



May 16, 2025

Notice of Upcoming Controlled Burn at Mead Botanical Garden

Dear Mead Garden Neighbors,

Mead Botanical Garden Inc., in partnership with the City of Winter Park, is planning to conduct a brief controlled burn over a small swath in the southwest corner of the Garden. With the recent burn banned now lifted, this planned ecological management event could take place as early as this coming Wednesday, May 21, weather permitting.

The confirmed date of the prescribed fire will be posted on the Mead Garden website at www.meadgarden.org and on our social media channels: facebook.com/MeadBotanicalGarden and instagram.com/MeadGarden

On the day of the burn, the Nottingham Street entrance to the Garden and the east gate on Pennsylvania Avenue temporarily will be closed. During the burn, neighbors may notice smoke in the area, particularly from the southwest.

The prescribed burn will be conducted by a team of certified natural area fire specialists, under supervision of an experienced "burn boss." The Winter Park Fire Department will be onsite for the event which has been fully permitted and approved by the Florida Forest Service and City of Winter Park. The burn will cover 0.3-acres of Sandhill habitat and last approximately 30 minutes. A minimum of two hours of post-burn monitoring and site management will follow. The team will ensure all embers are extinguished and smoke dissipated before departing.

The reason for the burn... Mead joins a growing movement among botanical gardens to highlight and preserve regional biodiversity. As part of our ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship and education, Mead Botanical Garden features a curated collection of native plant communities. Over the past decade in partnership with the Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, Mead has introduced a variety of native species adapted to Florida's unique climate and soil conditions. These are found in the southwest Sandhill area of the garden. This habitat supports gopher tortoises and other native wildlife that reside in the garden.

These native plants significantly benefit from prescribed fires which mimic natural ecological processes. This recognized conservation method helps manage invasive species, returns nutrients to the soil from the charred plant matter, and stimulates growth among native wildflowers and grasses. New growth typically is visible within a few weeks following the burn.

We are excited to support the continued health and regeneration of our native plant habitats through this managed burn and look forward to sharing the results of this important ecological initiative with you and our visitors in the months ahead. For FAQs, please scan the QR code, email info@meadgarden.org or call 407-622-6323.

Regards,

Cynthia

Cynthia Hasenau
Executive Director

