



Field trip: Saturday, December 23, 2023, 10am, Beker-South Fork

**Meeting: No Meeting this month! Holiday Pot-Luck dinner,
Monday, December 18th, 6pm, Audobon Nature Center.**

More information below.

**We love meeting at Selby Gardens! Our next General meeting there is
Monday, January 15, 2024, 7pm.**

**Click below to find out more Selby Gardens' beautiful holiday
celebration: Lights in Bloom.**



We're using [Meet Up](#) for all Field Trip signups

All field trip sign ups this year will be via Meet Up. [Click here](#) to join our Meet Up group. You can sign up for trips as soon as the registration becomes available. Registration will become active about one month in advance.

[Click here to see our list of monthly programs and field trips](#)



Please join us...

Serenoa Holiday Potluck Dinner

**Monday, December 18, 6-9:30p. Dinner at 6:30p
Audubon Nature Center, 999 Center Rd, Sarasota**

We'll gather to celebrate the holiday season and the joy of nature. Bring a dish to share, your own plate, glass & utensils. BYOB. The chapter will provide turkey, water, tea and ice.

We will play a gift exchange game; if you want to participate, bring a wrapped, nature-oriented gift (up to \$20 value). Expect a lively game of exchange and re-exchange!

Please RSVP for our planning purposes. [Click here to RSVP](#)



**December Field Trip:
Saturday, December 23, 10am**

**[Beker-South Fork State Park, Manatee County](#)
29400 SR 62 Parrish, FL 34219**

This tract is often shown in Google Maps as 'Little Manatee State Park.' While it is managed by LMRSP staff, it is not located there. Make sure your mapping shows the address as 29400 SR 62 Parrish, FL 34219. It is 12 miles East of US301 on the North side of the road. Specific parking information will be sent to attendees.

The park is divided in half by the southeast-to-northwest flowing South Fork of the Little Manatee River and its associated floodplain of bottomland forest. The uplands consist of scrub, scrubby flatwoods, mesic flatwoods, mesic hammocks and small pockets of sandhill. The park's mature sand pine and rosemary scrub draws the plant lovers every year. [Rosemary scrub](#) is a rare natural community that is found only in Florida. The park has the only known population in Florida of a small ground orchid called the broadleaf nodding cap. Other interesting plants at the park are the Manasota pawpaw, the rare Britton's beargrass and Florida milkvine, needle palms, plus epiphytic butterfly and green-fly orchids.

[Click here to go to Meet up for Field Trip Registration](#)

You will receive an email confirming your registration, and later receive one with the details about the trip.

Our December Field trip leader:



Tom Heitzman is the founder and co-owner of Sweet Bay Nursery. A graduate of Ohio State with a degree in Horticulture with 40 years experience in all aspects of Florida gardening. He a past and current president of Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, past co-president of FANN and past president of Manatee County Audubon. He enjoys leading wildflower walks and volunteering his expertise to improve the local environment.

We are excited to be participating in the Eco Summit at the Van Wezel, December 5-6. And we can't wait to go to the Green Living Expo December 2-3, at the Municipal Auditorium, both in Sarasota. Click on the images below to find out all about these events, including tickets to hear Carl Hiaasen speak, and to attend the Eco Summit. The Green Living Expo is free!



The December 2022 newsletter included some cancellations due to flooding from Hurricane Ian. This year, most of us are in the complete opposite situation - drought! Here are some links for more information about how to deal with this in your landscape.

[Dry Landscapes - Florida Wildflower Foundation \(flawildflowers.org\)](https://flawildflowers.org/)

[Drought in Florida - UF/IFAS Extension: Solutions for Your Life \(ufl.edu\)](https://ufl.edu/)

[What To Do During Drought - Pinellas County](https://www.pinellascounty.org/)

[Florida | U.S. Drought Monitor \(unl.edu\)](https://unl.edu/)

Acorns Roastin' on an Open Fire...

by Zack Westmark

and fun way to learn about them. Here are just a couple of things I learned while concocting "Apache Acorn Cakes" and acorn burgers.*



I collected about 6 cups of acorns from an asphalt parking lot, where wildlife value was thought to be somewhat diminished. We wound up with about 1.5 cups of acorn flour. Live oaks are considered white oaks, but they were boiled twice for about 10 minutes to remove the tannins.

Cracked acorns were discarded, along with any sporting holes from the acorn weevils' exit. The weevil, [*Curculio glandium*](#), inserts larvae into the nuts while they are still on the tree during the summer. After the acorns drop to the ground in fall, the larvae bore an exit hole and slip into the soil where they reside for 1-2 years before emerging as an adult. Apparently squirrels can detect the weevils and leave them behind. We're still not exactly sure how many weevils we woofed!



After boiling, the acorns were spread on a cookie sheet and dried in the oven for an hour at 175 degrees.* Then, they were cracked/shucked with a hammer and bucked into the blender, where formed into flour.

*Ultimately they became "Apache Acorn Cakes" and acorn burgers via recipes in [Florida's Edible Wild Plants](#) by Peggy Sias Lantz. There was no mention of the weevil, so I thought it might be worth sharing. Also, one hour in the oven seemed to work better than 15 minutes.

Winter Gardening Tips:

- ***Do your final clean up (weeding, mulching) before you take your winter break.***
- ***Prune beautyberry after they lose their leaves and berries. Cut them back to 12-24" height if you want to have your plants bushy and under 5' height. Otherwise, let them go and they will grow to about 8'.***
- ***Newly planted trees and shrubs should be watered at least once a week to keep them from drying out. This is the dry time of year here, and even native plants need to be watered until they are well-established, for optimum health.***

Find out about your area's water restrictions. Here are some links for more information:

[Watering Restrictions - Manatee County \(mymanatee.org\)](http://mymanatee.org)

[Water Restrictions | Sarasota County, FL \(scgov.net\)](http://scgov.net)

[District Water Restrictions | WaterMatters.org \(state.fl.us\)](http://state.fl.us)

[Department | DeSoto County FL BOCC \(desotobocc.com\)](http://desotobocc.com)

Hardee County appears to have no county restrictions at this time. They are outside of the severe drought zone.



Here's some places to go for gift shopping with a nature theme:

Florida Native Plants Nursery & Landscaping, [Sarasota 730 Myakka Rd.](#)
Myakka State Park shop, [Sarasota 13208 SR 72](#)
Native Plant Play ([online store with Florida Native Plants themed tshirts](#)).
Selby Gardens, Sarasota [1534 Mound St.](#)
Sweet Bay Nursery, [Parrish 10824 Erie Rd.](#)

Interesting Links & More

Manatee County Environmental programs & events. [December 2023](#)

Gulf Coast Conservation Foundation: Check out the great family events.
See how to get involved. Save Land! [Conservation Foundation - Events](#)

The [Honeymoon Island Bluegrass Festival](#) is Saturday, December 2nd at Honeymoon Island State Park. A fun way to support this beautiful place!

[Which Christmas Tree is Better for the Environment?](#) I have cut Australian Pines and used/planted eastern red cedar and mulberry. Another opportunity to support native plants...

[Seed packets from the Florida Wildflower Grower's Cooperative](#) and/or local native nurseries make nice stocking stuffers.



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Contact us via email: srepens@gmail.com

The Board meets on the first Tuesday of the month. email us If you are interested in attending.

**Click here to see our calendar of meetings and programs on the
Serenoa FNPS website**

**Did you miss a meeting? Want to check out a past Serenoa FNPS
program? They are now on You Tube!**

[Click here.](#)



Serenoa Chapter FNPS

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

Go Wild! Go Native!

<https://serenoa.fnpschapters.org>

Use the QR code below to join FNPS. Our chapter is Serenoa, which represents Sarasota, Manatee, Hardee and DeSoto counties.



The QR code below can be used to donate directly to Serenoa Chapter FNPS. If you would like to donate via check, please make it payable to Serenoa FNPS and sent to PO Box 1224; Palmetto, FL 34420.



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