



Tillandsia

Newsletter of the Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society
For Miami-Dade County and the Florida Keys
Mission: To champion Florida's native plants and their habitats.
JANUARY 2026



Chapter calendar

See <https://dade.fnpschapters.org/events/> for activities of the Dade Chapter (and all FNPS)

- Jan. 16: DCFNPS Native Plant Restoration Team volunteer event
- Jan. 24: Field trip to Everglades National Park
- Jan. 27: Meeting at Pinecrest Gardens and online
- Feb. 6: Deadline for submitting FNPS Conservation Grant applications to the Dade Chapter
- Feb 24: Meeting at Pinecrest Gardens and online
- Feb. 21 or 28 (TBA): Chapter workday at ENP
- Feb. (TBA): Field trip.
- Mar. 21: Native Plant Day

In this issue:

- January meeting / Restoration Team Event / Field trip
- 🌿 🌸 Native Plant Day – *What you need to know and do now* 🌿 🌸
- Message from the Chapter President
- News from the Dade Chapter and our friends
- Remembering Jim Gross
- Plant of the Month: “Frostweed” – by Raul Moas
- “Man-In-The-Ground, *Ipomoea microdactyla*” - by Roger L. Hammer



DADE CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, January 27, 2026, 7:30 – 9:00 PM

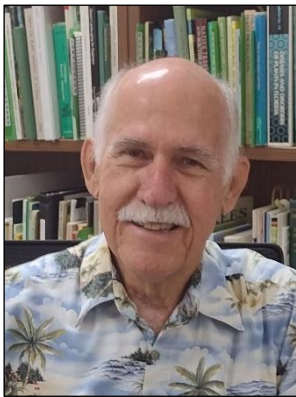
Pinecrest Gardens, 11000 SW 57 Ave. (Red Road), Miami

Free - All are invited

Come early or stay late to enjoy refreshments, socialize and browse the merchandise and raffle tables. Plants for sale might also be available. The raffle follows the program. The program is also [live-streamed](#) and recorded on YouTube. Check out our [online store](#) in advance for plants, shirts, mugs and tote bags, and pick up pre-orders at the meeting.

“The Sawmills of South Dade” – Jeff Blakley, Independent Historian

Before the arrival of Henry Flagler’s Florida East Coast Railway in Miami in 1896, floral and faunal ecosystems flourished in South Florida. By 1920, that had changed dramatically. A perusal of *A History of Florida’s Forests*, by Baynard Kendrick and Barry Walsh tells the tragic story and results of the Western attitude toward the forests in Florida. This talk is focused on the sawmills of South Dade. They were far more numerous than the Drake Lumber Co., the best-known and one of the biggest exploiters of the rich timber resources in the area, of which there is nothing left. A number of early photographs that depict intact forests of *Pinus densa*, commonly known as Dade County Pine, will be shown.



Jeff was born in Dade County and had lived here his entire life. He has always been interested in history and, in retirement, has indulged in his passion. He writes for his website, Historic South Dade (hsdade.com), and explores themes relating to the early development of South Dade. That is a vast subject which has not received much attention from historians.

- **Refreshments:** You are invited to bring light finger foods and to help set up and clean up afterwards.

Questions? Contact Karina, 305-490-1677 or kmgxoxo@me.com.

- **Raffle contributions:** Thank you for your native plants or plant-related items!

PLEASE LABEL EACH PLANT with at least the common name written on paper, tape or stake (more info is encouraged).

- **Online viewing:** www.youtube.com/channel/UCmassuC5-OsAX2KsRYQ6X5A. You will see only the computer-based portions of the meeting, with the presentation starting about 8:00, after announcements and plant raffle discussion. Chat will be enabled.

We regret that circumstances sometimes arise that prevent online viewing and thus recording.

- **Watch past presentations:** Use the **YouTube** link above or at DadeFNPS.org (at bottom of home page), **Click Videos** or **Live** for all

available recordings.

• **Upcoming February 24, 2026:** “The Ruins of Orchid Jungle” - Eric M. King, Interpretive Programs Manager for Miami EcoAdventures (Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces)

• **Questions:** DadeFNPS@gmail.com

DCFNPS Native Plant Restoration Team Event

Nixon Smiley Pineland Preserve

Friday, January 16, 2026, 9AM-12PM

The chapter has a new committee to assist in local native plant restoration and maintenance projects, and some members have already signed up. **If you would like to join the team or learn more about it**, please contact Scott and Carmen at info@carmenferreiro.com or dadefnps@gmail.com. The entire membership will also be notified of most activities, but you'll be the first to know!

DCFNPS Committee: Native Plant Restoration Team - Chair: Scott Sutherland / Co-Chair: Carmen Ferreiro

Miami-Dade Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) workday with Tiffany Melvin of EEL.

Address: 13200 SW 124 Street, Miami, FL

- Arrive at any time from 9 AM to noon and work as long or little as you like. Any help is greatly appreciated!
 - This project entails removal of invasives in a recently restored area of the property planted with native pine rockland grasses and other open prairie natives.
 - Open to all members and guests.
 - Bring/wear comfortable clothes, comfortable closed footwear, sun protection, water and snacks.
 - Please bring your own gardening or work gloves if you have some. We will try and have some spares available if needed.
 - Tools will be provided.
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FIELD TRIP: Everglades National Park

Mahogany Hammock, a Cypress Dome, and Pineland Trail

Saturday, January 24, 2026. 8:30AM – 1:00PM

Leader: Steve Woodmansee. Steve is the current President and Field Trip Coordinator for DCFNPS. He is a botanist and owns Pro Native Consulting, which specializes in plant research, conservation and native plant horticulture.

Meeting place: ENP Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center, then we will caravan/carpool to Mahogany Hammock Trail (20 additional miles). Start the day with a full tank of gas!

Directions: <https://www.nps.gov/ever/planyourvisit/coedirections.htm>

Difficulty: Easy to moderate, generally along board walk and trails, **we will also visit other nearby areas, which could be wet.**

Notes: Restrooms available at the Coe Visitor Center (bushes elsewhere). Cell reception is variable farther inside the park.

Cost: Park admission **\$35 for a week's pass (no cash; includes passengers in your car)** – or go ahead and buy your own annual or senior pass! However, many Dade members have entrance passes, and there is an opportunity to carpool for free or by splitting the cost.

Description:

It's been almost five years since we've visited these sites. Winter is a great time to visit Everglades National Park, and the dry season is here in earnest. Steve will lead us to a couple of old favorites. At Mahogany Hammock we will walk along the half-mile long boardwalk. This hardwood hammock, surrounded by marsh, is one of the largest in the park, and possesses the northernmost native Mahoganies on the mainland. Expect many hammock tree species to be in bloom, along with winter wildflowers (yes, that exists). Next, we will travel back to a cypress dome at the intersection of Pa-hay-okee Road and Main Park Road (13 miles from Coe Visitor Center). (The overlook is expected to still be closed for renovation.) We will go off trail and explore a nearby cypress dome which has most of our native species of *Tillandsia* (airplant). Then we will take 0.4 mile walk along the Pineland Trail through pine rockland habitat (7 miles from Coe Visitor Center).

Bring/wear: Sturdy, closed shoes that can get wet, water, bug spray (just in case), sun protection. Be prepared to get wet at Pa-hay-Okee (or you can opt out if it is wet). A walking stick may be helpful to some for extra stability. Binoculars are handy for viewing wildlife. Bring lunch if you'd like to picnic afterward.

For more information about the Mahogany Hammock Trail and Pineland Trail, visit:

<https://www.nps.gov/ever/planyourvisit/mahogany-hammock-trail.htm>

<https://www.nps.gov/ever/planyourvisit/pineland-trail.htm>

Dade Chapter's iNaturalist Project: Add your **DCFNPS field trip nature photos** to iNaturalist for inclusion in our project to help us showcase the amazing biodiversity we find! Upload your photos via the iNaturalist website (www.inaturalist.org) or app. Then you can add them to "Florida Native Plant Society- Dade Chapter Field Trips". See how [here](#).

  **28th ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT DAY**  
Saturday, March 21, 2026, 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

This year, we'll be back in the northern part of Miami-Dade County, in a wonderful location within Amelia Earhart park, at the Bill Graham Farm Village. The park is conveniently located near the Palmetto Expressway and NW 119 Street.

Native Plant Day is our one big annual event and the board cannot make it happen without help from our members and friends, so please read on!

There will be many exhibitors (organizations / agencies / businesses) with educational display tables, native plant and merchandise vendors, speaker series, landscape professionals, raffles, live music, children's activities, artists, bird walks, food trucks, opportunities for networking / socializing, and more.

• **Volunteers needed** – Besides attending the event, please consider volunteering (recruit friends and family, too). Just email Daniela Champney at d_champney@yahoo.com and she will happily sign you up.

Help is especially needed early Saturday morning with setting up tents, tables, and assisting vendors / exhibitors.

During the event, we need volunteers to help participants carrying their plant purchases to their cars (with carts), running the plant holding area, and assisting at the various DCFNPS tables (information, membership, raffle, plant sale, merchandise, children's activities).

Also, please tell us if you know of any youth groups (age 16+) interested in volunteering.

• **Plant donations for DCFNPS sale / raffle in three easy steps:**

First, pot up volunteers/prepare plants in 4" to 3-gallon pots. **Please start prepping your plants now so they will be well-established and looking healthy in two months.** Small species like wildflowers and shrubs are especially desirable. We'll also have a freebie table for tiny seedlings / lawn weeds.

Second, to streamline this process, please **provide us with a list** (as early as possible) of plant names, approximate quantity and pot size **for what you expect to donate**. This allows us to prepare nice plant information signage for all the species well in advance. **Email Daniela Champney** at d_champney@yahoo.com.

Third, if possible, **we'd like for all plants to be dropped off no later than one week BEFORE the event**, especially if you donate more than ten plants (there will be several drop off locations, we'll personally coordinate with you). Plants will be well taken care of, and selected for either sale, raffle or giveaway.

New option this year: You can bring your unfinished plants to the monthly meeting at Pinecrest Gardens (January 27 or February 24) and Raul Moas will grow them out for NPD.

If needed, you can bring plants directly to the event on March 21, but we kindly ask you to help us **keep this to a minimum**. Many thanks!

• **Donate other items** - anything related to native plants, nature, or gardening (and which is in good shape). Items will be selected for either sale or raffle.

• **Save seeds of SE Florida native species.** We'll make seed packets for giveaway. No messy fruits / berries please. Please tell us promptly which species you'll have and we'll coordinate. Email Daniela Champney at d_champney@yahoo.com.

• **Spread the word** to friends, family, colleagues, neighbors - send out emails, post on your social media and encourage them to attend. Details will be on our website at <https://dade.fnpschapters.org/events/nativeplantday/> and on social media. Or share **Linktree** (<https://linktr.ee/dcfnp>) to find everything in one place, including social media. More details will be posted closer to the event.

Please note: If you email Daniela Champney regarding any of the above, she might forward your message to one of the other members involved in organizing NPD. Therefore, you might receive a response to your email from someone else (so keep a careful eye on your inbox).

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

Greetings fellow Dade FNPS members,

Isn't January a nice time of year for us? November's Give Miami Day raised \$6,355.81 for our chapter, thanks to those who supported us and the Miami Foundation. This will help greatly in supporting Native Plant Day. We also plan on furthering our mission to champion native plants and their habitats by expanding our outreach program with some essential materials/handouts along with equipment such as tables, display items, and give-away items. As usual we will also contribute to funding FNPS's conservation grants for another year, maintain administrative costs of our monthly meetings, and business expenses.

Similarly, **FNPS Conservation Grant (up to \$5,000.00) applications are due to our Chapter Board of Directors on February 6th, 2026.** This grant needs Chapter review, feedback, and approval before it can go to the State Board of Directors by March 6th, 2026. Application details can be found here: <https://www.fnps.org/grants#gsc.tab=0>

Other than a reminder to get outside this month, that's it, and as you can probably tell, AI had nothing to do with the writing of this message.

It is an honor to serve.
Steve Woodmansee, DCFNPS President



DADE CHAPTER and FNPS NEWS

Welcome new Dade Chapter members! Camilo Garcia, William Glenn Capps, Nachshon David Carmi, Ilene Prusher, Deborah Troner, Michael Troner, George Harvey, Mary Catherine Harvey, Nancy Fellman-Hoyle, Marco Perez-Alvarez, Stacey Lawrence Kaufman, Emily Beltran*, Daychel Garcia*, Andrea Gavidia*, Courtney Mitchell*, Matthew Rizo*, Andrew Mann, Lucita M Rosado, Lucas Folse. (* = Student)

Thank you to all who renewed recently. We greatly appreciate your continued support, interest and participation.

Chapter Volunteer Workday at Everglades National Park's Coe Visitor Center. The next bi-monthly workday will be on Saturday, **February 21 or 28 (TBA)**, 9 AM-noon. Volunteers already on our list will be notified by email.

If you are a potential new volunteer: Please contact Patty (pharespl@gmail.com) for details, questions and to be added to our volunteer list. Non-members and students are also welcome and encouraged.

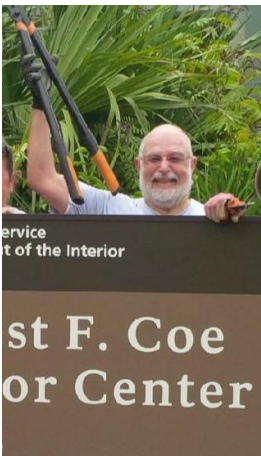
We weed, prune, clean up, answer questions from visitors, and enjoy our fellow volunteers. Knowledge of native plants is not a prerequisite. The work is not difficult but is greatly appreciated by ENP! Afterwards you can enter the park for free.

Dade Chapter Plant Store at <https://store.dade.fnpschapters.org/> is constantly expanding and replenishing out-of-stock species. Check the site often for new species from more habitats. Pick up plants at the nursery in Pinecrest or at a meeting, or arrange delivery. *You can also return the square pots from past purchases.*

New shopping opportunity at chapter meetings: We will have a small selection of plants available for purchase at most upcoming meetings.

REMEMBERING JIM GROSS

You could have known Jim from any number of avenues ... the National Hurricane Center, University of Miami (where he received his master's and PhD degrees), Sierra Club, Osher Lifelong Learning (OLLI) at UM, YES Institute, bike riding, attending the theater. And, of course, the Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society, where he had been a member since 1987.



Jim passed away unexpectedly in early January at his home. In case you didn't know him personally, he was a fixture at meetings, sat near the front with the same friends, often engaged in the discussions. On field trips he wore shorts when long pants were strongly advised, brought a cane instead of a walking pole, and usually came with his car full of other members who appreciated the ride and his congeniality.

Jim was a regular volunteer with the Dade Chapter's landscaping project at the Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center in Everglades National Park. He was probably among the volunteers on the inaugural planting day in 2001. He didn't have the patience to pull weeds but dragged out heavy fallen Royal Palm fronds. Most importantly, he brought Knaus sticky buns once a year, getting up early to wait in line for an hour!

The chapter visited his verdant yard several times, a jungle of towering trees between a canal and a shady street in South Miami, with a lush array of understory plants (natives and nonnative aroids, ferns and such).

From Chris Landsea, a colleague at the NHC and a member of DCFNPS: "Jim finished his meteorology career at the National Hurricane Center. While there he was initially a Hurricane Specialist, issuing the hurricane forecasts that the public, media and emergency management require to prepare for these devastating storms. But during his last few years at NHC, Jim switched over to the applied research group. His goal was to automate the forecasting process, essentially putting the hurricane forecasters out of a job. A couple decades later, we are still pursuing Jim's vision (now using AI) to provide the best, most objective predictions possible."

Jim loved being with people, learning, and sharing knowledge. He was cheerful and generous. In a discussion, he sometimes dug in and would not budge one bit on his opinions, but friendships still remained. We will miss him and all he offered us.

[Photo: Jim "cutting up" at a workday]

OTHER NEWS and ACTIVITIES

Dade Native Plant Workshop. See <https://nativeplantworkshop.ning.com/>. **Jan. 20, 5 PM** at Miami-Dade College Kendall Campus. **Topic:** TBA, please check the website. Please bring in at least 3 plants (whole or cutting), which needn't necessarily cover the topic. It is best to bring plants with flowers and/or fruits, especially for those which you do not know. Old hands and new learners are encouraged to come – and it's free!

Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program Volunteer days. Register online [here](#). For questions: 305-372-6687 or eel@miamidade.gov. Read more about EEL and the volunteer program [here](#).



- Monday, January 19, 3-6 PM: Florida City Pineland (Urban Forest Habitat Restoration)
- Saturday, January 31, 9 AM-noon: Matheson Hammock Preserve (Wetland Restoration and Tour)

PLANT OF THE MONTH

From our online store

Frostweed, White Crownbeard (*Verbesina virginica*)

by Raul Moas

Appearance/Growth habit: Fast-growing biannual or short-lived non-woody perennial, to 6 feet, with erect habit, much taller than broad.

Lifespan: Persistent; individual stems 1-3 years, but new stems arise from short rhizomes.

Flowers: Blooming in summer and fall with many large flat clusters of attractive white flowers.

Behavior: Hardy and needing little care apart from pruning post-flowering, if desired. Will die back after flowering, and re-sprout in the spring. Can spread by short rhizomes. Grows more compact and flowers best in full sun; will get leggy in deep shade. Will exude thin waxy sheets of ice from the stems during the first frost further north, hence the name.

Natural range: Widespread in the southeast, less common in Miami-Dade, where it is recorded from hammock edges.

Ecology: Flowers attract butterflies, skippers, moths, and other pollinators. The hollow stems can be used by native bees for nesting.

Preferred substrate: Wide range of soil types, prefers medium moisture.

Drought-tolerance: Fair.

Shade tolerance: Does best with full sun at least a few hours a day; will get leggy and flower poorly in shade.

Planting and Initial care: Initial slow-release fertilizer will help establish the plant.

Recruitment: Seeds if soil is clear, and slowly by short rhizomes.

Pros: Excellent for hammock edges or as tall backdrop for native gardens. Tends to stay erect. Can be trimmed down after flowering and resprouts from fibrous rootcrown.



MAN-IN-THE-GROUND, *Ipomoea microdactyla*

By Roger L. Hammer

One of the most stunning morning-glory vines in all of Florida is a species called man-in-the-ground or, in Spanish, *bejuco colorado*, which translates to “red vine.” The English name relates to the large, underground root tuber that somewhat resembles that of the related sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*), while the Spanish name alludes to the strikingly pretty flowers.



Ipomoea is Greek for “wormlike” and relates to the twining growth habit of morning glories, and the species name, *microdactyla*, is Latin for “small fingers,” alluding to the fingerlike projections on the tuberous root of this state-listed endangered species. Its range includes Florida, the Bahamas, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

In Florida it can be found in pine rockland habitat on the Miami rock ridge in southern Miami-Dade County, including Long Pine Key in Everglades National Park, where it twines up understory shrubs. The reddish-pink flowers are eye-catching and are visited by hummingbirds in the fall and early winter months within its Florida range, and various butterflies visit the flowers as well. Despite its profound beauty, it is only sparingly cultivated, but there are a few native-plant nurseries in Miami-Dade County that grow it. Give it full sun and either plant it on a fence, a vine pergola, an arbor, or allow it to twine around on shrubs as it does in nature. The good news is that man-in-the-ground is not nearly as aggressive as many other species are in cultivation. There are 14 native morning glory species in Florida as well as 15 non-native, naturalized species that have escaped cultivation.

Give man-in-the-ground a prominent place in your garden and it will give you much joy when it blooms anytime from spring through summer and fall. It prefers limestone or sandy, well-drained soils and, since it is drought tolerant, supplemental watering is not necessary.



Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [X](#).
Check out the [DadeFNPS](#) website and our [Online Plant & Merchandise Store](#).
[Linktree/dcfnps](#) for DCFNPS has all our links (plus some for FNPS) in one place.



**THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS AND NON-PROFIT MEMBERS
and other businesses who support FNPS and DCFNPS at a higher level.**

Their interest in native plants and extra financial support are much appreciated and very helpful to the mission of FNPS and the chapter. They may also promote FNPS and may contribute in other ways through event participation, presentations, articles, field trips, donations and more. Thank you from all of us!

- Casaplanta Garden Center www.casaplantamiami.com/
- Institute for Regional Conservation www.regionalconservation.org/
- Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Gardens www.keywest.garden/
- LandscapeDE www.landscapede.com/
- NaMa Native Landscapes www.namaprojects.com/ and Flora of Miami Garden Center floraofmiami.com/
- Native Tree Nursery www.nativetreenursery.com/
- Susan Casey (Casey’s Corner Nursery) www.plantrealflorida.org/professionals/detail/16
- 3o5Gardens www.3o5gardens.com/

Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society - For Miami-Dade and the Florida Keys
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Board members and team members:

President: Steve Woodmansee **Vice-President:** Karina Gomez **Secretary:** Carmen Ferreiro **Treasurer:** Susan Walcutt
At Large: Joey Basna, Riki Bonnema, Daniela Champney, Harley Guerra, Charlie Reverte, Jeanne Rothchild **Past President:** Brian Diaz
FNPS Council of Chapters representative and volunteer hours reporting: Riki Bonnema

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***Tillandsia* Newsletter**

Please contact the editor if you might like to join the *Tillandsia* staff or contribute an article or news item.

Articles, announcements and news items are invited for *Tillandsia* from Dade and Keys members. Advertising rates from \$12 per month.

Florida Native Plant Society: FNPS communication: info@fnps.org, 321-271-6702, <https://www.fnps.org>
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The Florida Native Plant Society’s mission is to champion Florida’s native plants and their habitats through conservation, preservation, restoration, education, and advocacy.