

Florida Native Plant Society

# MANGROVE CHAPTER

April 2025

The Mission of the  
**Florida Native Plant Society is to**  
*Champion Florida's Native Plants and their Habitats*

## PLANT NATIVE DAY was a huge success!



Thank you to all who came out. We had a tremendous morning and sold 500 member-grown plants in just 3 hours. Plant Native Day is our primary event for funding our native plant grant program and we have met our goal for the year. Thank you to all of our volunteers, exhibitors, and the Florida Native Plant Nursery. It was truly a team effort!

Our members spent months growing their plants before Plant Native Day. Alicia Irvin grew the plants she donated from seed. From small seedlings (below left) to the beautiful plants she brought to Plant Native Day (below right), Alicia grew a couple hundred happy, healthy plants and helped educate people about the Right Plant, Right Place principle. We welcome members to join us in growing plants for next year's Plant Native Day. Contact us to learn more! (There is no minimum number of plants to grow or donate, but you must be registered to donate plants.)



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## Upcoming Events in April

It's that time of year for outdoor events and the Mangrove Chapter has a full calendar. We'll have a table set up at the following events. Come out to see us and help us to champion Florida's native plants.

**Saturday, April 5** - Orchid Fest at Englewood Sports Complex, 1300 S River Rd, Englewood (10am-5pm)

**Sunday, April 13** - Earth Day Festival at Buchan Park next to Buchans Airport on Old Englewood Rd (11am-4pm)

**Saturday, April 26** - CHEC's Lemon Bay Earth Day at Cedar Point Environmental Park (10am-2pm)

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### **BIG NEWS: The Mangrove Chapter will be Returning to the Pollinator Wildflower Habitat at Cedar Point**

The Mangrove Chapter is excited to announce that we are working with Charlotte County on a plan to restore and resume maintenance of the pollinator garden at Cedar Point. The garden was devastated in Hurricane Ian. We are building a team of volunteers and will begin planning for the new garden soon.

Cedar Point Environmental Center, 2300 Placida Rd, Englewood



Photos above: Mangrove Chapter volunteers check out the current condition of the pollinator garden at Cedar Point.

We have a lot of work to do! Interested in joining or want to learn more? Email us

## Plant of the Month Button Sage (*Lantana involucrata*)



Native Button Sage by John Bradford, FNPS, left.

The plant this month is Button Sage. I have always known it as simply Native Lantana as it is the only one that we have locally. *Lantana involucrata* is also known as Wild Sage, Big Sage, Wild Lantana, White Lantana, and White Sage. It is in the Verbenaceae/Vervain family. They are not sages. Daniel F. Austin in his *Florida Ethnobotany* has several pages on the sage versus oregano due to the aromas. I just went out to my yard and the one I had is gone!! I used to get yearly frosts but not

recently. I think Ian did it in and I just didn't notice. Gives you a hint how much vegetation I have that I didn't notice!

Lantana refers to the resemblance of this group of plants to *Viburnum lantana*, in the Honeysuckle family (Caprifoliaceae). The name *involucrata* means "with an involucre," in reference to the leafy bracts below the flowers. In the Bahamas, the leaves are brewed into a tea and used to sponge sores from measles and chicken pox. I saw a picture of a Cassius Blue (*Leptotes cassius*) on a plant. It is listed as a nectar/pollen resource for adult butterflies, bees, and other pollinators.

This is a perennial woody shrub from 4-6 feet tall (I've not seen any that large. One source mentioned 12 feet!) with rounded aromatic, opposite leaves to 1 inch long and 5/8 inch wide. The leaf margins are scalloped. Upper surfaces are rough to the touch. Branches are thin and hairy. Grayish, gnarly bark.

Flowers are in dense clusters, subtended by a whorl of green bracts. The flower heads are 3/8-5/8 inch wide with small, crowded 5-lobed flowers that are typically white with a yellow center but are sometimes suffused with violet. They bloom February thru October and sporadically at other times. Fleshy, rounded drupes are 1-seeded, purple or blue. Mockingbirds, cardinals, and catbirds may enjoy the seeds. The ranges are dry, pineland, hammock margins and coastal habitats of central and south Florida, Bermuda and tropical America. One of the sources



© Shirley Denton

mentioned them forming thickets in full sun. I would love to see that! They can be pruned.

*Lantana involucrata* bloom (above) by Shirley Denton, FNPS.

Please destroy any of the exceptionally invasive *Lantana camara* (see below) that has orange and pink flowers that are on your property. They easily hybridize with the native species!! From the same above ethnobotany information, it was noted that the aqueous leachate of *L. camara* kills the alien pest water hyacinth. It would be ironic if *L. involucrata* does the same. A lovely bit of human justice to turn native Lantanas against the alien pest.

by Linda "Willie" Wilson

References: *Florida Ethnobotany* by Daniel F. Austin; *Native Wildflowers* by Craig N. Huegel



Native *Lantana involucrata* (above) by Alan Cressler, LBJWC.

Non-native *Lantana camara* (below) and text by Taylor Clem.



### UF/IFAS says...

"Prevent seed production from any *Lantana camara* (bottom left) within the landscape. Many non-sterile camaras develop seeds shortly after flowering. Collection and removal of seeds help reduce the spread of the landscape invasive. Of course, if it is a native variety, collect and disperse seeds.

The non-native invasive Lantana (*Lantana camara*/*strigocamara*) is usually most recognized by its clusters of bright orange, red, and yellow flower clusters. Many of the invasive lantanas end up within the environment or disrupting agriculture production. Sterile varieties can easily be found, but if you ever notice a *Lantana camara* produces tiny, black seeds, it should be removed immediately. The sterile varieties will not produce the seeds. To be safe, look for our native Lantanas, *L. involucrata* and *L. depressa*. The native Lantanas create beautiful plants for your landscape that attract many different pollinators."

## Chapter Meeting – Tuesday, April 8

Come early for social time beginning at noon; bring your lunch, too! Meeting starts at 1:00 p.m. Lemon Bay Park, 570 Bay Park Blvd., Englewood.

### Meeting Agenda

- Call to order

- Introductions and ice breaker
- Announcements of Chapter business
- Chapter history
- Plant of the Month - Button Sage (*Lantana involucrata*)
- Introduction to guest program:

**Bren Curtis**  
**President, Peace River Audubon Society**

Bren will tell us about Audubon's bird and butterfly sanctuary certification program. Learn what it takes for your property to be recognized for "providing food, nectar, shelter, and a water source for birds, bees, insects, and other wildlife."

We will adjourn the meeting following the guest program.

For more information email [mangrovechapter@fnps.org](mailto:mangrovechapter@fnps.org)

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## 2024-2025 Native Plant Grants Available

This is the last month applications will be accepted! To assist those within the Mangrove Chapter FNPS area (South Venice to Punta Gorda to Englewood), our Annual Landscape Grant has been changed a bit to better accommodate those affected by the storms. In most years, we have provided grants to PUBLIC properties, but, this year (2024-2025), we will provide up to \$100 in grant funding for PRIVATE landscapes.

Applications are being accepted through **April 30, 2025**. Projects need to be completed by September 30, 2025. Complete details and applications can be found at: <https://mangrove.fnpschapters.org/outreach/grants/>

### Volunteer Opportunity - Help with Site Visits

As part of the grant application review process, the Grant Committee conducts a site visit at each property. A site visit consists of a visit to the grantee's property to discuss potential plant selection and placement and takes approximately one hour per site. Join us to help ensure that grant money goes to planting the **Right Plant** in the **Right Place**; it's both educational and fun! For more information, contact Bobbi Rodgers at [elipsi@comcast.net](mailto:elipsi@comcast.net).

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## Out and About with Mangrove Chapter

All our events are free to attend and all are welcome unless noted.  
Please, no dogs, smoking, or vaping.

**Tuesday, April 8, 1:00PM.** The Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society's monthly Chapter meeting is open for all to attend. This month's guest speaker is Bren Curtis, President of the Peace River Audubon Society. Curtis will speak about the society's bird and butterfly sanctuary certification program. Learn what it takes for your property to be recognized for "providing food, nectar, shelter

and a water source for birds, bees, insects and other wildlife.” Of course, natives are a piece of the puzzle! Lemon Bay Environmental Center, 570 Bary Park Blvd., Englewood. BYOP social at 12:15pm.

**Friday, April 18, 9:00-11:00 AM.** Join the Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and member Dr. Mary Davis for a walk at the Oscar Sherer State Park, 1843 S. Tamiami Trail, Osprey. Mary will tell us about the endemic Florida Scrub Jay and managing for its habitat. Meet at the Nature Center at the end of the road.

**Tuesday, April 22, 10-11:30+ AM** Join the Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, and members Charlie and Jane Woodruff as they lead a guided nature walk at Manasota Scrub Preserve, 2695 Bridge St, Englewood. Learn more about the native birds and plants that inhabit this preserve. Meet at the parking area/entrance on Bridge St., corner of Manasota Beach Rd. for a 1.5 to 2-hour long walk. Pack a lunch if you wish to chat with others after the walk as picnic facilities are nearby, and remember to bring water, a hat, and sunscreen.

**Tuesday, April 29, 9:00-11:00 AM.** Join the Mangrove Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, and UF/IFAS Sarasota Extension Service, as member Dr. Mary Davis leads a guided nature walk at the Sleeping Turtle Preserve South, 2800 State Route 777, Venice. Learn more about our amazing and unique Florida ecosystems as we explore the mosaic of plant communities that occur along and help protect the Myakka River. Meet at the preserve kiosk. NOTE: Check for a change of location in case this park is still closed at this date.

For more information, contact [mangrovechapter@fnps.org](mailto:mangrovechapter@fnps.org)

## Monthly Plant Survey - get involved!

Each month, the Mangrove Chapter of FNPS with Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC) and Charlotte County conducts plant surveys at **Cedar Point Environmental Park** in Englewood, FL. These surveys record both blooming and seeding plant species along designated trails. These data provide land managers and educational professionals with information for climate-related projects and other important issues. Plus, it is a fun and educational morning learning new plant species and meeting new people with similar interests! Volunteers are always needed for the scheduled survey dates:

**April 15 and 16 (Tuesday and Wednesday)**

Please contact Barb Seibel at [leftyb3@comcast.net](mailto:leftyb3@comcast.net) to sign up.

The Chapter welcomes new people (membership in the Chapter is nice but not necessary) to help with these surveys. We will meet from 9:00 AM to approximately 11:00 AM. Wear comfortable shoes that can get wet, and bring sunscreen and bug spray, as needed. We look forward to meeting each of you.

Cedar Point Environmental Park, 2300 Placida Road, Englewood, FL.

**February 2025 Plant Survey Report**



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The March Plant Survey went as expected. Cedar Point Environmental Park is far from being recovered from Hurricane Milton. So much of the park is still covered with dead, dried plants, but there are positive signs that the park is recovering. The small wildflowers such as Frogfruit (*Phyla nodiflora*), Pink Purslane (*Portulaca pilosa*), American Bluehearts (*Buchnera americana*), and Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina*), are starting to

bloom throughout the park.

On the negative side, the one and only Hercules' Club (*Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*) in the park has been destroyed by either the storm or the clean-up that followed. The Hercules' Club is sometimes called the Toothache Tree. Crush a leaf, stick it in your mouth, and soon your mouth will be numb. Don't try this unless you are sure of what you are doing. We also pulled up a Chinese Crown Orchid (*Eulophia graminea*). This is an invader from Asia and is a very aggressive terrestrial orchid. One of its identifying features is the large bulb from which this plant grows. Pull it up if you see it.

Keep on smelling the flowers!

Photo of *Phyla nodiflora* bloom by Mark Hutchinson, FNPS.

## The Sabal Palm Campaign Continues!

A committee of Sabal Palm Protectors has been working to educate our community about the proper care of Sabal palm trees. They don't need to be trimmed, and skipping the damaging "hurricane cut" is more economical and safer. The palm in the photo (right) had its trunk weakened by over-pruning and strong winds broke the top off.



Members are talking to their neighbors, HOAs, and landscaping companies about how to protect palms. Laurie plans to hang a laminated sign (photo above left) in English and Spanish on her palms so that the HOA landscapers will know not to prune while she is gone over the summer.

For more information or if you are interested in joining the committee, please

contact Kristin at [kristinhoffschmidt@gmail.com](mailto:kristinhoffschmidt@gmail.com). Protect Florida's state tree and natural heritage with us!

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## Where to Buy Native Plants

### Mangrove Chapter Members Save 10% on Your Plants! Buy Native!

Below are a few area nurseries where you can confidently purchase native plants, plus they offer a discount for FNPS members! Too often, big box stores sell plants that they call native, but instead they are hybrids or cultivars, or even worse, the grower might already have treated the plant or the soil with pesticides that are fatal to native insects. Buying from a native nursery helps avoid those worries.

**All Native Garden Center**, 300 Center Rd, Fort Myers, FL 33907  
<https://nolawn.com/>

**Florida Native Plants Nursery**, 730 Myakka Rd, Sarasota, FL 34240  
<https://www.floridanativeplants.com/>

**Sweet Bay Nursery**, 10824 Erie Rd, Parrish, FL 34219  
<https://sweetbaynursery.com/>

Check out **Plant Real Florida's** website to search for native nurseries anywhere in Florida: <https://www.plantrealflorida.org/>

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[Mangrove Chapter Facebook page](#)

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## Organizations of Nature Related Friends

**ECOSWF** (Environmental Confederation of SW Florida) <https://www.ecoswf.org/>

**Environmental Conservancy of North Port and Surrounding Areas** <https://ecnorthport.com/>

**Florida Wildflower Foundation** <https://www.flawildflowers.org/>

**Lemon Creek Wildflower Preserve** <https://lemonbayconservancy.org/>

**Peace River Audubon Society** <https://www.peaceriveraudubonsociety.org/>

**People for Trees** [www.peoplefortrees.com](http://www.peoplefortrees.com)

**Venice Area Audubon Society**  
(VAAS) <https://veniceareaaudubonsociety.wildapricot.org>

**Check out more things to do each month on our partner counties' websites**

**Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center** <https://www.checflorida.org/calendar>

**Sarasota County events - register here:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/ufifas-extension-sarasota-county-422952084>

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**Mangrove Chapter meets the second Tuesday of the month, October through May, at 1:00 at the visitor center at Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center, 570 Bay Park Blvd., Englewood.  
Our meetings are open to the public.**

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## **Mangrove Board of Directors & Coordinator Positions**

President; Newsletter – Ava Lasseter, PhD [MangroveAva@gmail.com](mailto:MangroveAva@gmail.com)  
Secretary – Kristin Hoffschmidt  
Treasurer – Alicia Irvin  
Chapter Representative; Conservation & Policy – Linda "Willie" Wilson  
Membership, Data – Sean McMillan  
Education and Outreach; Grants – Bobbi Rodgers  
Publicity and Field Trips – Laurie Via

### Coordinator Positions (Non-board members)

Programs Coordinator – Renee LePere  
Social Media Coordinator – Anne Risberg

To reach us, email [mangrovechapter@fnps.org](mailto:mangrovechapter@fnps.org)



**Visit our website**

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