



## Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens e-Newsletter March 2016

### HAPPENING THIS MONTH!

#### **Nature at Night**

Saturday, March 5  
6 PM-9 PM

#### **Volunteer Workday**

Saturday, March 12  
9 AM-12 PM

#### **Nature Walk**

Saturday, March 12  
9:30 AM-10:30 AM

#### **Arboretum Extended Hours On Tuesday & Thursdays**

Starting Tuesday, March 15  
8:00 AM-7:00 PM

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Photo courtesy of Ian Carroll. The license for use can be found here <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

### **S'more Nature at Night**

This coming Saturday March 5th from 6 PM to 9 PM, come enjoy a bonfire under the stars with music from Terry Whitehead. Dinner and entertainment are free for members and volunteers. If you would like to bring friends along who do not fit these categories, just pay a small fee of \$5 for adults and \$2 for kids. Please

## Save The Dates!

### Themed Nature Walk May 14

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make sure you [RSVP HERE](#) by noon on March 5th and put "Nature at Night" in the subject line. JAG-supporters Certified Steak & Seafood and Potter's House "Soul Food Bistro" will provide food. Non-alcoholic beverages will be available, as well as Regal Cinemas' popcorn. Please remember to bring your own lawn chairs, bug spray, and flash lights. We will bring the s'mores!



Photos courtesy of Merrill Varn

## Thank You to the Funders & Volunteers of the Jones-Creek-Trail Improvements

On February 13th, workday volunteers finished leveling and resurfacing the Jones Creek Trail section that leads into the ravine, as well as constructing a new bridge and adding seating. JAG extends a special thanks to Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) for funding the the use of equipment for the project and for the purchase of the bridge and seating area materials. A hearty thanks also goes out to Ken Cranford for

**Donor**  
**Thank you!**

**Shop at Amazon Smile**

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**JAG Membership**

By becoming a member or donor, you are supporting the Arboretum's operations and improvements. All donations are tax-deductible. Details are available on our website.

**Membership Levels**

\$ 40 Single  
\$ 55 Dual  
\$ 70 Family  
\$100 Friend

supervising all the workdays and performing the heavy equipment work at cost. Finally a salute to JEA, Rotaract, and our own site ops volunteers who together supplied close to 150 volunteer hours on the project. This was truly a community effort. We hope our visitors enjoy easier access to the Jones-Creek-bottomland forests.



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**Plant of the Month: Blueberries**

Blueberries are in the genus *Vaccinium*, a genus that includes cranberry, lingonberry, deerberry and cowberry. Local commercial blueberries come from the native highbush or rabbit eye blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) and hybrids between it and Darrow's blueberry (*V. darrowii*). Formerly, the rabbit eye blueberries were considered to be a separate species (*V. ashei* or *V. virgatum*) but botanists have lumped them together. In general, the rabbit eye types tend to

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**Thank you!**

grow better in north Florida while the highbush types are recommended for central Florida. Wild plants can be found in the local woods.


Blueberries are very easy to grow in north Florida. They grow and fruit best in sunny to partly shade sites in acidic soils. In dry sites, they require some extra water when they are first planted and when the fruits are developing.

Besides the commercial blueberry, Darrow's blueberry is an attractive landscape shrub that is native to Florida's panhandle. It has small but very tasty fruits. Two local natives, *V. stamineum* and *V. myrsinites*, grow in natural areas around Jacksonville and produce small, edible fruits. Sparkleberry, *V. arboreum*, is a native shrub or small tree with attractive white flowers but its fruits are tough and not sweet tasting.

You can find all of these in the Jacksonville Arboretum and Gardens. The four native species grow in the Arboretum's natural areas. Cultivated plants are planted on the north side of the lake near the camellias. All of them have attractive little white or pink flowers in late winter and early spring. The sweet, nutritious berries ripen in late spring and early summer. Keep an eye out for local you-pick fields. Picking blueberries is a good family outing with fresh blueberries as the reward.

**Extended Hours at the Arboretum**

Day light savings time will begin on March 13th. Therefore, we have decided to extend visiting



hours at the Arboretum on Tuesday and Thursdays until 7PM. On all other days of the week, the Arboretum will close at the usual time - 5PM. We hope to see many of you at the Arboretum after work on the 15th.

### OUR MISSION

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