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## ***News from Serenoa Chapter***

### **April 2023 Announcements**

**Board Election:** Members will get an email from Serenoa chapter soon regarding changes to when we elect the board.

**Serenoa Day and Plant Festival at Sweet Bay Nursery: April 15. Discounts for members! Vendors and demonstrations! Proceeds support our grant fund. Volunteers needed: plant experts to help the shoppers select plants. Email: [srepens@gmail.com](mailto:srepens@gmail.com).**

**Our monthly meeting (via Zoom) is Monday, April 17th, 7pm. The topic: Native Plants of SW Florida Through the Seasons**

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**celebration at Oscar Scherer State Park. Volunteers needed! Email: [srepens@gmail.com](mailto:srepens@gmail.com)**

**Florida Native Plant Society 42nd Annual Conference, April 28-30, 2023. More information below.**



**PLANT FESTIVAL!** This is our major fund raiser for the year. The money raised goes towards our grants program. Organizations can apply for up to \$500 to use for their native plant gardens. Email us for more information about grants: [srepens@gmail.com](mailto:srepens@gmail.com)

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Serenoa Chapter  
Florida Native Plant Society  
**SPRING Wildflower Festival  
& Native Plant Sale**

**Saturday, April 15 9:00am-3:00pm**

**SWEET BAY NURSERY**

10824 Erie Road, Parrish

**LARGE SELECTION!!**

Native trees, shrubs, blooming wildflowers,  
grasses, and Flori-mulch for sale.

And Exhibitors!

**Members get 15% off plant purchase!**

Join onsite to receive your discount!

For more information call

941-776-0501

If you are already an FNPS member, please bring your membership card or latest membership letter/membership email for your discount.

## April Meeting

### Native Plants of SW Florida Through the Seasons

Monday, April 17, 2023, 7pm

via Zoom

**Ashley Ellis**

**Residential Horticulture / Master Gardener Coordinator at UF/IFAS**

**Sarasota County Extension**

**Learn what's blooming for pollinators or producing fruit for wildlife and how to incorporate native plantings into your home landscape that will provide enjoyment throughout the year.**

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[Meeting via Zoom at 7:00 pm](#)

[Click here to register for the meeting.](#)

[A link to the zoom meeting will be sent to you.](#)

***About our presenter:***

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**Ashley Ellis is the Residential Horticulture / Master Gardener Coordinator at UF/IFAS Sarasota County Extension. The Residential Horticulture program provides research-based gardening and landscaping information to the residents of Sarasota County. Ashley is interested in environmental horticultural practices that focus on preservation of natural resources and landscaping for wildlife.**



**Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference**



***Join us for Florida’s premier event focusing on the preservation, conservation and restoration of our natural lands, ecosystems, and local communities.***

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**Experience expert speakers, panel discussions, games, silent auction and more. Field days in person in Naples, Tallahassee and Sanford!**

**Our own Nancy West says: "Hi, last year I attended the virtual conference. I was impressed on how well it was done. They have set it up so that you can even watch a missed speaker 6 months past the event. It is not expensive and well worth the time. I even enjoyed the virtual field trips. There was a big learning curve on some of them. I laughed at the ones where many attendees had wandered off from the main leader, which happens in our field trips**

**Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference**



**Roadsides Are Important Habitat Too!**  
**By Zack Westmark**

**Spring is a special time for native plant enthusiasts, with**

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**(*Viburnum obovatum*)** blooming at our beloved county and state parks. But look closer as we travel *to* these places and we may notice a world of wonder zooming by.

According to the Florida Department of Transportation, Manatee and Sarasota Counties maintain about 2,564 miles of roads as of September 2021 ([source here](#)). In spring, aggressive self seeding native wildflowers like [oak-leaf fleabane](#) (*Erigeron quercifolius*), [lyre-leaved sage](#) (*Salvia lyrata*), and even the state wildflower *Coreopsis* spp. (usually *C. leavenworthii*) pop up along these roadsides depending on the management and size of the right of way (ROW).

Yet less common native wildflowers like the state threatened [Simpson's Zephyr Lily](#) (*Zephyranthes simpsonii*) and the whimsical [spring ladies-tresses](#) (*Spiranthes vernalis*) can be found on roadsides too.

All of these species attract native pollinators and the common ones listed above are available from the [Florida Wildflower Growers Cooperative](#).

The [Florida Department of Transportation Wildflower Program](#) was created in 1963 to improve aesthetics and driver safety while lowering maintenance costs. A 2014 University of Florida Institute of Agriculture and Food Sciences (IFAS) [report](#) estimated that FDOT could save approximately 30% on vegetation management costs (mowing) and support \$1 billion in ecosystem services by adopting sustainable ROW management procedures.

So next time you are out and about, take the time to appreciate native plants along our public roadways and ask: "what *could* grow there?"

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**Photos above: Less common roadside wildflowers. At top is Simpsons Zephyr Lily taken April 10, 2022 along SR72; below is spring ladies-tresses (with oak-leaf fleabane and turkey tangle fogfruit intermixed) taken April 22, 2021 along SR72.**



**Photos above: Common spring roadside native wildflowers. At top is lyre-leaf sage taken along the park drive at Myakka River State Park taken April 10, 2022. The bottom shows Leavenworth's tickseed (*Coreopsis leavenworthii*) along the park drive at Myakka River State Park on May 10, 2022. The genus *Coreopsis* is the official state *wildflower* of Florida.**



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## Gardening tips for April

- **Stay on top of the weeds.** Hand pull regularly or use a heavy mulch to keep them suppressed. If you get them out before they go to seed, you keep yourself way ahead.
- **Mulch your flower and plant beds.** Besides helping with the weeds, mulching keeps your soil shaded, retains more moisture and helps keep the soil temperature cooler. Mulch from recycling is readily available, as is pine straw, pine bark, eucalyptus and Florimulch. A thick layer gives the advantages mentioned above as well as adding organic matter to our sandy soils.
- **Prune as needed.** Now is a good time to cut back and thin out trees and shrubs. Dead head any flowers that have finished blooming; most of the time this will reward you with additional blooms. Hurricane season is approaching. You may want to contact a qualified arborist now to get trees trimmed by August, when our season generally gets busier. Don't over-prune!! Check out the UF extension's advice on this: [Pruning and Maintaining Trees - Gardening Solutions - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences \(ufl.edu\)](#)
- **Your new plantings of all types – flowers, shrubs, trees, etc,** will need watering. We are in the dry season. Check your county's water use guidelines. Use rain barrels if you can. Water rings are good around trees and shrubs to keep the water over the root zone. Encourage deep rooting by giving plants a good soaking once or twice a week.

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### What is blooming in southwest Florida in April?

**Photos above:** At top, [red milkweed](#) (*Asclepias lanceolata*) taken at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park on April 19, 2022; below is [skyblue lupine](#) (*Lupinus diffusus*) taken at Rye Preserve on April 6, 2019.

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### Interesting links:

**Volunteer Opportunity with Friends of Myakka River:** Love Myakka River State Park? Love to Bike Myakka? Looking for an opportunity to give back? Then join us for our April Bike Myakka for Good Service Ride on April 15! Registration is required. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

**Volunteer Opportunity with Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast:** Volunteers are need on Friday, April 21, from 9:00 am to 11:30 am. primarily to plant native trees and wildflowers at the Myakka Headwaters Preserve. [More information is available here.](#)

**Florida Gopher Tortoise Day, April 10, 2023!** As a Florida resident, you are an

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**The Special Link Between Birds and Native Plants:** entries for the plants for birds category of the 2022 Audubon Photography Awards... [Click Here!](#)

**New user-friendly soil test kit to improve Florida landscapes:** each kit includes a prepaid shipping label, soil bag, QR code to a collection instruction video and a customer care card. [More information from the IFAS Blog](#)

**Learn how to conduct a firefly atlas survey!** Help track and conserve threatened and data-deficient species in North America. Learn more at [fireflyatlas.org](http://fireflyatlas.org)



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**Follow up from last month's presentation:**

The book list shown in speaker Kate Borduas' talk:

***Extinct and Endangered: Insects in Peril.*** American Museum of Natural History

***Buzz Bite Sting:*** Anne Sverdup Thygeson (UK Imprint 'Extraordinary Insects')

***Insect Crisis: The fall of the tiny empires that run the world.*** Oliver Milman

***Silent Earth: Averting the insect apocalypse.*** David Goulson

***Hurricane Lizards and Plastic Squid: The fraught and fascinating biology of climate change.*** Thor Hansen

**Doug Tallamy**

***The Living Landscape***

***Bringing Nature Home***

***Nature's Best Hope***

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## **YouTube; "what's the rush?" And other programs**

**Happy Reading!**

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### **Serenoa Chapter Board Members**

**President: Tom Heitzman**

**Vice President: Nancy West**

**Treasurer: Leah Wilcox**

**Secretary: Cindy Watts**

**Chapter Representative: Pamela Callender**

Contact us via email: [srepens@gmail.com](mailto:srepens@gmail.com)

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

**[Click here.](#)**

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## 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>

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