



Conradina NEWS

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January 2026

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Conradina Chapter Meeting Monday, January 12, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Meet us at the First Church of the Nazarene
2745 S Babcock Street, Melbourne FL 32901

Meet the Bees You've Never Noticed!

What if your garden is alive with native bees you have walked past for years without even realizing it? Florida has more than 300 native bee species, yet most people only recognize honey bees. This talk will introduce you to the incredible diversity right outside your door.

In eight years, Laura has turned her one-third acre of grass into a thriving "beecosystem," where she has documented more than 47 species of native bees, including several not commonly seen in home gardens. She also visits other people's gardens and nearby natural areas to document the species found there. In this talk, she will share images that show the diversity of native bees, along with stories from her field observations, so you will feel inspired to explore your own garden and find the native bees living there.



About the speaker:

Laura Zurro is a naturalist and macro photographer who specializes in documenting the behaviors, pollen-collecting habits, and nesting strategies of Florida's native bees. Her images and observations have appeared on the cover of *The Palmetto* and other publications, and in a variety of bee identification and naturalist books, educational displays, and scientific work. She founded the Florida Native Bees Facebook community and holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and Communication. More of her work can be found at [LauraZurro.com](#).

Story and photography by Laura Zurro [Read the story here.](#)

"We don't own the planet Earth, we belong to it. And we must share it with our wildlife." – Steve Irwin

Next Chapter Meeting

January 12, 2026

www.Conradina.FNPSCChapter.org



Preserving, Conserving, and Restoring the Real Florida Since 1980.

Landscaping with Florida Natives Tour



The Landscaping with FL Natives Tour Needs Leadership Team Members – That's You!

We hope you enjoyed the tour in Nov. – it's Conradina's biggest outreach and education event of the year!

It literally takes a small army to make this happen and we need your help! Besides all the volunteers on the day of tour (huge thank you!), there is a group of hard-working volunteers on our leadership team working to put this together from January to November in the following areas:

- Project leadership and coordination of subcommittees
- Homeowner communication
- Obtaining sponsors and communicating with them
- Publicity
- Creating the brochure
- Recruiting volunteers for the day of the event
- And many other tasks!

If you'd like to help us out and have skills in any of these areas, please contact Jane at janehiggins2016@gmail.com in the next month or if you have questions.

We'll be having our kick-off meeting soon!

The leadership team meets once a month in the evenings via zoom to share updates and vote on any decisions needed.

Carol's Corner: Beautyberry

Wow – what a beautiful plant! American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) is native to the southeastern United States. It has a wonderful look during all seasons of the year. It grows to about 4-8 ft tall by 3-6 ft wide so be sure to give it enough room when you are planting one.



In Autumn, the leaves have fallen off and it has developed purple fruit on each stem. This plant is a good attraction for birds such as Catbirds and Mockingbirds.

As Spring arrives, new leaves branch out in opposite ways along the stem. The leaves are so soft they feel like velvet! The light pink purple flowers form along the stems of the branches. It is really neat how development starts from the bottom and keep extending towards the top of each branch.

American beautyberry has been used as a folk remedy to prevent mosquito bites. Four chemicals including *Callicarpa* have been shown to act as insect repellent.

The use of callicarpinal has been patented by the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service as a mosquito repellent.

Happy New Year!



Plant Natives!

Carol Hebert

Upcoming Events

Date	Event
	General Meetings are held at Melbourne First Church of the Nazarene. 2745 S. Babcock Street, Melbourne
First Tuesday of every month at 12pm	MRC's Lagoon at Noon Seminars are held at the Ted Moorhead Lagoon House with limited seating OR via Zoom. Registration is required. https://lovetheirl.org/events/
Third Wed of every month at 5:00pm	Palm Bay's Planning Matters course. The series explores the laws, tools and strategies that guide how our community grows & functions. Limited registration available
January 1 thru 31 2026	New and improved Speak Up Brevard website open for citizens' efficiency and effectiveness suggestions.
Monday Jan 05, 2026 5:00 – 9:00 pm	SOIRL public workshop at Titusville city council chambers
January 9 10 16 17 23 24 and 30, 2026 8:30am to 5pm	Florida Master Naturalist Program, Freshwater Systems. Classroom time and local field trips
Monday, Jan 12, 2026	General Meeting Speaker Laura Zurro presentation "Meet the Bees You've Never Noticed"
Monday Jan 12, 2026 5:00 – 9:00 pm	SOIRL public workshop at Palm Bay city council chambers
Sunday Jan 18. 2026	Field trip to Turkey Creek Sanctuary. Arrive at 8:45 am for check in.
Tuesday, Jan 21 thru 25, 2026	27th Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival at Radisson Resort at the Port. Register for field trips and more at https://scbwa.net/
Monday, Feb 9, 2026	General Meeting speaker Laurilee Thompson at 6pm . Her topic is "Wandering Florida's Space Coast from the St. Johns River to the Atlantic Ocean"
Feb 23 through 27, 2026	National (and local) Invasive Species Awareness Week
Monday, March 9, 2026	General Meeting speaker Heather Stapleton at 6pm
Saturday, March 21, 2026 9am to 2pm	Florida Friendly Landscaping Seminar at the Melbourne Auditorium
Saturday, May 9, 2026	KBB Secret Garden Tour 10am to 3pm

See Conradina web page for additional events: <https://conradina.fnpschapters.org/events/>

Native Plant Nurseries and Service Providers

Have you planned on, or have you already started planting new native plants in your garden and yard? Have you had trouble finding the native plants and wildflowers you want? Well here are a few links to help you locate what you are looking for. Please call or check websites for hours, services and plant availability.

Company / Web link	Name / email	Telephone	Comments
Change of Greenery	Brendan Healy	321-536-0655	Native and edible plants, landscape design, installation & maintenance
Four C's Nursery		321-729-0351	Native plants, landscape design & installation
Florida Native Wildflowers	Sharon Dolan		Purchase pots, seeds and Florida Native Plants online
Go Native Landscaping	Nichole Perma	321-795-3111	Native landscape design, installation, consultation and maintenance
	Newsletter Sponsor		
	Tim / Anna	321-626-7386	Native plants and landscape design
Rockledge Gardens	General Information	321-636-7662	Expanding native plant selection
Rosemallow Farms	Tim & Ivoriann Wooley	321-236-1741	Native and Florida-friendly plants for sale to the public
Wild Wet N Wacky	Kiela Frank	321-417-2218	Expanding native plant selection

Additional local sources of plants and services may be found at our FANN partner site at www.PlantRealFlorida.org

Shopping elsewhere? Please always ask for Florida native plants – especially when you see none on the shelf. Popular demand drives availability and can change our community for the better.

Field Trip to Turkey Creek Sanctuary

Join us for a field trip to Turkey Creek Sanctuary

On Sunday January 18th 2026 Conradina is hosting a field trip to Turkey Creek Sanctuary.

Please arrive at 8:45 am for check in. We will meet in the parking lot across from Turkey Creek Sanctuary.

Luke Blanchard will lead us through several different ecosystems in Turkey Creek Sanctuary.



The field trip will be on the boardwalk. We will explore our way through the Turkey Oaks and lush Wild Coffee down to Turkey Creek highlighting native plants along the way.

Towards the end of the walk, we will be on sandy soil on the Sand Pine ridge.

The field trip will be under 2 hours.

It is recommended that you wear a hat, bring water, sunscreen, insect spray and binoculars.

Any questions? Contact Luke by email skywalker1999@yahoo.com

Remember the date - Sunday January 18th 2026 at 8:45am!

Hope to see you on the field trip!

Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival

FLOCK to the



27th Annual
**SPACE COAST
BIRDING &
WILDLIFE FESTIVAL**

January 21-25, 2026

Birding, photography, and wildlife enthusiasts, join 5 days of fun in the Florida sunshine.

- Adventure with expert guides who help you see and do more on land and water.
- Experience remarkable stories, photographs, and rich information shared by world-class experts.
- Examine high-quality equipment and local treasures in a large indoor Expo Center.
- Bring your kids to our exciting Young Birder Saturday Events.
- Check back as speakers, field trips, photographers, sponsors, and exhibitors are added.



Scan here or go to scbwa.net to register for events

Secret Garden Tour



KBB South Action Team Secret Garden Tour

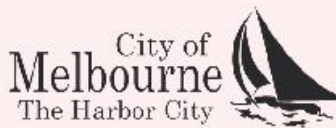


**Calling all
gardeners
and
sponsors**

SAVE THE DATE
Saturday
May 9, 2026
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

*All proceeds go to support KBB SGT booklets,
KBB SAT grants and beautification projects

For more information :
🌐 Megan.ruben@mlbfl.org



Restless Natives Report

Native plants need a voice! Restless Natives educate & lobby our elected officials to help advance the Society's mission to conserve, protect, and restore the native plants of Florida. Beth Blackford, 321-622-2633-m, HardAground@outlook.com

SUSAN CONNOLLY MEMORIAL UPDATE Many of you have asked about plans for a memorial for our late friend and member, Susan Connolly, who died Nov 13, 2025. There is a good deal of *talk* going on about planting trees and dedicating memorial gardens at both Brevard County and the City of Palm Bay, but neither have firm plans yet. The first such memorial will likely occur at our meeting site, First Church of the Nazarene, so please keep a lookout for email notification and Conradina newsletter Upcoming Events for breaking news.

SPEAK UP BREVARD (SUB) PROGRAM REVISIONS The website opens for 2026 citizen efficiency & effectiveness recommendations on Thursday, 01 Jan at <https://sites.brevardcounty.us/SpeakUpBrevard/>. Your efforts last year to urge the county to use more Low Impact Development principles sadly produced few changes to “business as usual” but did result in improvements to the SUB program itself! The instructions, now permanently viewable, explain that submissions are more last resort appeals, *not* complaints, service requests, or comment box suggestions. You should pursue your ideas through the faster, more direct methods listed. The submission form has changed a bit; attachments can give important detail & are encouraged. BCC workshops inviting public comments on submissions will likely appear again in February or March. I suggest dusting off your good idea from last year & reworking it under the new guidelines. Please contact me if you would like help.

HOMEGROWN NATIONAL PARK NEWS Maybe you planted a tree, added native plants, or changed how you care for your yard this fall. Every step makes a difference, and now's a great time to log that impact by adding your property (or updating your entry) on the [Homegrown National Park Biodiversity Map](#)TM. Seeing your progress and celebrating the difference you're making just got easier. The new [Wildr Score](#)TM, created with our partners at Plan it Wild, adds a fun and simple way to understand how your outdoor space supports nature, and gives you fresh motivation to keep growing your impact. For nature, that means ecosystems that are happy and healthy - thanks to backyard stewards like you!

GLASS RECYCLING IN PALM BAY Since 2020, the City of Palm Bay's waste & recycling provider, Republic Services, has stopped recycling glass & racked up a history of performance failures, and may owe the city a “substantial amount” of money. City Manager Matthew Morton indicated there might be an opportunity to reinstitute glass recycling during the current fine and compliance disputes. So we're jumping on it! Lydia Barbour and Susan Connolly have already done the homework - researching the current market for glass and identifying two in-state buyers for the crushed glass “cullet”.

Lydia & I are going to need help, so if this interests you, or if your city already recycles glass, please contact us!

Restless Natives Report Part 2

BOOKMARK – THIS -TRACKER

SB-180 UPDATE Additional challenges and amending bills have been introduced to mitigate damage caused by this bill. Locally, Brevard's Comprehensive Plan amendments for the state-mandated Brevard Barrier Island Area of Critical State Concern were declared **null and void** due to SB 180, leaving the County unable to carry out protections for the Indian River Lagoon and coastal habitats that the Legislature itself required. [Read more](#). Florida's 2026 [Legislative Tracker](#), updated in real time as bills are filed, heard in committee, & amended during the Session.

SOIRL UPDATE From Craig Wallace, chairman of the Brevard IRL Coalition: *Your voice needs to be heard* expressing support & recommendations for the future of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Program (SOIRL) at public workshops being held by the Brevard County Commission on the following dates:

- Jan 5th; 5-9pm; **Titusville** City council chambers.
- Jan 12th; 5-9pm; **Palm Bay** City council chambers.

Commissioners have approved the workshop format and a list of presenters; their objective is to hear public input on the need to continue the program, as well as any suggested adjustments they should consider. The workshops will be divided into 3 parts: 10 min. presentations by staff & community leaders; public comments (2-3 mins each); commissioner discussion (all are invited). Both workshops will be recorded & available for public review.

Your input will be used by SOIRL staff to develop a proposal to present to the Commission this summer for its vote to add a referendum to the November ballot. There will be 2 additional public hearings this summer, when we will ask you to please speak up for the Lagoon and urge Commissioners to put the referendum on the ballot for voters to decide.

To move forward with a renewal of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Program, the Commission needs to hear strong public support from diverse representatives of the community – business people, fishermen, property owners, scientists, hospitality workers, etc. When you speak, identify yourself and describe your background & interest in the Lagoon. If you feel strongly about some element of lagoon restoration, such as seagrass or stormwater, express your thoughts & recommendations.

This is your opportunity to have an impact on the future of the Indian River Lagoon.

If you would like to speak at one or both of the Jan workshops, please reply to BIRLCCoalition@gmail.com@shared1.ccsend.com so that we can keep you updated with information on the meetings as we receive it from the County. Also, please forward this newsletter to anyone you think may be interested in speaking.

P.S. Let me know of your interest to join a coordinated presence of Conradina & Sea Rocket FNPS members!

Sustainably yours,
Beth Blackford

Get Involved with Your Local Sustainability Advisory Board!

You can get involved by either being on a Board or attending the meetings to voice your opinion and get involved with local events.

Some cities call it an Environmental Board and some use the term Sustainability – whatever it’s called, there’s an opportunity for native plants and landscapes to preserve our native wildlife. Please check out the listing below or send your city information to us at ConradinachapterFNPS@gmail.com to include on the list.

Indialantic: Call the Town Hall at 321-723-2242 prior to the meeting to make ensure there is a quorum and the meeting is still a Go.

Palm Bay: Check out the Palm Bay website for agenda information and to make sure the meeting is still a Go. (palmbayflorida.org)

City	Meeting Time & Place	Website
Indialantic	5:30 pm on 2nd Thursday of the month in Council Chamber	Boards & Committees The Town of Indialantic Florida Official WebSite
Melbourne	2 pm on 3rd Friday of the month in City Hall Council Chamber	Beautification & Energy Efficiency Board City of Melbourne, FL (melbourneflorida.org)
Melbourne Beach	Melbourne Beach Environmental Advisory Board - Home Facebook	Sustainability Melbourne Beach FL https://www.melbournebeachfl.org/sustainability
Rockledge	6 pm on 2nd Thursday - February, June, and Oct. in Council Chamber at City Hall	The Rockledge Environmental Enhancement Board Rockledge, FL - Official Website (cityofrockledge.org)
Palm Bay	6 pm on 4th Wednesday of the month in Council Chambers, Palm Bay City Hall	Sustainability Advisory Board City of Palm Bay, FL (palmbayflorida.org)
Satellite Beach	6 pm on 4th Wednesday of the month in Council Chambers	Satellite Beach, FL

Wreath Making in December 2025



Officers and Directors

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Conradina Chapter

Florida Native Plant Society

www.conradina.fnpschapters.org

[YouTube](#) - Conradina Chapter

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Chapter Board and News

Events Back-up Cashier Needed

Have you noticed Conradina is attending a lot of events to educate people about native plants? Our cashier Martha does a phenomenal job but can't be at every event, especially when events overlap. If you're good with money and available on some weekends, we need to develop a back-up. Here are our suggested qualifications:

Comfortable handling money and putting a summary report together

Experience using credit cards and willing to learn the seller side

Availability to attend events as needed

We'll provide training! If you're interested, please contact Jane, Treasurer at janehiggins2016@gmail.com to discuss further. Thank you!!!

Looking to make a Required Minimum Distribution donation from your IRA?

The Conradina chapter of the FNPS is a register 501c3 non-profit and would be happy to accept any contributions you'd like to make to further our local efforts for native plant education and conservation.

THANK YOU to Heather Elko for recently making a RMD contribution to Conradina!

Please contact our Treasurer: Jane Higgins at janehiggins2016@gmail.com for any info you need about us or how to contribute.

