

THE DECLARATION

FALL 2023



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Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden's Future Meadow

Article and Photos By: Tana Herndon, Member Chair

This fall a small meadow garden will be installed adjacent to the Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden. After digging up the oriental bittersweet vines this spring, cardboard topped with mulch was used to cover the meadow area in anticipation of a fall planting. A meadow garden aspires to be a floriferous grassland with a mixture of native grasses and native wildflowers, and our plans aim for 50% grasses/50% forbs, with no woody plants. It's a small sliver of land – only 200 square feet. Sounds easy, doesn't it? Many gardeners who have attempted a meadow garden would disagree!

Natural grasslands in our region are rare today but were probably more widespread several hundred years ago. Without large herbivores and fire, and without growing conditions that discourage woody plants, forests will grow in our corner of the world; frequent disturbance is needed for grasslands to persist in the Virginia Piedmont. Whether remnant old-growth grasslands or similar plant communities that have assembled in modern times, contemporary grasslands in Virginia tend to be found on utility rights of way that are mowed every year or other sites with frequent disturbance. Where can we find local examples?

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You're Invited! Fall Potting Party

By: Phil Stokes, Plant Sale Chair

Volunteers needed for the fall potting party! With your help, we hope to pot over a hundred native plugs and bare roots. Pottings will be used for next April's Annual Native Plant Sale. Bring a friend and meet us at Fran Boninti's house on **Sunday, October 15th at 1:30 PM.**

Fran Boninti will be hosting the event at her gardening haven in the Ivy area at 2505 Holkham Drive. Sign up is not required. We'll have a well-equipped potting area right in Fran's spectacular garden. And new to this year's event, we will have experienced members ready to advise volunteers on proper potting techniques.

Due to the shortages we've experienced with plug growers our order was placed well in advance to obtain customer favorites. After several years absence we'll now have milkweed to pot. Other favorites on order are blazing star, ox-eye sunflower, blue false indigo, rough goldenrod, blue wood aster, wild blue phlox, hairy alumroot, narrow-leaved mountain mint, and wild stonecrop sedum. From our bare root supplier we expect to have trillium, wild geranium, Virginia bluebells, Mayapple, and shooting star.

On hand should be plenty of pots, trays, and labels. If you have 4" square pots (deep or shallow) to recycle or small gardening shears, please bring them. To get these all planted we need a large turnout of members. So come enjoy a fall afternoon in a friendly setting and we'll make great headway supplying plants for our sale.

Chapter Events & Opportunities

The Jefferson Chapter invites you to attend our Wednesday Chapter Meetings and to join field trips and plant walks hosted throughout the fall. Chapter meetings are held at the Ivy Creek Natural Area Educational Buildings. For plants walks at Ivy Creek, meet at the kiosk. All plant walks are free and open to the public.

Ivy Creek Native Plant Walks

Saturday, 9:00-11:30 am, Sept. 16, 2023 – led by Phil Stokes

Phil Stokes will lead a walk searching out late summer wildflowers and fruits--asters, goldenrods, and thoroughworts should be blooming. We'll see the colorful and highly unusual flower of horsemint (*Monarda punctata*). We may also see the fruits of spicebush, persimmon, and jack-in-the-pulpit, along with various nuts and seeds.

Saturday, 9:00-11:30 am, October 21, 2023 – led by Phil Stokes

Walk with Phil Stokes, Jefferson Chapter member, to learn more about identifying Ivy Creek's trees in early autumn. As well as bark and leaf shape, fall color, fruits, and nuts can all be useful clues at this time of year.

Saturday, 9:00-11:30 am, November 18, 2023 – led by Nancy Weiss

Jefferson Chapter member, Nancy Weiss, will lead a forest ecology walk. This will be an opportunity to learn more about how various tree, shrub, and herbaceous species in Ivy Creek's forests have changed over time. See how to read the influences of man, geology, weather, fire, etc on the landscape. As we try to imagine how the forest looked 80 years ago, Nancy will also help with tree ID in winter and talk about what is known of how Ivy Creek became a nature center and not multiple houses.

Chapter Meetings

Wednesday, September 13, 7:00-8:30 | Chapter Meeting Topic: Piedmont Dark Skies

The Jefferson Chapter VNPS monthly lecture series at Ivy Creek will host a talk about the effects of light pollution on native plants. Please join Carol Carter, Peggy Comett, Christine Putnam, and Emily Byers of Piedmont Dark Skies for a discussion about the effect of light pollution on native plants and pollinators. Piedmont Dark Skies is a local group that seeks to protect dark skies for future generations through outreach education. Piedmont Dark Skies is an advocate for responsible lighting. This will also be an opportunity to meet our State Board President, Nancy Vehrs and our new Diversity State Chairperson, Melody Starya Mobley, who will be visiting. Please join us!

Wednesday, October 11, 7:00-8:30 | Chapter Meeting Topic: Moths & Host Plants

Deborah Davis, painter, herbalist, and gardener will speak about moths and their plant hosts. Deborah Davis will have some examples of her artwork on display. Learn more: <https://www.mothpaintings.com/about>.

Wednesday, November 8, 2023, 7:00-8:30 | Chapter Meeting Topic: Monarch Butterfly Migration

Old Rag Master Naturalist Carolyn Smith will speak about the amazing migration of the Monarch Butterfly. Carolyn will speak about her journey to Mexico to visit a monarch sanctuary and her work with the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project.

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Potting Party

Sunday, October 15, 1:30 PM | Fran Boninti's House

The Potting Party will take place on Sunday, October 15th at 1:30 PM. Fran Boninti will be hosting the event at her gardening haven in the Ivy area at 2505 Holkham Drive. Sign up is not required.

Native Seed Collecting & Native Seed Swap

Wednesday, October 4, 6:30-8:00 PM | Ivy Creek Natural Area

Ivy Creek Natural Area and Historic River View Farm is partnering with the Jefferson Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society to have a special program on Seed Collecting, Storing, and Planting, followed by a native plant seed swap. This program is a beginner's guide to how to collect, store, and plant native seeds for native plant gardening. During the program Will Shaw will introduce the cost-effective way to collect native seeds, plant them, and grow them for your garden. After the presentation, there will be a native plant seed swap. All seeds will be free and even if you have no seeds to swap, you are welcome to attend and get some seeds to start your native plant garden!

This event is focused on beginners or novices to native plant gardening and seed collection. The program will present easy, cost effective, and earth friendly ways to collect, store, and grow native plants from seed. This event is free and open to the public, but registration is required as space is limited. Please register for this event at <https://app.donorview.com/WwmPg>.

Virginia Native Plant Society 2023 Annual Meeting & Program

Friday, October 6, 2023, through Sunday, October 8, 2023

Please join us for the VNPS 2023 Annual Meeting at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester, VA, and nearby locations. You may register for one, two, or all three days of activities. Members receive a registration fee discount. More information at <https://vnps.org/events/2023-annual-meeting-and-program/>.

Open Call: Residential Gardens for 2024 Informal Visits

In 2023 we enjoyed three Open Garden events. Thank you to Fran & Andrew Boninti, Ruth Mary Hall, and Annie Stafford for graciously sharing their gardens. These were casual, unstructured garden visits without a talk or a formal tour. Guests dropped in at their convenience on the designated morning.

The garden visits were so popular that we hope to offer more in 2024. To be a host, your garden does not have to be exclusively native plants. An ideal candidate would be a mix where existing non-native landscape plants are gradually being replaced by natives. Our community has great interest in the aesthetics, scale, and economics of incorporating natives into established gardens.

If you are interested in opening your garden to the local chapter one morning in the spring or summer of 2024, please email the Field Trip Chair at dorothy.carney@gmail.com Specific dates will be negotiated later.

Open Call: Ideas for 2024 Field Trips

In 2024 we will offer new field trips to other Virginia natural areas. If you can recommend a good choice for a 2024-chapter hike, please email dorothy.carney@gmail.com. One improvement for chapter field trips in 2024 will be online registration. It will allow us to email attendees updates before a trip and follow-up afterwards, e.g. with plant lists and photos. Note, registration will not be needed for the monthly Ivy Creek walks or open garden visits.

Member Contributions

Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden's Future Meadow

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An easily accessible public grassland is located at Preddy Creek Park in northern Albemarle County. This meadow, just east of the horse-trailer parking lot, is dominated by Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and other native grasses such as Broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*), and also contains a diverse selection of legumes in addition to other native plants such as Butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), Maryland Golden-aster (*Chrysopsis mariana*), Showy Goldenrod (*Solidago speciosa*) and Roundleaf Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium rotundifolium*). It's maintained by an annual mow.

Earlier this year, the Center for Urban Habitats' Devin Floyd led a Jefferson Chapter field trip to a non-public meadow at the Milton Airfield east of Charlottesville. This naturally occurring meadow is on hardpan soils and has been maintained by mowing and fire. Attendees viewed a meadow full of Little Bluestem and other native grasses and sedges, an abundance of Narrow-leaf Mountain-mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*), and some locally uncommon wildflowers such as Spring Ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes vernalis*), Purple Milkwort (*Polygala sanguinea*), Virginia Meadow Beauty (*Rhexia virginica*), and Southern Sneezeweed (*Helenium flexuosum*).

Our fledging meadow garden will take some ideas from these local examples. For grasses, this fall we will be planting Little Bluestem from plugs and transplants. We will supplement this with plugs and transplants of sedges for the shadier areas and a few plants of Purple Lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*), Pink Muhly Grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*), and Poverty Oatgrass (*Danthonia spicata*), if plants can be obtained. Wildflowers will also be transplanted from the existing pollinator garden including Pussytoes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia/parlinii*), Lyre-leaf Sage (*Salvia lyrata*), Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*), Gray Goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*), Dense Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*), and Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*). Some native plants that have been grown from locally collected seeds [Round-leaf Thoroughwort, Butterflyweed, Yarrow (*Achillea borealis*), Hyssop-leaf Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium hyssopifolium*), and Maryland Golden-aster] will be added.



The meadow at Preddy Creek Park contains three species of milkweed including *Asclepias tuberosa*.

Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden's Future Meadow

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We hope to purchase a few additional native plants such as Rough Goldenrod (*Solidago rugosa*) to round out this year's planting. Plants rather than seeds are being used to minimize the time needed to establish the meadow, but some seeds of annuals such as Wild Sensitive Plant (*Chamaecrista nictitans*) may be sown. In future years, additional plants such as the aggressive Narrow-leaf Mountain-mint can be added once the grass plugs have settled in.

Two to three years will be needed for this fall's plantings to become well-established. In the meantime, constant weeding will be needed. Evidently, this is where the most failures at establishing a meadow garden occur. Open ground invites opportunistic weeds and there will be lots of open spaces available while the plantings fill in. Luckily, the pollinator garden has a group of dedicated volunteers to help! The meadow will be mowed annually in the late winter.

Future plans are to extend the meadow garden southward if this first stage is successful, and the garden committee members hope that the eventual meadow garden can be an educational tool for the public to learn about native meadow flora and fauna and the basics of meadow gardening. We will probably learn a lot about the pitfalls of attempting to put in a meadow, but a beautiful pollinator-filled meadow should be worth it!



Rhexia virginica and *Helianthus flexuosus* are among the special wildflowers in the Milton Airfield meadow.



Jefferson Chapter members in a meadow of *Pycnanthemum tenuifolium* and native grasses at Milton Airfield.



Solidago speciosa blooms at Preddy Creek Park in the fall.

Updates from the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

By: Jill Trischman-Marks, Executive Director of the Piedmont Botanical Garden

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont (BGP), located at the intersection of Melbourne Road and the John Warner Parkway in Charlottesville, just began a stream restoration construction project. KBS Earthworks is hard at work restoring the unnamed and highly degraded, perennial stream that bisects the Garden. The process of restoring the 820 linear feet of the stream is multi-phased and includes removing the existing vegetation, realigning the stream to include meanders to slow down the speed of the water, raising the level of the bottom of the stream and tapering back the banks so they are not so steep, adding areas for floodplains, and stabilizing the entire stream corridor by planting native plants.

When completed, this project is expected to reduce sediment pollution by 112 tons, nitrogen by 106 lbs., and phosphorus by 78 lbs. each year, and once the specified native plants are installed, will provide sustainable land and aquatic habitat for our native fauna.

The removal of vegetation is not something taken lightly by any of the organizations involved in this restoration. The base bid for the construction includes the supply and installation of 158 trees and 685 shrubs. In addition, BGP has committed to planting at least an additional 44 trees and 93 shrubs.

David Powell at the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Forestry said, “the improvement of the stream buffer at the Botanical Garden can offer many benefits to water quality and wildlife... One of the challenges in establishing healthy buffers is the presence of invasive trees and plants which will out-compete native vegetation... Native trees and plants provide more benefits to insects, birds, and other wildlife than invasive plants.”

The Garden is open during the construction process, but Growing the Garden can be messy and there will be some minor discomforts. For instance, the parking lot is being used to store supplies and equipment, so the parking lot is closed throughout the construction process. However, there is plenty of parking available along Melbourne Road and a new mulched trail brings you from the sidewalk and into the Garden. Look for the sign along the sidewalk to get you there.

Some of the trails on the north side of the Garden are impacted as well. An updated trail map is available on their website for downloading in both English and Spanish. Trail maps are also posted on the north side information kiosk. If you get confused walking the trails, there are wayfinding signs along the way to guide you back to where you started.

None of the trails on the south side of the stream will be impacted by the stream restoration construction. Visitors entering the Garden south of the stream will also notice a new information kiosk provided by Building Goodness Foundation.

You can find the kiosk by following the trails toward the Garden that start near the Skate Park and the pedestrian railroad bridge and travel north towards the Garden. On the south side of the Garden, parking is available near the railroad pedestrian bridge.

The Garden is open every day of the year from sunrise to sunset, and free tours are offered to the public on the first Saturday of the months March - November. You can find more information about Botanical Garden of the Piedmont at their website <https://piedmontgarden.org/>.

Chapter Field Trips

Article and Photos By: Dorothy Carney, Field Trip Chair

In the spring and summer of 2023, our Jefferson Chapter hosted more than a dozen field trips and hikes, all free of charge. Chapter outings included ephemeral wildflowers at VMI overlooking the Maury River, a nursery for native grasses, a prairie, a quail habitat restoration and a remnant grassland. Three residential gardens were opened for us. Members of our chapter faithfully led nine monthly plant walks at Ivy Creek Natural Areas. Thank you to all who made these activities possible and to all who attended.

At Cowbane Prairie, Stuarts Draft, our leader was Virginia Greene, Natural Heritage Specialist. This unusual site has calcareous spring marshes and prairie-like expanses of native forbs. We saw blue flag iris (*Iris versicolor*) and spatterdock (*Nuphar advena*) in bloom. Note that our spatterdock used to be classified as the Eurasian *Nuphar lutea*. Genetic testing revealed our species is distinct, and thus the new native species of *N. advena*.



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Chapter Field Trips

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At the farm of Overton McGehee in Fluvanna County, 18 acres of riparian buffer are planted as quail habitat. A broad strip of cattle pasture was cleared of fescue in 2019-2020 and then seeded with native plants of our region. Additional natives germinated from the seed bank or as volunteer arrivals. Highlights of our visit included large masses wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), black-eyed and brown-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta* and *R. triloba*), oxeye sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*), narrow leaf mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*) indigo bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*), Maryland meadow beauty (*Rhexia mariana*), and sensitive plant (*Chamaecrista nictans*).



At Milton Airfield (a UVA property) we were led by Devin Floyd, with support from Drew Chaney. Floyd discussed the ecology of this grassland site, including maintenance specifics about the annual controlled burns. Notable plants were Virginia meadow beauty (*Rhexia virginica*), spring ladies' tresses (*Spiranthes vernalis*), diverse sedges (*Carex* sp.) and rushes (*Juncus* sp.), field milkwort (*Polygala sanguinea*) and others.

Floyd's Center for Urban Habitats is transitioning to a new non-profit, Piedmont Discovery Center. They have been conducting an ambitious Piedmont Grasslands Assessment seeking remnant sites in 17 local counties. On the hunt, they have driven many miles of country roads! The remarkable grassland at Milton Airfield is one such remnant site.

Partner Events

Volunteering in the Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden

Do you enjoy gardening with native plants or wish to learn about native plant gardening? The Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden could use your help! This native plant garden is maintained by volunteers who participate in group workdays and/or weekly monitoring where they set their own schedule during their chosen week(s).

Skilled gardeners and gardening novices are welcome. If you might be interested in volunteering in the garden this year, please contact Tana Herndon (tbherndon@gmail.com) to get on the email list for garden announcements.

The Center for Urban Habitats - Piedmont Grasslands Fundraiser

In order to understand and protect the grasslands of the Piedmont, The Center for Urban Habitats is seeking support to study them. Over the past 2 years, Center for Urban Habitats has conducted research aimed at understanding the status, distribution, and diversity of grassland plant communities in the Virginia Piedmont. Their Grasslands Team has discovered over 800 hypothesized old-growth remnant grasslands over 17 counties in the central Virginia Piedmont. Their research has revealed over a hundred county record occurrences for plant species, many rare species, and multiple new occurrences of state and globally imperiled plant communities.

The Center is seeking contributions and support to allow their team to continue locating, studying, and protecting some of Virginia's most ecologically significant and imperiled places. Every cent will go toward funding research and conservation efforts in 10 Southern Virginia Piedmont counties in the heart of the historic "Grand Savanae" mapped by the early European explorers. Learn more at <https://centerforurbanhabitats.com/pga-fundraiser/>.

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

To view full schedule of fall events and to sign up for the newsletter, visit the website at <https://piedmontgarden.org>.

Blue Ridge Prism

Join Blue Ridge Prism at a virtual event or stop by and see Blue Ridge PRISM staff and volunteers in-person. Visit their website for a full calendar of fall events: <https://blueridgeprism.org/events-calendar/>.

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
