

Florida native plant sale coming to Sanford this weekend



The Cuplet Fern chapter of Florida Native Plant Society is hosting a native plant sale Aug. 19 at the Sanford Garden Club. Mark Kateli

BY PATRICK CONNOLLY ORLANDO SENTINEL

Central Floridians have an opportunity this weekend to go home with new plants for their landscaping needs while helping the Sunshine State's natural environment.

A Florida native plants sale offers green thumbs and gardeners a selection of firebush, muhly grass, wildflowers, native milkweed and more. The Cuplet Fern chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society hosts their seasonal kickoff sale from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Aug. 19 at the Sanford Garden Club.

The statewide organization is dedicated to educating the public about native plants and their seeds in Central Florida.

"Our mission is the conservation, preservation and restoration of Florida native plants and plant communities. We've been around since 1980 and we were incorporated here in Orlando," said Mark Kateli, the president of the local chapter and statewide nonprofit. "We had our first conference at Rollins College. Our membership stands around 6,000-plus."

The Seminole and West Volusia-based Cuplet Fern chapter had its first plant sale in April of 2021, which was a huge success. Now the local group hosts eight sales per year.

"Native plants are the future. They aren't reliant on irrigation once established or reliant on fertilizer," Kateli said. "We use the outreach of plant sales to get people interested in Florida Native Plant Society and what our local biodiversity is all about."

As education is a large part of the society's mission, Cuplet Fern is hosting a native plant gardening tips discussion on Aug. 20, plus an afternoon movie matinee with "Fantastic Fungi."

Kateli said native plants can help lessen human-induced stress on the environment amid Florida's population boom.

"We can't eradicate our impact, but we can certainly soften it and mitigate it," he said. "I think it's a win-win situation. The environment wins, people win, our biodiversity wins and the food web that is reliant on these native plants win."

If you go

The Cuplet Fern native plant sale is 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Aug. 19 at 200 Fairmont Drive in Sanford. Pre-orders are available for chapter members. The event is free and open to the public. Cash and credit cards are accepted. Learn about native plant gardening tips from 11 a.m.-noon Aug. 20 at 250 W. County Home Road in Sanford followed by a movie matinee at 1 p.m. For more information, visit cupletfern.org.

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