

**WAKULLA COUNTY PROCLAMATION DECLARING OCTOBER 2022 AS  
NATIVE PLANT MONTH IN WAKULLA COUNTY**

Whereas Florida's native plants and plant communities are rich and diverse and essential to sustaining the state's bees, butterflies, moths, birds, and other wildlife, as well as humans;

Whereas Wakulla County is home to over 1,000 species of native plants from trees to wildflowers, including 24 species of carnivorous plants and 15 species of native milkweed, and ranks sixth among Florida counties for plant diversity;

Whereas Wakulla County's complement of Florida native plants features imperiled and uncommon species and species whose known global range lies entirely within the County, such as St. Marks yellow-eyed grass and Godfrey's spider lily;

Whereas Wakulla County was the first county in Florida with a policy to preserve roadside wildflowers and has miles of native wildflowers along state and county roads that support the pollinators needed by agriculture, nurseries, and other plant-based businesses;

Whereas native plants support hunting, fishing, and birding, and Wakulla County has an abundance of Ogeechee tupelo, the foundation of the tupelo honey industry;

Whereas Wakulla County is home to many Florida and National Champion Trees, has two designated old-growth forests, and has magnificent natural areas that showcase our many native plants and native plant communities to residents and visitors alike;


Whereas all of the preceding support ecotourism and draw thousands of visitors from all over the world to those places within our county where native plants remain in abundance;

Whereas Florida, including Wakulla County, continues to lose native plant communities, numbers, and species due to development and habitat loss, fire suppression, non-native and invasive species, and the climate crisis, and this, in turn, has contributed to steep declines in native insect and bird populations, including fewer Monarch butterflies;

Whereas the loss of native plants and wildlife threatens our natural heritage, tourism, local agriculture, and our quality of life; and

Whereas the mission of the local Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society is to conserve, preserve, and restore native plants and plant communities, and the Chapter urges all to do their part to preserve our county's unique character and natural heritage and keep Wakulla "natural" for future generations;

Now, therefore, the Board of County Commissioners of Wakulla County convened this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of October, 2022, declares the month of October 2022 as NATIVE PLANT MONTH in Wakulla County.

  
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Quincee Messersmith, Chair