

Wildflower Gazette

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Florida Wildflower Foundation Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2010

Learn more about the Florida Wildflower Foundation at www.floridawildflowerfoundation.org

Spring in La Florida puts on a colorful show

Call it a “perfect storm” for spring wildflowers – lots of winter rain, cooler temps and ... wow! Showy stands of wildflowers are popping up everywhere. As a result, the Florida Wildflower Foundation is receiving phone calls, emails and photos like never before. Mostly, people want to know what they’re seeing and how they can grow the flowers in their own yards.

This growing interest in wildflowers was certainly evident in late March at the Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival in downtown DeLand. About 9,000 people attended the event, which featured more than 50 vendors and organizations. Attendees left with potted wildflowers, wildflowers seeds, native plants, wildflower info, garden doodads, books, gardening utensils, pots and much more. They also heard speakers such as author Ginny Stibolt, who talked about sustainable gardening, and DeLand’s Herb Hiller, who shared a vision of the future that includes a statewide celebration of the 500th anniversary in 2013 of Ponce de Leon’s naming of La Florida, “land of flowers.”

After the festival, cyclists participating in Bike Florida’s weekend in DeLand joined members and friends of the Florida Wildflower Foundation downtown for the Peace, Love and Wildflower concert featuring the Groovers & the Shakers. On March 29, Bike Florida launched its annual five-day ride from DeLand, pedaling the St. Johns River to the Sea Loop trail, which the Foundation last year surveyed for naturally occurring wildflowers (see the report at www.floridawildflowerfoundation.org/past_recipients.html).

Meanwhile, more people are looking for opportunities to view wildflowers in their natural glory ... including yours truly. I took pleasure in cruising one of my favorite routes last weekend, which takes in DeLand, Astor, Ocala, the Ocala National Forest, Wiersdale and Eustis and places in



About 9,000 people attended the Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival in DeLand. Photos by Lisa Roberts

between. I was rewarded by an abundance of pink, red and white phlox, fleabane, Blue Flag iris, spiderwort, blue-eyed grass, Coreopsis and – the star of spring 2010 – toadflax. To learn more about where to see wildflowers, turn to Pages 2 and 3, where Dr. Jeff Norcini, Oecohort Inc., offers suggestions.

As you’re out and about, don’t forget to share your photos so we can let others know where to view wildflowers. Submit them to flawildflowers@gmail.com along with the location of the shot and the names of wildflower in it. (If you don’t know the name, be sure to include leaves of the plant in the photo as well as the flower so we can help. Also, tell us where you found it and in what habitat or soil (wet, dry, sandy, etc.).

To identify what you’re seeing, consider these excellent sources: Dr. Walter Taylor’s books *Florida Wildflowers in Their Natural Communities* and *The Guide to Florida Wildflowers*, as well as the *Wildflowers of Florida Field Guide* by Jaret Daniels. If you need suggestions for wildflower viewing in natural places, check out Sandra Friend’s *Exploring Florida’s Botanical Wonders*, which lays out wildflower walks in a number of accessible locations, from state parks to botanical gardens.

By next spring, we hope to have a free “app” available for downloading to smart phones that



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will help users find and identify Florida’s flora and fauna in the field. The Foundation has joined with the Florida Natural History Museum and Florida Wildlife Commission to develop this exciting educational aid, which will focus on wildflowers, butterflies, birds and habitat along the 489-site Great Florida Birding Trail.

— Lisa Roberts, FWF Executive Director



FWF member Judy Gersony gets into the Peace, Love and Wildflowers concert theme, including a headband made with dried wildflowers.

Catch Florida's wave of spring wildflowers

By Dr. Jeff Norcini
"Catch the wave"?

The wave refers to the wave of showy wildflowers that starts in March in South Florida and proceeds northward through May into June.

While some wildflowers can be seen at any time of the year in South Florida, the showy spring wildflower displays in South Florida are mainly in March and April. In North Florida, those of you with a good eye saw some blooming wildflowers as early as February, especially along trails or openings in wooded areas. However, the showiest displays are from late April into June. In Central Florida, the best time to view spring wildflowers typically is late March into May.

Throughout the state, look for yellow-flowered tickseeds, like Leavenworth's tickseed. While some of it has been planted, most Leavenworth's tickseed naturally occurs in moist ditches and swales. In northern Florida each May, it will be hard to miss the swaths of goldenmane tickseed that adorn roadsides and fields. Often mixed in with the goldenmane tickseed are the pinks and purples of annual phlox. Annual phlox is a familiar roadside wildflower throughout the Big Bend and as far south as Tampa, including I-75. Another purple wildflower that is becoming more common to roadsides is powderpuff, a creeping wildflower that embellishes roadsides throughout much of the state. And not to be missed are the showy stands of one of our few true blue native wildflowers, blue-eyed grass, which is not a grass at all — it's related to the garden iris.

How showy will this spring's wildflowers be?

Great! The reason: El Niño, a cool weather pattern that brings winter rain to Florida, is good for spring and summer wildflowers. And all the rain combined with a cooler-than-normal winter should set us up for a good crop of fall wildflowers as well. The El Niño

Wildflowers are so pretty. Is it OK to pick some?

Please don't pick the Black-Eyed Susans, or other wildflowers for that matter — even if no one is looking (although Mother Nature always is). If you want to preserve the memory of a wildflower, take a picture — it will last longer. So "don't pick it — click it," and let others enjoy the beauty.

Also, many of our native wildflowers reproduce only by seed. Picking a flower reduces the ability of that plant to reproduce and for that wildflower population to sustain itself. If you want to pick wildflowers, plant some in your yard or in containers on your patio or porch. Seed packets are available from the Florida Wildflower Seed and Plant Growers Association (www.floridawildflowers.com), and sometimes at garden centers specializing in Florida native plants. To find a



Black-Eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*) bloom on the shoulder of Florida's Turnpike.
Photo by Jeff Norcini

native garden center near you, visit the Association of Florida Native Nurseries' Web site, www.afnn.org.

More reasons not to pick wildflowers:

- Picking the flowers of any endangered or threatened species is illegal in Florida. For details, see Florida Statute 581.185 Preservation of native flora of Florida.
- Stopping along a roadside to pick wildflowers can be hazardous to you and other motorists.

Where are the best places to see spring wildflowers?

In general, the best places to view wildflowers are open areas in rural settings along two- and four-lane roads, including interstates. Open areas, including woodland edges, provide the bright light that many species of native

Who planted these wildflowers?

In most cases, Mother Nature. Then roadside vegetation specialists like Florida Department of Transportation's Dick Bush in North Florida and Will Moriarty in Central Florida simply use management practices that preserve and expand these natural populations of showy wildflowers.

Some of the wildflowers along roadsides have been planted. For example, in Polk County last fall, FDOT's Dennis Murray planted Leavenworth's tickseed, blanketflower and lanceleaf tickseed along State Road 471 just north of U.S. Highway 98. Look for the results this spring and summer.

wildflowers need to thrive. And rural areas are better than urban environments for two reasons – there are more natural stands of wildflowers and lower expectations for manicured landscapes. Some prime areas in which to view wildflowers are:

Statewide

- Along the Florida National Scenic Trail (www.floridatrail.org)
- Florida Water Management Districts lands (www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/watman)
- Florida State Parks (www.floridastateparks.org)
- National Forest lands (www.fs.fed.us/r8/florida)

Panhandle

- State Road 65, Franklin and Liberty counties
- County Road 379, Liberty County
- Apalachicola National Forest, forest roads (some only accessible with four-wheel drive)
- Florida Caverns State Park, Marianna
- Torreya State Park, Bristol

North Florida

- U.S. Highway 17, between Palatka and DeLeon Springs
- U.S. Highway 27, Suwannee County
- U.S. Highway 129, south of Live Oak
- State Road 100, between Bunnell and Palatka
- St. Johns River to the Sea Loop (Flagler, St. Johns, Volusia, Brevard and Putnam counties, including the A1A Scenic and Historic Byway south of St. Augustine, which in 2007 received a grant from the Florida Wildflower Foundation to plant roadside wildflowers. For the complete account of wildflowers along the cycling and driving route, click [here](#) to download the report (PDF format, 7 MB)
- Ocala National Forest

Central Florida

- I-75 (Pasco County)
- Florida's Turnpike
 - Okahumpka Service Plaza
 - Mile Markers 272 and 280.4 (northbound)
 - Mile Marker 236 to 193 (southbound)



Powderpuff (*Mimosa strigillosa*) is blooming on roadsides and in sunny meadows. Photo by Jeff Norcini.

- Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge
 - Tosohatchee State Preserve, Christmas
 - Longleaf Pine Preserve, Volusia County
 - Seminole State Forest, Lake County
- #### South Florida
- Everglades National Park (Royal Palm Hammock)
 - Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and

vicinity (Collier County)
Click [here](#) to see wildflower locations submitted to the Foundation. Click [here](#) for spring wildflower tour suggestions.

Now it's your turn

If you know of a showy wildflower site, please visit the Foundation's Web site for details about submitting wildflower locations and photos of Florida's beautiful wildflowers.

Seeds for Schools grant program launches

On April 1, the Foundation launched its new Seeds for School grant program. Twenty \$50 wildflower seed certificates for teachers were up for grabs on a first-come, first-served basis. Eighty-four applications were received during the first week, which necessitated closing the application period much earlier than expected.

Teachers who receive the grants will plant wildflower gardens on school grounds to use as teaching tools. While we work with teachers to get gardens planted next fall, the Foundation will be looking at expanding the 2011 program to accommodate even more schools. Our education committee also is exploring the development of lesson plans and activities to use with the gardens.



Woodville Elementary students in Tallahassee line up to receive wildflower seeds to scatter.

Welcome new members

License Tag

Cheryl King	Muriel Turner
Donna Dollinger	Linda Wheelock
Eleanor Dietrich	Edward Curley
Hannah Hodge	Mary Masters
Jane Pope	Sandra McQueen
M.E. DePalma	Juanita McMullen
Kimberly Purcell	Cynthia A. Linscott
Janet Dawkins	Richard and Debbie Willeman
Jane Wallace	Willeman
Wyatt Rowe	Marcia Knapke
Madison Smith	Karen L. Casey
Laura Blessing	Ellen Deboeser
Julie Howell	

Student/Senior

Shirley Mathews	Jan H. Liles
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General

Garden Club of the Lakes	Wildflower Garden Club
Lakes and Hills Garden Club (Oleander Circle)	Kim Heiss
Holly Kimberl	Colette Vallee
Violet Irminger	William Schirrmacher
Diane B. Cheek	Kimberley Gregg
Carol Schneider	Carol M. Sullo
Lake Region Audubon Society	Grace Fiandaca

Business/Contributor

Florida Native Plant Society	Carol Simmons
Bok Tower Gardens	Founders Garden Club

Sustaining

Garden Group of John's Island

Thank you to our volunteers

Wekiva Riverfest

Peggy Musial	Carolyn Schaag
Tina Drake	Larry Hutt

Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival

Jerry Fritz	Jeff Norcini
Gary Henry	Jeff Caster
Carolyn Schaag	Terry Zinn
Brightman Logan	Eleanor Dietrich
Larry Hutt	

Congratulations to art contest winners

Our Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival art contest winners are:

- 1st place: Shannon Venturini, DeLeon Springs ("Nectar of Life")
2nd Place: Jane Dion, DeLand ("Spring Run Spiderlily")
3rd Place: Linda Weiler Deltona ("Cascades")
Artists Barbara Kepsell, Patty Lamontagne and Betty M. Roberts won honorable mentions for their works.

Seedlings or weeds – how can you tell?

Spring is here and wildflowers are emerging ... but so are weeds. The Florida Wildflower and Plant Growers Association recently commissioned a report showing photos of common wildflower species as seedlings. It can be viewed at www.floridawildflowerfoundation.org/pdf10/SeedlingImageProject_Report-Ver2007-96DPI_Images.pdf For more help, e-mail your seedling photos to education committee member Dara Dobson at wildflowersmatter@defuniak.com.

Controlling grass among wildflowers

Homeowners can control grass in wildflower beds with ready-to-use products that contain fluazifop as the only active ingredient. Grass herbicides tend to act slowly; it might be a few to several days before injury symptoms develop (usually a reddening of the grass blades). Also, grass herbicides should probably not be used in a wildflower/native grasses planting – there is too much chance for collateral damage. Post-emergent grass herbicides like fluazifop can be used at any time of the year when grass is actively growing.

FWF, Scenic Highways team to spread seeds

The Florida Wildflower Foundation and FDOT's Florida Scenic Highways program have teamed to produce free packets of *Coreopsis lanceolata*. Packets are handed out at events and talks throughout Florida. Send an email request for seed packets to pass out at your next community event to flawildflowers@gmail.com. Please note: The Foundation requests a small donation be made through PayPal before the order is filled to offset the cost of shipping and handling.

To learn more about Florida Scenic Highways, visit www.floridascenichighways.com.

Save the date

Members and friends are invited to attend the Foundation's Annual Meeting on Sept. 11 at the Osceola County Extension Office, Osceola Heritage Park, 1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane, Kissimmee. Stay tuned for details on speakers and other activities.

If you'd like to volunteer to be part of the Annual Meeting committee, please contact Lisa Roberts at 407-353-6164 or flawildflowers@gmail.com.

FWF Calendar

- April 23-24: Florida Federation of Garden Clubs Conference, Boca Raton.
May 2-8: National Wildflower Week
May 19: FWF board meeting
May 20-23: Florida Native Plant Society Conference, Tallahassee.
June 17: FWF board meeting
July 15: FWF board meeting
Aug. 18: FWF board meeting
Sept. 10: FWF board meeting
Sept. 11: Florida Wildflower Foundation Annual Meeting, Osceola County Extension Office, Kissimmee
Oct. 12: Vice Chair Terry Zinn at FNPS Sea Oats Chapter, St. Augustine.



Are you a member?

You are if you have a State Wildflower license tag! Tag owners support the Foundation's efforts by donating \$15 each year they register their vehicle.

You don't have to have a tag to be a member, though – you also can join as an annual paid member. Paid levels are Student/Senior, \$15; General, \$25; Business/Contributor, \$100; Sustaining, \$250.

Now you can renew your membership or become a new member via PayPal. Tag owners also will find an electronic form for joining. To join or review benefits, visit www.floridawildflowerfoundation.com/join_us.html.

However you choose to join us, we thank you for supporting Florida's native ecosystems with your donation!



Members Don and Doll Hallum, DeLand, swung by the Foundation's booth to say hello at the Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival in March. Members who stopped by got wristbands good for discounts at downtown DeLand restaurants and shops.