



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.



MAY 2026

Chapter calendar

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

May 23: Field trip to Ned Glenn Nature Preserve

May 26: Monthly Meeting & Annual Members Meeting at Pinecrest Gardens and online

June 20: Field trip to National Key Deer Refuge, Big Pine Key (save the date)

June TBA: Chapter workday at Everglades National Park

In this issue:

May meeting and Annual Members Meeting / Field trip / Conservation & Restoration workday opportunities

News from the Dade Chapter and our friends

Plant of the Month: Purple Thistle, *Cirsium horridulum*

“Spring Cleaning in Your NPN Garden” (reprinted from the Native Plant Network newsletter, April 2025)



DADE CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, May 26, 2026, 7:30 – 9:00 PM

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

Free – all are invited

*A short **Annual Members Meeting** will be held before the program to elect certain Dade Chapter Board of Directors position and any other business brought forth. The slate of nominees is:*

*President: **Daniela Champney**, Vice President: **Karina Gomez***

*Directors at Large: **Riki Bonnema**, **Joey Basna**, **Dania Otero-Perez***, **Sebastian Fernandez*** (1 year term)*

(denotes new to the board; all 2-year terms except the one noted)*

Bios for the new nominees will be provided in a later email. Members present in person at the meeting will be eligible to vote.

*Also, winners of the chapter's **2026 Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award** and the new **Silver Tillandsia Award** will be announced.*

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.

Program

“City in a Garden: Fairchild’s Vision for Miami”

Carl Lewis, Ph. D., Director, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

• **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 June 23, 2026:** “Designing Landscapes with Native Plants: An in-depth look into the landscape design process and the opportunities and challenges of using native plants” - Stephanie Dunn, Associate, Affiliate ASLA

• **Questions:** DadeFNPS@gmail.com

FIELD TRIP
Ned Glenn Nature Preserve (EEL site)
Saturday, May 23, 2026, 9AM – 11AM

This is a high-quality, high-diversity urban pine rockland toward the southern terminus of rocklands with Northern Biscayne soils (sandy pockets). Miami-Dade County conducted a prescribed burn about 6 months ago, so we hope to be greeted with a colorful diversity of native wildflowers such as *Liatris tenuifolia*, *Symphyotrichum concolor*, *Galactia floridana*, and many others. Some rare plants include *Argythamnia blodgettii* and *Euphorbia deltoidea*. This also a good site to see *Crossopetalum rhacoma* behaving like groundcover in the frequently-burned pineland. We were last here during the Native Plant Field Day event in March 2021.

Leader: Steve Woodmansee, president and field trip coordinator for DCFNPS.

Address: [SW 87 Ave and SW 188 St., Cutler Bay, FL 33157](#) . From SW 184 Street (east of US1), travel south on SW 87th Ave., past SW 188 Street. Park inside or near the entrance gate on the west side of the avenue.

Difficulty: Moderate. There are no real paths, but the site is small (11 acres). Short distances, areas of jagged rock, small solution holes. Poisonwood is present.

Bring/wear: Long pants and sleeves, sturdy shoes with thick soles for jagged rock, water, bug spray (just in case), sun protection. A walking stick may be helpful to some for extra stability. Binoculars can be handy for viewing wildlife.

Notes: No restrooms. *Pets are not allowed on our field trips.*

Species list:

<https://regionalconservation.org/ircs/database/plants/ByConsArea.asp?SiteID=706&SN=Ned%20Glenn%20Nature%20Preserve>

Tip! Find the locations and read the histories of this and other Miami-Dade County environmentally endangered lands [here](#).

“Ned Glenn Nature Preserve is owned by Miami-Dade County School Board and the preserve is adjacent to Whispering Pines Elementary. Although the School Board holds title, the management of these environmentally sensitive lands have been the responsibility of the EEL Program since 1996.”

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

• **June, 2026 (the date will be 6/6 or 6/13 – stay tuned!): 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. Most workdays have been on weekdays, but sign up for notifications in case an opportunity arises on short notice on a date when you can attend.



DADE CHAPTER and FNPS NEWS

• **Welcome new members:** Brian and Tanfa Rigg, Christine Davies. 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 varied 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/>. **Tuesday, May 19, 5 PM** at Miami-Dade College Kendall Campus. **Topic:** Orobanchaceae, which includes false foxgloves (*Agalinis*), bluehearts (*Buchnera*), and blacksenna (*Seymeria*). Please bring in at least 3 plants (whole or cuttings) for discussion, 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!

PLANT OF THE MONTH from the Dade Chapter [Online Plant Store](#) by Raul Moas

Purple Thistle, *Cirsium horridulum*

Cirsium horridulum, known as purple or yellow thistle, is an annual or biennial member of the Aster family ranging through much of eastern North America, Central America and parts of the Caribbean. In South Florida, it is often found along roadsides and disturbed areas, but also inhabits pine rocklands and flatwoods.



When flowering, it has compact heads of purple, lavender, red, yellow or white florets, 1.5" to 2" wide, arising from the top or side branches. There is a large basal rosette. The leaves and stems are spiny. Its height ranges from 2-3' to twice that in flower. A large tap root allows it to survive fire or mowing.

Blooming is in spring and summer, with the flowers providing nectar and pollen to native bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, and many other pollinators. The seeds are favored by finches, sparrows and other birds. It is a larval host of the Little Metalmark and Painted Lady butterflies, as well as many moths.

Thistles tolerate dry conditions well once established. Sunny locations are best for blooming. Exercise care when handling to avoid unpleasant jabs from the spines!

Photo from FNPS website, copyright Mark Hutchinson

The article below is reprinted from the April 2025 newsletter of the [Native Plant Network](#) (NPN) at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden – with permission. Their advice on pruning may surprise you, but the results will amaze you!

If you aren't already a NPN member but have (or want to have) a native plant garden at your home, school or business in Miami-Dade or Monroe County Keys, check it out at the link above!

When you join (for free), you will receive a free starter kit of plants. All members enjoy a monthly newsletter full of useful information, opportunities to buy more plants from the NPN nursery, and invitations to field trips, garden visits and other events. It's a great complement to your FNPS membership.

Spring cleaning in your NPN garden

The start of South Florida's rainy season is almost upon us, so get ready to prune and trim! Going after leggy shrubs with a sharp pair of loppers in the spring can help keep your home garden looking gorgeous.

Pine rockland species respond well to pruning. After all, these species evolved in a landscape with frequent fires. Almost every pine rockland plant will respond well to a heavy pruning once a year. The tricks are to (1) not do it until your plants are well-established (i.e. for shrubs, in the ground for at least two years), and (2), do it right before or at the start of the rainy season. A notable exception is the Dade County pine. These do not tolerate pruning.

When you prune a pine rockland plant, it will look awful at first, but this is temporary! Depending on the time of year, it can take 3-6 weeks for a plant to really leaf out again. May or June is the best time to do it, because plants are not yet growing vigorously, but they will be soon, with the onset of summer rains. If you do it a little early (i.e. now), there's no harm, but the regrowth will just be slower.

Some hammock edge plants (firebush and wild coffee come to mind) respond well to a hard pruning but in general, hammock plants are small trees that are not adapted to fire and therefore will look weird, sad, or both if you give them a hard pruning.

Below, we take you through some examples of how different pine rockland plants respond to pruning, and we end with a list of species that respond especially well to a good haircut.



Firebush (*Hamelia patens*). If left alone, firebush grows into a small tree. But with a hard spring pruning, it will keep a compact ball shape. This is good for keeping the butterflies at eye-level! Photo: Mary Collins



Crenulate lead plant (*Amorpha crenulata*). What a show-stopper! This crenulate lead plant in Fairchild's pine rockland display garden was flowering profusely less than two months after being cut all the way to the ground. Doing so encourages flowering in this species. Photo: Brian Harding.



Pineland croton (*Croton linearis*). Believe it or not, that is a pineland croton on the right side of this planting (alongside Florida gamagrass and lignum vitae). Established pineland croton plants that are cut back each spring will have a compact, round shape. Photo: Mary Collins.



Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*). Do you wish your beautyberry was this compact? You just need to prune it! Cut it all the way to the ground, or a little higher if you want it to have some height, like the plant pictured here, which is in Fairchild's pine rockland display plot. Photo: Jennifer Possley.

Cut these woody shrubs back almost to the ground to achieve a dense, ball-like shape.

- Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)
- Crenulate lead plant (*Amorpha herbacea* var. *crenulata*)
- * **Firebush** (*Hamelia patens*)
- Florida prairie clover (*Dalea floridana*)
- * **Little strongbark** (*Boussieria cassinifolia*)
- * **Locustberry** (*Byrsonima lucida*)

* **Mexican alvaradoa** (*Alvaradoa amorphoides*)

Pineland croton (*Croton linearis*)

Pineland sage (*Lantana involucrata*)

* **Pineland privet** (*Forestiera segregata*)

Shrub thoroughwort (*Koanophyllon villosum*)

What does the asterisk* mean? These species can also be grown as a small tree. If you prefer a small tree, then skip the hard pruning back to the ground, and allow the plant to grow tall. It will still respond well to shaping.

These non-woody species also respond well to a heavy late-spring cut-back:

Brickell bush (*Brickellia mosieri*)

Low rattlebox (*Crotalaria pumila*)

Scale-leaf aster (*Symphotrichum adnatum*)-- and most other asters

Snow squarestem (*Melanthera parviflora*)

Tropical puff (*Neptunia pubescens*)

Note that most grasses (*Andropogon* spp., *Muhlenbergia capillaris*, *Tripsacum floridanum*) also respond well to annual cutting-back. It's fine to do it in the spring! However, some people opt to do it in the fall, after they have gone to seed.



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

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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.*

April 25, 2026, field trip to Kitching Creek Trail, [Jonathan Dickinson State Park](#)
Photos by Jennifer Stine

