



## The Declaration

Jefferson Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS)

Fall Edition 2016

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### Upcoming Member Meetings

-- by Ruth Douglas



Mark your calendars for our fall lineup of speakers. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM at Ivy Creek Natural Area Education Bldg., 1780 Earlysville Rd. just south of Woodlands Rd. intersection on north side of Charlottesville, VA unless otherwise noted. Bring a friend or two, visitors are welcome.

#### September 14, 2016 – Tana Herndon and Tim Williams: “Ivy Creek Plants and Herbarium”

We are very excited to have our own Jefferson Chapter members Tana Herndon and Tim Williams kick off our meetings this fall with a program focusing on the most recent Ivy Creek plant survey and ongoing efforts to develop an Ivy Creek Herbarium to formally authenticate the survey's findings. This is your chance to learn about recent discoveries here at Ivy Creek of a number of quite unusual plants for our area of the Piedmont. Tim will also describe what is involved in constructing a herbarium and explain its value as a physical record of Ivy Creek's plant diversity. Sample herbarium sheets will be available to view. Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville).

**October 12, 2016 – Program To Be Determined** - Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville).

**November 9, 2016 –Lori Chamberlain, Forest Health Specialist** - The forest health program at the Virginia Department of Forestry is tasked with surveying and monitoring the state for major forest pests, pathogens, non-native invasive plants, and other disturbances. Lori Chamberlain will talk about some of our major forest health threats and provide current survey results. Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville).

**December 14, 2016 – Program To Be Determined** - Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville).

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## 2017 Plant Sale Fall Potting Party

-- by Phil Stokes, Plant Sale Chairman



What better way is there to spend a fall morning than meeting old friends and new ones at Pat Willis's for a potting gathering to prepare plants for the chapter's spring plant sale. No special talents required. We'll gather Oct. 8 (Sat.) at Pat Willis's most accommodating greenhouse and home in the tranquil countryside of Louisa Co. Green Springs Historic District for a 10:00 start. Rain or shine given that we'll have indoor work areas available.

Awaiting our potting attention will be about 500 bare root spring ephemerals such as bluebells, trillium, wild ginger, and mayapples. Also we'll have on hand at least 500 well developed plugs of good sellers including milkweed, heuchera,

sedum ternatum, and monarda eager for a new home in a roomy pot. If you have a hand pruner or snips for your use to cut back small roots or stems please bring them. Although we'll have enough pots on hand, we always appreciate having your recyclable 4" opening size pots to fill our needs later.

With a good turnout of members and friends we can get these potted in 2 hours. Then we'll be rewarded by a lunch with Pat's savory soups and potluck salad, bread, or dessert items you may bring. This potting event supplies about a third of the plants for our sale. Please plan to attend. For driving directions search: 1611 Hamilton Rd., Louisa, VA or contact Pat at 540 967-0208.



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## Native Plant Spotlight: Turtlehead

-- By Kate Asquith

This month, you may noticed lovely pink or white flowers resembling a turtle's head poking out from its shell. The plant might be the aptly named turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*), a hardy perennial that can provide plenty of late season color with minimal maintenance. The plant's interesting flower has inspired a variety of charming alternative names like shellflower, snakehead, snakemouth, cod head, and fish mouth.

Turtlehead is a beautiful addition to your garden. Its abundant late summer blooms are perfect for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds. It is a favorite border species among gardeners because deer are not interested in browsing the plant. The cut flowers also serve well as part of a bouquet or floral arrangement, lasting about a week in water.

If you're looking to add late season color to your garden, plant turtlehead in damp ground in either full sun or part shade. Plan for the plant to reach a mature height of 2 to 3 feet with a spread of about a foot. Be on the lookout for turtlehead at our native plant sale next spring.

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## Field Trip to Gladden Fields Wetland

-- By Mary Lee Epps



This past summer on a hot mid-July day, more than 30 Jefferson Chapter members and other wildflower enthusiasts converged on Gladden Fields south of Charlottesville to explore the remarkable wet marsh there. We divided into two groups led by Jefferson Chapter members Ruth Douglas and Tana Herndon. The larger group explored the marsh itself, following a narrow trail winding through towering shrubs and herbaceous plants while a smaller group, mainly those who had opted to bow to the very hot weather and wear shorts, enjoyed walking on a wider mown path around the perimeter of the wetland.

Although the groundnut was not yet blooming and the only Turk's cap lily blooms we saw were inside the marsh and almost finished flowering, the purple fringed orchids (*Platanthera permoena*) were at their prime and blooming in profusion. They were scattered throughout the marsh, but there were also plenty to admire along the perimeter path. We also found several blooming plants of wild sweet-william (*Phlox maculata*), a close cousin of the more common native *Phlox paniculata* that many of us cultivate in our flower gardens. *Phlox maculata* is fairly common in the mountains but infrequent in the Piedmont. We saw lots of button-bush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), seedbox (*Ludwigia alternifolia*), some lovely swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), and also yellow passion flower (*Passiflora lutea*) with its tiny blossoms so similar in structure to the flowers of the purple passion flower. There were numerous American hazelnut shrubs (*Corylus americana*), heavy with under-ripe nuts, and the round, fat rosehips of swamp rose (*Rosa palustris*).



We also found one particularly unusual plant, bristly hedge nettle (*Stachys hispida*). This is a mint that several of us had puzzled over on a scouting trip the day before, finally deciding that it must be a very peculiar sample of American Germander. Happily, Jefferson Chapter member, Chip Morgan, a talented local botanist who teaches an Ollie wildflower course, recognized it and was able to have a sample verified by Gary Fleming, author of two chapters of the Flora of Virginia and on the staff of the Division of Natural Heritage. According to the online Digital Atlas of Virginia Flora, this *Stachys* is found mainly in northern Virginia, and is not shown in Albemarle, or indeed in any Central Virginia counties.

One fascinating aspect of the Gladden Fields wetland is that we actually have a plant list from 49 years ago that was assembled by the late Mo Stevens, a dedicated local botanist and birder who kept methodical records of natural history observations from his teenage years onward. In his records, he mentions seeing "scores" of the northern rein orchid, *Habenaria flava* (now *Platanthera flava*), which the Flora lists as rare in the Piedmont and several of us who had visited the area before had never noticed. Thanks to Mo's list, we were looking for it this time and found a plant, long past bloom and in seed. We hope to go back earlier in the season in another year to see it in bloom.

We are particularly grateful to our host, Ron Brunk, who owns the Gladden Fields wetland and has acted as a superb steward of the area throughout the time he has owned it. We also very much appreciate his willingness to share this beautiful wetland with visitors. Please keep in mind that this is private land. While Ron is happy to have wildflower aficionados visit, he asks that they contact him first. You can get his contact information from Mary Lee Epps by emailing her at [mse5e@virginia.edu](mailto:mse5e@virginia.edu).

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## **Upcoming Plant Walks and other Events**

### September 9-11: The Virginia Native Plant Society 2016 Annual Meeting

Blacksburg. It's not too late to join in the fun and meet VNPS members from around the state. Membership is not required. Sempervirens at <http://vnps.org/download/sempervirens/spring%20sv%20color.pdf>

### Sept 9-11: Native Plant Sale

Hummingbird Hill Native Plant Nursery will be holding a plant sale at 7015 Blackwells Hollow Road in Crozet, Va 22932. For more information contact them at (434)964-1034.

### Sept 17: Native Plant Walk (Saturday 9am)

Mary Lee Epps will lead a walk focusing on fall flowers and fruits. Good for all ages. Co-sponsored by Ivy Creek Foundation. Meet by the kiosk near the parking lot. Free. Membership not required, just an interest in native plants.

### Sept 19: Joe Murray Presentation (Monday, 7pm)

Joe Murray will be the guest of the Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards at Ivy Creek Natural Area. CATS welcomes anyone who would like to hear this dynamic speaker. There is no fee to attend. Murray's presentation title is "Radical Gardening: Doing Things that would drive my College Professors Crazy." He is an ISA certified arborist, former Blue Ridge Community College faculty member, ISA trainer, consulting arborist, and writer. Joe Murray has an enthusiastic delivery and has lectured to groups in our area in recent years. We are pleased to have him in our community again for one night. If you have questions please contact [jackivawter@comcast.net](mailto:jackivawter@comcast.net).

### Sept 24: Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards Fall Tree Sale (Saturday 11am-until trees are sold out)

The IX Complex, 955 2nd Street SE, Charlottesville, Va - Vegetarian Festival  
38 varieties of mostly native, young trees and shrubs will be offered at low prices (most priced at \$5 or \$10)

### October 15: Native Plant Walk (Saturday 9am)

Phil Stokes will lead a walk focusing on identifying invasive plants and the need as well as the means to control them. Co-sponsored by Ivy Creek Foundation. Meet by the kiosk near the parking lot. Free. Membership not required, just an interest in native plants.

### October 23: Trees of Ivy Creek (Sunday 2pm)

Join Ellen Powell of the Virginia Department of Forestry on an autumn walk at Ivy Creek Natural Area to learn to identify trees indigenous to Central Virginia. Meet in the parking lot of Ivy Creek Natural Area. Sponsored by Ivy Creek Foundation.

### November 19: Native Plant Walk (Saturday 9am)

Ruth Douglas will lead a walk focusing on identifying weeds in winter Co-sponsored by Ivy Creek Foundation. Meet by the kiosk near the parking lot. Free. Membership not required, just an interest in native plants.

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## May 2016 Plant Sale's Success

-- By Phil Stokes, Plant Sale Chairman

The Jefferson Chapter's May 1 Annual Native Plant Sale drew a huge turnout despite being on the same weekend as the Master Gardener/Tree Steward Sale and a Tufton Farm Open House. Although far from being a total sellout like we experienced last year, we impressively registered sales for the day of \$7,050 which exceeded the prior year's record breaking \$6,769. A price increase from \$4.00 to \$4.50 added to the take but was offset somewhat by a 10 % discount offered to VNPS members. We also reaped the benefit of having gained several new membership signups.

Our larger than usual supply of chapter potted trilliums, bluebells, wild ginger, and Jacob's ladder was nearly able to meet our customers demand. Adding to our success were many flats of member contributed plants such as milkweed, twinleaf, and columbine. What were difficult to sell were the summer and tall fall pollinator attracting species unfamiliar to our customers. At sale time they tended to be small and all looked alike making it difficult to identify them for labeling.



When the sale ended we had the unenviable task of loading 1 ½ pickup truck loads of leftover plants. Knowing many of these leftovers would need constant watering and would soon outgrow their containers we worked to find individuals with large gardening projects and public garden sites where our donated plants would be planted. Remarkably we found buyers and homes for the over 300 plants (including creeping phlox – pictured) and added \$657 to our plant sale total. Given the larger quantity of plants the chapter potted this year our costs were much higher at \$3,007. However there is a case and a half of unused pots available for future use.

Thanks go out to the many growers of donated plants, workers at the two potting events wonderfully hosted by Pat Willis and Fran Boninti, label makers in particular Jane Taylor, Will Shaw for transporting and storing potted plants, sale weekend volunteers with a multitude of tasks getting tables and plants in place, cashier crew, and clean up help. Last but not least we're very appreciative of loyal customers who make the event so rewarding.

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## Goldfinches Visit My Gardens

-- By Betty Truax



Multiple bird baths have enticed visitors to my gardens here in Troy, Virginia and goldfinches have been among them. The goldfinches have also been taking full advantage of my meager native offerings to date. I've seen them enjoying *Monarda fistulosa* (Wild Bergamot) as well as *Liatris spicata* (Dense Blazingstar) seeds. They are often around *Coreopsis lanceolata* (Lanceleaf Coreopsis) plants but I haven't seen them actually eating the seeds. The most interesting behavior I observed happened when I trimmed *Solidago odora* (Aniscented Goldenrod) to try and contain its size in a smallish garden bed. Lovely new grow quickly started sprouting and I watched as goldfinches took little 2 inch snips of the very strong smelling new growth. I'm not really sure why they were doing it, but

I will be cutting that particular goldenrod back again next year to see if they repeat the behavior. I had read an old article in Science Daily that claimed: "If the fresh herbs and plant materials that parent birds bring into the nest have a sufficient concentration of antimicrobial compounds, they could protect the nestlings from harmful bacteria," says researcher Jann Ichida.' Solidago is not mentioned in this particular article but with such a strong smell, I wouldn't be surprised if it's not being used as a deterrent. I will continue to watch what plants they seem to enjoy and add them to my native plantings in the future.

To read the article about herbs and bird's nests: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2004/05/040527080935.htm>

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### **Jefferson Chapter Newsletter**

Submissions of articles, events, and other information of interest to the chapter are welcome. Feel free to submit them to: [jeffvnps@gmail.com](mailto:jeffvnps@gmail.com) . Put "Newsletter Editor" in the subject line please.