



Conradina NEWS

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March 2026

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Next Chapter Meeting

March 9, 2026

Conradina Chapter Meeting Monday, March 9, 2026 at 6:00 PM

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

Problems with Plastic

Heather Stapleton, boasts a rich background spanning nonprofit leadership, environmental education, and community engagement. She was a Peace Corps volunteer in Benin, West Africa, the Education Director at a nature center, and the Executive Director of an historic building. Now, as a Community Engagement Coordinator for the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, she channels her passion for environmental advocacy into community building. Off the clock, Heather is gardening, singing at church, or baking award-winning gluten-free treats. She hates folding laundry, loves homemade fizzy drinks, and believes the world could use more compost, more kindness, and a little less waste.



www.Conradina.FNPSChapter.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 November 2025 – 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 Saumya at landscapetour@conradinafnps.org 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: It was cold outside!

It got down to freezing for a couple of days. I'm sure we could feel it and so did the plants. First time in years I had put the heater on in my house! The temperature has an effect on several plants. Especially the plants that are north of their range.

The Melbourne Library has a beautiful Geiger Tree (*Cordia sebestena*) in front of the entrance. The tree doesn't look too good. The Geiger Trees mostly grows in south Florida, the Florida Keys, and northern South America. We will keep an eye on it.

I have a few frost damaged plants in my yard that I am concerned about. My Fiddlewood (*Citharexylum spinosum*) looks a bit damaged by the weather. It looks like just leaves are damage but there are green leaves underneath. I do see a bit of leaf damage to my Swamp lily (*Crinum americanum*) but it does now show the plant coming back strong.

Walter's viburnum (*Viburnum obovatum*) is starting to bloom! Viburnum has no problems with cold weather and it has a beautiful display of the flowers showing up!

Also the Oak trees (*Quercus spp.*) have such a long range of where it grows so the low temperature is no problem.

My Laurel Oaks (*Quercus laurifolia*) have started to bloom!

Spring is coming! Plant native!

Carol Hebert



Upcoming Events

Date	Event
	General Meetings are held at Melbourne First Church of the Nazarene. 2745 S. Babcock Street, Melbourne FL, 32901
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/
Monday, March 9, 6pm	General Meeting speaker Heather Stapleton at 6pm Topic: Problems with Plastic
Wednesday March 11 Time TBD	SOIRL campaign planning workshop, Marine Resources Council, 3275 Dixie Hwy NE, Palm Bay, 32905
Saturday, March 21 9am to 2pm	Florida Friendly Landscaping Seminar at the Melbourne Auditorium
Monday – Friday April 6 -10	Florida Invasive Species Council Annual Conference , Crowne Plaza Hotel, Melbourne, FL
Saturday April 11, 10am to 2pm	Arbor Day Plant Market at Cocoa River Front Park
Saturday, May 9, 10am to 3pm	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 Wackey	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.

Florida Friendly Landscaping Seminar

WELCOME TO THE
FLORIDA FRIENDLY
LANDSCAPING
SEMINAR

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2026
MELBOURNE AUDITORIUM

SCHEDULE

OPENING

9:00 - 9:20 a.m. Nicholas Sanzone, and words from the
Brevard Indian River Lagoon Coalition (BIRLC)

PRESENTATIONS

9:30-10:15 Kathy Hill,
Healing the Lagoon:
Progress and Partnership at Work

10:15 -11:00 Sally Scalera,
Grow Delicious Food - No Matter Where You Live

11:00 BREAK

11:30 - 12:15 p.m. Native Butterfly Flowers,
What You Plant Matters

12:15 BREAK

12:20 First Raffle

12:30 -1:15 Ariel Horner, M.S.,
Bats & Their Benefits

1:20 Second Raffle
1:45 CLOSING

Arbor Day at Gleason Park



What the heck is Arbor Day?

Arbor Day is a holiday dedicated to planting, celebrating, and caring for trees, promoting environmental stewardship and the future benefits they provide, like clean air, shade, and wildlife habitats. Originating in Nebraska in 1872, it's now observed globally, with most U.S. states celebrating on the last Friday in April, though dates vary by region to match the best planting seasons, often involving community tree plantings and educational events.

Purpose and Significance

- Promotes a better future: Unlike holidays for past events, Arbor Day focuses on planting for future generations.
- Highlights tree benefits: Celebrates trees for providing clean air, water, shade, food, fuel, and beauty.
- Encourages conservation: Promotes the planting and care of trees to combat deforestation and improve communities.

Arbor Day Plant Market at Cocoa Riverfront Park



arbor day plant market

Saturday, April 11, 2026
10 am - 2 pm
Cocoa Riverfront Park



CALLING ALL VENDORS!

Join the City of Cocoa and UF IFAS Extension to celebrate Arbor Day with a Plant Market! Join us to connect with others who are passionate about plants, gardening, and eco-friendly products. Supporting the Brevard Discovery Garden.

\$25.00 DONATION VENDOR FEE

Why Participate

Showcase your plants, garden goods, or nature-inspired products to a crowd of enthusiastic plant lovers!

Connect with like-minded individuals and support the Brevard Discovery Garden.

Celebrate Arbor Day while supporting sustainability and green initiatives.

Vendor Requirements

- Vendors are required to provide their own table, chair(s), canopy, etc.
- Deadline to submit the vendor form is April 3, 2026
- Pay by check or cash on the day of the event or mail check to Dani Eguez, UF/IFAS Brevard Extension, 3695 Lake Dr., Cocoa, FL 32926. Make checks payable to University of Florida and write Arbor Day Donation in the Notes field.

Questions

Contact Master Gardener Beth Patterson at 770-597-1600 or epatterson3@UFL.edu



The 4th Annual Spring Fling

We are excited to announce the first ever collaboration between the **Brevard Discovery Garden (BDG)** and **Brevard Backyard Beekeepers (BBBK)** to unite their annual spring events into one extraordinary community celebration!

On **Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**, the **4th Annual BDG Spring Fling Plant Sale** will partner with the **BBBK Bees, Butterflies and Blooms Festival**, bringing together the best of native plants, Florida-Friendly gardening, and pollinator education at the **UF/IFAS Extension Brevard County Facility in Cocoa, 3695 Lake Dr., Cocoa, FL 32926**

In past years, these two organizations hosted separate spring events. In 2026, they are combining efforts to create a **larger, richer experience** for the public—connecting gardeners directly with the plants, practices, and pollinators that support healthy Florida landscapes.

Attendees can expect:

- A wide selection of **native and Florida-Friendly plants** grown by local Master Gardeners
- **Pollinator-focused education**, with special programs on beekeeping
- Family-friendly activities and children’s programming
- Educational talks, demonstrations, and garden tours
- Opportunities to meet **Master Gardeners and local beekeepers**
- Vendors, exhibitors, and hands-on learning experiences

“This partnership allows us to tell a more complete story,” said Sally Scalera, UF/IFAS Brevard County Urban Horticulture Agent. “Healthy gardens and healthy pollinators go hand in hand. By working together, we’re offering the community an event that’s bigger, better, and more impactful than ever.”

This free event is open to **all ages**. Proceeds from BDG nursery plant sales help support the ongoing maintenance and educational mission of the Brevard County Master Gardener Program and the Brevard Discovery Garden.

For event updates, follow the Facebook pages for the [Brevard Discovery Garden Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/BrevardDiscoveryGarden) <https://www.facebook.com/BrevardDiscoveryGarden> or follow [Brevard Backyard Beekeepers Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/BrevardBeekeepers). <https://www.facebook.com/BrevardBeekeepers>

For event administrative information, please contact:

Danitza Eiguez, Administrative Secretary,

UF/IFAS Brevard County Extension, 3695 Lake Dr. Cocoa, FL 32923, 321-633-1702

danitza.eguez@ufl.edu

danitza.eguez@brevardfl.gov

Florida Master Naturalist Program Scholarship

The Conradina chapter is pleased to offer one annual scholarship to attend a Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) module. Scholarship applicants must:

1. Be a Conradina chapter member. (Applicants may become chapter members at the time of application.)
2. Reside in Brevard County
3. Submit a recommendation letter and a 250-word or less essay describing:
 - a. Why you want to participate in the FMNP?
 - b. Your expectations of the FMNP.
 - c. How you plan to use the knowledge gained to benefit the Conradina Chapter.
4. Applicants must agree to fulfill one of the following commitments within 6 months of completion of the FMNP module:
 - a. Choose and guide a FNPS field trip.
 - b. Present their FMNP project at a general Conradina FNPS meeting.
 - c. Submit three short articles for the Conradina Chapter newsletter related to the FMNP project.

Scholarship applications must be submitted by September 1st for use at any time in the following year. The Conradina scholarship committee will review, evaluate and notify the applicants of the results by December 1st.

Maximum scholarship award is \$350 for the year 2026. To apply, email the completed Scholarship Application Form, the essay and the letter of recommendation to Joann Gulliver pgulliver@cfl.rr.com and Richard Blackford svslowdancing@hotmail.com.

Follow link on the Conradina FNPS chapter website to find the application form:
<https://conradina.fnpschapters.org/fmnp-scholarship/>

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*

Greetings all,

It's been more than a year since a group of us gathered over pizza after our January 2025 meeting and decided to try to coordinate our efforts to influence our local and county officials. Since then, enthusiasm has waned and other projects have emerged.

I can't continue alone, so I'm dissolving this legislative and policy committee.

Instead, I invite you to join me in supporting these and similar issues through the City of Palm Bay's Sustainability Advisory Board chaired by Doug Hook that meets each month at 6:00 pm the 4th Wednesday of each month at City Hall <https://www.palmbayfl.gov/government/city-departments-f-to-z/legislative/boards-committees/sustainability-advisory-board>.

I will leave you with these 2 thoughts:

1. If you'd like to pursue these and related topics on your own, check out the State FNPS website, where you'll find a wealth of guidance on everything from local native landscape ordinances to the policy advocacy handbook: <https://www.fnps.org/policy-toolkit#gsc.tab=0>.
2. The single most important legislation to affect Brevard residents this year will be renewal of the Save Our Indian River Lagoon half-cent sales tax referendum in November. The measure first needs to make it onto the ballot, and then *pass*, or else all our projects and hard work to restore the health of our amazing estuary will run out of funds and die. Please do whatever you can to ensure the referendum passes resoundingly!

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

The 2025 Coreopsis Award Recipient

Announcing the 2025 Coreopsis Award Recipient from the Florida Wildflower Foundation



We are thrilled to announce Cameron “Cammie” Donaldson as the 2025 recipient of the T. Elizabeth Pate Coreopsis Award from the Florida Wildflower Foundation.

Despite her humble preference to stay behind the scenes and out of the spotlight, few people have had such an extraordinary impact on Florida’s native plant community of practice.

Through her work with the Florida Native Plant Society, Florida Association of Native Nurseries and Native Plant Horticulture Foundation, Cammie has dedicated her career to forging connections and strengthening Florida’s native plant industry.



[Read more here.](#)

FNPS Membership Rates are Changing

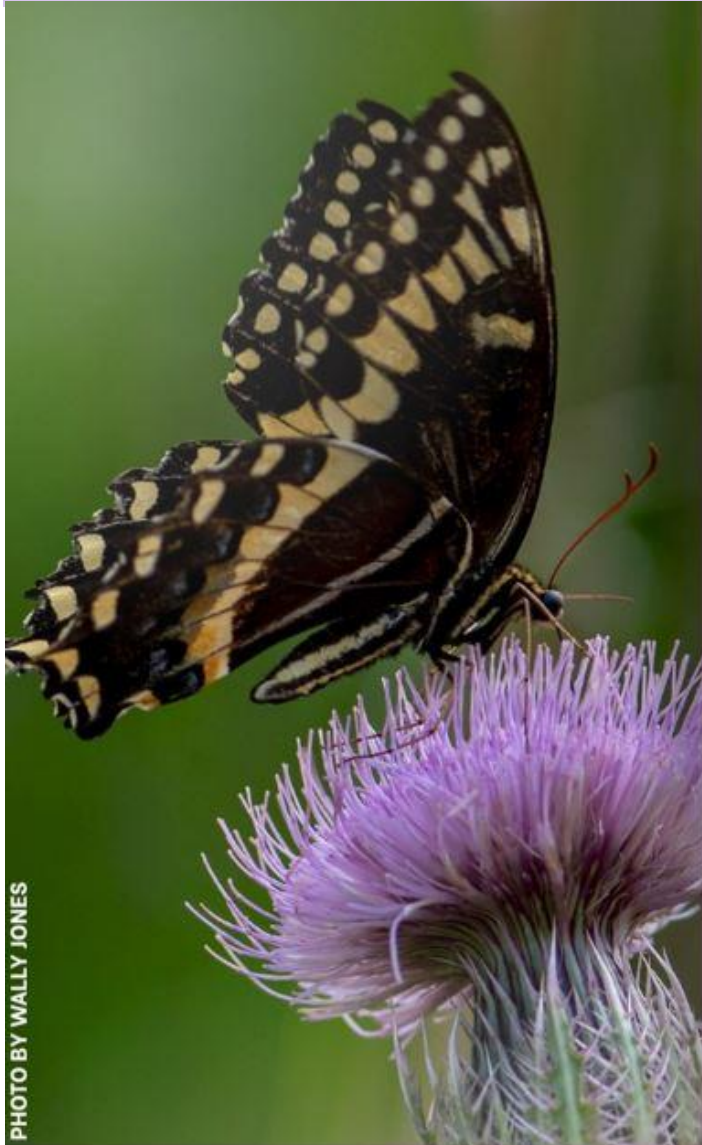


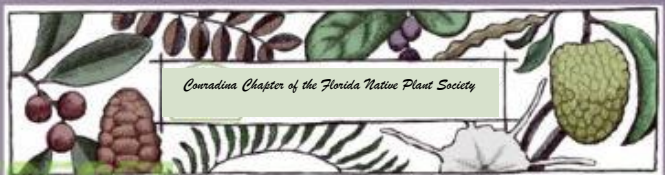
PHOTO BY WALLY JONES

FNPS MEMBERSHIP RATES ARE CHANGING APRIL 1, 2026

**New Annual Rates:
Individual: \$35 → \$50
Household: \$50 → \$90**

Your membership fuels the protection of Florida's native plants & their habitats when they need us most.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!



For the first time in 16 years, FNPS will be adjusting membership dues beginning April 1, 2026. This change comes out of real need. As grants and outside funding have been reduced, membership support is more important than ever to sustain: Staff salaries, Conservation advocacy, Habitat restoration work, Education programs, Community outreach. We understand that increases are never easy. We invite you to reflect on how FNPS has enriched your life — the knowledge gained from chapter speaker programs, the discoveries made on field trips, the friendships formed, the habitats restored and protected, and the wildlife sustained. If FNPS has made a difference for you, please consider supporting us during this important time. Join or renew before April 1 to lock in the current rate and stand with us as we continue protecting Florida's native plants and wild places.

Thank you for being part of our community and for supporting Florida's natural heritage.

Officers and Directors

President

Lynda Geraci 2024-2026

Vice President

Sara Morrison 2024-2026

Secretary

Terry LaPlante 2024-2026

CoTreasurers

Jane Higgins 2022-2026

Mary Murphy 2025-2027

Chapter Representative

Beth Blackford 2026

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Anastasia Doshna 2024-2026

Richard Blackford 2024-2026

Carol Hebert 2022-2025

Christine Bamberger 2024-2026

Christine Ryba 2024-2026

Luke Blanchard 2025-2027

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Newsletter Editor

Marilyn Peio

Volunteer Coordinator

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Conradina Chapter

Florida Native Plant Society

www.conradina.fnpschapters.org

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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, Thankyou!!!

CALLING ALL GARDENERS...

One of the awesome things that happens at Conradina meetings, besides the informative programs, tasty treats, and catching up with likeminded friends every month, is the opportunity to take home a new native plant. I have been a Conradina member since 2012 and these plants have made a large contribution to our native yard. Did you know that Conradina gives away a lot of plants? Like, 70 - 80 a month at our meetings and another 350 during the annual Landscaping with Natives tour. Every plant is produced by a small group of Conradina volunteers.

If your thumb is even the slightest shade of green, we could use your help in propagating new stock and caring for existing plants. If you are new to this, there's no better way to learn about Florida's native plants than by growing them. We will provide pots, dirt, seeds or cuttings, and lots of encouragement. Contact Richard at Plants@ConradinaFNPS.org or talk to Luke, Joann, or me when you pick up your freebie at the next meeting. If you have pots just sitting in your yard, we need them to grow more plants, not mosquitos!!!

After many years of service, Martha Stuart stepped down in early February as our Chapter Representative. Beth Blackford was appointed to fill her position through the remaining 4 months of her term.

Thank you Martha for representing Conradina at the state level !!!