



## The Declaration

Jefferson Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS)

Winter/Spring Edition 2017

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### Upcoming Member Meetings

-- Ruth Douglas



Mark your calendars for our late winter/spring 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.

**Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup> – Build it Back: the Crucial Role of Native Plant Restoration following Invasive Plant Removal** - Our own **Phil Stokes** will focus on two Tree Steward projects that he chaired involving invasive plant removal: one almost outside the Education Building door, where there was a huge tangle of invasive shrubs and vines some years ago. The invasive plants were removed, and native shrubs were planted. It's a great illustration of a practical approach to invasive plant removal and restoration of a small site.

Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville).



**Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> – Quarry Gardens Update** - Bernice and Armand Thieblot will update us on their fascinating and extensive project developing the Quarry Gardens, located in Schuyler. From an abandoned soapstone quarry, they have developed their vision of restoration of the site using native plants to create a striking and lovely garden. The Quarry Gardens will open in April. Come get a preview and the story behind their creation. Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville).

**Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup> – Details will be provided soon** - Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville).

**Wednesday, May 10 - Tom Wieboldt on Mo Stevens** - Tom Wieboldt, Charlottesville native and recently retired botanist at Virginia Tech will speak about the life and accomplishments of Charles “Mo” Stevens, his mentor and colleague in field botany. Mo traveled over Albemarle County and the entire state of Virginia seeking out notable habitats for plants, and annotating USGS topographic maps with his finds. The value of his work today and in the future is noteworthy as a record of plant locations during the time when Mo was exploring the state. Now and in the future, we can compare locations then with locations now: are the populations still in the same area, have they moved, etc. Other friends and colleagues of Mo’s will join Tom in recounting Mo’s achievements and telling noteworthy stories about Mo—and there are many (achievements AND stories). Visitors are welcome to join us at 7:30pm (Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Rd, Charlottesville).

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## **Preparing for our April 30, 2017 Plant Sale**

*--Phil Stokes, Plant Sale Chair*

As usual our preparations for the Jefferson Chapter’s Annual Native Plant Sale (to be held Sunday, April 30, 1:00 pm in the Barn at Ivy Creek Natural Area) started with a chapter members’ potting gathering on Oct. 8 at Pat Willis’s home. To make up for a low turnout, the hard working members who showed up, worked well past morning. They extended potting well into the afternoon. Their spirits were lifted by a hearty lunch with Pat’s delicious soups which this year featured Basque Sausage & Potato Soup, North African Chicken Soup, and Vegetarian Pumpkin Apple Soup.



This crew potted all of our ordered bare root plants consisting of 100 each of Virginia bluebells, toad shade trillium, heartleaf, Solomon’s seal, short-toothed mountain mint and May apple. By mid-afternoon after potting 350 of the 500 tray grown plugs we called it a day. Three of the volunteers agreed to potting up a tray of 50 plugs later at home. All the day’s potting of about 950 plants were loaded on to the pick-up trucks of caretakers Will Shaw and Phil Stokes. Kudos to Pat and these dedicated volunteers for all their work on a rainy and cold day.

We’ll need many more plants to satisfy the sale’s exceptionally large customer demand. Please help by attending our upcoming potting event at Fran Boninti’s on Apr. 1 (rain date Apr. 2) starting at 1:30 pm, see separate newsletter article for details. Additionally we rely on member grown and contributed plants being dropped off on the weekend of the sale. Last year we received a record number of donated pottings, please keep them coming. On sale-weekend plants can be dropped off Fri., Sat., and early Sun. and left behind the barn; label at least one of each species. Help is welcomed and needed in setting up tables, sorting, and labeling on Sat. afternoon (3:00 – 6:00 pm) as well as on Sun. morning (beginning at 10:30) at the Ivy Creek Natural Area’s barn for final preparations.

We’ll be promoting the sale starting with sample plants and flyers at our display table at the PLA Seminar on Feb. 16 and the Woods & Wildlife Conference on Feb. 25. Betty will be providing plant descriptions and photos on our facebook page. Our final push will be a display table at Tufton Farm’s Open House on the day before our sale.

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## Help Needed: Potting Party at Fran's

--Phil Stokes, Plant Sale Chair

Saturday, April 1st (rain date: April 2<sup>nd</sup>) at 1:30pm. - Only a little more than half of the plant sale inventory that the chapter produces from potting events has been prepared. As has been our tradition, we'll wrap up this year's potting with a chapter gathering on Sat. April 1 (rain date Apr. 2) at Fran and Andrew Boninti's, 2505 Holkham Dr. west of Charlottesville in the Ivy area. We need your help for this final push to have a tremendous selection of plants ready for our Apr. 30 Annual Native Plant Sale at Ivy Creek Natural Area.

At Fran's you'll have the added pleasure of being able to tour her spectacular garden including a room where the ground is entirely blanketed by native ephemerals. Fortunately Fran can find places where many of these outstanding plants can be thinned for our potting. Already she has trays of May apple and wild ginger divisions awaiting us.

To increase our sale's selection of natives you're encouraged to bring for us to pot your extra seeded-in volunteers or divisions of popular natives which can become sale ready in 4 weeks. Some plants we need are Robin's plantain, foamflower, purple coneflower, and amsonia. While we'll have enough purchased containers and trays on hand, we prefer to use the recycled ones with approximately 4" openings that members can bring.

Please plan to attend and have a great time with friends old and new. This is a wonderful opportunity to easily get to know members. No previous potting experience is needed. If you have pruners for trimming roots please bring them. The photos were taken last year at Fran's during the potting party!



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## Native Plant Spotlight: Dutchman's Breeches

-- E.M. Truax

Being offered at our plant sale this year Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*) is an elegant, charming, and easy to grow spring ephemeral that is commonly found throughout the eastern United States. This short plant rarely gets over 8 inches tall. Blooming in early spring from March to April, the flowers are white to pink. They look very much like miniature pantaloons hanging on a line. The foliage is dainty and fern-like. This plant grows in dappled sunlight in woodlands, in a rich loamy soil with abundant organic matter. An early bloomer this plant can resist a moderate frost without any damage. Bees are attracted to its nectar as well as a few butterflies.



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## Plant Walks and other Events

--Liz Eristoff

### **Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup> - Piedmont Landscape Association Seminar** (Paramount Theater, Charlottesville)

- ❖ Speakers include Nancy Ross Hugo: *"Trees up Close: Discover the Extraordinary Secrets of Everyday Trees;"* Allan Armitage: *"Horticulture through One Man's Eyes" and "Dr. A's Best Piedmont Plant Picks;"* and Peggy Singleton: *"Native Shrubs, the Middle Layer"* Ask for a discount if you're a chapter member. More information: <http://www.piedmontlandscape.org/seminar.html>

### **Saturday, Feb 25 – Winter Tree ID** (10 am to noon, Education Center, Ivy Creek Natural Area)

- ❖ The Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards will offer a free class on Winter Tree ID. Learn about other characteristics for tree species when leaves are absent. To register, email [Treebasics183@gmail.com](mailto:Treebasics183@gmail.com)



### **Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup> - Virginia Native Plant Society Workshop: "Understories: Small Communities and Secret Agents"** (9:15 am- 3:30 pm, University of Richmond Jepson Hall Auditorium, Ryland Circle)

- ❖ John Townsend on Bryophytes! Manuela Dal Forno on Lichens! Mary Jane Epps on Plant-Fungal Interactions! Jason Davis uncovers How Plants Hijack Animal Physiology to Rule the World! More on the program and registration: <http://vnps.org/workshop-2017-under-stories-small-communities-and-secret-agents/>

### **Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> - Field trip to Quarry Gardens**

- ❖ Visit the Quarry Gardens in Schuyler. Here is the Garden's Website to whet your appetite! <http://quarrygardensatschuyler.org> Details to follow.

### **Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup> – Annual Native Plant Sale!!!!** (1:00-3:00 pm, the Barn at Ivy Creek Natural Area, 1780 Earlysville Road, Charlottesville, VA)

- ❖ Choose from over 50 species of native perennials, trees, shrubs, wetland plants. There will be a large selection of spring wildflowers and groundcovers including trillium, Virginia bluebells, Dutchman's breeches, wild geranium, Mayapple, Jacob's ladder, wild blue phlox, heuchera, spring beauty, solomon's seal, short-toothed mountain mint, common milkweed, butterfly weed spiked blazing star and wild ginger. Later season species turtlehead, purple coneflower, scarlet bee balm, goldenrod, asters, and more. Most Perennials will be \$ 4.50 each; most trees and shrubs \$ 7 each. Cash and checks accepted.
- ❖ Plants and volunteer needed: on Saturday 3:00-6:00 pm and for on Sunday morning beginning at 10:30.
- ❖ Proceeds support Jefferson Chapter's educational and conservation efforts.



❖ <https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1865066>

**September 29-October 1<sup>st</sup> - Tri-State Native Plant Conference 2017**

Mark your calendar for September 29 – October 1, 2017. The Virginia Native Plant Society, the Maryland Native Plant Society, and the West Virginia Native Plant Society are joining together to host the 2017 Native Plant Conference at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV! For more information visit our state site at: <http://vnps.org/tri-state-native-plant-conference-2017/>

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**Take a Camera on a Winter Hike**

-- *E.M. Truax*



Taking pictures of nature in the winter can be challenging. The weather is often cold and windy, the lighting is different, and colors are muted. The ground can be wet, muddy, or even frozen. Don't allow this to discourage you from visiting our parks, mountains, gardens etc. Bundle up and get out there!

In spring, summer and fall photographers are usually attracted to bright colors and moving critters. In winter, look up towards the sky and also scan the ground. Trees such as Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) and Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) sometimes have attractive seeds pods. Down on the ground many types of mosses, sometimes with spores, are very pretty.



With the disappearance of foliage, rocks and bark become more noticeable. Rocks sometimes covered in lichens, mosses and ferns really shine. The rocks themselves can have details you might not otherwise see such as quartz running through them or color variations. In the mountains you can see how water flows down a rock face and how amazing it is that plants can actually grow on them. In winter that water can form lovely ice sculptures when it drips onto plant materials.



There are native plants that bloom in winter. Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) and Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) come to mind. Both are interesting and beautiful. The joy of finding a bloom in winter should not be underrated. These are plants that are survivors. They have specific relationships with

their pollinators because both blooms and pollinators are rare in winter. According to renowned naturalist Bernd Heinrich there is an owl moth that pollinates witch hazel. The moth is particularly interesting because it covers itself in leaf litter and its body temperature drops. When it is ready to feed, this moth starts to shiver until it raises its body temperature. Skunk cabbage has a distinct odor when any part of the plant is broken. It is found in wet mucky soils near and even in streams, springs and bogs. Gnats, carrion and flesh flies are attracted to the flowers because of their meat-like smell. Keep an eye out for seed pods and spent blooms which can be as interesting as the flowers that produced them.



The muted colors of winter are often subtle but when you look at the different hues you might see things you wouldn't have noticed. During this season more than any other, I find myself squinting at something I find interesting because by squinting I get a feel for the background will look like. Although bright blue sky is attractive particularly when paired with bright colored berries, I particularly like the very soft greens, purples, yellows and grays that winter brings out.

Taking pictures of nature in winter is fun. There are fewer bright colors or insects to distract your eye making it easier to hunt for the "bits of interesting".



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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.