

## Magnolia Chapter FNPS March 2013 Monthly Update – Fritz Wettstein

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"A garden requires patient labor and attention. Plants do not grow merely to satisfy ambitions or to fulfill good intentions. They thrive because someone expended effort on them."

(Liberty Hyde Bailey)

## Chapter Happenings

March found the Magnolia Chapter members out looking to see when the swelling buds of red buckeye, *Aesculus pavia*, popped, calling hummingbirds back to ornament North Florida woods. Cool and mosquito free, conditions were also perfect for hitting the trails, pulling invasives and readying up for spring planting.

### March 7, 2013 Program – Eleanor Dietrich and Loran Anderson, "The Plants of State Road 65"

The March program was a perfect blend of beauty and science. Eleanor Dietrich, with the help of her able sidekick Dr. Loran Anderson's botanical punditry and a local musician's instrumentals, put on a wonderful show of scenic State Road 65's spring wildflower glory. Eleanor skillfully told the interesting story of the protection of the highway's roadside wildflowers, with important roles played by Harper's Beauty, *Harperocallis flava*, the US Forest Service, the folks of Liberty County and the Florida Department of Transportation. Dr. Anderson highlighted the uniqueness of the area's biodiversity, noted by the number of rare and endemic species. The crowd of 48 in attendance left glowing all warm inside from the third portion of the presentation, Eleanor's and Virginia Dell Craig's colorful wildflower photographs played with songs by local composer Jonny Lipford. Lipford features melodies composed on Native American flutes and backed with keyboards. You can see photos of the flowering natives at Eleanor's Flickr site on the web at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wildflowersflorida/sets/72157633074988338/>. Many commented that the March program was the best wildflower presentation they had experienced.

### Dan's March Pick for Plant of the Month, Solomon's seal, *Polygonatum biflorum*

Solomon's seal, *Polygonatum biflorum*, grows in shady moist woodlands of Florida's Panhandle and North Central Peninsula. A widely distributed perennial herb found throughout North America's deciduous hardwood forests it hangs out in some of the best forests in the area. Herbarium specimens describe colorful names and descriptions of Solomon's Seal collecting sites: Woodyard Hammock in Tall Timbers, near Cedar Grove sink, Bumpnose Road, Cat Hammock, Phipps Park, Blue Spring Creek and Florida Caverns, with site descriptions such as "shady forest," "beech woods," and "calcareous hammock." In the spring Solomon's Seal raises its long graceful leafing stems and dangling small creamy white bell flowers above these rich forest floors. Quite hardy, Solomon's Seal can be grown in shady garden beds with minimal care. The roots and new shoots are edible and the plant has long been considered a valuable medicinal herb.

Solomon's Seal is named after the ring with the seal given King Solomon by God for protection against malice. Flat, round scars where stems formerly attached to the plant's rhizomes create patterns that resemble the official

seals imprinted on wax to seal documents. Add to this sign the plant's reknown for healing everything from damaged limbs to "women's issues", and the plant definitely deserves recognition as being kingly protection.

The taxonomic discussion of the species is a little more difficult. Once considered a member of the lily plant family, *Polygonatum biflorum* now is classified with the Asparagaceae. This shouldn't be a stretch as the edible new spring shoots are described as asparagus-like. USDA identifies several varieties overlapping within Florida's eastern panhandle, depending on growth forms and cell chromosome counts. Wunderlin describes only one species in the [Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida](#). As a variable species growing over a wide range, perhaps aided by human use as a medicinal herb, Solomon's Seal is both a unique and wide ranging North Florida native wildflower. See *Polygonatum biflorum* at <http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Plant.aspx?id=3322>.

## Botanical Rambles

### March 23, 2013 Field Trip – SR 65 Spring Wildflowers, Liberty County

Magnolia Chapter March Field Trip: Despite the weather Saturday, 15 botanizers managed to dodge the rain and have a great trip, including a wonderful lunch at the Family Coastal Restaurant in Sumatra. Though still a little early for the full suite of wildflowers in the roadside swales, savannas, flatwoods and cypress stringers of the Apalachicola National Forest landscape, quite a few were in bloom. These are also on Eleanor's Flickr site at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wildflowersflorida/sets/72157633074988338/>.

#### Site 1 Hickory Landing Road (FR-101-B)

Bull thistle *Cirsium horridulum*  
Bearded grass pink *Calopogon barbatus*  
Bog buttons *Lachnocaulon*  
Candyroot *Polygala lutea*  
Fetterbush *Leucothoe racemosa*  
Hatpins *Eriocaulon*  
Lanceleaf coreopsis *Coreopsis lanceolata*  
Lyre leaf sage *Salvia lyrata*  
Parrot pitcher plant *Sarracenia psittacina*  
Pineland daisy *Chaptalia tomentosa*  
Pond cypress *Taxodium ascendens*  
Purple polygala *Polygala crenata*  
Small butterwort *Pinguicula pumila*  
Spring helenium (sneezeweed) *Helenium vernale*  
St. Johns wort *Hypericum*  
Titi *Cliftonia monophylla*  
Yellow butterwort *Pinguicula lutea*  
Yellow trumpets pitcher plant *Sarracenia flava*

#### Site 2 Family Coastal Restaurant

Fried green beans  
Fried green tomatoes  
Fried fish  
Fried shrimp  
Grits  
Hushpuppies  
Sweet Tea

#### Site 3 SR 65 swale (north west road shoulder from FR-105)

Bayberry *Myrica heterophylla*  
Dwarf wax myrtle *Myrica pumila*  
Lanceleaf violet *Viola lanceolata*  
Rose pitcher plant *Sarracenia rosea*  
Spiderwort *Tradescantia ohiensis*  
Snowbell storax *Styrax americanum*  
Yellow stargrass *Hypoxis*

## Go Native Plant Events

### March 2, 2013 Wildflower Workshop, Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park, Leon County

Birdsong Nature Center hosted Dan Miller's "Using Native Wildflowers in the Home Landscape" workshop, on Saturday, March 2nd. The Birdsong fundraising event was an interactive workshop to assist gardeners in the selection and placement of wildflowers in the home garden. Dan instructors gardeners on how to select and place wildflowers in north Florida and south Georgia gardens, showing slides of wildflowers and talking about cultural requirements for specific plants and their propagation practices. Dan's discussion points included: species appropriate for the region, colors, bloom season, size; placement of plants: light, spacing, soil and moisture requirements; techniques for propagating wildflowers; and seed production and gathering.

### March 9, 2013 Red Hills Horse Trials, Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park, Leon County

Karen Berkley and the Jenkins family hosted an information booth at probably the largest international event held annually in Tallahassee. The booth focused on the joint Florida Trail Association/Florida Native Plant Society

invasive plant education/eradication effort ongoing at Phipps Park. The Red Hills Horse Trials (not one was convicted) is marvelously well run with folks shuttled across the park and Phipps property landscape, and great venue for connecting with the general public, horse people and others with an interest in good stewardship and management of natural areas.

### **March 16, 2013 Gholson Nature Park Invasive Plant Removal Workday, Chattahoochee**

Magnolia Chapter volunteers were at it again working to control non-native invasive plants at Angus K. Gholson, Jr. Nature Park in Chattahoochee. Leigh reported crab apple wildflowers in bloom, including trout lilies, trillium, rain lilies, blue phlox, false garlic, woodland spurge. In bud were flame azalea, Indian pink, fringed campion, tuberous gromwell, Baldwin's spiny pod, all soon to be in flower. For blooming time of Magnolia Country's wildflowers, find out the scientific name to search the flowering data of Gil Nelson's <http://www.gilnelson.com/PanFlora/> website.

### **March 16, 2013 Birdsong Old Timey Plant Sale, Meridian Road, Georgia**

Many Magnolia Chapter members support the numerous other organizations and places sharing the FNPS mission of leaving the world a better place for native plants and natural communities. On a beautiful spring day quite a few chapter members volunteered or attended Birdsong Nature Center's annual spring plant sale. The sale featured tried-and-true garden favorites, rare and unusual plants, plus native plants for wildlife food, including hundreds of wild azaleas. In addition to heritage plants grown by Birdsong members, Dan Miller brought flowering flame and pinxter azaleas (*Rhododendron austrinum*, *R. canescens*) and a lot of native stock from his Trillium Gardens Nursery. Superior Trees out in Madison County also brought native plants well suited for North Florida/South Georgia growing conditions. For more on Birdsong visit <http://www.birdsongnaturecenter.org/>.

### **March 17, 2013 Invasive Plant Education/Eradication, Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park, Leon County**

Under Karen Berkley's leadership as crew boss, the Magnolia Chapter FNPS continues partnering with the Apalachee Chapter of the Florida Trail Association to attack the invasive exotic coral ardisia, *Ardisia crenulata*, in an important plant area north of town. This program will use Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park's extensive invasion of coral ardisia (and other exotics) for a series of hands-on education and volunteer opportunities. An interesting mix of twenty seven folks attended the event, eager to rip out the ardisia. Before the eradication started, however, the group heard about the public awareness raising purposes of the event, resource management and safety. Assisting Karen were Cameron Higgs, Maclay-Overstreet Park Ranger and Brian Pelc, the Nature Conservancy. A representative of the Florida Department of State also discussed the importance of being mindful of historic artifacts and sites when working in natural areas. The volunteers, including some of my local environmental heroes, Fred Dietrich, Joe Lama and Jody Walthall, made it a fun, educational, exercise-fulfilling morning, with the added satisfaction of clearing two-plus zones of much 27 bags of Ardisia. It was also rewarding to see groundcovers recovering along previously treated areas of the Fern Gulley Trail.

### **March 30, 2013, Gholson Nature Park Lily Fencing, Chattahoochee**

Leigh Brooks, Bill and Marcia Booth and other volunteers were installing deer exclosures around Carolina lily (*Lilium michauxii*) that is emerging now. These plants have not been seen blooming at the park for many years. They are really tasty to deer and maybe other wildlife so they don't get a chance to flower, set seed, and reproduce.

Leigh Brooks reported beautiful weather for a day on the bay and great attendance. From the count of tickets sold for the low country boil, an estimated 500 people attended the annual fund raising event of the Friends of St. Joseph Bay Buffer Preserve, a group powered in part by Magnolia Chapter members Marcia and Billy Boothe. The Magnolia Chapter was joined by the Sweetbay Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society in Panama City, with exhibits of native plants and wildflowers, and sharing native plant information and brochures. Leigh and crew of

Rayanne, Scott C. and Carmen Z., talked to bunches of plant happy people, gave away a lot of native plant literature, and sold *Botanical Rambles* calendars and a slew of Dan Miller's native plants from Trillium Gardens. The many seasonal residents plus folks just visiting the area especially appreciated the Highway 65 Spring Wildflower Flyers and the Panhandle Wildflower Route Brochures.

### **March 30, 2013, Lost Creek Forest Hikes Resume, Thomas County, Georgia**

Beth Grant reports that there are hikes again at the old growth Lost Creek Forest near the airport in Thomas County, and scheduled a March 30, 2013 workday to clear the trails:

"Perhaps you remember the Save Our Forest Movement a few years back? There were plans to build an industrial park there, but a grassroots movement convinced the county commission to reject this plan. They later found a much better site on four-lane Highway 319.

A group of us eventually formed a non-profit Friends of Lost Creek Forest. We have just recently completed a contract with the county and city (the owners of the airport property) that will allow us to once again do guided hikes and research in the forest.

There will be several hikes scheduled in April, including Rose Show week. We will need lots of help for a membership drive, we need more board members, etc., so please be thinking about how you would like to help!

\*Go out Hwy 122, Pavo Rd., about 5 miles out of town from Office Depot.

Just past the Country Oaks Golf Course, there is a left turn lane onto Airport Rd. You will see our cars on the left about halfway down the hill on the left. Please park off the road.

More to come. It is going to be so wonderful to be back in the forest again! Beth" (bethwgrant@gmail.com).

**Tip of the Hatpins!** A huge Magnolia Chapter "tip of the hatpins" to another member who is the owner of a Big Tree. Martha Tilden can take claim to the Florida Challenger Silverbell growing on her property. The tree, documented by county forester Charles Marcus, is depicted on the Florida Forest Service Champion Tree webpage: <http://tlhfor013.doacs.state.fl.us/ChampionTrees.Public/home.mvc/Detail/977>.

## **Notes from the Field**

### **City of Tallahassee National Invasive Species Awareness Week Declaration**

Brian Pelc, TNC restoration specialist and regional Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area dynamo, reports the City of Tallahassee adopted a resolution declaring March 3-9 as National Invasive Species Awareness Week. Brian was on hand for the Feb 13th city council meeting to make some comments and accept the resolution. Second only to habitat loss as a cause of the decline of our native species of plants and wildlife, invasive species are a very costly hazard.

### **Ten Ways to Observe National Invasive Species Awareness Week, March 3 – 9**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Know your Enemy                              | 7. Start a Native Wildlife Garden            |
| 2. Join an Eradication Effort                   | 8. Get Involved in Public Policy             |
| 3. Become a Citizen Scientist with EDDMapS      | 9. Take the NISAW Challenge for:             |
| 4. Visit a Native Garden, Park or Nature Center | - boaters                                    |
| 5. Read <i>Strangers in Paradise</i>            | - pet owners                                 |
| 6. Donate to the Cause                          | - campers                                    |
|   | - gardeners                                  |
|   | 10. Have an Invasive Species over for Dinner |

## **Travis and Karen MacClendon, Calhoun County, go Global with FNPS Blog**

A tell-all story, "Evolution of a Herbarium" chronicles Travis and Karen's great big adventure from getting a copy of [The Guide to Florida Wildflowers](#), learning to key out plants in the [Guide to the Vascular Plants of Florida](#), botanizing with the legendary Margaret Hames as my mentor to canvassing Calhoun County with Dr. Anderson. Check out Travis's blog at <http://fnpsblog.blogspot.com/2013/03/evolution-of-herbarium.html>.

## **Mountain Laurels**

Mountain laurels, *Kalmia latifolia*, are blooming now and do well here in Magnolia Country. For a look at the plant, click here: <http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Plant.aspx?id=3648>, or see them live at Maclay Gardens or along Econfinia Creek. Mountain laurels like lower to mid-slope Upland Hardwood Forests, in the shade or partial shade, creek and roadsides, and between roads and creeks. Plant them in your "Back 40" or your front yard! They are usually available at Native Nurseries. Be patient...they are s-l-o-o-o-o-w!

## **Parsley Haw**

Blooming now is the wonderful Parsley Haw (*Crataegus marshalii*). This plant will grow in shaded areas near water or lower slopes. It is a river floodplain special and will also hover over sinkholes. Because it can take heavy soils, it is adapted to most soil types of the Tallahassee Red Hills and surrounding areas. This native plant has gorgeous, parsley-like foliage and abundant flowers/red berries for the bugs and birds, respectively! See it along the Aucilla River near Lamont, or go to <http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/Plant.aspx?id=3770>.

## **In the Native Garden**

If you are like other native plant or wildlife habitat gardeners, you are at least semi-delusional, envious of the order, color and vibrance of well tended garden while self convinced that your untidy wildness is "maintenance free." With the spring rains you find yourself walking your beds and saying, "see it's so natural, see all the wonderful little seedlings." Still you know inside, it is probable that the wildflowers share their seedbed with even more aggressive non-native annuals. But how do you know what's best to pull and best leave? A tip from a native gardener's blog notes that in addition to knowing the traits and characteristics of the full size wildflower, knowing the seedling germination times and physical traits are essential. In the winter, "Sow a small amount of each seed in a flat and label accordingly. You will see what the immature plants look like and what not to weed. Unfortunately, snails and slugs seem to prefer wildflowers (and our young bulbs as they emerge!) over weeds so whether with bait or some home remedy, get them!"

## **Stem Rot in the Native Garden**

Another tip from the same website warned against stem rot, fungi that attack the critical juncture at the soil level between the plant stem and the root crown. Fungi especially enjoy the cool, damp conditions of our winters and springs. Inspect the area where the roots are connected to the stem. If there are fuzz or white hairs around the base of the stem, or the stem is soft, it may be too late. Leaves and soil that may have fallen or washed in against the stem should be pulled away. This is important to prevent the growth of fungi and to allow the root crown "to breathe." Be especially watchful of buildup around recently planted plants. This might be time to rake or grade out the "watering ring" constructed around the plant for watering.

## **Wildflower Alert – Butterflyweed Locations Needed**

Dr. Jeff Norcini reports that the Xerces Society wants to increase the availability of butterfly weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, specifically Florida ecotypes, as part of their project to increase monarch habitat. They have asked Jeff to collect seed in the panhandle and northern peninsular Florida. Jeff says "From what I've seen in my travels they are common but widely scattered and generally only a few occur in any one spot. I have checked PanFlora for potential locations, although most of those records are not very recent. And Janet Grabowski (USDA NRCS Plant Materials Center, Brooksville) noticed a relatively large population on SR 100 in Bradford County. What locations are you aware of in the panhandle/northern Florida?" Please report butterflyweed spots to Jeff at: [OecoHort@comcast.net](mailto:OecoHort@comcast.net).

## Magnolia Chapter Schedule

### Upcoming Magnolia Chapter Native Plant Society Activities and Events

(some events subject to change...check your email or call Fritz at 412-1121!)

- 4/18/2013 Workday: Wolf Creek Trout Lily Preserve, Grady County, GA Thursday 9 am – ? Exotics workday, Beth Grant
- 4/20/2013 Wakulla Springs Wildlife Festival Wakulla Springs State Park Saturday 9am – 4pm: Native Plant Booth: Earth Day event
- 4/27/2013 Maclay Native Arboretum garden day, Maclay Gardens State Park, Leon County Saturday 9 am – noon, Bob Farley
- 5/02/2013 Magnolia Chapter FNPS Annual Membership Meeting FSU Jim King Life Science Center, Rm 1024 Thursday 7:15 pm: votes on  
- changes to by-laws  
- new chapter officers
- 5/02/2013 Magnolia Chapter FNPS **May Program:** Plants, Art and History of the Tobe Botanic Garden, Quitman, Georgia Thursday 7:45 pm John David Tobe, PhD
- 5/04/2013 Magnolia Chapter **May Field Trip:** Led by John Tobe. Saturday 9 am: Tobe Garden in Quitman, GA
- TBA Ad hoc field trip: Leon & Wakulla counties. Mike Jenkins, Sally Jue St. Marks bike trail to see Coral Hairstreak butterflies
- 5/16-19 Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference, Ixia Chapter FNPS Thursday – Sunday 2013 FNPS Conference, University of North Florida, Jacksonville
- 5/25/2013 Maclay Native Arboretum garden day, Maclay Gardens State Park, Leon County Saturday 9 am – noon, Bob Farley
- 6/06/2013 Magnolia Chapter FNPS **June Program:** Culture of edible native blueberries and their cultivars, Blair Clawson Thursday 7 pm: social. 7:30 Meeting. 7:45 Program  
- **Pre-meeting herbarium open house**
- 6/08/2013 Magnolia Chapter June **Field Trip** Webb Farm, Madison County. Led by Dr. Anderson. Saturday 9 am field trip: Webb Farm, seed orchard for Superior Trees

Prepared by Fritz Wettstein

April 16, 2013

*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.*