



December 2019 – March 2020

The Beautyberry

Lake Beautyberry Chapter of the
Florida Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 88 Umatilla, FL 32784

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Lake Beautyberry Chapter – Fall 2019 – Winter 2020 Calendar

Chapter Planning Meeting – Sunday, December 1, 2019 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

The Chapter's Officers and Committee Chairmen hold a Planning Meeting in the month's alternating with the Program Meetings. This next meeting will be planning ahead for the first months in 2020. Under consideration will be our chapter's 20th Anniversary Celebration at the Annual Meeting on January 19, 2020. Also on the agenda will be late winter and early spring events. Fundraising for the three challenge commitments in the new year will also be discussed and the ongoing Roadside Wildflower activities will be moving along, too. **All FNPS Chapter members are Welcome to Attend.** Please bring your ideas and energy with you and join in to keep Lake Beautyberry Chapter on a roll. Thank you! The meeting will be held at Trout Lake Nature Center, Eustis

Discovery Gardens Workdays – Monday, December 2, 2019 at 9:00 a.m.

The last workday in 2019 will be on Monday, December 2, but beginning in January 2020, Lavon Silvernell and Jan Kolb will be holding workdays at the chapter's native plant garden on the **First Tuesdays** of each month. They will be glad to have you join them in their efforts tending the garden and adding new plants as needed. So the upcoming workdays in the next year will be January 7, February 4, March 3 and April 7. The native garden is located in the back south-west corner of Discovery Gardens at the Ag Center, 1951 Woodlea Road, south of Tavares off SR 19. To let Lavon know you are willing to help at the garden, call her at 352-223-4761 or just show up to help.

Holiday Potluck Luncheon – Sunday 8, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

The traditional Holiday Luncheon at Trout Lake Nature Center will be hosted by the Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society (OVAS) with our Lake Beautyberry Chapter and Trout Lake Nature Center members joining in. It is always a pleasure to enjoy a social time with our friends who volunteer in the environmental community. The event will begin at 1:00 p.m. with a potluck buffet so please bring a holiday dish to share. Drinks and table settings will be provided although you may bring your own tableware, if you wish.

Following lunch, the 2019 Lake County Conservationist of the Year award will be presented. If you have a raffle or silent auction item to donate, please bring it and give it to Clyde or Phyllis Stephens as they are coordinating this drawing. Their contact is (352) 343-6468 to let them know ahead. The luncheon location is Trout Lake Nature Center 520 E CR 44, Eustis, FL 32726.

Field Trip to Orlando Wetlands Park – Sunday, December 15, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

Orlando Wetland Park is a natural wonderland and a Water Treatment Facility. Lake Beautyberry, Florida Native Plant Society invites members and naturalist friends to join them in a visit to this interesting park on December 15, 2019. Orlando Wetland Park (OWP) is an encouraging example of how 1,200 acres of former pasture can be converted to treat 57 million gallons of nutrient rich water before it flows into the St. Johns River. Those acres now multi-task, cleaning water through a functioning wetland ecosystem and at the same time, inviting visitors to enjoy the stunning vistas of native trees, aquatic and upland vegetation and easily seen and photographed wildlife, especially birds.

We plan to arrive at 2:00 p.m. and gather in front of the Education Center. While at OWP we will enjoy a cart tour of the wetlands with FNPS and Master Naturalist guides and also a tour of the Education Center and Wildlife Garden. The guided tour will end at about 4:30 p.m. but the park does not close until sundown, 5:30 p.m., so if you wish you may stay and see water birds returning to the rookery or to photograph the sunset.

A suggested donation of \$5.00 for Friends of Orlando Wetland Park to be collected upon arrival. Car pooling is encouraged as it is the environmentally friendly thing to do. So in North Lake County we will meet at the Mt. Dora Lowes store located at 18795 US Highway 441, Mt. Dora, FL 32757. Gather in the SW corner of the parking lot at 12:30 p.m. departing at 12:45 p.m. Arrive at Orlando Wetland Park 25155 Wheeler Road, Christmas, FL 32709 at 2:00 p.m.

Pre-registration is required if you plan to join the cart tour and requested if you plan to walk on your own. For additional information and to register by email: lakebeautyberry@gmail.com. Or if you cannot email, call 352-223-4761. Come prepared for an afternoon outdoors: insect repellent, poncho, sunscreen, a snack, water and dress in layers. This is a wild open space and can be windy and colder than an urban area.

Event: Tavares Arbor Day – Saturday, January 18, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Tavares will be hosting their 3rd Annual Arbor Day Event in conjunction with partners UF/IFAS Lake County Extension and the Lake Soil and Water Conservation District this year on January 18th. The event will be in Wooton Park as it was last year, held under a large tent by the lake. The Beautyberry Chapter will participate with an outreach table with native plant information handouts. The event is free and includes educational programs and the annual LS&WCD tree giveaway of bare root trees. If parking is full near the tent use the parking lot near City Hall and walk toward the lake. To volunteer to help at our table, please let Lavon know that you can help. Call 352-223-4761.

Annual Meeting and 20th Year Celebration – Sunday, January 19, 2020

The Annual Meeting of our Lake Beautyberry Chapter with Election of Officers for 2020 will be held at Trout Lake Nature Center, Eustis FL. Final plans for our 20th Year Celebration will be made at the next Planning Meeting on December 1, 2019. The theme a “Taste of the Future” is under consideration. Sometime after that, members will receive an email message as to the time set for this meeting and further details. Save the date now. It will be in the afternoon. See the Election of Officers article further in this newsletter for those details.

Field Trip - Sometime in February 2020.

A February field trip or plant walk excursion will be planned in February with location, date and time to be announced. Future trip locations being considered are to Silver Springs State Park and to the Yearling Trail. Ideas for future field trip locations from our members are always welcome. Contact Lavon Silvernell at 223-4761 or John Benton at 250-7847 if you know of a special place that you have enjoyed and think would also be of interest to our members.

Program Meeting – Sunday, March 15, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

The guest speaker at this meeting will be Nash Turley a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Biology Department at the University of Central Florida. He is a plant and insect ecologist and is the co-founder of “Lawn to Wildflowers” a nation-wide movement to create pollinator friendly wildflower habitat. Nash will give information on gardening techniques and how to join in on creating your own habitat enhanced landscape.

The meeting will be at Trout Lake Nature Center in Eustis. There will be a social time at 2:00 p.m., with the meeting beginning at 2:30 p.m. Directions: Take SR 19 north out of Eustis to the intersection with CR 44E and turn right at Winn-Dixie and CVS Pharmacy, then go ¼ mile to the nature center entrance on the right. The meeting is open to members, friends and the general public.

President’s Message by Lavon Silvernell

I’m retiring again. This time it is as President of Lake Beautyberry. I am going to try for a little more balance to my life. Not quite so many deadlines and a little more me time. However, since I have this sense of responsibility that I inherited from my hard-working German ancestors, or learned from many Sunday services, that means I’ll continue to try to make a tiny little difference in the world. Below are projects I am involved in and which could use your help, too.

Keep Lake Beautiful and Roadside Wildflowers. Keep lake Beautiful (KLB) has voted to encourage the County to create a mowing plan which will allow wildflowers on our roadways to bloom and reseed. This might make our roadsides a little more beautiful and will add to their value for pollinating insects and birds. This mowing schedule is an experiment and we need volunteers to monitor a section of road for Native flowers, grasses and fern and the mowers success with sticking to the new schedule. It was a strong push by Beautyberry members that was the stimulus for this project and Beautyberry will continue to be involved. Vice president John Benton will be the liaison for Beautyberry so let him know what you can do to help. KLB is also looking for clubs or community groups that would like a program on the new Roadside Wildflower plan: why, how and what you can do to help.

IFAS, Discovery Gardens. Barbara Grigg began tending this little garden about 15 years ago. When she retired, I offered to help. My gardening day is my most relaxing of the month and the most soothing. Volunteering in the garden provides an opportunity to interact with friendly Master Gardeners and to create a place for visitors to see native plants in a naturalistic setting.

I have been working with the **UU Congregation** to add a little more habitat value to their property. They are currently maintaining a small wildflower plot. With the goal of adding other wildflowers, small trees and shrubs which will increase the food and shelter for pollinators, birds and other urban wildlife on their acreage. Maybe your community or even your neighbor could be encouraged to add a little more habitat value too.

As you probably know, there is a group of citizens who keep a watchful eye on our Board of County Commissioners. There are many voices reminding Commissioners of the value of a vibrant economy and growth. But few who remind them of the value of natural areas and open space for the **Environmental or Ecosystem Services** they provide. Our lakes, wetlands and uplands too, inexpensively provide water capture, storage and protection of its quality. Natural areas with their trees and plants sequester carbon, produce oxygen and have a role in temperature regulation. Wild places shelter species diversity of plants and animals which give Lake County its unique sense of place. And natural surroundings provide recreation and sooth the spirit. These like-minded neighbors work to remind our community leaders and their staff that Lake County’s natural areas are what make this a healthy, functioning place to live and benefit the economy too. You can help by sending an email, attending a meeting, even commenting when you hear of an issue. So few people get involved your input really makes a difference. Visit the FNPS website to learn how you can comment on the proposed toll roads which cross some of Florida’s valuable North Florida natural areas.

The Florida Native Plant Society and Beautyberry too are devoted to “the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida”. I share that mission and will continue to support Beautyberry in that mission. **I Hope You Will Too.** I am confident that John Benton and Beautyberry will continue to do a great job of educating and advocating for native plants and their communities. The recent **Wildflower Festival** was a wonderful demonstration of the new and innovative ways that local chapters can fulfill the FNPS mission. The Beautyberry Planning Committee has many other new ideas for the future. I’ll bet you have some ideas yourself. Why don’t you join them to actively support the work of preserving conservation lands, the native plants that make them function and the insects, birds and other wildlife that help to create a functioning ecosystem for Florida and for us all. If we each do a little, we will all have some time left to play and the future will be better for our children and their children.

Annual Meeting and Election of Officers

The Lake Beautyberry Chapter will hold our Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 19, 2020. We will be celebrating our 20th Anniversary at that time. And, we also will have our Election of Officers for 2020. At present, the nominated slate of Officers are the following members who have agreed to serve if elected: President – John Benton, currently Vice President for Programs

Vice President (for Programs) – Open

Vice President (for Field Trips) – Open

Secretary – Open

Treasurer – Barbara Loudon, currently Treasurer

FNPS Chapter Rep – Patricia Burgos

So as you can see, we need some more members to volunteer to fill the slate of Officers by January 19th. Please note: The Vice President’s slots can be filled by just being on the Board and filling the President’s role in the President’s absence. Field Trips and Program Planning can be filled by Committee appointment as well. As to Secretary, that is someone who is also willing to be on the Board and who is responsible for taking Minutes of the meeting and writing them up and distributing them after our six Program Meetings and six Planning Meetings each year.

For further detail on the responsibilities of Officers, see the Chapter By-Laws or call John Benton at 352-250-7847, or Lavon Silvernell at 352-223-4761 or Nadine Foley at 352-669-2398. Our chapter would very much like to welcome new members to serving on the Board. To keep an organization vital and forward looking requires active, interested folks with new ideas and energy. We just know that among our 90 or so chapter members there are many capable people who would prove to be a great asset to our chapter. Thank you for considering joining those who have already committed to serving our chapter in 2020.

Other areas of chapter work are serving on Committees such as: Field Trip Planning, Program Planning, Roadside Wildflower Projects, Public Outreach, Native Plant Rescue and Planting, Land Management Reviews, Discovery Gardens Native Plant Garden, Membership, Hospitality, Volunteer Coordination, and Social Media. Many members already work in these areas, but we can always find a spot for you and we are glad for the help as the year goes along. Thank You!

Lake County Wildflower Festival, A Bloomin’ Success

On September 28th, Lake Beautyberry and Passionflower Chapters joined with Green Isle Gardens and created an event which invited visitors from all over Central Florida to learn about and purchase native plants. That joint effort generated 400 – 500 participants and 2,000 dollars for our Chapter work. Both Chapter Presidents sent their appreciation to all the volunteers whose work made the event such a success.

Your New President for 2020 by Lavon Silvernell

John Benton, who has agreed to stand for election as our new President in January, works for Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission or FWC. He has also been an elected Eustis City Council member. These past experiences and many more give John a deep understanding of natural functions and the managerial/social skills to do a great job in his new role as President of Lake Beautyberry Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society. No one can do this job alone. John will need your help to allow Lake Beautyberry to continue to have an impact on Lake County's urban landscapes, open space and conservation lands all of which need native plants to function. So, offer to help.

End of Year Fundraising, Regional Chapter Groups & Toll Roads

Lake Beautyberry Chapter Representative Report by Patricia Burgos

FNPS members will be receiving a letter from our Society President, Susan Carr requesting an end of year donation. Please take the time to read the letter because it does highlight this past year's accomplishments, which could not happen without dedicated staff and generous members. Every little bit helps us to spread the importance of habitat protection and the benefits of native plants. Please give any amount that you can!

There are two positions (Membership Committee Chair and Director at Large) available on the FNPS Board. If you are interested, let Executive Director Juliet Rynear know of your interest. You may contact Juliet by email at executivedirector@fnps.org.

Highlights from the past November 16, 2019 meeting.:

- * * There was discussion on evaluating and acting on moving society money from a low performing savings account to a one-year CD with a higher interest rate.
- * * Nicki Fried, Florida's Agriculture Commissioner declared a statewide Native Plant Proclamation for October 2019. Many of the Tallahassee Magnolia Chapter members attended with our President-elect Bonnie Basham.
- * * Wendy Poag, Lake Beautyberry member and FNPS Education Chair presented a variety of educational pieces for consideration i.e. species propagation/information sheets, FNPS/Chapter book mark, and a "Living With Nature" information brochure. You can view these pieces under the forum which is accessible to anyone to view at <https://www.forum.fnps.org/index.php/topic,1620.0.html> . These educational pieces are meant to encourage our chapters to handout materials with FNPS origins versus always handing out other organization's materials.
- * * FNPS members have been very active on land management review committees for state parks. If you are interested in getting involved, please let me know at patricia1724@gmail.com .
- * * Shirley Denton, Website Administrator did a presentation to help members better understand the website and navigate the menus and where to find information. Her slide show was very informative and is available for anyone to review at <https://fnps.org/assets/docs/docs/finding-it-2019.pdf> .
- * * Juliet Rynear, Executive Director announced that FNPS now has an online "shop" for fundraising. Once they get a bunch of items to sell they will advertise the shop on Facebook and the website.
- * * Juliet also went over a few of the grants that FNPS has applied for in her report such as the Florida Forest Service grant for TorreyaKeepers and for Dicerandra species, one denied grant from Volunteer Florida, one grant to resubmit for Duke Energy and one grant in progress for FEMA to fund a part-time TorreyaKeeper contractor.
- * * Anne Cox, Past FNPS President and past Membership Chair led a discussion on chapter membership ideas. She encouraged chapters with a large membership to share some activities they have employed to attract new members and she encouraged small membership chapters to discuss what are the hurdles. Some ideas included attaching to the membership brochures a schedule of upcoming fieldtrips and meeting topics, ramping up the social media presence, staging small outreach events at a brewery, scheduling participatory workshops, providing members only events, providing free parking,

giving out a new member packet, assigning hosts at meetings, targeting empty-nesters in their 40's and 50's and having a student liaison.

* * Bonnie Basham, President- Elect led a discussion about creating a membership working group and asking for suggestions on what their tasks should be.

* * Gene Kelly, Chair of the Policy Committee spent time with attendees discussing the Toll Road issue and encouraging FNPS members to attend local meetings to oppose the roads going through intact habitats. Gene will be speaking on behalf of FNPS, but members are encouraged to speak of their concerns with protecting habitat as a resident of Florida. For a good overview of the toll road situation, visit the front page of the FNPS website, www.fnps.org.

* * Council of Chapters (CoC) discussed feedback from the last August retreat meeting. Some key themes included: strengthening communication between the Board and Chapters, Council and Chapters and between Chapters, the benefits of networking and sharing ideas/successes/failures of Chapter activities during in person meetings, and supporting and strengthening Chapters and Regional Chapter groups.

* * Kara Driscoll, CofC Chair then led a discussion on crafting the purpose of the CoC going forward, which was voted on and states:

“The purpose of the Council is to facilitate communication among the Chapters and with the Board. It serves as a conduit of information that supports and strengthens the FNPS Chapters in their pursuit of the FNPS mission and elevates local and regional issues and shares solutions throughout the Society”.

* * There was discussion on the creation of regional chapter group meetings and planning those meetings, how can Chapters work together, what the CoC can do to support regional groups, discussion of collaborative efforts and finally what regional help does each Chapter need.

A Busy and Productive Fall 2019

As reported before, the Wildflower Festival was very successful with many a happy plant going to a new home. Fundraising from that event allows our chapter to begin to make good on the Three Challenges we voted to undertake in late 2019 and into 2020 at the September meeting. We also sent a sponsor donation for the next printing of a new issue of the “Guide for Real Florida Gardeners” by the Florida Association of Native Nurseries (FANN). The booklet will have our chapter's information in it and we receive copies to distribute to members and for public outreach.

Our chapter also helped sponsor the “Festival of Flight and Flowers” in Eustis on October 11, 12, & 13. The event was well attended and our members helped with field trips and public outreach.

Other field trips were to Alexander Springs in August conducted by David Rakes, ecologist, on the Timucuan Trail. First the beautiful first-magnitude spring was visited, then a walk from hydric hammocks up and along sand pine scrub with abounding habitat diversity. If you missed the trip, visit this lovely place north of Altoona, then right onto CR 445 and about 2 miles to the park within the Ocala National Forest.

And a few members joined the Sumter Chapter on a sandhill plant walk in the Withlacoochee State Forest led by FNPS President Susan Carr. In the Citrus Tract you can see superb wildflowers and families of red-cockaded woodpeckers. Visit this state treasure near Inverness, FL

Closer to home members have been helping two days planting Clasping Warea at Scrub Point, a Lake County Water Authority Preserve near Clermont. These rescued, endangered Warea plants were nursed by the folks at Bok Tower Gardens and now are returned to nature in a safe preserve.

If you are now in a mood for a good field trip, join our members on our next one to Orlando Wetlands Park on December 15, 2019. See all the information in the Calendar on Page 2.

Reports on Recent Programs

At the September Program Meeting we were happy to meet with Marc Minno once again and hear and see his fine program on “Butterfly Conservation Efforts in Florida and Cuba”. He has been going on expedition trips to Cuba since 2013 studying butterflies there and dispersal patterns between Florida and Cuba and back. He began by describing where our butterflies come from. They are of West Indian origin, i.e. islands that have split off from South America such as Cuba, Hispanola, Jamaica, and Bahamas and the Florida Keys. Old coral reefs where species got isolated. A huge proportion of plants and butterflies in Florida came from all these different island populations with variation in patterns but very closely related. Hurricanes can be a vector for dispersing insects and plants.

Of Cuban habitats, 90% of natural habitats are gone already although they have a big mixture of soils for growing things as Mangroves and Salt Flats that support Flamingos. On the Eastern side, mountains go up to 5,000 feet with new species of butterflies as you go up still being found.

An unusual soil supporting xeric shrub lands is the Serpentine Savanna, a metamorphic reddish or greenish rock where only some plants as cactus can survive the metals in the soils. There are coral reefs along the North Coast. West of Havana there is Karst rock with caves and disappearing rivers. The other coast is rain forest. Such a variety.

Marc showed many photos of habitats and butterflies comparing the similarities and small differences in our familiar butterflies between Florida and Cuba populations. In all, there are 170 species of butterflies in Florida. Marc is happy to be finding many rarely seen larvae and adult butterflies and finding new species in his travels, too. He expects to travel to NE Cuba in November 6 – 15, 2020, traveling with the Tree Institute. Contact for him is marc.minno@gmail.com.

Managing Aggressive Plants

The program in July was “Managing Aggressive Plants” presented by John Benton, Biologist with the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Ben Gugliotti, Biologist with the Lake County Water Authority. They concentrated their talk on identification of invasive exotic plants or aggressive native plants. Then they made many suggestions for removal or careful use of chemical application.

Some of the bad actors in your landscape which are not native (exotic) plants are Brazilian Pepper (once sold as Florida Holly), Natal Grass, Chinese Tallow (sometimes called Popcorn tree) Camphor Tree, Air Potato, Rosary Pea (seeds are poisonous) and Coral Ardesia. And then, there are native plants that can get a bit too much in a home landscape such as Passion Flower Vine, Tropical Sage, Spanish Needles, Cat-Tails, Grape Vine, Virginia Creeper, Wax Myrtle and Smilax (Greenbrier).

John and Ben discussed using mechanical methods with hand tools, hoes, shovels or mowing saying doing earlier removal is easier. To prevent sprouting you can use mulch with pine needles or newspaper. Try not to use cypress mulch. They also discussed the chemical approach. They said know your target to choose your application, **Read The Label**, and use personal protection. Glyphosate, “Round-Up” or any of the generic equivalents have been studied extensively and found safe if used properly. Some shrubs and trees when cut back, need to be treated with a brush killer painted on the stump within 15 minutes if you wish to kill the plant.

John handed out a Resource List on this subject. Please consult John or Ben for advice in more detail than can be reported here.

Practical Pruning

Our guest speaker at the November program meeting was Nick Giannola who has worked at the Green Isle Gardens native plant nursery for over five years. He gave a detailed talk with good advice on “Practical Pruning” for your landscape. Why do we prune our plants? To achieve pleasing shape, for fruit or flower production, to decrease seed spread, if desired, for the plant’s health and so the neighbors

don't call the HOA. Decide on your own goals: Neat and Tidy? Or Wild and Free? Remember a little a day keeps disaster away. If you do have a HOA to please, remember "The Landscape Mullet" Front: neat and tidy Back: Wilder.

Nick discussed the tools such as hand pruners and loppers, weed whackers, hedge trimmers, edgers and mowers. Keep the edges sharp and get good quality tools as they will hold up best.

He suggested deciding on how much you want to leave for wildlife such as leaving seed heads and grasses over winter and pruning back in spring or leaving bloom stalks as markers for where plants will come up again in spring. Use the 1/3 rule on shrubs and woody plants, trimming only 1/3 at a time. It takes a couple years growth to support more new growth. Also, berries grow on last years branches. For Saw Palmetto, only trim every 3 – 5 years. If you have winter die back on some plants, prune in spring to clean up. Always maintain the central leader on trees to have shapely trees. If you have wildflower beds, stagger pruning back leaving blooming areas intact if you have butterflies depending on nectar plants. Nick's contact is ngiannola@gmail.com Website: GreenIsleGardens.com .

Looking Back Twenty Years – Continued by Nadine Foley

At the January 2000 Meeting as our chapter was forming, Tammera Race from Bok Tower Gardens gave an inspiring talk on our beautiful, endangered Florida plants. In the business part of the meeting, Yvonne Rice presented the By-Laws Committee's work and after a few changes, we adopted our By –Laws. They stood the test of time very well, until last year when we updated and revised them.

At that meeting we were honored to have Candace Weller, FNPS President and Katy Roberts, FNPS Membership Chairman attend this organizational meeting and welcome our chapter to the parent organization. They cheered us on and said we were well-set to present our application for FNPS Chapter status at the Board meeting in Tampa on February 26, 2000. It was my pleasure to attend that meeting and formally apply. Now, let's pat ourselves on the back a little and move forward into 2020. Plan to attend the Annual Meeting and 20th Anniversary of our chapter on Sunday, January 19, 2020.

Save the Date: The FNPS Annual Conference will be held in Jacksonville May 14 – 17, 2020.