



*Rhexia mariana* ©Darel Hess

# The Rhexia

Paynes Prairie Chapter  
Florida Native Plant Society  
September 2006

## MONTHLY MEETING SEPTEMBER 12, 2006

Claude Browne  
Northeast Florida Regional Coordinator  
for Florida LAKEWATCH

Claude will discuss a little about LAKEWATCH and then review how to recognize about 40 common aquatic plants encountered in Florida freshwaters, primarily lakes.

Claude Brown was born in Jacksonville, Florida and graduated from Paxon Jr./Sr. High School. He obtained his B.S. degree from the University of Miami, Florida in 1980 with a major in biology and minor in chemistry. From 1980-1982, he worked as a temporary agricultural inspector for APHIS/PPQ (The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Plant Protection and Quarantine) at Miami International Airport and as a sanitarian for Dade County. He was employed at the University of Florida as a laboratory technician studying insect interactions and parasitology in the Department of

Zoology (1982-1984) and as manager of the Health Center Teaching Laboratories for the medical professional colleges (1984-1988). In 1988, he returned to the University of Miami as a research assistant studying the effects of crude oils, jet fuels, and dispersants on mangrove physiology (1988-1990). He worked as a chemist with Florida LAKEWATCH, concurrently conducted graduate studies part-time from 1991-1997 in the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences and obtained a Master of Science degree in 1997.

Since then, he has been working as a Florida LAKEWATCH Regional Coordinator for the northeast Florida counties.

[http://  
fishweb.ifas.ufl.edu/  
Otherstaff/ClaudeB.htm](http://fishweb.ifas.ufl.edu/Otherstaff/ClaudeB.htm)



<http://lakewatch.ifas.ufl.edu/>

# FRAGRANT FLORIDA NATIVES

Most people associate fragrance with flowers. However, some of our native plants also have enticing aromas hidden in their foliage. These secret scents can be released by merely crushing a leaf. As with other plant features, fragrance intensity can vary from one plant to the next.

Often, while wandering in the woods or working in the garden, I will pick a fragrant leaf or two to enjoy throughout the day. A few of Florida's aromatic native plants follow - cultivating these can add a unique twist to the native plant garden.

A word of caution: be sure to correctly identify a plant before crushing and smelling its leaves. The leaves of some of Florida's native plants also contain toxins and irritants. And never put leaves or other plant parts in your mouth.



*Persea borbonia* var. *humilis*  
Photo by Maddy Dumas  
<http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu>

## Trees

**Swamp / Red / Silk Bays** (*Persea palustris* / *Persea borbonia* / *Persea borbonia* var. *humilis*) – These bays constitute an extremely versatile group of larger native trees. Pick your tree based on the conditions in your yard. Swamp bays flourish in moist situations, red bays in more mesic conditions, and silk bays will adapt to even the driest of scrub sands. The tough leaves of the Florida bays are powerfully fragrant, reminiscent of the traditional bay leaves used as a cooking spice.

**Hercules' Club** (*Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*) – A striking, small tree with abundant thorns on its trunk, Hercules' Club will grow in moist to drier conditions, in sun to light shade. If you hold a leaf up to the light, distinctive oil glands are clearly visible. Crushing the leaves produces a rich lemon scent. This plant is also called toothache tree, since the oils are reputed to be mildly numbing.

**Spicewood** (*Calypttranthes pallens*) – This is a member of the Myrtle family, a group of plants justly famous for their fragrance. A plant of tropical hammocks, Spicewood prefers a bit of shade to look its best. Graceful leaves cascade on this plant that eventually produces a small tree. Though there is some variation from plant to plant, the crushed leaves are said to be lightly reminiscent of spices.

## Shrubs

**Florida Anise** (*Illicium* spp.) – A great shrub for the landscape, Florida anise will form a dense, dark green

hedge of considerable size. Preferring moist conditions, it will adapt to drier sites. It needs shade for its leaves to look their emerald-green best. The leaves emit a strong, wonderfully intense anise aroma when crushed.

**Wax Myrtle** (*Myrica* spp.) – For years the waxy berries of this plant were extensively harvested to create 'bayberry' candles. While this practice has largely been discontinued and artificial chemical fragrances substituted, you can still rub a few berries in your hand to enjoy the original nostalgic scent. If none of the fragrant berries are available, just crush a few leaves.

**Florida Rosemary** (*Ceratiola ericoides*) – A plant of the driest sand scrubs, this one very loosely resembles the common culinary rosemary herb. While common in natural areas, it is difficult to find in cultivation as the tiny oily seeds can take up to a year to germinate. Though crushing the leaves produces little aroma, their fragrance will perfume the air after the briefest summer rain. A curious plant, it emits an odd earthy but uniquely pleasant, musky scent.

## Ground Covers

**Pennyroyal** (*Piloblephis rigida*) – This is a great little ground cover with lovely cones of small purple flowers. I was once told its scent is variable, depending on where the mother plant was collected. Some plants emit a clean, minty fragrance when crushed. However, others have distinct overtones of citrus and oranges.

**Vanilla Plant** (*Carphephorus* spp.) – Another great wildflower for the garden and a butterfly favorite, Vanilla plant gradually forms large colonies that prefer moist soils and full sun. The tall flower spikes bear flowers of a deep lavender hue. It is said that the dried leaves of this plant have a distinct, warm vanilla scent.

**Lemon Bacopa** (*Bacopa caroliniana*) – A tiny spreading groundcover that prefers moist soils, it will even tolerate standing water. In blooming season, intensely blue flowers cover the plant. As the name suggests, crushing the leaves emits a very pleasing and surprisingly strong lemon fragrance.

**Scrub mints** (*Dicerandra* spp.) – These small, mounding plants are both beautiful and endangered endemics of ancient Florida scrubs. When in bloom, the foliage is covered by clouds of pale cream and pink flowers. Its scent can be described as an almost overpowering menthol fragrance. If any part of this plant is crushed, the strong mint scent will fill the air and waft for long distances.



*Dicerandra immitata*  
Photo by Greg Heston  
<http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu>

# 2006 - 2007

## MEETINGS, EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS

### Meetings

- September 12 Chapter Meeting  
Claude Brown - LakeWatch
- October 10 Chapter Meeting  
Anne Barkdoll - The Gory Details of Native  
Groundcover Restoration in Florida's Pinelands
- November 7 Board / Conference Meeting
- November 14 Chapter Meeting  
Ramech Bush / Busy Shires Byerly -  
Conservation Land Purchases
- 2007
- January 9 Chapter Meeting
- February 13 Chapter Meeting
- February TBA Board / Conference Meeting
- March 13 Chapter Meeting
- April 10 NO Chapter Meeting
- April 24 Conference Review
- May 8 Chapter Meeting

### Events

- October 20-21  
**PLANT SALE**  
**MORNINGSIDE NATURE CENTER**
- December 12 Christmas Social

### Field Trips

- Sept 16 River Rise Canoe Trip  
RSVP Required, Contact  
Erick Smith  
352.380.0648
- Oct 14 Stephen Foster S.P.
- November 18 Barr Hammock
- 2007
- January 13 Stormwater Park
- February 17 Rally for the Ocklawaha
- March 17 TBA

### ARTICLE SUBMISSION AND ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

Please send all articles to: [Rhexia@gmail.com](mailto:Rhexia@gmail.com).  
If you would like to receive the Rhexia via your e-mail,  
please contact Annie at: [anniebret@bellsouth.net](mailto:anniebret@bellsouth.net). **Subject line:**  
**FNPS**

**Deadline date: September 20, 2006**

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#### 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](http://www.fnps.org).

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# Annual Conference - Gainesville

## Conservation Cures by Yards and Miles

April 19 - 22, 2007

Hilton University of Florida Conference Center  
1714 SW 34th St

Hosted by the Paynes Prairie Chapter

### 2007 Conference Update

Planning committees have been working through the summer to lay groundwork for our upcoming conference, so mark your calendars for April 19-22, 2007!

Much discussion led to choosing the conference theme - Conservation Cures by the Yard and Mile. The theme highlights the successful strategies our local conservation groups have made identifying and purchasing conservation land. We would also like to convince homeowners that backyard conservation can make a difference to local environments.

We have invited keynote speakers (more on that in future issues of the Rhexia), compiled a list of interesting talks based on our conservation theme, and created a list of our favorite places for field trips. A brief conference brochure and registration form will be prepared this fall. Thank you to Program Committee chair Grace Crummer and Field Trip Committee chair Erick Smith and their committee members.

Brian Quinn is heading the committee to invite plant related vendors and educational exhibitors. He is also organizing a huge plant sale and inviting nurseries from throughout the state. We hope to organize it like the Morningside sale with a central cashier area.

From January to March we would like to organize about 20 volunteers to help during the conference with registration and set up activities Thursday through Saturday; and

to work as cashiers at the plant sale on Friday and Saturday.

We would also like interested members to contact us with sponsorship leads. The costs of the hotel and event locations are huge and we need to generate sponsorship donations to offset these costs and keep the registration fees affordable.

If you, your business or your friends' business would like to donate, there are many levels of sponsorship. These include sponsoring receptions (\$5000), continental breakfast (\$3500), and coffee breaks (\$2000), to placing ads in the conference brochure which will reach 500 people. \$50 - \$300 for full page.

Of course the most generous donors will also be compensated with recognition signs and announcements during the conference. Please contact Claudia ([micanopywildflowers@yahoo.com](mailto:micanopywildflowers@yahoo.com)) or Charlie ([charliepedersen@gmail.com](mailto:charliepedersen@gmail.com)) for sponsorship information or any other ideas or questions you may have concerning the conference.

We will keep everyone informed of conference activities in future Rhexia newsletters. Our meeting planner Jackie Casserly is doing a great job keeping our time line and budget and we know this will be the best conference ever. Please plan to attend and invite your friends too.

*Submitted by:* Claudia Larsen

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**September 12th meeting**  
**Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.**  
*(Plant ID Workshop at 6:30)*  
**Doyle Conner Bldg. DPI**  
**1911 SW 34th St.**  
**Gainesville, FL**

**Monthly Meetings**

Regular monthly meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday  
in September - November and January - May at 7:30 p.m. at the:  
Doyle Conner Building  
Division of Plant Industry  
1911 SW 34 St., Gainesville

Plant ID workshops precede each meeting at 6:30 p.m.

**Florida Native Plant Society Membership Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Check pertinent category:

- Individual \$25
- Family or Household \$30
- Contributing \$40
- Not-for-profit Org. \$50
- Business or Corporate \$100
- Supporting \$100
- Donor \$250
- Library \$15
- Student (full-time) \$15

**Please mail completed form to: Florida Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 278, Melbourne, FL 32902-0278**

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.