



Florida Native Plant Society

Sea Rocket

Chapter Update

July 2025

Announcements

- **July Membership Meeting**

The next membership meeting will be at 6:30 pm on June 23rd at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary. Our speaker will be Sally Scalera, Urban Horticulture Agent & Master Gardener Coordinator for UF/IFAS Extension Brevard County. She will speak on *Love Your STUMP*, which talks about why we should keep all dead organic matter in our yard.

Sally Scalera graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Horticulture. With degree in hand, she left Iowa to work for a mouse! She started off in Florida working at Walt Disney World at EPCOT Center in landscaping, then to the Land Pavilion at EPCOT, and then to the Disney Tree Farm and Nursery. In 1992 Sally started working on her Masters' degree at UCF (graduating in 1995) and in January 1993 she joined the UF/IFAS Extension Brevard County where she is the Urban Horticulture Agent and Master Gardener coordinator.

- **Sea Rocket Chapter Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/searocketchapterfnps>

Have you had an opportunity to check out our Chapter's new Facebook page, where you can find information on Chapter events, Florida native plants, field trips, plant sales, interesting articles, and more? We now have 126 "followers" and 99 "likes". You can "follow" our page, so each post will automatically be included in what you see or just view the page at your leisure. There's also a QR code at the end of each set of minutes and each Chapter Update for easy access. If you enjoy the posts, please consider "following" us, giving the page a "like", or both.

- **Do You Have a Great Picture of a Florida Native Plant that You Would Like to Share on Our Facebook Page?**

We're currently sharing pictures of Florida native plants which have been submitted by folks who see our Page and we'd love to share your pictures, too! You do not have to be a Chapter member, or Facebook page "follower" to participate. If you have something to share, please email it to srsecretary@fnps.org along with your name (we'll show full or first name only, your preference), common name of plant (we'll add the scientific name), and if you would like, the city or location. The pictures can be any size – we'll adjust as needed to conform with Facebook standards. Tell your friends they can submit as well!

- [Check This Out on the FNPS Website: FNPS Monthly Lunch and Learn Series](#)
Members of the Florida Native Plant Society are invited to attend live *Lunch and Learns* on the last Friday of every month, at 12:00 pm EST. After signing up at (<https://www.fnps.org/news/news>), the link to each upcoming *Lunch and Learn* will be emailed to you. To watch past *Lunch and Learns*, visit our Public YouTube Playlist.
- [2025 Landscape Awards Nominations Begin](#)
From residential yards to commercial landscapes and from large-scale restoration sites to small-scale wildlife and butterfly gardens, FNPS encourages Chapters, community groups, businesses, professionals, government agencies, HOA's and individuals to nominate their own or others' landscapes for recognition of their efforts to celebrate and highlight the benefits of native plants. Submissions will open on June 2, 2025, and will close on August 1, 2025. If you have questions, please email landscape-awards@fnps.org.
- [Kudos](#)
Many thanks to Brevard County for our agreement with the Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, which allows us to hold our meetings, educational presentations, and plant sales at the Sanctuary. Our work maintaining the Butterfly Gardens at the Forest is part of the agreement.
- [Possible Local Development Ordinance for Promoting Native Plants](#)
Titusville City Council is considering a native plant landscaping ordinance requiring all landscapers to plant a minimum of 50% native plants in future developments. The Florida Native Plant Society supports the use of native plants in landscaping and the retention of native plants and native plant communities. Sea Rocket Chapter members Kimberly Gibbs and David Turcotte provided expressions of support of this new native plant landscaping ordinance at the May 27th council meeting.

A vote on the ordinance was tabled until July 22nd at 5:30 pm, where an entire hour will be given to consider this and related ordinances. This meeting is open to the public. Anyone interested in finding out more should contact Kay St. Onge (stongekay@yahoo.com) of the Titusville Tree Team.

Outreach Reports

- [Butterfly Garden Work](#)
The June Enchanted Forest Garden Workday was held June 7th. Madeline, Bevely, Jesse, and Paul participated. We worked on trimming and weeding. With the summer rains many plants are now flowering.
- [June Membership Meeting](#)
Laurilee Thompson spoke at our June 25th Membership Meeting on *The Indian River Lagoon: A Treasurer Worth Saving*. Laurilee grew up in northern Brevard County and presented historical and current perspectives on the lagoon. Before development of Kennedy Space Center and rapid urban expansion, the lagoon supported extensive seagrass beds and abundant populations of fish, oysters, crabs, and other wildlife. Subsequently, causeways reduced lagoon water circulation,

launch pad and Crawlerway construction severed the connection between Banana Creek and Banana River, and impoundment of salt marshes for mosquito control severed the exchange of organisms between marsh and lagoon. Urbanization increased sewage and stormwater runoff into the lagoon. Sandy beaches important for horseshoe crabs and diamondback terrapins were replaced with sea walls and armored shorelines. These changes were detrimental to the lagoon and the life in it.

In the 1990's reconnection of many impounded wetlands to the lagoon reestablished access for fish and aquatic organisms. Controls on stormwater and sewage increased. However, beginning in 2010 a series of algae blooms lead to a massive loss of seagrass, critical habitat for fish and other lagoon organisms. Beginning in 2016, Brevard County citizens authorized a 10-year sales tax for the *Save Our Indian River Lagoon Program*. It has completed 106 projects so far, with more in progress. Recovery of seagrass populations in Mosquito Lagoon, the least impacted part of the system, was seen in 2021 to 2023 and more recently in the northern Indian River Lagoon. This progress is threatened by extensive development on Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Space Force Station for commercial space infrastructure and operations. For more information on these issues and to find out where you can make public comments check out the Indian River Roundtable (www.irlroundtable.com).

Upcoming Events/Volunteer Opportunities

- [Gardening for Pollinators Online Course](#)

The Florida Museum of Natural History in conjunction with other University of Florida departments is offering the online course Gardening for Pollinators. This is a self-paced, online course, and you have 45 days to complete. Topics include bee and butterfly diversity, biology, and identification; garden design and management; and plant selection for pollinators in Florida. Registration fee is \$20. Registration closes June 30th. For full info and registration see: <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/.../gardening-for.../>

- [FNPS Annual Meeting](#)

The Annual Meeting of the Florida Native Plant Society is planned for Saturday July 26th. There will include the annual report for the society, updates from FNPS Committees, elections of new officers and directors, and announcement of awards. Please plan to attend if you can. More information should be available soon on www.fnps.org.

- [Garden Workdays, Plant Sales and Field Trips](#)

With summer's oppressive heat and humidity, garden work will resume as early as September, while our next plant sale will be October 4th. We are hoping to resume our field trips this fall.

Sea Rocket Chapter outreach events are free, and open to the public!

Dates to Remember

- June 30th Deadline for Registration for Gardening for Pollinators Course
- July 1st Board of Directors Meeting
- July 20th Due date for Chapter Update Submissions.
- July 23rd Membership Meeting
- July 23rd Salt Lake Management Plan Meeting
- July 26th FNPS Annual Meeting
- August 1st Deadline for Landscape Awards Application
- August 5th Board of Directors Meeting
- August 27th Membership Meeting

Board of Directors

President: Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.
Treasurer: Megan McCormick
Chapter Rep: Elisabeth Bishop
Newsletter OPEN
Hospitality: John Stiner
At-Large: Jesse Baker

Vice-President: OPEN
Secretary: OPEN (acting: Laura Covell)
Membership: Beverly Lewis
Social Media: Laura Covell
Education/Outreach: OPEN
Chapter Update: David Turcotte acting

Want to know more?? For More Information...

Website: <https://searocket.fnpschapters.org>

Calendar: <https://searocket.fnpschapters.org/calendar>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/searocketchapterfnps>

Chapter Secretary: srsecretary@fnps.org

Florida Native Plant Society: <https://www.fnps.org/>

Facebook Page

