

NATIVE PLANT NEWS

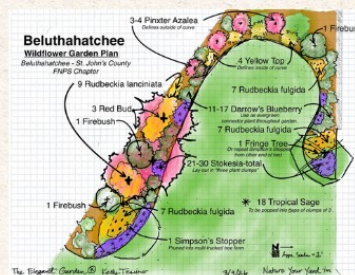
BELUTHAHATCHEE CHAPTER



CHAPTER NEWS

Beluthahatchee Chapter submitted a project idea to the Florida Wildflower Foundation for a Viva Florida Grant, and we met the first hurdle, with our concept being approved so that we can move to the next phase and send a detailed design for consideration for funding. This project would add a Florida Native Wildflower garden to Beluthahatchee Park. Chapter member Kelly Tesiero of the Elegant Garden created the design and coordinated the concept with both St. Johns County Parks and Recreation and The Stetson Foundation. Elaine Gallant prepared the grant documentation and submitted the application package.

Whether we are awarded this grant or not, this has been a good learning experience and we now have a nice template design to enhance Beluthahatchee Park with a native wildflower garden which would be a lovely addition to the space shown in the above photo which is used for outdoor folk concerts and other activities.



Logo Contest: We launched the chapter with the logo to the right. We will be holding a contest to develop and vote on final logo. Details coming soon!



NATIVE PLANT FOR APRIL

Lady Lupine

Lady lupine is as elegant as she sounds and is a stunning spring bloomer that is endemic to the SE Coastal Plains. Butterflies, humminbirds and many other insects are frequent callers. Due to a deep sensitive taproot and a reliance on symbiotic bacteria in the soil of it's natural habitat, this beauty is not easily cultivated. We spotted her on our field trip to Gourd Island!



Lupinus villosus

| March Event Report

Native Plant Tour with Audubon

We were delighted to join St. Johns Regional Audubon for their native plant tour and seed give-away on March 12 at the St. Augustine Visitors Center. This was a joint outreach opportunity to share information about Florida Native Plants to community members. Shirley Barber, a plant propagation specialist, answered questions about propagating plants from seeds. Several people travelled from the Space Coast area to see this garden as they are attempting to improve a native garden in a public space as well. There were also many local community residents who stopped by to learn more about native plants, several were recent transplants from different states who are still learning about our Florida landscape palette.

Anyone who has not toured this lovely native plant garden should certainly stop by. It is on the north side of the visitor's center at the St. Augustine Parking Garage. There are many lovely specimens in the garden with QR code signage to get FNPS data about the plant.



| Mark your Calendar!

- 18 April - Field Trip to Wetland Preserve: 8:45 am. 299 State Road 100, Palatka
RSVP - limited to 15 attendees
- No meeting in April
- **22 April - Earth Day**
- 16 May - Meeting - SJC Public Library, Southeast Branch. 10:30-12:00 am;
Guest Speaker: Ephraim Badea, St. Johns Botanical Garden Outreach



Membership

We have grown to 24 members! That is a 50% increase from last month. Invite your native plant friends and family to join! fnps.org/join

Business Members

- The Elegant Garden, LLC
- Native Plant Consulting
- Southern Horticulture Landscape and Garden Center

Support local
FNPS
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Members



* Scan and join us!

Stay in Touch

- * beluthahatchee.fnpschapters.org
- facebook.com/groups/125838412763801 and
<https://www.facebook.com/beluthahatchee.st.johns.fnps>
- beluthahatchee@fnps.org

| FNPS CORE VALUES SPOTLIGHT - LEARNING

APRIL FIELD TRIP

Stewardship & Sustainability - Promoting environmental integrity through ethical land management and sustainable practices.

Ben and Louann Williams purchased 3,800 acres of timberland in 2009 with the express intent of converting the land to sustainable land management practices. Since that time, their dedication and hard work has resulted in being recognized as the Florida Land

Steward Landowner of the Year (FWC) in 2019. Beluthahatchee Chapter is excited to provide this opportunity to explore the different ecosystems being conserved here. When timber is harvested sustainably, native plants, habitats and animals have an opportunity to thrive. Review the flyer sent out for this event for more information and be sure to RSVP to reserve your spot. Limited to 15 people.



Come explore this gem with Beluthahatchee!

| Native Plants Support Wildlife - Feature Article - by Laura Swartz

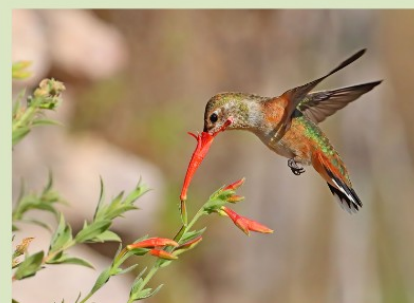
Color all Year, Native Plants for Happy Hummingbirds!

North Florida's native hummingbirds and seasonal migrants—including the ruby-throated hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*), rufous hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*), and black-chinned hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)—depend on a continuous supply of nectar as they breed, overwinter, and refuel during migration in USDA Zone 9. Native plants such as firebush (*Hamelia patens*), coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), coral bean (*Erythrina herbacea*), tropical sage (*Salvia coccinea*), and buckeye (*Aesculus* spp.) have evolved alongside these birds and bloom at different times of the year, collectively ensuring that nectar is available in every season. Their tubular, brightly colored flowers are perfectly shaped for hummingbird bills and tongues, allowing efficient feeding while discouraging insects that compete for nectar.

Native firebush and tropical sage are especially important during summer and fall, producing abundant nectar when hummingbirds have the highest energy demands. Coral honeysuckle provides critical nectar in late winter and spring, often reblooming in fall to support migrating birds.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird



Rufous Hummingbird

Coral bean flowers in early spring, offering one of the first major nectar sources as hummingbirds return from wintering grounds or begin nesting.

Native buckeye species, including red buckeye and painted buckeye, bloom in late winter to early spring, a time when few other nectar plants are flowering. This makes buckeye especially valuable for early migrants and resident hummingbirds. When these plants are grown together, their staggered bloom cycles create a dependable, year-round food supply that supports hummingbirds throughout their entire annual cycle while adding stunning color and low-maintenance landscape.

Wet-Site Native Nectar Plants for Hummingbirds

In addition to upland shrubs and vines, several Florida native wildflowers thrive in wet soil and seasonal drainage areas, expanding hummingbird habitat into places where few flowering plants succeed. Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and scarlet hibiscus (*Hibiscus coccineus*) are especially well suited to wet ditches, rain gardens, pond edges, swales, and low-lying areas with consistently moist soil.

Cardinal flower blooms from late spring through summer, producing tall spikes of vivid red flowers rich in nectar, while scarlet hibiscus blooms throughout summer with large, showy red flowers that are highly visible to hummingbirds. Planting these species in wet ditches or naturally damp soils transforms underutilized areas into productive nectar corridors, further strengthening year-round food availability.

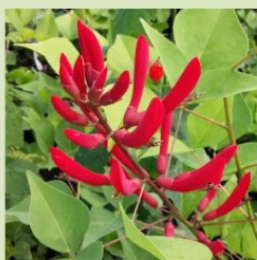
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Late Winter



Native Buckeyes

Early Spring



Coral Bean

Summer to Fall



Firebush

Wet Sites



Cardinal Flower