

The Sparkler

The Sparkleberry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

Volume 2, Issue 5

May, 2012

President's Message: *Carol Sullivan*

Enjoy being outdoors!!!

April has been another very busy month for the Sparkleberry Chapter. **Kathleen Elbare** did a great job on our booth at **the Suwannee County Fair** with an interesting display board featuring pictures of native plants that provide food, shelter and nesting material for wildlife, along with some live plants to fill in the space. (See *picture, below*) It's a bit of a challenge to keep live plants inside a dimly lit building for 10 days, but surprisingly most of them survived quite well.



Photo courtesy of Carolyn Hogue

Our booth at the **Alligator Lake Festival** was done by **Trish Haight** with various live native plants and another nice display board featuring photos of some natural scenes and one of last year's FNPS Residential Landscape Award winning native yards. Trish faced a different kind of challenge at this event . . . a little wind that kept getting stronger and stronger. The display board was the first thing to blow over, the plants were taking a beating and the banner eventually had to be taken down. Yet, people still came to talk to us about native plants. It was a very interesting day. Thanks to Kathleen and Trish for the good job they did on behalf of the Chapter.

We also had two field trips in April led by native plant experts: Sam Cole at Ichetucknee Springs State Park and Dr. Loran Anderson at Ruth Springs and Hogue's Lafayette County property. (See *details under Field Trips section.*)

We will have a booth at the **Wild Florida event at Stephen Foster State Park** on Saturday, May 5. Put this event on your calendar and enjoy a day at the Stephen Foster State Park! (See *Calendar of Events section*)

On May 12th is our **Native Plant Sale**. Several of you have volunteered to help with everything from growing plants to assisting at the sale. The list of plants for the sale is long and still growing. Don't miss it! (See *more details in the "Of Interest" section*)

After our plant sale things should slow down and return to our normal monthly meeting schedule through the warm weather of summer. None of this happens without your help. Those of you who contribute or volunteer your time and energy to help make the Sparkleberry Chapter a success are definitely appreciated.

See you all on the 8th.

Carol

Sparkleberry Chapter meetings are held the 2nd 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 May 8, 2012



Sparkleberry Webmaster Mae Brandt is working on a **new Sparkleberry webpage**. You can reach it at <http://sparkleberry.fnpschapters.org>. Mae says it's a "work in progress, but it should be complete within the next few weeks." 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, search for Sparkleberry, and become a friend and/or fan.

Calendar of Events:

5/5/12: Wild Florida, Stephen Foster State Park 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

This event will be held in the Craft Village where they have the blacksmith shop, art and gift shops and **Lei Lani Davis** has her herb garden. **Kathleen Elbare** has again volunteered to help with our booth for the event, and there will be several other exhibitors with a variety of items for demonstration and for sale. Be sure to mark your calendar and join Kathleen for this event.

5/8/12: Monthly Meeting 6:30 PM, Hatch Park, Branford

Our May 8 program will be "The Threat of Wildfire is Real! Can You Protect Yourself?" Kurt Wisner, Wildfire Mitigation Specialist with the Florida Forest Service, will present an overview of local wildfire activity and discuss ways you can protect your property and increase your survivability when wildfire comes to North Central Florida.

Suwannee Forestry Center is responsible for wildfire suppression and landowner assistance in Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Hamilton, Suwannee, and Union counties. Kurt's role is to increase public awareness of the wildfire threat and help individuals and communities make their homes safer in a high-risk environment.

5/12/12: Spring Plant Sale 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM, US Highway 27 and Wideman Street, Branford
(More information included in the "Of Interest" section below.)

5/17/12- Florida Native Plant Society, 32nd Annual Conference, Plant City. Registration is still open!

5/20/12: Activities will include landscaping, conservation, research, field trips, socials, vendors, silent auction, plant sales, and exhibits.



Check your email and respond to the following communication from FNPS:

Dear FNPS Member,

Good news: You still have time to save big on your stay at this year’s spring conference in Plant City. The Red Rose Inn, our primary conference hotel, has graciously agreed to extend their bargain \$69 room rate through the conference and yes, there is still room for you—we apologize for miscommunications about sold-out room blocks.

Call (813) 752-3141 and mention Florida Native Plant Society to get the discount rate.

Not your typical corporate franchise hotel, the Red Rose is, according to Suncoast Chapter members, a testimony to its owners, a local family known for generous contributions of time and resources to the Plant City community. They have transformed the Red Rose Inn through attention to first-class quality service, food and interior décor. These renovations have made the Red Rose very popular for events and parties. Troy says, “I have personally been to many Red Rose events and parties over the years. It is one of the hidden jewels in our town.”

Friday, May 4, is the last day to register in advance, online:

<https://www.eventville.com/catalog/eventregistration1.asp?eventid=1008997>

Advance registration is the best way to guarantee you’ll be on that memory-making field trip—so don’t miss it.

Questions about the conference? Call us at 321-271-6702, or email us at info@fnps.org.

See you soon in Plant City, May 17-20

The FNPS Team

Field Trips:

4/11/12: Field Trip, 9:00 AM-11:00 AM - Native Plant Walk at Ichetucknee Springs State Park with Park Ranger Sam Cole. Sam guided us through several habitats the park identifying a multitude of trees, shrubs and flowering native plants. Two of the prettiest flowering species we saw were the Rose-Rush, *Lygodesmia aphylla*, with its intricate lavender flowers on very tall stems, and the Squarehead, *Tetragonotheca helianthoides*, a bushy plant with very large yellow sunflower-like flowers that have visible squared bracts.

*****Did any of you take pictures on this field trip?*****

4/28/12: Field Trip, 9:45 - 11:30 AM - Ruth Springs WMA, Lafayette County



Photos courtesy of Gary Kueppers

Dr. Loran Anderson guided us on a short walk at **Ruth Springs** pointing out a variety of plants, including wetland and sandhill species. The little bits of information he adds about a plant's use by Native Americans, how some common or scientific name came about, tidbits about the plant family, or just one of his funny stories keeps it very interesting. Even though our time was up, Dr. Anderson wasn't ready to quit. Several of us then drove the few miles to **Carolyn and Dave Hogue's camp property** and had a second guided tour! If you missed these field trips, you missed a rare treat. During the course of Dr. Anderson's visit, he was able to document 3 or 4 native plants for Lafayette County that hadn't been listed before!

Of Interest:

Spring Plant Sale

We are going to have a plant sale on May 12th, the day before Mother's day. Our Vice President Trish Haight will serve as Plant Committee Chairperson, and our Past-President Betsy Martin will be coordinating the plants for the sale as she did for our fall sale. Betsy will gather the plants at her house a few days before the sale, so they can be inspected. She'll provide the details for that activity at our meeting next week.

Trish wants to thank all the members who have volunteered to help the day of the plant sale. If you haven't responded to Trish's request for what times would best accommodate your schedules, please let her know right away. latriciah@aol.com, 954-547-5932

It takes many helping hands to successfully complete a project like this!!! Again THANK YOU!!!!!! If anyone else would like to assist please let me know. The more help we have the more we can do. *(Editor's note . . . AND the more fun we'll have!!!)*

May Plant Sale Growers Committee Update: From Betsy Martin

This is it! The plant sale is almost upon us; this is the last meeting right before the plant sale. Now is the time to take inventory of the plants that you have ready for the sale and let us know the names of the plants you'll be bringing. We want to make sure we have pictures and descriptions of the plants you intend to bring.

I have had wonderful response letting me know what you have growing. Here is the list of plants we have so far. If you have something that is not on this list, please let me know so we can get the signs made up. Either email your list to betsymartin@windstream.net or bring your list to the meeting.

Golden Rod (maybe)	Butterfly weed	Gaillardia pulchella
Henry's Garnet	Lanceleaf coreopsis	Asclepias tuberosa
Silk grass	Dotted horsemint	Baptisia Alba
Bear Grass (just one)	Mimosa strigillosa	Viburnum acerfolium
Coral Honeysuckle (shoots)	Oakleaf hydrangea	Starry Rosin week
Dune sunflower	Standing Cypress	Lyre-leaf Sage
Blanket flower	Pink Muhly	Crossvine
Goldstrum Rudbeckia	Beach Sunflower	Coreopsis lanceolata
Passion Flower	Blue Eyed Grass	Ironweed
Carolina Jessamine	Swamp Sunflower	Helianthus radiata
Wax Myrtle	Beauty Berry	Pennyroyal
Cabbage Palm	False Indigo (Amorpha fruticosa)	Conradina canescens
Green Ash	Lobelia cardinalis	Red Maple
	Saltbush	Ilex vomitoria
	Cypress	Purple coneflower

Just a reminder for those of you who are not growing plants for the sale, there are some things that you can do to help. One would be to save any boxes that would be good for people to tote the plants back to their car. Bring them to the meeting if you have any, and continue to save any for the next meeting right before the sale. Those plastic bags are nice for a few plants, but boxes are better. You can also volunteer to help the day of the sale. Contact Trish to get your name added to the list of volunteers.

Feature Article: *Carol Sullivan*



Photo courtesy of Carol Sullivan

Stokes Aster (*Stokesia laevis*)
Family: Asteracea

One of the not-so-common natives blooming now is the Stokes Aster. It occurs naturally only in a few counties in north Florida and the panhandle and does well in our area. This little perennial can be easily overlooked until spring when the flower stems grow up from the base and persist over a period of several weeks. The flowers are showy lavender/blue to whitish, 4" wide, fluffy and aster-like on the tips of stems above the basal leaves. Removing old flowers before they go to seed will usually encourage additional blossoming.

When not in bloom, the plant is a clump of dark green 6"-8" leaves only about a foot tall. Though its drought tolerance is low, it thrives on rich, acidic soil in a moist but well-drained, partly sunny site. The Stokes Aster is an excellent choice for any garden, not only for its pretty blooms, but also for a border or slow-growing ground cover. It is easily propagated by division of the clumps or by seed. It requires little maintenance once established in its favorite spot, except for dividing the clumps every few years, and is visited by many butterflies and other native pollinators.

Carol

Roadside Bloomers

With so many roadsides and fields in Suwannee County covered by the non-native *Coreopsis basalis*, *Phlox drummondii*, *Glandularia pulchella* and *Oenothera speciosa*, it's difficult to see much of anything else. Most of these species were introduced to beautify the roadsides and have certainly naturalized in Suwannee and several surrounding counties. If you look closely, you will find there are still some of our natives blooming in the midst of the display; and they will be there when the exotics are spent. For now we should probably just enjoy the show.

Guest Feature: *Carolyn Hogue*



From Wikipedia in accordance with their free use policy

"There's a bird on our feeder I haven't seen before," my husband Dave called out to me a few days ago. Of course, the bird had flown high into a nearby tree before I could get to the door! With some patience on Dave's part, I was finally able to see it perched on a branch; but spring leaves kept me from seeing much detail. Dave got out his list of the birds we've identified over the 17 years we've lived on the Suwannee River near Branford, and we started checking our bird books in an effort to identify this new one. Have you ever had the experience where pictures in the book don't look much like the creature you're trying to identify? It can be frustrating.

Idea! . . . ask Valerie Thomas, remembering her program for us a few months ago. So, I dashed off an email with all the description we had been able to gather . . . black-capped, white-on-black wings, white or light breast with what looked like a red bib. Shortly, Valerie responded that it was a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and added, "We are inundated with them currently and I have had several at my feeders too. They are migrating from the south (Mexico, Central/South America) to our northern states for the summer. The weather system that brought us rain last weekend brought them down, and they are enjoying our feeders before setting out again. I rarely get one in the spring, and this week I have seen several daily. Enjoy the treat, it won't last long."

I've since heard that Carol Sullivan, Phyllis Bridges, and Sylvia Dunnam have also had visits from these distinctive birds. Have any of you seen them in your yards? Thanks, so much for the ID, Valerie!

Carolyn H 😊

Just a reminder to all you creative native plant lovers (yes, that means YOU!) . . . be thinking about something you'd like to submit for the next issue of "The Sparkler!" Please take a few minutes to share your story . . .

- What's happening in your garden?
- What are your gardening experiences/wisdom to share?
- How did you become interested in native plants?
- Have you taken any personal field trips?
- What else would you like your fellow native plant aficionados to know about you and your gardening?

. . . maybe you'll see your story published in the next or an upcoming issue of "The Sparkler."

Mystery Plant:



Found at McClay Gardens in Tallahassee along the trail as an understory plant, thus in shade. It was about 2 feet tall, berries a little smaller than a typical green pea, with a lot of the leaves about 1 ½ to 2 inches long.

Keep those Mystery Plants coming! We had several to choose from for May, but keep your eyes open for more candidates. 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!

Point to Ponder:

*Where your pleasure is, there is your treasure;
Where your treasure, there your heart;
Where your heart, there your happiness.
Augustine*

Officers and Committee Chairs

President	Carol Sullivan	csullivan12@windstream.net	386-364-9309
Vice President	Trish Haight	latriciah@aol.com	954-547-5932
Secretary	Phyllis Bridges	pbrid3@windstream.net	386-330-0382
Treasurer	Judy Townsend	judtown@gmail.com	386-397-2731
Chapter Representative	Betsy Martin	betsymartin@windstream.net	386-935-2453
Conservation	Carolyn Saft	csaft318@ufl.edu	386-362-2771
Program Coordinator	Debbie Phillips	jeep5149@aol.com	386-364-7028
Publicity	Sylvia Dunnam	dunnams@windstream.net	386-362-3256
Membership Chair	Mae Brandt	maebrandt@bellsouth.net	386-466-0915
Website	Mae Brandt	maebrandt@bellsouth.net	386-466-0915
Newsletter	Carolyn Hogue	dchogue@windstream.net	386-935-2044

.



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