



Newsletter

VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY UPPER JAMES RIVER CHAPTER

*The counties of Allegheny, Amherst, Bath and Rockbridge
and the cities of Lexington and Buena Vista*

Early Spring 2014

Additions, changes or corrections to the calendar will be sent to our email list, and phoned to members not on email.

April 8th - Talking Native Plants – last for the season at Sweet Treats 11:30 a.m.

Spring Native Plant Walks:

March 29th - Chessie Trail, Mill Run entrance (the Lexington end)

April 5th - W&L back campus (behind the indoor tennis courts and ball field) & VMI cliffs

April 12th – Brushy Hills west loop (purple to lower trail)

April 19th - W&L back campus/VMI cliffs with the Jefferson chapter of the VNPS

April 26th – Brushy Hills wherever the flowers call us, Blue Ridge Wildflower Society
Each Saturday, we will gather at 9:30am to start walking by 10:00. The walks will be a minimum of two hours; folks are welcome to return to their cars whenever they need to. Please dress for the weather that day (we'll go unless it is pouring rain) and bring water and snack for yourself. Contact Peggy Dyson-Cobb

<cobbking@rockbridge.net> or 464-3511 if you have questions. See article below.

May 31st - Master Gardener Plant Sale – 8:30 a.m. W&L Pavilion, details in newsletter.

President's Column

A Workshop For All Reasons is my version of the title, "Taking The Heat", VNPS's Spring Workshop, 2014. Peggy Dyson-Cobb and I sat comfortably in the Jepson Hall Auditorium, University of Richmond from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. for four lively talks. Earlier, we had enjoyed tea, coffee, pastries and networking with other attendees. We chatted with Butch Kelly (Roanoke) and Ruth Douglas (Charlottesville) about their chapters' (Blue Ridge and Jefferson respectively) plans for visiting our turf

for spring walks this year. We also caught up with Beth Ford, new VNPS Board member for Education. Beth has made contact with Boxerwood's Elise Sheffield, including her in a group effort to look at ecological education for Virginia's K-5 grades. And we spoke with Alan Ford of the Potowmack chapter. Their work inspired us to consider a "going to grass" event for our summer walk this year. More about all of this later.

Now for those lively talks. From Jerry Stenger's, I learned that the Valley of Virginia really is drier on average than the rest of the state. Our weather is mostly brought in on westerly winds or from easterlies. Moisture coming in on these winds moves up slope with them, falling as rain or snow on those "higher elevations", leaving much less moisture for those of us in the middle. Hurricane moisture, while having a pattern, is not as reliable. There are other considerations, such as elevation, which can add or subtract 2 months to the growing seasons across Virginia. Stenger, the State's official climatologist, also teaches at UVa. He did mention Climate Change, which he prefers to global warming.

Next we heard from Richard Primak of Boston. He and his students found, explored, and continue to explore, the history of Climate Change from Thoreau's time to the present. Why aggravate the general public with details from islands in the Pacific when we can document it here on the east coast of the USA? The records exist from Thoreau's daybooks, other written sources over the decades, as well as photographs, and interviews all serving to add enjoyable, natural events - known as phenology - to the dry data of weather and tidal reports. Just imagine records from birders up there being important! Most intriguing of all his illustrations was one built on a background map of the USA, with the map of the state of Massachusetts highlighted in yellow, moving ever southward over the decades. Finally, towards the end of this century, it lands on top of Virginia. Massachusetts will then have vegetation resembling ours, and Virginia can expect...Florida? He noted that, in the Boston area, rare spring ephemeral orchids known to prefer cooler climates are no longer found around Thoreau's Walden.

Then we heard from Kristina Anderson-Teixeira, currently with the Smithsonian facility in Front Royal. Her background is in desert flora, so she's just getting used to east coast forests, and the work in Front Royal is 5 years old. The Institution, however, maintains research centers around the globe. She described how their older records are being mined now for evidence of Climate Change. Newer technologies are improving our ability to evaluate current events on forest floors, and up in the canopy as well. There are baseline emissions and these help set guidelines for global carbon trading within the context of global marketing. When asked for her predictions as we face Climate Change, she thought we might get a lot more woody vines here. Golly, just what we need, more multiflora rose.

And finally, we learned from Carl Hershner, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, that our part of the Chesapeake Bay is sinking. We are a "hotspot" for sinking-ness. Reasons include the usually mentioned ocean warming, a meteor strike in prehistoric times right in the middle of the Bay, and even 2 paper mills' water withdrawal close to the current shoreline. If disparate parts of your job are keeping homeowners, duck hunters, commercial fisheries and voters happy, to say nothing of politicians informed, Climate Change is very much a part of your daily life. The soil down there under the marshes, by the way, is a gooey black/gray. I wondered how our orange version changes color on its way from "my" South River to the Maury, to the James and out to the marshes.

The workshop was professionally recorded this year. I, for one, would like to share most of it with our chapter.

Highlights of the Quarterly Board Report

- * First of all, we are in sound financial shape, and the membership records are, too.
- * Our 2014 fundraiser plans are to donate the \$13,000.00 towards the rare flora recovery project. There are some 130 plants previously reported as being somewhere in the state, but not currently found. The funds will pay for interns to site search for these during the summer.
- * The Flora of Virginia exhibit opens on the 17th of March at the Library of Virginia AND CONTINES THORGH.
- * And (drumroll here) the Wildflower of the Year, 2015, will be *Clethra alnifolia*, otherwise known as sweet pepper bush. (Flora of Virginia, p. 507)

Katherine Smith



Clethra alnifolia

Spring Plant Walks – Learn and Help

This year we are offering mid-week walks preceding each weekend walk for those who wish to train with us. You must sign up in advance for these, and must be committed to assisting currently, and leading eventually. You need enthusiasm, a field guide, a notebook, and a camera if you have one. AND, you need to call Peggy Dyson-Cobb to make arrangements. Let Peggy (<cobbking@rockbridge.net> or 464-3511) know if you're interested. These walks will not take place if no one has signed up.

We will walk the trails during the week before each planned walk to familiarize us all with who is blooming/leafing/seeding/disappearing this week, and to follow up on mystery plants. When we have lots of folks at our weekend walks on the narrow single file paths, it's really helpful to have knowledgeable folks in the middle and at the end of the line. And remember, none of us knows ALL the plants – we're all learning all the time!



A Terrific Exhibit in Richmond

If you are in or passing through Richmond, you may want to visit this exhibit. While you may have been to Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, or Maymont, or even Hollywood Cemetery as a botanical tourist, none of these venues in our Commonwealth's capitol offers a wide variety of native flora so conveniently. The Library of Virginia's exhibit offers four seasons at once (in display cases, of course) artfully documented, and in air conditioned comfort. Yes, it is long-ago history, but a version serving to bring people together. And it is history in the making as well.

March 17–September 13, 2014

FLORA OF VIRGINIA

Discover the power of the flower! Explore our commonwealth's phenomenal plant world through **FLORA OF VIRGINIA**, an exhibition open now at the Library of Virginia.

Curated by the Flora of Virginia Project in tandem with the Library, the exhibition features colorful illustrations from the Library's collections, as well as books, photographs, plant specimens, paintings, posters, models, and sculptures—some pieces dating to the 17th or 18th century.

With an eye toward the art of botany, the exhibition covers the Flora Project, conservation, John Clayton and other early botanists, and native plants. Try your hand at sketching a specimen at the drawing station. Have fun discovering interesting facts about Virginia's plant life. And get an astounding perspective on our rich botanical heritage.

Don't miss this show! And check the Library's web calendar for related events.

EXHIBITION HOURS Monday–Saturday, 9–5

**LIBRARY
OF VIRGINIA**

800 East Broad Street | Richmond, VA 23219
www.lva.virginia.gov | 804.692.3592



floraofvirginia.org
804-371-5561

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and Hollow-stemmed Joe-pye-weed (*Eutrochium fistulosum*)
© Lara Call Gastinger

Plans for Master Gardeners Plant Sale

We're going to rejoin the sale this year, but not by lugging in lots and lots of pots. Although we plan to have some plants for sale, we anticipate moving more in the direction of order forms for plants to be dug later on or to be picked up at other locations. And those we do lug in will offer talking points. A good example might be our native pachysandra offered as a ground cover. Another could be our native honeysuckle. We plan to provide more handouts and posters. And fun. Please think creatively - and share those Hoe-to thoughts with Katherine Smith.

Local Companies supporting the use of Native Plants

So far we know of these two companies, but if you know of others let any of the officers know so that we can share this information with the membership.

Native Woods Landscaping

Owner Kelly Morikawa

(540) 460-0265

nativewoodlandscaping@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Native-Wood-Landscaping/649518295110800>

Michele Fletcher Landscape Designs

Owner Michele Fletcher

(540) 464-1599

plantlover.mf@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Michele-Fletcher-Landscape-Designs/230948441558>

Rick's Custom Nursery

Owners Rick and Debbie Corrington

212 Cold Run Drive

Lexington, VA 24450

(207) 831-9215

<http://rickscustomnursery.com/index.html>

Herbaceous and woody plants from self-propagation or liners/plugs.

Natives, Perennials, Shrubs and Trees; Garden Art - concrete and mosaic creations.

Retail sales are April/May and Sept/Oct., Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 9:00-2:00.

Visits any other time are by appointment only.

Virginia Native Plant Society Upper James River Chapter

PO Box 503 Buena Vista VA 24416

We welcome new members and guests. For more information, contact a board member.

President	Katherine Smith	540-261-2562
Vice President	Peggy Dyson-Cobb	540-464-3511
Treasurer	Laura Neale	540-261-1909
Secretary	Vacant	
News letter editor	Jan Smith	540-463-1942