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Happy September!

Serenoa Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society is back with new events.

Please note a big change this season is that we are using Eventbrite for RSVPs. This is replacing Meetup for this season. So “**Follow**” us to be alerted when new events post. And our first meeting is on a **TUESDAY** due to Yom Kippur!

Tuesday, September 22, 2026 @ 6:30 PM General Meeting: Lee Amos on Restoration at the Elling Eide Center

Saturday, September 26, 2026 @ 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM Field Trip - Explore & Contribute to the Seed Bank at the Eide Center

General Meetings

Our General Meetings are typically in-person and on Zoom at 6:30 pm on the 3rd Monday (except when it isn't like this month) of each month, September through May. Doors open for social hour at 6:30 pm. We convene for a short business meeting at 7pm, followed by the evening's program. After the presentation, the meeting concludes with a Q&A session with the speaker. The in-person meetings are at the Selby Garden Downtown Campus (1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236), and on Zoom. Please register in advance.

For the best experience we recommend you download the **Zoom app** ahead of time.

Field Trips

There's now something happening at least once a month – an educational tour, informal hike, or advocacy in the community. Some trips have limited availability. Register in advance to confirm your spot. Please wear appropriate clothing, pack trail snacks, & bring water. Details and Directions will be emailed to registrants as the trip date approaches.

Apply for a grant to plant Native Plants - Deadline Sept 30th!

You could receive up to \$1,000 a grant from our chapter to build a Native Plant Garden.

Renew your membership today!

Scroll down for links and information.



General Meeting & Program: Tuesday, September 22, 2026

Lee Amos on Restoration at the Elling Eide Center

Social @ 6:30 PM, Meeting @ 7:00 PM EDT

**Marie Selby Botanical Gardens - Downtown Campus
and Zoom**

Join us for an engaging presentation by Lee Amos as he details the center's ambitious ongoing initiatives to rehabilitate its grounds.

Hidden along the shores of Little Sarasota Bay, the 72-acre Elling Eide Center preserve encompasses a unique mosaic of coastal habitats, historic arboretum collections, and ecologically sensitive wetlands. Join us for an engaging presentation by Lee Amos as he details the center's ambitious ongoing initiatives to rehabilitate its natural grounds and establish vital infrastructure for regional conservation. Lee will walk attendees through the multi-phase restoration strategy designed to enhance biodiversity across the property—from invasive species removal and hydrologic enhancement to prescribed fire within pine flatwoods.

Presentation Highlights

- **Habitat Restoration on the Eide Property:** Insights into the ecological assessment, invasive plant mitigation, and re-wilding strategies tailored to coastal shoreline and pine flatwood communities.
- **Building a Native Plant Nursery:** How the center is developing a dedicated, on-site propagation facility focused on producing site-appropriate native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers for internal restoration and broader purposes.
- **Establishing a Regional Seed Bank:** The vision, setup, and protocol for creating a seed bank aimed at preserving local ecotypes, safeguarding rare coastal flora, and ensuring genetic resilience against climate pressures.
- **Community & Volunteer Opportunities:** Ways FNPS members and local naturalists can get involved with hands-on seed collection, nursery propagation, and citizen-science monitoring projects.

Whether you are a home gardener passionate about native propagation, a seasoned restoration practitioner, or simply curious about local land stewardship, this presentation will offer practical knowledge and an inspiring look at the future of native plant conservation in our region.

RSVP in Eventbrite. Registration for events is free. Non-Members of FNPS are welcome, but we encourage you to **become a member**.

RSVP



Saturday, September 26, 2020 @ 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM EDT
Elling Eide Center, Sarasota FL

Hidden along the shores of Little Sarasota Bay, the 72-acre Elling Eide Center preserve encompasses a unique mosaic of coastal habitats, historic arboretum collections, and ecologically sensitive wetlands. [Join Lee Amos](#) in developing the seed bank at the Center. Activities will be determined in the weeks preceding the event, but may include seed collection, seed processing, or various plant propagation work.

[RSVP](#)

Lee Amos serves as Director of Land Management and Environmental Programs at the Elling Eide Center, bringing more than 16 years of experience as a land stewardship manager and staff biologist at Big Waters Land Trust in Southwest Florida, where he supervised 27 preserves totaling over 3,000 acres and helped protect nearly 20,000 acres of habitat. A lifelong Venice, Florida resident with a BA in Biology from Tennessee Wesleyan University and a background in horticulture and farming, Lee brings a holistic approach to managing landscapes for biodiversity, one rooted in careful attention to the needs of people, plants, and animals alike. His key interests include conservation horticulture, structural ecology, and the ecology of altered landscapes, and his advocacy for land conservation in Southwest Florida has been featured in numerous newspapers, magazines, and online videos. In his free time, Lee enjoys hiking, bicycling, playing blues and folk rock on acoustic guitar, and relaxing with his cat, Barry.

Conservation Update

Both Manatee and Sarasota counties have crucial environmental land referendums officially locked in for the upcoming November 3, 2026 ballot. Additional funds are needed to continue the success of these tax-payer funded conservation land acquisition programs.

Manatee County Commissioners voted unanimously to place Resolution R-26-095 on the general election ballot. This acts as a direct expansion of the county's highly successful 2020 conservation program.

The Question: Shall Manatee County levy an additional 0.16 mill ad valorem tax and issue general obligation bonds not exceeding \$75,000,000?

The Cost: Roughly \$34 per year for the median homestead

The Purpose: "To acquire, improve, maintain, and contribute to the acquisition of lands and other property interests to protect drinking water sources, water quality, wildlife habitat, natural and environmentally sensitive lands from overdevelopment and provide public preserves."

If approved by voters, it will also enable the County to partner with other agencies, such as the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Rural and Family Lands Protection Program (RFLPP), to help fund conservation easements and other less-than-fee-simple acquisitions.

Since the 2020 referendum's approval and the establishment of the County's Environmental Lands Program, Manatee County has made significant progress toward achieving voter-approved conservation goals. The County has acquired more than 300 acres of conservation lands, established two new county preserves, expanded four existing county preserves, expanded one county park, and partnered with FDACS through two Memorandums of Agreement to permanently

Sarasota County Commissioners voted unanimously to place a critical extension of their landmark Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program (ESLPP) on the ballot (County Ordinance NO. 2026-008).

The Question: Shall Sarasota County extend the ESLPP and Neighborhood Parkland Acquisition programs for an additional 20-years?

The Funding: It maintains the existing, dedicated 0.25-mill property tax and authorizes the issuance of bonds not to exceed \$250 million.

The Purpose: To continue conservation, public access and recreation opportunities.

On a very related note, over 1000 acres of Thundercloud Ranch was approved for a conservation easement through the RFLPP, in partnership with Manatee County, at the June 9, 2026 Cabinet Meeting. The Ranch is part of the headwaters for Gilley Creek which is a major tributary to the Manatee River and consists of natural mesic flatwoods and scrub habitat with improved pasture. It also sits between the Little Manatee River and Ed Chance Preserves.

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) has extended a Phase III "Extreme" Water Shortage through October 1, 2026 for all four counties due to regional aquifer deficits. This is a time to appreciate native plants in our landscape, beautifully they endure drought and protect our precious water resources.

For an update on conservation-related items from the 2026 Legislative Session, please use this 1000 Friends of Florida web link <https://1000fof.org/legis/2026-legislative-session/#/bills/>

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Your Florida Native Plant Society Membership

Name: Yiwen Chow

Membership #: 2956

Email: yiwen.chow@gmail.com

Membership Type: Individual - Annual

Member Since: 09/24/2025

Expiration Date: 09/23/2026

Renew Today

Apply for a Grant to Build a Native Plant Garden

You could receive up to \$1,000 a grant from our chapter to build a Native Plant Garden. On our [grants page](#), you will find important information about the new grant cycles, and tips to assist applicants in preparing strong proposals. Do you know of an organization that may be interested in applying for a grant? Please encourage them to apply! Are you intimidated by the application? We're still like to hear about your project.

Below is the installation of Native Plants at the Easter Seals Butterfly Garden this past July!



Application