

Speaker Biographies

- **Vernon Compton** - Vernon Compton works for The Longleaf Alliance as Director of the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership. The Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership is a voluntary public/private landowner partnership formed in 1996 that now sustains over 1.3 million acres of diverse habitat in northwest Florida and south Alabama. Vernon has a Bachelor of Science in Forest Management from LSU and prior to joining The Longleaf Alliance in 2010 worked for the Florida Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Florida Forest Service at Blackwater River State Forest.
- **Harvey Cotton**- Harvey Cotton is a graduate of Mississippi State University with a degree in ornamental horticulture, Cotton was director of the Huntsville Botanical Gardens for more than 20 years. Cotton has also been active in the green industry and is past president of the Alabama Invasive Plant Council, Horticultural Research Institute, and the Alabama Nursery and Landscape Association, where he serves as Director Emeritus. His book, "Easy Gardens for the South," which was co-authored with Pamela Crawford and Barbara Pleasant, is in its fourth printing and has become a reference guide for southern gardeners and Master Gardeners throughout the country.
- **Wendy Wilber** - has been with the University of Florida since 2000 when she became an Environmental Horticulture agent and Master Gardener Program Coordinator for UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County. In 2015, she took over as Florida's State Master Gardener Coordinator. In this role, she will coordinate 4,000 volunteers and serve as a resource for many on plant and landscape issues. "Being able to serve the community as an Environmental Horticulture agent has been such a blessing in my life," Wendy says. "I am very fortunate to have a very meaningful career where I can help to improve people's lives and the environment in the community that I am so proud to be a part of."



Welcome to the Second Semi-Annual
Northwest District Master Gardeners Conference

Encounter Nature

March 19th, 2019

E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center, Freeport, FL.



Conference Co-Chairs:

Matthew Orwat, Daniel Leonard, Mary Salinas

Agenda

- 8:00 am - Registration / Conversation / Explore Center
- 9:00-9:15 - Welcome and Introduction (Matt Orwat, Mary Salinas)
- 9:15-10:00 - E.O. Wilson, Biophilia, & Why Conservation Matters (Paul Arthur)
- 10:00-10:50 – Bringing Back the Longleaf Ecosystem (Vernon Compton)
- 10:50-11:10 – Break (Explore the Center, Shop at IFAS Bookstore)
- 11:10-12:00 – Ethnobotany of Native Plants (Gail Fishman)
- 12:00-1:00 – Lunch, Door Prizes and Sponsor Intro. (Mary Salinas)
- 1:00-1:50 –Favorite Florida-Friendly Plants for Individual Ecosystems (Beth Bolles, Julie McConnell, Mark Tancig)
- 1:50-2:20- State of the Master Gardener Program Update and Awards (Wendy Wilber)
- 2:20-2:50- Break (Explore the Center, Shop at IFAS Bookstore)
- 2:50-4:30 - Keynote Speaker: The Story of the Birds and the Bees (Harvey Cotton)
- 4:30-5:00 Conclusion and Door Prizes (Matt Orwat, Mary Salinas)



Lunch Menu

Choice of Meat or Vegetable Lasagna

Salad

Garlic Bread

Dessert

Special Thanks

Nokuse Foundation and the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center

Walton County Master Gardeners

IFAS Bookstore

Gloria's Catering of Chipley, Florida

Northwest District Horticulture Program Implementation Team

Our Excellent Speakers

Speaker Biographies

- **Paul Arthur** - Paul is currently the President of Nokuse Education Inc. and Director of the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center. The Biophilia Center is the perfect spot for Paul to share his enthusiasm of the outdoors by teaching future generations the importance of conservation and preservation.
- **Gail Fishman** - Gail is Ranger at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge and works to conserve wild areas in the Big Bend region of North Florida. Her efforts in teaching others about native plants and their ecosystems are noteworthy. She works with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, St. Marks and St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuges, and the Florida Native Plant Society.