



# Sea Rocket



Florida Native Plant Society ~ Sea Rocket Chapter ~ Serving Central & North Brevard County

APRIL 2021

The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

~ Sea Rocket ~

## BOARD of DIRECTORS

### President

Linda Sackman

### Vice President

Kristina Jackson

### Treasurer

Patti Larson

### Secretary

Laura Covel

### Chapter Representative

Elizabeth Bishop

## COMMITTEES

### Membership

Barbara Gwiazda

### Education/Outreach

Janina Shoemaker

### Nursery

Lois Harris

### Hike Leader

Paul Schmalzer, PhD

### Newsletter

Jill Whitson

### Digital Archivist

David Humphrey

### Social Media

Kate Chiodini

### Hospitality

Armand De Filippo

## Getting to know your Board



My name is Linda Sackman, I'm a relatively fresh transplant to central Florida, only having moved here 2 years ago. I stumbled upon Sea Rocket chapter in my pursuit of curated native flower seeds. I am a lifelong avid gardener and I love to interplant natives between my edible crops, to create habitat and diversify. I found a newsletter with a plea for members to step up to fill board positions. Everyone seemed to

be in agreement that one just "needs to be a willing warm body and love plants", so I figured I qualify :) That said, I have a decade of non-profit leadership experience, most of it from animal welfare charities. My last big job was as a director of operations for East Bay SPCA, an Oakland (CA) based limited admission animal shelter. We moved to Florida for family reasons and I decided to take the move as an opportunity for a much needed sabbatical. I fell in love with Florida outdoors, eventually making my peace even with the humid, buggy madness of summer that tests everyone's resolve to move a muscle. To answer that challenge, I took a job as a harvest manager at a local regenerative organic farm for a year. I loved it and I still volunteer every Friday morning. I currently work as a laboratory technician for a shrimp breeding program, which pays for my dearly held habits: planting trees and paying lawyers to defend them, mostly:) When I grow up, I'd like to have my own native plant rescue and nursery focused on flowering species that support native pollinators.

# Members Small-Group Field Trip

## Wild Citrus Walk

By Ron Chicone, Jr.

Participants in last month's Wild Citrus Walk had high expectations, and they were not disappointed. The eight participants and two leaders were able to experience all the wonders that the planned route bargained for, including getting a little lost and rained on, indeed a well rounded Florida experience.

We walked a portion of the old Hernandez Trail along the top of the scrub ridge, which led us to the cliffs of the old coquina quarry, where we descended into the rock-strewn sunken gardens. Then on to the "Old Citrus Road" and down the hill into the moist hammocks where the 250-plus-year-old live oaks live. And there, shaded by these centenarians were the historic Duncan grapefruit trees, some fifty feet tall and a foot in diameter.

The flora was impressive all along the journey. The wild olive, lancewood and laurel cherry were in bloom, as were the sour oranges, which as Floridians know, offers up a splendorous olfactory over-indulgence. The hikers, many of which had not yet experienced this part of the Enchanted Forest, were friendly, engaged and even awe-struck at times which really made it a fun hike. We welcomed two junior members (Murali's kids) who eagerly sampled fruit and recognized frostweed without fail by the time the hike was done.



## April Sea Rocket Field Trip and Hike:

How can we help save the Indian River Lagoon?

Date/Time: Saturday April 17th at 9:30 AM

Meet at: Marine Resources Council's Ted Moorhead Lagoon House  
3275 Dixie Hwy, NE, Palm Bay, FL 32905

Find out how native plants are a critical component in improving and restoring our beautiful Indian River Lagoon. In 1983, a group of Florida Tech professors convened to determine what could be done to reverse the negative impacts that were happening to the Indian River Lagoon through citizen science and engagement. They decided to create a 501 c (3) organization, the Marine Resources Council (MRC). They purchased the first conservation buffer lands along the lagoon to protect wetlands, and they still manage those lands today growing and planting native shoreline and wetland plants. Caity Savoia, Director of Science and Restoration, will be our guide to talk about living shorelines, sea-grass, and helping the Lagoon.



Photo by MRC

Website: <https://savetheirl.org/> Photo by MRC



Photo by City of Palm Bay

Second Stop: Ais Trails Park, 2804 Hickory Ave NE, Palm Bay, FL 32905 Next we will travel 7 minutes south to Ais Trails Park on Turkey Creek. A short, easy loop trail leads to a creek overlook. Small urban habitats like this are critical to preserving remnants of wild Florida amidst the ever-increasing conversion of natural area to subdivisions and commercial developments. Often these small parks are diamonds in the rough as city governments often don't have the resources to manage natural habitats.

Website: <https://www.palmbayflorida.org/Home/Components/FacilityDirectory/FacilityDirectory/16/1647> Photo by City of Palm Bay

Contact Ron Chicone to reserve a spot, 321-946-6352 or [rchicone@yahoo.com](mailto:rchicone@yahoo.com). Bring water, sun-screen, insect repellent, and hiking shoes that can get wet.

**Sea Rocket**

**Earth Day Plant Sale**

**April 24, 2021...9:00 – 2:00**

**Enchanted Forest Sanctuary**



**Come early for best selection**

444 Columbia Blvd.

Titusville, Florida 32780

**Please wear  
a mask.**

**Volunteers  
welcomed!**

Contact Lois at 321-277-5741

## GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

Lois will be working in the gardens at the Enchanted Forest on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month from 9:00AM to 1:00PM. Staff also has sanctuary workdays on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday. Everyone is invited to join in when they can. Participants should bring water, wear closed-toe shoes and bring their own tools, including gloves and bug spray.



## Adopt-a-Highway Fun on April 1st, 2021 by David Humphrey

No foolin', the Adopt-a-highway outreach this April 1st was a record setting success. After the drought quenching rain we had the night before the day turned out to be quite nice. We had seven volunteers for Sea Rocket! Having worked the Adopt-a-highway project from first to last this is the best volunteer response ever. But wait, there is more. Brittany, an EEL naturalist that works at the Enchanted Forest said "We need to be involved in this effort". She and three other employees came out to help. Brittany, Debbie, Barbara (I think is a very dedicated volunteer at EF) and Alex came out and worked the West end from the Railroad overpass to the EF entrance. The Sea Rocket Volunteers, Barbara, Janina, Nancy, Stacy, Patti, Elizabeth, and David worked as teams from the EF entrance to



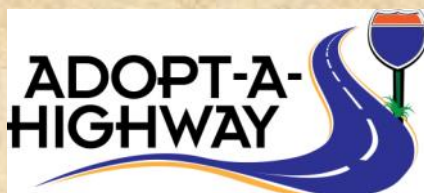
Patti, Barbara, Nancy, Dave

Grissom. This was the first time that the entire route was picked up. Together we had well over 40 pounds of trash. The County had recently cut the grass so walking the roadside was easy and safe. A couple of  $\frac{3}{8}$  stainless steel bolts and washers were found and Dave kept them. (After all, stainless hardware is expensive). After an hour the road side was clean from the overpass on 405 to Grissom. I want to thank every one of the volunteers for doing such a fine job, and having fun doing it.

A special shout out to the EF volunteers Brittany, Debbie, Alex and Barbara for getting involved in keeping our part of Brevard looking good.



Stacy, Patti, Nancy, Dave



## Titusville Resident Finally Saw Sea Grasses Growing, shared by Ron Chicron

A Titusville friend of mine who does a lot of kayaking in the Indian River Lagoon took a trip to the Florida Keys recently where she went snorkeling and kayaking. I commented on a picture she posted in Facebook, "Your Bahia Honda trip must be great."

She said, "It was. And, I saw sea grass for the first time! Honestly kind of sad, but it was really cool to see so much of it growing."

When the rainy season comes, polluted stormwater ponds overflow into the Indian River Lagoon and water clarity drops from more than 4 feet to as low as 8 inches. I asked the Florida Department of Environmental Protection if they would require testing water quality in these retention ponds and require their owners to maintain them and make modifications to remove the pollution. The Department responded that stormwater ponds are expected to be polluted and they only require these ponds to meet the minimum design volume. They do not require regular maintenance and they do not require water quality testing. The ponds are allowed to overflow into the Lagoon with no designed systems for pollution removal. The Sand Point Park ponds in Titusville which recently received over seven million gallons of raw sewage from a sewer main break are a prime example. Much of this contamination reached the Lagoon. According to the City, the leak was sealed on December 24<sup>th</sup>, but only 22 days later, on January 15<sup>th</sup>, the City of Titusville declared the Lagoon was back to "normal" (for bacteria E.coli). Unfortunately, "normal" does not equal "healthy."

Brevard County reported an incredible 179 manatee deaths in the first 64 days of 2021 (now more than 235 deaths). No other county has come close. Broward is the next highest with 51 deaths. The whole



state of Florida normally only averages 129 deaths a year. Could the Titusville sewer spill be a major cause? Most of Brevard's shoreline's are lined with seawalls or impoundment dikes; there isn't much living shoreline remaining to create good habitat and water quality. The Indian River Lagoon has lost 54% of the sea-grass coverage since 2007 largely due to nutrient pollution and algae blooms. I wonder when we will ever get regulations to help the IRL get healthy enough for seagrasses to grow again, and I do not know why Brevard County does not act to prevent the Manatee

deaths in the IRL.

The solution to manatee deaths in the Lagoon could be as simple as measuring the nutrient concentrations in the stormwater ponds that empty into the Lagoon and listing the ones that are causing the pollution. Then maintaining these ponds by installing aquatic plants and littoral zones around these ponds and using mechanical harvesters instead of herbicide to manage the aquatic plants. This would be similar to the way that water treatment facilities use wetlands for their final nutrient removal before release into a natural water body. In my opinion, these ponds need to be tested and their outputs regulated.

For more information go to:

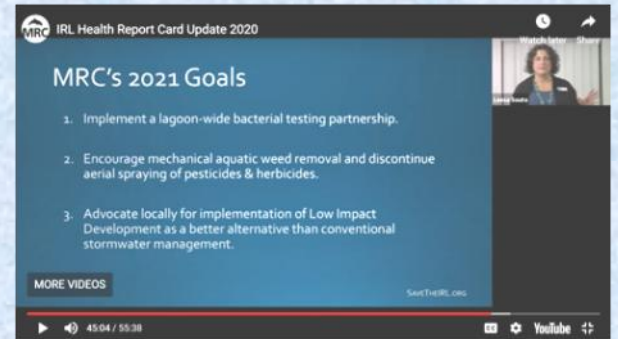
City of Titusville website, <https://www.titusville.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=94>

Marine Resources Council website, <https://savetheirl.org/>

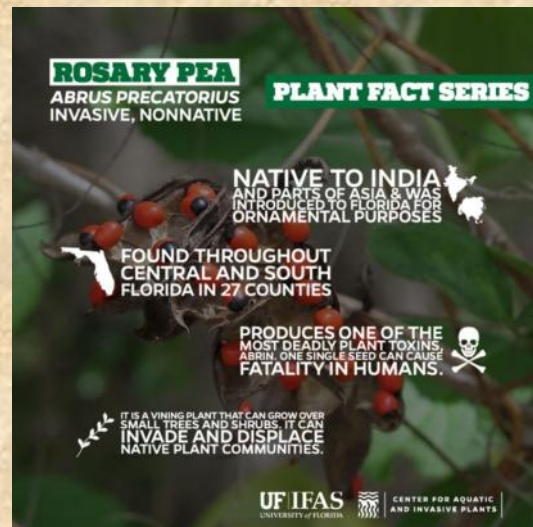
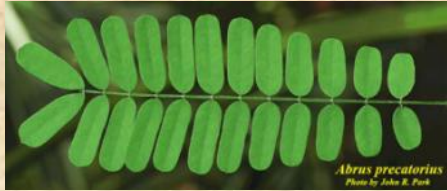
Indian River Manatee Mortality, Indian River Lagoon News website,

[https://indianriverlagoonnews.org/guide/index.php/IRLNews:2021-03-07/Indian\\_River\\_Lagoon\\_Manatee\\_Mortality](https://indianriverlagoonnews.org/guide/index.php/IRLNews:2021-03-07/Indian_River_Lagoon_Manatee_Mortality)

Bill Klein, Titusville



# *Abrus precatorious*—A cautionary Article—From the University of Florida



The complete story can be found at the web address below.

<https://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/plant-directory/abrus-precatorius/>

## **Native to:** India and Asia

The native range of rosary pea is India and parts of tropical Asia. It has been widely used throughout Florida's landscapes as an ornamental plant for many years. Rosary pea is highly **toxic** and can be **fatal** if ingested. One of the most deadly plant toxins, abrin, is produced by rosary pea. Studies have shown that as little as 0.00015% of toxin per body weight will cause fatality in humans (a single seed). Birds appear to be unaffected by the deadly toxin as they readily disperse rosary pea seed. The seeds of this plant are so uniform in size and weight that they are used as standards in weight measurement as well as to make jewelry, including rosaries.

**Impacts:** Rosary pea is found throughout central and south Florida, and often invades undisturbed pinelands and hammocks. It also has a tendency to invade disturbed sites, such as pastures and roadsides. Though it lacks tendrils, rosary pea can grow over small trees and shrubs. It has a deep taproot, making it very difficult to remove. Fire encourages the growth of rosary pea.

Rosary pea is **not recommended by UF/IFAS**. Rosary pea is a **prohibited** plant according to the [FDACS Florida Noxious Weed Index](#). [The UF/IFAS Assessment](#) lists rosary pea as prohibited and [FLEPPC](#) lists it as a Category I invasive species due to its ability to invade and displace native plant communities.

**Management Options:** Regular monitoring and removal of plants can prevent the spread and establishment of rosary pea. Programs to educate homeowners on proper plant identification will also reduce the spread of this species. Native alternatives to rosary pea for use in home landscaping or natural areas include leather flower (*Clematis crispa*) or Carolina jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*).

**Cultural/Physical:** Hand-pulling and removal of entire plants, particularly the roots, is practical for small infestations. Remove seed pods if possible and pull seedlings. Fire provides only temporary control.

**Mechanical:** Aggressive tillage is an option and very effective, but impractical in many areas.

**Chemical:** Timing of application is critical to effectiveness; with applications in the fall prior to seed set being the most effective. Site must be revisited several times to pull seedlings.

- Cut-stump: Triclopyr is effective on large woody vines immediately after the vines are cut down
- Foliar: 0.12–0.25% Milestone; 5% glyphosate product

[Atlas of Florida Plants](#)

[Florida Division of Agriculture and Consumer Services- Noxious Weeds](#)

[UF/IFAS Assessment of Nonnative Plants in Florida's Natural Areas](#)

[Identification and Biology of Nonnative Plants in Florida's Natural Areas](#)- University of Florida

[USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service- Plants Database](#)

**The Enchanted Forest Sanctuary Education Center**

444 Columbia Blvd, Titusville, FL 32780 321-264-5185

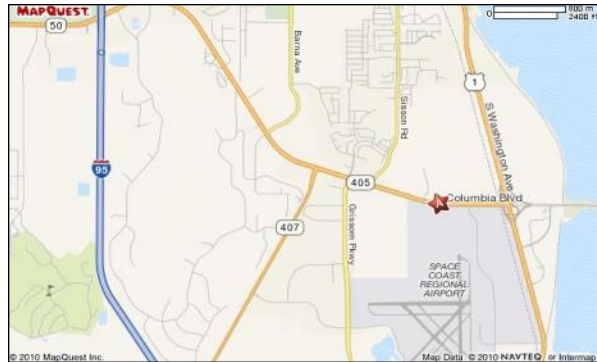


Driving Directions to the Sanctuary:

**From I-95 Northbound:** take SR-407 Exit 212 east 2.7 miles to SR-405 intersection. Turn right onto SR-405 and go east 1.9 miles (the Sanctuary entrance is on the left 0.4 miles past Sisson Road)

**From I-95 Southbound:** take SR-50 Exit 215 east. Turn left onto SR 50 and turn right onto SR-405 (2nd light) Travel 3.6 miles (the Sanctuary entrance is on the left 0.4 miles past Sisson Road)

**From U.S. HWY 1:** go west 0.5 miles on SR-405 in south Titusville. Sanctuary entrance is on the right.



**Florida Native Plant Society**

For membership information, address change: P. O. Box 278, Melbourne, FL 32902-0278  
Phone: 321-271-6702; Fax: 321-951-1941; Email: [Info@fnps.org](mailto:Info@fnps.org)/[www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org)  
Sea Rocket Chapter mailing address: 444 Columbia Blvd, Titusville, FL 32780



**VOLUNTEER HOURS ARE FOR EVERYONE**—If you have a high school student that is lacking Bright Future Hours, please consider local opportunities.

Be sure to check out the bi-monthly newsletter of the  
Florida Native Plant Society



Located online at : <http://fnps.org/resources/sabalminor>