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

Mission:
To conserve, preserve, and restore Florida's native plants and their habitats through science-based education, research, advocacy, horticulture, landscaping, and engaged participation by our members and communities.

OCTOBER 2026

Chapter calendar

See https://dade.fnpschapters.org/events/ for activities of the Dade Chapter (and all FNPS)
Oct. 25 (Sun.): Field trip to Fern Forest
Oct. 27 (Tues.): Monthly meeting at Pinecrest Gardens
Nov. 24 (Tues): Monthly meeting at Pinecrest Gardens
Nov. date TBA: Field trip to Sunny Palms Preserve
And more to be added!

In this issue:

October meeting and field trip
Dade Chapter news
Volunteer Opportunities
Other News and Activities
Article: "Fall colors: Celebrating Florida Native Plant Month"
Thank you to our Business and Organizational members

DADE CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, October 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 will also be recorded (barring any difficulties) and available on our YouTube channel. Check out our online store and this newsletter in advance for plants, shirts, mugs, tote bags, butterfly posters and other merchandise, and pick up pre-orders at the meeting.

"With Fronds Like These…: Naturalized Ferns of South Florida"
Jimmy Lange, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

Jimmy will provide an overview of the ferns of South Florida, with an emphasis on fern appreciation and identification, highlighting potential and realized issues with non-native, naturalized species. Don't miss a preview of many of the native ferns on the field trip to Fern Forest on October 25!



Jimmy Lange is a Research Botanist with the Conservation Program at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden and a Research Associate with the Institute for Regional Conservation (IRC). He has fifteen years of experience working with plant conservation and ecology, mostly in South Florida. His work focuses on in situ and ex situ conservation of rare plants in South Florida and the Caribbean with a focus on threat mitigation. His primary areas of expertise include plant taxonomy and identification, rare plant ecology, invasive species biology, and restoration ecology. Jimmy also serves as the Chair of Florida Invasive Species Council Plant List Committee and Chair of the EDRR (Early Detection and Rapid Response) Plant List Committee for the Everglades CISMA. He particularly enjoys the challenge of working with difficult groups of plants such as graminoids, cacti, and ferns.

• **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).

• **Program recordings:** Available at https://www.youtube.com/@dadefnps/streams (barring any difficulties) but no longer live steamed. The link is also on the DCFNPS home page.
• **November 24 meeting:** AP Statistics students at Jose Marti MAST 6-12 Academy will present on their research under teacher Andrew Kearns, in collaboration with the conservation team at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
• **Questions:** DadeFNPS@gmail.com

FIELD TRIP
Fern Forest Nature Center, Broward County
Sunday, October 25, 2026, 9:15AM – 11:45AM

Leader: Jimmy Lange, Research Botanist with the Conservation Program at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
This 247-acre wilderness acquired by Broward County in 1979 was once part of the Snapper Creek Watershed. Its ten plant communities include wet hardwood hammock with rare ferns (over 30 species) and open prairie, as well as eroded limestone formations. We last visited here in February 2019, with Jimmy as the leader. This will be just a taste of what Jimmy will offer in his program on the following Tuesday. For more information about the park see https://www.broward.org/parks/parklocations?park=fern-forest-nature-center.

Address and directions: 201 Lyons Rd. South, Coconut Creek 33063 (954-357-5198), west of Pompano Beach. Go north from Miami on the Turnpike or I-95 to Atlantic Blvd.; go west. As you near Lyons Road, stay in the right lane and after passing through the intersection you will veer right and circle back to go south on Lyons Road. The entrance is immediately right.
Meet: At the entrance to the Nature Center
Difficulty: Easy - boardwalks or paths and smooth ground.
Cost: No cost
Notes: Restrooms on site. *Pets are not allowed on this trip.*
Bring/wear: Drinks, bug spray, lunch if you want to picnic after the walk. A hand lens might be handy to look at hairs on fronds. Binoculars can be handy for viewing wildlife – or maybe fern up close from the boardwalk.
Species list:
https://regionalconservation.org/ircs/database/plants/ByConsArea.asp?SiteID=328&SN=Fern%20Forest%20Nature%20Center

November 2026 (date TBA): Sunny Palms Preserve in south Miami-Dade County led by Riki Bonnema

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DADE CHAPTER NEWS

Check for new videos on our YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/@dadefnps/streams. Monthly meeting programs and special Zoom programs will be recorded (if the speaker agrees and the technology works). Look under Videos and Live for all available.
● **The newest video is "The Reef in Our Backyard: Getting to Know Florida's Coral Reef",** a Zoom presentation on October 6, 2026 by Sofia Bond of Miami Waterkeepers.

Welcome new members − we're so glad to have you on board! Gloria Joannou, Claudia Rule, Jayden Grant (student), David Abadin

Thank you to all who renewed recently. We greatly appreciate your continued support, interest and participation. **To renew your membership or update contact information,** go to your membership portal at https://fnps.app.neoncrm.com/login. If the portal isn't working for you or to pay by check or phone, please email FNPS at info@FNPS.org. The chapter cannot provide membership services.

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.

Chapter branded merchandise, **Butterfly posters**, **Books:** Shop for **chapter shirts, mugs, and tote bags** with artwork by Kim Heise and also **butterfly posters** to pick up (or buy) at meetings**.** Check out the separate **online bookstore** from Bookshop.org with a selection curated just for us.

DCFNPS Native Plant Conservation & Restoration Team. Assist in local native plant restoration and maintenance projects at Miami-Dade County preserves and privately-owned sites, some interesting sites with restricted access. For more information, please contact Scott Sutherland (scottsuth@aol.com) or Carmen Ferreiro (info@carmenferreiro.com). Sign up for notifications in case an opportunity arises on short notice. You'll find this is one of the most rewarding activities worth sweating for!

See our **Linktree** (https://linktr.ee/dcfnps) for links to shopping and engaging with the chapter, FNPS and beyond!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

October 10: EEL Explore & Restore at A.D. Barnes Park / World Migratory Bird Day celebration and habitat restoration
October 17: Pine rockland restoration event at Camp Choee with Citizens For A Better South Florida
October 24: Pine rockland restoration event at Coral Pines Park in Pinecrest with the IRC
November 14: EEL Explore & Restore at Bill Sadowski Park/ Pine Rockland Conservation Week event

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Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program's EXPLORE and RESTORE Events
Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resource Management's EEL Program **acquires, preserves, restores, and maintains environmentally sensitive land** for this and future generations. It manages **over 29,000 acres** of wetlands, hardwood hammocks, scrubs, and imperiled pine rockland habitats and needs volunteers to help! **Explore and Restore events** are engaging, educational, and always focused on protecting our unique and vulnerable South Florida ecosystems. All are welcome and **student community service hours** are offered at every event. If you have any questions about the events or are interested in developing a partnership with the EEL Program, email EEL at eel@miamidade.gov. They truly value the opportunity to collaborate with schools, community organizations, and corporate groups. Learn more at the EEL Story Map and register for volunteer events at the link here.

Saturday, October 10, 2026 – World Migratory Bird Day
EEL celebrates birds and their habitats with the James A. Kushlan Bird Conservation Program at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden and Tropical Audubon Society
9:00 AM-12:00 PM / 8 AM bird walk
A.D. Barnes Park and Preserve, 13401 SW 72nd Ave., Miami, FL 33155
Bird walks, speakers, habitat restoration
Please wear comfortable walking shoes, hat, sunscreen and bring water. Binoculars are recommended.
Free event – Registration with EEL is encouraged here.
The Dade Chapter FNPS will be tabling – stop by!

Also coming up with EEL Explore & Restore:
Saturday, November 14, 2026 – Pine Rockland Conservation Week event at Bill Sadowski Park in Palmetto Bay.

Saturday, October 17, 2026, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Help restore pine rockland at Camp Choee. Miami-Dade County DERM and Citizens For A Better South Florida will host a community volunteer day with planting, mulching, sharing stories of Camp Choee (as a former Girl Scout camp) and enjoying nature walks. **Address:** 11347 SW 160th Street. Registration is required here.



Saturday, October 24, 2026, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM. The Institute for Regional Conservation (IRC) will hold a Pine Rockland Initiative volunteer event at **Coral Pine Park in Pinecrest** to help restore the native pine rockland within the park. This event will focus on removing invasive species and educating the public about the importance of this ecosystem. Sign up here!
Get hands-on experience in restoring a pine rockland with Sebastian Fernandez, DCFNPS board member and IRC Field Technician.

The Pine Rockland Initiative *"was founded in 2005 with an emphasis on providing support to private owners of pine rocklands, especially for invasive plant control, with primary funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Over the years it has grown and evolved to become a multi-faceted program with many funders and collaborators …The goal of the program is to restore and manage pine rockland fragments on public and private lands throughout the range of pine rocklands, including providing the thought leadership needed to move beyond 'business as usual' and save this unique part of our natural heritage. One way to do this is through "expanding the footprint" of pine rocklands, including the restoration of fire-excluded pine rockland patches, as well as the restoration of pine rocklands that have been destroyed."*

OTHER NEWS and ACTIVITIES

Dade Native Plant Workshop. See https://nativeplantworkshop.ning.com/. **Tuesday, Oct. 20, 5 p.m.** at Miami-Dade College Kendall Campus. Old hands and new learners are encouraged to come – and it's free! **Topic: Fruit classification (*rescheduled from September*)** led by Dr. Theresa Chormanski, Landscape & Horticulture Technology Director at MDC

Everglades National Park - Free entrance days (for US citizens and residents)
• **October 27:** Theodore Roosevelt's Birthday
• **November 11:** Veterans Day



Pine Rockland Working Group Conference: Science-backed management in a changing landscape. November 8-12, 2026. This five-day conference includes a full day of virtual sessions, a full day of in-person programming at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, an evening social and poster session, and three days of field trips. **Look over the schedule and register now for the sessions and activities that work for you!** See www.pinerocklandworkinggroup.org for conference information and registration. This conference is **free** and open to all who are interested in pine rocklands.
[Logo: Bartram's scrub-hairstreak life cycle watercolor by Kim Heise]

FALL COLORS
Celebrating Florida Native Plant Month in Miami-Dade

In honor of Florida Native Plant Month, we asked several Dade Chapter members to contribute a short note about a native plant they are fond of that is flowering (or perhaps fruiting) in October. As it turns out, that was not easy for the Keys members to do, as flowering is more past. So we will pick up on Keys seasonal favorites later.



Fragrant Flowers in the Water

Beginning in October each year, the intensely-fragrant and aptly-named native orchid called ***Spiranthes odorata,* or fragrant ladies'-tresses**, makes its appearance in freshwater wetlands throughout much of mainland Florida, occurring as far south as Everglades National Park. You'll know it's nearby when the floral perfume reaches your nose. Look for it in the Taylor Slough region and around the Pa-Hay-Okee overlook in Everglades National Park as well as the watery prairies in the eastern Big Cypress National Preserve.

- Roger L. Hammer, naturalist, botanist, photographer, author and speaker. He has written several guides to wildflowers, often contributes to our chapter newsletter and FNPS's *Palmetto* magazine, and is always a go-to resource for information!

A Velvety Treat for Birds? Or Just Ants?

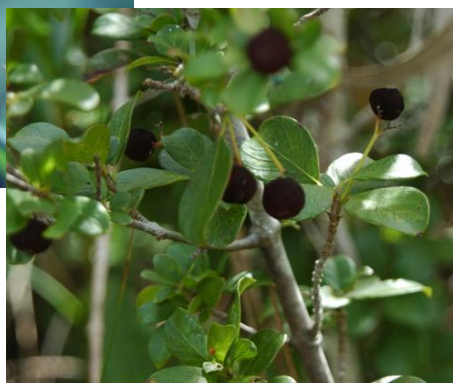
***Guettarda scabra*, rough velvetseed**, blooms during the summer months in rocklands of southern Florida. Its lovely fragrant flowers are pollinated primarily by hawkmoths, producing green fruits that in the fall ripen to red with a velvety textured surface (hence the common name). The fleshy fruit covers a hard "seed" that can contain up to four seedlings. ***Guettarda elliptica*, smooth velvetseed**, has smaller greenish flowers that produce fruits very similar to those of *G. scabra*, but these ripen from green to red to dark purple. It seems that birds should harvest these fruits and disperse the seeds, but I have never seen any birds taking these fruits. Many fruits of *G. scabra* have their fleshy covering eaten off by carpenter ants, leaving the bare "seed" exposed and still on the plant.
- **Dr. Suzanne Koptur**, Professor Emerita, International Center for Tropical Botany. Florida International University and National Tropical Botanic Garden. Over the years she has taught us much about pollinator insects and "ants and plants".

Left to Right: *G. scabra* flowers and fruits; *G. elliptica* flowers and fruits.









The Majestic Muhlygrass

Muhlygrass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*) should either be in bloom or coming into bloom in September or October. This wetland grass grows in clumps and when it's in flower it provides a spectacular burst of fall color. It can be seen in patches along the 18-mile stretch of US 1 on the way to the Keys, visible even at 60 mph because its distinctive purple blooms contrast beautifully with the various greens of the surrounding wetlands.
- Gwen Burzycki, retired wetland scientist who still likes to play in the water

Left: In a landscape (photo by Gwen).
Right: On the Concho Billy Trail in Big Cypress National Preserve, October 2014 (photo by Richard Brownscombe)







Like Snow in October

This Thinleaf October flower (*Polygonella polygama* var. *brachystachya*) was seen at Crystal Lake Sand Pine Scrub Natural Area in Broward County, but it has also been found at County Line Scrub and the Deering Estate at Cutler in Miami-Dade. It is endemic to peninsular Florida, and its IRC South Florida Status is Imperiled.
The Florida Wildflower Foundation states: "For most of the year, it is a rather understated plant. But in late summer and fall - particularly October - it is covered in a profusion of snowy white blooms. These small but prolific flowers are especially attractive to native bees."
- Patty Phares, fan of flowers on field trips

THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS

and other businesses who support FNPS and DCFNPS at a higher level.

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

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/
Miami Native Plants
NaMa Native Landscapes www.namaprojects.com/ and **Flora of Miami Garden Cen**ter 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)

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

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President: Daniela Champney **Vice-President:** Karina Gomez **Secretary:** Carmen Ferreiro **Treasurer:** Susan Walcutt
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Past President: Steve Woodmansee
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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