

The Rhexia



Paynes Prairie Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

www.paynesprairie.fnpschapters.org

March 2019

March General Meeting

Thirty Years of Memories

Paynes Prairie Chapter Members

Tuesday, March 19, 2019, 7:00 p.m.

Plant ID Workshop at 6:30 p.m.

Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship Sanctuary
4225 NW 34th Street, Gainesville, FL 32605

Join us for an informal meeting of fun and stories as we drift down memory lane to the beginnings of the Paynes Prairie Chapter. In honor of our celebrating **thirty years of plant sales** (quite a milestone!) some of the chapter's "long-timers" will gather to share stories and commentary on our progress and foibles. Long-timers such as Claudia Larsen, Joe Durando, Howard Jelks, Gary Schultz, and David Pais will dust off their brain cobwebs and regale us with their memories of just how it all got started. If you've ever wondered about our chapter's beginnings, this is the meeting not to miss! And we encourage any and all long-timers out there to join in the fun, especially our plant sale vendors. **We would particularly enjoy seeing old photos** (they don't have to be plant-related) of the old gang and/or the early plant sales. Bring 'em if you got 'em!

NOTE: MEETING IS IN THE SANCTUARY

Native Plant Sale celebrates 30 years!

Members-only Friday, April 19, 4:30-6:30 pm

Public sale Saturday, April 20, 8:30-1:30 pm

Morningside Nature Center

Unbelievable as it may seem, the Paynes Prairie Chapter has been hosting our native plant sales for thirty years! We started very humbly in a parking lot with members selling their hobby plants or small plant nurseries. We have grown to be the largest native plant sale in the state!

This Spring we will enjoy a more festival atmosphere with live music from Boilin' Oil and edibles from Mayflower Cellars. We also have several guided nature walks lined up, as well as nearly a dozen informational booths from community organizations. The University Press will be selling books at a great discount, and Creative Garden Structures will have bird, bat, and bee houses for sale. And of course, there will be lots of native plants.

Come enjoy this family friendly event (but no dogs, please) and help spread the use of natives in our landscapes. The sale is co-sponsored by Friends of Nature Parks and the City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs. We will have our exclusive members-only sale on Friday evening, April 19, from 4:30 to 6:30, with the public sale beginning Saturday morning (April 20) at 8:30 and running until 1:30 pm. Morningside Nature Center is located at 3540 E. University Avenue.



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The Rhexia is published eight times a year by the Paynes Prairie Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. Comments are welcomed. Readers are encouraged to submit articles and images for publication consideration to ahlers.karen@gmail.com

March Field Trip
San Felasco Hammock
Saturday, March 23 at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Lucas Majure our February speaker, will lead our March field trip to San Felasco Hammock on Saturday March 23rd. Meet at the South entrance of the park on Millhopper Road, at 9am. For those unfamiliar with the park, the address is 11101 Millhopper Rd, Gainesville, FL 32653.

Lucas will take us to some of the off-trail areas that we rarely get to see. Hopefully we will get to see the really cool topography some of the rare endemic plants that make San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park (the official name) so special.

As always bring water, insect repellent, sun screen and sensible shoes. If you have questions or get lost call Mark at 352-215-4093.



San Felasco Hammock
 Photo by Karen Garren



Save the date - April 19-20 for a very special native plant sale celebrating 30 years!

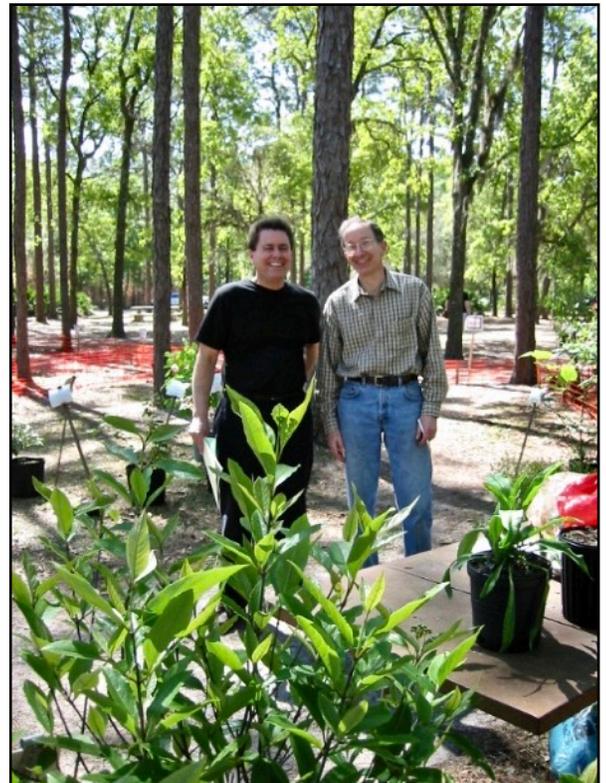


Plant Sale Volunteers Needed!

For three decades dedicated volunteers like Lisa and Howard Jelks, Joe Durando, Jill McQuire, and Claudia Larsen have worked to make native plants available to dedicated shoppers like Tim Keyser. These folks have missed few, if any, sales. You are invited to join the team!

Come have some fun and help us celebrate three decades of hosting the Native Plant Sales! This milestone would not be possible without the dedication of our volunteers and plant vendors. Because this sale will be much bigger than usual, we will require a few more volunteers than normal. We'll need people to help plant vendors (loading/unloading/filling out sales slips), Park-a-Plant area, or our Chapter's information booth.

If you are willing to help for an hour or two between 8:30 am and 1:30 pm on Saturday, April 20th, please contact Lisa Jelks at ielksla@gmail.com or (352) 373-3028.



SANDHILL YARD TOUR APRIL 6

On Saturday, April 6, at 9 AM, we'll be touring Paul Cohen's sandhill property south of Archer. He last burned the property about a year ago, so there should be some nice things to see. The address is 9290 NE 137th Ct. in Williston. If you want to carpool meet at 8:15 AM at the northwest corner of the Publix shopping center (Tower Square) at SW 75th Street and Archer Road. For more information contact Connie Caldwell, cnncldwll@gmail.com or 352-359-2164.



The Rhexia
Paynes Prairie Chapter
Florida Native Plant Society
March 2019

Kanapaha Festival volunteers needed March 23-24

The theme of the Kanapaha Spring Garden Festival is Native Plants! The festival is March 23-24. Our chapter has been invited to have an information table right up front in the Festival Hall. This is a great opportunity to promote native plants and our chapter to the public.

We are looking for volunteers for both days. We will split the shifts into two 4 hour shifts each day so you will have a chance to get out and see the festival before or after a shift. There will be about 150 booths offering plants, landscape displays, garden accessories, arts and crafts, educational exhibits and lots of food. There will also be live entertainment, live auctions and a children's area. Contact Mark Elliott at markelliott1955@gmail.com if you are interested in volunteering. It will be fun!

2019 Florida Wildflower Symposium

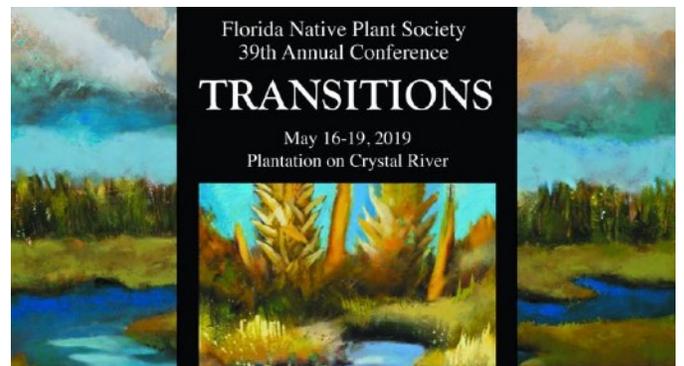


The annual Florida Wildflower Symposium, the Florida Wildflower Foundation's signature event, will be held April 12-13 at the Straughn UF-IFAS Extension in Gainesville, one of the state's premier nature destinations.

The event focuses exclusively on Florida's native wildflowers, their ecosystems, and the wildlife depending on them. Friday, April 12, will feature morning field trips to natural Gainesville-area gems, with presentations on timely environmental topics beginning at 1 p.m. at the Straughn center. An evening social will follow at First Magnitude Brewing Co., Gainesville.

A full day of presentations, workshops, vendors and a plant sale is planned for Saturday, kicked off by keynote speakers Pamela and Douglas Soltis, who will discuss how climate change is already effecting our plant communities. Other topics include butterflies, bees, gardening with wildflowers, roadside wildflowers and more. You can participate in pollinator pot and native wildflower propagation workshops, too.

Cost is \$45 for FWF members and \$55 for non-members. Click [here](#) for schedule and registration information.



FNPS Annual Conference – Save the Date

May 16 – May 19, 2019

****REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 1st****

Our theme this year "Transitions" is pertinent to the Nature Coast region of Florida in a number of ways - sea level rise, migrations of ecosystems due to climate change, and the transition zone between north and south Florida. In this region you will also see the transition of cave system into Karst, spring flows to tannic flows, and water quality transitions. The region also has a large diversity of plant communities and the transitions between uplands and wetlands are common, dramatic and highly visible – a great place to introduce people to Florida's diverse natural communities. For more information click [here](#).

You will be delighted by mind-expanding experiences, tempted by sumptuous meals (including vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free) and amazed by the networking and social opportunities.



Etoniah Rosemary Census

by Mark Elliott, Photos by Mark Whitten

On Tuesday October 30th, Charlie Pedersen, a Biologist with the Florida Forest Service (and Paynes Prairie Chapter member) led a group of intrepid botanists/biologists from multiple organizations including Santa Fe Audubon, Bok Tower Sanctuary and 2 additional members of Paynes Prairie chapter through the undergrowth of Etoniah Creek State Forest to count Etonia rosemary (*Conradina etonia*) plants. Etonia rosemary, endemic to Etoniah Creek white sand scrub, wasn't described until 1991. In the abstract of the paper first describing it, the authors (Kral and McCartney) stated that "*C. etonia is a narrow endemic, that is on land that is presently being developed for residential use and that it therefore should receive high conservation priority.*" It is now on both State and Federal lists of endangered plants. Based on reports from Charlie Pedersen, these plants have been counted annually for about 18 years. In 2000, biologists counted about 700 individual plants. A few years later 2369 plants were counted; in 2018, we counted less than 1500. Most individuals now occur on state forest lands, but some also grow on private inholdings within the forest.

We split into 2 groups and the smart group got to count the plants along the roadside. The other group, of which I was a member, was obliged to bushwhack our way through the overgrown scrub from plot to plot. The botanists flagged the plants, one volunteer counted the flags and another recorded the numbers. One interesting observation made by the ecologically observant botanists/biologists was that seedlings were only observed in recently opened or disturbed sandy areas such as those exposed by the roots of a fallen tree or by mechanical disturbance. Mature plants struggled in the dense shade; those in full sun or light shade seemed to be the most healthy. Only a few flowers and pollinators were observed in dense shade. At the end of the survey, our discussion ranged from the current conditions to what might be needed to optimize growing conditions and even what might have optimized the growth of Etonia rose-



mary during the ice ages when scrub habitats were more widespread. Unlike some scrub and sandhill plants, Etonia rosemary does not tolerate frequent fires; it seems more adapted to mechanical disturbance to open up suitable habitat. Some biologists have suggested that such plants might have depended upon soil disturbance of extinct megafauna (such as mastodons, mammoths, gomphotheres, and giant sloths). (I went home and looked up Gomphotheres. Apparently Florida may have been one of their last strongholds before extinction.) Ironically present-day management of Etonia rosemary might require disturbance by heavy machinery (plus occasional fire) to mimic the effects of these extinct mammals. Much more research is needed.

Back to the survey... We counted a total of 1475 plants. Population estimates fluctuate from year to year, but have never exceeded 2400 plants. Currently work
(Continued on page 6)



Etoniah rosemary census

(Continued from page 5)

days are planned for March 16-17 to remove some of the tall woody scrub plants that are shading the *Etonia* rosemary plants to give them a better chance at survival. (See details below.)

There are also efforts from Putnam Land Conservancy continue to buy some of the private lands where it grows. And, the USFWS is currently conducting a Species Status Assessment (SSA) to review the literature, research, monitoring, and land management needs of *Etonia* rosemary.



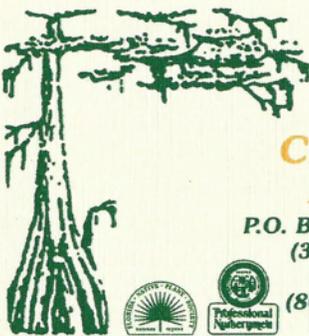
Volunteers Bill Chitty and our president, Mark Elliott.



(*Conradina etonia*)

Care to help a rare plant species with your loppers and hand saw? *Etoniah* Rosemary is a narrow range endemic mint species only known from *Etoniah* Creek State Forest and private land adjacent to the Forest. Dunn's Creek Rosemary (*C. cygniflora*), an additional narrow range endemic mint species, was once considered the same species but further research determined it is a distinct species which occurs in roughly the same region. In areas where fire has been excluded populations of these mint species are declining. These populations would benefit from small-scale hand removal of shrubs near individual plants in areas that will not be burned or mowed. **If you are interested in volunteering March 16-17** please contact Michael Jenkins at the FL Forest Service. (850) 681-5876 or Michael.Jenkins@FreshFromFlorida.com

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Florida Native Plant Society
Paynes Prairie Chapter
Post Office Box 1004
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The Mission of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

The Society fulfills this mission through:

- Support for conservation land acquisition;
- Land management that enhances habitat suitability for native plants;
- Education;
- Public policies that protect our native flora, especially rare species;
- Research on native plant species; and,
- Encouragement of local landscaping practices and policies that preserve Florida's native plant heritage.

Can you grow *Rhexia* from seed?

You could win \$100 worth of plants from Notestein's Nursery if you are the first to propagate *Rhexia*, our namesake, from seed. You will need to grow several flats of four inch pots in time for either our Spring or Fall Native Plant Sale to qualify. Call Jim with questions - 352-372-2107.



Photo Credits: Our thanks to Wesley Hetrick for permission to use his photo, Sunrise at Paynes Prairie, on Page 1. See more of Wesley's images at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wesleyhetrick>
Also to Peter May for permission to use his *Rhexia* photo. See more of Peter's work at <http://www2.stetson.edu/~pmay/index.htm>

Paynes Prairie Chapter Florida Native Plant Society

Etoniah Creek State Forest
Etonia rosemary workdays
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

March 16-17

(See page 6 for details)

General Meeting
Thirty Years of Memories
Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 PM

Plant ID Workshop at 6:30 PM

(See Page 1 for details)

March Field Trip
San Felasco Hammock
Preserve State Park
Saturday, March 23

(See Page 2 for details)

Kanapaha Gardens Spring Festival
March 23-24

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

(See page 4 for details)

Spring Yard Tour, April 6

(See page 3 for details)

Spring Native Plant Sale
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

April 19-20, 2019