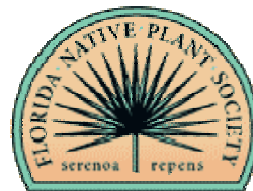




# Sea Rocket



Newsletter of the North / Central Brevard County Sea Rocket Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

February 2009

*The Florida Native Plant Society was organized in 1980 to promote the preservation, conservation & restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida, primarily through education.*



## Samsons Island, Discover the Treasure

**Kerry Stoms, Satellite Beach Recreation Director**  
**Wednesday - February 25, 7pm**

Samsons Island is located in Satellite Beach on a 52-acre island in the Banana River. Prior to the 1950's, Samsons Island consisted mostly of salt marsh and mangrove wetlands. In the early 50's, part of the wetlands were dredged to create canals for mosquito control, and a long "spoil island" resulted from the dredge deposits. Thus began Satellite Beach's Grand Canal and Samsons Island. With the destruction of natural ecosystem in the in the 1950's, Brazilian peppers and Australian pines came to dominate, preventing native

species from taking root. In 1990, a citizen committee recommended that the City create a passive recreation park and nature preserve. Kerry Stoms, the City's Recreation Director, will talk about this habitat transformation and the ecological, recreational and educational goals of this unique coastal feature. Kerry will provide info on how to access the Island and enjoy its offerings. Along our urbanized coast – Samsons Island is a true treasure.

## Coconut Point Sanctuary - Field Trip

**Saturday, February 21 - 9am until noon**

*A joint acquisition of Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program and the State of Florida, acquired in 1994. Vegetation is coastal strand, coastal scrub, some hammocks, and wetlands along the Indian River Lagoon. The first prescribed fire was conducted in 1999. Much of the site burned in a wildfire in March 2006 and in a prescribed burn in April 2007. Recovery has been rapid and quite impressive.*



*Our Hike Leader Paul Schmalzer, PhD is on our County's Environmentally Endangered Lands program's Selection & Management Committee and is an expert in natural communities & native plant identification. This is a real & rare opportunity to get to know Florida and our precious native plants and ecosystems better.*

### *Directions:*

*I-95 to St. Rt. 192 . East on SR 192 to A1A. South on A1A about 5.8 miles. Park at Ponce de Leon County Park on the east side of A1A, cross A1A and walk a short distance north to the kiosk at the north end of the loop trail. Bring hat, sunscreen, water, and insect repellent.*

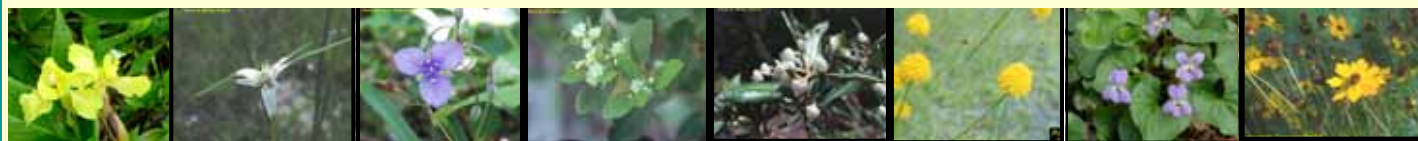
## Education Committee Report . . . submitted by Stephanie Phillips, Chair

Your Education Committee has just doubled its membership. Sea Rocket member Kathie Benson, has just signed-on to help our Chapter meet its educational goals and objectives. Kathie is a retired teacher and an active volunteer at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, so I know her participation & efforts will be a huge plus for our Chapter and the Florida Native Plant Society.

Our first mission is to improve and update our presentation board - you know, the big blue tri-fold with the dangling and faded photos. So, now that you all have had an opportunity to try the lessons you learned from last month's guest speaker - Award Winning Photographer, Jim Angy, please consider contributing your work to your Education Committee so that we may perk up our display board. Of course digital format is welcome. Send to K4MVO@titustek.com, or better yet, just bring your work to our next meeting for an informal show & tell.

### *What's in bloom this month in our Native Gardens:*

**Damp areas:** White tops or Star Rush, *Rhynchospora colorata*; Highbush Blueberry, *Vaccinium corymbosum*; Spiderwort, *Tradescantia ohiensis*; Florida Violet, *Viola affinis*; Southern Elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis*; Tickseed, *Coreopsis leavenworthii*; Fetterbush or Shiny Lyonia, *Lyonia lucida*; Dog-hobble, *Leucothe axillaris*; Shiny Blueberry, *Vaccinium myrsinites*; Yellow-star Grass, *Hypoxis juncea*; Rusty Lyonia, *Lyonia ferruginea*; Yellow Bachelor's Button, *Polygala rugelii*; Pine-hyacinth, *Clematis baldwinnii*; Virginia Willow, *Itea virginica*; Jack-in-the-pulpit or Indian Turnip, *Arisaema triphylum*; Inkberry or Gallberry, *Ilex glabra*; Golden Canna, *Canna flaccida*; and Tropical Sage, *Salvia coccinea*.



**Uplands and Scrubs:** Silkgrass, *Pityopsis graminigolia*; Corky-stemmed Passion-flower, *Passiflora suberosa*; Tropical Sage, *Salvia coccinea*; Lyre-leaved Sage, *Salvia lyrata*; Butterfly-pea, *Centrosema virginianum*; Sky-blue Lupine, *Lupinus diffusus*; Pennyroyal, *Piloblephis rigida*; Rusty Lyonia, *Lyonia ferruginea*; Scrub Plum, *Prunus geniculata*; Wild Olive, *Osmanthus megacarpus*; Dune Sunflower, *Helianthus debilis*; Redbud, *Cercis canadensis*; Yellow Jessamine, *Gelsemium sempervirens*; Sweet Acacia, *Acacia farnesiana*; Wild Lantana, *Lantana involucrata*; Scorpion-tail, *Heliotropium angiospermum*; Rouge Plant, *Rivina humilis*; Wild Pine, *Tillandsia fasciculata*; Painted-leaf, *Poinsettia cyathophora*; Tasselflower, *Emilia fosbergii*; and Deerberry, *Vaccinium stamineum*.

(Reference: Florida Wildflowers in their Natural Communities, by Walter Kingsley Taylor, 1998, University Press of Florida)



## 2009 Florida Native Plant Society Annual Conference

West Palm Beach Marriott Hotel

May 21-24, 2009

***Wake Up and Plant the Natives: Planting Today to Preserve Florida's Tomorrow***

More information is available at [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org). Click on the "Conference" listing on the home page.



## Better Know a Native !

A large attractive tree that can reach 35 - 60 feet with an equal canopy. The trunk and branches are thick and are covered with smooth, peeling coppery bark with a shiny, fresh varnish appearance. It is sometimes called the Tourist Tree because of its reddish peeling bark. A native of south Florida and offshore islands, the soft, light-weight and easily carved wood of gumbo-limbo was used for making carousel horses before the advent of molded plastics. It has proven to do well locally up to central Brevard County where there are many large specimens. It is a great choice for homes, large parking lots and residential streets. It has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common.

*Gumbo Limbo - Bursera simaruba*



## Recognize Our Invasives !

Native to Australia. A common indoor plant that reaches tree size and produces huge numbers of seeds outdoors in central and southern Florida. Introduced to Florida landscaping in 1927 and noted as escaping cultivation in southern Florida in the late 1970s, often growing as seedlings in the boots of cabbage palms in the manner of strangler figs. Now naturalized and spreading in a variety of habitats, from cypress strands to sand pine scrub, from the full sun of beach dunes to the deep shade of hammocks. Invading endangered remnants of scrub habitat, where it is shading outlisted rare plants such as the Florida-threatened scrub pinweed, *Lechua cernua*. Difficult to control; major leaf litter.

## Schefflera Umbrella Tree



*Schefflera actinophylla*



*Local source for herbs & veggies,  
heirloom vegetable plants & native plants  
and fresh local eggs & goat cheese*

**Heirloom Vegetable & Herb Plants - Unique varieties of  
lettuce, eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, squash, Seminole pumpkin & more !**

.....

**FLORI-MULCH - eco-friendly 100% maleleuca mulch,  
must pre-order before March 7**

**For more info call Kari at 536-1410 or [kari@naturewiseplants.com](mailto:kari@naturewiseplants.com)**



## A Cheery Look at Jack Frost, Father Winter, and Seasonal Cold Snaps in Our Native Gardens

*submitted by Stephanie Phillips, Sea Rocket Education Committee Chair*



When my friends and neighbors told me about the many non-native plants they had lost to the most recent cold snaps that have hit our area (north Brevard County), I made a mental inventory of the numerous natives that have not only survived, but actually seem to be flourishing on my property. The sweet fragrances of natives such as Florida Violets, Carolina Jessamine, and *Habenaria odontopetala* - toothed rein orchids, are pleasant reminders that 'Going-Native' has been a very effective strategy for saving time, effort and money in my yard!

Unlike many of my neighbors, I didn't run around trying to cover my tender native plants before the two 'record cold snaps' struck, because I knew they would bounce right back from their roots once the warmer weather returned. Already, after just a few days of warmth, I see the purple Passion-flower poking up out of the leaf litter mulch and inviting the Gulf Fritillary and Zebra Longwing butterflies to lay their eggs. The scarlet colored flowers of the Tropical Sage, that showed some signs of being hit by the freezing weather - wilting a bit, are already back in full bloom and the butterflies are again happily feeding on their sweet nectar. The Rusty and Shiny Lyonia, Highbush Blueberry, Jack-in-the-pulpit, and Redbud are in full bloom, and the Flame Azalea (yes, Pat, I know it is not native to this part of Florida), has some lovely plump and promising buds that seem to be thanking Father Winter for that little flash of cool weather they so desperately need for a full explosion of their color in the Spring.



The really big bonus of being visited by Jack Frost is that he has zapped the life from the terribly invasive non-native species trying to take root on my property: air-potato, pond primrose, and Brazilian pepper - all gone! Hooray! Oh, but if only he had taken out the Poison-ivy and Wedelia!

I'm curious. What does your own 'post freeze inventory' reveal? Did you lose too many plants, or have you 'Gone Native' and are now smelling the sweet fragrance of success in your garden? Do you have a brown and freeze-dried lawn, or do you have lovely clumps of colorful native grasses with heavy seed heads to feed the critters? Do you have the unsightly grey remains of frozen non-natives, or do you have pretty pink and white bells dangling from your lush green shrubs? Are you out cutting down and hauling off dead plants, or are you clipping flowers for a lovely bouquet? Are you making a shopping list for replacement plants, or are you instead making a list of the native plants you want to share with your friends and neighbors so they too will be cheered up by Mother Nature's winter delights.



I'd like to know how your yards and plants survived the recent cold snaps. Do any of you have success stories or strategies you'd like to share with others? If so, please let you Education Committee members know, so we can get the word out about what works in this part of Brevard County.

**Thank you.**

# Upcoming Events

<i>Mon, Feb 16</i>	<i>President's Day</i> <i>Friends of Ulumay, 7pm Kiwanis Island Park</i>
<i>Sat, Feb 21</i>	<i>Sea Rocket Hike, Coconut Point Sanctuary, 9-noon (see front page)</i>
<i>Sun, Feb 22</i>	<i>Space Shuttle Launch</i>
<i>Wed, Feb 25</i>	<i>Sea Rocket Chapter Meeting - Kerry Strom reveals Samsons Island, 7pm</i>
<i>Thurs, Feb 26</i>	<i>Baseball Spring Training Nationals Opening Game, Space Coast Stadium, 1pm</i> <i>Beginning Bird Watching, Merritt Island NWR, 9am - 321/861-5601</i>
<i>Sat, Feb 28</i>	<i>Plants of Merritt Island NWR, 10am - 321/861-5601</i> <i>Scrub Ridge Trail Hike Merritt Island NWR, 1pm</i>
<i>Sat, March 7</i>	<i>Spring Craft Fair, Cocoa Village</i>
<i>Mon, March 9</i>	<i>Conradina Chapter Meeting, Native Yards &amp; Creative Landscape—M.Provencal, 7pm</i>
<i>Sat, March 14</i>	<i>Pelican Island Wildlife Festival, Sebastian</i>
<i>Sat, March 21</i>	<i>Goby Fest, San Sebastian River Preserve SP, 10am</i>
<i>Every Saturday</i>	<i>City of Cocoa Farmers Market, 11:30am - 3pm, Cocoa Village Gazebo</i>
<i>Every Friday</i>	<i>Brown Bag Jazz Lunch, Cocoa Village Gazebo</i>

If you would like to have an item included in this section, please contact Joanie Regan at [joanie.regan@hotmail.com](mailto:joanie.regan@hotmail.com) / 482-3323

## FROZEN ASSETS OF THE NURSEY

... SUBMITTED BY PAT BAYER, NURSERY COMMITTEE

Record breaking freezes have taken a big toll on the plants (and weeds) at the nursery. It will be a few months before we know how much damage has been done. Spring will bring sprouts to those plants with perennial roots and seeds will pop up in pots. Meanwhile we will pull weeds and let the plants recover in their own time. The chapter may have to include a few bake sales this year for fund raising.

*"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream."*

~Barbara Winkler



## Not sure where to get native beauties for your yard?

### Naturewise

#### Green Marketplace

2295 Adamson Road  
Cocoa, FL 536-1410

[kari@naturewisepplants.com](mailto:kari@naturewisepplants.com)  
[www.naturewisepplants.com](http://www.naturewisepplants.com)

Tues 2-6pm, Fri 10-6pm  
and Sat 9-1pm

### Maple Street Natives

7619 Henry Ave  
West Melbourne, FL  
729-6857

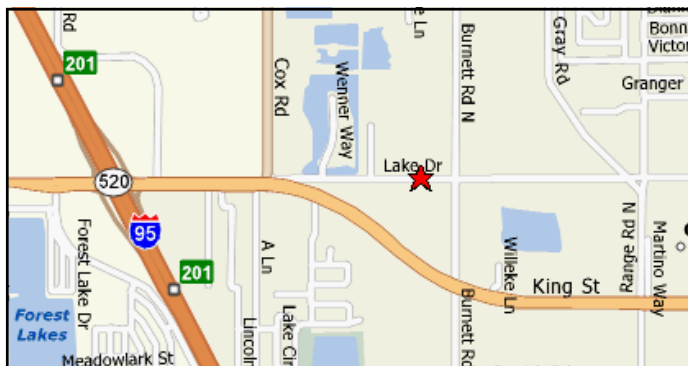
[info@maplestreetnatives.com](mailto:info@maplestreetnatives.com)  
[www.maplestreetnatives.com](http://www.maplestreetnatives.com)

Mon thru Sat 8-5pm

### Green Images

1333 Taylor Creek Road  
Christmas, FL  
407 568-1333

[greenimage@aol.com](mailto:greenimage@aol.com)  
Wed & Sat 10 - 2pm



## CHAPTER MEETING LOCATION

**Brevard County Ag Center, 3695 Lake Drive, Cocoa, Florida**

- From I-95, go east on SR520 to 1<sup>st</sup> traffic light (Burnett Rd.). Turn left at light and drive one block north to Lake Drive. Turn left & Ag Center is on your left.
- From US 1, go west on SR520 to traffic light immediately after Bob Steele Chevrolet. Turn right onto Burnett Road & go 1 block to stop sign. Turn right onto Lake Drive & Ag Center is on your left.

*Please do not call the Ag Center*

*For questions, contact a member of the FNPS Sea Rocket Chapter board.*

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## Sea Rocket Board of Directors

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**President:** Barbara Venuto: [cvenuto@cfl.rr.com](mailto:cvenuto@cfl.rr.com) / 452-3609

**Vice President:** Paula Berntson: [jepasm.3@juno.com](mailto:jepasm.3@juno.com) / 459-3606

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**Library Chair:** Woody Dierberg, PhD [aquachem1@aol.com](mailto:aquachem1@aol.com)     **Chapter Rep & Hike:** Paul Schmalzer, PhD: 268-5473

**Newsletter:** Joanie Regan: [joanie.regan@hotmail.com](mailto:joanie.regan@hotmail.com) /482-3323     **Membership:** Gail Hill: 453-4865

**Education:** Stephanie Phillips: [k4mvo@titustek.com](mailto:k4mvo@titustek.com)     **Hospitality:** Candy Murphy: [budyboo@yahoo.com](mailto:budyboo@yahoo.com) / 636-4074



## Florida Native Plant Society

For additional information on membership benefits or changes of address call, write or e-mail FNPS, or visit our website:

<http://nbbd.com/npr/SeaRocket/index.html>

P. O. Box 278, Melbourne, FL 32902-0278



## Sea Rocket

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***please contact us if you would like to receive future Sea Rocket newsletters via e-mail***