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

### **September 2023 Announcements**

***As current president of our chapter, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all our new and current members of the Serenoa chapter of FNPS to our new season. Your board of directors have put together a great lineup of speakers and field trips.***

***This year we are back to having in person meetings, which will be held at Selby gardens in Sarasota. Most of the meetings will also be offered on zoom for those that cannot attend in person. It will be nice to get together in person.***

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***protect, and use native plants. Our first meeting is Monday, September 18th, hope to see there.***

**Tom Heitzman**

**Meeting this month: [Selby Gardens](#), Sarasota, Monday September 18, at 7pm.**

**Our topic is "Florida Native Plants 101," from Jeff Weber  
Field trip: Led by Jeff Weber; Saturday, September 23, 9am at  
[Old Miakka Preserve](#).**

**See below for more information!**



Facebook



Instagram



Email



Website



**TikTok**

### **[Monthly Meeting and Program Return to Selby Gardens](#)**

**We will meet in person this year! We will be meeting at [Selby Gardens](#) on the 3rd Monday of the month, 7pm, September 2023 - May 2024. We are planning to make the meetings hybrid (option to attend in person or via zoom). The September 18 meeting is our first hybrid meeting, and we are practicing ahead of time, but please bear with us if issues occur on our first venture into hybrid gatherings.**

**We will gather in person to socialize at 6:30pm. Bring a little**

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**program.**

Selby Gardens is located at: [1534 Mound St., Sarasota, 34236](#)

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### **For those attending the meeting in person at Selby Gardens:**

**Selby Gardens is currently under renovation so please follow these directions for parking and access to the conference center.**

#### **For parking:**

**Enter at the construction entrance on Orange Ave just south of US41. Look for FNPS sign. (Palm Ave entrance is closed. Do not go into Parking Garage).**

**Follow construction entrance and park in the parking lot directly east or across from main gardens entrance.**

**Walk across Palm Ave and enter through iron gates just south or to the left of main entrance.**

**Follow path to the right going north past koi ponds continuing to the west of the orchid house to enter conference center on the west side doors.**

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### **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](#)**

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Pictured above: Catbird on [beautyberry, \*Callicarpa americana\*](#).

## **[Native Plants 101 with Jeff Weber](#)**

**Monday, September 18, 2023**

**In person: Meet and Greet: 6:30pm**

**In person and on Zoom: Program begins at 7pm**

**Are you new to discovering and gardening with native plants? Then this introduction is for you! This presentation will help you better understand what natives are, why they are so important, and why each of us should be protecting them and using them in our own yards! You'll also learn about some of our rare natives and some that are true Florida endemics.**

**[Click here to register to attend the meeting via Zoom](#)**

**[After you register, a meeting link will be sent to your email.](#)**

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### **Jeff Weber, Sarasota County Environmental Specialist**

**Jeff is originally from New York state but has lived in Florida for the past 53 years. He graduated from Seminole High School in Pinellas County and earned a bachelor's degree in Biology from Eckerd College in St. Pete. Professionally, Jeff has enjoyed a nearly 40-year career in the environmental field having worked previously with the Florida Park Service for 8 years and in his current position with Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Department for the past 30 years. In his current position, Jeff manages 5 county parks and preserves for Sarasota County and enjoys working in such beautiful surroundings and sharing his passion for the preservation and protection of these special places.**



**Field trip: Saturday September 23, 2023, 9am**

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**Come with us on a plant walk to learn more about local native plants led by Jeff Weber, Sarasota County Environmental Specialist. Old Miakka Preserve is a rare remnant of longleaf pine forest and Florida scrub, most of which has been lost in Sarasota County. The property's surface waters flow into the Tatum Sawgrass Marsh and the Myakka River.**

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[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.**

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### **Step by Step - How to "Plant a Patch for Pollinators"**

[Florida Native Plant Nursery in Sarasota](#) provides a terrific step by step guide to get started on a native plant garden for pollinators. Click the link to see it.

[Plant a Patch for Pollinators](#)

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### **[Volunteering with the Florida Native Plant Society](#)**

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**Native Plant Society? I did. I was enjoying the quarterly newsletter and learning what my local chapter was up to.**

**Getting my hands dirty assisting with native plant installations/maintenance seemed like a reasonable aspiration. And maybe attend a field trip.**

**That is not what happened! Instead, the chapter asked for help managing grants. Am I qualified for that? I wondered.**

**New roles can be scary; taking on tasks we may not be familiar with, learning how an organization functions, and sometimes relying on instinct to make important decisions.**

**But it didn't take long to realize that at the end of the day, these are just a bunch of native plant junkies, just like me! And how cool to have behind the scenes knowledge about the range of native plant installation projects throughout our four counties!**

**The FNPS workforce are volunteers.** What that means is, you have the power to make a huge impact! So if you have ever considered volunteering with your local FNPS chapter, *do it*.

Volunteering is a great way to meet people who share your interests, meet new friends and enjoy nature. We would love to assemble a team of ready-to-go volunteers who would like to help out when planting volunteers are needed in our area. Many local park districts

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the months and years, seeing the results of your labor flourish.

**Interested in volunteering with the Serenoa Chapter? Send an e-mail to [serenoa@fnps.org](mailto:serenoa@fnps.org) and please share your interests, skills, and any other information we might find helpful to find the right job for you!**

Zack Westmark



**Pictured above in the article is [redroot, \*Lachnanthes caroliniana\*](#).**

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### [Interesting Links & More](#)

**Get your yard on the map!** Check out Doug Tallamy's [Homegrown National Park](#) program. Every slice of nature matters!

**Hurricanes: Friend or Foe of Invasive Plants?** Most of us associate strong winds with dispersal of invasive plants. Did you know some invasive species are actually reduced during tropical systems? [Article from the IFAS blog.](#)

**City of Sarasota incentivizes the planting of TREES!** City of Sarasota single family homeowners have the chance to purchase a mature tree for their property at a significantly reduced price through [Phase 3 of the City's Mature Tree Program.](#)



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For those who willing to travel a little, check out this unique conservation action! [from the Suncoast Sierra Club.](#)

**Bike Myakka for Biodiversity Saturday, September 23.** Celebrate BIKE YOUR PARK DAY and NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY at Myakka River State Park with a fun, 7-mile bike ride, snacks, a service project, free lunch, NA brews and much more! [Register with the Friends of Myakka River.](#)

**Sarasota County's National Public Lands Day event (Saturday, September 23) at Potter Park.** Help improve Potter Park by weeding, pruning, planting, removing nuisance plants and pickup up trash. **More information and registration at the** [National Environmental Education Foundation's page.](#)

**Save the Date: Tampa Bay Debris Derby at E.G. Simmons Park on Saturday November 4th!** This is a water-based, volunteer trash collection tournament! Register today for your chance to win awesome prizes donated by Power-Pole, Costa Del Mar, and many more! **For more information and to register, check out** [Tampa Bay Waterkeeper.](#)

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### **Fall Gardening Tips**

- Keep weeds under control. Check for weeds weekly before they get ahead of you.
- Prune trees and shrubs. Remove crossing branches and those which are growing too near the house or other plants. Be careful not to cut plants back too hard since you will not get much growth this time of year.
- Dead-head the flowers. Remove spent flower stalks. Thin out or split perennials if needed.
- Lightly fertilize only those plants that seem stressed. Most natives, planted in the right spot, will not need fertilizing. Check your county fertilizer ordinance, many say no nitrogen (N) or phosphorus (P) June 1 – September 30.
- Mulch the beds. Mulch helps suppress weeds and protect the roots from heat and cold while adding organic matter to the soil. We recommend recycled hardwood, pine straw, leaf litter, melaluca (bagged as “Florimulch”) and eucalyptus mulch.

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not grow much the first year, but the roots firm, and your plant will be better established to bear up during the dry season in the spring. Deep water the roots of trees and shrubs for better establishment. Many people water the roots/root ball before placing them in the ground.

- Feel the air! Is there maybe 3 degrees less humidity? Hello fall!

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## **Follow up to the call for action in Manatee County from last month:**

**Board Member Elliot Prout attending the Manatee County Commissioners' meeting on August 17, and provides the following account:**

**"... Ultimately the amendment to reduce wetland buffers was approved 6-1 with George Kruse being the only dissent. I was taken aback by how many people attended, the room was filled to capacity so they had to divert everyone else to the 5th floor viewing room. Not gonna lie it brought a little tear to my eye to see how many people cared.**

**In Daniel Delisi's opening remarks he stated that reducing wetland buffers from 50 feet to 25 feet would "unequivocally have no impact on our wetlands." That got a big laugh from the room. Afterwards commissioner VanOstenbridge threatened to clear the room if there was any outburst for the rest of the meeting.**

**I was surprised to learn that no scientific study or wetland impact study was required to approve the amendment. I also was surprised at how closed off and aloof the commissioners seemed during the 4 hours of public comment from scientists, ecologists, and concerned citizens. But most of all I was surprised that they made an almost unanimous decision against the best interest of the public and against the advisory panels recommendation to decline this amendment."**

**Thank you, Elliot, for attending and telling us how it went. And**

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**Please register to vote. Please tell your commissioner what you think of the job they do on your behalf.**

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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**

**Membership: Elliot Prout**

Grants Program: Zack Westmark

Field Trips/Programs: Steve White

Field Trips Leader: Cathy Page

Social Media: Rachel DesRosier

Newsletter: Susie Venters, Zack Westmark

Technology: Alison Bishop

Website: Yiwon Chow

Past President: Erica Timmerman

At large: Chris Meyer; Lee Breyer

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

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

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

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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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