

The Sparkler

The Sparkleberry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

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President's Message: *Mae Brandt*

Winter is finally here!

Turn that furnace back on! I was beginning to think we had missed the cold weather this year, but I'm enjoying the beautiful days with the temperatures in the mid 60s and the crisp nighttime temperatures. It surely beats the frigid temperatures our friends up North have been having!

Thank you, Carol Sullivan, for heading the Sparkleberry Arbor Day tree give-away held in Branford on the 18th of January. It was a chilly day, but I understand people came from far and near & 175 trees were handed out.

At our January meeting I passed around sign-up sheets for a few of the events we have coming up. Betsy Martin wasn't able to attend the meeting, but sent out an email for volunteers to help with this year's plant sale. These events are great opportunities to not only help our Sparkleberry Chapter, but to learn more about Florida's natives and socialize with fun, like-minded friendly people! I encourage you to sign up to help out at one or all of the events.

The speaker this month will be Betsy Martin; her topic is "Seeds." I'm not sure what she has up her sleeve, but I guarantee you will learn a lot from her. She makes everything interesting and she is so knowledgeable, you don't want to miss it!

Also at our February meeting, we will be filling packets for the Florida Wildflower Association. Don't forget to bring your ¼ teaspoons to measure the seeds to put into the packets. I'm happy we can give-back something to promote our beautiful Florida wildflowers!

I'll see you at our next meeting on February 12. Don't forget to bring a friend!!

Mae Brandt

Sparkleberry Chapter meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month, except June, July and August, at Hatch Park, 403 SE Craven St., Branford. Meetings start at 6:30 PM.

Please join us for our next meeting on February 12, 2013



Calendar of Events:

February 2: Four Rivers Audubon Alli Walk. Alligator Lake Park, Lake City Florida. Come learn more about our Florida birds and migrants, identify plants, and meet new friends. All levels of experience welcome! Meet at 8am at the Pole Barn. Free, 8a -11a.

February 12: Monthly Meeting 6:30 pm., Hatch Park, Branford

Betsy Martin, will be conducting a hands-on workshop to plant native plant seeds. Plant some seeds to take home. We will also be filling wildflower packets, so bring your ¼ teaspoon. We'll learn something, have some fun and get some new plants too!

February 28: North Central Florida Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA)

Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System. Fort White Public Library, 6:30p. FREE.

To Be Considered: Native Plant Sale

Betsy Martin

2013 Annual Sparkleberry Chapter Plant Sale

It is that time of year again, time to start thinking about our annual plant sale. The plant sale has become an important source of income to help us pay for our wonderful speakers and materials for events we participate in. We are going to have a meeting for those interested in helping directly with the sale right before our regular February meeting at 5:45. So if you would like to help please join us.

The most important thing we need for our sale of course is plants! This is the perfect time to start some seeds for sale so if you can please try to start some. We are going to be having a hands-on workshop planting seeds at our Feb meeting and hopefully a lot of you will have success and share some of those plants for the sale. And we are going to have some great unusual varieties to choose from to plant.

Also the easiest way to get some plants for the sale is to dig up some of those native plants in our yard that have re-seeded on their own and have stepped outside the garden and need to be moved -- or dividing those plants that have just become overcrowded in the garden. This cooler weather is the perfect time to do some transplanting into pots before the plants start putting on lots of growth.

And always remember even if you can help us with one or two plants that is great! Every single plant helps the sale. You just might have that one plant that someone is searching for.



Coreopsis lanceolata



Feature Article: Arbor Day

Carolyn Hogue and Valerie Thomas

On Friday morning, January 18, members of the Florida Native Plant Society, Sparkleberry Chapter in Branford held an Arbor Day Celebration by making free Florida NATIVE trees available. Despite the cold windy day, people from Branford and all the surrounding areas stopped by to pick up their choice of a native dogwood, red cedar, or shumard oak tree along with instructions on where and how to plant and care for their choice. During the course of two hours, 175 trees were distributed to local area residents!

At the same time, Judee Mundy, our new Secretary at Sparkleberry, attended an Arbor Day event at Fort White High/Middle School. The Middle School has been awarded a Collaborative Grant sponsored by Audubon and Toyota to plant a Native Plant, Bird and Butterfly garden in an otherwise barren school courtyard. Sparkleberry donated one each of the Arbor Day native trees, and Judee helped the students plant a bare root red cedar at their celebration as the initial step in the garden establishment.

Valerie Thomas, who works at the school as an Environmental Education Coordinator, will be talking more about the Garden, and the role that Sparkleberry members will be playing in it. Judee has already volunteered her time to come out and look at the site, and helped to revise the plant list for plants that will survive in the habitat where the Garden is being planted.

Thanks to everyone who participated in making this first annual Arbor Day event successful.



Students at Fort White Middle School plant a bare root red cedar on Arbor Day.

Roadside Bloomers: Carol Sullivan

Carolina Jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*). Vine climbing to more than 20 feet, its flowers are trumpet shaped, bright yellow, fragrant and showy.

Innocence (*Hedyotis procumbens*) Low, creeping white-flowered relative of the more northern Bluets.

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) was a bit late in January with its bright red flowers and are now beginning to leaf out.

Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) started blooming along with the Red Maples this year. They can still be seen around the area covered in its purple/pink flowers on bare branches.

Walter's Viburnum (*Viburnum obovatum*) is right on time with its large clusters of white flowers at the end of every branch. With less freezing so far this year, most still have all their dark green leaves making a striking contrast to the flowers.

Chickasaw Plum (*Prunus angustifolia*) is now blooming small white flowers in clusters all along its bare branches.

Points to Ponder

Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died.

Erma Bombeck

Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.

Frank Lloyd Wright

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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."