

# THE FOOD IN OUR FORESTS

## AN INTRODUCTION TO EDIBLE, NATIVE PLANTS OF LEE COUNTY

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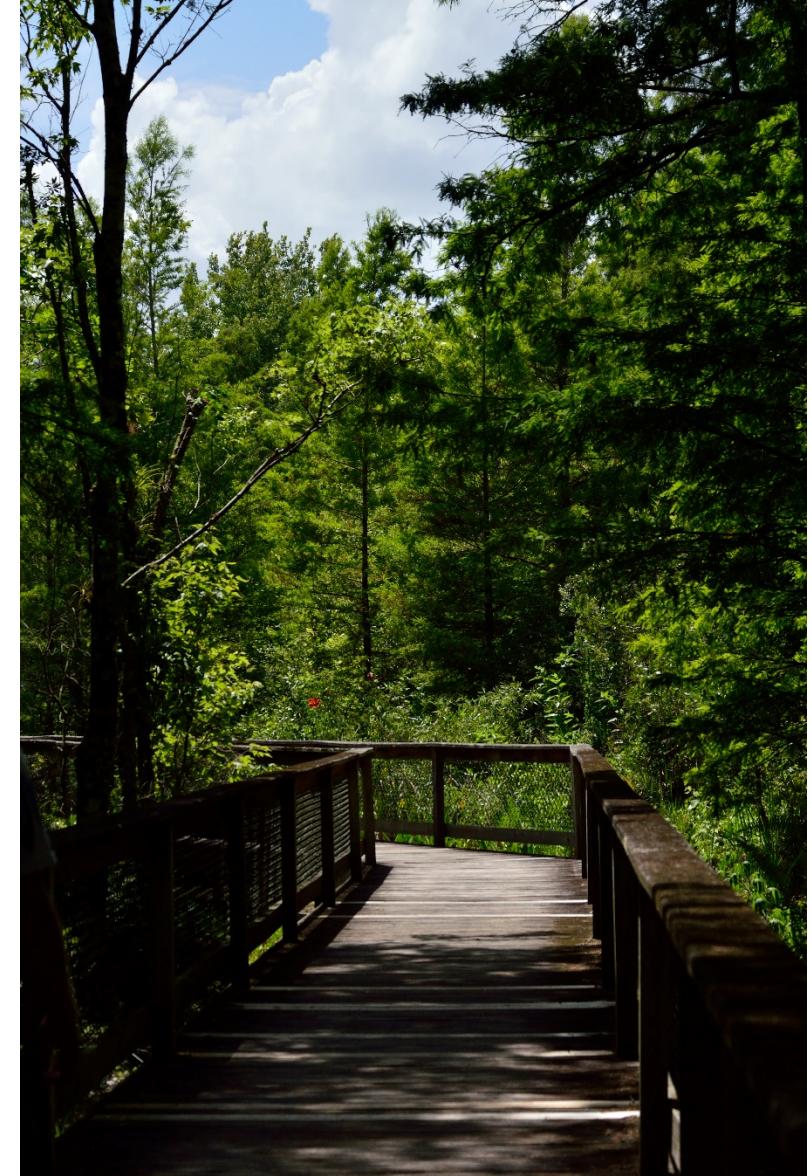
Kara Tyler-Julian

Florida Native Plant Society: Coccoloba chapter

April 20, 2017

# Disclaimer

- Eat at your own risk
- Be confident with identification or consult an expert
- Do your own research
- Small amounts first



# Foraging guidelines

- Not permitted on state/county lands
- Beware of contaminants: roadsides, bodies of water, fancy landscapes
- Wash and cook properly
- Don't eat endangered or rare species
- Consider wildlife resources
- Best advice: grow your own!



# Criteria

- PLANTS
  - Native to and found in Lee county
  - Abundant/easy to find
  - Easy to prepare
  - Easy to identify
  - Highly palatable
- 
- Not included: endangered or rare species, species not found in Lee county.

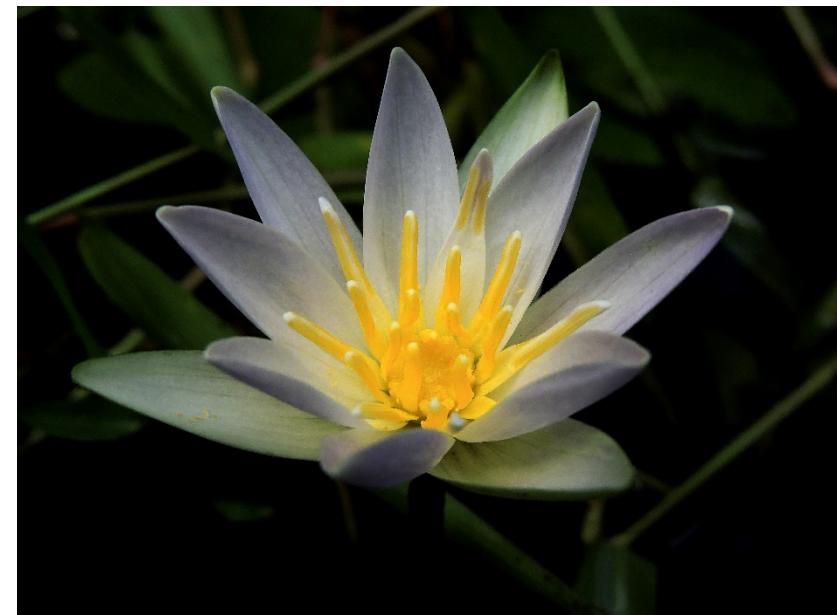


# Wetland edibles



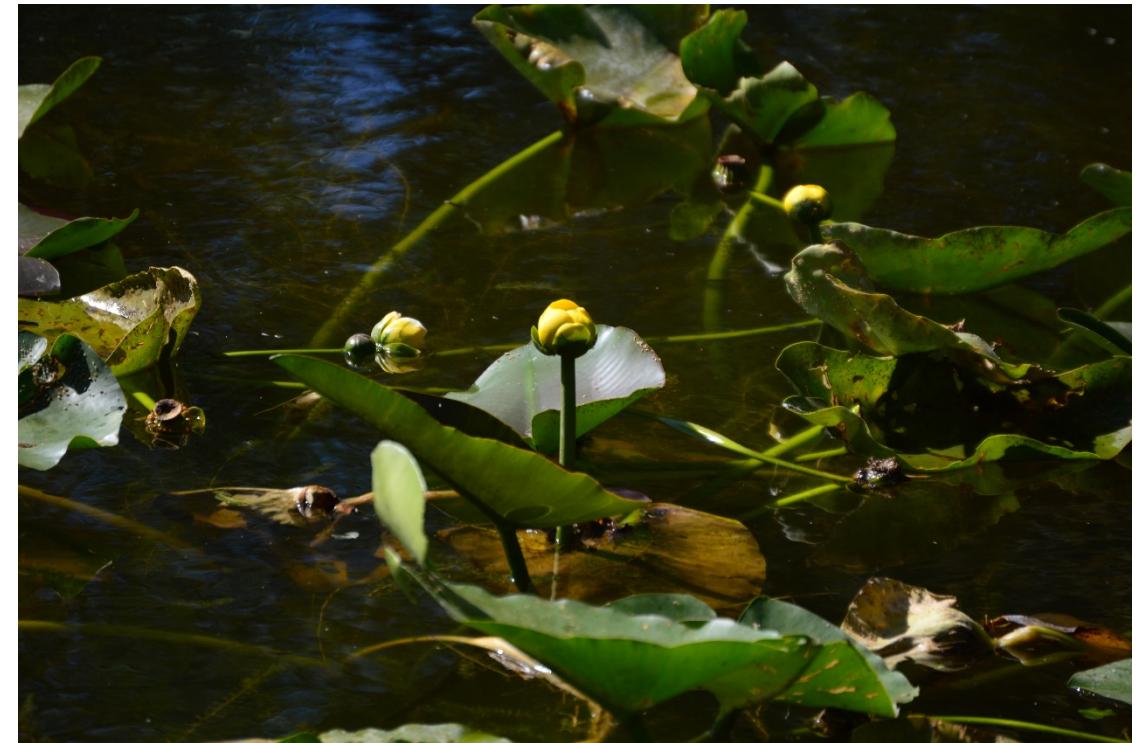
# Water lilies, *Nymphaea* spp.

- 7 species total in Lee county (native and non-native)
  - *Nymphaea ampla* (Dotleaf waterlily), *Nymphaea elegans* (Tropical royalblue waterlily),  
*Nymphaea jamesoniana* (Jameson's waterlily), *Nymphaea lotus* (White egyptian lotus),  
*Nymphaea mexicana* (Yellow waterlily), *Nymphaea odorata* (American white waterlily),  
*Nymphaea x daubenyana*
- Cooked green, cooked vegetable, flour
- Young leaves, unopened flower buds
- Seeds
- Sample snack *Euryale ferox*



# *Nuphar advena*, Spatterdock; yellow pondlily

- Roots: potato
- Seeds: popped like popcorn, ground into flour, creamed like corn



# *Pontederia cordata* - Pickerelweed

- Young unfurled leaves raw in salad or cooked like spinach
- Fruit/seed eaten raw, dried and added to granola, ground into flour
- Highly nutritious

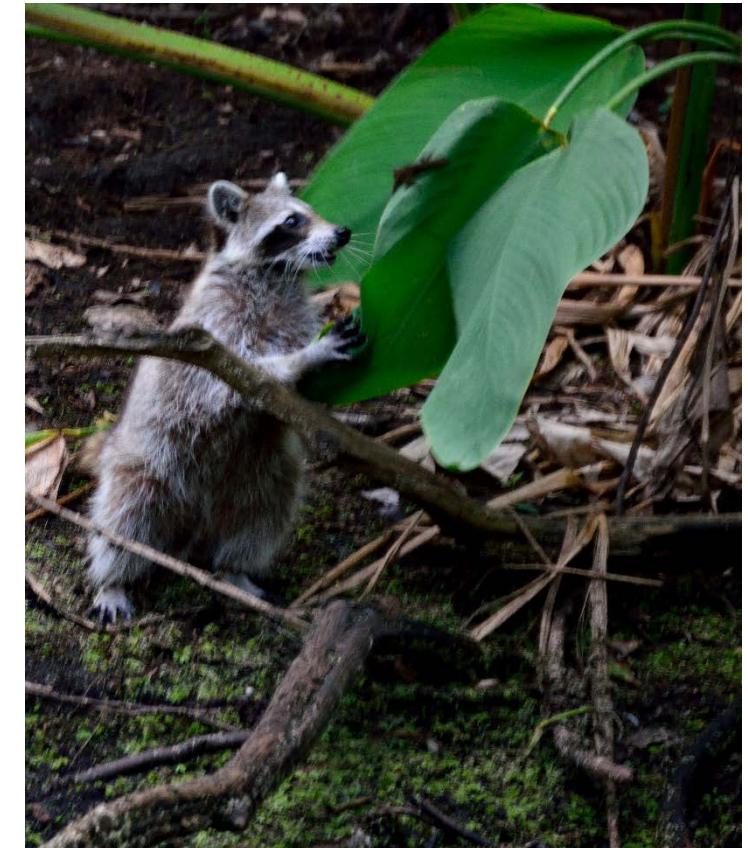
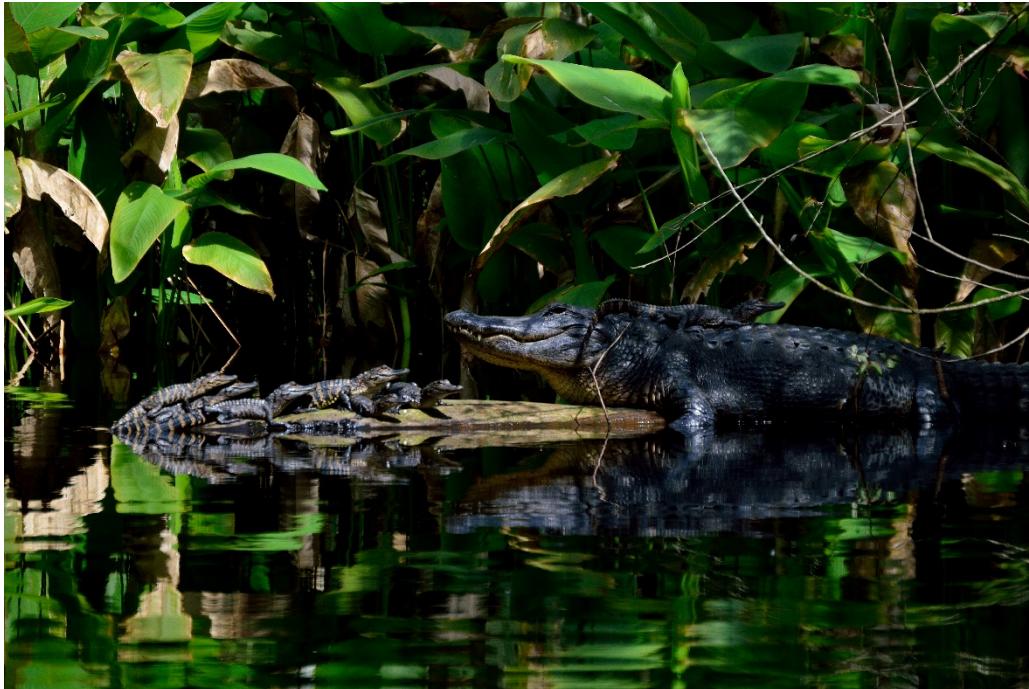


# Arrowhead, *Sagittaria* spp.

- 4 species in Lee county
  - *Sagittaria graminea* Michx. - Grassy arrowhead, *Sagittaria isoetiformis* J.G.Sm. - Quillwort arrowhead, *Sagittaria lancifolia* L. - Bulltongue arrowhead, *Sagittaria latifolia* Willd. - Broadleaf arrowhead; common arrowhead; duck potato
- Tubers- like a potato



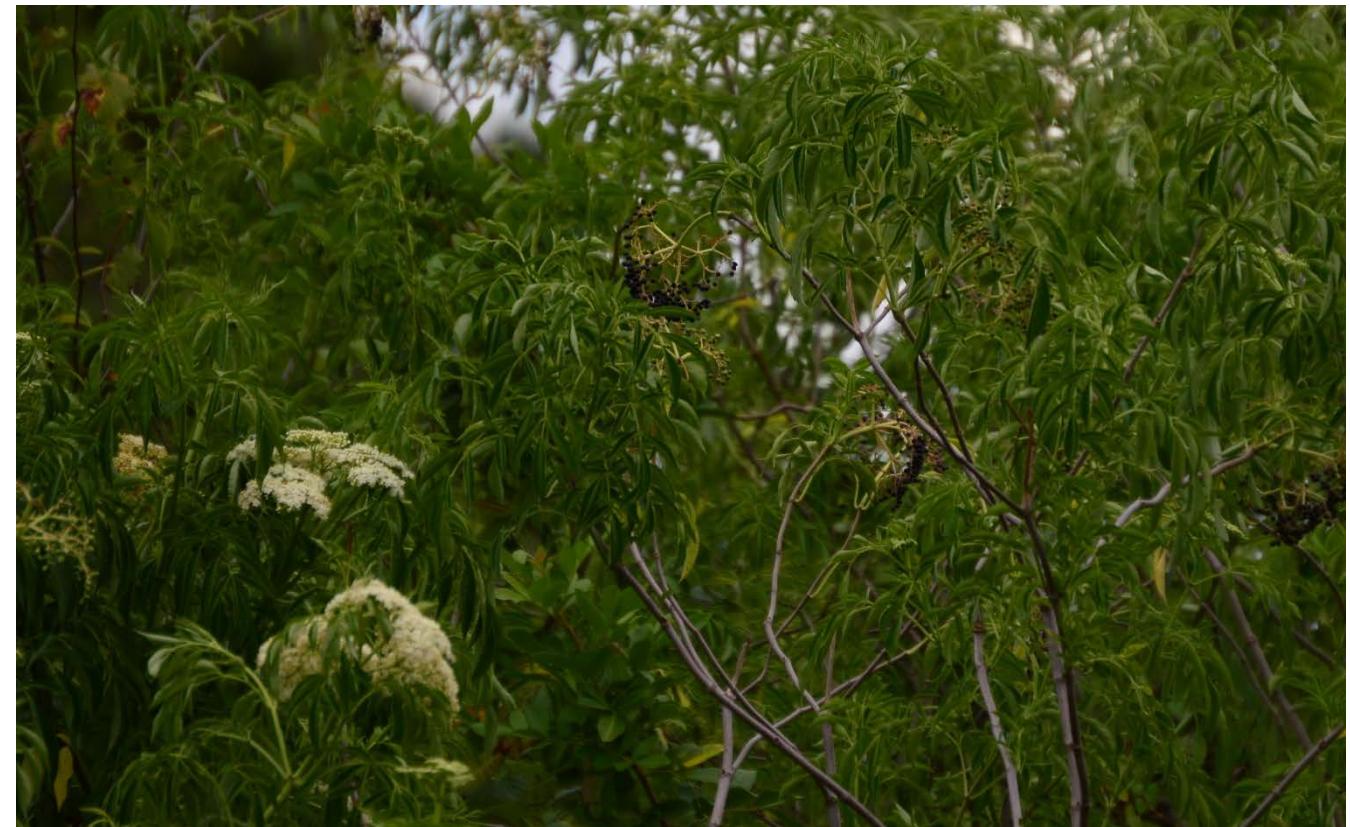
## *Thalia geniculata* - Alligatorflag; fireflag



- Seminoles ate roots, rhizomes, flowers, stem bases
- Leaves used to wrap food for cooking.

## *Sambucus nigra L. subsp. *canadensis** - American elder; elderberry

- Flowers- fritters
- Berries: jelly, dried and later reconstituted for juices, muffins, pies, tea, etc.



**CAUTION!**



## *Annona glabra* - Pond apple

- Fruit: jelly
- Seeds not edible



# Cattails, *Typha spp.*

- 2 species in Lee county
  - *Typha domingensis* (Southern cattail), *Typha latifolia* (Broadleaf cattail)
  - Young shoots and stalks like asparagus
  - Immature flowers like corn on the cob
  - Pollen as protein-rich flour
  - Sprouts from the rootstock in salad
  - Rootstock starch as flour



# *Acer rubrum*, Red maple

- Sugar, syrup, water



# *Persea palustris*, Swamp bay

- Leaves as seasoning

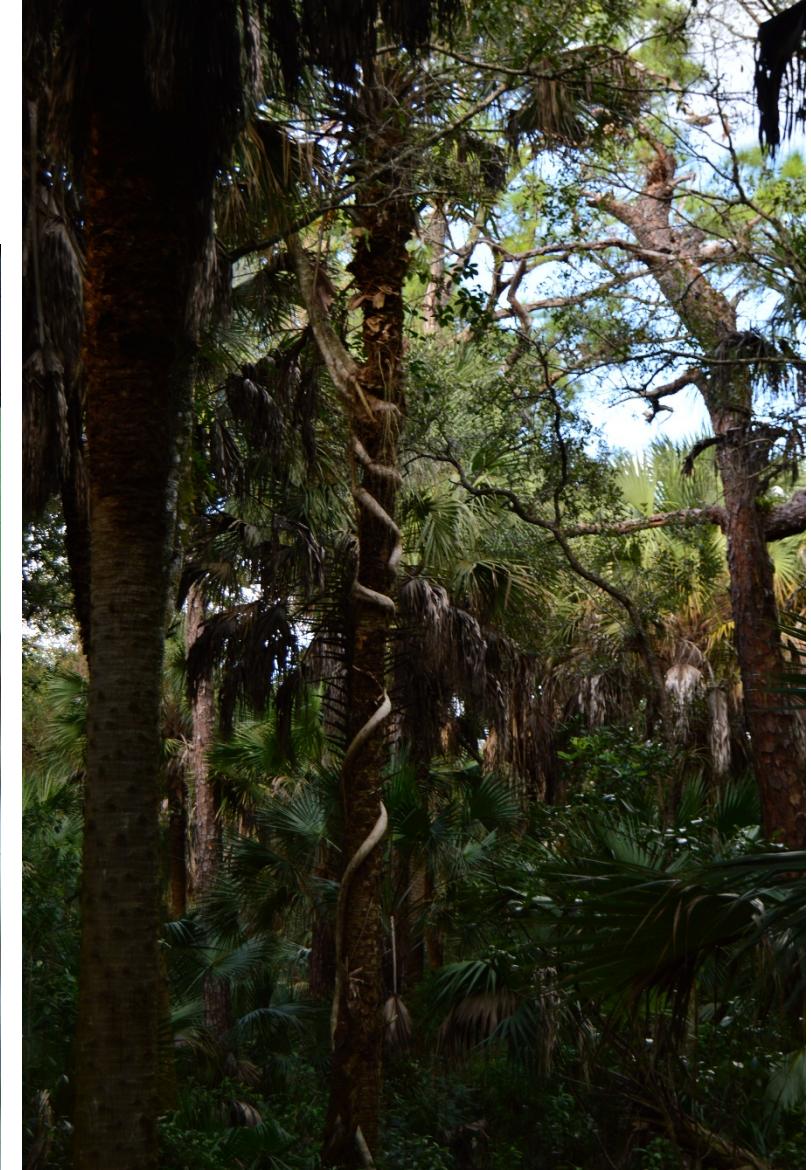


# Uplands- mesic



# *Ficus aurea*, Strangler fig

- Raw fruit



# *Morus rubra*, RED MULBERRY

- Fruits, RIPE



# Oaks, *Quercus* spp.

- Acorns roasted, candied, or turned into protein-rich flour
- 8 species in Lee county



*Quercus chapmanii*  
Photo by Shirley Denton



# *Morella cerifera*, Southern bayberry; wax myrtle

- Leaves as seasoning
- Berries as pepper



# Less-mesic uplands



# Greenbriar, *Smilax spp.*

- 4 species in Lee county
  - *Smilax tamnoides* (Bristly greenbrier; hogbrier), *Smilax laurifolia* (Laurel greenbrier; bamboo vine), *Smilax bona-nox* (Saw greenbrier), *Smilax auriculata* (Earleaf greenbrier)
- Shoots cooked like asparagus
- Young shoots, leaves, tendrils in salad
- Rootstock as a gelatin substitute



# Grapes, *Vitis spp.*

- 4 species in Lee county
  - *Vitis aestivalis* (summer grape), *Vitis cinerea* (Florida grape), *Vitis rotundifolia* (muscadine), *Vitis shuttleworthii* (Calloose grape).
  - Young leaves boiled
  - Fresh fruit, jelly, cold drink.



# *Serenoa repens*, saw palmetto

- Terminal bud, salad or cooked vegetable
- *Sabal palmetto* also



# Blueberries, *Vaccinium spp.*

- 4 species in Lee county
  - *Vaccinium stamineum* (Deerberry), *Vaccinium arboreum* (Sparkleberry; farkleberry), *Vaccinium darrowii* (Darrow's blueberry), *Vaccinium myrsinites* (Shiny blueberry).
  - Fruit: fresh, cooked, dry



# *Diospyros virginiana*, Common persimmon

- Fruit: fresh, pudding, nut bread, jam
- Leaves: tea



# Pines, *Pinus spp.*

- 2 species in Lee county
  - *Pinus palustris, elliotii*, longleaf and slash pines.
- Pine nuts
- Tea from the needles, high in A+C



# Hollies, *Ilex spp.*

- 4 species in Lee County
  - *Ilex ambigua* (Carolina holly; sand holly), *Ilex cassine* (Dahoon), *Ilex glabra* (Inkberry; gallberry), *Ilex opaca* (American holly).
- Leaves as tea
  - DRIED FIRST
  - DO NOT EAT BERRIES



# *Piloblephis rigida*, Wild Pennyroyal

- Minty tea



## *Ximenia americana*, Tallow wood/ Hog plum

- Fresh fruit



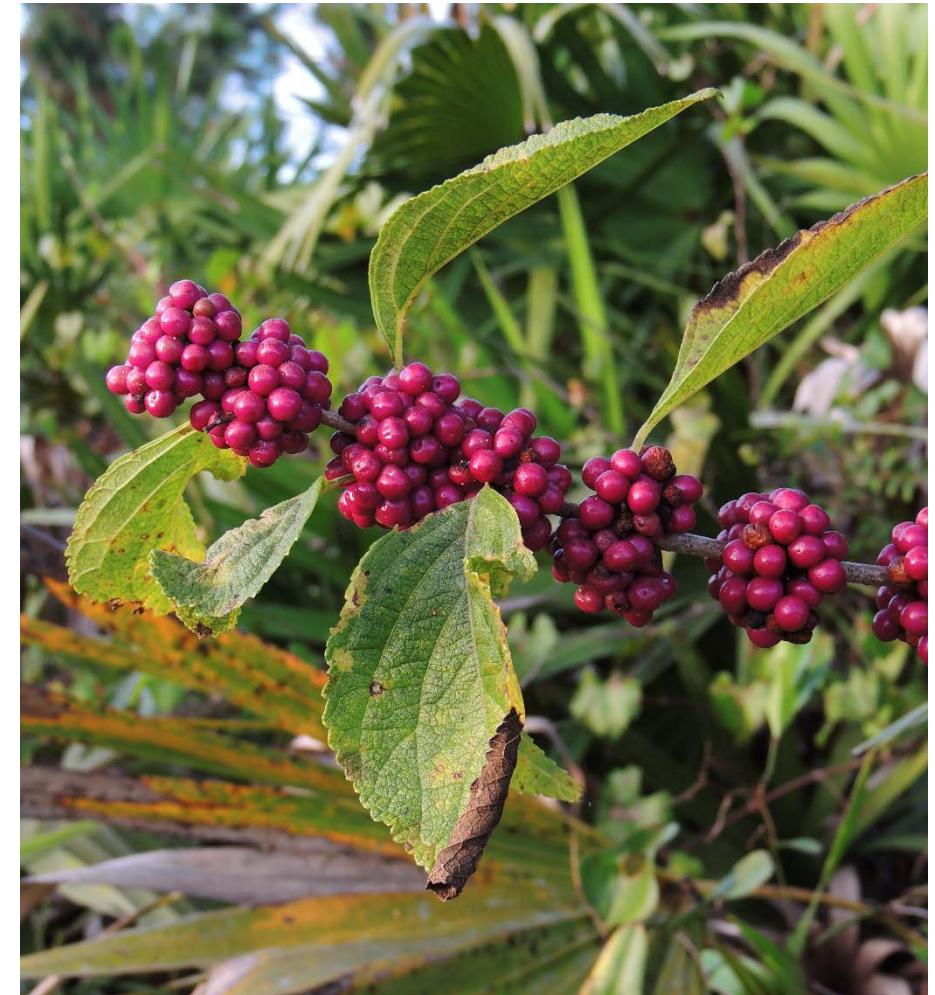
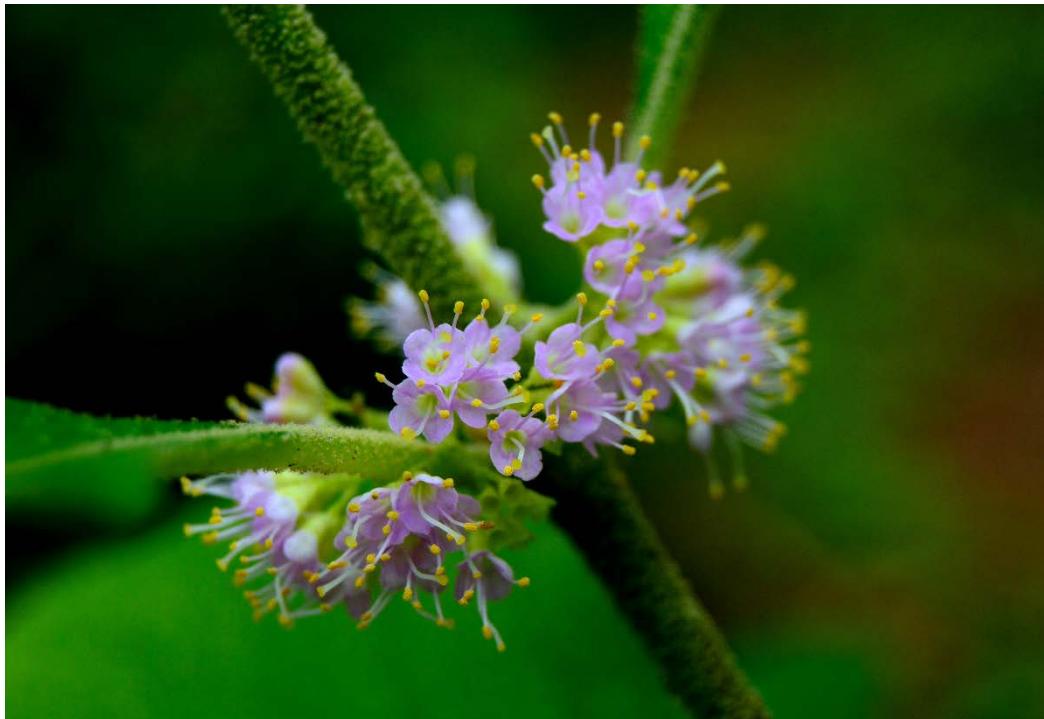
# *Asimina reticulata*, netted pawpaw

- Creamy fruit



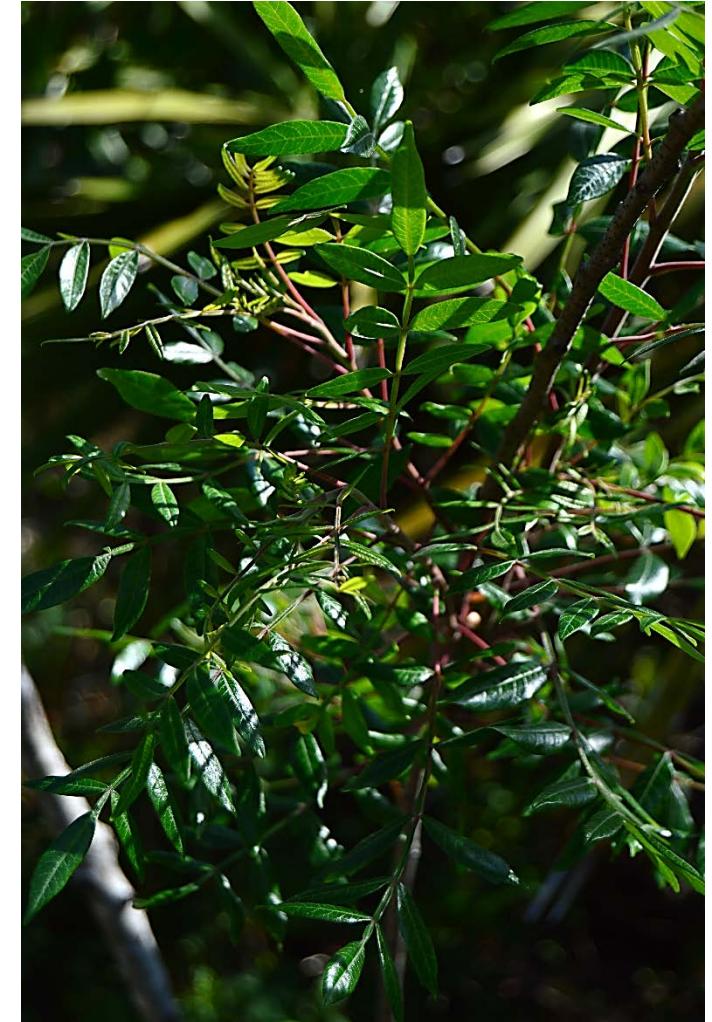
# *Callicarpa americana*, American beautyberry

- Berries- jelly, syrup
- Leaves- mosquito repellant



# *Rhus copallina*, winged sumac

- Berries, lemonade-like drink, syrup, jelly



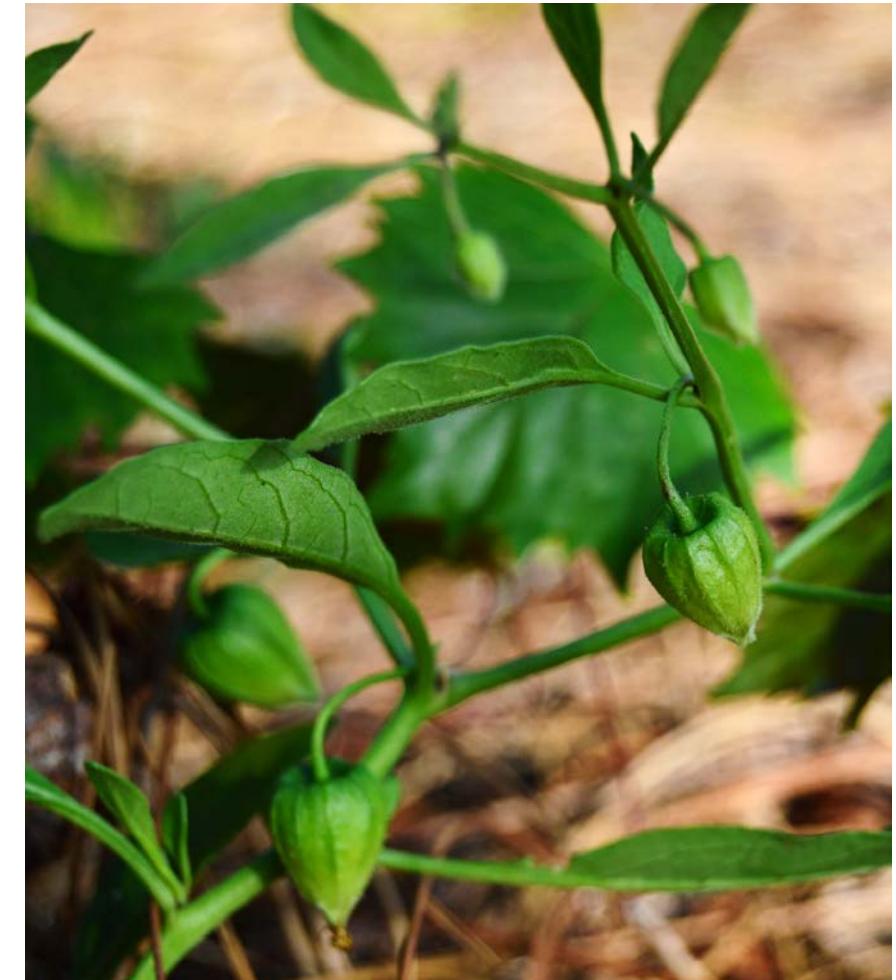
# *Bidens alba*

- Cooked green
- Raw in salad



# Groundcherries, *Physalis* spp.

- 5 species in Lee county
  - *Physalis pubescens* (Husk tomato), *Physalis arenicola* (cypresshead groundcherry), *Physalis angustifolia* (coastal groundcherry), *Physalis angulate* (cutleaf groundcherry), *Physalis walteri* (Walter's groundcherry)
  - Fruit- fresh, cooked, jams, pies, syrups, salsas etc
  - Unripe fruit and leaves poisonous



# Blackberries, *Rubus* spp.

- 2 species in Lee County
  - *Rubus cuneifolius* (sand blackberry), *Rubus trivialis* (Southern dewberry)
- Fruits fresh, jams, syrups, muffins, pies, wines, etc
- Leaves in tea



# *Lepidium virginicum*, Virginia pepperweed

- Young leaves in salad
- Fruit/seeds for spice



# *Cnidoscolus stimulosus*, Tread-softly/ Finger-rot

- Tubers like potato
- DO NOT TOUCH ABOVEGROUND PARTS!



*Cnidoscolus stimulosus*  
Photo by Shirley Denton

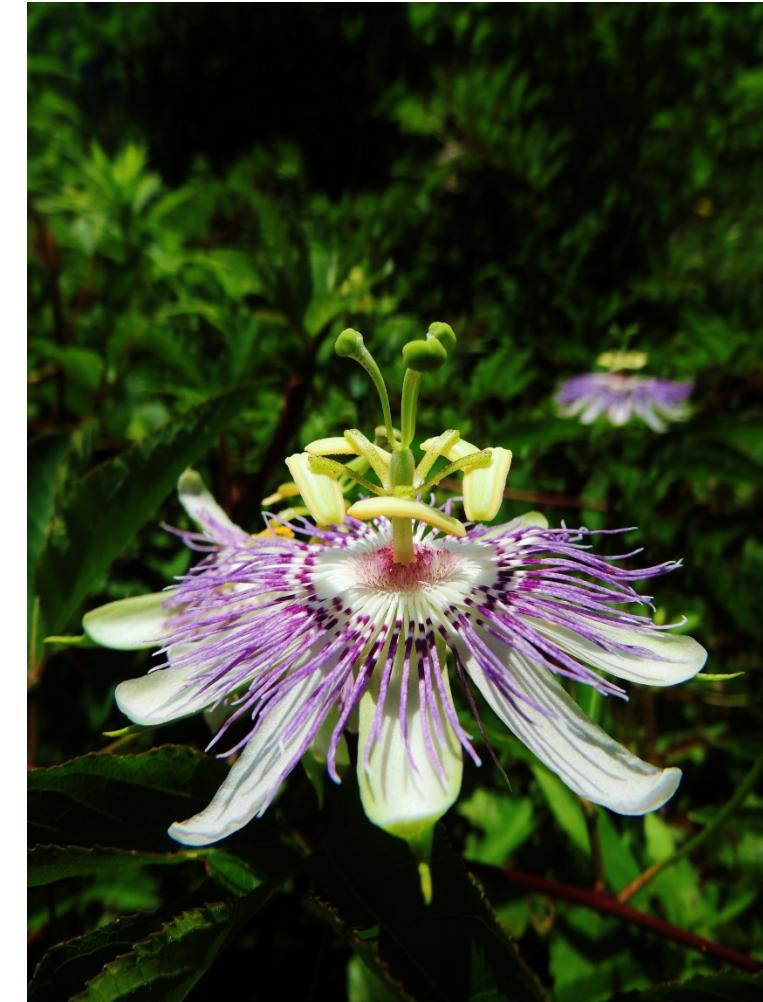
# *Melothria pendula*, Creeping cucumber

- Green fruits fresh
- Some controversy



# *Passiflora incarnata*, purple passionflower

- Fruits- fresh, cold drink, jelly



# *Carica papaya* (?) Papaya

- Fruits ripe or green
- Seeds as pepper
- Other parts (see [eattheweeds.com](http://eattheweeds.com))



# *Phytolacca americana*, American pokeweed

- Young shoots and leafy tips cooked like asparagus, pickled.
- **WARNING: POISONOUS if not cooked properly or if the wrong plant parts are consumed.**



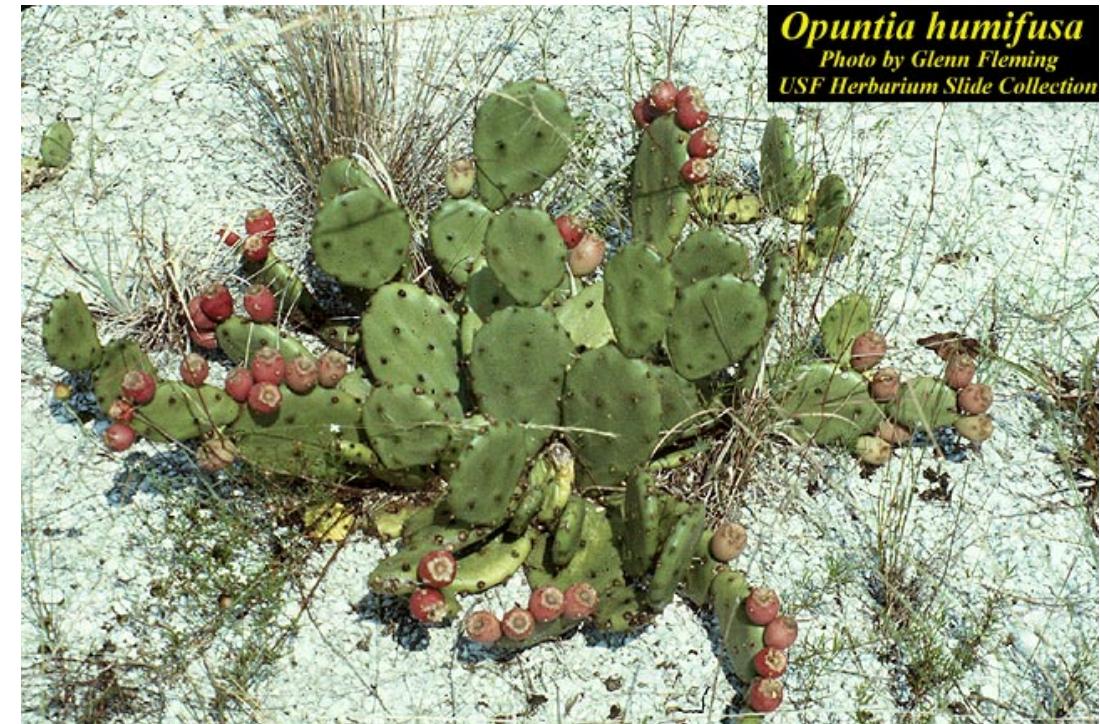
# Purslane, *Portulaca spp.*

- 4 species in Lee county
  - *Portulaca amilis* (Paraguayan purslane), *Portulaca oleracea* (Little hogweed), *Portulaca pilosa* (Pink purslane; kiss-me-quick), *Portulaca rubricaulis* (Redstem purslane)
- Leaves and stems raw in salads. Soups, omelets.
- Stems pickled.
- Seeds as flour or added to salads, baked goods
- Omega 3s!



# Pricklypear, *Opuntia* spp.

- 2 native species to Lee county
  - *Opuntia humifusa* (Pricklypear), *Opuntia stricta* (Erect pricklypear; shell-mound pricklypear)
- Pads cooked, eaten hot or chilled
- Fruit as a drink, jam, syrup, candy
- Seeds as flour or soup thickener



# Coastal areas



# *Coccoloba diversifolia*, Tietongue/ pigeon plum

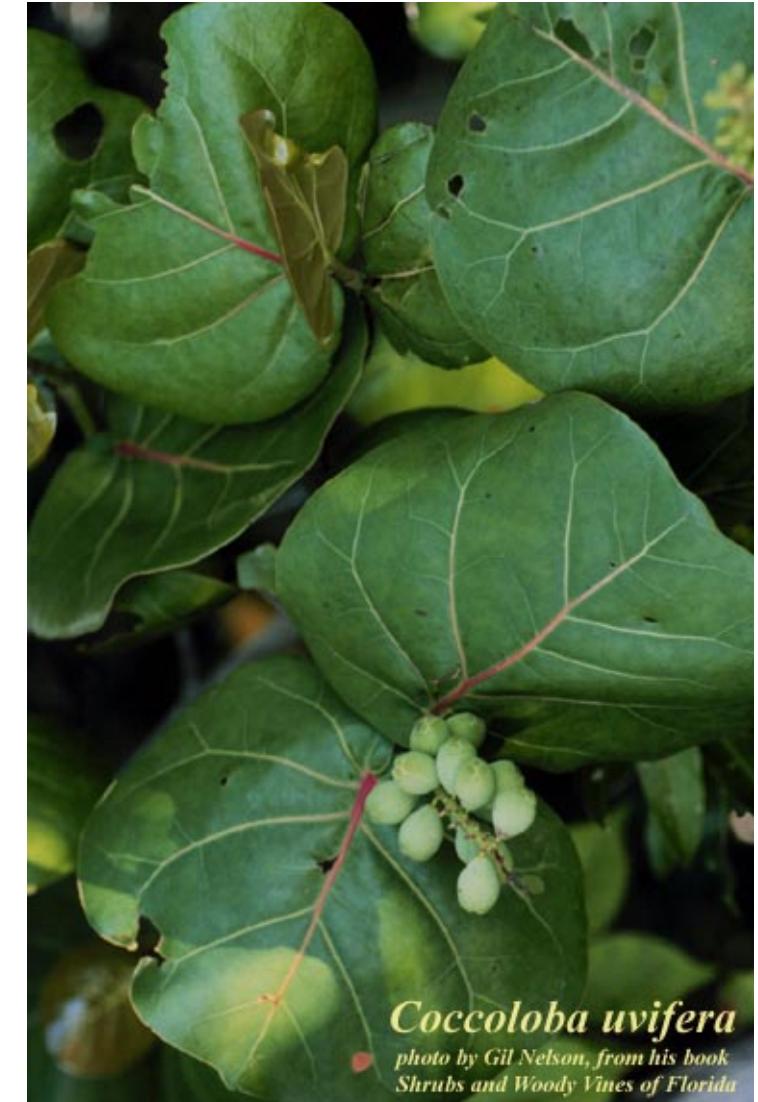
- Fresh fruit, dried fruit, jam, wine



*Coccoloba diversifolia*  
Photo by T. Ann Williams

# *Coccoloba uvifera*, Seagrape

- Ripe fruit, jelly, wine



*Coccoloba uvifera*  
photo by Gil Nelson, from his book  
*Shrubs and Woody Vines of Florida*

# *Chrysobalanus icaco*, Coco plum

- Fruit raw, jelly, syrup
- Seed raw or cooked



*Chrysobalanus icaco*  
Photo by T. Ann Williams

# *Lycium carolinianum*, Christmasberry/Carolina desert-thorn

- Berries fresh or dried.



# Seapurslane, *Sesuvium* spp.

- 2 species in Lee county
  - *Sesuvium portulacastrum* (Shoreline seapurslane), *Sesuvium maritimum* (Slender seapurslane)
- Leaves and stems raw or pickled, cooked.



# *Suaeda linearis*, Sea blite/Annual seepweed

- Leaves and stems boiled in 1-2 changes of water (reduce saltiness)



# *Salicornia bigelovii*

## Annual glasswort/dwarf glasswort

- Young leaves and stems raw, cooked, or pickled



*Salicornia bigelovii*

Photo by T. Ann Williams

# Resources

- Edible wild plants: <http://www.eattheweeds.com>
- Florida's Edible Wild Plants: A Guide to Collecting and Cooking Paperback – June 3, 2014  
by Peggy Sias Lantz (Author)
- Florida's Incredible Wild Edibles Paperback – January, 1993  
by Richard J. Deuerling (Author), Peggy S. Lantz (Author)
- A Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants: Eastern and central North America (Peterson Field Guides) Paperback – September 1, 1999  
by Lee Allen Peterson (Author, Photographer), Roger Tory Peterson (Editor, Illustrator)
- **Atlas of Florida Plants:** <http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/>