

The Sparkler

The Sparkleberry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

Volume 3, Issue 1

January, 2013

President's Message: *Mae Brandt*

A New Year for Sparkleberry

Happy New Year!! The year 2013 starts the 3rd year of our Sparkleberry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. I can only hope, that as your new president, I can continue the good works of the previous two presidents, Betsy Martin and Carol Sullivan. I truly have big shoes to fill. I am honored to be your president for the 2013 year and am open for your suggestions and comments. It is my wish that you become more educated in Florida's beautiful native plants and habitats, and to further the Society's goals of promoting the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. □

Almost a dozen Sparkleberry members got together on December 10th and stirred up their creativity to make some really outstanding table decorations for our 2nd annual Sparkleberry Christmas party held on the 11th. We had a blast at the party!! The food was awesome and everyone went home with a gift. Thank you to all the planners, helpers and attendees! I'm already thinking of ways to do the next year's PowerPoint too. LOL

I would like to encourage you to tell your friends and neighbors about Sparkleberry and invite them to one of our meetings. On January 8th, at our monthly meeting, the speaker will be Beau Willsey, from the Suwannee River Water Management District. He will be giving a presentation about Invasive Exotic Plants. This will be a very informative presentation and a good opportunity for you to bring a friend or neighbor to open their eyes to the threat that invasives play in Florida.

I am looking forward to seeing you on January 8th. Bring a friend!

Mae Brandt

Year's end is
neither an end
nor a beginning
but a going on,
with all the wisdom
that experience
can instill in us.
Happy New Year



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 January 8, 2013



Calendar of Events:

January 5: 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.

January 8: Monthly Meeting 6:30 pm., Hatch Park, Branford

Beau Willsey, an Environmental Scientist III with Water Resources for the Suwannee River Water Management District will present a program on Invasive Exotic Plants affecting the Suwannee Valley region and what we can do to prevent and/or eliminate them from our property.

January 18 -Florida Arbor Day Celebration, 10:00 am till noon, Branford

The Sparkleberry Chapter will be promoting the many benefits of planting trees with a bareroot NATIVE tree to be given to those who stop by our booth, one to a family. We will be set up next to the Branford Town Hall on Suwannee Avenue (U.S. 129). The selections include Dogwood, Redbud, Eastern Red Cedar and Wax Myrtle, each with planting instructions to assist in choosing the right tree. Come join us in supporting Arbor Day.

Ask a Native Plant Gardener: Valerie Thomas

Q: My fire bush has mostly frozen and is black with hanging leaves and berries. Should I cut it back? Will it come back in the spring?

A: Wait until danger of frost is past, usually sometime in March. Then cut the dead growth off, fairly close to the ground. Fire bush will usually come back, and at times, it comes back more robustly than the previous year!

To Be Considered: Valerie Thomas

Some more root names for our Florida natives..

coccinea = red

Ex. *Salvia coccinea*

Common name, Tropical sage

canadensis = from Canada

Ex. *Solidago canadensis*

Common name, Goldenrod

coreopsis = Greek words koris, meaning "bedbug," and ophis, meaning "view,"

Ex. *Coreopsis leavenworthii*

Common name, Tickseed



Florida Arbor Day - January 18, 2013

All over the world special festivals, known by a variety of names, are held for the planting and celebrating of trees. Through the tree planting efforts in the mid-1800's of J. Sterling Morton, the state of Nebraska declared the third Friday in April the legal holiday called "Arbor Day". As other states began to follow their lead, Arbor Day soon became a tradition all over the U.S.

So by now you are probably asking why we call the third Friday in January Arbor Day. The answer to that is simply that the weather conditions by April can become very hot and dry for us. The best time for planting trees and shrubs in Florida is from December to February when the angle of the sun, the shorter days and the cooler temperatures give our plants a chance to establish good root systems. This is true for most of the Southeastern states, many of which celebrate Arbor Day in January or February. In some other parts of the country the dates also vary to coincide with their best planting season.

Trees are a very important part of our everyday lives. Besides being beautiful to look at, they provide many benefits, including food, building materials, erosion control, shade, clean air, habitat for all varieties of wildlife, and on and on. With commercial harvesting, various catastrophic events, encroaching development and invasive pests taking their toll, our trees are being lost at an alarming rate. We can all help slow this decline by planting at least one more tree in your yard or by convincing a neighbor to do so. Think of the number of trees that would be planted in Florida alone if everyone planted just one tree.

The Sparkleberry Chapter is supporting Arbor Day with an event in Branford on Friday, January 18th, by giving away a variety of native trees to passersby. Several of our members have already volunteered for this event and if you would like to help in some way just email or call me anytime.

Carol Sullivan



Roadside Bloomers: *Carol Sullivan*

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) is usually the first tree to bloom in January. Before leaves appear, they become covered in brilliant red flowers that will form a 2-winged red fruit. (Sapindaceae - Soapberry Family)

Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) will begin to bloom later in the month. Buds appear red, then open to a profusion of lavender/pink flowers on bare stems. (Fabaceae - Pea Family)

Common Blue Violet (*Viola sororia*.) Blue/violet flowers with blue or white center on single stem (Violaceae - Violet Family)

Walter's Viburnum (*Viburnum obovatum*) This evergreen shrub will be forming buds this month for next month's flowers. Some dwarf varieties may bloom sporadically at any time of year.

Points to Ponder

Remember that remarkable achievements begin as thoughts.

Anonymous

Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.

Anonymous

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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."