

Magnolia Chapter FNPS Monthly Update: October 2012

“Put away the (highway) mowers ‘til after Thanksgiving dinner.”

(A. Gholson)

Chapter Happenings

October was all roadside wildflowers and butterflies for the Magnolia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. Kicked off with “the Jeffs” wildflower presentations at the Chapter meeting and marked with a startling announcement from FDOT District 3, October ended with Monarchs winging south on a North wind. Magnolia members covered the region this month, witnessing native plant testimonials from Bay Day at Port St. Joe, munching on kudzu with an appreciative wildfoods audience, appreciating the multi-flowered glories of State Road 65 and the Apalachicola National Forest, and telling the good news at the Tallahassee’s Master Gardener’s Open House, Downtown Market and down onto St. Marks for the Monarch Butterfly Festival. All done in the name of a good time and inspiring converts to Go Native!

October 4, 2012 Program – Jeff Caster and Jeff Norcini, “Panhandle Wildflower Route and other Florida Wildflower Foundation News”

Before the meeting we enjoyed having pizza and a cold one at Mellow Mushroom with Jeff Norcini, learning more about his networks with other plant folks and incredible horticultural expertise with wildflowers. The meeting drew an excellent audience of 40 chapter members and flower lovers excited about the program and the buzz of activities, including the rollout of the 2013 Magnolia Chapter “Notes from the Field Calendar: Flower Structure”. The Chapter recognized the calendar committee for their hard work, and Robin Kennedy’s and Pat Stampe’s leadership in the production of a beautiful and botanically accurate calendar. In the plant raffle, Leigh Brooks won a Wreath Goldenrod, *Solidago caesia*, and Karen Berkley won Gholson’s Blazing Star, *Liatris gholsonii*. Both botanists and wildflower enthusiasts noted how the long stalked pedicels on each flower cluster along the stem made Gholson’s liatris flower stalk stand out among the most beautiful of the blazing stars.

October speakers, the Jeffs, Jeff Caster and Jeff Norcini presented “Panhandle Wildflower Route and other Florida Wildflower Foundation News”. Jeff Caster, FDOT State Transportation Landscape Architect, recounted the colorful history of wildflower conservation in Florida, including the naming of the “Land of Flowers,” efforts of the garden clubs starting in the early 1900’s and the recent coalescing of the Florida Native Plant Partnership. Through Jeff’s work and the influence of the garden clubs and other partners, many Florida counties are adopting reduced mowing ordinances. Jeff C’s informative talk was peppered with quotable quotes from notables such as Lady Bird Johnson, the Florida Constitution, and Angus Gholson. For more roadside fall wildflowers Jeff suggests following Angus’s sage advice: “Put away the mowers ‘til after Thanksgiving dinner.” Jeff C. also offered his premier reading of Robert Frost’s poem, The Last Mowing.

Jeff Norcini is a horticulturist with his own firm, OecoHort, and assists local governments and others with writing specifications for roadside and other wildflower programs. Jeff N. described his experience with the wildflower route surveys conducted for the Florida Wildflower Foundation with Gil Nelson, and presented the results of the Panhandle survey with wonderful photographs, finding that “liatris are STUNNING on County Road 379 in Liberty County.” In addition to his horticultural knowledge, Jeff N. has honed his taxonomic skills with his surveys and slides. The Panhandle survey is available at <http://flawildflowers.org/research.php>.

THE LAST MOWING

There's a place called Far-away Meadow
We never shall mow in again,
Or such is the talk at the farmhouse:
The meadow is finished with men.
Then now is the chance for the flowers
That can't stand mowers and plowers.
It must be now, though, in season
Before the not mowing brings trees on,
Before trees, seeing the opening,
March into a shadowy claim.
The trees are all I'm afraid of,
That flowers can't bloom in the shade of;
Its no more men I'm afraid of;
The meadow is done with the tame.
The place for the moment is ours
For you, oh tumultuous flowers,
To go to waste and go wild in,
All shapes and colors of flowers,
I needn't call you by name

Robert Frost 1949

October Plant of the Month – Wreath Goldenrod, *Solidago caesia*

The plant doctor, Dan Miller of Trillium Gardens Nursery picked a slender woodland wildflower, Wreath Goldenrod, *Solidago caesia*, suited to shady planting beds in about any upland site. The golden fallflowers stand about 3 feet tall on erect stems, about 5-10 per plant, and each with dark bluegreen simple lance-shaped leaves. Bend the stems into a loop and each forms a “wreath” of green and yellow, distinctive because of the many axillary flowers emerging from the base of leaves along the stem, in addition to the terminal or top flower spike. Wreath goldenrod takes sun to partial shade, and is not too particular about soil types as long as there's decent drainage. It can be grown from seed collected from the dry flowerheads.

Wreath goldenrod is native to North Florida and much of Eastern North America. After getting to know her winning raffle plant, Leigh Brooks reported seeing it about everywhere, from the Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines where she hiked for years without noticing it, to the edges of the cove forests in the Great Smokey Mountains. Native bees, butterflies and birds are also attracted to this small, unaggressive and unassuming goldenrod. If this plant were not so special, those crazy French would not call it “*verge d'or bleu-arte*.”

October 6, 2012 Field Trip – Apalachicola National Forest off State Road 65

Jeff Norcini and Scott Davis led 18 on the field trip, meeting early in Hosford and ending the day with dinner at the Family Coastal Restaurant in Sumatra. In between, the tour covered a lot of the Apalachicola National Forest, visiting locations surveyed by Jeff with Gil Nelson. As advertised, the wildflowers were outstanding and the trip leaders knowledgeable about the diverse species.

October 9, 2012 Florida Trails Association Apalachee Chapter Meeting, Early Learning Coalition, Tallahassee.

Magnolia Chapter President Fritz Wettstein out on a Tuesday evening to check out what's happening with our area's trailblazers in the Apalachee Chapter of the Florida Trail Association. Here's his report:

Howard Pardue, Karen Berkley, Dawn Griffin and the chapter members were very welcoming with good conversation and a nice spread of food. Howard and the Apalachee Chapter worked out an arrangement to meet in a large downstairs meeting in the Early Learning Coalition offices in the old Northwood Mall, for free. Fellow native plant people, Mike Tucker, Joe Lama, Brian Pelc and George Weaver showed the cross fertilization of the groups. Howard gave me and Karen B. several minutes to talk about Magnolia Chapter happenings and the joint effort

organized by Karen B., Linda Patton, Leigh Brooks and Mike Jenkins to eradicate coral ardisia from Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park north of Tallahassee.

Brian Pelc, restoration ecologist with the Nature Conservancy, presented a TNC video on prescribed burns, advocated how to be an active hiker reading the ecology of the natural communities, and described groundcover restoration and invasive species removal in the national forest. Brian has found that cogon grass, Chinese tallow and Japanese climbing fern present the greatest threats to the forest. To interpret the condition of natural communities, the hiker needs to read the landscape's CLORPT: Climate – rainfall and temperature; Organisms – types and abundances of species; Relief – topography and orientation; Parent material – geology and soils; Time – time since disturbance. Brian Pelc's presentation of restoration ecology was lively, informative and understandable. Think of management of natural systems like gardening: instead of applying fertilizer and water, apply herbicides and fire!

October 18, The Big Bend Environmental Forum, Leroy Collins Library, Tallahassee

The Big Bend Environmental Forum and the League of Women Voters of Tallahassee hosted a candidates' forum for local candidates (Tallahassee City Commission Seat 1, Leon County Commission At Large and District 2, Florida House District 9 and Florida Senate District 3). The Magnolia Chapter members Scott Davis, Ann Johnson joined other area environmental groups with booths, discussions and food (always food) prior to the forum. Although the evening was not marked with major theatrics and the candidates all just love the environment, there were some interesting notes. Bill Montford appeared genuine in his concern over poor land and water planning in the state. Michelle Rehwinkel Vasilinda was quite strong advocating the need for new leadership in the Florida Legislature, saying “watch Boardwalk Empire (on television) because that's what we're going back to” in terms of Florida's political power. The strong slate of well qualified women candidates campaigning for volunteer Soil Conservation District positions was encouraging. The Stewart – Maddox debate was mostly civil, with Maddox deflecting the charge that he's in pocket of the developers with a response that he would not let a developer friend tear down a majestic live oak. Apparent was the dire need to educate folks about native plants and natural communities. Stewart and Maddox agreed that they just love that native flowering tree, crape myrtle! Uggh!

October 21, Native Plant Foray, Fern Forest, Tallahassee

Scott Davis led a large group of 80 Sustainability Club and native plant lovers on a tour of the edible native and exotic plants growing in Tallahassee. The tour was rescheduled after a rainout the previous weekend. Before starting, Scott whetted the group's appetite for plant identification with a tasting of wild foods. Joseph Barnett covered the foray in a Tallahassee Chronicle article, “*Native plant society hikes Tallahassee's wild food paradise*”:

One big reason that I moved to Tallahassee was our surrounding natural paradise. But I didn't realize we had so many natural wild foods right in the middle of our city!

The first thing our wild food hike leader, Scott Davis did was offer us “Kudzu fries” made with his homemade acorn flour. It tasted good, was filling, and nutritious. He also gave us some beautiful orange red Winged Sumac “lemonade” to wash it down. While waiting for everyone to arrive he explained how we could get fat eating just the kudzu. Older leaves are cooked but the younger kudzu leaves could be used in salads.

<http://www.tallahassee.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2012310110003>.

Roadside Mowing Update

FDOT has released a series of 3 maps specifying this fall's mowing schedule for each of the state roads in Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla County. These roadsides are blessed with abundant sunflowers, deer's tongue, false foxgloves and other wildflowers that populate important feeding grounds for the migrating Monarch and other butterflies. Mowing will be limited until the end of this fall's migration. Yeah! Thank you FDOT and Gulf, Franklin and Wakulla Counties. Here's Eleanor's report:

I have not been directly involved, but have been following it with interest. Here is what I understand. The action was initiated by Lesley Cox (850-697-5555), who lives in Franklin County, and who observed the mowing and sent out an email to people she thought would care. This was in mid-September.

One of the people who received Lesley's e-mail was Grant Peeples (850-322-6917) who then contacted Leon County Commissioner Bryan Desloge and Representative Rehwinkel Vascilinda.

Representative Rehwinkel Vascilinda immediately had her staff (John Rodriguez 850-966-8460) get in touch with their contact at FDOT and request that mowing be halted right away. FDOT District 3 did halt the mowing on September 13th and delayed resuming it until they had a chance to study the situation.

On October 17th, Phillip Gainer (850-415-9214), FDOT District 3 Director of Transportation, sent Tommy Barfield (850-415-9200), FDOT District 3 Secretary, a plan to resume mowing in Franklin, Gulf, and Wakulla counties with maps of the roads in the counties that included the mowing plans for each road.

"Due to the continuing safety concerns within the three county area with prudent consideration for the environment, we will resume the mowing operations in Gulf, Franklin and Wakulla counties this week which have been halted since early September. The plan will have some areas of limited mowing and some with full ROW mowing as described in the attached county maps. The plan is to start in Gulf county and move to Franklin and Wakulla counties."

Letters of support for not mowing until after the fall wildflowers had finished blooming and the Monarch butterflies had finished their migration were sent to FDOT by the following people:

Terry Peacock, Refuge Manager, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (850-925-6121)

Lynn Artz, Wakulla County Commissioner (850-320-2158)

Fritz Wettstein, President of the Magnolia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (845-412-1121)

Lana Arnold, President of the Tallahassee Garden Club (850-509-7758)

October 20, 2012 Master Gardener Open House, Tallahassee

Eleanor reports: Vicki and James and I had a nice turnout for our booth at the Master Gardeners' Open House at the Extension Service on Saturday. We gave away many of the materials, and thanks to James the salesman, we sold nine calendars.

October 27, 2012 Monarch Butterfly Festival, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

The Chapter's native plant booth at this year's Monarch Butterfly Festival at St. Marks was one of the great things we do that leaves a smile on everyone's faces. I didn't get an official count, but refuge staff estimated attendance around 1,500 to 2,000. It was fun to see the gobs of children and to talk about native plants to so many people who had butterflies on their clothes and faces. I know it was well attended because they ran out of Bradley sausage dogs around 1:00 in the afternoon after having ordered twice as many as last year.

Gail Fishman, who helped organize the festival booths, located us in a tent with our sister Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, and close to the butterfly booth of the Hairstreak Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, and the wildflower tent of the Florida Wildflower Foundation and Panhandle Wildflower Alliance, creating a great synergy. When someone talking to us about native plants in a butterfly garden had a question about how long it takes a monarch butterfly to emerge from a chrysalis, we could point them to the butterfly folks for an answer (as little as a week). For the visitor to the butterfly booth who asked about creating a wildflower meadow, the answer was right behind them with Jeff Norcini the horticultural expert in the wildflower booth!

Thanks to Magnolia Chapter volunteers Chris Bittle, Scott Davis, Ann Johnson, Robin Kennedy, Pat Stampe and Fritz Wettstein for helping with the booth. Also invaluable were Sarracenia Chapter members Jeannie Brodhead, Doug and Katherine Gilbert and David Roddenberry, who put together a beautiful wildflower display and display

boards, and helped answer questions and sign folks up when we got busy or had to take a break. Robin was quite the salesman, selling a total of 22 one gallon native plants from Trillium Gardens (pinxter and flame azaleas, highbush blueberry, hoptree and oakleaf hydrangea). Scott's yaupon tea, sweetened with blue agave, was a big hit and very much the conversation piece. Visitors to the booth also enjoyed the free native plant seeds (red buckeye, wild indigo and woods/river oats), bought 9 calendars and walked away with a ton of information. And the butterflies? A skipper (longtail?) visited Ann's bouquet of Carphophorus, Chrysopsis, Conoclinium and Lobelia, and flew away with a bellyful of nectar!

Native Nurseries Sale - 50% off Native Trees, Shrubs and Wildflowers

American Elm – beautiful form (we're south of the Dutch Elm Disease)

Pond Cypress – fewer knees!

Swamp Tupelo (*Nyssa biflora*) – love that big butt

Wild Olive – smells great, less filling

Soapberry – make your own soap

Buttonbush – the best summer native butterfly bush

Saltbush – the best fall native butterfly bush

Simpson Stopper – most cold hardy evergreen subtropical, shell mound species: at St. Marks.

Sweet Pepper Bush – gives the old timey garden feel.

Corkwood – loves a chance to show its stuff in gardens, but needs room to run.

Wax Myrtle 'Varnadoe' – all females

Cutleaf Rudbeckia – lots of color

Blue Flag Iris – leaves show bluegreen in the garden in early spring

Trumpet Vine – hardy, hardy, hardy – long summer bloomer for the hummers

Passionvine – butterfly munchies and human eye candy

Atlantic White Cedar – another unexpectedly solid growing plant in urban uplands

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Magnolia Chapter FNPS Membership Coordinator

Like to get to know new folks, reconnect with old friends and be a member of a charged up fun group of people? You sound like a perfect membership coordinator (see below). The position has opened up again. Is it hard? Naw, just ask Mike Jenkins, who with Amy is handling membership, chapter secretary, and is a rare plant expert, field hand, daddy and Ms. Magnolia while having time in between to catch some ZZZs! Contact Fritz Wettstein fwettstein@comcast.net or Leigh Brooks lbrooks2wd@nettally.com for more information.

Volunteer Activities

- ^ Serve as Chapter contact for state office to receive quarterly membership reports. Forward to the Magnolia Board.
- ^ Coordinate follow up of lapsed memberships. Prepare an email to Magnolia Board members that lists the delinquent names and asks board members to reply who they know and can follow up with by phone call or email. For unclaimed names, send email and/or postcard. Keep track of who is contacting who and results, keep everyone on schedule.
- ^ Monitor membership trends, keep the board apprised of such trends, and make periodic recommendations about increasing membership in the chapter, plan activities for increasing membership.
- ^ Follow up with dropped members to ascertain their reasons for allowing the membership to lapse.
- ^ Insure that the chapter has a supply of membership forms for dissemination at regular meetings.
- ^ Submit an annual budget request to the Treasurer when requested.

Magnolia Chapter FNPS Outreach and Education Coordinator

Have a knack for education or media relations, or just willing to deploy your numerous talents in helping spread the native plant gospel? The Magnolia Chapter has a need for a person to help with announcing chapter meetings and special events, distributing the excellent public information materials produced by FNPS and partner organizations,

and getting involved with area schools. Contact Fritz Wettstein fwettstein@comcast.net or Leigh Brooks lbrooks2wd@nettally.com for more information, or if you know someone just perfect for the job.

Volunteer Activities

- ⤴ Help with the production of flyers and announcements for bulletin boards and electronic postings.
- ⤴ Post announcements of chapter meeting and events on Facebook and community website calendars.
- ⤴ Help coordinate, set up and interpret at the native plant booth set up at special events. If you haven't seen it, the native plant booth includes poster displays, native and exotic plant cuttings, brochures, pamphlets and books, calendar sales and fun stuff for kids. There is often a native plant raffle at the event.
- ⤴ Coordinate the distribution of FNPS and partner public information, such as the "Real Florida Gardener's Guides," and the "Florida Wildflowers and Butterflies" pamphlet.
- ⤴ Reach out to local school systems for activities such as native plant projects for science fairs, native butterfly gardens and field trips.

Magnolia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, October 2012 Activities and Events (some events subject to change...check your email!)

Thursday 7 pm **Chapter Meeting:** Will Sheftall & George Kish, Project Mgr NPN (USGS)
11/01/2012 National Phenology Network, opportunities for citizen scientists

Saturday 9 am **Field Trip:** Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park, Leon County
11/03/2012 Led by George Kish and Scott Davis

Saturday 9 am – 6 pm **Booth:** Florida Seafood Festival, Franklin County
11/03/2012 Leigh Brooks

Saturday 8 am – noon **Workday:** Northwest FL Water Management District, Gadsden County
11/10/2012 Wildflower planting party, Leigh Brooks

Sunday 9:30-12:30 **Workday:** Elinor Knapp Phipps Park, Tallahassee
11/11/2012 workday with Florida Trails Association, (lunch provided) contact Linda Patton (850) 668-4334, lpatton@fsu.edu, or Karen Berkley (850) 570-5740, kjberkley@gmail.com.

Saturday 9 am – noon **Workday:** Maclay Gardens State Park, Leon County
11/24/2012 FNPS garden day, Bob Farley

Thursday 7 pm **Chapter Meeting:** Dr. Craig Huegel, author
12/06/2012 Native landscaping for wildlife
Saturday 9 am **Field Trip:** Travis and Karen MacClendon's property, Calhoun County
12/08/2012 Award winning native landscape south of Blountstown.

Saturday 9 am – noon **Workday:** Maclay Gardens State Park, Leon County
12/29/2012 FNPS garden day, Bob Farley

Thursday 7 pm **Chapter Meeting:** Malcolm Hodges, The Nature Conservancy
1/03/2013 Lichens

Prepared by Fritz Wettstein 850/412-1121
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The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.