



## Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens e-Newsletter February 2014

### HAPPENING THIS MONTH!

#### **Volunteer Workday**

Saturday, February 8  
9 am - Noon

Help us maintain **your** Arboretum and keep it looking good. Volunteer Workdays are a great way to engage in outdoor activities while giving back to the community. We have some tools and gloves available, but you are welcome to bring your own clippers and gloves. Please wear long pants and closed-toe shoes.

#### **A Walk in the Woods**

Saturday, February 8 & 22  
8 am Fitness Walk  
Brisk 3 mile hike

Saturday, February 22  
9:30 am Nature Walk  
with naturalist/biologist  
Walks are free.

#### **Discovering Nature Nearby** Primitive Technology & Basic Survival Skills

Saturday, February 22  
1 pm - 3 pm



Students preparing site for prescribed burn

### **Thank you, Volunteers!**

Juniors and seniors in the Sandalwood GreenState Environmental Club organized a service day at the Arboretum on January 18th. Counting all adults and students, there were 75 volunteers. Projects included picking up invasive air potatoes along Jones Creek, planting wildflower seedlings in the flatwood, prepping for the turkey oak barren burn, and clearing a trial mini-scrub restoration site. We accomplished a huge amount in three short hours and want to thank Steven Sherrill and his club for their hard work and our own Conservation Corps volunteers for their steadfast supervisory skills.

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## ALSO

### **Tree Hill Nature Center Workday Target: Air Potato**

Thursday, February 20  
Start Time: 8 am  
7152 Lone Star Road  
RSVP to

[lia.sansom@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:lia.sansom@dep.state.fl.us)

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### **Greenscape's 27th Annual Flowering Tree Sale**

Saturday, February 22  
7 am - 2 pm  
Metro Square Park  
3563 Philips Highway  
Cash or Check  
Rain or Shine

### **Greenscape's 7th Annual Root Ball**

Saturday, February 22  
6:30 pm  
The Museum  
4160 Boulevard Center Drive

For info & tickets visit  
[www.greenscapeofjacksonville.org](http://www.greenscapeofjacksonville.org)

## Save the Dates!

### **Annual Air Potato Roundup!**

Saturday, March 1  
9 am - Noon

Air Potato is an extremely aggressive exotic invasive species that thrives in the Arboretum's bottomlands. We need everyone's help digging vines and collecting potatoes to make a dent in the population of this pest plant. So please mark your calendar now and plan to help.

### **Member & Volunteer**

#### **Owl Prowl**

Saturday, March 15

Conservation Corps volunteers for their steadfast supervisory skills.

And a big thank you to all the volunteers who came out for our Volunteer Workday on January 11th! Your efforts really make a difference!

## Discovering Nature Nearby

The second in our series of programs is coming up on Saturday, February 22 from 1 - 3 PM. You won't want to miss Ayolane Halusky's fascinating presentation on Primitive Technology and Basic Survival Skills. Ayolane, founder of Earth Kinship LLC, St. John's County Naturalist and Florida native has been practicing wilderness skills and native technology for over 20 years. He will dispel fears and myths of the natural world and show you how to establish a connection with your environment through knowledge of survival skills using primitive methods. This program, and others in the series, was made possible by a grant from the TD Charitable Foundation.

This program is suitable for adults and families with teens - all those under 18 must be accompanied by and under the supervision of an adult at all times.

## What's New?

For those of you who regularly visit the Arboretum and walk the trails, you may have noticed some construction on the Lake Loop Trail at the east end across the lake. The Board approved the acquisition, assembly and construction of a pavilion to provide covered shelter with a lake view and for use during special events. Once our site rental program is in place, anticipated in the next 2-3 months, the pavilion can also be rented for weddings, receptions, family reunions and corporate retreats. The structure is pre-fabricated steel with a standing seam aluminum roof over tongue and groove decking. We anticipate constructing additional patio space between the pavilion and the lake in the near future. Construction is expected to be completed by mid-February.

## Fire and Native Habitats

Saturday, March 15  
Details to follow in March  
newsletter.

**Discovering Nature Nearby**  
Mark you calendars for upcoming  
programs in this series. Details in  
upcoming newsletters

**Birding 101**  
March 29 9 am - Noon

**Edible & Medicinal Plants**  
April 5 10 am - 11:30 am

**Native Plants**  
May 3 9 am - Noon

**Geocaching with a Smart Phone**  
June 21 9 am - 10:30 am

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**Join Us!**  
**Become a JAG Member**

By becoming a member, you are  
supporting the Arboretum's day to  
day operations and planned  
improvements. Members receive  
discounts to special programs &  
events and your membership is  
tax-deductible.

### **Membership Levels**

\$ 25 Student/Senior/  
Limited Income  
\$ 35 Individual  
\$ 55 Family  
\$ 100 Corporate  
\$ 200 Friend  
\$ 500 Sponsor  
\$ 1000 Benefactor/Lifetime

To join, go to our website at  
[www.jacksonvillearboretum.org](http://www.jacksonvillearboretum.org) and  
[click on "Membership"](#)

**THANK YOU!**

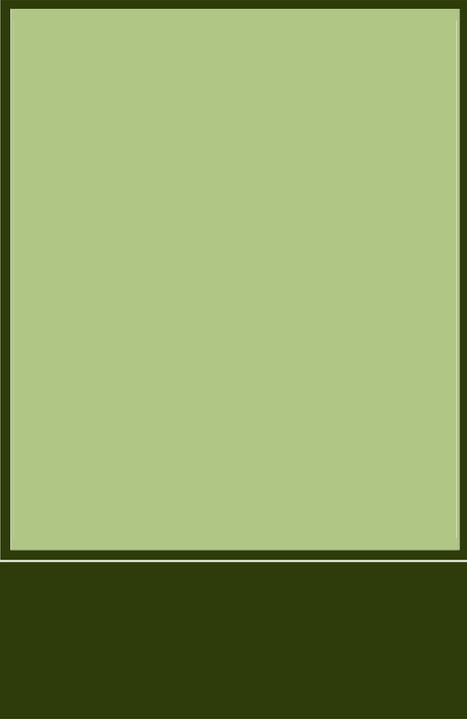
## **Fire and Native Habitats**

As species evolved over millions of years, they became keenly adapted to local weather patterns. In northeast Florida one of the most important evolutionary forces was fire. Summer thunderstorms meant lightning which meant fire. Florida's plants and animals evolved with fire and fire is what molded the diverse ecosystems of the pre-settlement southeast. As Jacksonville became more developed, fire could not move through the landscape without negatively impacting humans. Natural fires were suppressed and, without periodical renewal, ecosystems changed dramatically. In some cases fire-dependent species became extinct. Though we can't recover extinct species at the Arboretum, we hope to recreate small patches of pre-settlement habitats for our visitors to enjoy by reintroducing fire under carefully controlled conditions.

A prescribed or controlled burn is the application of fire, by a team of experts under specific weather conditions, to help restore health to fire-dependent environments. After months of preparation, the turkey oak barren is ready for The Nature Conservancy's Southeastern Ecosystem Restoration Team (TNC-SERT) to light their drip torches. The final task was to cover the hardwood leaves with pine straw so the burn temperature would more closely resemble that of a pine sandhill.

We are actually going to conduct two burns: the turkey oak barren (0.3 acres) on a north breeze and two acres near the powerline on a south breeze. The latter burn will be controlled jointly by St. Johns River Water Management District, Florida Forest Service, and Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Division. Both burns are also part of the Florida Forest Service Urban Wildfire Mitigation Program targeted at reducing fuel and thus reducing the chances of a catastrophic urban wildfire.

Permitting for urban burns is extremely strict. Temperature, wind speed and humidity must be within a very limited range and we will have only a few hours' notice of the start time. We will post signs in the parking lot and on Monument Rd, so if you see or smell smoke, check for the signs before calling 911. The city emergency officials will know about the burns because the teams are required to file plans and obtain permits. If you decide to come "look and learn" please carefully



the teams are required to file plans and obtain permits. If you decide to come "look and learn" please carefully follow instructions from the supervising burn team. Fire is a valuable tool but it can also be extremely dangerous and the factors controlling it very unpredictable.

We are excited about the prospect of re-introducing fire at the Arboretum. After such long term exclusion, we don't know exactly what species are still surviving as seeds. We hope those who are botanists will visit frequently after the fires to help us keep tabs. Contact us at [info@jacksonvillearboretum.org](mailto:info@jacksonvillearboretum.org) to let us know what you find. Even if you aren't a botanist, remember to visit every few weeks after the burns to see if you notice anything new. This will be a fascinating few months.

### **OUR MISSION**

**Cultivating a unique environment for recreation, education and inspiration.**