

# The Sparkler

The Sparkleberry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

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June, 2012

## President's Message: *Carol Sullivan*

.....rain, rain, "please" come again another day!

As you are all aware, Carolyn Hogue, who has been the editor of "The Sparkler" since the Sparkleberry Chapter began, has had to resign for health reasons. Her recent call for help was successful and as you can see there is no break in publishing our monthly newsletter. That's due to Judi Harn volunteering to continue Carolyn's efforts and to Valerie Thomas volunteering to be Judi's backup in the future. Members like these are what make this Chapter a success. Thank you, Carolyn, for all the time and effort put into this project over the past year and a half, and thank you to Judi and Valerie for being there to fill an important place in our group.

The 32nd FNPS Annual Conference held last month in Plant City was a big success. The four days were filled with field trips to some of central Florida's best natural areas, vendors of all kinds, big plant sale with many hard to find natives, social events, meetings, educational sessions, workshops and keynote speakers - way too many things to do and still have time to visit with old friends. Carolyn, Betsy and I crammed as much as we could into the four days and came home tired - and maybe even a little bit smarter!

My plants are smiling. We collected 9.8" of rain in two days from Beryl. Hope all of you were fortunate enough to get a good rain too.

*Carol*

**Sparkleberry Chapter meetings** are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at Hatch Park, 403 SE Craven St., Branford. Meetings start at 6:30 PM.

**Please join us for our next meeting on June 12, 2012**



**Sparkleberry Webmaster Mae Brandt** has produced our own SPARKLEBERRY CHAPTER web site. You can reach it at <http://sparkleberry.fnpschapters.org>. Web sites by nature are always a "work in progress" because there will always be updates.

Please visit the site and let Mae know what you think!

We also have a **Facebook** page, to be used as a communication spot for members between meetings. Visit [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), search for Sparkleberry, and become a friend and/or fan.

## Calendar of Events:

### 6/12/12: **Monthly Meeting 6:30 pm., Hatch Park, Branford: "District Lands...Yours to Enjoy"**

The program will be District Lands...Yours to Enjoy. Edwin McCook, Land Management Specialist for the Suwannee River Water Management District, will discuss recreation opportunities on District lands. Recreation opportunities include bicycling, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, picnicking, wildlife viewing and nature study. The program will include photographs of unique features and views on District lands

Edwin has been involved in public use of District properties since 1990. He was involved in building off-road bicycling trails on District properties and promoting bicycling events in North Florida using bike trails that are on District properties. He has an Associate of Arts Degree from North Florida Community College and extensive experience in nature and heritage based tourism in North Florida.

The Suwannee River Water Management District employed Edwin as Greenways and Trails Coordinator in March, 2000, and he moved into the position of Public Use Coordinator in May, 2002. His responsibilities are to coordinate and develop recreation opportunities on District properties. His duties have been expanded and job description updated to Land Management Specialist.

Edwin is married and has a son. He is active in Suwannee Bicycle Association, Florida Trail Association, Branford Camera Club and First Baptist Church of Live Oak. He enjoys photography and outdoor activities.

### 7/10/12: **Monthly Meeting 6:30 pm., Hatch Park, Branford**

Our speaker for the July meeting is Sarah Lauerman, a member of the Paynes Prairie Chapter and a Biologist involved in conservation and restoration efforts in our area. She currently is working with the Red Cockaded Woodpecker in an effort to reestablish a population in the Osceola National Forest. This is a very busy time of year for her with all the baby birds hatching and we surely will hear all about it in July.

☆ **Future Programs** - Some of the topics coming in the near future include forest trees, medicinal native plants and wildlife habitats. Stay tuned for further details

#### ☆ **Roadside Bloomers**

*Asclepias tuberosa* - Butterfly Milkweed - watch for their clusters of bright orange flowers that will surely be covered in butterflies.

*Erigeron spp.* - Fleabane - different varieties bloom from spring thru fall with small daisy-like flowers of white to pinkish ray flowers and yellow disks. (Last year the flowering continued nearly all through our mild winter)

*Centrosema virginianum* - Butterfly Pea - lavender flowers on small thin vines

*Mimosa strigillosa* - Sunshine mimosa - round pink flowers standing up above a low-growing ground cover.

## Field Trips:

We currently have no field trips planned; however, that may change after we hear about all the opportunities Edwin McCook opens for us at our June 12 meeting! 😊

In the meantime, there is an interesting field trip on the FNPS website, if they still have any openings! Go to the website and check it out.

6/9/2012 St. Johns River Cruise - 9:30am – 11:30am.  
St. Johns Eco-boat tour, Highbanks Marina, DeBary  
To get Group Rate (\$20/ person) You Must Reserve in Advance! (capacity 28)  
Leader: Sonya Guidry [sonyaguidry@yahoo.com](mailto:sonyaguidry@yahoo.com) 386 690-1797  
Lunch after tour at Swamp House Grill at Highbanks Resort and Marina



## Of Interest:

### The SPARKLER Editor's Message:

I want you all to know how much I've enjoyed editing "The SPARKLER" for you over the last year and a half, and I've appreciated your positive feedback! I'm sure you know that getting each issue together was a joint effort, and the quality wouldn't have been possible without all those great inputs from our Board and some of the members.

Sadly, I'm going to have to pass this task to others due to some health issues I'm facing. Happily, we have two willing volunteers who are going to see that "The SPARKLER" continues. Judi Harn has graciously volunteered to be the new editor, and we've already started the transition. Valerie Thomas has agreed to be Judi's helpmate and backup. Judi and I will work together to publish the June issue. Judi and Valerie will then work together to be ready to publish the July issue.

Please be as supportive of Judi and Valerie as you have been for me. Keep those articles, pictures, and mystery plant entries coming!!!

*Thank you, Carolyn Hogue*

### Spring Plant Sale, Saturday, May 12

Thanks to all those who grew plants and helped with the sale! Again, it was a great Success . . . details to come at Tuesday's meeting.

## Mystery Plant:

Keep those Mystery Plants coming!

Be sure to include as much information as you can about habitat, botanical description, growing/blooming habit, etc. Remember, a submittal earns you two free tickets for the plant raffle, and a correct identification earns you a chance for another 2 free plant raffle tickets! When your issue of "The Sparkler" comes, check for this month's Mystery Plant, get out your books, and make sure we have an ID winner this month!

**Feature Article: Judi Harn**

Much to my surprise-----six year ago, my husband and I, became residents of Suwannee County. That move has been one of the best things to happen to us in our 51+ years together. We were both raised in Pinellas County (Clearwater – St. Petersburg, etc.) and that area had long since become too crowded.

Before retirement, daily drives to work took 30 minutes to go 10 miles with only traffic to look at... Now, it takes about the same time to go to Live Oak and we see beautiful roadside flowers during the Spring and Summer. It's wonderful to watch the farms as the crops change during the year. So nice to open the windows in the morning and see woods instead of houses in a subdivision!!!!

*Judi*



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*Coreopsis florida* – Florida tickseed

**Guest Feature: Valerie Thomas**

When I moved into my house three years ago, it looked like typical new construction, a lovely house surrounded by some naked sand. Thankfully, one of my new friends in North Florida had given me Doug Tallamy's book, *Bringing Nature Home*, and the message of using native plants in home landscaping became crystal clear to me. I had previously been told that I should "plant native" but I never really understood WHY, and I loved my impatiens and crape myrtles. There was nothing wrong with those plants, and they were so pretty, right? After reading Tallamy's book, I finally got it, and I was very excited to dress up my new house with Florida natives.

Enter another new friend, Betsy Martin, who was kind enough to come over to see my yard and give some suggestions about natives that might work there. My husband and I also wanted to start vegetable gardening, but coming from Southwest Florida, we had no idea about what to plant and when in North Florida, and Betsy graciously offered her tips. I scurried around with my notebook and wrote down lots of ideas and much valuable information.

Fast forward a bit, I've established some nice beds around the house, and I have my favorite that I can see from my comfy chair on my screened back porch. I have planted some plants in this bed, but it's a pretty large area, and even though I've got quite a few, it still looks pretty naked. You know how it is, things haven't grown enough yet, and my garden didn't look garden-like. So at a nature festival I attended, I purchased several packets of wildflower seeds. I happily planted all of these in my favorite bed, and I could see in my mind's eye the beautiful drifts of colorful wildflowers that would be blooming there when spring came.

NOT. Nothing came up, nothing bloomed. I was very disappointed. But I continued to gather my natives, at local plant sales, nurseries and the Farmers' Market. I found the Harts, a couple who grow some natives and sell their plants at the Gainesville Farmers' market, near Home Depot on Hwy. 441 on Saturday mornings. Shopping there, I found they had some small Standing Cypress plants. I was excited to see them. I had really admired the plants growing along 27 when I first moved here, and I had tried to grow them (unsuccessfully) from seed. So I bought three little plants (a Betsy-ism, plant

by threes or other odd numbers) and hurried home to plant (a Valerie-ism, plant as soon as possible in order to avoid fatalities).

I placed my plants where I wanted them in my favorite bed, and I started to dig my holes. As I dug, I glanced over and what did I see growing right next to where I was digging but...another baby Standing Cypress!!! As I looked around in the bed, I recognized about a dozen Standing Cypress plants, obviously growing from the seed I had sown. I had no idea! I was thrilled! For those of you who are not familiar with this plant, as I was NOT, it is a biennial, taking two years to bloom and die. So I had bought three plants and had a dozen growing plants, and you would not BELIEVE how many Standing Cypress plants I now have growing in my favorite bed. The plant seeds itself very easily and needless to say, it has "filled in" and it just goes to show you, there is always hope!

**Point to Ponder:**

We live in the present, we dream of the future,  
but we learn eternal truths from the past.  
Isn't it splendid to think  
of all the things there are to find out about?  
*...by Lucy Maud Montgomery*

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