

Magnolia Chapter FNPS April-May-June 2013 Update – Fritz Wettstein

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"Look for the little things."

(Martin Lindauer)

Chapter Happenings

April continued the Magnolia Chapter area's extended cool, wet 2013 Spring, kicked off by the record late February rains, while May brought first hot dry weather, then hints of tropical humidity to come. It was a time of change, changing of weather's mood, flower troops, and the Magnolia Chapter officers. June turned North Florida into rainforest dwellers, living around the steady parade of afternoon thunderstorms. There was also a mood swing in the Magnolia psyche, from the ebullient joy for FDOT's appreciation of the roadside wildflower bonanza experienced in May journeys to the annual FNPS conference and other destinations, to the damp soured mood of June's humidity and absurd Governor's veto of the wildflower plate fee increase, then back to a green optimism buoyed by the plant outburst fueled by the summer heat and humidity. Dumb doings of a dour bald man are no match for photosynthesis!

Monthly Programs

April, 2013 Program Nia Wellendorf, 'Getting the Plants Right provides clues for Getting the Water Right: Use of Plants in Florida's Water Quality Assessments

Nia Wellendorf, an expert botanist in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Water Quality Program, explained the use of plant surveys in confirming if lakes and streams meet the state's water quality standards. In addition to chlorophyll counts of algae cells (microscopic phytoplankton plants!), researchers identify and count aquatic and invasive plants using line transects and other rigorous biological survey methods. The results are compared to a vegetation of a natural or "reference" waterbody, and used in conjunction with nutrient and macroinvertebrate information to determine the waterbody's status as "impaired" or "non-impaired." primarily for nitrogen and phosphorous. During her presentation, Nia showed photographs of many of the common aquatic plants in the area, and provided interesting anecdotes about the plant grazing (herbivorous) Florida manatee and the health of the area's waterbodies.

Dan's April Pick for April's Plant of the Month, Florida Flame Azalea, *Rhododendron austrinum*.

Native to the slope forests of Northwest Florida's ravines, steepheads and streambanks, the Florida Flame Azalea is recommended by Dr. Dan Miller of Trillium Gardens Nursery north of Tallahassee as a "must have" tall deciduous shrub for gardens in the area. Blooming several weeks after the Pinxter Azalea, *Rhododendron canescens*, the flowers of the Florida Flame Azalea, *Rhododendron austrinum*, brighten woodland shade with clusters of showy orange flowers, and perfume the cool spring morning air. Florida Flame Azalea prefers moist, drained, acid soils where it can take partial to full sun. If you don't have perfect "slope forest" conditions, but clay or hardpan soils, plant a little high and contour the planting bed so that rainwater doesn't pool but runs off. According to Dan, new

plantings may need to be watered through the first several growing seasons, until a mature root system develops. As an acid loving member of the blueberry, oak leaf or pine needle mulch is sure to be appreciated. Annie Schmidt won a little tyke Florida Flame Azalea from Dan's nursery in the plant raffle at the April Chapter Meeting.

Magnolia Chapter Annual Meeting, May 2013

The annual general membership of the Magnolia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society approved updates to the Chapter's by-laws and a new board of directors. The 27 chapter members attending first heard an annual chapter report and recognition of volunteers by outgoing president Fritz Wettstein. Fritz also explained the by-law changes (a thinly veiled power grab to cover misappropriation of chapter funds for his Costa Rica trip...just kidding). Eleanor Dietrich presented the slate of officer nominees (a.k.a. "suckas", bam!) and new chapter president Leigh Brooks provided a description of the general structure for chapter volunteers in the future. Click on "Documents" on the chapter website <http://magnolia.fnpschapters.org> for full annual meeting minutes.

May, 2013 Program – John Tobe, “Plants, Art and History of the Tobe Botanic Garden, Quitman, Georgia”

Dr. Tobe took us on a botanical garden tour of his life from a rock pit which his family developed into a tropical paradise in Davie, Broward County, through his educational years, including a graduate school stint cataloguing plants in a French garden, travels to Asia and finally to the Tobe Botanic Garden with its garden follies (look it up in [Wikipedia](#)) and locally manufactured bathhouse in Quitman, Georgia. His fascinating story is a testament to his dedication to beautiful plants, such as a doctoral thesis on the Magnolia family, and his mentoring by faculty members but mostly by his family. For instance, John's great-grandfather from Kentucky insisted that the family "buy the farm," which resulted in them setting down stakes in southern Georgia. John's presentation showed the transformation of the property from a house in a pine plantation as depicted in his brother's childhood drawing of their home, to the botanical, architectural and ecological wonderland it is today.

Dan's Pick for May's Plant of the Month, Smooth Phlox, *Phlox glaberimma*.

Dr. Dan Miller picked Smooth Phlox, *Phlox glaberimma*, for the long steady flowering of phlox purple blue that rises about the rest of the crowd in the garden bed. Common to the eastern United States, Smooth Phlox occurs in moist woodlands of the central and western Florida Panhandle, where it can be found in light gaps where trees have been knocked down. Craig Huegel remarks in his [blog](#) that it is regrettable that Phlox are not more widely available in Florida garden nurseries. Smooth phlox can take light sunny to deep shady conditions and is reported to tolerate more soil moisture than most other species of phlox. It is recommended to avoid overhead watering, however, and apply a summer mulch to help keep its roots cool. At the chapter meeting, Deanne shared the good fortune of area plant lovers enjoying the beauty of Smooth Phlox grown at Dan's Trillium Gardens nursery, winning a great specimen in the May plant raffle.

June 6, 2013 Program – Blair Clawson and Dr. Loran Anderson, “Helping Blueberries Prosper in Tallahassee and North Florida”

Dr. Anderson warmed up the crowd, working in stories of blueberries and cowpox before hitting a high note with a crowd pleasing easy key for identifying the area's species of blueberry (e.g., *Vaccinium ellioti*, Mayberry, has many green stems and small leaves and smaller dark berries). Blair Clawson picked up from where his father-in-law Loran left off (that's another story) and kept the beat with a great story of his fascination with all things blueberry contracted when he moved to this area. Blair engaged the audience with his tricks for producing the perfect blue fruit, handpicked off the bushes from late March to early June if the conditions are just right. Blair's backyard experiments have settled him on planting techniques (apply pine straw mulch liberally and no chemical fertilizers are required; avoid planting under or near oak trees, which not only rob the blueberry roots but disfavor the berry flavor) and Rabbiteye cultivars varieties perfect for this area (there are major differences in the highbush blueberry cultivars of *Vaccinium corymbosum*, that leave some not suitable for this area). Scroll on down to "Notes from the Field and Garden" for Dr. Anderson's blueberry ID key and Chapter and Blair Clawson's "Delite"-ful Fresh Berry Pie recipe!

Fritz's Pick for June's Plant of the Month, Mayberry, *Vaccinium elliotii*.

With Plant Doctor Dan Miller taking the month off, Fritz Wettstein takes idiotorial privileges to proclaim Mayberry, *Vaccinium elliotii*, Chapman, also known as Elliott's blueberry, as the plant of the month. Not cultivated for its smaller, less sweet fruit, and not named for Andy Griffith's mythical North Carolina town, Mayberry is plant that wildlife and native plant gardener's love. Plus, it was first described by Alvin Chapman, one of the region's botanical giants. Mayberry combines the landscape plant attributes of the small leaved semi-evergreen lowbush blueberries (*V. darrowii* and *V. myrsinites*) with the size and wildlife buffer screening benefits of the highbush species (*V. corymbosum* and *V. staminium*). An acid soil lover like all of its heath family relatives, Mayberry can take wet or droughty soil conditions, thriving with minimal maintenance...maybe a dressing of pine straw each year. And don't just take my word for it, Steve Christman has a nice write-up in [Floridata](#).

Botanical Rambles

April 5-7, 2013 Georgia Botanical Society 44th Annual Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage, Augusta, Georgia

Magnolia Chapter members Beth Grant, the Booths and others journeyed north for three days of field trips in the glorious important plant areas of the Piedmont/Coastal Plain Fall Line, seeing granite outcrops, Carolina bays and northern longleaf pine -scrub oak sand hill ecosystems. Everybody who goes on these trips always reports back with enthusiasm that it is worth the wait to plan for next year!

April 6, 2013 Field Trip – Wakulla River Paddle

On Saturday, April 6, Magnolia Chapter members Nia Wellendorf and John Lorenz led a joint FNPS, Apalachee Canoe and Kayak Club (ACKC) paddle and aquatic plant identification trip on the Wakulla River, south of world famous Wakulla Springs. Guided by expert paddler, John Lorenz, folks moseyed the cool, placid stretch of the Wakulla between the bridges, allowing time for Nia's sighting and identification of such blooming perennials as Blue Flag Iris, *Iris spp?*, and Golden Club, *Orontium aquaticum*.

May 4, 2013 Field Trip – Tobe Botanic Garden, Quitman, Georgia.

John Tobe opened his homestead up for a field trip to the property his family has been developing as a botanical garden and southeastern U.S. coastal plain ecological landscape since 1970. Over the years the Tobe family acreage would become a landscape that is part reconstructed forest and part garden. Field trippers enjoyed the the native oak-pine-hickory forests of the past as well as naturalized native spring ephemerals and flowering trees, including a spectacular collection of Magnolias with garden follies, a teahouse and temple lanterns adding artistic interest to garden paths and views.

June 8, 2013 Field Trip – Trillium Gardens and Blair's Blueberry Patch, Leon County

A good showing of Magnolia folks found their way to Dan Miller's Trillium Gardens wholesale native plant nursery north of Tallahassee, then for the afternoon double header to Blair Clawson's property chocked full of blueberries and other fruits. Sales were brisk at Trillium Gardens as members snapped up Dan's collection of hard to find wildflowers and native plants, and questions flew there and at Blair's blueberry patch, for overall quite a satisfactory day of botanical rambling!

Go Native Plant Events

April 6, 2013 Springtime Tallahassee, Ponce De Leon Park, Tallahassee

The Magnolia Chapter hosted its native plant booth in the park area close to the parade route on Monroe Street. A steady throng stopped by for native plant brochures, free wildflower seeds, yaupon tea and for native plant and wildflower chit chat. The Springtime Tallahassee venue is expensive at \$125 for the all day event, but those at the booth, Vicki and James Cooper and Eve and Fritz Wettstein, thought it seemed worth it with the number of folks getting native plant education and signing up for Chapter e-mails.

April 13, 2013 Earth Day Magnolia Plant Booth, Florida Caverns State Park, Jackson County

Leigh Brooks reported a good day at Florida Caverns State Park for their Earth Day event. Pam and Bill Anderson picked up plants from Dan's nursery and unloaded them at the event. Pam, Carmen Zaldivar and Leigh worked the booth, talked to quite a few people. With the sublime weather, however the Indian pinks had not all hatched out like at last year's event. The Panhandle and Hwy 65 wildflower brochures were popular and had to be refilled, 22 signed petitions for the Florida Water and Land Legacy campaign were collected and mailed in, and a pile of native plants from Trillium Gardens were sold, raising \$206 for the Chapter and partly quenching the thirst of the wanderer's in the Jackson County native plant desert.

April 18, 2013 Planting Native Wildflowers and Sunflowers, Tallahassee, Leon County

Magnolia member and wildflower maven Eleanor Dietrich joined Magnolia member and Landscape Architect Marc Dick and Priscilla Hudson & Kathryn Ziewitz of the Talla-Happy Sunflowers for a FREE Program with FREE sunflower seeds at the Tallahassee Eastside Branch Library on 1583 Pedrick Road.

April 20, 2013 Earthday, Goodwill Community Garden, Jackson Bluff Rd., Leon County

Scott Davis was a busy native plantsman on Earthday, with the help of Aimee Leteux manning a native plant booth at the Goodwill Community Garden on that morning, then co-facilitating a permaculture class with the UF Extension Office, then leading a foraging hike in the afternoon.

April 20, 2013 Wakulla Springs Wildlife Festival, Wakulla County

The Magnolia Chapter native plant booth was in action at the park's long running wildlife festival, teaming up with the Sarracenia Chapter and Trillium Gardens to deliver native plant goodness in the natural beauty of Wakulla Springs State Park. Dr. Ann Johnson, Ed and Donna Irby, Fritz Wettstein and Dan Miller participated. Festival Coordinator Jeff Hugo remarked on the beautiful wildflower display, appreciated Dan's plants and reported a record attendance of about 2800 in the park on that lovely Saturday. The Chapter is invited back for next year's Wakulla Springs Wildlife Festival to be held Saturday, April 19, 2014.

April 27 and May 25, 2013 Workdays, Native Arboretum, Alfred B. Maclay State Gardens, Tallahassee

Volunteers have been busy clearing out the vines and perennials weeds that try to swallow the garden and planting additions to the garden, including Indian pinks, *Spigelia marylandica*, Smoothbark St. John's wort, *Hypericum lissophloeus*, Pondspice *Listsea aestivalis*, Godfrey's swamp privet, *Forestiera godfreyii*, and Flyer's Nemis, *Brickellia cordifolia*. Fighting entropy is a never ending garden chore, with the arboretum being no exception. In June a large branch of water oak trashed the large Red Buckeyes. Park staff have cordoned off the area in the process of removing the debris.

Below is list of bloom times for the plants in the native plant arboretum at Maclay Gardens from Dr. Ann Johnson's Excel file. **Bold** plants were blooming in April. A good website for looking up photos of them is:

<http://www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/>

WOODY PLANTS		Musclewood	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>
common name	scientific name	Southern hackberry	<i>Celtis laevigata</i>
Red Buckeye	<i>Aesculus pavia</i>	Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>
Pipestem	<i>Agarista populifolia</i>	Flowering dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i>
Devil's walking stick	<i>Aralia spinosa</i>	Parsley haw	<i>Crataegus marshallii</i>
Paw paw	<i>Asimina triloba</i>	Persimmon	<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>
Beautyberry	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	Eastern leatherwood	<i>Dirca palustris</i>
Sweet shrub	<i>Calycanthus floridus</i>	Strawberry bush (Hearts-abursting)	<i>Euonymus americanus</i>

Beech *Fagus grandifolia*
Two-wing silverbell *Halesia diptera*
Witch hazel *Hamamelis virginiana*
Firebush *Hamelia patens*
Oakleaf hydrangea *Hydrangea quercifolia*
American holly *Ilex opaca*
Yaupon holly *Ilex vomitoria*
Florida anise *Illicium floridanum*
Ocala anise *Illicium parviflorum*
Virginia willow *Itea virginica*
Mountain laurel *Kalmia latifolia*
Florida corkwood *Leitneria floridana*
Cucumber tree *Magnolia acuminata*
Ashe magnolia (legacy)
Southern magnolia *Magnolia asheii*
Wax myrtle *Magnolia grandiflora*
Wild olive *Myrica cerifera*
Hophornbeam *Osmanthus americana*
Mockorange *Ostrya virginiana*
Black cherry *Philadelphus inodorus*
Bluff oak *Prunus serotina*
Swamp white oak *Quercus austrina*
Needle palm *Quercus michauxii*
Alabama azalea *Rhapidophyllum hystrix*
Florida flame azalea *Rhododendron alabamensis*
Florida pinxter azalea *Rhododendron austrinum*
Chapmans rhododendron *Rhododendron canescens*
Oconee azalea *Rhododendron chapmanii*
Swamp azalea *Rhododendron flammeum*
Cabbage palm *Rhododendron viscosum*
Florida soapberry *Sabal palmetto*
Silky camilla *Sapindus saponaria*
Horsesugar *Stewartia malacodendron*
Florida yew *Symplocos tinctoria*
Arrowwood *Taxus floridana*
Possum haw *Viburnum dentatum*
Walter's viburnum *Viburnum nudum*
Viburnum obovatum

Rusty black haw *Viburnum rufidulum*
Florida coontie *Zamia pumila*

HERBACEOUS PLANTS

Eastern bluestar *Amsonia tabernaemontana*
Columbine *Aquilegia canadensis*
Wild ginger *Asarum hexastylis*
White wild indigo *Baptisia alba*
Apalachicola wild indigo *Baptisia megacarpa?*
Poppy mallow *Callirhoe papver*
River oats *Chasmanthium latifolium*
Green and gold *Chrysogonum virginianum*
Purple coneflower *Echinacea purpurea*
Narrow-leaved sunflower *Helianthus angustifolius*
Horsemint *Monarda punctata*
Muhly grass *Muhlenbergia capillaris*
Golden ragwort *Packera aurea*
Smooth beardtongue *Penstemon laevigatus*
Wild blue phlox *Phlox divaricata*
Smooth phlox *Phlox glaberrima*
Carolina phlox *Phlox glaberrima*
Solomon's seal *Polygonatum biflorum*
Christmas fern *Polystichum acrostichoides*
Bloodroot *Sanquinaria canadensis*[not seen]
Indian pink *Spigelia marilandica*
Southern shield fern *Thelpteris kunthii*
Spiderwort *Tradescantia ohiensis*
Cahattahoochee River wakerobin *Trillium decipiens* [not seen]
Sotted wakerobin *Trillium maculatum*
Longbract wakerobin *Trillium underwoodii*
Fakahatcheegrass *Tripsacum dactyloides*
Giant ironweed *Vernonia gigantea*
Blue violet *Viola sororia*
Atamasco lily *Zephyranthes atamasca*

April 2013 Invasive Plant Education/Eradication, Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park, Leon County

The coral ardisia removal and education effort at Phipps park continued under Karen Berkley's leadership as crew boss. This program uses Elinor Klapp-Phipps Park's extensive invasion of coral ardisia (and other exotics) for a series of hands-on education and volunteer opportunities

May 16-19, 2013 Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference, Jacksonville.

Many Magnolia Chapter members took the roadside wildflower resplendent trip east on I-10 to take in the field trips and presentations of the Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference, "*Celebrating La Florida, the Land of Flowers*," held at great conference facilities at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. Not only were bodies charged with native plant juices, minds filled with native plant education, but the cars on the way back home were filled with native plants from the awesome plant sale!

June 15, 2013, Gholson Nature Park Weed Pull and Park Update, Chattahoochee

With the April 14 exotic removal workday rained, volunteers were at it again in June, clearing invasive exotics so that the rare endangered flora of the nature park can thrive.

In other news, Leigh is thrilled and relieved to report that a new volunteer workday coordinator to carry on the exotics workdays next year. Diana Picklesimer lives just outside Chattahoochee in Georgia, on Booster Club Road. She is an outdoor enthusiast, hiker, birder, member of the Magnolia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, and a delightful person. Leigh met Diana during the spring wildflower pilgrimage of the Georgia Botanical Society that was based out of Bainbridge a couple years ago. Chapter members will work with her to bring her up to speed on the exotic and rare plants at the park, and Leigh will mentor her on the organizational aspects and pass along to her the supplies like gloves, trash bags, Root Jack, flagging tape. A big thank you to Leigh for her leadership and hard work at Gholson Nature Park, and congratulations to Diana for taking up a great adventure!

Tip of the Hatpins!

A huge Magnolia Chapter "tip of the hatpins" to the Ixia Chapter and other FNPS organizers of "*Celebrating La Florida, the Land of Flowers*," the Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference held in Jacksonville. The venue, field trips, presentations and plant sale were all top notch!

Notes from the Field and Garden

Wildflower Reports

Leigh Brooks found a previously unknown population of fringed campion (*Silene polypetala*), one of our federally endangered plants and described its Chattahoochee area location to Mike Jenkins, endangered plant specialist with the Florida Forest Service where he can find it and hopefully with a GPS map the location.

Wildflower Alert – Reminder that Butterflyweed Locations are still 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.

Blueberry taxonomy/cladistics

These are the blueberries of the genus *Vaccinium* native to this area that Dr. Loran Anderson discussed at the June Magnolia Chapter program. High Bush Blueberry, *Vaccinium corymbosum*, is not on the list because as Dr. Anderson explained, it does not occur here. See the USDA PLANTS database for a range map, <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=VACO>.

Flowers cup-shaped, spreading

Stamens included (evergreen tree) V. arboreum

Stamens exserted (deciduous shrub) V. stamineum

Flowers more cylindrical, tips often narrower

Low shrubs, with small evergreen leaves

Leaves dark green, shiny V. myrsinites

Leaves gray-green, glaucous V. darrowii

Tall shrubs, with larger deciduous leaves

Small-leaved with greenish twigs V. ellottii

Larger-leaved with brownish twigs

Leaves stipitate-glandular V. virgatum

Leaves non-glandular

Twigs very hairy V. fuscatum

Twigs + smooth V. formosum

"Delite"ful Fresh Berry Pie as made by Blair Clawson

Bake pie shell until golden brown - I strongly recommend Marie Callendar's.

Boil 1 cup each of water, sugar, and berries. (I often use less sugar - maybe 2/3 to 3/4 of a cup.) Crush the berries, boil some more, and strain out the skins. Gradually stir in corn starch (a tablespoon or more) that had been mixed with enough water to make it the consistency of milk or cream. Stir until it thickens well, then remove from heat. This is the glaze. Use the least desirable berries to make the glaze.

When the glaze has cooled pretty well stir in 3 to 4 more cups of fresh berries. If using blueberries, the "Delite" variety has the most vibrant, luscious flavor of any of the cultivars that I have tried. However, it's still good with pretty much any blueberries that are fresh and firm. Our favorite is actually Triple Berry Pie, using a mixture of blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries. (Typically we use about 2/3 to as much as 3/4 blueberries, with the rest a combination of the other berries.)

Pour the glazed berries into the pie shell. (I sometimes reserve a little glaze to pour over the top of the filling to "seal" it, so the slices hold together a bit better when the pie is cut.)

Cool well in the refrigerator. It's fabulous as is, but sometimes it's yummy to serve it with Breyer's vanilla or some whipped topping.

Enjoy!!!

Pollinator Week June 17-23

Since **Pollinator Week** was **June 17-23**, there's no better time to reward these hard workers for all they do than by turning your yard or garden into a welcoming haven for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. [Help pollinators by certifying your yard, garden or balcony as an official National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat® site today.](#) Here are a few tips to attract these helpful friends to your garden:

1. **Honeybees** pollinate about one-third of all crops in the United States and contribute roughly \$15 billion a year to the economy. Honeybees and smaller native bees have somewhat shorter tongues than bumblebees, so they'll appreciate tightly packed clusters of tiny flowers and shallow blossoms like some milkweeds, spirea, goldenrod and phlox.
2. **Bats** are hard at work while you're asleep, so consider night-blooming plants in addition to day-bloomers. Install a bat box on a nearby tree to encourage bats to take up residence in your yard.
3. **Hummingbirds** love brightly colored, tubular flowers. Native red trumpet honeysuckle and many types of columbine are a favorite. When blooms are few, supplement flowers with feeders filled with nectar water.
4. **Butterflies** move pollen on their bodies, like bees, but aren't quite as efficient as other pollinators. Attract these beauties with red, yellow, orange, pink and purple blossoms that are flat-topped or clustered and have short flower tubes.

FDOT Roadside Wildflowers

Eleanor Dietrich provides this update on some important activities that have been occurring within FDOT with regard to communications initiated by members of the Panhandle Wildflower Alliance (PWA).

Just to recap briefly, the Panhandle Wildflower Alliance met with FDOT central office and District 3 several months ago to receive a presentation on the Department's mowing practices. Following that meeting, Alliance members followed up with District 3 personnel to ascertain the status of the District Vegetation Management Plan. District 3 indicated that the plan was on hold awaiting additional guidance from central office. An inquiry to the central office resulted in the Secretary of the Department calling for a clear definition of a "designated wildflower area" to be developed by the Department that could be included in the FDOT maintenance guidelines for roadside mowing.

A definition of a Designated Natural Area has now been developed and reviewed by all of the District Maintenance Engineers, the final review being this morning. A copy of this document is attached for your information. No action is required on our part at this point; this document is being provided to you only for the purpose of updating you on the progress that is being made in this area by the FDOT.

The next step will be to incorporate this definition into the FDOT Wildflower Program policy. After a draft revised policy is developed, there is a standard internal comment period within the Department before it is finalized. Once that process is complete, Districts will be in a position to implement the policy.

As you will see in the Designated Natural Areas document, Districts will be able to receive input on where these areas will be designated in a district; one of these options will be through county wildflower resolutions, which is one good place where we can work to specify areas that we want protected by modified mowing regimes.

Thanks to the efforts of the Panhandle Wildflower Alliance, these actions position all FDOT Districts to become conservationists for our roadsides in a much more effective manner. This is no small thing! It will be up to each of us to work closely with the appropriate FDOT District personnel to provide input on the designated natural areas.

As soon as the revised FDOT Wildflower Program policy is finalized, it will be sent to each of you for your information.

Florida Land and Water Legacy Campaign

Thanks to the tremendous efforts of volunteer signature gatherers and supporting organizations, including the Magnolia Chapter FNPS, Florida's Water and Land Legacy conservation amendment has crossed the ten percent threshold for Florida Supreme Court review ([see the press release](#)). In the next few months, the

Court will review the amendment language to confirm that it satisfies the legal requirements for a citizen's initiative: and in the meantime, the campaign must keep gathering signatures from Florida voters!

In April alone, campaign volunteers have gathered more than 25,000 signatures, but we need your organization's help to keep up the pace! **There are only 30 more weeks to gather another 160,000 signatures, and the Magnolia Chapter has been asked to make this campaign a priority.** For more information contact Kent Wimmer, Campaign Outreach Director, kent@floridawaterlandlegacy.org, (850) 629-4656, or Leigh Brooks, Magnolia Chapter President.

Native Plants May Be Susceptible to "Finger Blight"

While Florida native plants are hardy with respect to Florida's climatic, soil and ecological conditions, researches have demonstrated that certain native species are susceptible to fungi, rusts and other pestilence that afflict many less hardy non-native ornamental plants. Torreya blight and laurel wilt are two serious plant diseases that have infected native species. Now researchers in Tallahassee have observed occurrences of "finger blight" among native as well as non-native species. The disease appears to be selective, afflicting recently planted species in urban landscapes.

Save a Monarch - cut back your Butterfly Weeds, *Asclepias* species

Monarch butterflies are threatened worldwide by a parasite that can be transmitted from infected butterflies to non-infected ones by spores left on host plants, butterfly weeds of the genus *Asclepias*. The single celled protozoan, *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* (OE), only reproduces inside the insect's body, but reproduces through spores that stick to butterfly's scales. Spores on female Monarchs contaminate her eggshells, which are eaten by the caterpillar, which leaves spores on the host plant, which can then spread the spores to the caterpillars of other Monarch caterpillars. How to break the cycle? In temperate climates of North America, butterfly weeds die back each year, with the new growth uninfected by the spores. Cutting back your butterfly weeds to the ground in the winter replicates this natural process!

The Best Management Practice (BMP) is: *As a result of OE accumulation on older leaves, we recommend the BMP of cutting all milkweed species back to the ground (if a hard freeze does not do so) to regenerate fresh leaves each spring.*

Researchers hope that the OE infections do not keep folks from planting non-invasive butterfly weeds in their gardens because of the importance of garden butterfly weeds to make up for the loss of many wild Monarch host plants lost by the recent re-cultivation or conversion of large acreages to farmlands.

In the Native Garden

To Stake or Not to Stake? You may have noticed newly planted trees and shrubs that shoot up and lean over in youthful exuberance. What do you do, straighten up the young whipper snappers, or lop off their heads? Most trees do not need staking, which can actually prove harmful. Lee Rich writes an article on how to know when to stake and how to do it right. <http://www.finegardening.com/how-to/articles/to-stake-or-not-to-stake.aspx>

Espoma Environmental Stewardship Awards for Home Gardeners

The Espoma Environmental Stewardship Award is provided annually by the National Gardening Association to five home gardeners who voluntarily demonstrate outstanding environmental practices and initiatives. The deadline for application is July 31, 2013. For more information: <http://www.garden.org/eesa/index.php?page=consumer>.

Governor Scott Vetoes Wildflower License Plate Fee Increase

Read about the absurd justification for the veto in this article from the Huffington Post, Jason Linkins, Posted: 06/14/2013 7:45 pm EDT | Updated: 06/14/2013 8:37 pm EDT

"...Scott's letter about the veto, which he sent to Florida's Secretary Of State, Kenneth Detzner. [Maybe this will clear things up:](#)

Dear Secretary Detzner:

By the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Florida, and Article III, Section 8, of the Constitution of Florida, I do hereby veto and transmit my objections to House Bill 265, enacted during the 115th Session of the Legislature of Florida, during the Regular Session of 2013, and entitled:

"An act relating to the Florida wildflower license plate..."

The bill increases the annual use fee for a specialty license plate; an expense in addition to the standard fees paid when registering a motor vehicle. Although buying a specialty license plate is voluntary, Floridians wishing to demonstrate their support for our State's natural beauty would be subjected to the cost increases sought by this bill.

For this reason, I withhold my approval of House Bill 265 and do hereby veto the same."

To me, this shows what happens when bean counters are running the insane asylum known as Florida's State Capitol.

Laurel Wilt

There are numerous rare and common plants in the Lauraceae researchers would like to collect in the Tallahassee area and store long-term before the disease gets here. These plants include Gulf Licaria (*Licaria triandra*), Northern Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), Bog Spicebush (*Lindera subcoriacea*), Pondspice (*Litsea aestivalis*), Sassafrass (*Sassafras albidum*), and Red Bay and Swamp Bay (*Persea borbonia* and *P. palustris*). Unfortunately, due perhaps to the high oil contents of the seeds, they do not store well and should not be put in the freezer. If you have information on seed storage please contact Mike Jenkins at michael.jenkins@freshfromflorida.com.

Magnolia Chapter Schedule

We are mostly on hiatus during the summer months

July 9 - August 20, Viva La Florida Photographic Exhibit
Wildflowers of Wakulla County

Open House 6-8 pm July 9, 2013
Wakulla County Visitor Center,
1493 Coastal Highway, Panacea

Prepared by Fritz Wettstein
July 3, 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.