**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**September 19 – Chapter meeting**

**Fall Roadside**

Eleanor Deitrich  
FDOT/Panhandle Wildflower Alliance Liaison, Retired. Eleanor is a pioneer advocate for the development of roadside wildflower mowing programs throughout the Panhandle. She is also an outstanding photographer and amateur botanist.

**September 30 - National Public Lands Day**

**October is Native Plant Month**

**October 17 - Chapter meeting**

Dr. Loran Anderson  
Professor Emeritus, Florida State University. Dr. Anderson’s topic will be Forensic Botany. Bring your mystery plants with you for expert identification. He is a great speaker and a terrific friend of the Native Plant Society.

**October 28 – ST. Marks Monarch Festival**

from 10am to 4pm (we will have a booth and plant sale.)

**November 21 – Chapter meeting**

**Of Berries, Nuts and Fresh Water**

Madeleine Carr, PhD.  
Park Historian, Wakulla Springs State Park. An archaeological dig has revealed biodiversity, climate variability and the cultural resources of the people who have lived along Wakulla Springs. This is another glimpse of ethno-botany.

**December 2017 – No meeting in December**

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The Sarracenia Chapter meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month September – November and January – May. Meetings are held at 6:30 PM (6:00pm social) at the Wakulla Public Library, Crawfordville, Fla. The public is invited.

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FNPS promotes the preservation, restoration, and conservation of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

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**SARRACENIA’S SUMMER ACTIVITIES**  

Linda Smith

Over the summer months most of the Chapter activities rested but we did do some work. Chapter members spent a good deal of time working with the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Milkweed Initiative. This project was busy all summer long planting milkweed seeds, squirrel proofing the greenhouse and cheering on seedlings. In addition, the Wakulla County Garden Club, Sarracenia and the Panacea Welcome Center volunteers planted Spartina grasses, (Spartina bakeri), salt-bush (Baccharis halimifolia), seaside goldenrod (Solidago sempervirens) and one small southern red cedar at the Welcome Center in Panacea. This site floods with salty to brackish water and is a moist edge of the salt marsh. The plants that will thrive there are on a short list. We hope the migrating monarch butterflies find our plants and supplement their nutritional needs as they move towards Mexico.

Sarracenia also continued to monitor plantings at Hickory Park. Our hope is to attract more birds and butterflies. Salvia coccinea, Penstemon spp., Pityopsis graminifolia, Liatris spicata and firebush have returned for a second year. The coral honeysuckle (Lonicera sempervirens) has also continued to attract hummingbirds.

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**Lonicera sempervirens**  
photo by Kitty Loftin
Sarracenia’s Summer Activities (cont’d.)

*vires* is blooming in a hot, high spot. Red bud, fringe tree, sassafras, oakleaf hydrangea, red buckeye and saltbush are all doing well. We thank the Park and volunteers for looking after the plantings during the long spring drought. These plants are not growing in a spot they selected and so a little water is needed to help them get established and to ease them through a drought. We will continue to add more natives, one plant at a time.

Two volunteers worked on improving our signs for the plant sales at area festivals. Weather proof, readable, accurate signs with photos are not as easy as we thought! We hope to see you at the Monarch Festival at the St. Marks NWR in October!

**ROADSIDE MOWING – FLOWERING PLANT PRESERVATION**

There have been recent discussions in Wakulla and Franklin County concerning the preservation of native flowering plants along the roadsides. The right-of-way along state and county roads holds great promise for refuge for wildflowers, grasses, other flowering plants, rare native plants and pollinators. Bees, beetles, spiders and butterflies can thrive in these strips of land that are not regularly mown.

The right-of-way for state and county roads must include a safety strip which is 10’-15’ wide. Beyond that is land, usually cleared land, which extends to the tree line, or another boundary of note. Wakulla County and Franklin County have reduced mowing plans in place. Both counties are in the process of modifying and improving these plans. Scott Davis is developing a revised Wakulla County mowing schedule for consideration. This plan should be ready for final approval in January. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is creating mowing schedules for state roads in Franklin County and they also work within Wakulla County lines.

In Franklin County, Dustie Moss, District Landscape Project Manager/District Wildflower Coordinator for the Florida Department of Transportation, is working with Bob Farley, vegetation management specialist. They will be carefully identifying areas within the current reduced mowing limits that provide habitat for native wildflowers. They will also identify areas that are infested with noxious weeds and reduce those areas that encourage negative public reaction to the program.

Bob Farley has begun on SR30 (US98) at the eastern edge of Franklin County to identify habitat for the endangered *Pityopsis flexuosa* and other wildflowers including *Dalea feayi* and *Asclepias tomentosa*. Survey work will progress through fall to identify additional special areas of concern.

Sarracenia members are invited to help identify endangered, rare or special patches of wildflowers. So far, we have been advocates for two things. First, the numbers of saltbush (*Baccharis halimifolia*) have been dwindling along Hwy 98. This plant is very important for migrating monarchs all along the Gulf Coast to Texas. We have asked that this plant be given special consideration in all mowing plans. We are also advocating for...
Roadside mowing (cont’d.)

annual mowing, vs. mowing twice a year, in wildflower sensitive areas.

We are so grateful for the work of roadside wildflower advocates and wise government leadership. It seems to me that great progress has been made. Thank you.

Linda Smith

Chamaecrista fasciculata  Partridge Pea  
photo by Linda Smith

OCTOBER IS NATIVE PLANT MONTH and we are celebrating with a busy schedule of events. A wildflower walk in the St. Marks NWR–Panacea Unit is scheduled for October 7 (see below.) Dr. Loran Anderson and David Roddenberry will lead the way. We should see some of the best plants that the autumn season has to offer. Our October 17 Chapter meeting is a special topic: Forensic Botany. Please bring your mystery plants with you for expert identification. Our plant sale at the Monarch festival at St. Marks NWR on October 28 will close the month with opportunities to plant what is too often mowed down. We are emphasizing wildflowers this plant sale. Looking forward to it all…

Linda Smith

OCTOBER HIKE DETAILS

Date: Saturday, October 7, 9:00 AM

Place: St Marks NWR, Panacea Unit [more specifically, an exemplary sandhill community]

Meet-up Place: 1085 Sopchoppy Hwy (US 319), a point midway between Medart and Sopchoppy, three miles west of US 98, where a beige masonry building (with the number) sits in a very large paved parking lot on the south side of the highway. Drive to the large oak at west end of lot.

Contact No. on that Date: 850-556-9530  (David Roddenberry)

AN ALERT FROM OUR FNPS CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVE JEANNIE BRODHEAD

Be on the lookout when buying plants that are labeled "Fresh from Florida". Several FNPS members have noticed invasive plants that have been mistakenly tagged with one of the labels. If you notice one, report it to the nursery manager and send a note to TysonEmery@Freshfromflorida.com. Only "Florida Friendly" plants should carry a "Fresh from Florida" tag.

Jeannie Brodhead
Some of the least showy plants in the garden provide the greatest store of “treasure” possible for pollinators. *Melanthera nivea*, known by some gardeners as salt and pepper plant and by others as snow squarestem is a fine example of just such a plant and it has been a welcome addition to our butterfly garden this year.

It’s the go-to-for-nectar plant for pollinators everywhere it can be found on our property. Our *Melanthera nivea* is constantly covered with gulf fritillary, Zebra Longwing, and various swallowtail butterflies who share the blossoms with other pollinators including skippers, wasps, and bees.

As shown in the above photo, there are black anthers rising out of the center of each floret which are reflected in its Latin genus name: *Melanthera*.

There is good news and cautionary news about this marvelous plant because it acts very much like a weed. It loves disturbed open habitat and can tolerate a very wide range of soil and other growing conditions. It adapts easily to any location in the garden.

*Melanthera* is the larval plant of the silvery checkerspot butterfly (shown on next page.) The plant is native to Florida and most southeastern states as well as Central and South America. It is a Species of Concern in Kentucky.

*Melanthera nivea* is a member of the Asteraceae family. However, it does not share all the usual characteristics of its cousins the sunflower, aster or daisy. *Melanthera* does share the characteristic of having a “head” which is packed with tiny florets. The blossoms give it its distinctive name salt and pepper and/or snow squarestem. What appear, in the distance, to be small white flowers prove to be mothball-sized heads consisting of many tiny white florets. Each floret is topped with two “arms” curving up and out of the corolla like bull’s horns.

Unlike many other members of the Asteraceae family, *Melanthera’s* stems are square and it has opposite leaves which might make you suspect it’s part of the mint family (*Lamiaceae*) rather than Asteraceae.

Another difference between this plant and other Asteraceae family members is the absence of ray florets that look like the petals of a daisy, dandelion or other members of the Asteraceae family.
Melanthera nivea (cont’d.)

The cautionary news is that it spreads like a weed because its florets are full of seeds. We have found it is helpful to dead-head Melanthera as the blossoms become mature. We also have found it can be transplanted easily, much like Echinacea purpurea (purple coneflower). We either transplant in late February or lay the seed heads where we want the plant to grow the following year. We are reminded of the saying “one person’s weed is another person’s wildflower.”

Melanthera nivea can become tall and leggy and often reaches a height and width of 3 – 4 feet. Flowering occurs in mid to late summer and continues on past our first frost. It does not seem to mind shade and also thrives in full sun. It’s happy wherever it is placed. It is a very unassuming looking plant in the garden.

We cut our plants back once or twice a season to encourage them to be more compact and to reign in the seed dispersal.

This unassuming “green” plant is a “must for any butterfly garden” because of the copious nectar it supplies to pollinators, plus its herbage hosts those silvery checkerspot butterfly caterpillars. It certainly has kept our garden humming.

Salt and pepper plant is occasionally offered by nurseries affiliated with the Florida Association of Native Nurseries so it may take a bit of looking to find it. We purchased ours from a Sarracenia plant sale a couple of years ago. Perhaps we will see it again at another spring sale!
Golden Canna, also called canna lily or Bandana of the Everglades, can be found in Wakulla and Franklin Counties along the edges of rivers, ponds, swamps and wet ditches. This plant can be up to 4 feet tall with bright yellow flowers about 3 inches across. The broad vertical leaves are up to 2 feet tall and 6 inches wide with a wide base tapering to a point at the top.

I have found them in isolated places near the Wakulla River and on the Ochlockonee River in the vicinity of Bear Creek.

After the *Canna flaccida* blooms, green velvety seed pods form and then darken to a deep brown as they mature. The mature pods contain many buck shot size seeds that are hard and almost black in color.

These wetland plants can be propagated by either piercing and soaking the hard seeds or dividing and planting the rhizomes from which the plants grow. They need full sun in order to bloom.

The flowers are a nectar source for the Brazilian Skipper and the leaves are a food source for the larval stage of the Brazilian Skipper.

Ethnomusicologist Frances Densmore in her book, *Seminole Music*, states that the Seminoles made rattles from turtle shells, dried gourds or coconut shells partially filled with *Canna flaccida* seeds. The Creeks and Miccosukees also used the seeds in their rattles and the starchy root has historically been a food source. (University of Florida IFAS Extension http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fp102)
YOUR SARRACENIA MEMBERSHIP

Florida Native Plant Society membership drive time is here. Please remember that our Sarracenia Chapter has the following benefits:

- Provides local outreach and education for Wakulla County and Franklin County by attending local festivals, conducting 7 Chapter meetings a year with outstanding local speakers, and publishing The Trumpet, our seasonal newsletter.

- Informs the friends and Members of up to date important dates and happenings. Members have unique opportunities for group trips and conferences. We have local research opportunities and grant availability.

- Maintains an outreach native planting program in two of our parks. We also offer mini-grants for native gardens for non-profit organizations who wish to start a small native landscape in a public area.

Please be a member of these important programs. Our native plants fuel struggling populations of insects, birds, amphibians and mammals. Our native trees, shrubs and flowers are critical to migrating birds. Trees are the lungs of the planet.

Your membership includes benefits from the Florida Native Plant Society organization, an award winning conservation group. This statewide organization provides the following benefits:

- Maintains an outstanding web site with high quality plant reviews, summaries of education, conservation, land management, landscaping and research programs; and

- Maintains an extensive database of native plants by local conditions through the state;

- Organizes an annual conference that features expert guides through ecosystems, speakers, discussions and socializing – all focused on the native plants of the locality;

- Assists Chapters in sharing ideas through conference calls and local meetings; and

- Publishes The Palmetto and The Sabal Minor. Both are terrific journals with informative landscaping, ecological and land management articles that appeal to all of us.

To become a member, go to the web site, FNPS.org. On the Home page go to the Participate tab, then to Membership Information. You can join from this page or you can pick up a paper application at any Chapter meeting.

Membership Information:
FNPS.org
Individual memberships begin at $35.00/yr.
Full time students $15.00/yr.

Chapter members and friends, led by George Weaver, enjoying our Florida Trail hike in late March 2017 along the Sopchoppy River.

Chapter members and friends with Dr. Loran Anderson on our excellent wildflower hike in late May 2017
Photos by Sandy Tedder

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POSTCARD FROM A BOG, JULY 2017

David Roddenberry

Just over a thousand road miles from our Sarracenia haunts, I drive into Pinelands National Reserve before I realize it. Known longer as the New Jersey Pinebarrens, this domain has a sparsely settled heartland about the size of Apalachicola National Forest. I soon realize that this inner fastness has something of the feel of ANF’s pine woodlands.

The dominant tree of the Pinebarrens is the pitch pine, Pinus rigida (and I’m actually not recognizing any other pine as I drive). The Atlantic white cedar (Chamaecyparis thyoides) that we know in places in our own area occurs in pure stands in cedar swamps in the Pinebarrens domain. The floor there can be very large expanses of sphagnum.

In a lonely place enclosed by a white cedar swamp in Greenwood Wildlife Management Area, maybe 12 air miles southwest of Toms River, N.J., sits Webb’s Mill Bog. A contact in New Jersey Native Plant Society has steered me here. Still, I couldn’t have found this site with its long, first-class boardwalk, beginning scarcely 100 yards off the highway, without the beneficence of someone’s old posts online. I find no road signage. Though that seems improbable even as a measure against plant-poaching, that reason is the best explanation to be had.

I’m cued to expect here the northern purple pitcherplant, Sarracenia purpurea, and the bog asphodel, Narthecium americanum, a plant of interest in the Pinebarrens because of its putative New Jersey–Delaware endemism. But entering this sphagnum bog, I immediately notice a good bit of home (as indeed I have wherever I’ve looked in the Pinebarrens). Both Clethra alnifolia and gallberry holly are along the trail, and the heaths that would, without some rebuke, swallow the boardwalk’s landing include our highbush blueberry and the swamp azalea (Rhododendron viscosum).

In the bog proper, open and sunny, our familiar horned bladderwort flowers in abundance while the same Lophiola that hogs the stage in front of my camera in our boggy places does so here, too. I try to persuade myself that a low pink flower here in numbers is our Polygala cruciata (the range map allows it), but something about it puts me off. Nothing puts me off about our threaddew Drosera tracyi standing here under the boardwalk.

That northern purple pitcherplant is here, all right, abundant and flowering pretty right now. And I feel OK saying that an herb of gold cast about 20 inches high is the bog asphodel; unfortunately, it’s decidedly past prime flowering. Cranberries (Vaccinium macrocarpon) are ripening. The rich suite of plants here delays briefly my realization that this bog is also quite a playground of dragonflies and damselflies.

One more find here, made with the greatest of ease — it’s right under the sign — is the spoonleaf sundew, Drosera intermedia. Recent July forays with my Sarracenia buddies in St. Marks NWR for a look at this sundew in reported spots have produced naught but sweat baths for us. Now I’ll tell them I started north with determination and didn’t quit until I found the sundew after seven states.
**Volunteer Opportunities and Accomplishments**

On August 25th and throughout the following weekend, Sarracenia Members, with St. Marks National Wildlife leaders, Magnolia Chapter members, Leon County Extension Service, The City of Tallahassee, and the Florida Dept. of Transportation rescued close to 2000 rare *Ruellia noctiflora* (nightblooming wild petunia) from the construction zone of the new bike path near St. Marks. Rare plant rescues continue.

You can see by the photo below that the plants are being collected and stored in small wading pools at the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge Work Center where the Monarch-Milkweed initiative greenhouses are located. These petunias will be replanted along the bike trail after construction. Milkweeds that are also being rescued will be planted in the wet area around the Education Building next to the Visitors Center at St. Marks Refuge on September 30, National Public Lands Day.

*Sandy Tedder*

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**What’s Happening at the Monarch-Milkweed Initiative?**

Volunteers have been busy all summer transplanting seedlings and sowing seeds of all varieties of *Asclepias*. We have seedlings from almost all counties in Florida. They are grown in the same soil mixture as they would grow in a particular area of the state. Once they are ready for final transplanting they will be taken back to their “homes” and encouraged to grow. Thus, there will be larval host plants throughout the state which should yield more butterflies.

A new nursery greenhouse is being built at the volunteer work site, at 7300 Coastal Highway south of Woodville, near the intersection of highways 363 and 98, to house future plants as well as milkweeds in their second and third year of growth.

In addition, volunteers have taken part in plant rescues of native wildflowers which have found themselves in the path of road or other DOT construction. Volunteers are always welcome! If you are interested in volunteering, contact Gail Fishman at grtener@gmail.com.

Find the Initiative on Facebook or at:  
https://www.facebook.com/StMarksMilkweeds/

DON’T FORGET THE Monarch Butterfly Festival October 28, 2017. It’s at the St. Mark’s National Wildlife Refuge. St. Mark’s Refuge is the place thousands of monarchs congregate to feed before their annual migration to Mexico and South America.

*Bonnie Basham Woodward*

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**Sarracenia Board and Regular Volunteers**

| Linda Smith  | Second Monday of September  |
| Jearnie Brodhead | October, November, January, |
| George Weaver | February, March, April  |
| Bonnie Basham | Email us for location: |
| Sandy Tedder | Sarracenia.nps@gmail.com |
| David Roddenbery |
| Kitty Loftin |

**Membership information is available at all Chapter meetings (ask Jearnie for info) or online at FNPS.org.**

Find us on Facebook at Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society