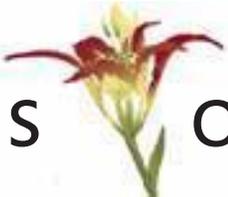


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Newsletter of the  
**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve**

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March - April 2013

### **Chairman's Message**

By Barb Hoffman

It warms my heart to open the Tampa Bay Times and see listed under "Things To Do" not just one or two, but usually four or five programs and events going on during a single week at Brooker! Not only that, but last week when I was there on a Sunday, a day when the Ed Center is closed, I counted 24 cars in the parking lot, all folks who were there to hike the nature trails and enjoy the outdoors! The week before that, again on a Sunday, I witnessed a group of 64 very excited adult hikers just beginning their hike. I don't know who they were or where they were from, but my heart sang to see them there!

To think only two years ago, there was talk of "mothballing" the buildings and shutting the entire place down, the "dark ages" I call them. Many thanks to our county staff, especially Paul Cozzie and Mary Campbell, and county commissioners, especially Karen Seel and Susan Latvala, for working to keep the Ed Center and trails open. Thanks to you, Friends, for your words and letters of encouragement during that time of need. And thanks to all the volunteers who just kept volunteering during those dark times. It is only through crucial diligence, vital effort, and positive attitude that our beautiful Preserve remains open to us who are devoted to its health and welfare.

**Barb**

### Chairman's Message

by Barbara Hoffman . . . . .	p. 1
Watercolor Lessons, 3/2 & 3/16 . . . . .	p. 2
Wildlife Safari, 4/6 . . . . .	p. 3
Wildlife Safari Sponsorships . . . . .	p. 4
Walk for Wildlife, 4/20 . . . . .	p. 5
Springtime is Noisy by Craig Huegel . . . . .	p. 6
Friends Campout, 1/19 . . . . .	p. 8
Fire Cider, by Brenda Klindt . . . . .	p. 9
Slash pine finds home . . . . .	p. 9
UF/IFAS Extension . . . . .	p.10
Volunteer News. . . . .	p.10
Nature Store News by Kathleen Nichter . . . . .	p.11
Brooker Book Club News by Laurie Angyn . . . . .	p.12
Wildflower Garden News & Tip by Pam Brown . . . . .	p.12
Upcoming Programs & Events . . . . .	p.13
Mission Statements/Contacts . . . . .	p.16

Don't forget to like the BCP Environmental Education Center on facebook - [Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center](#)

Have a question, but can't find the answer? Visit [www.AskExtension.org](http://www.AskExtension.org) or stop by the Education Center and drop your question into the "Ask an Agent" box.

# WATERCOLOR ART LESSONS

By Carol Loiacono

\$15 / class

Saturdays, March 2 & 16 Class begins 9:30. Students should be at the Preserve by 9:00 to get ready. Students may take one or both classes. These are plenaire sessions, outside, in a beautiful Preserve location. Payment can be made on class day.

## Supply list:

### Paints -- transparent watercolors

Cadmium Yellow Light  
Alizarin Crimson  
French Ultramarine Blue  
Phthalo Blue  
Cerulean Blue  
Cobalt Blue  
Phthalo Green  
Sap Green  
Yellow Ochre  
Burnt Sienna



**Paper** -- 140 lb. weight or thicker-block, pad, or individual sheets (foam core or other board to clip individual sheets onto).

**Pallet** -- plastic pallet with lid in a large size is best

### Paper towels

**Brushes** -- assorted sizes & shapes (pointed, square, & rigger) suitable for watercolor (short handled )

**Easel & Chair** -- if you wish to sit while painting

### Water Container

**Pencil** -- #2b eraser

**Small Pen Knife** -- or a cut up credit card!

**RSVP** by emailing [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com)

Questions and more information: Carol Loiacono (artist) (727) 934-1482  
Barbara Hoffman (chairman, Friends of Brooker Creek) ( 727) 410-0939

**Hope to see you there!**

## Hey Kids!

If you are between the ages of 4-12  
Bring an adult and join the...



Saturday, April 6, 2013  
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Join this fun and educational adventure for children through 12 years old! The children begin with a blank Wildlife Passport, then walk along a one-mile loop of adventure with live owls, snakes, baby raccoons, turtles, turkey chicks, and more! As kids visit each Wildlife Station, their Passport gets stamped. At the end, kids get a special prize for completing the journey. Cost is \$5 per child. This event is cosponsored by Pinellas County Extension Service and Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve.

Questions? Call 727-934-2680  
Email [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com)



Photo by Patti Young

### Jobs!

- \* Skins & Bones Education Tent
- \* Prize Table
- \* Safari Guide
- \* Registration
- \* Parking Attendent
- \* Set Up the Day Before
- \* Clean Up at End

## Volunteers Needed for Wildlife Safari!

Successful events require lots of help. We need you! Volunteers are needed for a variety of jobs. Please email [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com) what you would like to do and which two hour shift works for you: 8:30-10:30, 10:30-12:30, 12:30-2:30. Thank you!

# Sponsorship Form



Saturday, April 6, 2013, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
For kids ages 4-12

Thank you for sponsoring this fun and educational adventure for kids. Your business name and logo will be placed on a sign in a prominent location as a sponsor of a wildlife station along the safari.

Wildlife stations cost \$200 each. You may choose to sponsor one station by yourself (\$200) or share a sponsorship with another sponsor (\$100 each).

Sponsorship Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_\$200 \_\_\_\_\_\$100

Name of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Please email your logo by 3/29 to: [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com)  
Check payable to: Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve  
Mail check and this form to: 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Questions? Call Barb Hoffman 727-410-0939 or email [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com)

# WALK FOR WILDLIFE

## Brooker Creek Preserve

Saturday, April 20, 2013

8:00 am - 4:00 pm

\$10 per person

Enjoy the beautiful, peaceful hiking trails of Brooker Creek Preserve and help wildlife while doing so! This fundraiser is open to everyone: children, adults, groups, families, or single individuals. You may choose the hiking loop that suits you best: one mile, 1.5 miles, 2.8 miles, or 4.0 miles. These trails are open all year for free, including this day, but for those people who would like to help restoration efforts at Brooker Creek Preserve, your \$10 donation will get you a beautiful t-shirt and the knowledge that you have done a small part to help the cause. Water stations and roaming naturalists will be on the trails for your benefit. Please include this event as part of your Earth Day celebration! This event is co-sponsored by Pinellas County Extension Service, Pinellas County Government, and Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve.

### Volunteers Needed for Walk for Wildlife!

- Roaming Naturalists

- Registration Table

Two-hour shifts available: 8-10, 10-12, 12-2,  
2-4

Contact [fobcp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fobcp@tampabay.rr.com) if you would like to volunteer!



Photos by Patti & Mike Young

## Springtime is Noisy

By: Craig N. Huegel

With the number of daylight hours lengthening, Florida is leaving winter behind and entering spring. That means everything gets a bit noisier at Brooker Creek Preserve because the wildlife there begin the cycle of courtship and rebirth. The selection of a mate is far from being a random event and for many species the selection process requires making some noise.



Male and female cardinals,  
photos by Mike Young

In the world of wildlife, it is normally the female that gets to choose. Males are forced to get noticed and in doing so, have to demonstrate their fitness to potential mates. They need to prove that they are the best possible partner. The competition is fierce as there are often surplus males and only the best ones will succeed in fathering offspring. Those that fail have to wait another full year before being given another chance, so there is a lot riding on strutting your stuff.

Being loud and boisterous may end up gaining you a partner, but it just as easily may cause you to end up as dinner for a predator. Brightly colored males, calling their hearts out from a visible perch call attention to themselves. It's a risk males make each spring

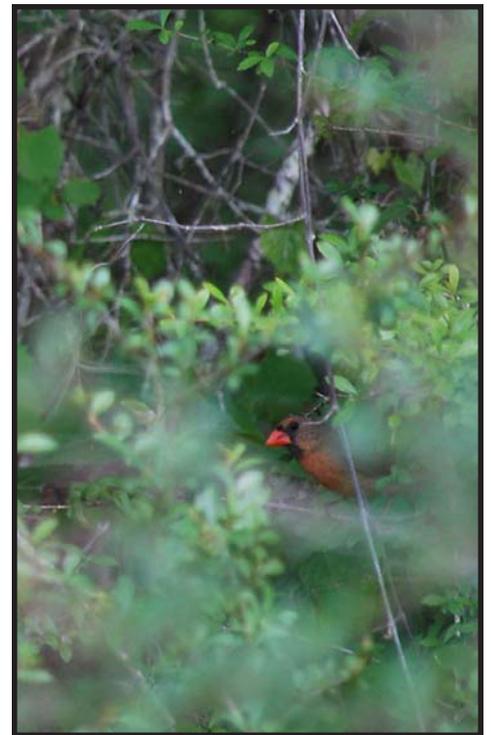
because it is the only means to their end. Females are intent on observing every male near their territory and they will not mate with one that does not make the cut.

Research, for example, has shown that female frogs listen to calling males and judge them not only on the strength of their calls, but also on the number of times they call in a specific period of time.

Male frogs have to be loud and demonstrate stamina. If they can't keep up the pace over time, and tire, the females will choose a different male. The same is true for a great many birds.

Vocalizations are most widely used by male anurans (frogs and toads), crocodylians (e.g. alligators), and birds. Few mammals resort to showing off this way to attract mates. Mammals use visual and olfactory (smell) clues that are not as easily detected by those other groups. Because calling (and often adding visual elements as well) is exceedingly dangerous, males use it cautiously and only for important reasons. In the spring, these calls are used to defend a territory and to broadcast their suitability as a mate. Once a mate has been secured, most males use it far less frequently and only when defending a territory boundary seems to make sense.

As you might expect, the calls of each species are unique and easy to discern from others. It makes no sense ecologically, for males of different species to get too concerned over each other or for



females to pay attention to anything they would not eventually select as a mate. These call patterns are inherited for the most part, but some birds are taught local dialects by listening to their fathers. Others, like the Northern mockingbird, pick up the calls of several different species living around them; the difference is that they use those base calls to form their own unique calling pattern that is quite easy to tell apart.

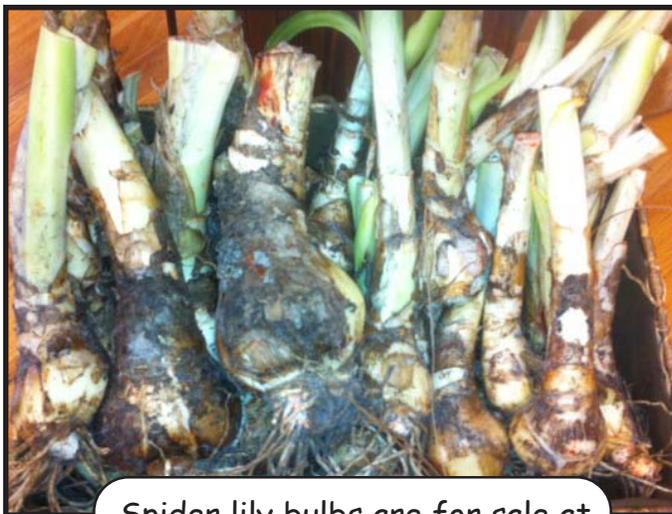
Wildlife call when their potential mates are actively paying attention. Again, it makes no sense to draw attention to yourself if it's not going to maximize your potential outcome. Therefore, birds tend to call most during the daytime while frogs and toads do most of their calling after dark - especially when ponds and wetlands are holding enough water for their tadpoles to develop.

Seasoned biologists learn to identify all of these species by their calls. Even though males are often showing off using visual clues, they can be cryptic and difficult to see. Their calls, however, may travel over 100 yards. Learning to identify these species by their vocalizations is often the only way of knowing they are present. If you are not yet an expert in bird, and frog and toad calls there are a lot of resources available to you. We are living in a world of computer/telephone apps and it is now easy to find and download exceptional ones that will enable you to learn and identify the many species residing at Brooker Creek Preserve. It is not difficult to learn and it makes hiking the woods far more interesting if you know what you are listening to.



Photo by Patti Young

### New at the Nature Store:



Spider lily bulbs are for sale at the Nature Store. Large bulbs are \$4 each or 3 for \$10. Small bulbs are \$2 each or 3 for \$5.

Spider lily bloom. These plants like full sun and wet soil but can live in dry soil once fully established.

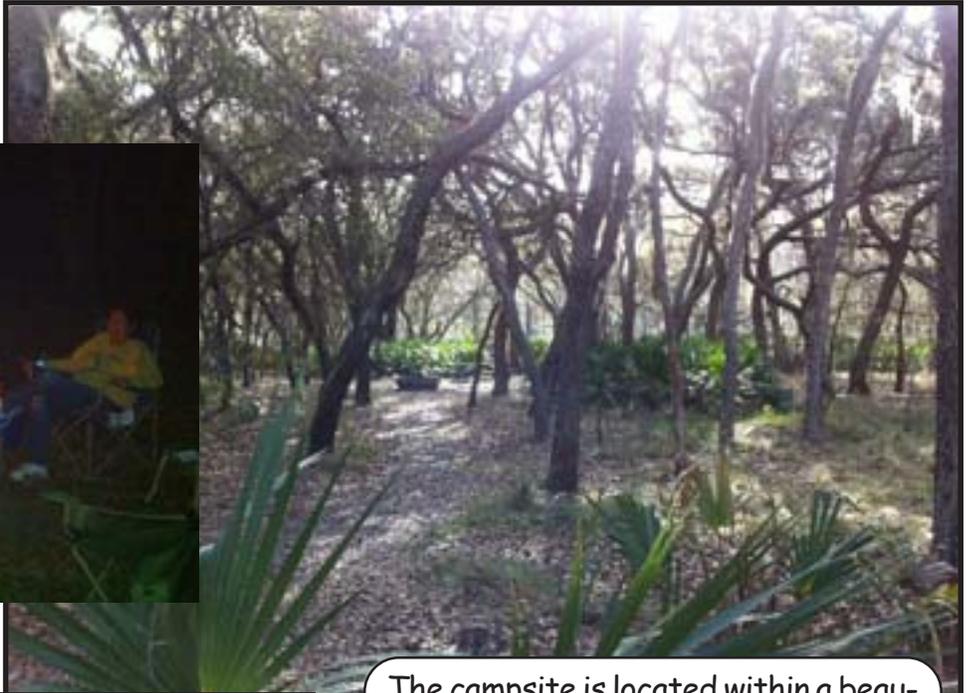


## Friends Campout - a really great time!

A great time was had by all at the Friends Campout on Saturday and Sunday, January 19-20, at Four Lakes Hammock in Brooker Creek Preserve. Four Lakes Hammock is located in the extreme north-west corner of the Preserve and is closed to the public. It is only open to group camping for groups that do volunteer work for the Preserve. Seven campers enjoyed a bonfire, s'mores, stories, night sounds, and a rousing game of Bat-Moth. We awoke to Barbara's strawberry pancakes and fresh coffee followed by a hike around the Four Lakes Hammock area. We were surprised that the area was quite hilly with lots of elevation change. The hike provided many interesting sights including the four lakes, dry swamps, a small area with lots of epiphytes including native orchids, huge sprawling oak trees, and many wildflowers. We are hoping to plan another campout this fall. What a blast!



Making s'mores!



The campsite is located within a beautiful oak hammock and contains a firepit and a picnic table. Campers brought tables and camp chairs along with their tents and sleeping bags.



Birdwatching during the hike.

The campsite is surrounded by swampland that is dry this time of year.



*Friends member and fellow camper, Brenda Klindt, shared with us her recipe for Fire Cider, her family method of warding off colds and flu. It's amazing what you can learn during a campout!*

Fire cider is an immune boosting tonic with antibacterial, antiviral, antimicrobial and antifungal properties. It can be taken daily as a preventive and also at the onset of colds or flu. It is an expectorant, breaking up congestion. Fire cider is also beneficial to the cardiovascular system. Several ingredients support optimal cardiovascular function and are used by many to treat high blood pressure and high cholesterol. It increases circulation and warms the body.

### **Fire Cider**

cup fresh grated ginger

cup chopped onion

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup fresh grated horseradish

$\frac{1}{8}$  cup chopped garlic

1 tsp cayenne powder (can use 2 fresh cayenne peppers)

1 qt. Apple cider vinegar with the Mother (I use Bragg's)

Combine ginger, onion, horseradish, garlic and cayenne in a quart sized glass jar. Fill the jar to within an inch of the top with natural organic apple cider vinegar, immersing all of the ingredients. If using a metal lid, place a piece of wax paper on top between jar and lid. Allow to steep at room temperature in a dark cabinet for 8 weeks. After 8 weeks, strain through a cheesecloth, making sure to squeeze the excess apple cider vinegar out of the solid material. Discard solid material and bottle the tonic in a glass amber bottle. Apple cider vinegar is a natural preservative and so your Fire Cider does not need to be refrigerated. One "shot glass" (about 1 oz.) a day is good.



### **Slash Pine Finds a Good Home!**

Remember the slash pine/holiday tree purchased from our native plant nursery by Evan Earle and Marion Youngue? Evan and Marion kindly donated it back to the Nature Store after the holidays with the hopes of it finding a good home. Well, it did! John Williams and his daughter (photo, left) visited the Preserve and hiked the trails on 1/3/13. They fell in love with the little tree, and took it home to plant in their yard near Sunset Beach in Tarpon Springs!

### **Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve**

**New Members: Joan Tobey, Jan Allyn, Mary Ann Schweitzer, Jay Sockriter, Peggy Wagner**

Friends of Brooker Creek  
3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs,  
FL 34688. Please use this address on  
any correspondence.

# UF/IFAS Extension

As UF/IFAS Pinellas County Extension staff continues to run the Environmental Education Center at Brooker Creek Preserve, we are working to increase our presence to the public. UF/IFAS Extension is considered the "best kept secret" and we want to change that. You can help us by educating yourselves about all of the services Extension offers and sharing to visitors what we are all about. Our new brand promise: *UF/IFAS Extension provides practical education you can trust, to help people, businesses and communities solve problems, develop skills and build a better future.*

Our focus at the Center is on natural resource education utilizing resources from the University of Florida. Please feel free to speak with any of the BCP staff to inquire more about UF/IFAS Pinellas County Extension or visit: [www.pinellascountyextension.org](http://www.pinellascountyextension.org)

## Volunteer News

By Lara Miller  
Natural Resource Agent  
Pinellas County Extension  
University of Florida/IFAS

**Wild Wednesdays** are going great and will continue on through April. We have photo, botany and forestry hikes along with special after-school fun 4-H activities. Please help us spread the word! (See Upcoming Events for details.)

**Important Date: March 9, noon - 2 pm North-County Volunteer Celebration.** Please join us for lunch, friends and fun! RSVP to Sarah at [SMarkofski@PinellasCounty.org](mailto:SMarkofski@PinellasCounty.org) or (727) 464-3571 as soon as possible. The event will be at Brooker Creek Preserve on Saturday, March 9th, 2013 from 12:00pm - 2:00pm.

**Please remember:** When interacting with the public, try to make positive and constructive "teachable moments" out of difficult situations. We don't want to scold the public for things they might not know are "wrong". Instead, we want to offer positive educational experiences so they don't make the same mistake twice. Example: You see people walking off trail. You



can kindly explain to them to stay on the trail for their safety and the safety of wildlife.

### Volunteer Opportunity:

Would you like to be involved in Community Outreach on behalf of Brooker Creek Preserve? Examples of community outreach are presentations at libraries, home owners associations and schools, delivering program fliers throughout the County, working at a booth representing the Preserve at various events, and more! If you are interested, please contact Lara at [lmiller@pinellascounty.org](mailto:lmiller@pinellascounty.org).

**Every hour counts!** Please continue to log your hours and let Julie know if your hours need to be adjusted.

If you would like to join our active volunteer group at Brooker Creek Preserve, please call us at (727) 453-6800.

## Nature Store News

By Kathleen Nichter

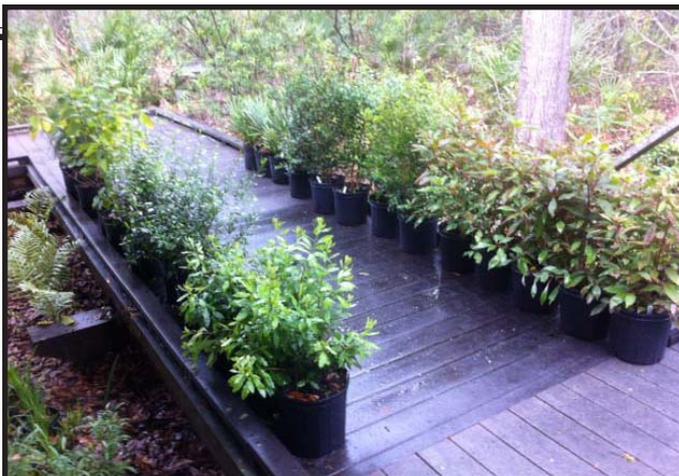
Tourist season arrived and the Nature Store sales really show it. In January and February we saw an increase in sales of t-shirts, BCP mugs, and BCP pins, items that visitors to the area normally purchase.

Books, both new and used, continue to fly off the shelves. Our selection of books and the amount we keep in stock are both slated to grow over the next few months, so be sure to visit and check out the shelves. Volunteers and regular visitors continue to donate both new and used books, some autographed. Those are very popular and very much appreciated.

We added a small native plant nursery, now housed on the deck just outside the Nature Store door. Tell your friends that they can now find native plants for their landscaping at the Friends of Brooker Creek Nature Store.

By the beginning of March we should have a new credit card system in place. We will be using a card swipe on a smart phone! The old system of paying through Pay Pal added complexity we didn't need to checking out, and unfortunately caused lines during busy times.

We very much appreciate the volunteers who work to keep our store open, but we do need more people. If the credit card process kept you away, please re-think taking on a shift once or twice a month.



### Announcing!

A new addition to the Friends Nature Store! A Native Plant Nursery!!

#### Vines:

Coral Honeysuckle  
Yellow Jessamine  
Cross Vine

#### Shrubs:

Walters Viburnum  
Wax Myrtle  
Simpson Stopper  
Saw Palmetto  
Firebush  
Coastal Privet  
Beauty Berry

#### Other:

Muhly Grass  
Coontie  
Red Salvia  
Wild Coffee  
Slash Pine Trees  
Spider Lily Bulbs

February-March-April  
Store Hours  
Wed. - Sat., 9 am - 4 pm

## Brooker Book Club News

By Laurie Angyn

We have enjoyed the books we have read in our Florida-themed collection and have had interesting and thought-provoking discussions about them. We have room for 11 and reserving a seat is easy - just go to the Brooker Creek Event sign up for the book club. <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/4035520350/eorg>. The book list is posted, provide your own book. Speaking of which - you do not have to read the book - if it looks like something you would like to hear discussed, please join us. But be advised - there will be spoilers! You may sign up for multiple or just one discussion. Feel free to bring your own coffee. We meet on the first Saturday of the month from 9:30 am to 10:30 or so.

## Upcoming Books on our List:

**March:** From Yellow Dog Democrats to Red State Republicans: FL Politics from 1940 by David R. Colburn

**April:** The Yearling by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

**May:** Rose Cottage Chronicles - Civil War Letters of the Bryant-Stephens Families of Northern FL

**June:** Sunshine Paradise: A History of Florida Tourism by Tracy J. Revels

**July:** Star Island- by Carl Hiaasen

**August:** Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida by Gar R. Mormino



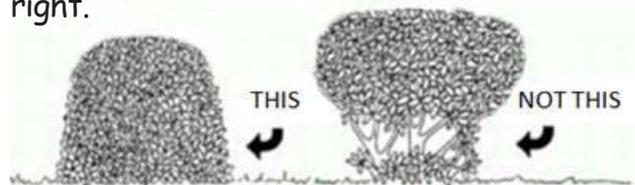
## News from the Wildflower Garden

By Pam Brown

January marked the first meeting of the Wildflower Garden Club. We will learn about a different native wildflower at each monthly meeting and then spend time tending to our Wildflower Garden and the Native Shrub Demonstration area. At our first meeting we learned about *Conoclinium coelestinum*, better known as blue mist flower. Each participant received a small plant to take home. There was not much going on in the garden, but we did see new growth at the base of many of the plants, and there were several violets in bloom and one lone gaillardia. We deadheaded the many plants and collected some seeds to sell in the Nature Store. Remember, we meet at the last Saturday of each month to continue our maintenance of this garden area. Please consider coming out to join us from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. There will be breakfast snacks, coffee and juice. Bring your tools and gloves and I hope to see you there!

## Pam's Gardening Tip

It is time to prune, if you have not already done so. Early spring is a good time to manage the size of shrubs in the landscape. If you have hedge plants that are getting sparse foliage at the bottom of each plant, you will want to prune them so that the top of each plant is narrower than the base. This insures that there is sufficient light to encourage full growth all the way to the bottom of each plant as shown in the picture at right.



(Picture from University of Florida/IFAS fact sheet "Pruning Landscape Trees and Shrubs")

**Brooker Creek Preserve  
Environmental Education Center  
Upcoming Events**  
3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs.  
(727) 453-6800  
[www.brookercreekpreserve.org](http://www.brookercreekpreserve.org)

### March 2013 Programs

**Thurs., March 7, 14, 21, 28**

**Book Time at Brooker, 10:30 - 11:15**

Children ages 3 to 5 connect to the wonders of the natural world through a story and a craft, game or other hands-on activity. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., Mar. 2, 16, 23, 30**

**Brooker Creek Guided Hike, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

See how the land has changed over time and the ecological footprints left by those changes. Closed-toe shoes, water and hat recommended. Best for ages 6 and older. Free; advance registration required.

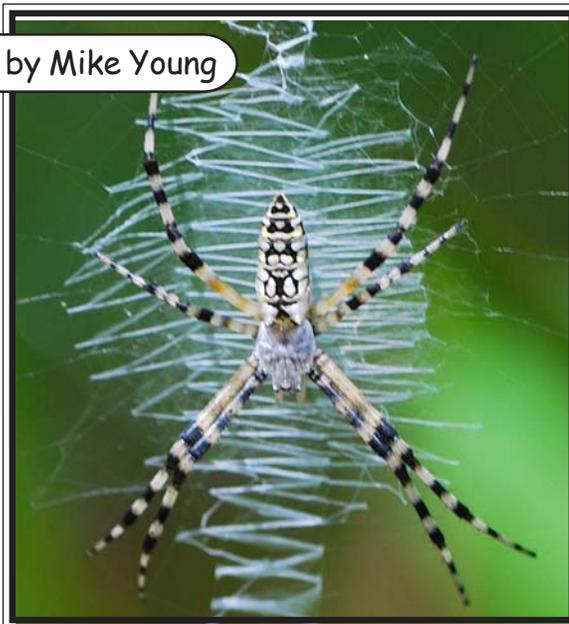
**Sat., Mar. 2, 9:30 - 10:30 am**

**Brooker Creek Book Club:** Hosted by the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, the Brooker Book Club meets the first Saturday of each month. Geared toward adults, the book list includes novels by Florida authors, past and present, with archeology, biography, politics and history storylines. March's book selected for discussion is *From Yellow Dog Democrats to Red State Republicans: Florida Politics from 1940* by David R. Colburn. Advance registration is required as seating is limited. Free; Brooker Creek Preserve.

**Sat., Mar. 2, 9:00 am - noon**

**Citizen Scientist Workshop:** Join instructor Lara Miller, UF Extension for a training to engage volunteers in the collection of local ecological information; and introduction to Nature's Notebook, a project of the USA National Phenology Network. The class includes both an indoor and outdoor components so please come prepared to make some observations outside. Free.

Photo by Mike Young



**March 6, 23, 8:30 - 10:00 am**

**Guided Photography Hike:** In a brief classroom session, local photographers and master naturalists Karl and Kathleen Nichter highlight the seasonal features that help participants capture the natural beauty of the preserve, then hike the boardwalk and trails looking for those shots that reflect the season. Recommended for adults and children 12 and over. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., March 9, 8:00 - 10:30 am**

**Birds of Brooker Hike:** Join this special hike identifying common birds of Brooker Creek Preserve. Meander along the one-mile trail to gather information on the birds seen and heard. Binoculars will be helpful. Bring water.

**Sat., March 9, 10:00 - 11:00 am**

**Birds of Prey:** Several live birds of prey will be used to illustrate aspects of predator-prey relationships, adaptations that ensure success as predators, and their role in maintaining

**As a winter special, Brooker Creek Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each Wednesday in February, March and April 2013, in addition to Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.**

healthy, balanced ecosystems. The basic natural history of each species is also discussed along with the impact of humans on their habitats and populations. Free.

**Wed., March 13, 10:00 - 11:30 am**

**Botany Hike:** Join a Brooker Creek Naturalist to explore the fascinating plants found on the Preserve while identifying wildflowers, ferns, epiphytes, trees and more. The ecology of various plant communities will also be examined. Best suited for adult participants. Come prepared with your camera and questions. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., March 16, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

**Community Garden and Rain Harvesting Workshop:** Learn how to save rainwater in a recycled plastic barrel. The collected water may be used for plant beds, potted plants and vegetable and herb gardens. In this free class, the group will learn how to make and set up a rain barrel. An optional rain barrel may be purchased for \$25 with advance registration. Registration required.

**Wed, March 20, 10:00 - 11:30 am**

**Forestry Hike:** Join a local natural resources agent and hike along two miles of boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. Come prepared with binoculars, cameras and questions and questions can also be researched in the resource room upon return to the education center. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., March 23, 10:30 am - noon**

**Introduction to Plant Identification:** Join a local Extension specialist and examine the basics of plant identification, from using simple keys to identifying critical characteristics that will help any would-be botanist in the field. An emphasis will be placed on flowering plants, but ferns will be included as well. Registration is required and all materials will be provided. Wear comfortable shoes, as part of the class will be outdoors. Free.

**Wed., March 27, 2:00 - 3:30 pm**

**After School Fun 4-H Activity:** Join us for fun, activity-based learning adventures. On the 4th Wednesday of February, March and April, an Extension specialist will lead you and your family through a fun activity-based learning adventures designed by 4-H to present the wonders of the Natural World. There'll be an opportunity to sign-up to become a Brooker Creek Explorer and continue with the fun, learning activities throughout the year. Please register each member of the family, as space and supplies are limited. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat, March 30, 10:30 am - noon**

**Family Herpetology Series III - Gophers:** Join an expert herpetologist and learn about Gopher tortoises. Brooker Creek Preserve is home to many of these incredible creatures. Find out facts about their diversity, ecology and conservation. Stop by the Exhibit Hall afterwards to crawl through a larger-than-life sized Gopher burrow. Recommended for all ages. Free; advance registration required.

### April 2013 Programs

**Thurs., Apr. 4, 11, 18, 25**

**Book Time at Brooker, 10:30 - 11:15**

Children ages 3 to 5 connect to the wonders of the natural world through a story and a craft, game or other hands-on activity. Free; advance registration required.

**Wed., April 3, 10:00 - 11:30 am**

**Botany Hike:** Join a Brooker Creek Naturalist to explore the fascinating plants found on the Preserve while identifying wildflowers, ferns,

**Sat., April 6, 9:30 - 10:30 am**

**Brooker Creek Book Club:** Hosted by the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, the Brooker Book Club meets the first Saturday of each month. Geared toward adults, the book list includes novels by



Florida authors, past and present, with archeology, biography, politics and history storylines. March's book selected for discussion is *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. Advance registration is required as seating is limited. Free;

**Sat, April 6, 10:30 am - noon**

**Owls, Owls, Owls:** Join Barbara Walker from Clearwater Audobon as she "shows and tells" all about owls. This program will include live animals and is great for the whole family! Free.

**Sat, April 6, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm**

**Wildlife Safari:** Join in the fun at this educational and fun adventure for children four through 12 years old! The children begin with a blank Wildlife Passport, then walk along a one-mile loop of adventure with live owls, snakes, baby raccoons, turkey chicks, and more! As kids visit each Wildlife Station, their Passport gets stamped. Cost is \$5 per child (due at the event). This event is co-sponsored by Pinellas County, IFAS, and Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve. Questions? Call 727-934-2680 or Email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com.

**April 10, 27, 8:30 - 10:00 am**

**Guided Photography Hike:** In a brief classroom session, local photographers and master naturalists Karl and Kathleen Nichter highlight the seasonal features that help participants capture the natural beauty of the preserve, then hike the boardwalk and trails looking for those shots that reflect the season. Recommended for adults and children 12 and over. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., April 13, 8:00 - 10:30 am**

**Birds of Brooker Hike:** Join this special hike identifying common birds of Brooker Creek Preserve. Meander along the one-mile trail to gather information on the birds seen and heard. Binoculars will be helpful. Bring water.

**Wed., April 17, 10:00 - 11:30 am**

**Fun-Time Forestry Hike:** Join a local natural resources agent and hike along two miles of

boardwalks and natural trails at Brooker Creek Preserve. Come prepared with binoculars, cameras and questions and questions can also be researched in the resource room upon return to the education center. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., April 27, 9:00 - 10:30 am**

**Brooker Creek Guided Hike:** See how the land has changed over time and the ecological footprints left by those changes on this 0.75 mile walk. Closed-toe shoes, water and hat recommended. Best for ages 6 and older. Free; advance registration required.

**Wed., April 24, 2:00 - 3:30 pm**

**After School Fun 4-H Activity:** On the fourth Wednesday of February, March and April, an Extension specialist will lead you and your family through a fun, activity-based learning adventure designed by 4-H to help the group understand the wonders of the natural world. There will be an opportunity to sign-up to become a Brooker Creek Explorer and continue the fun, learning-based activities throughout the year. Please register each member of the family, as space and supplies are limited. Free; advance registration required.

**Sat., April 27**

**Explore the ferns of Brooker Creek Preserve:** The Preserve is home to many of Florida's fabulous ferns. Explore the fascinating world of the history of these ancient plants during a classroom activity then take a stroll to meet the plants inhabiting the center. Identification tips, interesting facts and more await participants. Free.

### Did you know?

The donations we receive in the donation boxes in the Education Center are earmarked for programs at the Preserve. Nearly all natural history programs at the Preserve are sponsored by the Friends using this funding.

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve - Mission Statement:** The mission of the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve is to provide public support for the Preserve through fund raising, volunteer programs, and education to ensure that the Preserve remains a natural wilderness for future generations.

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve - Land Use Position Statement:** The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve support land uses within the boundaries of Brooker Creek Preserve which have a main purpose that furthers the preservation, conservation, restoration or protection of the land and resources of the Brooker Creek Preserve.

**Current mission statement of the Parks Department** - it is at least three years old and does not reflect the many changes in staffing and resources over that time. The newly formed Parks and Conservation Resources Department has not yet developed mission/vision statements.

The mission of the Pinellas County Park Department is to provide a continuing program of acquisition, development, maintenance, and protection of park areas for healthful outdoor activities.

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve:**  
www.FriendsOfBrookerCreekPreserve.org  
Email: fobcp@tampabay.rr.com  
Voicemail: (727) 934-2680

**Brooker Creek Preserve:**  
Phone: (727) 453-6900  
Website: www.brookercreekpreserve.org

**Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center** is located at 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs, Florida, 34688.  
Phone: (727) 453-6800  
Center Hours: Thurs. - Sat., 9am - 4pm  
**The Ed Center and Nature Store are open Wednesdays during March, April, and May.**

**Friends Nature Store** is located in the Education Center. Store Hours: Thurs. - Sat., 9am - 4pm

**Preserve Hiking Trails** open 7 days a week, 7:00am to 30 minutes before sunset. Closed the day after Thanksgiving and Dec. 25.

**Horse Trails** open 7 days a week, all year, sunrise to sunset.

**Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve Board of Directors:**  
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**This newsletter is published every other month.** Please submit articles to Newsletter Editor Dr. Craig Huegel (727) 422-6583 or email Huegelc55@aol.com  
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