



The Maypop



News and Notes, August 2021

Lake County Wildflower Festival *by Katrina Stephenson*

Passionflower and Lake Beautyberry chapters are teaming up with Green Isle Gardens to plan an exciting kick-off for Florida Native Plant Month – our second Lake County Wildflower Festival & Native Plant Sale will be on October 2nd!

We were delighted when our 2019 festival was a huge success, and disappointed when we were not able to do an event last year. This year we are working hard to make our 2021 festival an event not to be missed. We are planning activities for knowledgeable native plant gardeners, anyone who wants to learn about the benefits and beauty of native plants, children, and people who just love nature.

The festival will feature talks from local experts and authors, nursery tours, a food truck, nature-oriented exhibitors and vendors, authors and book signings, family activities and, of course, native plants! Volunteers and Green Isle staff will be on hand to answer questions and help attendees choose the right native plants for their yards - or containers. Green Isle has an incredible selection of native shrubs, trees, wildflowers, and butterfly host plants to choose from, and FNPS members receive a discount.

Save the Date! Saturday, October 2, 2021

We're also refreshing the festival logo – stay tuned.



Upcoming Events – Save the Dates

As we move past our summer hiatus and into the fall we are cautiously resuming in-person activities and optimistically planning for a full “return to normal”.

Thursday, August 5

Rescue Planting – 8:00am – Lake Louisa SP

Wednesday, August 25

Chapter Meeting - 6:30pm – online

Saturday, August 28

Field Trip (**reservations required**) – 8:30am – Colt Creek State Park, Lakeland

Saturday, September 11

Program – Fairies, Trolls and Dragons – 10:00am – In-person or Zoom TBD

Wednesday, September 22

Chapter Meeting - 6:30pm – TBD

Saturday, September 25

Gardening Day – 9:00am – Lake Louisa SP

Saturday, October 2

Lake County Wildflower Festival & Native Plant Sale – 9:00am to 2:00pm – Green Isle Gardens

For updates and more details on these and other upcoming events:

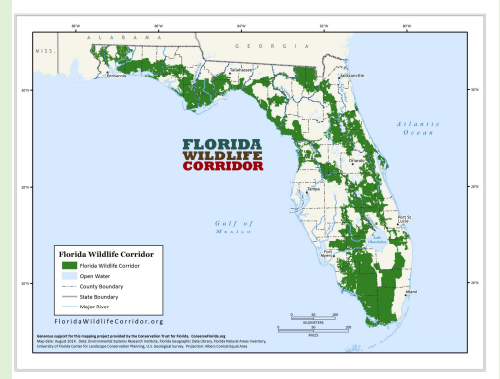
- Watch your email inbox
- Visit the Passionflower [Website](#)
- Follow Passionflower on [Facebook](#)



Conservation Corner *by Mindy Meadows*

For our first column about environmental victories, issues and threats in Lake County, we wanted to report wonderful news.

On June 29th, Governor DeSantis signed into law the [Florida Wildlife Corridor Act](#). This bill was designed to protect and connect the state's network of natural areas and safeguard essential habitat for many of Florida's 131 animal and 567 plant species currently imperiled because habitat loss and fragmentation are driving population declines. The corridor – our State's precious "green infrastructure" - runs through southwest Lake County. So this bill will positively affect our wild places, water sources, and quality of life. We can supplement the Florida Wildlife Corridor with backward corridors - check out two ideas on how to do this:



[Why You Need Wildlife Corridors and How to Make Them](#) and [Create your own native plant garden-in containers!](#)

The bill itself, which passed with bipartisan support, is a good thing. However, there could be a catch in the state budget. Lawmakers amended the budget so landowners paid with bill funding to not develop their land can also use their land for wetland-mitigation banking. Mitigation banks – including some in Lake County - have a spotty record of working as intended to compensate for wetlands loss. So this situation bears watching until the budget expires in 2022.

We'll keep an eye on this and other conservation developments and keep you posted.

Resurrection Fern *by Melanie Simon*

Resurrection fern is a small, but remarkable plant. This native, found throughout Florida (and north to New York and west to Texas), is an epiphyte, which means it grows on top of other plants. Resurrection fern is a creeping plant with branched rhizomes that attach it to hosts - living or dead tree trunks and branches and sometimes rocks or manmade objects. Although this fern needs a host plant on which to anchor it (it favors oak trees) it does not steal water or nutrients from the host, only a perch. Large colonies can often be seen in live oak trees.

Most plants die if they lose about 10% of their water content. Resurrection fern can lose about 75% of its water during a typical dry period and up to 97% during an extreme drought. Water loss makes it turn gray/brown and shrivel up, but it doesn't die. When exposed to moist conditions again it looks green and healthy within hours.

In 1997 a fern was taken into space aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery to watch its "resurrection" in zero gravity.



Resurrection Fern Fast Facts

Scientific Name: *Pleopeltis michauxiana*
Also known as: *Pleopeltis polypodioides* var *michauxiana*
Family: Polypodiaceae (common ferns)
Type: Perennial
Phenology: evergreen
Zones: 7b to 11
Water: Moist, well-drained
Light: Partial shade to full shade
Height: 6" to 9"
Spread: 1' to 2'
Soil: N/A
Reproduction: spores



A 7-Year Journey by Pam Adams

The journey from a typical Florida subdivision yard to the award-winner of the 2021 FNPS Native Plant Residential Landscaping Award has been an emotional one – happiness, sadness, frustration – you name it! I was very happy to share this experience and lessons learned with everyone who came to our July Yard Tour event.

When I bought my house in 2013, the landscaping was like the 109 other houses in the subdivision – irrigated lawn on all sides, manicured hedges, and palm trees. My goal was to eliminate 90% of turf grass, provide visual interest with color, texture and size, eliminate the need to irrigate and treat with chemicals, and create a healthy habitat for pollinators, birds, insects, reptiles, and small mammals. Because my home is in an HOA, and on a corner with high visibility, it was also very important that the transformed yard “fit in”. Wanting to complete the work quickly (site prep through full installation in 6 weeks) while avoiding costly mistakes, I collaborated with Marc Godts of Green Isle Gardens to develop a design, select plants, and prepare the site to receive new landscaping.

I relied on Marc’s expertise to select and install 398 plants for my ~1/3 acre lot. He selected plants most likely to thrive in my yard conditions: low nutrient and fast-draining sand, irregular rainfall and no irrigation, limited shade from large trees, and very hot summers. The plants included 13 small trees (3 species), 49 shrubs (9 species), 135 grasses (7 species), 18 groundcover (2 species), 5 vines (3 species), and 176 wildflowers (15 species). Some non-native “Florida Friendly” favorites (like plumbago) were kept. Installation was completed in 2014. Over the intervening years 23 additional species have been introduced with varying degrees of success. Download the [Plant Inventory](#) from the website Resources page.

Disappointments: Although literature indicated a good match for site conditions, some species failed to survive much less thrive. Of the original installation, 12 species did not survive: 1 shrub, 2 grasses, and 9 wildflowers. Many of the “failures” are still a mystery. On the East (driveway) side Firebush, gopher apple, and garberia struggle and have almost disappeared. Lopsided Indian grass, a mesmerizing addition in the NW, failed to reappear after the first year. Beach Verbena, Ironweed, St. John’s Wort, Twin Flower and Wild Petunia did not receive the perfect balance of moisture and light. Sunshine Mimosa – highly touted as a fast spreader - was very slow to take hold on the West.

Happy Surprises: Although the landscape was not intended to be educational, large, easy-to-read plant ID markers (ice cream lids), have engaged neighbors and provided an opportunity to share native plant information with neighbors and their children. The benefit of weeding by hand, being up-close and personal, is the discovery of beneficial insects, wildlife, and emerging plants. The most voluminous “volunteers” are dune sunflower, coreopsis, beebalm, spiderwort, rouge plant and muhly grass. Happiest surprise of all - two gopher tortoise burrows among the dune sunflowers on the South exposure in 2020 and 2021!



Check out the [Flickr Album](#) for more photographs.

Fun Fact – Container Gardening with Natives is Hot!

Container gardening is a popular 2021 garden trend - and even better since we can use native plants. Want to learn how? In addition to the article mentioned in the Conservation Corner, the Florida Wildflower Foundation has a great [article and plant list](#) and [2 videos](#) about creating pollinator pots. Also check out “Container Gardening with Natives”, the upcoming August 27th [FNPS Lunch and Learn](#) presented by our very own Kirsten Sharp Ortega of My Dragonfly Gardens (see page 4).



FNPS Florida Native License Plate



Show your pride for Florida's unique and beautiful native plants by preordering a Florida Native License Plate! This official state of Florida license plate was designed with a distinctive camouflage pattern using all native species.

Revenue from the sale of the plates will go directly to FNPS to fund conservation and land management work, research grants, and scholarships to protect and restore Florida's native plant communities.

We must presell 3,000 plates before the state will start printing out specialty license plate.

Visit <https://www.fnps.org/support/license> today to learn more and to purchase your FNPS license plate voucher. Vouchers make a one-of-a-kind gift for a loved one while helping spread the message and appreciation for Florida Natives!

Passionflower's First Business Member

In June, Passionflower welcomed our first business member: My Dragonfly Gardens, LLC.

The My Dragonfly Gardens business slogan "We nurture nature" says it all. Owners Kirsten Sharp-Ortega and Victor Ortega, long-time Passionflower members, focus on using native and Florida-Friendly plants to create welcoming habitats for wildlife in harmony with nature and their clients' visions. In addition to Landscape Design and consultations, the company offers Gardening Service and Maintenance, Installation, and Drip Systems, utilizing sustainable methods to preserve environmentally friendly habitats.

Kirsten, who has a horticulture degree with a specialization in landscape design and was the in-house natural habitat designer for Green Isle Gardens, believes it is her social responsibility to share her knowledge. She did a program presentation for Passionflower earlier this year and will do one of the FNPS Lunch and Learn programs in August.

Watch for Kirsten and Victor at Passionflower activities, wish them well with creating more native plant landscapes in our area, and find out more about their philosophy and services at MyDragonflyGardens.com.



My Dragonfly Gardens



Florida Native Plant Society Mission:
Promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

For information on FNPS activities throughout the State, check out the [FNPS website](#) and [FNPS blog](#).

Chapter Leadership

President: Melanie Simon

Vice President: Katrina Stephenson

Secretary: Donna Bingaman

Treasurer: Dot Rogers

Chapter Representative: Melanie Simon

Communications Director: Katrina Stephenson

Membership Chair: Mindy Meadows

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