



Florida Native Plant Society

Sea Rocket

Chapter Update

August 2025

Announcements

- **Next Membership Meeting Speaker, August 27th**

Speaker: Ed Perry, Presentation: *Florida's Butterflies & How to Garden for Them*

Our August speaker, Ed Perry, retired as a 32-year Park Ranger at Sebastian Inlet State Park in 2020. He enjoys fishing, butterfly gardening, growing and grafting tropical fruit trees, beachcombing for sea beans, tropical fish aquaria, and wildlife photography. Ed is a Florida native who graduated from the University of Florida in 1988 and is interested in being involved in butterfly counts and protecting tracts of native, wild lands within our beautiful state of Florida.

His presentation, *Florida's Butterflies & How to Garden for Them*, is a neatly packaged slide presentation that shares a lifetime of information gleaned from the author's interest in Florida's butterflies and his efforts to attract them to the home landscape. Answered are the questions: Why garden for butterflies, what makes butterflies different from moths, and why are populations declining? Also highlighted are their life cycles, host, and favorite nectar plants. Attendees will learn ways they can easily attract these flying beauties to their own properties. The author has participated in annual North American Butterfly Association counts throughout Central Florida for the last 13 years and has a good knowledge of Florida's butterfly species, their native hostplants, and the perils they face.

The Sea Rocket Chapter Membership Meetings are held at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, 444 Columbia Blvd, Titusville. We have a social time from 6:00 – 6:30pm when the meeting begins. We'll have a short business meeting (about 10 minutes) prior to Ed's presentation.

***All Sea Rocket Chapter events are free
and open to members of the public!
All Are Welcome!***

- **2025 FNPS Photo Contest: Celebrating Florida's Native Flora**
Open for submissions on July 15th – September 15th

Celebrate the beauty and importance of Florida's native plants by sharing your best photos in our inaugural photo contest.

Whether you're capturing wild habitats, plant-animal interactions, artistic interpretations, or moments of advocacy in action, we want to see your perspective!

Open to all ages, with special categories for youth and discounted entry fees for FNPS members.

- **In Florida, Tropical Milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) is now considered a Category 2 Invasive.**

The Florida Invasive Species Council (FISC) now considers Tropical Milkweed a Category 2 invasive plant. To learn more about the FISC list of Invasive Plant Species, which was updated June 2025, go to <https://www.floridainvasives.org/plant-list/>.

FNPS recommends that tropical milkweed not be planted and that it be removed from gardens and yards where it occurs. Land managers of natural areas are encouraged to remove it from their sites.

For the full Florida Native Plant Society Position on Milkweeds and Monarchs posted September 2024 see <https://www.fnps.org/news/news>.

- **FNPS Annual Meeting - July 26th**

The Florida Native Plant Society holds a membership meeting once a year. All FNPS members are invited to participate. We provide a year in review and announce grant awards, Palmetto Awards for members and vote on new officers. The meeting will be virtual on Saturday, July 26th from 10:00am to 12:00pm EST. A link to register has been emailed to all members. If you are a member in good standing and you would like to attend but have not received a link, contact (info@fnps.org).

- **From the FNPS Website – Gardens with Good Native Plant Displays**

The Native Plants section of the FNPS website includes an interactive map of **Gardens with Good Native Plant Displays** throughout our state.

Did you know that our own **Enchanted Forest Butterfly Gardens and Serenity Pond** (collectively referred to as the Gardens) were awarded the 2007 Florida Native Plant Society First Place Landscape Award? The Sea Rocket Chapter and the Friends of the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, the Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program's non-profit support organization, coordinated the project for the EEL Program. Various aspects of the all-native gardens were planted with grant funds and received recognition from Keep Brevard Beautiful. The Garden specializes in wildflowers and a visit is likely to acquaint the visitor with many pollinators and butterflies. The Gardens are part of the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary's 400 acres which includes five native habitats (*Oak scrub, mesic and hydric hammock, wet prairie, and pine flatwoods*) along with several miles of hiking trails including the Enchanted Crossing; an approximately 500 foot concrete path from the Management and Education Center to an overlook along the Addison Canal where you can see the canal that was cut through the coquina ridge in the early 1900s in an unsuccessful attempt to drain parts of the St. Johns River Basin.

The Sea Rocket Chapter maintains the Gardens as part of our agreement with Brevard County which allows us to hold our meetings, plant sales, and other educational events at the Enchanted Forest.

To learn more about this interactive map visit <https://www.fnps.org/natives/gardens>. If you would like to learn more about the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, we suggest that you visit their web site at <https://www.brevardfl.gov/EELProgram/Sanctuaries/EnchantedForestSanctuary> or visit there soon!

- **2025 Landscape Awards**

Categories include: Residential (Pro and Homeowner), Commercial and Institutional, Habitat Restoration, Pollinator and Community Gardens. Submissions will close on August 1st. If you have questions, please email landscape-awards@fnps.org.

- **FNPS *Sabal Minor***

The most recent *Sabal Minor*, a bi-monthly newsletter for the members of the Florida Native Plant Society, was distributed July 18th. If you missed the email, you can view and download issues at <https://forms.fnps.org/civicrm/mailling/url?u=25797&qid=2108744>.

Outreach Reports

- **Membership Meeting – July 23rd** *Report by Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.*

Speaker: Sally Scalera, Presentation: Love your STUMP

Sally Scalera was our speaker for the July 23, 2025, Membership Meeting; she spoke on the topic: *Love Your STUMP: The NeighborWood Watch Campaign*. Sally is the Urban Horticulture Agent and Master Gardener coordinator with the UF/IFAS Extension Brevard County.

Dead trees, snags, dead limbs, and leaf litter are important biologically and support biological diversity, store carbon, recycle nutrients, and add organic matter to the soil. Hundreds of insect species and many fungi live in dead wood. Many bird species as well as flying squirrels nest in cavities in dead trees (snags). Brush piles provide habitat for many native bees and reptiles. Dead trees can be cut to 15 feet in height or two-thirds the distance to the house to limit the risk of the tree falling on your house while maintaining the value of retaining the snag and stump. Termites feed primarily on the roots of dead trees, so retaining a snag does not increase termite risk to your house but do not stack dead wood near your house. For more information on this topic check out <https://neighborwoodwatch.org/> and UF/IFAS Bulletins.

- **South Lake Wildlife Management Area Management Plan 2026-2036 Review**

Report by Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.

I represented the Sea Rocket Chapter at the meeting of the Management Advisory Group for the Salt Lake Wildlife Management Area (SLWMA) on July 23, 2025. This meeting was a step in the preparation of a management plan update for 2026-2036. SLWMA is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The main tract of SLWMA includes 5,262 acres west of Titusville. Managed with it are three disjunct sites: Grissom Parkway Unit, Ten Mile Ridge Unit, and Micco Expansion Unit that include 1,467 acres.

The meeting considered current conditions and priorities for inclusion in the updated plan. FWC staff will prepare a draft management plan. There will be a public hearing on the draft plan on Thursday, September 25th, at 6:00 pm, at the Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Cultural Complex, 2130 Freedom Ave., Mims, FL 32754. For a copy of the draft management plan contact Cedar Spirk, Cedar.Spirk@MyFWC.com.

Upcoming Events *Mark Your Calendars Now!*

- **Membership Meeting - September 24th**
To be determined.
- **FNPS Lunch and Learn August Schedule – August 29th**
FNPS offers monthly Lunch and Learn presentations that are generally held at noon on the last Friday of each month. The August presentation will feature JP Charisma who will be sharing information on **Butterfly Landscaping for Your Yard**. Their September speaker will be Susan Carr. Links to sign up for each presentation are mailed to members monthly and are available through <https://www.fnps.org/events/calendar>.
- **Next Plant Sale - October 4th *Volunteer Opportunity!***
We've already begun work on our first plant sale of the fall season which will be held at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary on Saturday, October 4th. Mark your calendars now so you can arrive early for the best selection and remember Chapter members are eligible for discounts!
- **OUTREACH Enchanted Forest Harvest Festival – October 25th 10:00am – 3:00pm**
Volunteer Opportunity!
The Sea Rocket Chapter will have an outreach booth at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary's Harvest Festival which will include local vendors, games, arts and crafts, and food trucks. The Florida Wildlife Hospital will also be giving two presentations with live owls. Costumes are also encouraged for anyone who wants to dress up. We hope you'll also visit the Butterfly Gardens, which are maintained by our Chapter, if you attend!

In Other News

- **Florida Wildflower Foundation August Webinar “Bring on the Butterflies” – August 20th**
This online event is being presented by Emily Bell, Communications Coordinator for the Florida Wildflower Foundation, on Wednesday, August 20th from 2:00 – 3:00PM. For more information, see <https://www.flawildflowers.org/event/250820-webinar-bring-on-the-butterflies>.

Reminder

Garden Workdays, Field Trips, and Plant Sales
will return in the fall, when the weather is cooler.

Dates to Remember

- July 26th – FNPS Annual Conference
- August 1st – Last day to submit application for Landscape Awards
- August 5th – Board of Directors meeting
- August 20th – Florida Wildflower Foundation's August Webinar
- August 27th – Membership meeting
- August 29th – Lunch and Learn
- September 2nd – Board of Directors meeting
- September 15th – Last day to submit photos to FNPS Photo Contest
- September 24th – Membership meeting
- October 4th – Next Plant Sale
- October 7th – Board of Directors meeting
- October 22nd – Membership meeting
- October 25th – OUTREACH: Enchanted Forest Fall Festival – *Lead Beverly Lewis*

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

Plant Sales/Garden: Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.

Chapter Update: Laura Covell (August Issue)

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

