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APRIL 2025 CHAPTER NEWS

**THE FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY'S MISSION IS TO
CHAMPION FLORIDA'S NATIVE PLANTS AND THEIR HABITATS.**

Welcome New Members to Lake Beautyberry Chapter!

Ron Shaver
Groveland

Beth Stendel

Steven Smith
Clermont

Patricia Crooks
Clermont

Native Plant Article

Can You Tell the Difference? Firebush—Native or Non-Native



Pluto Sphinx Moth (*Xylophanes pluto*) on Firebush. Photo by Al Tuttle.

In addition to butterflies, hummingbirds, bees, and wasps frequent the flowers as well. And, fruit-eating birds such as mockingbirds, catbirds, and blue-headed vireos feed on the small purple fruits. *Hamela patens var patens* is the larval/host plant for the Pluto Sphinx, a hummingbird-like moth.

Distinguishing leaves

Native Firebush has broadly lanceolate leaves in whorls of typically 3, and often tinged with red. Leaves and young stems are covered with flattened hairs. Non-native Firebush, frequently named “dwarf” has no hairs on leaves and whorled in groups of typically 4.



Distinguishing Flowers

Shown in the picture to the right from left to right. Native: *Hamelia patens* var. *patens*. Non-native: *Hamelia patens* var. *glabra* sold as African, Dwarf, or Compacta. Non-native: *Hamelia cuprea*. Non-native hybrid: *Hamelia patens* and *Hamelia cuprea*.



The native flowers can be yellowish when in bud, turning orange after opening, and then orange-red once they are pollinated – but the dominant color on open flowers is typically red, or orange-red.

Non-native *Hamelia patens* var. *glabra* flowers are mostly yellow with a reddish orange base, often with thin red lines along the outside of the floral tube. The bottom of a leaf through a magnifying lens, small hairs on the veins are visible, but the leaf blade is essentially smooth.

Some nurseries offer a selection of native *Hamelia patens* var. *patens* with a rounded, compact growth form and dark red flowers, a cultivar trademarked under the name ‘Calusa.’

Source:

Varieties and cultivars can be confusing. For a more detailed description, read the full description at Association of Florida Native Nurseries. <https://www.fann.org/info/plants/the-hamelia-mess/>

Upcoming Activities

FIELD TRIP COMING UP FAST!

April 4, Friday, 2-4 PM, Hontoon Island State Park
2309 River Ridge Rd, Deland, 32720



Hontoon Island has a variety of natural communities, including hydric hammocks, upland woodlands, mesic flatwoods and more. This diversity of habitats means a diversity of plants from cabbage palm and red cedar, tarflower and sparkleberry, to mosses and ferns. Ranger Adam Hull will be our guide.

This field trip is free, but numbers are limited. If you plan to participate, email: lavonsilvernell@gmail.com to be added to the list. If you wish, you may meet in the SW corner of the Mount Dora

Lowes parking lot, 18795 US-441, Mount Dora, at 12:45 and we will caravan from there. There is a free ferry to take visitors to the Island.

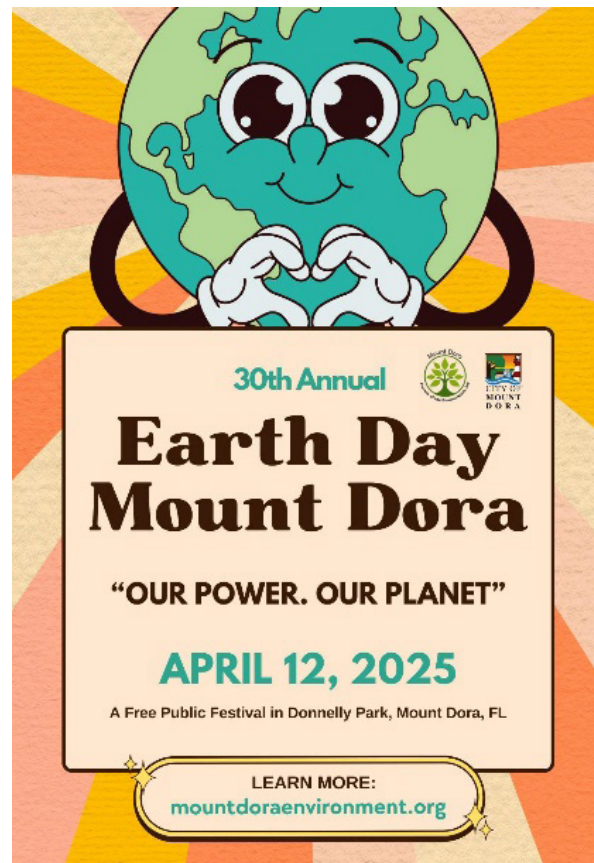
April 12, Saturday, 10am-12pm, Native Plant Sale
W.T. Bland Library, 1995 N Donnelly Street, Mount Dora

Come early for the best selection as our plant sale tends to sell out! Select from over 40 species and 250+ plants will be available. A few sample new offerings this year: Baby Rubber Plant, Pineland Dropseed, and Prairie Coneflower. Lake Beautyberry will have knowledgeable members available to assist with your selection and purchase. Sale is held in the library parking lot.

Volunteer Ken Bell with
a truckload of natives
for the plant sale

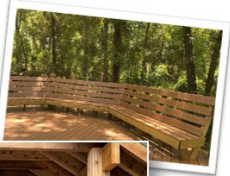


April 12, Saturday, 9am-3pm, Earth Day
Donnelly Park, 530 N Donnelly Street, Mount Dora



In addition to other earth-friendly vendors, Lake Beautyberry Chapter will be represented by our volunteers at a table display to help the public learn more about native plants and their benefits.

April 19, Saturday, 8:30am



Forest Preserve Guided Nature Walks

New topic each 3rd Saturday!

8:30 AM

March 15, 2025	Spring Blooms
April 19, 2024	Trees that Talk
May 17, 2025	Caterpillars
June 21, 2025	Basics to ID Plants
July 19, 2025	Florida Black Bear
August 16, 2025	Tree Defense Against Pests

Our knowledgeable naturalists will help all ages explore the intricate relationships between plants, animals and microorganisms that make up a sandhill forest ecosystem. **Program takes place at the north entry and pavilion at 8:30 AM and a guided hike on the dirt trail is available afterwards. No registration required.**

Sponsored by the GFWC Mount Dora Woman's Club

Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by participants.



**CITY OF
MOUNT
DORA**

W.T. Bland Public Library
(352) 735-7180 (option 5)

1995 N. Donnelly St. Mount Dora, FL 32757
library@cityofmountdora.com

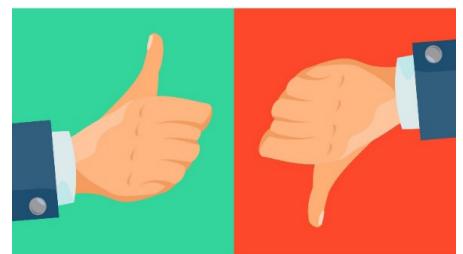
April 26, Saturday, 8am-10am, Coral Ardisia Removal Workday
Forest Preserve, W.T. Bland Library, 1995 N Donnelly Street, Mount Dora

Please join us at the trailhead (look for the 'Forest Preserve Work Day' sign) and bring your work gloves and garden clippers for this work day in the forest, with volunteers on hand to demonstrate proper removal techniques. Meet time is 8am at the entrance at the Forest Preserve located behind the library parking lot. W.T. Bland Library, 1995 N Donnelly Street, Mount Dora.

Save the Date—Next Chapter Meeting

May 18, Sunday, 1:30 pm, "Native Plants We Love...and Hate"
W.T. Bland Library, 1995 N Donnelly Street, Mount Dora

Find out how, and why Lake Beautyberry members John, Delphine, and Suzanne can love...and hate these Florida native plants. You can add your experience too! Topics include: Don't let these shrubs Creep you out, Replacing lawn with ground covers, and Right plant, but my garden was not the right place. This event is free and open to the public.



Webinar Series

Don't forget about the six-part Botany in Context Webinar Series with Jim Folsom, PhD!

This series was highlighted in previous newsletters and worth a reminder! All classes are on Wednesdays at 2pm. **Note:** This is a Florida Wildflower Foundation sponsored event.

- Part 1, 2, and 3: ****Recording now available****
- Part 4: Getting Familiar with Plant Families, April 16
- Part 5: Botanical Jargon, May 21
- Part 6: Using Keys to Florida Plants, June 18

[Click here for additional details and registration](#)

Enjoy Our Blossoming Spring

After the winter bare branches, Flatwoods Plum, *Prunus umbellata*, springs into bloom for bees and other pollinators. Purple fruit in the fall is eaten by birds and other wildlife.



Annual Conference

Online registration is now closed. On-site registration opens April 2.



April 2nd - 6th 2025
Gainesville, FL

Neta

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