

# Native Plant Society Nature Walk

By J. R. Williams

Saturday, January 14, 2017

As I pulled out of my driveway, the weather looked suspect for the nature walk with the Eugenia chapter of the Native Plant Society at the Wabasso park off 64<sup>th</sup> avenue. But, by the time I arrived, the weather was almost perfect.

There were 40 enthusiastic hikers ready for the 1 pm start at the scrub habitat and the promise of a scrub jay sighting was the buzz among the participants. However, as a seasoned nature photographer, the wildflowers and native flora were utmost in my thoughts. The middle of the day is not normally the best time of day for fauna of any kind.

After some social interaction, an introduction by Jane Schnee and a group photo by yours truly we proceeded onto the white “sugar” sand path.



At first glance the photo opportunities seem remote, but upon closer inspection and the trained eyes of our guide Jane Schnee and Janice Broda from the Eugenia chapter of the NPS, the beauty of the habitat became apparent.

Every few steps we came across amazingly small and wondrous flora that was a delight to view and photograph. Lighting was often an issue because of shadows and some cloudiness but the effort to capture this beauty overcame most of the obstacles.

All of the illustrations below, except the rabbit bells, are native to Florida and most are rare because of the limited amount of scrub habitat.



*Illustration 1: Coastalplain Golden Aster*



*Illustration 2: Rabbit Bells*



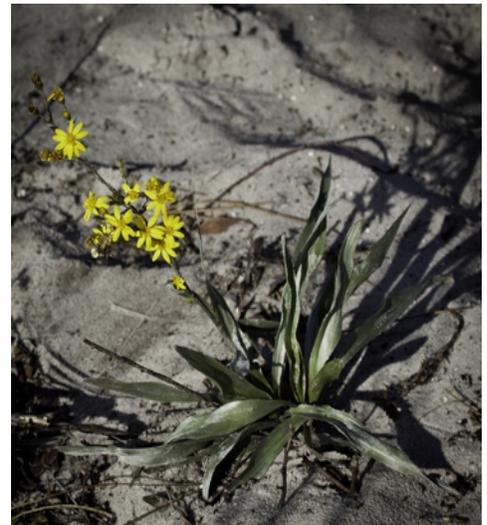
*Illustration 3: Scrub Blue-eyed Grass*



*Illustration 4: Yellow Milkwort*



*Illustration 6: Staggerbush or Rusty Lyonia*



*Illustration 5: Golden Aster*

We did see a few birds including a mockingbird, a nesting great horned owl and finally a scrub jay.

All in all, it was an outstanding way to spend a wonderful afternoon with a great group of nature enthusiasts.

*Illustration 7: Florida Scrub Jay*

