



Florida Native Plant Society Sea Rocket Chapter Update August 2026

***Promoting the preservation, conservation, and restoration
of native plants and their communities in Florida.***

Announcements

FNPS Annual Membership Meeting by Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.

The Florida Native Plant Society held its 2026 Annual Meeting online on Saturday, July 18th, from 10:00am to 12:00pm. The meeting included reports by Gene Kelly, President, Executive Director Melissa Fernandez, and the Conference, Conservation, Finance, Policy and Legislation, and Science Advisory Committees. FNPS members approved Bylaws changes that included a revised Mission Statement. Recipients of FNPS Green Palmetto, Silver Palmetto, and Mentor Awards were announced. Six members of the Board of Directors were elected, as was a new Board Secretary. A recap of the meeting is available at <https://www.fnps.org/2026-annual-member-meeting-recap#gsc.tab=0>. The recording of the meeting will be available soon.

Florida Native Plant Society Mission Statement

During the Annual Meeting, a new Mission Statement was approved:

To conserve, preserve and restore Florida's native plants and their habitats through science-based education, research, advocacy, horticulture, landscaping, and engaged participation by our members and communities.

The new Mission Statement was included in revisions to FNPS Bylaws

Sea Rocket Chapter Bylaws

On June 2nd, our Board of Directors began their review of our current Bylaws, which were approved by the Membership on February 25, 2026. This review will continue monthly until suggestions for revisions are complete and the 2027 Proposed Bylaws have received a Board vote of approval.

The 2027 Proposed Bylaws will be distributed to members with the February 2027 Newsletter/Chapter Update and will be presented to the Membership for final approval at the next Annual Membership Meeting, which is scheduled for February 24, 2027. Members are encouraged to participate in the review process by attending Board meetings, asking questions, and providing suggestions which can also be submitted to the Board through srsecretary@fnps.org.

2027 Budget

The Board of Directors began their review of the proposed budget for 2027 during their July 7th meeting. Members are encouraged to participate in this review, as well. A Board vote on the proposed budget is scheduled for no later than the October 6th Board meeting so that it can be distributed to Members with the November Chapter Update for consideration of approval at the November 18th Membership meeting. As a reminder, the November meeting will be held a week earlier than usual due to the Thanksgiving holiday. If you have suggestions or questions, feel free to attend any Board meeting, or contact srsecretary@fnps.org.

Plant Sale

We've planned the dates for our Fall plant sales!! Mark your calendars now for October 17th, November 14th, and December 12th when you will be able to check out and make purchases from a large variety of top-quality Florida native plants.

Don't forget...you can always check out our packets of Florida native plant seeds, which sell for the great price of \$2.00 a pack, at any plant sale, Sea Rocket Chapter meeting, or outreach event.

Posters

You can pick up a **FREE** copy of the **Florida's Butterflies, Caterpillars, and Their Host Plants II** poster by visiting a Sea Rocket Chapter Membership meeting, plant sale, or other outreach. This beautiful poster showcases 45 of Florida's 170 native butterflies along with their caterpillars (larvae) and host plants. Below each image of the host plant is its common name and plant family often used by the caterpillar. Some caterpillars feed exclusively on a single plant species (host), while others may feed on plants in a variety of plant families.

Funding for the posters was provided by the Florida Wildflower Foundation and Florida Native Plant Society. Supplies are limited, so we hope you'll visit us soon!

Florida Native Plant Society's Action Alert Network

With the Governor's recent signing of the 2026-2027 budget, the 2026 Legislative Session has reached its conclusion. [An Overview of the Florida Native Plant Society's Participation in the Legislative Process](#) can be found on the FNPS website.

You can receive FNPS Eco Action Alerts by signing up in the area provided at the bottom of the Florida Native Plant Society home page: <https://www.fnps.org/#gsc.tab=0>.

Outreach Reports

July 11, 2026 Garden Workday

Regular garden workdays are suspended during the summer due to heat concerns, but special workdays may occur. If you would like to be notified of opportunities that may be scheduled this summer, please speak with Paul Schmalzer, or contact him through schmalzp@digital.net.

Thank you, Beverly Lewis and Paul Schmalzer, for working in the Garden and spreading 10 bales of pine straw mulch on July 11th!

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July 22, 2026 Membership Meeting by Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.

Our speaker for the Sea Rocket Chapter July Membership meeting was Chapter member Russ Hansen speaking on *Invasive Plants of Central Florida*. Invasive exotic plants are a major problem in Florida. Land management agencies spend substantial resources trying to control these plants and limit the damage they do. How did it get this bad? Not all non-native plants are invasive. Ones that become invasive have characteristics of weediness such as rapid growth, abundant reproduction, and easy distribution. The subtropical and tropical climate of Florida allows year-round growth. Multiple ports in the state provide access for species that come in on other cargo (hitchhikers). Some invasive plants were deliberately introduced. Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolia*) and Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) were brought in as ornamentals. Melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) was brought in to dry up marshes and swamps. Cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) was introduced for cattle forage and erosion control (as it turns out cattle won't eat it). Climbing ferns (*Lygodium japonicum* and *L. microphyllum*) were hitchhikers, coming in on other imported materials. There are good native alternatives for common invasive plants in landscaping. Instead of Brazilian pepper plant native hollies including American (*Ilex opaca*), yaupon (*I. vomitoria*), or dahoon (*I. cassine*) hollies depending on site conditions. The native bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) will grow in wet sites rather than Melaleuca. Red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) are native substitutes for Chinese tallowtree (*Triadica sebifera*). Instead of coral ardisia (*Ardisia crenulata*) use the native subtropical shrubs marlberry (*Ardisia escallonioides*) and wild coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*, *P. tenuifolia*). Native grasses such as switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) and muhly grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*) are alternatives to Guinea grass (*Urochloa maxima*) and Cogon grass. There are many other examples of native species that are better alternatives to invasive exotics. Controlling invasive exotic plants frequently depends on mechanical means such as pulling out or digging up, use of chemical herbicides, or combination of mechanical treatment and herbicides such as frill and girdle where a section of tree bark is removed with a hatchet or chainsaw and herbicide sprayed on the cut area. There are many considerations with herbicides including choice of chemical and mechanism of application. The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is a good source for detailed information and recommendations (<https://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/management-guides-and-videos/>). If you use herbicides, it is also important to follow the manufacture's recommendations and precautions.

July 23, 2026 Titusville Tree Planting 9:00am Sandpoint Park

The City of Titusville, Brevard County Parks and Recreation, Titusville Tree Team, and other organizations, held a community wide tree planting event to celebrate the City's new Urban Forestry Management Plan.

To learn more about the adopted Urban Forestry Plan visit: <https://www.titusville.com/3186/Urban-Forest-Plan-Project>.

Upcoming Events and Dates to Remember

All events are held at the EEL Program's Enchanted Forest Sanctuary, in Titusville, unless otherwise noted.

August 4th Board Meeting 6:00-8:00pm

Members are always welcome to attend!

August 26th Membership Meeting

Our speaker will be Dr. Laura Wilson, Executive Director, Marine Resources Council, who will speak on *Rethinking Stormwater: Low Impact Living for a Healthier Lagoon*.

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Inspired by the natural world, Laura pursues work that brings together her love of learning, teaching, and exploring. She earned her B.S. in Geology from Washington & Lee University, M.S. in Earth Sciences from Montana State University, and Ph.D. in Geological Sciences from University of Colorado at Boulder. Dr. Wilson joined the Marine Resources Council as Executive Director in June 2024. With a background in paleontology, she brings a big-picture approach to restoring our ecosystem—looking at how geology, biology, and time all connect. She emphasizes using sound science to guide decisions, building strong partnerships, and fostering a culture of continuous learning so that together, we can create lasting improvements for our environment.

September 1st Board Meeting

Members are always welcome to attend!

September 23rd Membership Meeting

Speaker to be announced.

October 6th Board Meeting

Members are always welcome to attend

October 17th *Plant Sale*

Our first plant sale of the fall season is scheduled for October 17th and this year, we'll be trying something new!! Megan McCormick, who coordinates our sales, has established a pre-order/pre-pay program, just for Sea Rocket Chapter members! Additional information will be distributed closer to the sale date. Remember, any plants remaining from previous sales can be purchased immediately prior to Membership Meetings, and Sea Rocket Chapter members are eligible for a discount!

October 24th OUTREACH Enchanted Forest Harvest Festival *Volunteer Opportunity*

It's always fun for all ages at the Enchanted Forest's Harvest Festival! We'll have plants for sale, and our Education Station will be full of **FREE** useful information on Florida native plants and how to grow them, pollinators and how to attract them, birds and butterflies, along with a few **FREE** goodies for the kids. We'll also have a variety of Florida native plant seeds for just \$2.00 a packet, and you can purchase your very own Sea Rocket Chapter T-shirt for just \$10.00, even if you are not a member!

If you would like to volunteer, please speak with Beverly Lewis, or contact her through blewis53@outlook.com.

October 28th Membership Meeting

Sure to be a great meeting!

In Other News

Scholarship Opportunity

The Space Coast Regional Friends Group of the Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) will be accepting scholarship applications that may be used for any FNMP class offered anywhere in Florida. If you are a Florida resident and at least 18 years old, you can find the scholarship information at <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/brevard/sea-grant/scrc/>. The deadline to apply is September 30, 2026.

So Much Information on the FNPS Web Site!!

If you check out the **Resources** section of the FNPS Site Map, which is located at the bottom of the home page, you can find a wealth of information including: FNPS Plant Database, Landscape Guidance, Educational Resources, Publications, Policy Toolkit, Position Statements, and more. We'll be providing additional information on these resources in future issues. You'll also find a link to the FNPS online Bookshop where you can explore and find links to purchase recommended reads on Florida's Native Plants!

This month we're highlighting the **Landscape Guidance** portion of the FNPS Resources section which includes educational materials on: Gardening Resources, Attracting Butterflies, Attracting Wildlife, Native Demonstration Gardens, and Monarch and Milkweed.

<https://www.fnps.org/landscapeguidance#gsc.tab=0>

Florida Museum of Natural History Butterfly Initiative

The Florida Museum of Natural History will be partnering with the Florida Department of Transportation on an initiative led by the University of Illinois Chicago to transform the vacant rights-of-way along roads, powerlines and train tracks into environmental corridors for monarch butterflies and other pollinators. The initiative will focus on pinewoods milkweed (*Asclepius humistrata*) and butterfly weed (*Asclepius tuberosa*), which have a proven track record of supporting monarchs and thriving in poor conditions. Story and video: <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/science/butterfly-experts-are-planting-15000-milkweed-plants-along-florida-roadsides-to-help-monarchs/>.

Remember...

**All Sea Rocket Chapter events are *FREE*,
and open to the public.**

All Are Welcome!

Tell your family, friends and neighbors!

SEA ROCKET CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.

Vice-President: OPEN

Treasurer: Megan McCormick

Secretary: Alyssa Sferrazza

Chapter Representative: Elizabeth Bishop

Field Trip Leader: Paul Schmalzer, Ph.D.

Membership: Beverly Lewis

Education/Outreach: Beverly Lewis

Newsletter: OPEN

(Chapter Update: Laura Covel)

Social Media: Laura Covel

Hospitality: John Stiner

At Large: Jesse Baker

For additional information.....

Facebook



Instagram



Website



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

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

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

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/searocket.fnps/>

Chapter Secretary: srsecretary@fnps.org

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

Sea Rocket Chapter 2026 Meeting Schedule

January	6 th	Board	July	7 th	Board
	28 th	Membership		22 nd	Membership
February	3 rd	Board	August	4 th	Board
	25 th	Membership		26 th	Membership
March	3 rd	Board	September	1 st	Board
	28 th	Spring Picnic		23 rd	Membership
April	7 th	Board	October	6 th	Board
	22 nd	Membership		28 th	Membership
May	5 th	Board	November	3 rd	Board
	27 th	Membership		18 th	Membership
June	2 nd	Board	December	1 st	Board
	24 th	Membership		Holiday	Gathering TBD

Go

Florida

Native!!!

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