

The Gabby Gardener

Garden Club of DeLand

December 2022 Volume 29, Issue 4

President's Corner



Along with the arrival of the toy soldiers downtown, the Garden Club's traditions mark the upcoming holidays for me.

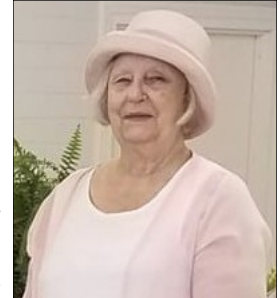
- ✓ I have ordered wreaths (50% to GCD!).
- ✓ I have embraced the nice buzz about the upcoming December 3rd Christmas parade. There are so many ways to participate - you can be a float decorator, walker, rider or cheering loudly in the crowd.
- ✓ I can't wait to see what is planned for the replanting of the downtown planters on December 10th.
- ✓ I have RSVP'd for Circle celebrations.

Please RSVP (nusu@cfl.rr.com) to the December 1st general meeting so we have a realistic headcount for refreshments. This meeting will kick off the season with Bryon White co-founder of Yaupon Brothers American Tea Company in Edgewater. It's a fascinating story of foresight and enterprise from working with UF on yaupon holly trees to being able to purchase their teas at Amazon, Whole Foods, Uncommon Goods and GCD!

I hope your holidays are joyous, full of family and friends and safe!

Marshall

Judy Maurer



Sadly, our former Club President, 2013-2016, Judy Maurer passed away on November 15th. Judy served our garden club through her forward thinking and actions by pressing ahead and starting the Sensory Butterfly Garden dream, adding a practical awning over the kitchen door and a veterans' brick walkway, celebrating the Clubhouse's 50th anniversary, starting fairy garden parties and Veterans' home tours. Her love of floral design was evident in her completing all nine FFGC floral design units, chairing Pageant of Crosses and adding floral designs to monthly meetings. We were fortunate to have her at the last garden visit and November meetings as a member of Rose, Magnolia and Milkweed Circles. She brought appreciation, creativity and beauty to everything she did. Over the years Judy graciously supported all aspects of the Garden Club and will be greatly missed.

Circle Around

Ian and Nicole changed the course for some November meetings. **Firecrackers'** trip to Schley's Bonsai was flooded out and **Marigolds'** trip to the AG Center changed because of areas off limits due to storm damage. **Milkweeds** and **Wild Coffees** went on with speakers who had taken Master Naturalists courses with a program on bumble bees and an excellent program on soils. **Roses** held their Make It, Bake It, Grow It fundraiser. **Magnolias** toured Lonny Reid's farm. **Members-at-Large and Affiliates** are always welcome to take part in these circle programs as are members of other circles – just check first with the president to verify there are no space restrictions.

GCD General Meeting

December 1

9:30am Social, 10am Meeting

Speaker: Bryon White

Yaupon Brothers

American Tea

Topic: Florida's Native Tea



Host Circle: Rose

Please RSVP to nusu@cfl.rr.com

Invasives in Florida -Mexican Petunia



Mexican Petunias invasion of a conservation area in Payne's Prairie Preserve State Park, Alachua County.

Continuing with invasive plants (also in November Gabby issue), the one I wanted to look at is one of my most disliked plants. It is commonly found in home gardens and very easily found in the local big box garden stores.

Mexican Petunia attracts butterflies and can grow in nearly any soil and light conditions. What not to love – let me tell you how bad this plant is.

Environmental tolerance, abundant seed production, and an ability to easily grow from plant stem sections have allowed Mexican petunia to spread into natural areas bordering urban areas. The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council lists Mexican petunia as a Category 1 invasive species, meaning that it is "altering native plant communities by displacing native species, changing community structures or ecological functions, or hybridizing with natives" (Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council 2011). These potential changes to community structure and ecological function are of particular concern in Florida wetlands where changes to plant communities have the potential to impact not just plant-animal interactions, but also overall hydrology on a whole watershed level..[1] This

(continued Invasives in Florida)

plant is so aggressive; it's banned in some states" [2] To get around this ban and to confuse the average gardener, gardening retailers have started to sell Mexican Petunias under alias names "Britton's Wild Petunia; Mexican Bluebell" [3] among others.

Mexican Petunia spreads very aggressively by both seeds – it can spew the small brown discs as far as ten feet – and rhizomes(roots).[4] The seeds are explosively expelled from their capsules and can persist in the soil.[5] Spreads via lateral roots and abundant readily viable seed that can germinate in light or dark conditions. The seeds produce a gel-like substance when wet that enables them to stick to surfaces when they dry. It forms dense stands in the understory of forests, crowding out native plants and altering fire and succession regimes. Sterile cultivars have been developed; however, they all still require maintenance to prevent escape because they will still spread via creeping lateral roots. [6]

1] <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP498>

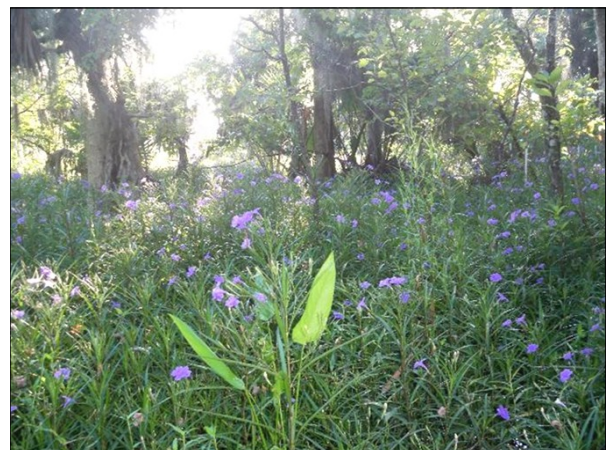
[2] <https://www.hgtv.com/outdoors/flowers-and-plants/mexican-petunias-plant-with-caution>

[3] <https://assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/assessments/ruellia-simplex/>

[4] <https://gardenspath.com/plants/flowers/mexican-petunia-ruellia/>

[5] <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/ruellia-simplex/>

[6] <https://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/plant-directory/ruellia-simplex/>



Mexican Petunias invasion of a conservation area in Payne's Prairie Preserve State Park, Alachua County.

Garden Club of DeLand



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Looking for information about The Garden Club, schedules, upcoming events, and rental information. Visit our website at www.gardenclubofdeland.org



Help Wanted for Clubhouse

GCD rental revenue enables us to have a clubhouse and lovely grounds. It takes a **minimum of 50 rentals** annually to support the building and grounds without any major repairs.

We are looking to **expand our clubhouse team**. The committee is responsible for all rental related aspects of the clubhouse. You will be well trained and confident before soloing. The workload varies - on your assigned months, you are busy while the other months are quiet.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Sharyn Marzullo at 615-617-7906 or wordmerchantsm@yahoo.com

Florida Native Gardening

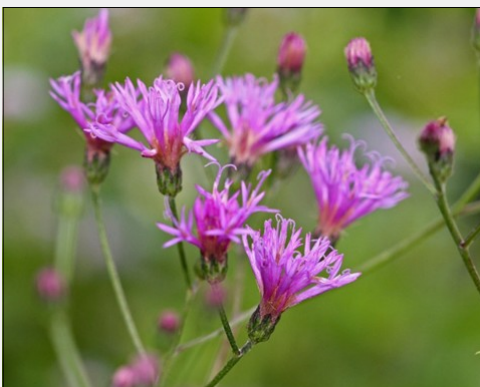
After reading the Article on the Invasive Mexican Petunia you may be wondering what is a native alternative. There are a couple of choices.



Stokes Aster (*Stokesia laevis*) is a wonderful alternative to Mexican Petunia. Stokes Aster, extremely easy to grow, blooms spring thru summer,

may bloom even longer, in shades of bluish-purple, lavender, pinkish or even white. The butterflies, and bees love this plant [1]

There are 2 native Ironweeds: **Giant Ironweed** (*Vernonia gigantea*) and



Narrowleaf Ironweed (*Vernonia angustifolia*); these are both tall plants when in bloom. They both have beautiful purple flowers that the butterflies and bees love. [2], [3]



- [1] <https://www.flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-stokesia-laevis/>
- [2] <https://www.flawildflowers.org/flower-friday-vernonia-gigantea/>
- [3] <https://www.fnps.org/plant/vernonia-angustifolia>

Invasives in Florida -
Mexican Petunia
and
Florida Native Gardening

By: Dorothy Caldwell

