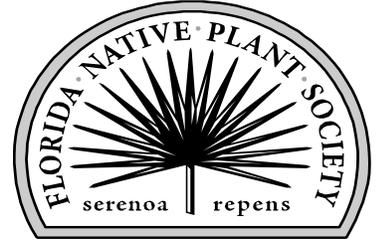




# The Lily Pad

The Pine Lily Chapter of the Florida  
Native Plant Society



FNPS Mission: The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida

## September 2009

### Species spotlight:

### Blue-eyed-grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*)

Narrowleaf blue-eyed grass, Bermuda blue-eyed grass, Blue-eyed grass. **Iridaceae** (Iris Family).

The numerous, narrow, light-green leaves of this perennial form dense, tufted clumps which steadily grow with new foliage during the season. The flattened, leaf-like flowering stems may be up to 18 in. long and bear blue or deep blue-violet star-shaped flowers with yellow centers. Generally, only 1 flower at a time is in bloom.



### Carolina Satyr: Not all butterflies are colorful

Carolina Satyr is often dismissed as a brown moth as it flies low and slow through wooded areas. The smallest and most common of our woodland satyrs, it lands and sits with closed wings making it hard to find in the shadows. Its markings are a series of yellow-rimmed eye spots along the outer edge of the wings along with several dark brown lines on a brown background. When the wings are open it appears even more moth-like with a plain brown dorsal surface.



Rarely collecting nectar at flowers, it prefers sap and decaying vegetation. Eggs are laid on various grasses. It ranges throughout the southeast. Look for this satyr the next time you are walking in shaded woodlands.

Source: [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org)

# Hydrilla: Danger in the water

*Hydrilla verticillata* is a submersed, rooted aquatic plant that forms dense mats in a wide variety of freshwater habitats (canals, springs, streams, ponds, lakes, rivers, and reservoirs). Plants grow from the substrate to the water's surface in both shallow and deep water (0-15 m in depth). A major aquatic weed problem throughout the southeastern United States, Hydrilla is now almost cosmopolitan in its distribution. Antarctica and South America are the only continents from which it has not been recorded. It is very common on the Indian subcontinent, many of the Middle East countries, Southeast Asia, and northern and eastern Australia.

It was introduced to North America in 1951 or 1952 by an aquarium plant dealer who discarded six bundles of hydrilla into a canal near his business in Tampa, Florida. Since then, it has spread explosively because it can reproduce from very small fragments. Apparently, recreational boaters and fishermen quickly spread hydrilla to new locations when fragments of hydrilla are transported on boats, motors, and trailers. Once an aquatic site is infested, eradication of hydrilla is very difficult. It produces specialized asexual, reproductive 'buds' on stems (referred to as turions) and on the underground stolons (tubers). These tubers and turions assist hydrilla in reinfesting a site after a drought, or after application of herbicides. The annual control cost to manage 7,600 ha of hydrilla in Florida exceeds \$5 million.

Hydrilla is a perennial, submerged, rooted, vascular plant. Roots are long, slender, and simple and are whitish or light brown in appearance. They are usually buried in hydrosol, but also form adventitiously at nodes. Stems are long, usually branching, growing from the hydrosol and frequently forming dense, intertwined mats at the surface of the water. Hydrilla frequently forms large monocultures that displace native vegetation, reducing biodiversity and altering native ecosystems. These alterations also affect the primary and secondary consumers in affected communities. Massive amounts of hydrilla can alter dissolved oxygen, pH, and other water chemistry parameters. The portion of the water column occupied by aquatic plants also influences the presence and size distribution of fish. In dense hydrilla mats, feeding by certain predatory fish is hampered, and small insectivores predominate, reducing community diversity.



Growing Hydrilla with crowded internodes as tips.



Hydrilla infestation. The rapid underwater growth 'pushes' a portion of the mat above

Stacia Hedrick presented about Hydrilla and its impacts on native plants at our last meeting (August 20<sup>th</sup>).

# Know the Natives: Native Wild Petunia (*Ruellia caroliniensis*)

Wild Petunia is a native wildflower found throughout Florida in native woodlands. They spread and are known as strong growers under adverse conditions. This 12 inch-tall plant has light green leaves that are medium in texture. Blue and pale violet flowers appear on this perennial in the spring, summer and fall. These trumpet-shaped flowers on short hairy stems from leaf axils

are showy, and their nectar is appealing to various species of butterflies. Host plant for Malachite and common buckeye butterflies.

An unbranched, 2-3 ft. perennial with crowded, opposite, oval leaves and flowers in unstalked, axillary clusters of 2-4. Usually only one or two of the light purple flowers are open on any given day. The flowers have a slender corolla tube and five, petal-like lobes. Seeds are borne on hooked projections. Well behaved and drought-tolerant, this native petunia makes an excellent replacement for the invasive pest Mexican petunia or impatiens.

Source: [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org)



## Helpful References: **Landscape Design**

Florida Yards & Neighborhoods: <http://hort.ufl.edu/fyn/>

Landscaping for Florida's Wildlife, J. Schaefer & G. Tanner, Univ. Press of FL, 1998.

Natural Florida Landscaping, Dan Walton & Laurel Schiller. Pineapple Press, 2007.

Source: [www.afnn.org](http://www.afnn.org)

# WEED ALERT!

## *Mexican Petunia (Ruellia brittoniana or Ruellia tweediana)*

Mexican Petunia is, among others, a good example of plant that is being sold over the internet and in garden centers as a flowering plant or “handy perennial edging plant for flower beds and colorful groundcovers”. The problem is that Mexican petunia is highly invasive and listed as category 1 invasive species by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council because of its invasion and distribution within native plant communities. This pest plant disrupts native wetland systems and is not used by butterflies, contrary to published misinformation.

Mexican Petunia is stalk forming perennial that stands up to 3 ft. in height. Leaves are dark green; oppositely arranged and lance-shaped, roughly 6-12 in. long and ½ - ¾ in. wide. Veins are prominent on the underside of the leaf. Leaf margins can be smooth or wavy. Foliage appears a metallic blue/purple under full sun. Flowers are trumpet shaped (1 ½ - 2 inches in diameter), solitary or borne in clusters at the tips of the stems. There are a variety of colors to choose from (white, pink, and many shades of blue) and dwarf varieties are unfortunately, also available.

Mexican Petunia is able to tolerate a wide range of environmental conditions including variations in light, temperature and moisture. Other characteristics that make Mexican petunia a successful invasive are its rapid growth rate, affinity for disturbed locations, lack of germination requirements and prolific seed production.

**Don't plant it.**



Check your exotic plants against the invasive plant lists published by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council ([www.fleppc.org](http://www.fleppc.org)). FLEPPC lists exotic weeds that damage Florida's environment, economy, and public health by disrupting ecosystems and displacing native species. Scientists now consider invasive species to be one of the top threats to the natural environment. Immediately remove and destroy any Category 1 (the worst) pest plants in your yard and make plans to replace any Category 2 (potentially threatening) plants. FLEPPC and your extension office can advise you on the safest, most effective removal methods.



## Events around town

### The Florida Wildflower Foundation

Annual Meeting

Saturday, September 12 (11 am - 3 pm)

The Florida Wildflower Foundation is planning an afternoon of education and fun at its annual meeting at the Orlando's Leu Gardens. Besides informative talks by three native wildflower experts, there will be book signings and sales, free native wildflower and plant information, door prizes, and a raffle featuring plants, books, gardening items and more! The meeting is free for Foundation members and \$5 for non-members. For more info on the annual meeting and memberships go to <http://floridawildflowerfoundation.org>

**Orlando's Leu Gardens - 1920 Forest Drive, Orlando (407-246-2620)**

For directions go to <http://www.leugardens.org/locate.html>

### Tibet-Butler Preserve

Scratching the surface

Saturday, September 19 (10 am)

Dig into the formation of rocks and minerals as we study the Earth's crust. Become a geologist for a day by practicing identification of rocks and minerals, learn the different types of rocks and make your own collecting box! Limited to 40 participants (ages 7 to adult). Call the preserve to reserve your space **(407)876-6696**

### Ecosystem Hike II: Fallen Log Crossing and Osprey Overlook

Saturday, September 26 (10 am)

Discover the plants and animals that inhabit bayhead swamp, pine flatwoods, and fresh water marsh ecosystems. Limited to 25 participants.

Call the preserve to reserve your space **(407)876-6696**

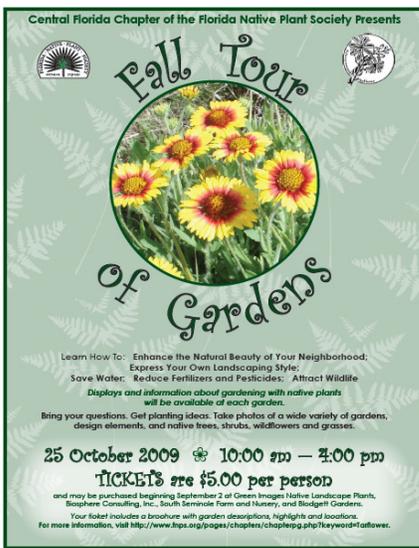
**All programs are free to the public**

**8777 County Road 535 - Orlando, FL**

### Fall Tour of Gardens

Sunday, October 15 (10 am - 4 pm)

Hosted by the Central Florida Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, The **Fall Tour of Gardens**, offers an excellent opportunity to learn how to enhance the natural beauty of your landscape and neighborhood with native plants. Florida's natives can help you save water, energy, and money.



They require less fertilizers and pesticides and benefit local wildlife. Over a dozen gardens are available to tour. **Come be inspired.**

Tickets are \$5, which includes a brochure with garden descriptions, highlights and locations. **Tickets will be available, beginning September 2** at Green Images Native Landscape Plants (E. Orlando), Biosphere Consulting, Inc. (W. Orlando), South Seminole Farm and Nursery (Casselberry), and Blodgett Gardens (College Park). **Hurry, tickets are limited.**

**For more info visit**

<http://www.fnps.org/pages/chapters/chapterpg.php?keyword=fallflower>.

## Very special events going on throughout September in FL:

Bald eagles return to nest sites and begin courtship. Florida scrub-jay fledglings lose their brown juvenile plumage. Hawks begin migrating. Loggerhead turtles leave Florida shores to begin their migrations. First signs of leaves changing color in the northern parts of the state. Many *Liatris* (gayfeather), dicerandras, and palafoxia are blooming.



## Did you know?

You can support native Florida wildflower research, education and planting with a click of your mouse. Just purchase your new State Wildflower license tag or visit your local tag office. To buy a license tag, visit [http://floridawildflowerfoundation.org/buy\\_it\\_here.html](http://floridawildflowerfoundation.org/buy_it_here.html)

## Important Bat facts:

Loss of bats increases demand for chemical pesticides, can jeopardize whole ecosystems of other animal and plant species and can harm human economies. More than half of American bat species are in severe decline or are already listed as endangered. Losses are occurring at alarming rates worldwide.

Source: [batcon.org](http://batcon.org)



Nancy Bisset will be presenting about "Restoring upland ecosystems: turning pasture into flatwoods, sandhills, and scrub by seeding and planting". Since 1994 wiregrass, other grasses, sedges, wildflowers, and other herbs and shrubs have been successfully seeded on site up to 200 acres. We will discuss various techniques, variabilities encountered and results.

We have a diverse constituency and want to make sure we are doing our best at meeting your needs. If you have ideas for program topics, speakers or field trips, please feel free to send an email to [mjohnson@ecotonelanddesign.com](mailto:mjohnson@ecotonelanddesign.com)

Don't forget our Next Meeting is on Sep 17th at 6:30 p.m. at First United Methodist Church in Kissimmee, located at the corner of Dakin Ave. and Church St.

We are always looking for people to help make our chapter everything it can be. If you ever feel you would like to lend a helping hand please just contact any of our board members.

*The Board of Directors, Committee Chairmen, and Contacts*

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**Florida Native Plant Society Membership Application**

Membership in the Floirda Native Plant Society enables you to receive their wonderful quarterly magazine *The Palmetto*. Joining the FNPS also entitles you to membership privileges in the Pine Lily Chapter of the FNPS and a subscription to their monthly newsletter *The Lily Pad*.

New Member                       Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business name or organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Check pertinent category**

- Individual \$25
- Full time student \$15
- Library subscription \$15
- Family or household \$30
- Contributing \$40
- Supporting \$250
- Not-for-profit organization \$50
- Business or corporate \$100
- Donor \$250

*Make check payable to: FNPS  
 Detach and mail to:  
**Pine Lily Chapter of  
 Florida Native Plant Society  
 P.O. Box 278  
 Melbourne, FL 32902-0278***