



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.
MARCH 2026



Chapter calendar

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

Mar. 21: 28th ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT DAY!

Mar. 24: Meeting at Pinecrest Gardens and online

Mar. 28: Field trip – Milton E. Thompson Park

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Native Plant Day – *What you need to know and do now*

March meeting / Field trip / Workday opportunities

News from the Dade Chapter and our friends

Plant of the Month: “Elliott’s Aster” – by Raul Moas

28th ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT DAY

Saturday, March 21, 2026, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE

28TH ANNUAL
NATIVE PLANT DAY
SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2026
9:30 A.M. - 4 P.M.

Photo by Carmen Ferreira

AMELIA EARHART PARK, BILL GRAHAM FARM VILLAGE
401 E. 65th St., Hialeah, FL 33013
FREE Admission!
Join us for a variety of activities including:
Displays by Local Organizations • Lecture Series • Plant Sales & Raffles
Children's Activities & Food Trucks • Artwork, Books & Other Merchandise
Early Birding Walk • Music by Local Folk Artist Grant Livingston

Full schedule will be available at: www.dadefnps.org

Details are on our website at <https://dade.fnpschapters.org/events/nativeplantday/> (see the program schedule) and on social media. Or share Linktree (<https://linktr.ee/dcfnps>) to find everything in one place, including social media.

Please join us and help make this another successful Native Plant Day!

Some highlights this year, all happening in a wonderful location conveniently located off the Palmetto and Gratigny Expressway:

- Several new organizations, artists and vendors will participate
- Grant Livingston is back with wonderful music.

- Great speakers giving informative talks: Hedges on the Edges, Gardening for Birds, Landscaping 101, and more.
- Early birding walk at 8:00 AM
- Lots of native plants and other items for sale, raffle and even some free!
- Activities for all ages
- Food trucks: Mexican food and Artisanal gelato
- Books and chapter merchandise for sale

How you can help:

- **Spread the word** to friends, family, colleagues, neighbors - send out emails, post on your social media and invite them to attend.
- **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 gladly sign you up.
- **If you still have items for raffle or sale to offer** (plants and anything related to native plants, nature, or gardening which is in good shape), thank you! **Please contact Daniela to see if we can still handle additional items.**



DADE CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 7:30 – 9:00 PM
Pinecrest Gardens, 11000 SW 57 Ave. (Red Road), Miami
Free and open to the public

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.

“Protect Our Wetlands: Local Action, Statewide Impact” **- Melissa Fernandez, Executive Director of FNPS**

South Florida’s wetlands, from the Everglades to Biscayne Bay, shape the health of our environment and our communities. In this talk, Melissa will share highlights from the Everglades Coalition Conference and insights from her graduate research on seagrasses in Biscayne Bay to explore how policy and on-the-ground practices affect plant biodiversity and water quality. She will connect these changes to ecosystem resilience and human health, and discuss how local engagement helps drive meaningful impact across the state.



Dr. Fernandez is a scientist, lifelong educator, and environmentalist who serves as the Executive Director of the Florida Native Plant Society. Florida-born and raised in Miami-Dade County, her work is rooted in a deep personal connection to the landscapes and communities of this state. Trained in environmental chemistry and pathology, Melissa brings a big-picture perspective to conservation—connecting ecological health with community well-being. She leads statewide efforts to protect Florida’s native plants and biodiversity by strengthening community-led conservation, partnerships, and on-the-ground work across Florida.

• **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 April 28, 2026:** “Hedges on the Edges: Natives That Get the Job Done” - Jeff Wasielewski, UF/IFAS Miami-Dade County

• **Questions:** DadeFNPS@gmail.com

FIELD TRIP

Milton E. Thompson Park, Miami-Dade County

Saturday, March 28, 2026. 9:00AM – noon

Leader: Steve Woodmansee. Steve is the President and Field Trip Coordinator for DCFNPS.

Meeting place: 16665 NW 177 Avenue, Miami, FL 33178

Directions: Click the park link above (not the address). It is on Krome Avenue (SW 177 Avenue, FL-997), 12 miles north of SW 8th Street (Tamiami Trail)

Difficulty: Moderate, along dry trails and roadsides, with some brief ventures into the marsh.

Notes: Motorbike races will be congruent, so be prepared for some noise.

Cost: Free

Description: Not long ago, this site was predominately Melaleuca forest. The county's Natural Areas Management team has done a marvelous job restoring it back to marsh. It should be dry, and there are some paths into the marsh. In addition to sawgrass, muhly grass, and other graminoids, expect to see *Calopogon* (grasspink orchids), fleabanes, thistle, water willow, bladderworts, yellowtop, and other spring wildflowers. We have never visited this site before.

Bring/wear: Closed toed shoes, water, sun protection, gloves. A walking stick may be helpful to some for extra stability. Binoculars are handy for viewing wildlife. Lunch offsite nearby is an option.

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](#).

CHAPTER VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS

• DCFNPS Native Plant Restoration and Conservation Team

This new chapter committee assists in local native plant restoration and maintenance projects at some interesting sites (such as the past events described below). **If you would like to join the team or learn more about it**, please contact Scott Sutherland (scottsuth@aol.com) or Carmen Ferreiro (info@carmenferreiro.com), co-chairs of the team. If known far enough in advance, the entire chapter membership will be notified of activities, but team members will be the first to be notified when/if there is short notice.

So far, these workdays have been on weekdays, but if you cannot come then, you can still be on the list in case an opportunity arises on a date when you can attend.



From Scott:

On the chilly Friday morning of January 16th our first workday at Nixon Smiley Pineland Preserve took place. After an orientation and walk through with EEL preserve manager Tiffany Melvin, weeding of Natal grass, Spanish needle, Mexican clover, false buttonweed, Burma reed, yellow alder and rattlebox was undertaken on the recently restored 10-acre pineland. The preserve supports endangered species like the gopher tortoise, tiger beetles and bonneted bats. A big thank you to chapter members Lourdes Rodriguez and Daniel Rojo for participating in our inaugural event.

On Monday, January 19, the team also participated in an event with James Duncan, Chief Urban Forest and Tree Division for DERM, Miami-Dade County at the South Miami Little House, one of the last remaining stands of slash pines in South Miami. Team members removed *Dioscorea* (air potato) from the site which is currently being restored to its native state. A second event was scheduled for February 14th.

• **Everglades National Park's Coe Visitor Center.** Workdays are scheduled every other month on a Saturday morning. **The next one will be in April (TBA).** Our chapter has served on this project for 25 years! Volunteers already on our list are 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 and FNPS NEWS

• **Welcome new Dade Chapter members!** Angela Burbano, Elissa Eguiluz, Jackie Fisher, Nicolas Mejia, Hannah Purcell, Michelle Sune, Leanne Tellam, Teresa Unigarro. We're so glad to have you on board.

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

• **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.* We will have a small selection of plants available for purchase at most upcoming meetings.

OTHER NEWS and ACTIVITIES

• **Dade Native Plant Workshop.** See <https://nativeplantworkshop.ning.com/>. **March 17, 5 PM** at Miami-Dade College Kendall Campus. **Topic:** Epiphytes, also known as air plants. Please bring in at least 3 plants (whole or cuttings), which don't have to match 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](https://www.miamidadegov.com/eel). For questions: 305-372-6687 or eel@miamidadegov.com. Read more about EEL and the volunteer program [here](https://www.miamidadegov.com/eel).



***Friday, April 10, 9 AM-noon:** County Line Scrub Preserve – Urban Forest Habitat Restoration

PLANT OF THE MONTH from the Dade Chapter Online Plant Store Description and photo by Raul Moas

Elliott's Aster, *Symphotrichum elliotti*



Appearance: One of our most robust and prettiest asters, this long-lived perennial grows to 4-6+ feet, flowering in late autumn, and covered with 3/4"-wide lavender to blue flowers from one or more upright stems. Grows rapidly in moist soil, and expands by rhizomes, gradually forming colonies.

Natural Habitat: Fields and open woods with moist to wet soil. Found in much of Florida.

Planting and Initial Care: Water daily for 2 weeks to establish; will grow best in moist soil, and flower abundantly with full sun. Can trim branches to ground after flowering. Will regrow from root crown and nearby rhizomes, as will germinate from seed if the ground is moist and clear. Initial slow-release fertilizer optional but will help establish the plant.

Pros: Tall and densely flowering with attractive blooms, makes a handsome backdrop in a wildflower garden. Great for single or group planting. Attracts native pollinators. Ideal for moist sites, next to water features, or native gardens that get supplemental water in the winter.

Cons: Flowers only in Autumn (like many Asters). Needs some moisture; may decline if soil dries out. Taller than most wildflowers and may require support during heavy bloom to keep main stems upright.



Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [X](#).
Check out the [DadeFNPS](#) website and our [Online Plant & Merchandise Store](#).
[Linktree/dcfnp](#)s 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

The Invoka Group (website in progress)

3o5Gardens www.3o5gardens.com/

Dade Chapter Florida Native Plant Society - For Miami-Dade and the Florida Keys

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Mail: Dade Chapter FNPS, 6619 S. Dixie Hwy, #181, Miami FL 33143-7919

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.

February 2026: Field trip to Nixon Smiley Pineland and Hammock visit in Redland

Photos by Tiffany Melvin and Eddie Yi

