



News from Serenoa Chapter

May 2023 Announcements

Coffee and Conversation: May 13, at Sarasota Audubon's Nature Center.

Zoom Meeting: Monday May 15, 2023, via Zoom, 7pm. Lee Amos from the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast.

Field Trip: Garden tours in Bradenton! May 20, 9a-2p.

This is our last newsletter of this program year. We'll be back again in September 2023. It has been a good year. We hope you enjoyed being a member of our chapter this year, and that next year will be even better. For the 2023-2024 program year, we will be having our monthly meeting in person, at Selby Gardens, with a Zoom option.



Some of the action from our Native Plant Sale and Festival on April 15. We had 400+ attendees; signed up at least 15 new members AND added \$3600 to our grant fund. Thank you to all the Customers, Volunteers, and everyone at Sweet Bay Nursery!



[Meeting via Zoom May 15, 2023, 7:00 pm](#)

We will hear how Conservation Foundation protects the land and water in Southwest Florida for the benefit of people and nature, and how we can help. To date, more than 18,943 acres across 53 properties are protected because of you and others like you, who care about our lands, waters, and way of life. This adds up to nearly 30 square miles of protected land that provides for kids and grown-ups, wildlife and waterways.

Conservation Foundation of Gulf Coast partners with landowners, businesses, and government to conserve the environmental excellence of our lands and waters in Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, and Collier Counties.

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

A link to the zoom meeting will be sent to you.

About our presenter:

Lee Amos is Land Stewardship Manager and staff biologist at Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast. He specializes in native plants and conservation. At Conservation Foundation, Lee is responsible for parks and preserve stewardship, map making and geographic analysis, and assisting with the acquisition of new preserves. Lee is especially interested in methods to attract wildlife with native plants – at home, on the farm, or in the woods – and wants to help landowners of all types find creative ways to enjoy their unique slice of Florida. Lee earned his BA in Biology from Tennessee Wesleyan College. As a native Floridian, Lee enjoys exploring the state with his tent in tow, and sharing his love of Florida with others.

Our Field trip this month:

[Garden Tours!](#)

May 20th Field Trip 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

You're invited to explore a bit of Manatee County and enjoy select native gardens in Bradenton. The Garden Tour includes both private yards as well as public Serenoa Grant Recipients. We hope you see some new things that inspire you for your own garden.

[Sign Up Here](#)

Info on the where and when will be sent to you.

**Seasonal Serenoa FNPS Coffee & Conversations**

Saturday May 13, 9am

Find us at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center picnic tables. Bring your favorite mug, pour some joe, and talk about Native Plants with fellow members. Coffee and doughnuts will be provided. No registration needed. Hope to see you there!

Pamela Callender will there for the Audubon Nature Center's Second Saturday Garden Day (9-11a). She will be giving a talk about gardening with native plants. Volunteers are welcome to stay and tidy the gardens

[Location: 999 Center Rd. Sarasota](#)



Serenoa Grants Updates

We'd like to thank Braden River Library and Crooked Creek Owner's Association (CCOA) for adding life to the landscape with native plants from the Serenoa Chapter's grant fund!

Braden River Library's new 600 square foot Sensory Garden was unveiled on Earth Day, with native plants funded by the Serenoa Chapter! This new public space was a team effort; Lowes donated 94 bags of Florimuch to prepare the space, Boy Scouts crafted two benches and The Friends of the Library funded a birdbath, fountain, and sundial. The library deploys a team of volunteer Master Gardeners to maintain the space with plans to integrate a water collection barrel and composting station.

The project promotes high visibility of native plants as the sensory garden is visible from the main circulation area, the library is scheduling open hours (outdoor seating has become increasingly popular over recent years) and it will become an outdoor educational space as programs by Master Gardeners, Manatee County Natural Resources, and local plant nurseries are planned. Tentative topics include "Story Time in the Garden," "Attracting Butterflies to your Yard," and "Meet with a Master Gardener." All native plants are currently labeled with both common and scientific names.

Some new resident species of the site include skyblue clustervine (*Jacquemontia pentanthos*), pink swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), coastal verbena (*Glandularia maritima*) and bluecurls (*Trichostema dichotomum*).

The Library Mission Statement is To nurture imagination, promote lifelong learning, and enrich the community. Native plants enrich the community by attracting beneficial wildlife to our suburban and urban areas, giving residents and visitors the opportunity to learn about Florida's natural history.



Photos above: **Braden River Library staff and volunteers pose with native plants before installation (left) and a look at the new sensory garden (right).**

Crooked Creek's rain garden is one step in a multi-phase restoration along a portion of privately owned shoreline surrounded by Sarasota County's Red Bug Slough Preserve, within the Phillippi Creek and Sarasota Bay watersheds.

On March 14, 2023 nine volunteer homeowners installed Swamp lilies (*Crinum americanum*), Fakahatchee grass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*), and green buttonwoods (*Conocarpus erectus*) among other species for erosion control, stormwater filtration, and wildlife habitat to capture runoff from their parking lot.

CCOA has applied for additional grants to remove invasive

Crooked Creek aims to educate homeowners on the importance of healthy waterways, living shorelines, *and* native plants; a worthy goal!



Photos above: Crooked Creek Owner's Association volunteers install living shoreline (left) and a look post planting (right).



Photo above: Leavenworth's tickseed (*Coreopsis leavenworthii*) interspersed with marshpinks (*Sabatia grandiflora*) at Myakka River State Park; May 24th, 2020.

Spring Flowers at Myakka By Mike Stanfield

Myakka River State Park can be a wonderful place to visit any time of year. There is almost always something in bloom- credit goes to mild winters, high humidity, frequent rainfall (usually) and lots of sunshine. But it is in the month of May when the park's flowers really shine. It's when the "fields of the yellow flowers" reach their zenith.

Visitors often ask when the field of yellow flowers happen. Truth be told: its not a field at all but a particularly wide expanse of the river's floodplain. Inundated for part of the year, then dried and baked in early spring. It erupts with a massive display of yellow flowers- commonly known as Leavenworth's tickseed (*Coreopsis leavenworthii*); Florida's state wildflower (genus). This annual phenomenon usually peaks around May 20, but is worth the visit for several weeks before or after.

This year's bloom is a little harder to predict. Hurricane Ian hammered the park in late September and Hurricane Nicole added insult to injury. The two storms created a massive amount of rainfall that may have affected both the soils of the floodplain basin and its seedbank. There is encouraging news though; there were many juvenile plants emerging in mid April.

Interspersed with the coreopsis are a multitude of other flowers. The lacy white umbels of mock bishopsweed (*Ptilimnium capillaceum*), the bright pink contrast of the marsh pinks (*Sabatia grandiflora*), plus the towering stalks of Nuttall's thistle (*Cirsium nuttallii*) add some color to the spread. Nuttall's thistle is an excellent pollen source for butterflies; often visited by swallowtails and skippers.

Other marsh flowers to look for in May and June include alligator

of depression marshes. When the first summer rains of early summer roll in (usually June), start looking up for peak blooms of butterfly orchids (*Encyclia tampensis*) on the limbs of live oak. See you in the park!



Photos above: Top: Alligator lily (*Hymenocallis palmeri*) (left) and Nuttall's thistle (*Cirsium nuttallii*) (right). Bottom: Butterfly orchids (*Encyclia tampensis*) (left) and bachelor's buttons (*Polygala rugelii*) mixed with marshpinks (*Sabatia grandiflora*). All taken at Myakka River State Park.



Gardening tips for May

Stay on top of weeds. Hand pull them regularly, or use heavy mulch to keep them suppressed. If you get them out before they go to seed you keep yourself way ahead.

Mulch not only suppresses weeds, it gives your garden a fresh look. It helps keep your soil shaded, retains moisture and keeps soil temperatures cooler. Suggested mulches include pine straw, pine bark, eucalyptus and Florimulch.

Now is a good time to cut back and thin out trees and shrubs. Always trim back to another branch rather than just a random cut. Dead head any flowers that are finished blooming.

Watering: Water only as needed. April – June is typically the dry period of year here. To avoid stressing recently installed plants, water them until they are firmly established. Placing water rings around trees and shrubs is an effective way to keep the water over the root zone. Encourage deep rooting by giving plants a good soaking once or twice a week. Use rain barrels if possible. Rain water tends to have more nitrogen in it than well or municipal sources.

This is an interesting article about how much water is needed: [Watering to](#)

Here is an excerpt from an article about watering in our sandy soil, by Sally Scalera, an urban horticulture agent and master gardener coordinator for the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences. The link to the article is below. "...When planting new plants in a location that has sandy soil, I recommend soaking the plant's root ball in water for at least half an hour prior to planting. The goal is to get the root ball thoroughly soaked so that when you pick it up, it is heavy and dripping wet.

This is important because if a new plant's root ball is dry when planted in sandy soil, it will be very difficult... to thoroughly wet it after planting. That is because most potting mixes have a high percentage of peat moss which, when dry, repels water. If sandy soil surrounds a dry root ball, the water will just flow through the sand, around the root ball..." [Here's how to water plants in Florida's wet or sandy soil \(floridatoday.com\)](#)

See you in September! Here are some tips from UF to get you through until we meet again: [ENH1191/EP452: South Florida Gardening Calendar \(ufl.edu\)](#)

Interesting links, etc:

[Second Saturday Garden Day - Sarasota Audubon | Sarasota, Florida](#): May 13, 9-11a, Audubon Nature Center. Pam Callender will give a talk about gardening with native plants. Volunteers are welcome to stay and tidy the gardens around the Center with Pam.

[Gardening and Landscaping | Sarasota County, FL \(scgov.net\)](#): Sarasota County's sustainability page has articles and links to information about gardening, water quality, land use and much more.

[Conservation Foundation - Artists' Day at Myakka Headwaters Preserve](#): Friday, May 19, 7a-12p. Sign up to enjoy the Myakka Headwaters Preserve for a morning of artistic exploration.

[Treasure Coast Natives Blog](#): "Facts About Flora in Our Part of Florida". Across the state from us, but same latitude and fascinating content!

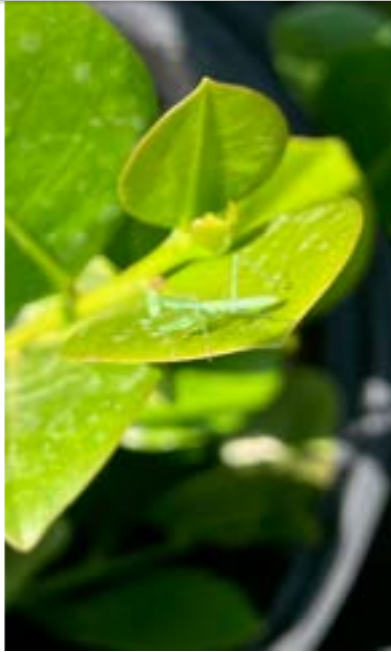
[Bike Myakka for Good May Service Ride](#): Saturday, May 13, 9a-1p. On Saturday, May 13, we'll celebrate National Bike Month AND Coreopsis bloom season by searching for gold, while discussing the importance of Florida's popular State Wildflower, and other native plants, for Myakka's delicate ecosystems. Then, after a short (under an hour) invasive plant removal service project, we will enjoy a free picnic lunch, sponsored by generous grant funds from Adventure Cycling and National Environmental Education Foundation.

And during lunch, we'll be drawing the winning ticket for our ALKI 2 by IZIP Bicycle Drawing of Chance! You can purchase your drawing tickets (\$5.00 each, or 5/\$20.00) at the Ranger Station prior to May 13. Or, you'll have a chance to do so right before the drawing at our event! All funds raised directly support Myakka River State Park and the Wild and Scenic Myakka River.



More pictures from the Plant Sale





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Secretary: Cindy Watts

Chapter Representative: Pamela Callender

Contact us via email: srepens@gmail.com

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>

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