



Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens e-Newsletter

May 2021 Edition

Hours: 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Growing for the Future

Kevin Blalock, President

Spring is a wonderful time of year at the Arboretum and in general. It signals growth and renewal and brings a healthy state of mind as we become more active and excited for outdoor activities, breaks from school or new beginnings. At the Arboretum, flowers are blossoming, spring migration is in full swing and our staff and volunteers have done a fantastic job maintaining its beauty throughout the winter and now taking full advantage of the spring months to refresh the gardens.



You are likely aware that we have undertaken a significant growth project for the Arboretum itself. Our Master Planning process kicked off in March with the first of several workshops with the design firms, Fromme Design and HDLA. Our board, staff and other important community constituents gathered for a visioning session and to draft an outline of our initial plan. We are so excited to have completed this first step: documenting what we think you, our members, patrons and donors, would like to see the Arboretum become. I can tell you we are highly focused on improving and expanding our gardens to become the best botanical garden in Northeast Florida and beyond. While that is our primary focus, we are also not losing sight of the natural beauty of the local ecosystems we have curated over the years. So you can expect in the next few years to see growth of our gardens and attractions without sacrificing the current aesthetic.

With that growth comes the additional responsibility of improving access for all of our community. We will continue to expand our infrastructure and resources to improve the experience for anyone who chooses to visit. More on that to come.

So, I hope this quick update provides a glimpse of where we are headed. Please come out and enjoy the spring with us, either on a casual dog walk or at one of our upcoming events. Immerse yourself in the aura of spring and imagine your own vision of the future of the Arboretum.

[Click Here to Donate to the Delores Barr Weaver Challenge Grant](#)

A Note from the Director

Dana Doody, Executive Director



**Get Outdoors and Enjoy *A Brush With Nature*
Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens, May 15-16, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

This wonderful annual event is in its tenth year! We're thrilled to have more than 35 of the region's finest landscape artists setting up their easels to capture the essence of the Arboretum's beautiful settings over the two-day event. Stunning Florida landscapes, talented plein air artists doing live demonstrations, live music, food trucks, kids' art activities and local artists' original art for sale – all outdoors and with room for the family dog to join in – are just a few highlights of this year's "A Brush With Nature" event. This popular annual event will be held May 15 and 16 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A Brush With Nature brings together art and the outdoors, as participating artists from First Coast Plein Air Painters (FCPAP) set up at different points around the Arboretum's 120-acre grounds to capture the essence of the beautiful settings and paint their favorite scenes live in real time. Proceeds from the event support both organizations, and \$3 per person is the requested donation amount to attend.

Oil, watercolor, pastel, acrylic, charcoal and colored pencils are just a few of the mediums that the FCPAP artists will demonstrate as they capture the Arboretum's lakes, trails, trees and flowers, each in their unique style.

Visitors can stroll along the nature trails to watch and interact with the artists as they work. Then, you can purchase your favorite piece and take it home. All works of art created at the event are available for sale, as well as other works by the participating artists.

This year's lineup includes

- A plant sale hosted by Earthworks Gardens
- Children's activities from noon to 3 p.m. both days
- Live Folk and Bluegrass music from Old Dawg New Tricks and Cindy Bear and Robert, followed by MC J Wiz Productions DJ to keep things hopping along.
- Food Trucks include Balu's Surf Shack, Big Island Bowls and About Time Creamery.

A special thanks to our volunteers and our sponsors: Be sure and thank them for their support of your beautiful Arboretum.

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Events to look forward to!

May 8 at 10 a.m. - SOLD OUT - Discovering Nature Nearby presents a very special bird walk at the Arboretum! Enjoy birding with Board President, Kevin Blalock and featuring Duval Audubon Society President Carol Bailey-White.

Discovering Nature Nearby sponsored by



June 12 at 10a.m.

Tortoise Walk: The Beloved Gopher!

Come learn from experts what makes this humble reptile a “keystone species” which 350 other species depend upon for survival! Space is limited and tickets are \$5; children 5 and under are free. A portion of the proceeds will benefit a local tortoise rescue.

[Click Here to Purchase Tickets for Tortoise Walk](#)

May 15 & 16 - A Brush With Nature

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

At this event, visitors enjoy the gardens while many of the region's finest Plein Air artists set up their easels to capture the essence of the Arboretum's beautiful settings and paint their favorite scenes from locations throughout the 120-acre site. This special event includes food trucks, live music, children's activities and beautiful art. Bring your whole family out for this annual treasured event!

Volunteer! Event volunteer sign up for A Brush With Nature is starting now!

[Click here to Volunteer](#)



Ways to Give & Support

Celebrate, honor and remember a special occasion by choosing a gift that provides a meaningful alternative to traditional gift giving. Recognize your family, friends or colleagues for any event: birth, wedding, anniversary, [birthday](#), retirement or celebration of life. Your personal tribute will become a part of the Arboretum's landscape while furthering our mission.

Raised bed gardens are a beautiful way to honor a loved one. For a \$250 donation, we will install a lovely plaque on one of the gorgeous raised bed gardens curated by our horticulturist, Shayan Khatibi. Contact Marti Schmidt, Development Coordinator: martina.schmidt@jacksonvillearboretum.org

Our Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Paul Storey

He looks forward to his time at the Arboretum all week! He works side by side with Shayan doing the dirty work that is required to keep your Arboretum beautiful. Coming from Michigan, he is enjoying our fine weather and friendly people.

His favorite plant in the Arboretum? The long leaf pine.

Say hi to Paul next time you see him on Wednesday mornings. He is the one with the big smile!

Interested in volunteering with us?
[Sign up today](#)





Marti Pitches in! **Your Volunteer and Development Coordinator**

I decided to try the immersive volunteer experience and I learned so much! For all of you who are hesitant about volunteering, it is fun! (And a little muddy).

Our Super Gardeners continue to grow with the raised beds proving to be the most popular place Wednesday mornings from 8 to 11 a.m. The lovely flowers and gorgeous plantings are appreciated by guests and volunteers alike.

We still need volunteers for our signature event, *A Brush with Nature*, on May 15 and 16. You can sign up for a slot with this link (or just call me). **904-318-4342**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4baaad2caaffcf8-abrush>

We have all kinds of opportunities available: you could work in the artist's tent, the family activities area, retail or the live music area. It is a great way to socialize with your fellow volunteers, the First Coast Plein Air Artists and the Jacksonville community. CDC guidelines are being followed for the health and safety of our guests, their families and our volunteers. Sign up today!

Plant of the Month **By Shayan Khatibi, Staff Horticulturist**



Amaryllis is a subtropical bulb native to South Africa and most well-known for its stunning flowers. When planted outdoors in our area, they typically bloom in spring before the leaves grow. The trumpet shaped flower colors range from reds, oranges, pinks and white. Plant amaryllis between September and January for a spring bloom. They perform best in partial sun and well-drained soil.

Photo credit Martha Mazza Photography

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/amaryllis.html>



Dog Days: Our Best Friends and their Humans

Meet Sydney, Bodhi and Mama with their humans, Trong and Oubon. This is their best time of the week and a welcome respite for this family. Thank you for visiting and supporting the Arboretum!

Carnivorous Plants are here!

By Merrill Varn



For the past five years, the Jacksonville Arboretum Conservation Group has been hard at work trying to make the trails more varied, more interesting and more aligned with our theme of People and Plants. Our aim is to show visitors examples of plants that native peoples in our neck of the woods used in their day-to-day lives. If you hike the trails often, you have noticed the work on the clearings and plantings including the sandhill/flatwood area on the Live Oak Trail, the pine scrub area on the Sand Ridge Trail, the baygall/upland hardwood area on the Aralia Trail, and the freshwater marsh area on the Lower Ravine Trail.

With the help of Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens and Atlanta Botanical Gardens, we now have two new pitcher plant bogs along the Lower Ravine Trail for you to enjoy. There is a small bog in a little sunny spot in the boardwalk circle at the head of the trail and a much larger planting in the marsh at the toe end of the ravine. Both plantings have the same species.

Pitcher plants are most famous as the carnivores of the plant kingdom. Early botanists thought that the pitchers were being used as safety retreats. It was not until 1815 that a very patient James MacBride observed the plants using pitchers to trap insects. The various species use a combination of irresistible nectar, slippery wax and downward pointing hairs to lure and imprison small wasps, flies and midges into a soup of digestive enzymes at the base of the pitcher. Larger insects that are trapped can chew through the walls of the pitcher and escape.

In the wilds of Florida, pitcher plants were once found in wet grasslands and in sunny openings of bottomlands and seepage slopes across the state. Over 95% of their habitat has been lost to roadways, ponds, development, shading due to fire suppression, and rooting by feral hogs. Five of the six species of pitcher plants in Florida are now listed as endangered. Our bog at the Arboretum currently has three of the five endangered species as well as the common hooded pitcher plant.

With funding from the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens and donations of hooded pitcher plants rescued from roadway ditching work, the Arboretum began a study in February 2020 to figure out the most affordable way to build a bog. Our Conservation volunteers worked with staff from the Atlanta Botanical Garden to explore several soil mixes and berm heights. Based on a year of data, they designed and built the bog using funding from the Jacksonville Zoo. In late March, our volunteers drove to Atlanta to pick up

our newly adopted youngsters. Conservation staff at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens grows plants in their greenhouses to plant on various restoration sites throughout the southeast. We were lucky enough to get up to 50 each of purple, whitetop and red pitcher plants. Our young pitchers are still quite small, but you should be able to watch them grow if you check on the planting over the next year.

As for their use by native peoples and early settlers, extracts made from the roots and rhizomes of pitcher plants were used across eastern North America "for all manner of fluxes" ... lower back pain, kidney problems, whooping cough, smallpox, diarrhea, chills and liver problems. Modern chemical studies have shown that pitcher plants contain several alkaloids and thus potentially could have medicinal properties though known have been researched. They also contain a possibly deadly neurotoxin.

You can help preserve pitcher plants by not collecting them from the wild and only buying them from dealers who grow them from seed or tissue culture.



Whitetop Pitcher Plant- Adult -
Endangered



Red Pitcher Plant – Adult -
Endangered



Hooded Pitcher Plant - Adult

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