do good for our planet? How about an easy and painless way to support Florida native plants and their environment? For as little as \$5.00 per month, you can set up an automatic monthly donation plan with FNPS. The Florida Native Plant Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) scientific organization and your donation is tax deductible. Here's a win-win for all of us! Just go to the FNPS website at www.fnps.org and click on the "Donate" button on the left under the logo.

13th Annual Great Air Potato Roundup Saturday, January 28th, 2012

Our chapter is pleased to announce we are a major sponsor for the 13th Annual Great Air-Potato Roundup! We are considering this important event to be our January Field Trip outing. One Saturday a year, more than a thousand volunteers gather to remove air potato and other invasive exotic plants from natural areas throughout Gainesville. This theme also reflects our FNPS mission to protect and preserve Florida natural ecosystems and is a great way to introduce Gainesville residents to native plants!

The volunteer event is an opportunity to give back to the community by helping to remove invasive exotic plants. Register now and mark your calendar for the roundup on Saturday, January 28, 2012, at 9:00 am. You can be assigned to a location individually, as a family or even bring a larger group from your social arena. A celebration at Morningside Nature Center will follow the roundup until 1:00 pm, with food, entertainment, guest speakers, and a drawing for prizes!

For more information call 353-334-3326.

Plant ID Workshop for 11-19-11 Presented by Paul Cohen

Species	Common Name	Family	Status
<i>Nyssa biflora</i>	Swamp Tupelo	Cornaceae	Native
<i>Symphotrichium elliotii</i>	Elliot's Aster	Asteraceae	Native
<i>Carya glabra</i>	Pignut Hickory	Juglandaceae	Native
<i>Tithonia diversifolia</i>	Shrub sunflower	Asteraceae	Non-native
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Papaya	Caricaceae	Non-native

I wish to extend a special thanks to all participants. The workshop is educational and is not intended as a plant ID service. Nomenclature adapted from "Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants" (<http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/>).

Save that Seed! By Claudia Larsen

There are different techniques used to create new plants, and learning propagation techniques for a wide diversity of native plants can be a lifelong hobby. One of the easiest methods is collecting seed from your own plants.

A nice thing about collecting local seed is that they are locally adapted to our soil and climate, so they “belong” in our geographic area and hopefully will be successful in their establishment. You can collect from your own garden year-round and other properties with owner’s permission; but it is against the law to collect from city, county, state or federal parks. Information in this article is mostly for wildflower seed, but you can adapt the methods for starting seed of shrubs or trees.

When collecting seed you usually only need a dozen flower heads to produce many dozens of new plants. This leaves the rest to reproduce naturally or provide food for small birds.

After flowering, most seeds ripen in 3 weeks to many months. They are ready to harvest when they become brown and shiny, and fall out of their flowerhead or capsule.

Seeds may ripen gradually over time on the same flower stalk, but placing them in a paper bag will allow for additional after-ripening of greenish seed and also dry out the seed for longer storage. Examples of this are Tropical sage and Partridge pea. I think the most fun in this process is looking at the different seed structures produced by plants and trying to figure out why they have adapted into follicles, pods, achenes, or nutlets to ensure their success in nature. Be prepared to pull apart the seed heads and find the true seed. Some plants like violets and false petunia have capsules that explode at maturity so look inside the capsule to determine if the seeds are still inside. After drying several days in paper bags, you can store your seeds in air tight containers or Ziploc bags in the refrigerator. Germination percentages will diminish over time, so plan to plant within the year for best results.

Cleaning seed will also increase the percent germination at planting. You can clean the seed from the covering or chaff by picking out the actual seeds, but it is also OK to just crush them together and plant the whole thing, since the chaff will just decompose.

Seeds with hard coats like coral bean, need a process called scarification to get the seeds ready for germination. Some growers use sandpaper to rough the coats; but a 12-24 hour bath in hot water will also do the trick.

Most seeds also need some fluctuation in temperature and moisture to germinate. The scientific name for this process is stratification. These plants take longer to germinate – up to 3-4 months. The easiest way to achieve this is by starting seed in fall and allowing it to receive normal outdoor weather variation.

Berries generally turn color from green to red or purple, and get a little soft to the touch before dropping off the plants to reseed. The pulp surrounding the small seed inside the berry can inhibit germination so plan to remove the pulp before planting by gently rubbing it off. You can wear disposable gloves for this process and swirl the macerated berries in a bowl of water to release the seed. Plant these seeds immediately or store in a container of wet sand.

Some wild plants are nearly impossible for homeowners to begin. Orchid seeds require mycorrhizal fungi for germination, trillium takes 5-7 years to germinate and others like lupines have very complex germination requirements of alternating wet and cold stratification. Don’t let this discourage you...there are plenty that are easy to grow!

You can plant your seeds in small pots or flats containing potting media or sand. Place containers in a shady spot and water if the media on top dries out. Just check them weekly and when plants emerge, acclimate them to a sunnier location. Plants with well-established roots can be moved to the garden.

Of course seeds can be sown directly back into your garden like Mother Nature does. Fall is usually the best time to sow wildflower seeds. You can also start your seeds in pots in a potting mix to transplant to specific areas of your garden. Just place the seeds on top of the soil and lightly press them into the dirt. Don’t cover with any additional dirt since most wild seeds need light to germinate. Keep the containers in the shade and don’t let them dry out (or overwater).

Check them weekly and when plants emerge, acclimate them to a sunnier location. When leaves form and plants have sufficient roots, they are ready to go into the garden.

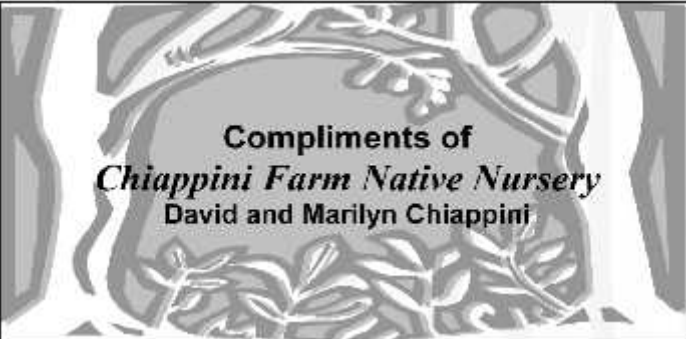
If you need additional advice, two good books to refer to are Jan Midgely’s book “Southeastern Wildflowers” and Richard Durr’s book “The Reference Manual of Woody Plant Propagation: From Seed to Tissue Culture.” Give propagation a try – you will be rewarded with lovely plants you can put back into your garden, or even bring to the FNPS meeting plant raffle each month!



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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 in .jpg, .tiff, or Powerpoint formats only to Goldie Schwartz at Rhexia@gmail.com. The ads cost \$100 and run from September 2011 through May 2012.

Have You Blogged Lately?
 Remember to visit the new Florida Native Plant Society blog at <http://fnpsblog.blogspot.com/>

Urgent: Send Us Your Email!

We need your support in completing the switch from sending a printed newsletter to sending it by e-mail. Your direct benefits include: allowing more resources for activities and education, and the ability to view the newsletter photos in full color instead of black and white. And for the chapter, we save dollars we can use to promote the use of native plants. Please show your support by signing up to receive the newsletter by e-mail. Just send an e-mail to Goldie Schwartz at afn49@mindspring.com with "Put me on the e-mail list" in the subject line. That's all it takes! Thanks!

Florida Native Plant Society
Paynes Prairie Chapter
Post Office Box 12908
Gainesville, FL 32604

Next Meeting

Tuesday, January 17

7:00 p.m.

(Plant ID Workshop at 6:15)

United Church of Gainesville

1624 NW 5th Ave.

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.

Rhexia Article Submissions Please!
Submit unformatted word documents
only. Submit pictures as separate jpg, or tiff
files. Send all article submissions to:
rhexia@gmail.com
**Submission deadline
date for the February
2012 newsletter is
January 25 2012**

Florida Native Plant Society Membership Form

Name: _____

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Total: ____ Check Enclosed: ____ Please charge my credit card ____

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Check Pertinent Category:

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| ◇ Library | \$15 |
| ◇ Student (full-time) | \$15 |

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.