

Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society
The SARRACENIA TRUMPET

WINTER 2015



Yaupon Holly at Shell Point, about 40 years old. LS

March 15

Worms

Peter T. Hertl, Ph.D.

April 9

Worm Gruntin' Festival
Sopchoppy

April 16

Wakulla Springs
Wildlife Festival

April 19

The Milkweed Project,
Scott Davis, Ranger

May 17

Ardisia: friend or foe?
Dr. Karen Berkley

Chapter Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at the Wakulla County Library. Come at 6:00pm for a social time. The meetings begin at 6:30. Bring pieces of plants that you would like identified.

January 16

Arbor Day
Crawfordville

January 19

The Importance of
Native Plants
in Landscapes

Donna Legare and Jody
Walthall

February 6

WHO Festival
St. Marks NWR

February 16

Long Leaf Pine and
Red Cockaded
Woodpeckers

Dr. Chuck Hess.

Winter Celebrating and Planning in Wakulla and Franklin Counties

In addition to the many other reasons to celebrate during winter, native plant enthusiasts can include a season of cones, fruits and rare flowers. Female holly, cedars and wax myrtle are full of fruits or cones and wildflower and grass and wildflower seed heads are dried nicely and so ancient decorating traditions can carry forward. This year, occasional asters, violets and Bidens are blooming. Insects are sailing bye now and then. We have had lovely photos of wiregrass gentian sent to us over the internet. The season's greetings are everywhere.

Winter is also a good time to plan and plant. This issue touches on planting projects, landscape planning and Arbor Day efforts. Over recent weeks, Sarracenia members have been traveling around Wakulla and Franklin counties to help to promote the benefits of landscaping with native plants. Our efforts are fun for us, and they elicit smiles from those we meet along the way. We hope you will have fun with these endeavors also.



January 19 Chapter Meeting

The January Chapter meeting will be “The Importance of Native Plants in the Landscape” presented by Jodi Walthal and Donna Legare. Jodi and Donna are expert landscapers, and expert naturalists. As owners of Native Nurseries and an energy force behind Birdsong Nature Center they have brought much knowledge about gardens for wildlife into North Florida. They combine this experience to discuss the advantages of landscaping with natives, the principles of design and they will suggest plants for Wakulla County.

Saw Palmetto

Highly valued by Wildlife and Landscapers

By George Weaver and Linda Smith

Four members of the palm family are native to our area. One of the most common is the saw palmetto, (*Serenoa repens*). These are abundant throughout the southern states in pinewoods and hardwood hammocks where they form dense thickets or grow in clumps.

In a detailed paper by Conway Conservation LLC, (<http://myfwc.com/media/1722032/EcologyAndManagementOfSawPalmetto.pdf>) the author notes the very high wildlife food value of saw palmettos. She reports that as many as 100 birds, 27 mammals, 61 reptiles, and countless insects use this plant for food or cover. These plants flower heavily every two to four years once established and produce yellow (turning black as they mature) fruit. The fruit and flowers are much favored by all kinds of wildlife.

Saw palmetto is often overlooked as a landscape plant. While this plant is drought, salt, frost and fire tolerant, if planted in the wrong place it can be a considerable nuisance. In pine-land restoration efforts, in hiking trail maintenance, or if placed too close to living spaces it is difficult to control. The sharp teeth on the petioles give the plant its name. In the right place, however, saw palmetto adds strength and grace to a landscape.

February 16 Chapter Meeting

Wildflower enthusiasts, birders, property owners and naturalists will learn from Dr. Chuck Hess’ 30 years of study of the “Restoration of Longleaf Pine Communities and the Life of Red Cockaded Woodpeckers”. Efforts to restore this diverse community continue through the south. The principles that drive these efforts can apply to small or large tracts of land. “... *the sunny spaces between, full of beautiful abounding grasses, liatris, long, wand-like Solidago, saw palmettos, etc., covering the ground in garden style. Here I sauntered in delightful freedom.*” John Muir, 1867

Saw Palmetto Con’t

The lush evergreen fronds can be used to create a ground cover in full sun or partial shade and in most soils as long as it is well-drained. It is an ideal plant to establish a buffer or privacy screen or hedge as long as you make sure it is planted about 6 feet away from walls, sidewalks and parking areas. New Plants can be spaced 6 feet from each other because they grow quite large, and faster than you might realize.

Saw palmettos grow relatively close to the ground but can reach 6 to 8 feet in height and 10 feet in width. They can be used as foundation plantings for large buildings, or used in front of larger trees of contrasting texture. Naturally occurring “silver



Saw Palmetto

George Weaver

Saw palmetto con't

palmetto" are found on the east coast of Florida. They generally grow faster and larger than green palmetto. They are not recommended for the Panhandle.

The fruit is currently in heavy demand as the basis for an herbal supplement (typically labeled as saw palmetto) which treats urinary/prostate problems world-wide (efficacy still under review).

The next issue of The Trumpet will describe the other members of the palm family in North Florida. They include the durable needle palm, *Rhapidophyllum hystrix*, dwarf palmetto, *Sabal minor* and cabbage palm, *Sabal palmetto*. Each of these palms are commercially available and all of them are excellent accent plants.

More about Local Gardens and Landscapes with Natives

Several local efforts are in progress that include native plants in public landscapes. These projects have been initiated by area towns and counties. Individuals who have an interest in natives are volunteering their time to help plan these landscapes. Sarracenia is helping in various ways.

The City of Sopchoppy is interested in native landscaping for the gardens on the edges of the new Depot Park. Sarracenia members have offered assistance in recommending plants that are suitable for the site. The existing 'mesic upland' plant community has much to offer for an attractive and interesting mix of colors and textures. Contact Lynn Artz for more information.

The Eastpoint Library is also interested in using native plants in their landscape. Sarracenia members have helped to identify plants that will adapt to this site and that can be arranged to provide shade and flowers. Contact the Friends of the Library for more information.

The Wakulla County Park Department is also learning more about planting natives in the parks. Coral honeysuckle and yellow jessamine will

brighten fence at Hickory Park and hopefully attract hummingbirds. Oakleaf hydrangea will soften the view from tennis courts. Tough wildflowers like black-eyed Susan, coreopsis and frog fruit should help bring butterflies to a memorial garden.

The Iris Garden Club continues to dedicate themselves to work with natives. They are currently working with the Panacea Welcome Center to add appropriate natives into the grounds.



Arbor Day Tree Prep 2014 at Just Fruits and Exotics
Kitty Loftin

A call for Volunteers

Arbor Day 2016

Wakulla County will be celebrating our annual Arbor Day celebration on Saturday, January 16, 2016 at Hudson Park in beautiful downtown Crawfordville.

This year we will be offering one free tree to each community member who comes to Hudson Park. The trees include live oak, bald cypress, yellow poplar, ashe magnolia, fringetree, redbud, arrowwood or river birch. A few others may be available.

The best part is that we need help to make this a great day. We especially need people who know about trees and how to plant them. I know a bunch of our Sarracenia friends will help with this great community event so here's the schedule:

The End