



# Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society The SARRACENIA TRUMPET

FALL 2013

## Upcoming Events

### September

- 17 Chapter Meeting
- 28 Wildflowers of the Panacea Sandhills • Public Field Trip

### October

- 15 Chapter Meeting
- 20 Big Trees of Wakulla Spgs. SP • Member Field Trip

### November

- 19 Chapter Meeting

## Chapter Meetings this Fall

Tues., Sep 17 Chuck Hess: Listening to Birds—what woodpeckers tell us about forest management

Tues., Oct. 15 George Apthorp: Big Trees of Wakulla Springs State Park

Tues., Nov. 19 T.B.A.

The Sarracenia Chapter meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month September to May. Meetings are held at 6:30 PM at the Wakulla Public Library, Crawfordville, Fla.



## Flowers —or the Status Mow?

Even those who trek far off the roads may still see most of their wildflowers in the roadway. It's no wonder; creation of the roads created wildflower habitat (sunny, with moist swales). Look along the Shell Point and Live Oak Island Roads. Or look in spring, summer, or fall along the wide, wet swales of Wakulla County Hwy. C-375 northwest of Sopchoppy.

The rhyme is free if you like it: these scenes are owing to mowing. But wildflower shows, or absence of them, have been simply incidental to roadway mowing regimes serving the utilitarian interest of maintaining an open roadway. It isn't the fine show of wildflowers in C-375's swales that holds off the mowing until the late-fall drying—but the mud.

By 2011 a member of the Wakulla County Commission (and Sarracenia Chapter member), citing complaints of wildflower destruction by the mowers on state-maintained roadways, was making headway with Florida DOT through the Commission. DOT agreed to a trial decrease and reduction of mowing (the two terms mean different things in the parlance) of the US 98 right-of-way. There was even a locally organized wildflower seeding of plots in a six-mile stretch of the right-of-way. A \$500 grant from the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs got an "upland meadow mix" of seeds that included a *Coreopsis* and a *Gaillardia*.

That part of US 98 does have a summer weed problem, and this especially chafed the sense of order in the right-of-way. There were officeholders of the persuasion that the wildflower concessions were foolishness. And it was said that a small deer could be concealed in weeds only a few feet off the pavement. Buttermint or "stinkweed" (*Hyptis mutabilis*, a non-native species that gets three feet high) and the native weed dogfennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*) are two rascally components of the weed scene.

In the fall of 2012 the Wakulla County Commission sanctioned mowing plans for all parts of the Big Bend Scenic Byway in the County—both DOT-maintained roads like US 98 and County-maintained ones. But it is diffi-

(go to "...Status Mow," on p2)

## Field Trip Set for Sep. 28

The chapter's field trip for the public, "Fall Wildflowers of the Panacea Sandhills," is on tap for Saturday, Sep. 28, at 10 AM. This will be the third and last event held by Sarracenia in concert with Viva Florida 500 (the state's quincentennial observance) and Panhandle in Bloom.

The free guided walk in St. Marks NWR will jump off from the Refuge parking strip on Otter Lake Road just west of Panacea.



Summer farewell (*Dalea pinnata*), a fall flower of the Panacea sandhills

A standard liabilities release will be required at the site.

All particulars will be available from chapter field trip coordinator Dr. George Weaver at 850-510-3288.

## What's Blooming?

There are still a bunch of summer wildflowers with blossoms out there in our natural areas but some others are beginning to show their fall colors. The "summer farewell" pictured above is named to mark the season—even if the "October flower" (*Polygonella polygama*) happens to bloom first. There are our six local *Liatris* species sending up their tall spikes of pink and lavender flowers. See how many different types you can spot along our roadsides.

Several species of goldenrod are getting ready to live up to their name as well. Asters, many now labeled *Symphotrichum* by botanists, are opening their white, blue or violet flowers. Many newly burned areas of our forests are getting ready to put on a wonderful dis-

play of our three different members of the *Carphephorus* genus while several types of sunflowers of the *Helianthus* genus are putting on buds and getting ready to greet us. Take a walk in the forest and sandhills and see how many varieties you see. (*Sarracenia* can help you on Sep. 28; see article on p. 1 above).

I was able to list in a few minutes almost 30 species that are out there waiting for you to visit them this time of the year. Take along your favorite guidebook or just go out to see what you can find. It will be time well spent in our beautiful, natural part of the state. *Autumn Beauty*

(cont'd "... Status Mow?" from p1)

cult at this moment to pin down what is really in practice.

Hope keeps getting renewed. Eleanor Dietrich of the Magnolia Chapter of FNPS is now representing the Florida Wildflower Foundation and Panhandle Wildflower Alliance in discussions with DOT. Eleanor's work is promising; the summer weed-control mowing of US 98 that had gotten dropped was re-implemented in recent days.

For the Wakulla-County-maintained highways, see news of an exciting development in the article "An Initiative That Could Flower" below.

### An Initiative That Could Flower

Florida Wildflower Foundation has initiated a bid for a partnership with Wakulla County Public Works to study limited stretches of four county-maintained roadways for special wildflower-sympathetic mowing plans. Earlier this year, FWF engaged private biological consultant Jeff Norcini. With the cooperation of Public Works, Jeff has delimited 10 promising stretches totaling a very modest 6,000 feet on County Roads 59, 365, 372, and 375. He also solicited a *Sarracenia* partnership of sorts; we're giving our time regularly in photo-documenting the scenes in those sites as the seasons roll.

The FWF/Wakulla Public Works roadway study will be completed and recommendations made by the consultant toward the end of the year. This is going to be interesting to follow. *David Roddenberry*

**CATCH THE SARRACENIA WILDFLOWER PHOTO EXHIBIT AT WAKULLA WELCOME CENTER (PANACEA) – THRU SEPTEMBER**

### Tate's Hell's Showiest Orchid

Chapman's Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera chapmanii* (Small) Luer)

WHERE: Warren Bluff or Rock Landing Roads

WHEN: July and August



According to Paul Martin Brown in *Wild Orchids of Florida* (2002), the Chapman's fringed orchid is a hybrid of long ago that originally arose between the orange fringed orchid (*Platanthera ciliaris*) and the orange crested orchid, (*Platanthera cristata*). The best characteristic in identification is the spur which equals to the lip in length. Brown states that from a global standpoint it is one of the rarest orchids known. He claims there are substantial sites in northern Florida. I hope

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he means Tate's Hell State Forest. I am not an expert and my phone photos do not do them justice, but I'm told they're Chapman's fringed orchids. Come next summer and see for yourself. *Lesley Cox*

(Both *P. chapmanii* and *P. cristata* are vouchered for Franklin County – and, for that matter, Wakulla – in the online Atlas of Fla. Vascular Plants. ed.)

### What's New in the Library Garden?

Our volunteer gardeners have been busy in the native garden at the library. The *Gaillardias* have about finished their blossoming so we've been trimming them back or pulling them out to make room for next summer's seedlings. Clumps of new wildflowers have been added to fill in some of the bare spots. We now have three species of *Liatris*, –*spicata*, chapman's and Godfrey's gayfeathers. We've added clumps of butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), *Brickellia cordifolia*, ironweed (*Vernonia angustifolia*), *Symphytotrichum concolor*, and wand goldenrod (*Solidago stricta*). Three clumps of bear grass (*Yucca filamentosa*) line part of the sidewalk and more purple lovegrass and purpletop grass continue across the edge of the area where

the counties are planted. We're trying to put in native plants where something will be blooming during most of the year. We love it when people stop by while we are working and tell us how much they like the way the garden is looking. That gives us a chance to tell them about native plants and our local chapter of FNPS. Stop by some day and see how it is shaping up. While there, feel free to pull weeds from around the muhly grass or munch on some of the edible dollar weeds that have spread around the *Baptisia alba* plants.

### Ride Guide

Plans have developed steadily, and internally, from the time of chapter board approval, for the chapter to produce the content of a native plant guide to a new segment of Wakulla County's Ochlockonee Bay Bicycle Trail (OBBT). This is known as Phase 4.

Phase 1 of OBBT became a reality two years ago. It reaches Mashers Sands Park. Early this year, Phase 4 paving was completed. Though disjunct at this point (as its number indicates) Phase 4 has a strong appeal in its own right; it is the 4.78-mile passage through protected land of St. Marks NWR along Surf Rd.

The native-plant appeal of the sizable new segment had grabbed the attention of *Sarracenia* as construction began in fall 2012. The flank of the trail has a good show of the narrowly endemic but locally abundant Godfrey's gayfeather (*Liatris provincialis*) – whose two-counties-in-the-world endemism makes it special to the chapter.

Additionally, the trail passes through the tiny territory of the one-county endemic St. Marks yellow-eyed grass (*Xyris panacea*). And both scareweed (*Baptisia simplicifolia*) and zigzag goldenaster (*Pityopsis flexuosa*), with global provinces of no more than six North Florida counties, can be seen from the trail.



Godfrey's gayfeathers smile at the bike trail

A first field reconnaissance was made – by bike – in April this year. Observations continue. Board member Doug Gilbert has provided GIS services, in the form of specialized maps of the route, to



help in development. Dr. George Weaver has the lead in design.

“Create the content” is used above, rather than “produce the guide,” because no funding for printing the attractive fold-up we envision is yet identified. (Nor is there funding yet for the County to provide bike path stations from which the guide could be distributed. But other available points – such as the Wakulla Public Library and the Wakulla Welcome Center – could go far toward bridging this obstacle.)

The chapter leadership will soon make the overture to Wakulla County administration to have Sarracenia’s project and offer recognized as worthy of a partnership with the County.

### Zeroing in on Our Namesake

The Sarracenia Chapter’s name is best justified in the western part of the Chapter’s sphere, which is a stronghold of the genus. Franklin County and southern Liberty County have five species of pitcherplants – two more than currently documented for Wakulla – including the emblematic yellow pitcherplant (*Sarracenia flava*) in spectacular stands.

Although the great Apalachicola Flatwoods occupies western Wakulla County as well, that county is a decidedly lesser pitcherplant domain. There may be no pitcherplants visible from any of its paved roads save C-375 – the Sopchoppy-Smith Creek road. That highway does have dense patches of parrot pitcherplant (*S. psittacina*) in the open

...no pitcherplants visible from any of its paved roads save C-375

right-of-way (their maroon flowers showy in spring), and just a bit of yellow pitcherplant in the edges.

The status of the yellow pitcherplant in Wakulla County was one question motivating Sarracenia Chapter members in a quest in May and early June this year, as they homed in on the prescribed burn of Bradwell Bay Wilderness, Apalachicola Nat. Forest. The burn had occurred in

early April and had opened up the view greatly. Another question was whether the whitetopped pitcherplant (*S. leucophylla*), documented last year in Leon County only 2½ miles outside Wakulla, would be revealed in Wakulla by the Bradwell Bay burn.



Ground Zero for Yellow Pitcherplants in Bradwell Bay Wilderness

The “team” visited the west edge of the Wilderness, where yellow pitcherplants appear along the flanks of FR 314 in any conditions. There scenes of yellow pitcherplant trumpets, in the new visibility, far exceeded their expectations. Occurrences relatively dense were found to continue from the forest road eastward over wet slash pine flatwoods for hundreds of yards at two latitudes.

In walking these zones with eyes peeled for *S. leucophylla* and the very uncommon *S. minor* (hooded pitcherplant), the very sooty team also observed an abundance of *S. psittacina* throughout, but, alas, none of the two species of their desire. (One plant exhibiting a leaf apparently suiting *S. xformosa* – the hybrid of *S. psittacina* and *S. minor* – was found; if that is the plant’s identity, *S. minor* must be living nearby.)

The Bradwell Bay observations of a few months ago do not yet establish those sites as the zenith of yellow pitcherplant occurrence in Wakulla County. But they do propose the sites for that distinction. Perhaps someone will take the challenge and point out rival sites.

### We Score One

Sarracenia congratulated Univ. of Georgia Ph.D. candidate Chase Mason on winning FNPS funding for completion of his study of two Florida native wildflower species. The chapter had readily stood as Mr. Mason’s sponsor-chapter for the FNPS conservation grant.

The \$1,500 awarded will enable completion of remaining genotyping of individuals of the two species: pineland false sunflower (*Phoebanthus tenuifolius*) and lakeside sunflower (*Helianthus carnosus*). The latter is a state-endangered endemic occurring in several East Coast counties. The former is threatened. It is vouchered for Franklin and four adjacent counties including Wakulla, but its presence in Wakulla may be a question now. The research project aims at recommendations for preservation of populations

For Sarracenia’s no-trouble in standing as sponsor, we will get a prize feature presentation by Mr. Mason on the species and the research. Watch for the date.

### New Members

2013 has been a growing year for the Sarracenia Chapter. Christine Barnes of St. Marks joined FNPS in January followed by Hugh Taylor and Mary Cortese of Crawfordville in February. Two of our Iris Garden Club friends joined in March, June Ann Hassebreek of Sopchoppy (and Washington State) and Angret Piasecki of Shell Point. In April, Bink and Andrea Williams of Sopchoppy and Annie Schmidt and her husband John Stiles of Bristol became members of Sarracenia. May brought our first two members from Indianapolis, Rebecca and Thomas Dolan. That is going to be a long commute to meetings but hopefully they’ll visit our area regularly. Please introduce yourselves to everyone, and welcome to the Sarracenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. We hope to see you all at our September 17<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Wakulla Library. I’ll make sure that everyone has a name badge. Jeannie Brodhead, Chapter Rep.