



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Fall 2024

VOL 45, No. 3



Recently sighted off the Blue Ridge Parkway. What is it? Turn to page 6 to find out.

SPEAKERS AND FIELD TRIPS - FALL 2024

The Programming Committee has put together a phenomenal schedule of speakers and events for Fall 2024.

Walks and talks this fall focus on ferns, fungi, and native landscaping. There is also an outing to enjoy lunch at the Peak of Otter Lodge, which offers participants a range of additional excursions. Hope you can join us!

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Speakers - Fall 2024

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Monday, Sept. 23

**BRWS Membership Meeting at Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs,
3460 Colonial Ave., Roanoke, VA 24018**

6 p.m. – Snacks, social, sign ups

6:30 p.m. - **“Virginia’s Fabulous Ferns”** by **Dr. Jordan Metzgar**, Curator of the Massey Herbarium, the largest herbarium in Virginia. He also spent 10 years as a curator for the University of Alaska. Dr. Jordan will also lead a fern walk at Falls Ridge Preserve on Sept 28.

Monday, Oct. 28

BRWS Membership Meeting at Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs

6 p.m. – Snacks, social, sign ups

6:30 p.m. - **“Fungi”** by **Dr. Bob Pohl** of Ferrum College

Bob is a Professor Emeritus of Biology and Horticulture at Ferrum College. Bob’s interests focus on plants and fungi. He and his wife led many student trips to Ireland, the Caribbean, and the Galapagos. He is also a senior scientist for the Water Quality Monitoring Program on Smith Mountain Lake.

Monday, Nov. 25

BRWS Membership Meeting at Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs

6 p.m. – Snacks, social, sign ups

6:30 p.m. - **“Landscaping with Native Plants”** by **Ms. Melissa**

Hodgkinson of Virginia Western Community College Horticulture Department and Fiddlehead Landscapes and Garden Design, 949 Barrens Village Lane, Roanoke, VA 24019.

New meeting time!

In an effort to create opportunities to meet newer members and reconnect with others, please note that **the September Blue Ridge Wildflower Society general membership meeting will include a time for fellowship and hospitality at 6:00 p.m., with the program beginning at 6:30 p.m.** We plan to carry this format through the fall and winter season.

Your BRWS membership-- Join or Renew!

Are you seeing our newsletter for the first time and would like to join the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society? Are you already a member and it's time to renew?

The quickest way to do either of those things is to go to **www.vnps.org**, the Virginia Native Plant Society website. Find the Membership drop-down menu, select the appropriate choice (Join or Renew), and take it from there!

And while you're on the VNPS site, be sure to check out all the great resources that are available: information about native plants and invasives, past newsletters, and much more.

Continued on next page

follow us on Instagram!
follow us on Facebook!



New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*), illustration by Lori Grunick

<https://www.phipps.conservatory.org/exhibits-and-events/calendar/magnified-portraits-of-southwestern-pa-native-plants>

Walks & Field Trips - Fall 2024

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Saturday, Sept. 7 WALK

“Shrubs, Trees, and Wildflowers” in a cove forest near **Dragon’s Tooth**, led by Heather Butler of Virginia Western Community College Dept. of Biology.

Meet at the Orange Market in Salem on the traffic circle of Va. 419 and Va. 311 to carpool at 8:30 a.m. or at the Dragon's Tooth trailhead at 9 a.m. Bring water, field guides, and insect repellent. Contact Heather at hmbutler48@gmail.com to let her know (1) that you plan to go and (2) where you will meet the group.

Saturday, Sept. 14 FIELD TRIP

Spikenard Bee Sanctuary in Floyd, Virginia

Meet at Cave Spring Baptist Church’s first parking lot on Va. 221 to carpool at 9 a.m. Bring water, field guides, insect repellent, \$5.00 for the tour, and money (in case you find something like a book or local honey in their wonderful nature store). Contact Dr. Rebecca Ross to let her know you plan to go at wingsross@aol.com or 540-855-4713.

Saturday, Sept. 28 FIELD TRIP

“Virginia’s Fabulous Ferns” field trip to Falls Ridge Preserve in Montgomery County led by Dr. Jordan Metzgar, Curator of the Massey Herbarium. You will not only see ferns, but also wildflowers, and a variety of trees and shrubs. Meet at the Park and Ride at Exit 140 in Salem at 9 a.m. Bring water, field guides, and insect repellent. Contact Ellen Holtman to let her know you plan to go at eholtman@comcast.net or 540-797-2350.

Sunday, Oct. 13 WALK

“Tree Walk” at Fishburn Park in Roanoke (near the old Shenandoah Life Insurance Building), 2304 Brambleton Avenue will be led by Chris Bryant, Master Gardener and President of Roanoke Tree Stewards at 2 p.m. Bring water, tree field guides, and insect repellent. Contact Dr. Rebecca Ross to let her know you plan to go at wingsross@aol.com or 540-855-4713.

Tuesday, Oct. 15 LUNCH at Peaks of Otter Lodge

If you wish to carpool, meet at 11 a.m. at the lower end of the Walmart parking lot at US 460 and US 220 (4524 Challenger Ave NE, Roanoke, VA 24012). Or if driving on your own, meet the group at the Peaks of Otter Lodge at 1 p.m. While you are at the Peaks you may want to hike around Abbott Lake, visit the Visitor’s Center's Ranger Station, hike to Johnson Farm on Harkening Hill (allow 2 hours), or even hike the two Peaks, Sharp Top and Flat Top (allow 2-4 hours each). For more details, contact Ellen Holtman to let her know that you plan to go at eholtman@comcast.net or 540-797-2350.

Sunday, Nov. 3 FIELD TRIP

Come see **Massey Herbarium** at Virginia Tech, 3006 Derring Hall, hosted by curator Dr. Jordan Metzgar. This is the largest Herbarium in Virginia. Meet at the Park and Ride at Exit 140 in Salem at 1 p.m. Contact Dr. Rebecca Ross to let her know you plan to go at wingsross@aol.com or 540-855-4713.





Help Wanted!

Welcome new members!

Kelley Lasley, Bent Mountain, VA

Amber Sonne, Amherst, VA

Jeanine Dodge, Goodview, VA

Mary-Rosser Furr, Radford, VA

Patricia Webb, Roanoke, VA

Stephen Alonso, Amherst, VA

The past two years have flown by and it's time to submit nominations for 2025-2027 officers. All members are encouraged to participate! Our club needs volunteers to assist with administrative and planning functions during the year so members can continue to enjoy activities and programs. The group usually meets twice yearly for planning purposes, and again if needed, for special events or committee business. Your input can help contribute fresh ideas and perspectives to the club's activities and programs. We welcome you to join us! If you are interested in joining the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society board or any of our committees, please contact Ellen Holtman or me for additional information.

Our annual plant sale and picnic are opportunities for members to come together and interact. Based on member feedback requesting more of those opportunities, starting September, the general membership meetings will include a time for fellowship and hospitality starting at 6 p.m.

This earlier start will also provide time for event sign-ups, program announcements, and light hospitality. Speakers will begin at 6:30 p.m. through fall and winter.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to announce that the Plant Virginia Natives Initiative has completed the Native Plants for Southern Piedmont guide and it is now in print production! The format is similar to A Guide to Gardening with Southwestern Virginia Native Plants currently in distribution. The Southern Piedmont region includes 18 counties (Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Brunswick, Campbell, Charlotte, Franklin, Halifax, Henry, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Prince Edward, and portions of Dinwiddie, Greenville, and Sussex) and the cities of Danville, Lynchburg, and Martinsville. BRWS and VNPS are proud sponsors of both guides! Our membership covers areas in both of these guides. In the meantime, you can access a digital copy and/or download the pdf at:

https://www.plantvirginiannatives.org/native-plants-for-southern-piedmont
HAPPY GARDENING! - Jennifer

Under the leadership of Carol Whiteside, the annual picnic with the Roanoke Valley Bird Club continues to be a beautiful event for members of BRWS and RVBC. A change to the facility schedule allowed Carol and her team to start the picnic in the late afternoon, providing more time for fellowship and great food. It was a welcome break from the sizzling summer heat.



The 2024 Annual BRWS & RVBC Picnic

In addition to BBQ and fried chicken, both clubs provided annual memberships as door prizes this year! We are so glad to hear from members that they continue to enjoy the annual picnic!

The boards and membership of both clubs appreciate the work of Carol and her committee for pulling together another successful picnic! From the opening poem (see next page) to the tri-fold board with many photos from our first combined picnic in Waldron Park in 2012 (thank you Betty and Butch Kelly!), members said they enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect with other members, reminisce about past activities, and look forward to upcoming opportunities to get together and learn.

Carol sent a heartfelt thanks to attendees for making time to participate in the picnic, prepare and share side dishes, and help with clean up. Additionally, Carol passed along thanks and acknowledgments to her talented committee:

- Drew Daniels and Linda Harrison for coordinating the delicious BBQ and chicken, Marilyn Lerch for her warm greeting with another charming and thoughtful poem, Ellen Holtman for creating lovely table arrangements of wildflowers, Robin and Allen Austin for coordinating drinks, Mary Lou Barrett and Iris Daniels for organizing, and creating beautiful settings on the serving tables, and Mary Harshfield for managing the sign-in table and ensuring everyone was welcomed!

Untitled

Thank you for the generosity of
birds who sing their celebration
of life without ceasing—
may their chirps, tweets, twitters, coos, and hoots
continue to bless the land.

Thank you for the wild rhododendrons
who don their lovely purple frocks each spring—
dancing with delight in the gentle breeze
and dotting the landscape with color.

Thank you for the busily buzzing bees
who do the important work of pollinating
to ensure the continued fruitfulness of the earth.

Thank you for the grandeur of trees
that provide a canopy from the rain and sun
and stand as majestic, silent witnesses
to the blooming, buzzing, chirping world.

[We give thanks] for all
of these wondrous things.

- by Carol Scott Kassner
Earth Our Original Monastery by
Christine Valters Paintner, PhD
(Sorin Books, 2020, p.33)

Goat's Beard by Sandra Elder



Forest Service roads are great places to find native plants growing in their natural habitat. On May 26, 2024 Jim and I drove down Parker's Gap Road, Forest Service Rd. 812 at Mile Post 78.4, Sunset Field, on the Blue Ridge Parkway. There were some nice patches of Bowman's Root, *Gillenia trifoliata*, in bloom; but the main attraction was **Goat's Beard, *Aruncus dioicus***. Both of these plants can be seen along the parkway; however, on this less traveled road, you can pull off and get a closer look.

The genus name *Aruncus* comes from the Greek word for goat because the panicles of flowers were thought to resemble a goat's beard. The species name denotes that the plant is dioecious, meaning the male and female flowers are found on separate plants. The male flowers are larger and more showy. The female flowers produce tiny toxic seeds.

With the forest as a backdrop and dappled sunlight provided by the open road, the stage is set for this impressive five feet tall native. The clusters of large white branching panicles atop dark green pinnately compound leaves provide a beautiful sight. The flowers produce copious amounts of both pollen and nectar. It is the host plant for the dusky azure butterfly. The roots have been used to treat blood diseases, internal bleeding, and during child birth.

The distribution of this member of the rose family is widespread, found in the eastern United States, on the west coast, and also in Europe and Asia.



Dusky Azure
butterfly
https://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/sighting_details/698251

New column "Sightings"

Did you come across a crop of native plants, or a native specimen of particular beauty or interest? Please consider writing up where you found it, what you know about the native, and submit with a photo.

We hope to get three submissions a year. Please send photos and a brief article by Jan 1, May 1, or August 1.

THANK YOU!



all Goat's Beard photos by Sandra Elder

Meet a Member: Sara Lissa Paulson

I grew up in Lynchburg, across from Randolph College's Planetarium and outdoor amphitheater, The Dell. When I was 6, my mother got my four siblings and me out of bed at 3 a.m. to run up the Planetarium stairs and watch, through the college's telescope, the Katouket comet fly across the dark night sky.

The Dell was an extension of our backyards, where the neighborhood kids rolled down grassy hills at bluegrass concerts and played kick the can until the lightning bugs came out in multitudes, and in just a matter of minutes. The campus was full of mature cedars and oaks, a magical place for a child.

I now realize some unusual native trees like a Franklinia, and a couple of Kentucky Coffee Trees, also reside and prosper there. In the 1980s, I was long gone, off to gain degrees in Comparative Literature, Spanish, Bilingual Education and Library Studies, and to work in libraries in San Francisco and New York City. During those years, Botanist Dorothy Bliss established a garden ahead of its time on the Norfolk Avenue side of campus. She and Sandra Elder (and many volunteers) worked tirelessly to create

Dorothy Crandall Bliss Botanic Garden atop the bank of the legendary goldfish pond, an impassible hill of brambles when I was a kid.

On a 2021 pandemic walk marveling at the cherry blossom petals blanketing the sidewalk, I saw Sandra working and she invited me to come and see what was blooming. I was hooked. She gave me my first Doug Tallamy book and I have been planting native plants and volunteering there ever since. I have always had a garden whenever I have had access to green space during my 30+ years living in big cities. Planting native, productive plants that restore the insect life on which all other lives depend is like growing readers, an act of hope for the future. It has been a great segue into retirement.

In 2023, I retired from my work as a school librarian and moved here full-time, but continue to translate children's literature from Spanish to English and write. I am a member of the Natural Bridge AT Club and am training to become a Lynchburg Tree Steward.



After many decades working with children and books, I am back where I was born to be closer to my family and to better understand the flora, fauna, and geology of the ancient Blue Ridge Mountains. My yard, which was just grass, is now half native plants! But that is another story.

Starting with this edition, I will be editing the BRWS newsletter and will strive to honor Roger's legacy. There is nothing more exciting than knowing a native and finding it in the wild. I ask you to consider contributing a "Sightings" article (see page 6) when you find an inspiring native plant on your next hike or walk.

Each newsletter highlights one of the planet-friendly organizations that share our goal of protecting healthy ecosystems. Any member who has a favorite group is encouraged to send in a blurb.

Spotlight: James River Association

The James River Association (JRA) is a caretaker organization for the state's largest river. It gives the James River a voice.



The James River is 340 miles long and traverses several counties and municipalities of the BRWS region: Lynchburg, Covington, Buena Vista, Botetourt, and a part of Roanoke County.

JRA has made great strides in initiating the much needed watershed restoration to address habitat loss. The James River is the largest roosting area for eagles in the state. The JRA sponsors invasive species removal workdays near the Richmond area, and frequent paddle trips in Lynchburg. **The Upper James River Education Program** opened last year

at [Riveredge Park](#) in Madison Heights, across from downtown Lynchburg. They have a strong slate of educational programs for all ages.

Working collaboratively with state and national organizations, the JRA is able to fund projects such as creating living shorelines and riparian buffer forests. These efforts improve the river's water quality and prevent flooding by adding native plants to shorelines, which essentially recreate lost marshlands and riverbanks.

The JRA offers many ways to get involved. Perhaps one of the surest is to go on a paddle trip (no boat ownership required). It's a great way to experience the history and natural tranquility of the waters of the James. Explore the JRA's "Full Calendar" of events, for more info, under the "News & Events" tab at <https://thejamesriver.org/>. - Lissa



black chokeberry (*Photinia melanocarpa*), illustration by Izabel Kubanowska from <https://www.phipps.conservatory.org/exhibits-and-events/calendar/magnified-portraits-of-southwestern-pa-native-plants>

BRWS MEETINGS

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs
3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke

Meetings are held the fourth Monday of the month in September, October, November, and in March, April and May, unless changed or canceled due to inclement weather and/or Roanoke County School closures. Hospitality and sign-ups are presented at membership meetings from 6 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., prior to our program. Currently, members must be present (in-person attendance) to vote. We also will share club news and updates on our webpage at www.vnps.org/chapters and via email.

Virginia Native Plant Society

Website:

<https://www.vnps.org>

The Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS), founded in 1982 as the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society, is a nonprofit organization of individuals who share an interest in Virginia's native plants and habitats. The Society and its chapters seek to further the appreciation and conservation of this priceless heritage.

Our Mission: The Virginia Native Plant Society is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the native plants of Virginia and their habitats, to sustain for generations to come the integrity of the Commonwealth's rich natural heritage of eco-systems and biodiversity for purposes of enjoyment, enlightenment, sustainable use, and our own very survival. To this end, we advocate and follow practices that will conserve our natural endowment, and we discourage and combat practices that will endanger or destroy it. We are committed to do all we can to slow the accelerating conversion of natural landscape to built and planted landscape and to reduce its damage to natural ecosystems.

Our Purpose and Services

State Level:

- Working for measures to protect endangered plant species, and preserve habitats and plant communities of special interest
- Learning and teaching about native plants and their special needs
- Encouraging the appropriate use of nursery or home propagated native plants in public landscapes and private gardens
- Assisting in writing and updating [Flora of Virginia](#)
- Providing money for graduate botanical research
- Working with nurseries to protect native species
- Offering a spring workshop on timely botanical subjects
- Offering field trips state wide and some in surrounding states
- Conducting the annual meeting with speakers and field trips provided

Local level, Blue Ridge Chapter:

Counties of: Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Roanoke **Cities of:** Roanoke, Salem and Lynchburg

- To present meetings in spring and fall that offer informative programs concerning a variety of areas and plants they support
- To lead free field trips to a wide variety of local habitats spring through fall
- To conduct an annual native plant sale in May
- To provide outreach to public groups in the way of speakers and guided walks
- To donate money to local conservation efforts

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs
3460 Colonial Ave. Roanoke, VA
24018

**General inquiries, newsletter
submissions**
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Membership inquiries
brws.membership@gmail.com

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Field Trips, Programs
Ellen Holtman
Rebecca Ross

Garden Coordinator
Linda Harrison

Membership
Rodelin Palmer

Plant Sale
Heather Butler

Newsletter Editor
Sara Lissa Paulson

The BRWS newsletter is published three times annually: spring, summer and fall. Photos and articles for publication are welcome and encouraged. Please send them via email to the address above.
Thank you!



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

P.O. Box 23011

Roanoke, VA 24018

MEETINGS/EVENTS AT A GLANCE

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"Shrubs, Trees, and Wildflowers" in a cove forest near Dragon's Tooth

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Peaks of Otter Lodge, Blue Ridge Parkway

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