



Magnolia Chapter

800 Ocala Rd., Ste 300-142

Tallahassee FL 32304

(850) 663-4361

lbrooks2wd@nettally.com · magnolia.fnpschapters.org

February 23, 2014

Mr. Steven W. Woodmansee, President
Florida Native Plant Society
PO Box 278
Melbourne FL 32902-0278
Via email at president@fnps.org

Subject: Mentor Award Nomination

Dear President Woodmansee,

The Magnolia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) is pleased to nominate Dan Miller for the FNPS Mentor Award for 2014. Dan has generously given his time and energy to the Magnolia Chapter for the full life of the Chapter, from its beginning as the Upsy Daisy Plant Uplift Society in Tallahassee. He served on the Chapter Board of Directors for many years, was the primary caretaker of a Chapter-sponsored native plant garden within Maclay Gardens State Park, and, most importantly, has contributed countless native plants to yards in the Tallahassee region through his native plant nursery.

Growing Natives

Gardening with native plants was a hobby for Dan for many years, and when he retired from his “day job,” he made it his second career. Since 1990, Dan has tended Trillium Gardens, his wholesale native plant nursery in Tallahassee. During that time, he has learned to propagate native plants from seeds or cuttings collected in a manner that has little or no impact on the natural communities of these plants. His early mentor was Chuck Salter, and Dan went on to develop propagation protocols for a number of north Florida specialties, focusing on species unique to the Red Hills and Marianna karst regions. He has shared his knowledge of native plant propagation with Magnolia Chapter members through presentations at our program meetings through the years. He also has welcomed members and interested folks who visit his nursery, where they learn how to propagate and care for native plants and purchase plants at very reasonable prices. Many of his plants may be purchased at Native Nurseries, a retail native nursery in Tallahassee, where they reach the general public and find their way into yards throughout north Florida. More recently Dan has contract grown large quantities of native azaleas (*Rhododendron* sp.) and mountain laurels (*Kalmia latifolia*) for special projects to restore spring and stream banks in the Econfina Creek Water Management Area. As Dan nears retirement from this second career, he is grooming a young native plant grower to take his place and ensure that these native plant contributions to the community continue.

Plant of the Month

For the past several years, Dan has brought a plant-of-the-month to Magnolia Chapter program meetings, usually a species in seasonal bloom. A prime specimen is donated to the Chapter and raffle tickets sold during our pre-meeting social. Before the guest speaker begins, Dan educates the audience on the plant’s identity, flowering time, and care, then the winning ticket is drawn

The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.

and the plant given to its joyful new owner. Dan also offers the plant for sale at meetings, a nice convenience for members and visitors.

Public Outreach and Chapter Support

Dan regularly participates in the Chapter's educational displays at regional nature festivals, where he sells native plants to festival visitors and donates a portion of the proceeds to the Magnolia Chapter. Dan has a friendly and patient manner with everyone, and teaches those who purchase plants where to plant and how to care for them in order to be successful in their native gardening. He is generous with his time and will talk with people about what spaces they have in their yard, which plants will flourish in those spaces, and which plants will attract pollinators or serve as good ground cover.

Wolf Creek Trout Lily Preserve

Dan was instrumental in preserving a 140-acre tract of land near Cairo, Georgia, which contains the most concentrated population of Dimpled trout lily (*Erythronium umbilicatum*) known anywhere in the world. The site also contains populations of Spotted wakerobin (*Trillium maculatum*), Green-fly orchid (*Epidendrum conopseum*), Crane-fly orchid (*Tipularia discolor*), and Twayblade (*Listera australis*). When it became known that this property was slated for development, Dan spearheaded the effort to raise funds so that this property could be purchased for preservation. Working with others in the Magnolia Chapter, private donors, and the Georgia Land Conservation Program, Dan's efforts were successful and the property was purchased and donated to Grady County, Georgia, in 2009. Dan continues to be involved in the management activities at Wolf Creek Preserve, leading wildflower tours during the blooming season and assisting in an ongoing project to remove invasive species at the preserve. For more information about the history of the acquisition see: www.wolfcreektroutlilypreserve.org/#!/history/cjg9.

In summary, Dan has worked in a quiet, steadfast manner for more than 30 years to raise awareness of the importance of native plants, and doing all he can to see them established in Tallahassee and statewide. He is beloved by fellow Magnolians.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Magnolia Chapter Board of Directors,



Leigh Brooks
President