



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.
APRIL 2026



Chapter calendar

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

Apr. 18: Chapter workday - Everglades National Park Visitor Center

Apr. 25: Field trip - Jonathan Dickinson State Park

Apr. 28: Meeting at Pinecrest Gardens and online

May 3: Restoration Planting Day at Camp Mahachie (DCFNPS team)

In this issue:

April meeting / Field trip / Conservation & Restoration workday opportunities

Message from the Dade Chapter President

News from the Dade Chapter and our friends

“The Everglades Wilderness Waterway: 99 Miles of Botanical Wonderland” – by Roger L. Hammer



DADE CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, April 28, 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.

“Hedges on the Edges: Natives That Get the Job Done”

Jeff Wasielewski - Commercial Tropical Fruit Extension Agent for UF/IFAS Miami-Dade County



Jeff will cover a multitude of hedge species including natives that have been overlooked as screens. Native hedges offer something that most hedges do not and that is that they are wildlife attractants and typically grow more slowly, making them much easier to manage. He will also talk about how to care for each species including how to plant, prune, water, and fertilize.

As a Horticulturist, educator, dog lover, and proud dad, Jeff strives to educate tropical fruit growers on how to implement sound, sustainable, research-based horticultural practices. He is thankful to be an Extension agent and to be able to share his 30 years of horticultural experience through classes, workshops, publications, and blogs.

- **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 May 26, 2026:** Carl Lewis, Ph. D., Director, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden: “City in a Garden: Fairchild’s Vision for Miami”

- **Questions:** DadeFNPS@gmail.com

FIELD TRIP

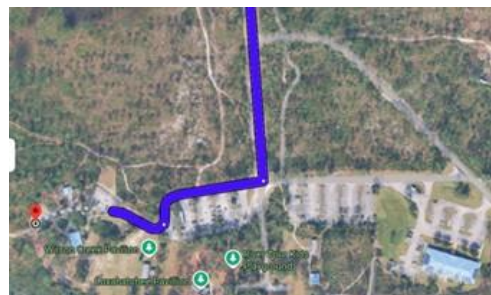
Kitching Creek Trail, [Jonathan Dickinson State Park](#), Martin County
Saturday, April 25, 2026. 9:00AM – noon

Leader: George Rogers, Ph.D. George is a retired Botany professor from Palm Beach College, has published several textbooks including subjects such as Botany and Landscape Plant Identification, and also authors the [Treasure Coast Natives](#) blog which you should subscribe to. He is a wealth of knowledge.

Meeting place: Park entrance is at 16450 S.E. Federal Highway, Hobe Sound FL 33455. We will meet in parking lot next to the [Kitching Creek Trail](#)

Directions: Google Maps (or other app) can give you detailed routes. The basics are: Head north from Miami on I-95 or the Turnpike, at Indiantown Road (706) turn east. At US-1, turn north (left) and continue to the park entrance on the left. Shortly after the park entrance, **bear right to take Park Road (SE Sand Rd.) to its end.** At the end (bottom of the photo), **turn right into the parking lot. It may take at least 2 hours to get to the park (depending on your address), and another 10+ minutes to get to the parking lot.** There are restrooms in this area.

If you are late, head for the Kitching Creek Trail. We won't have gotten far!



Difficulty: Easy to Moderate, along dry unpaved trails and roadsides.

Notes: Peak dry season.

Cost: \$6 per vehicle (2-8 people), \$4 one person

Description: Jonathan Dickinson State Park is one of Florida's jewels. We will be walking through pine dominated mesic flatwoods and wet flatwoods, along with some depression marsh and boggy areas. We also will be next to one of the creeks which feeds into the Loxahatchee River. Spring wildflowers should be plentiful, and this park is a great site for wildlife. Wildflowers we should see include: Chaffhead (*Carphephorus* spp.), rose pogonia (*Pogonia ophioglossoides*), shiny blueberry (*Vaccinium myrsinites*), sparkleberry (*Vaccinium staminium*), milkworts (*Polygala* spp.), and lots more. After lunch, we might go and explore the nearby Sandhill plant community and check out the turkey oaks and other cool flora. We haven't led a field trip here in 15 years.

Before heading home, check out the beautiful exhibits in the new [Environmental Education and Visitor Center](#) (opposite end of the parking area).

Bring/wear: Closed toed shoes, water, sun and insect protection. A walking stick may be helpful to some for extra stability. Binoculars are handy for viewing wildlife. Bringing lunch is recommended.

If you would like to try to carpool, please contact Patty (pharespl@gmail.com) by Monday, April 20. Please provide your email address, the general area (or address) where you live, whether you would be willing to drive, and if so, how many riders you could take. No guarantees, but we can try to put you in touch with others near you desiring riders or a ride and are willing to keep the same schedule. Note that transportation to and from the trip are not part of the official trip.

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

• **April 18, 2026: Everglades National Park Coe Visitor Center workday.** Help weed, prune and clean up the landscape we began installing in 2001. We also 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.

If you are a potential new volunteer: Please contact Patty (pharespl@gmail.com) for details, questions and to be added to our volunteer list to receive email notifications. Non-members and students are also welcome and encouraged. Workdays are scheduled every other month on a Saturday morning.

• DCFNPS Native Plant Conservation & Restoration Team

Assist in local native plant restoration and maintenance projects at some interesting sites you might not otherwise be able to access. **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. The entire chapter membership will be notified of activities known far enough in advance, but team members will be the first to be notified when/if there is short notice. So far, the workdays have been on weekdays, but you can sign up for notifications in case an opportunity arises on short notice on a date when you can attend.

Camp Mahachee restoration planting day, Sunday May 3, 2-5 PM. In 2022, the Girl Scouts began hammock restoration at their camp in West Matheson Hammock at 9950 Old Cutler Road. Over 3,000 trees have been planted, and three acres of hardwood hammock restored. Now, with the support of federal and local funding, these efforts are continuing. This spring, Girl Scouts and community partners will be restoring another 3 acres and planting at least 2,000 more trees! You are invited to join the Girl Scouts for a **Camp Mahachee Tree Planting Day. Please register [here](#).**

The Dade Chapter plans to have a group. **After you register at the link above**, please **also email Scott Sutherland**, co-chair of our Conservation and Restoration Team, at scottstuth@aol.com to let him know you'll be joining the group.

MESSAGE FROM THE DADE CHAPTER FNPS PRESIDENT

Greetings fellow Dade FNPS members,

Although anytime is a good time to get outside (except maybe during most hurricanes), the “nice” time of year is coming to a close, and we should take advantage and go and enjoy nature. Rain is on the horizon, however this time of year is normally very dry, making it a wonderful time to visit freshwater swamps and other normally wet areas.

As I write this, all of Florida is in a drought, and brush fires are likely in the near future. At last month's meeting at Pinecrest Gardens, I was surprised by how few attendees had water features in their yards. Water features are important refuges during droughts, and are excellent tools to increase wildlife in the landscape. If you haven't already done so, please consider adding a bird bath, a pond, or even dishes of water with gravel for the insects such as bees and wasps. Livestock water troughs (stock tanks) make excellent ponds for less than \$100, add some mosquito fish and native aquatic plants, and wildlife will become much more abundant in your yard. I landscape for insects, which are among the lynchpins for plant ecosystems. Unfortunately, insects (especially terrestrial insects) have become much reduced in the world these past few decades, and it is estimated that there will be an annual rate of insect biomass decline between 1% and 2.5%. One way I can tell that I am a successful gardener of insects is when I go out in my yard at night, the noise from crickets, katydids, and their kin is almost deafening. Despite this, last year was the first year I saw no native click beetles in my yard, which first appear in the evening during late April/early May. I plan on creating a talk emphasizing this, as native plants and water features go hand in hand with wildlife biodiversity.

April is National Native Plant Month (Florida Native Plant Month is October). **Earth Day this year takes place on April 22nd.** There should be lots of events where you can spread the word of how native plants are important!

Native Plant Day at Amelia Earhart Park last month was a success with over 450 people participating, a good number especially for a venue and part of the county new to us. Special thanks to the Native Plant Day Committee chair Daniela Champney, the Board of Directors, volunteers, NGOs, institutions, and vendors for making it a successful event. Dozens of young people volunteered at the event, and some even joined Dade FNPS as new members. The FNPS executive director and Miami native Melissa Fernandez-de Cespedes also attended and helped meet and greet attendees. Next year Native Plant Day will likely return to A.D. Barnes Park.

Your Board of Directors will be meeting this month to prepare a slate of nominees to be voted on at our annual members meeting on May 26, when my term as chapter president ends. I am not going anywhere, as I will remain on the BOD as past president and I am happy with what we have accomplished during my term. Your Board of Directors is filled with competent, conscientious people, and is well prepared to carry the baton forward.

AI had nothing to do with the writing of this message.

It is an honor to serve.

Steve Woodmansee, President of DCFNPS



DADE CHAPTER and FNPS NEWS

• Welcome new members!

Melissa Lau*, Pamela Shlachtman, Audrey Dominguez*, Blake Harrison, Isabel Piantini*, Alina Rodriguez, Yeimi Valdes, Lisa Johns (Florida Butterfly Botanicals), Virginia M. Walsh. (*Student membership). 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.

Special thanks to **Lisa Johns of Florida Butterfly Botanicals** for supporting at the Business level! You can find the nursery online at <https://floridabutterflybotanicals.com/> and in Homestead on weekends between 10am and 4pm. If you attended Native Plant Day, you may have already seen their nice array of native plants.

• 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.

• **Merchandise:** Don't forget to check out and order **chapter shirts, mugs, and tote bags with artwork by Kim Heise to pick up at meetings.**

OTHER NEWS and ACTIVITIES

• **Dade Native Plant Workshop.** See <https://nativeplantworkshop.ning.com/>. **April 21, 5 PM** at Miami-Dade College Kendall Campus. **Topic: Plants with whorled leaves!** See the website for more explanation. 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](#). For questions: 305-372-6687 or eel@miamidade.gov. Read more about EEL and the volunteer program [here](#).

These three fun events will each be a **City Nature Challenge BioBlitz**:



- * **Friday, April 24:** Richmond Pineland Preserve
- * **Saturday, April 25:** Rockdale Pineland Preserve
- * **Sunday, April 26:** Trinity Pineland Preserve

The last event of the season is:

- * **Saturday, May 2:** Eachus Pineland Preserve (Urban Forest Habitat Restoration)

• **Tropical Audubon Society Members Migration 2026.** **April 26, 4-6 PM in South Miami.** Details [here](#). Attend as a non-member for \$10, or [join TAS](#) and attend for free!

Celebrate local conservation heroes, take a bird walk, enjoy food and live music, and hear Cesar Becerra explore **“Everglades Guardians Past & Present.”** This noted South Florida historian will retrace the people and pivotal moments that shaped the 20th-century movement to protect the world's most unique and extraordinary wetlands ecosystem.

THE EVERGLADES WILDERNESS WATERWAY 99 Miles of Botanical Wonderland

By Roger L. Hammer

There is a watery wilderness trail that leads canoeists and kayakers from Chokoloskee Island at the north end, to Flamingo in Everglades National Park at the southern end, and it is called the 99-mile Everglades Wilderness Waterway. Along its entire length there are both land-based campsites as well as wood platforms called chickees with a roof and portable toilet facilities, and I have paddled this scenic waterway three times solo in my 16' 2" solo canoe, enjoying 10 days of blissful solitude each trip. Although it could be paddled in 7 days or less, I prefer to take my time to enjoy being out there in 1.5-million acres of breathtaking wilderness.

My preferred month has always been May because the tourists are gone, so I always had all the campsites to myself, plus the mosquitoes have yet to make their summer appearance or are at tolerable levels, and the weather is generally nice with no chance of a cold front sweeping down from the north.

Although most of the vegetation you will see along the waterway will be mangroves and buttonwood trees, there are some occasional botanical jewels to admire along the way. My favorite to see in flower is the wormvine orchid (*Vanilla barbellata*), a state-listed endangered species found in coastal forests of Miami-Dade, mainland Monroe, and the Monroe County Keys. It is a vining species that climbs trees and has large, showy flowers with an intoxicating perfume.

Other native orchids that grace the trees along the Everglades Wilderness Waterway are the butterfly orchid (*Encyclia tampensis*) and the dollar orchid (*Prosthechea boothiana*), and these are often joined by the cardinal airplant (*Tillandsia fasciculata*) with its showy, bright red bracts.

Another botanical gem I enjoy seeing along the waterway is a small, endangered tree called swampbush (*Pavonia paludicola*), with small, green, hibiscus-like flowers that hummingbirds fight over for the nectar and pollen. Its Florida range includes Collier, mainland Monroe, and Miami-Dade County. There is a very similar look-alike species called *Pavonia bahamensis*, endemic to the Bahamas, that can be found cultivated in South Florida, and both species can be found at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables. Where I see the native swampbush growing along the Everglades Wilderness Waterway is down the Rodgers River and Broad River.

I also enjoy paddling past the gorgeous flowers of the **mangrove rubbervine** (*Rhabdadenia biflora*) adorning the mangroves in the spring with its large, yellow-centered white blossoms that look like those of a morning-glory.



L to R: wormvine orchid (*Vanilla barbellata*), **swampbush** (*Pavonia paludicola*), **mangrove rubbervine** (*Rhabdadenia biflora*)

If you take the outside route down the Gulf coast, you will witness Cape Sable, the most beautiful beach in all of Florida, and there you will find endless stretches of **sea oats** (*Uniola paniculata*) and other dune vegetation, plus the most beautiful sunsets imaginable.

When you return, you will find yourself rejuvenated and with a deeper respect and understanding of the Everglades.

Permit information is available at <https://www.recreation.gov/permits/4675314>

***Roger Hammer** is an award-winning professional naturalist, author, botanist and photographer. He has authored numerous books and countless articles on Florida native plants featuring his outstanding photos (with many articles appearing in Tillandsia and Palmetto). His awards from several organizations include the first Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award from the Dade Chapter. Roger was the manager of Castellow Hammock Nature Center for Miami-Dade County Parks for 30 years. He is a longtime member of FNPS and lives in Homestead with his wife, Michelle. Find him online at <https://www.rogerlhammer.com/>.*



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/

Florida Butterfly Botanicals floridabutterflybotanicals.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

Chapter communication: DadeFNPS@gmail.com, www.DadeFNPS.org/

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

Newsletter editor: Patty Phares **Mail Chimp and Social Media:** Karina Gomez

Webmaster: Haniel Pulido Jr., dadefnpsweb@gmail.com

***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.

