

Lake Beautyberry
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER



Cynipid wasp gall on White Oak

Neta Villalobos-Bell

RANDOM NATURE SIGHTING

Rusty Lyonia, Staggerbush (*Lyonia ferruginea)*



Rusty Lyonia, Staggerbush

Note the pinkish areas on this plant. Flower? Insect? Disease? It's galls!

On our recent Chapter field trip to Lyona Preserve, we observed these galls on the Rusty Lyonia. Typically galls are produced by different species of insects that may attack specific species of plants causing a variety of different looking galls. You can identify the cuplrit insect by the plant species and/or how the gall looks. The insect can be wasp, midge, aphid, certain sawflies, moths, beetles and leafminer flies.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joan Mckeon, Mount Dora
Linda Anderson, *Fruitland Park*



Cynipid wasp gall on Overcup Oak

For example, a female wasp uses her needle-like ovipositor to inject an egg into the bud, leaf, or twig. Her saliva or movement stimulates a chemical in the plant to signal abonormal growth around the egg. This growth shelters the egg and feeds the larvae after it pupates. Look for a tiny where it exits the gall as an adult.

Bud Distortion



ColinPurrington.com

However, the cause of bud distortion on the Rusty Lyonia is from a FUNGUS, Exobasidium ferrugineae! Exobasidium ferrugineae enters host plants through spores that then germinate inside and spread as filamentous hyphae inside the plant tissue that transforms developing flower buds into large, fleshy, whitish, or pinkish structures that look like distorted, imitation flowers. Flower buds are its main target, but it can infect leaves causing swollen leaf galls.

Fascinating, but why do this? What's the advantage for the fungus. These structures fool pollinating insects by its large shape and size who land seeking nectar. Because the fungus breaks through the outer layer of the plant's tissue, it covers the entire surface of the fake "petals" in a velvety white layer of microscopic spores. So, the pollinating insect bodies are covered with fungal spores, not pollen, which they then inadvertently transport and plant the fungus onto its next host.

Join us on future field trips for more random nature sightings.

Resource: Insect Galls of Florida, by Amanda Hodges, Eileen Buss, Russell F. Mizel III, published by Univeristy of Florida Cooperative Extension

Author: Neta Villalobos-Bell. Certified Advanced Florida Master Naturalist, Certified Horticulture Professional, Certified National Association Interpreter. Member of Florida Native Plant Society.


Lyonia Preserve



Neta Villalobos-Bell

LYONIA PRESERVE FIELD TRIP



And, of course, the Preserve is known for their scrub jays, a Threatened species under the US Endangered Species Act and an Endemic species, meaning it's found only in Florida. It requires dry oak scrub and scrubby flatwoods on ancient, well-drained sandy ridges, also an endangered ecoysytem due to development.

Our tour guide, and founder of the Preserve, Stephen Kintner, was very knowledgeable. We walked the trail, learned about the meadow created from rescued plants, the pollinator garden, the museum gallery displays, and had a tour of animal encounters.

The Preservre was established in the 1990s after a public campaign stopped a proposed shopping center and protected the land for environmental education and native scrub restoration. The compromise split the site into 240 acres designated for educational facilities, library and museum, and 360 to 400 acres set aside for permanent environmental preservation. The preserve is named after Rusty Lyonia, Lyonia ferruginea, a common native shrub of the Florida scrub ecosystem.



Lyonia Preserve

UPCOMING EVENTS

01 Fall Festival Table Event (Rescheduled)

November 7-8, 2026, 9am-3pm
UF/IFAS Discovery Gardens, 1951 Woodlea Road, Tavares, FL



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are essential to the Lake Beautyberry Native Plant Chapter. Join in the fun while you help preserve the Floirda's natural beauty for the future.

Can you spare a few hours a month to volunteer on a Chapter Committee?

- **Plant Sale:** One in spring and one in fall.
  Chairperson Nancy LaPointe: laf4good@gmail.com
- **Budget:** Track monthly income & expense.
  Treasurer Jane Bullock: lakebeautyberry@gmail.com
- **Newsletter:** Write articles on native plants & nature.
  Neta Villalobos-Bell: netavb@gmail.com

02 Membership Meeting

Why & How are NATIVE Plants Rescued

Sunday, November 15, 2026, 1:30-3:00pm
Speaker: **Laura Bennett-Kimble** (*L1BK2@live.com*)

W.T. Bland Public Library, 1995 N. Donnelly Street, Mount Dora, FL

During this time of rapid development in Florida, our native plants are at risk of extinction on these properties. Hear how volunteers follow legal procedures to rescue rare and endangered plants in order to replant them in a predesignated appropriate recipient site.

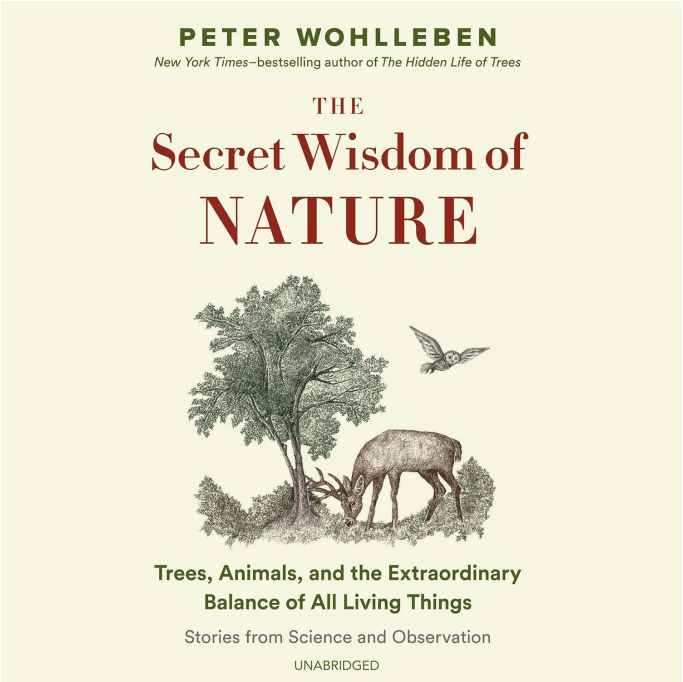


BOOK REVIEW

The Secret Wisdom of Nature

As a participant of the Nature, Science & Us Book Club, I recently finished reading a book I enjoyed titled The Secret Wisdom of Nature, by Peter Wohllenben. The overarching theme of the book is the complexity and interconnectivity of plants, animals, fungi, microbes, soil, water, and air. I found the book to be entertaining and witty with chapter titles like: Salmon in the Trees, Why Deer Taste Bad to Trees, and How Earthworms Control Wild Boar.

The book explains that up to 70 percent of nitrogen in the forests come from the ocean by way of salmon causing spruce trees to grow as much as three times faster. Not only do bear feast on salmon but so do multiple other mammals and birds all of which enrich the forest soil and increase biodiversity. Nutrients in turn flow down rivers back to the ocean. These cycles show interconnectivity of ecosystems thousands of miles apart.



Humans have created many disconnected forests which results in many edges with different plants than those that are found in deep, very shaded forests. Deer enjoy eating the shrubby plants along the forest edges and their populations do quite well in many urban areas. Some tree species try to protect themselves from deer browsing by producing bad tasting compounds in response to deer saliva. These compounds are not produced in response to leaf damage caused by other things such as wind or animals passing by.

Oak and beech trees, by species, can synchronize mass production of their acorns or nuts helping them to ensure survival of their species. Producing large quantities only every 3-5 years helps keep the number of wild boar, deer and other animals that feed on them lower than if they would produce every year. This synchronizing can occur over hundreds of miles. Some hunters feed deer and wild boar maintaining larger populations than would occur without this supplemental feeding. However, there is another wild boar population control mechanism that intensifies with larger numbers of wild boar, that is lung worm. Lung worm larvae can be inside earthworms which are eaten by wild boars. The larvae travel to the lungs causing susceptibility to diseases and higher risk of death.

Humans play a huge roll in the web of life, most times not understanding what the consequences of our actions are. The book's author suggests that the best course humans can take is to conserve much greater amounts of land and allow nature operate as only nature can.
If you enjoy nature and science come join the Nature, Science and Us book club.

We meet at the W.T. Bland Library 1995 N Donnelly St, Mt Dora, the third Thursday of every month at 2:00pm. Come join us for one month or all twelve months.

Tina Mertz
Council of Chapters, Chapter Rep
Chapter Member

Nancy LaPointe

FALL NATIVE PLANT SALE



As you come through the entrance into the Lake Beautyberry Native Plant sale held recently it all looked so serenely set up with the plants waiting for you to take them home. Little did you realize all the behind the scenes preparation that goes into this final event. We have already set a date for our April sale!

Then we check the list of plants Green Isles has and decide which ones are going to look good and flower well at that spring time of year. The more rushed part starts towards the sale date when we start seeking volunteers, renting the U-haul and picking up the plants that Friday and having someplace to leave the truck overnight.

Early Saturday morning of the sale, volunteers arrive to set up the tables, empty the truck and place the plants to their appropriate tables and we get all beautiful for you waiting in line to come in and take these lovely plants home. Thank you for supporting native plants and planting them in your landscape.













Lake Beautyberry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society
Our Mission is to Champion Florida's Native Plants and Their Habitats!
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