



March 2026 Chapter News

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

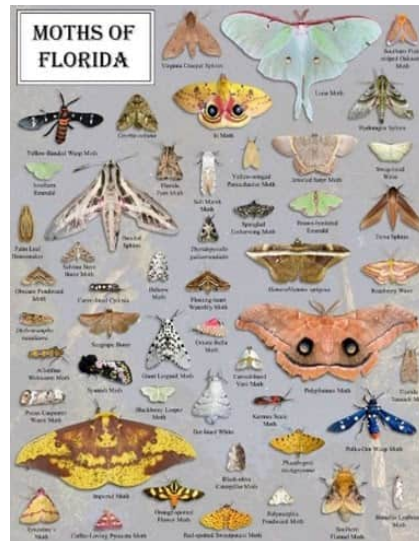
www.lakebeautyberry.fnpschapters.org

March Membership Meeting

**Sunday, March 15, 2026, at 1:30 pm. Meeting will be held at the
W.T. Bland Public Library, 1995 N Donnelly Street, Mount Dora,
FL 32757.**

Topic: Nighttime Pollinators – Florida Moths

Speaker: Marc Minno



Marc Minno, biologist, environmental consultant, and author will speak about the importance of moths in our world. A 2024 Florida Museum of Natural History study found strong, consistent declines in both the number and diversity of moths across all life stages, driven by urbanization and the "heat island" effect, light pollution, and habitat loss. Researchers suggest one way we can help is that planting native host plants can help mitigate these declines.

Free and open to Bug Lovers!



Umatilla Black Bear Festival

Florida Black Bear & Wildlife Conservation Festival

January 31, 2026



Despite the cold north wind, 50 vendors joined the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce and Black Bear Habitat promoters to encourage compassionate cohabitation with bears in our forests. Our chapter was represented by Delphine Salai, Tina Mertz, Lavon Silvernall, Jane Bullock and Lea Faulkner.

We provided information about native plants to approximately 50 to 60 attendees, including literature on butterflies and their host plants, native trees of Central Florida, and the ideology behind our promotion of native plants. Interest is increasing!



Lake County's Fifth Annual EcoExpo

February 21, 2026



The first international event for EcoExpo is estimated to have been in 2006. This world-wide activity included Eco Expo Asia, Eco Expo Central Asia, and Eco Sustainability in India. The focus was sustainability, waste management and green technology.

The first EcoExpo in the United States was primarily a West Coast phenomenon that premiered in 1991 in California and from there grew in popularity across the country.

The first EcoExpo in Lake County premiered in 2022 organized by Lake County Conservation Council (LCCC). Now in its fifth year it has grown and 600 people attended this free event last Saturday at Hickory Point Park in Tavares where 50 conservation and environmentally-friendly organizations participated in exhibitor displays.

Our chapter, represented by Delphine Salai, Tina Mertz, Neta VB and Lynda Knight kept busy, answering questions, and handing out FNPS brochures. The Passionflower Chapter joined us to assist. Kirsten McIntyre, Ana Sinclair, and Denise Palermo were highly appreciated to come help out.



What Natives Froze in your Yard?



Florida Native Wild Coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*)

Mount Dora, where I live, experienced its coldest temperatures early February in 16 years. What a surprise to wake up to brown drooping leaves on some plants. I'm not discouraged though because I have Florida native plants in my yard.

Of my 60 native species, several plants within each species, 6 species were affected. Firebush, *Hamelia patens*, and Wild coffee, *Psychotria nervosa*, were to be expected, after all they are south Florida species, and Seagrape, *Coccoloba uvifera* is a coastal native, zone 10a – 11. Beyond that, the other three, Marlberry, *Ardisa escallonioides*, Bracken fern, *Pteridium aquilinum*, and Lantana, *Lantana depressa*, even though are within our planting zone, they also had brown leaves.

These natives are expected to recover and resprout from their roots. And actually, my coffee, lantana, and fern have already resprouted from the underground roots within the protection of the brown leaves surrounding them.

Each yard is environmentally different as well, so the plants can react differently. There may be protected areas in a microclimate, by a nearby wall, or heat generated from concrete sidewalks and patios.

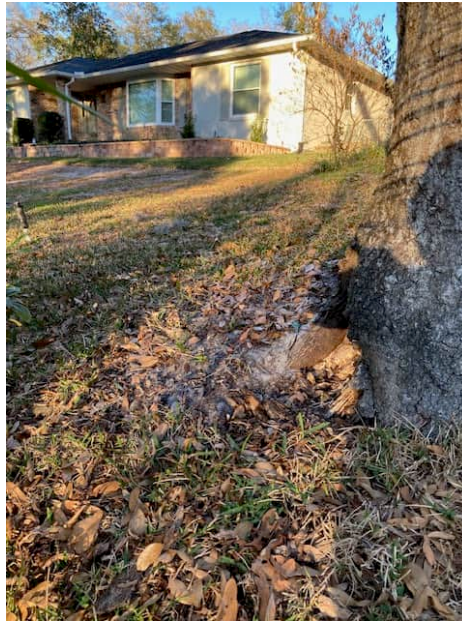
So be patient, wait for spring and look for any new sprouts before pruning any branches to the ground.

Outreach/Volunteer Opportunity

Neighbors on Alert



Before



After

Driving by a neighbor's yard on the way home I spotted a glimpse of bright red berries. Oh no. It is the invasive plant coral ardisia. It didn't look purposely planted but found its way there, perhaps by a bird dropping. The numerous berries drop below the shrub to create a mat of seedlings. Birds eat the berries and deposit them further away from the parent plant. Aggressively long runner roots sprout new plants creating a monoculture dominating the landscape and eliminating the survival of any other plants. An invasive plant, indeed.

I contacted the owner to explain the problem and request permission to enter their property to remove this shrub before it would spread through the rest of the neighborhood. They consented and the shrub is gone.

Many people do not know about this plant or the many other declared invasive plants. It's all about education. Share what you know. Click here for an [Invasive Plant List](#).



Our most popular invasives!

Hosted by **Jim E. Davis, UF/IFAS Extension Sumter County**

Wildlife & Invasive Species Education™ (WISE) Conference

MARCH 26-27, 2026

Topics Include:

- Invasive species management
- Prescribed fire and forest ecosystems
- Wetlands and aquatic systems
- Native and invasive plants
- Florida wildlife conservation—including mammals, reptiles, birds, and marine species—and wildlife photography and identification

REGISTRATION:

- \$70** Both Days (Best Value)
- \$40** Single Day
- \$45** On-site Registration (see day)
- *No refunds after March 18, 2026

Attend each day for a chance to win one of 10 Bluebird Nest Boxes, raffled daily during the conference.

Register at:

SCAN TO REGISTER

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1766992475059>

MAR 7th 8AM-11AM

CUPLET FERN
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

NATIVE PLANTS SALE

Beauty
Biodiversity
Resilience
Conservation
Habitat

WEKIVA HUNT CLUB COMMUNITY CENTER
197 NORTH HUNT CLUB BLVD, LONGWOOD, FL 32779

www.CupletFern.org

Sad News about Nadine Foley

This evening (February 27th), Lavon Silvernell let me know that Nadine Foley has passed away. Lavon reports that Nadine had two strokes, was in the hospital, and then transferred to hospice a day or two ago. Lavon suggests that sympathy cards be sent to:

**The Family of Nadine Foley
PO Box 88, Umatilla, FL 32784**

Nadine was an environmental educator and activist in Lake County for over 40 years. She was very active in LCCC (Lake County Conservation Council) during its early years. Lavon reports that Nadine "was involved with Lake County Soil and Water and the acquisition of the land which became PEAR Park, and loved working with students at Trout Lake and at the Envirothon." Since 2024, LCCC has issued our annual Conservationist Award in her name.

Nadine, we wish you peace.

[Excerpt from Jane Hepting, 352-250-6771]



On February 27th, our Chapter founder Nadine Foley passed away. She was 89.

As a member of Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) since 1999, but with no local chapter near her in Lake County, she wrote a letter to 90 people she thought might be interested in forming a new local chapter. They presented their application for Chapter status at the FNPS Board meeting in Tampa on February 26, 2000 where they were officially accepted as a FNPS Chapter, Lake Beautyberry Chapter.

Mike Archer announced the new chapter in the "Lake Sentinel" and Gene Packard, the editorial cartoonist for the "Daily Commercial" designed our distinctive and colorful chapter logo pro bono.

Nadine was an environmental educator and activist in Lake County for over 40 years. In addition to Lake Beautyberry Chapter, she was very active in LCCC (Lake County Conservation Council) during its early years. Nadine was involved with Lake County Soil and Water (LCSW), the acquisition of the land which became PEAR Park in Leesburg, and she loved working with students at Envirothons and Trout Lake Nature Center in Eustis.

Nadine was honored last year on our 25 Anniversary at a Chapter meeting.

She was a guiding light for environmental and conservation involvement, always positive and resolute.

Sympathy cards may be sent to: The Family of Nadine Foley
PO Box 88, Umatilla, FL 32784

Upcoming Activities at the Library

Forest Preserve Talk and Walks 1995 N Donnelly Street, Mount Dora, FL 32757



☞ **March 21, 2026, Saturday, 8:30 am**
TOPIC: Native Snakes

Claudia Rowe (left) is a science educator, cattle rancher, 4H volunteer and native Floridian.

Neta Villalobos-Bell (right) is a Florida Master Naturalist, vice president of the Lake BeautyBerry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and is a certified national interpreter of natural environments for the National Association for Interpretation.

Coral Ardisia Removal Workday 1995 N Donnelly Street, Mount Dora, FL 32757

☞ **March 28, 2026, Saturday, 8:00 am**



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.

Upcoming May Meeting: Share Your Yard

Audience Participation: Tina Mertz



This annual meeting highlights member presentations and audience participation, encouraging us all to learn and grow together. Perhaps you have a favorite plant, had an exciting experience, or an A-ha! moment. Maybe you found a volunteer native in your yard, or learned something new about plant behavior. The possibilities are endless.

If you're willing to share your experience, we'll add a slide to the program for you to talk about. Contact Neta: netavb@gmail.com

ALERT: FNPS Membership Dues Increase

Membership Dues Increase FAQ

Why are dues increasing?

FNPS has not adjusted membership dues in 16 years. During that time, costs for staffing, insurance, publications, technology, and conservation work have increased significantly. This update corrects for long-unaddressed inflation.

What are the new rates?

Effective April 1, 2026:

- Individual: \$50
- Household: \$90
- All other tiers remain unchanged

Why such a large jump?

Because dues remained flat for 16 years, a modest annual increase was never implemented. Making a sufficient adjustment now reduces the likelihood of smaller increases every year going forward.

Can I avoid future dues increases?

Members who wish to avoid future pricing changes may consider a Lifetime Membership.

A lifetime membership:

- Is a one-time contribution
- Permanently eliminates annual renewal
- Supports both FNPS statewide and your local chapter
- Provides long-term stability for the organization

If you are interested in upgrading to lifetime membership, you can upgrade your membership in the [new membership portal](#).

Why not raise dues gradually over several years?

Because dues were not adjusted for 16 years, smaller annual increases now would likely require repeated price changes over several consecutive years. That approach can create ongoing confusion, friction, and higher attrition. FNPS chose to make a measured correction now to reduce the likelihood of frequent future increases.

Can I [renew](#) for multiple years at the current rate?

Yes. Members may prepay multiple years at the current rate if they renew before April 1, 2026. Each additional year purchased will extend your membership at the current rate. On and after April 1, all single-year and multi-year renewals will reflect the updated dues.

What if I want to lock in my membership long-term?

Members who prefer not to think about future dues changes may choose a Lifetime Membership, which is a one-time contribution that permanently eliminates annual renewals while supporting both FNPS statewide and your local chapter.

How does this affect chapters?

As always, 26% of every membership dollar goes directly to local chapters. This increase strengthens chapter programming and conservation work statewide.

Can members renew at the old rate?

Current members may [renew](#) at the current rate before April 1.

2025 Chapter Activities

Education

We provided inspiring environmental topic presentations free and open to the public at member meetings and for other interested organizations.

Presentations

1. Florida's Intriguing Carnivorous Plants
2. Educational Treevia
3. Florida Native Plants Basics
4. Edible Native Plants
5. Plant Strategies to Attract Pollinators
6. Volunteer Native Plants
7. Native Plants We Love...and Hate
8. Protecting What Matters – Conservation
9. Navigating an HOA with Plant Natives
10. Eight Best Natives to Plant This Fall

Consultations

- Community Pollinator Garden in Minneola
- Native Plant Garden at Sunken Gardens in Plymouth

Outreach

- We participated in Community Events, interacting with a larger, more diverse group of people.
- Our volunteers shared their knowledge of native plants and their benefits at our display table.

Events (1,780 attendees)

1. City of Tavares Arbor Day (300)
2. Lake County Conservation Council EcoExpo (400)
3. Books & Blooms Wildlife Festival (20)
4. City of Umatilla Cracker Christmas (500)
5. Envirothon Regional Event (60)
6. Master Gardener Fall Festival (500)

Chapter Plant Sale

- April and October
- 620 plants sold
- 200 attendees

Field Trips

1. Hontoon Island
2. Half Moon Water Management Area

October Native Plant Month

- Proclamation submitted by the Chapter and approved by Lake County Commissioners.
- And the October Native Plant Sale

Newsletter

- Monthly distribution electronically emailed.

Conservation/Restoration

- Monthly invasive coral ardisia removal in Mt Dora City-owned Forest Preserve.

Volunteer Hours

- Reported 1800 hours for the year.
- Estimate: 2000 to include people who don't report.



Join in our activities. Connect with our membership.

web: lakebeautyberry.fnpschapters.org

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Vice President & Programs

V.P. Conservation & Field Trips

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Membership Chair

Communications

Outreach

Plant Sale

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Neta Villalobos-Bell

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