JEFFERSON CHAPTER VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

THE DECLARATION

WINTER 2021



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Chapter Meetings	2
Member Contributions	3
Partner Events	8
Learn More About VNPS	9

Common Buckeye Butterfly

By: Mary Lee Epps Chapter President

In late September I saw a handsome and unusual chrysalis hanging from a *Penstemon* seed head in my flower garden. I had never seen anything like it before.

I knew it did not belong to a fritillary, probably the most common butterfly visiting my garden. But the one butterfly that seemed to be everywhere at that time of year was the common buckeye, and when I googled buckeye chrysalis, photographs matched mine perfectly (except perhaps for the fact that descriptions of the chrysalis were that it is usually brown while mine was more a dark charcoal)



Common buckeye chrysalis on Penstemon seed pod

At that point I decided I wanted to learn more about this eyecatching butterfly. The common buckeye (Junonia coenia) is in the Nymphalidae family, the largest family of butterflies with over 6,000 species.

Just a few other examples of members of the family common in our part of Virginia are the fritillaries, red admiral, and mourning cloak. One fascinating characteristic of this family is that almost all members of the family stand on only 4 legs, keeping the other two curled up, hence the common family name, "four-footed butterflies".

Continued Page 3

Spring in the Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden

By: Tana Herndon, Chair of Ivy Creek Foundation's Pollinator Garden Task Force

The ephemeral wildflowers that bloom in our local forests before tree leaves emerge can often be grown in woodland gardens. But are there any early blooming native plants suitable for sunny gardens? Luckily, there are many, and some will be blooming in the Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden this April and May.

Four years ago, the Pollinator Garden had few early flowers. Yet, in order to attract and support a diverse pollinator population, a diverse plant community, blooming throughout the growing season, is required. Much of the garden, especially the area adjacent to the Paved Trail, is in full sun and slopes downward, making the upper area sunny, well-drained and dry. Over the last four years, early blooming native plants have been added by garden volunteers.

Continued Page 4

To help keep everyone safe during COVID-19, chapter meetings featuring an educational speaker will be held **virtually** the second Wednesday of the month from 7:30-9:00 PM.

Chapter meetings will be accessible through Zoom. Login information is provided via email to Chapter members.

For help accessing the chapter meetings email Chapter President,
Mary Lee Epps
(mse5e@virginia.edu).

Chapter Meetings

Jefferson Chapter monthly talks are back! After taking a break from November through February, we will be offering our usual monthly talks through the spring via Zoom. Preliminary information on the talks is below. Watch for more details on the presentations with links to the Zoom meetings in the upcoming weeks.

Wednesday, March 10, 7:30-9:00, Online Access | Creating and Enhancing Pollinator Gardens with Native Plants

Our March speakers will be Dr. Elizabeth Long and Morgan Franke from Appalachian Headwaters. Dr. Elizabeth Long is the new director of Headwaters' Appalachian Pollinator Center, a new community science and research center. Prior to joining Headwaters, she served as the Director of Conservation Science at the Mohonk Preserve, an 8,000-acre nature preserve in New York's Hudson Valley. She earned her master's degree from William and Mary studying Peregrine falcons and her PhD at the University of California-Davis studying the ecology, evolution, and genetics of the phenomenon of mimicry in butterflies. Previous work includes many years as a professor at Embry-Riddle and as a research fellow at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles. She worked at UCLA's La Kretz Center for California Conservation Science. Morgan is the Director of Headwaters' Native Plants program. She is a native West Virginian who has studied and worked with plants throughout the United States. She joined Appalachian Headwaters after working to build a native plant nursery in Guam. She earned her bachelor's degree in Biology at Sweet Briar College in Virginia and her master's degree from Virginia Tech. Morgan's thesis research focused on better understanding the impacts invasive plants have on the reforestation of surface mine sites in Appalachia.

Wednesday, April 14, 7:30-9:00, Online Access | Gardening with Native Plants

Fran Boninti is considered by many to be Charlottesville's premier native plant gardener. Since the early 1980s she has worked to develop a truly outstanding garden on her own property, featuring a large assortment of natives, many grown from cuttings.

Wednesday, May 12, 7:30-9:00, Online Access | Pipevine Swallowtail Butterfly and Its Host Plants

Mary Lee Epps will speak on the pipevine swallowtail butterfly and its host plants. She will also briefly talk about the Dripping Rock Area of the Blue Ridge Parkway just a few miles south of Afton, a great place to see the pipevine swallowtail and a wonderful diversity of wildflowers. Mary Lee is president of Jefferson Chapter, a member of the Rivanna Master Naturalists, and a frequent volunteer at Ivy Creek Natural Area.

Member Contributions

Common Buckeye Butterfly

Continued from Page 1

In the common buckeye and many other members of the family, these curled-up legs have brushes, giving rise to a second common name for the family, "brush-footed butterflies". Although it is not clear what these brushes are for, one hypothesis is that they enhance the butterflies' sense of smell and may help with communicating.

The mature butterfly is strikingly handsome. The upper side of both forewing and hindwing is a warm brown. The forward wing has a small eyespot near the tip of the wing and, a little closer to the middle, a broad white stripe ending in a second, much larger eyespot. The edge of the hindwing has a row of small white chevrons topped by a broad orange stripe on which two eyespots rest. The common name, buckeye, comes from these eyespots, thought by some to resemble a buck's eyes.

The genus, *Junonia*, is distributed worldwide. It is believed to have originated in Africa, spreading from there to Asia, and can now also be found in Australasia and the Americas. Our common buckeye, *Junonia coenia*, is distributed through much of the U.S., although absent in the Northwest, and its range also includes most of Mexico and parts of the Caribbean.

Females lay eggs singly on host plants, which include a variety of species with English plantain and Ruellia common hosts in our area. Several of these species, especially English plantain (Plantago lanceolata), are preferred caterpillar host plants because they contain iridoid glycocides, chemicals that have a bitter taste and also have detrimental effects on insect feeding and growth that tend to deter predation, although imperfectly. On the downside, caterpillars that consume too great a quantity of iridoid glycosides may have inhibited immune responses, making them more susceptible to parasites.

Buckeye caterpillars can be quite variable in their markings, but their backs are generally black with light-colored markings and have black, branching spines with a bit of shiny blue at the base. They have yellowish-white stripes with orange spots along the sides and are brown underneath. In Virginia, common buckeyes fly from May to October, but are particularly common here in late summer and early fall when our local population is augmented by migrants from the northern states, flying to wintering grounds in the Deep South. In Virginia, some pupae survive the winter. E.O. Wilson has called butterflies "flowers of the air", and this seems a particularly apt description for our common buckeye butterfly.





Photo: Common Buckeye at Preddy Creek Park

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Robin's Plantain



Green-and-Gold



Blue-star and Golden Alexanders



White Beard-tongue

Spring in the Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden

Continued from Page 1

Six spring blooming additions have flower stalks that reach less than 18 inches above evergreen to partially evergreen leaves that hug the ground. These locally common wildflowers were originally planted with varied success along the Paved Trail, the sunniest and driest part of the garden:

Lyre-leaf sage (*Salvia lyrata*) with its violet, trumpet-shaped flowers has thrived in the sunniest, driest site. **Pussytoes** (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*) have also thrived beside the Paved Trail. As in the wild, it has done best on a sunny, well-drained bank.

Common blue violet (*Viola sororia*) isn't choosy about growing conditions, self-seeds freely, and is a good garden understory. A host plant for fritillary butterfly caterpillars, its purple flowers begin to bloom by winter's end. **Robin's plantain** (*Erigeron pulchellus*) with its showy flowers has grown best when partially shaded in the summer by adjacent plants.

Green-and-gold (Chrysogonum virginianum) struggled in full sun; it was replanted where neighboring plants provide partial shade in the summer. The leaves can form a dense evergreen ground cover and will not tolerate wet feet. **Golden ragwort** (Packera aurea) also struggled, so it was moved to the back of the garden where its bright yellow flowers can beckon visitors. Prolifically self-seeding, this is a plant that I deadhead in my own garden.

The slightly taller **Golden-alexanders** (*Zizia aurea*) are thriving along the Paved Trail; it now also grows in other spots with part shade and moist soil. Freely self-seeding, the short-lived mature plants are automatically replaced with seedlings. The umbels of yellow flowers can start blooming as early as March. Its foot-tall partially evergreen leaves are food for black swallowtail caterpillars.

In the dry, sunny, middle of the garden, the trumpet flowers of **White beardtongue** (*Penstemon digitalis*) start blooming in May on stalks up to four feet tall. Freely reseeding throughout the garden, we often let the scattered beard-tongue seedlings bloom before removing them. Close by is **Hairy beard-tongue** (*Penstemon hirsutus*), which has smaller lavender flowers and is less than two feet tall

Also found in the dry, sunny garden center are **Blue-star** (Amsonia tabernaemontana) and **Blue wild indigo** (Baptisia australis). Both have blue flowers blooming in April and May and have a three-foot shrub-like growth that gives structure to the garden's center. Blue wild indigo takes several years to become established.

Other early bloomers, **Wild columbine** (Aquilegia canadensis) and **Ohio spiderwort** (Tradescantia ohiensis), have been planted along the mulched trail in an area with some shade and moisture.

As we have gotten to know the garden's microclimates, the moister, shadier conditions at the bottom of the slope have recently been utilized for growing other early spring blooming wildflowers. In addition to the transplanted Golden ragwort, last year, Virginia bluebells (Mertensia virginica), Woodland phlox (Phlox divaricata), and Dwarf crested iris (Iris cristata) were planted along the garden's back edge.

By June, the garden's blooms begin to transition to milkweeds, beebalms, asters and other wildflowers traditionally found in sunny native plant gardens. If you can, check out the garden earlier for the spring bloomers. As I write this, snow is on the ground, and it is pleasant to anticipate the months ahead filled with wildflower gardening.

In Memory of Pat Willis

BY: Marjie Giuliano, Chapter Member

Pat Willis provided the most fun of all the memories I've had over 20 years with the Jefferson chapter of the VNPS, hosting wonderful potting parties where she served a variety of soups so delicious, we always wanted to have a bowl of each! Sitting on her deck in warmer weather, or inside her cozy home by the fire on chillier occasions, we always felt welcome and well nourished, both physically and spiritually.

Pat's unique and unabashed attitude in support of our chapter's treasury was backed up by her continuing to hold that office for several years beyond the call of duty. Her love of teaching about and growing native plants was evident in every aspect of her active life, teaching numerous classes on native plants and even carrying it through to her love of cooking over open hearth for demos with the Louisa Historical Society. Serving on the Louisa Water Board was yet another example of her diverse talents and energy.

My most recent association with Pat was, perhaps my closest, and saddest. We were very involved in a project for Murray School's Environmental Science classes, collecting seeds, pots, labels, and soil for 84 kids to start individual native plant gardens. It required lots of organization and planning, with teachers and each other, to provide virtual learning as COVID presented new and unprecedented challenges. Pat and I were enjoying lots of fun as we worked on this project together. It was when I was unable to reach Pat and so contacted her family, that we learned of her having had a fatally disabling stroke. I am honored to have shared the enthusiasm and positive energy enjoyed by my dear and vivacious friend near the end of her very special life.

Patience

BY: Cary Conwell, Chapter Member

Pictured below is the seed head of New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*) in the dead of winter. Could there be a more perfect emblem of patience? Frozen in time and space, the namesake of the plant coming from the sturdy upright habit of its tall, lanky stems holding strong through all of winter's onslaughts of wind, precipitation, and biting cold. Yet *Vernonia noveboracensis* waits. And waits and waits for the rejuvenating warmth of the next season to achieve purple brilliance once again along Moffatts Creek, in Augusta County, south of Middlebrook. I cannot imagine it is easy to endure such a long period of wanting for this member of the Asteraceae family.

I could use a dose of patience these days, we all could. My wife and I are expecting our first child. The due date, as I write this, was yesterday and our patience is being stretched as tight as a guitar string. (It doesn't help that we are millennials!) As gardeners, it can be difficult to wait for spring. So it goes for choosing a seasonal hobby or profession. There is a remedy for this nagging ailment, and no, it is not a flight to the Southern Hemisphere. Bundle up and take a stroll outside. Notice the seed heads with their delicate architectural forms and muted tones of brown and rust. The patient and often stoic remnants of plants that must bide their time until they too can have what they want. If they can do it, so can I.

Stay strong fellow gardeners and naturalists. Spring will be here soon enough.



Beyond the Field - Enter

BY: Nicola McGoff, Chapter Member

You drive by it every day, without notice. It is just a field. An ordinary everyday field. Square shaped or almost anyway, with very defined boundaries. Manmade boundaries stretching back through time. The sedentary, fallow field. Static and uninviting for most. A place where utility trumps esthetic.

Perchance, one day you pause at the gravel entrance. No gate or pillars, no sign to indicate a human stamp of ownership. You cast your glance towards the back slope and decide to take an unplanned adventure across the field. Following some inner whimsy, you enter into this space. This wide-open enclosure without walls.

Perhaps you walk on through and out the far side. Oblivious to all upon which you trample. Or maybe you are one of those special ones that are drawn to such quiet places. Those who can hear the distant echoes of lives passed, of foregone times. Within this "thin place" these almost-sounds draw you into a space and time of your own making.

In that first moment of pause, you feel the breeze ripple off the top of those old warm season grasses. Upon the breeze you smell their oncoming dormancy, their pollen, their seed chaff. Switchgrass mingles with blue stem, underlain by some fescue. Boneset abuts the bee balm, while the non-native lespedeza creeps in.

As you survey the site, you notice the place that repeatedly draws your eye upon the slope. The perfect spot to sit awhile. From this perch, you spy a flat level site up on the hill, where if you had to, you would build your house. To one side of your "new house site" a headwater brook slips past. Bed and banks abound with grasses, the streamlet slides silently downhill. A clear, shallow thing of no consequence to you. Small though it may be, its energy has sliced through the far bank offering you a glimpse back through time. Back through past land uses.

Follow this brook down the slope, to the wondrously broad Sycamore. Its arms spread horizontal and wide.

The crown too large for the trunk that carries it. The bark a dappled skeleton, visually unlike all other trees.

From this wet patch your eye travels uphill in all directions. The road and surrounding human places are now obscured from your view. All you see is field as your senses are swallowed. The sounds are only those of the field now and the air feels dense.

A bee zips by in some autumnal search for bygone blooms. A vulture circles overhead wondering if you are worth waiting for. Unseen to most, an army of seeds float by overhead seeking out their forever homes. A rock peeks its head up to your left. Without much inquiry, it is just a gray rock. A cold mass of mineral foundation. An annoyance to the plow.

Turning to continue on your way, the old fence line, separating the field from the forest, presents itself. Not entirely intact, its three wires droop and dangle. The old split cedar wood, upright, still standing at attention on this boundary. Still claiming some human use on this space. Unwilding this land.

On you go, down into the woods. Past the old pond, surrounded now by new trees. Down the hill towards the town.

Coming out of your reverie and back to this modern world with its fast-paced living. You now brazenly walk by the bear scat and the fox's den. Float above the copperhead snake winding away from your footfall. Passing under the sleeping nocturnes. On back into your own world at full speed. Returning to the surface. Succumbing to your screens and high-speed communications.

Do you understand what it is you walk upon? Whose history? What life? Which ecological wonder?

Slow down awhile and come back to this field. This ordinary mundane field. And allow space and time and the natural world to unfold their arms and perform for you. Theirs is a lengthy tale of fruitful existence. One well worth watching.

Come in for a minute. Come sit and be present. Set aside your busy schedule. The field awaits.

Long Delayed Plant Sale Planned for May 1

BY: Phil Stokes, Plant Sale Chairman

Spring and Fall Delays

Early last spring, with Covid lockdowns becoming widespread, the decision was made to postpone the Jefferson Chapter Annual Native Plant Sale.

A fall 2020 sale was considered, but with our plant inventory over weighted with spring wildflowers, and continuing Covid concerns, the chapter board postponed.

May 1st Plant Sale Date Set!

The board has now set a sale date of Sat. May 1, 2021 (order pick-up date), sales will be made only by customers submitting a Pre-Sale Order Form in advance. This method will allow us to maintain safe social distancing.

Plant Inventory

The Chapter inventory totals over 1,600 potted plants. Plants are a mix of plants potted at Pat Willis's (cherished memories) in fall of 2019, leftovers from prior years, and a few new additions.

During the many extra months of storage our plants have become more robust with enlarging root systems.

Exceptional is the Toadshade (*Trillium sessile*) with 103 from 2018 pottings that are expected to be flowering again this spring.

For this species only, quantities are restricted to 5 pots per customer order.

Mayapples will be both in the usual 4" sq. tall pots and for the first time also offered in larger 6" pots. It's expected that many will be flowering size.

A new addition potted this fall is prized Shooting Star (Dodecatheon meadia) with its unique dart-like flowers.

These are just a few of nearly 50 desired native species to be offered. It includes woodland wildflowers, groundcovers, and partial sun wildflowers favored by pollinators, vines, and shrubs.

Pre-Sale Requirement

All customers must place Pre-Sale Orders by e-mail.

Orders will be filled on a first-come-first-served basis. The two-page Pre-Sale Order Forms will be email to all members on the chapter's e-mailing list and will also be accessible through our Facebook page.

Customer will send a scan of their filled in order form to a specified chapter e-mail address. The chapter will process the orders strictly in the order received during the specified ordering period.

The Pre-Sale Order Form will show quantities available for each plant species. We will not otherwise limit the quantity a customer may order except for the Trilliums (limit of 5).

Quantities Limited

Many species may sell out quickly, possibly we will be able to allow customers to make substitutions from other species still unsold.

Contactless Pickup

When an order is finalized the customer will be given a time slot on May 1 to pick-up their order and make check or cash payment while remaining in their vehicle. Pick-up location will be in the Ivy area (about 8 mi. west of C-ville).

Volunteers Needed!

We need volunteers to help process orders, box customer orders, set up tables, assemble orders for pick-up, keep traffic lines organized, and load vehicles. A special thank-you to Ruth Iwano for helping to label the plants.

Please contact Sale Chairman Phil Stokes at philipfs@embarqmail.com to volunteer.

Native Plant Advocacy: Embracing Change in Language and Focus BY: Annemarie Abbondanzo. Newsletter Editor

Native flora and fauna have formed symbiotic relationships over thousands of years and have evolved to match the specific growing conditions of their native region. Natives help to maintain the unique ecological characteristics of an area. Many can live only in the regional or even narrow niches in which they evolved. Protecting native species, and their ecosystem functions, against the adverse impacts of nonnative species is a compassionate, progressive, and science-based social cause.

Words matter for social causes and language can define and influence the success of movements. While words can underscore the power of efforts and create an identity, they can also harm by excluding supporters and becoming a gatekeeper for creative solutions.

In the native plant movement, there has been a gradual shift to defuse loaded terminology and colorful metaphors. Vocabulary is moving away from military metaphors ('eradicate' or 'wage war upon' invasives) and there is a greater awareness of the political implications of certain words ('exotic', 'alien'), especially words used pejoratively to refer to people, especially immigrant communities. The conflation of native plant advocacy with unscientific, militaristic, and emotive language threatens to distract from and undermine a meaningful conversation about the role of native plants in ecological processes.

Consolidating around more neutral and consistent terminology may help to develop greater understanding and attract a greater diversity of support. Leaving behind the litany of oversimplified terms (e.g., exotic, introduced, invasive, weedy, naturalized) that are used and often misused may help to reduce misunderstanding and harm.

Reducing misunderstanding may go even deeper. Broadly, there has been a focus at the species level to determine if a species has beneficial or non-beneficial characteristics. However, populations of the same species can differ from place to place. Shifting focus to populations and ecosystem function while using language to describe vegetative community change processes may help to further clarify concepts and provide a more accurate description of the challenge and the necessary work of mitigating it.

DCR Honors Fleming; Successful VNPS Funding Drive Benefits Flora Project

BY: Mary Lee Epps, Chapter President

The Jefferson Chapter congratulates Gary P. Fleming for being named Employee of the Year for 2020 by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Co-author of the Flora of Virginia, plant ecologist with DCR's Virginia Natural Heritage Program, and past president of the Virginia Botanical Associates, Gary has made unparalleled and essential contributions to documenting and understanding Virginia's flora.

In other news with the Virginia Flora Project, a great big thank-you is extended to all the individual chapter members that contributed to the recent fundraising drive. Thanks to your help, fundraising efforts contributed \$26,943.45, strongly exceeding its goal of \$25,000! The Native Plant Society is a designated partner and a leadership supporter of the Flora Project.

Partner Events

Compiled By: Emily Byers, Publicity Chair

Volunteer Opportunities at The Quarry Gardens

Volunteers for The Quarry Gardens at Schuyler may assist Rachel Floyd, of the Center for Urban Habitats, in managing the 40-acre Gardens' more than 30 habitat-modeled galleries of native plant communities each Friday morning, February-November. There are also opportunities to adopt specific galleries to monitor and maintain on the volunteer's own schedule. When in-person public tours resume, there will be opportunities to lead visitors along the Gardens' trails. Those having specific expertise—native plants, birds, photography, etc.— may sign up to lead special tours. The Quarry Gardens are a Virginia Native Plant Society Registry Site. To learn more, visit quarrygardensatschuyler.org. For questions or to volunteer, contact Bernice Thieblot: bernice.thieblot@gmail.com.

Plant Virginia Natives 2021 Spring and Fall Landscaping with Virginia Natives Webinar Series

Register today! A series of 12 webinars - 6 this spring and 6 this fall for gardeners just learning that Virginia natives are the best choice! The webinars will guide you through the why and how to turn your home garden into a beautiful retreat for your family and a native habitat for birds and other wildlife. The series kicks-off on Friday, March 5 at 6:30 pm with an engaging presentation by Dr. Douglas Tallamy, renowned author of Nature's Best Hope. Dr. Tallamy's photography and message of hope are not to be missed! Sign-up for all 12 webinars for just \$10! For more details and to register, go to:

https://www.plantvirginianatives.org/webinars-landscaping-with-virginia-natives

Piedmont Master Gardeners 2021 Spring Lecture Series

The Piedmont Master Gardeners have lined up an outstanding slate of speakers for their 2021 Spring Lecture Series, to be presented online over four Thursday evenings in March. To run from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m., the lectures are free and open to everyone. Registration starts February 1 on PMG's Events website (piedmontmastergardeners.org/events/) and is required for receiving an invitation to the Zoom sessions.

Woodland Walk at Montpelier

March 20, 2021 | 10 AM-12 PM

\$15/adults; \$7/children

Take a woodsland walk with Montpelier's Horticulture department and the Virginia Master Naturalists

Register: https://www.montpelier.org/events/seasonal-woods-walk.

Friends of the Rappahannock Tree Giveaway

March 13 @ 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Tree Giveaway for Sperryville

Pen Druid Brewing 3863 Sperryville Pike, Sperryville

Register in advance for free trees through this Friends of the Rappahannock event! Trees will be available for pickup on March 13th between 10 am- 1 pm at Pen Druid Brewery. Select your trees through the FOR website.

Invasive Plant Workshop – Blue Ridge PRISM

March 19 @ 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Join Blue Ridge PRISM for a workshop on "Invasive Plant Identification and Control" via Zoom. Topics covered include: Identifying invasive plants, invasive plants you can best kill now or should treat later, seasonal practices for each invasive, and using manual & mechanical control methods for controlling invasives with herbicides.

The Virginia Native Plant Society is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the native plants of Virginia and their habitats, in order to sustain for generations to come the integrity of the Commonwealth's rich natural heritage of ecosystems and biodiversity for purposes of enjoyment, enlightenment, sustainable use, and our own very survival.

The Jefferson Chapter serves the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, as well as the City of Charlottesville.

Submissions of articles, events, photographs, and other information of interest to the chapter are welcome. Please submit them by email to Annemarie Abbondanzo at: annemarie@ecosystemservices.us with the subject line "Newsletter Submission".

Virginia Native Plant Society, Jefferson Chapter

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Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places