

The Sparkler

The Sparkleberry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

Volume 4, Issue 33

April, 2013

President's Message: *Mae Brandt*

Greetings fellow native plant lovers:

It is Easter Sunday. The weather is absolutely wonderful! Do you think Spring is actually going to stick around this time?? I hadn't planted my garden yet but plan to do it this week. The yellow goldfinches have been "tanking up" for their trip up north on my backyard feeders and the trees are leafing out nicely now.

A couple of weeks ago a dozen of us went over to Betsy's house to transplant native plant seedlings into pots for our 3rd annual Sparkleberry Native Plant Sale. We had a great time and probably potted around a thousand seedlings. The sale is May 4, make sure to spread the word!

Yesterday, March 30, we had a field trip to the Ft. White Mitigation Park, an excellent example of a sand hill community. If you didn't join us, you really missed a nice time. Jerry Krummrich was kind enough to lead us around the park teaching us to identify the birds by their calls and their shapes. He is also doing a couple of bird walks at the Alligator Lake Spring Festival on April 13, in Lake City, for those of you who missed our field trip. Thank you, Carol Sullivan, for your expertise in identifying the native plants on our outing.



Our speaker for April will be Terry Zinn, from the Florida Wildflower Foundation. He will do a presentation titled Gardening with Wildflowers. The presentation will introduce our chapter to the work of the Florida Wildflower Foundation, and talk about how wildflowers are essential to our health and well-being, as well as that of the world around us. It will include info about the importance of adding wildflowers to home landscapes and include resources for species information and plant selection. Terry also will introduce a number of proven landscape performers and their care.

There are only a couple of months left before Sparkleberry shuts down for the summer. Let your friends and neighbors know about the fun we have at our meetings and how much knowledge is imparted at these meetings. Invite someone to come with you to the next meeting!

I'll see you there,

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 April 9, 2013



Calendar of Events: Save The Date!

March 29 – April 6: Suwannee County Fair, Red White Blue and You. See <http://www.suwanneecountyfair.org/schedule.htm> for fair schedule. Come visit the Sparkleberry booth.

April 13: Alligator Lake Spring Festival. 8am Bird Walks, 10a – 3p Vendors and Workshops. Alligator Lake Park, Lake City. Enjoy a fun festival celebrating nature, birds and native plants. Participate in bird walks, and Walking Workshops (registration required) on native and exotic plants, butterflies, and bird habitats. Food and drinks will be available for sale. Come see the Sparkleberry booth! Free.

April 24: Heritage Park, Live Oak. 8:00a-12:00noon. Invasive Plant Cleanup with Suwannee County Master Gardeners. Bring lunch, and after lunch a “walkabout”: a scavenger hunt for natives

May 4: Sparkleberry Native Plant Sale, Branford, 10a – 2p. Come support our Sparkleberry Chapter and get native plants at the best prices in the area.

June 1: Suwannee River State Park, a walk and a picnic “Summer Send Off”. Stay tuned, more details to follow.

Dates of Interest

April 26-27: Spring Native Plant Sale. Morningside Nature Park, Gainesville. Native plant members only, Friday April 26, 4:30p-6:30p. Open to the public Saturday, April 27, 8:30a-12:30p. Many native plant vendors participate, some of which do not routinely sell to the general public. Pay by cash, check, or (new!) credit card.

May 16-19: Florida Native Plant Society 33rd Annual Conference, Jacksonville. See the Palmetto for more details.

Feature Article: Sparkleberry Plant Sale

Betsy Martin

Sparkleberry Plant Sale Workday

Thanks so much to all who attended our Plant Sale workshop! We potted up lots of small flowering plants into 4" pots for the sale. Every small plant I had to pot got potted, and we even started on my many different varieties of tomatoes, and everyone got a chance to take a couple home to try in their gardens. And as a thank you I will be bringing some peppers, and squash plants to the meeting this month for those helping with the sale to try also.

Sparkleberry Plant Sale

This is it! If you are going to be digging up and dividing plants for the sale, now is the time. Three to four weeks before the sale should give the plants enough time to recover and be happy and healthy for the sale. It should be done now if you are going to be moving plants around in your yard before the plants really start leafing out and the weather starts getting really warm every day.

We will be having a meeting at 5:30p, right before our regular Tuesday night meeting, for those who would like to help on sale day, in which we will discuss the final preparation for the sale. We will also be discussing what plants we have for the sale, so if you have some plants for the sale and are not able to make it to the meeting, let me know what plants that you have so that we can make arrangements to have the signs with descriptions of the plants made up ahead of time. These signs are a really great selling tool. People like to see the flowers or how the plant will look as it grows and we need to have some time to make sure the signs get made. My email is betsymartin@windstream.net just drop me a note with the plant names.

We will also be having a workday the Friday before the sale for pricing and labeling at my house. We will price and make sure all plants are labeled with the plant names before the sale. It will be from 9:00a until we are done. All plants will need to be brought to my house before that Friday for the plant inspector, who is going to be there sometime that morning between 9a and 12n. The plant inspector is looking for any severely diseased plants or bugs that might be on the plants, and he pulls those plants out of the sale group if he finds any. If you would like to help on that day make sure to contact me and I will get you directions to my house if you need them. We will have the whole week/weekend before the sale that you will be able to drop off plants, or anytime we can arrange. Just contact me and we will make arrangements.



Roadside Bloomers: Carol

Lyreleaf sage, *Salvia lyrata*,
Lots of blue-flowered

Sullivan

is blooming everywhere.
spikes are standing about a

foot above the basal rosette of purple-tinged leaves.

Blue Eyed Grass, *Sisyrinchium angustifolium* - another of our small plants with blue flowers on single stems above the grass-like foliage.

Fringe Tree, *Chionanthus virginicus* - now has it's spring show of white flowers in clusters that dangle all along the branches giving it a fuzzy white haze. Sometimes also called Old Man's Beard.

Bracken Fern, *Pteridium aquilinum* - though it isn't a flower, it's fronds of bright green are a welcome site as the pop up along the roads, in the fields and all through the woods.

Wild White Indigo, *Baptisia alba* - this delicate looking plant with blue-green foliage has tall spikes of white flowers.

Also seen are Annual Garden Phlox, Moss Verbena, Henbit Deadnettle, and Mullein - none of which are Florida natives.

Point to Ponder

Opportunity is missed by people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.

-Thomas Edison

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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."