

THE DECLARATION

SPRING 2025



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Join Us for the Jefferson Chapter's Potting Event & Annual Plant Sale

By: Phil Stokes, Plant Sale Chair

Help us get ready for the Annual Native Plant Sale by attending a **Potting Party** on **Sunday, March 30th at 1:30 PM** (rain date Monday, March 31st, 1:30 PM) at **Full Tilt Farm**. This event supports our mission of providing affordable native plants to the community while raising funds for the Chapter. Bring a friend and be part of this annual tradition!

Event Details

We'll be hosted by Chapter Member, William Hamersky at the beautiful Full Tilt Farm (70 Taylors Gap Road, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903. Just 2 miles west of the I-64 Ivy Exit #114). The event is casual, and volunteers are free to come and go as needed. Full Tilt Farm not only provides the space but will also care for our potted plants until the **Annual Plant Sale on Sunday, April 27th at Ivy Creek**.

How You Can Help

☛ **Donate plants** – At this event we rely on our members to bring all the divisions or plugs that we'll be potting. We especially need: *Celandine Poppy, Cardinal Flower, Green and Gold, Robin's Plantain, Jacob's Ladder, Wild Blue Phlox, Foam Flower, Wild Ginger, Golden Ragwort, Lyre-leaved Sage, Wild Petunia, Allegheny Spurge, White Wood Aster, Blue Flag Iris, Milkweed, and Pussytoes.*

We'd also love donations of *Twinleaf, Ginseng, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Goldenseal, and Bloodroot*. Plants should be large enough to mature into a \$5 sale-ready plant within 30 days.

☛ **Volunteer for potting day** – We need help with soil/water mixing, potting, labeling, and carrying flats to storage. No experience required—most volunteers can quickly learn proper potting techniques. If you have compact pruning shears, bring them to trim roots and stems.

☛ **Bring supplies** – Soil, pots, trays, and labels will be provided, but we always need **4" square pots (both short and tall)**—your used ones help reduce future ordering costs.

Why Join?

Recent plant sales have been **sellouts or nearly so**, proving the high demand for native plants. Our customers truly appreciate the plants we provide—let's not let them down! A strong volunteer turnout makes it easy to pot hundreds of plants in no time.

Get Involved!

Thinking about participating? Have questions? **Contact Phil Stokes, Plant Sale Chair** at philipfs@embarqmail.com or 434-293-4217.

Let's make this another successful year—see you there!

Notes from the Board

Help Wanted: Field Trip Coordinator

The Chapter is seeking an organizer for local field trips, aiming for 2-3 outings per year, primarily in spring and fall. Knowledgeable guides are ready to lead—now we need someone to coordinate logistics, manage sign-ups, and handle waitlists. Field trips will likely be limited to 15-20 people so that everyone can hear and learn. No experience necessary, training provided. Interested? Contact Carol Carter at rcarter112@aol.com.

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 spring and summer. Chapter meetings are held on Zoom or at the Ivy Creek Natural Area Educational Buildings, as indicated. For plants walks at Ivy Creek, meet at the kiosk.

Chapter Meetings

Wednesday, March 12th 7:00-8:30 | Chapter Meeting Topic: Paw Paws (In Person Meeting)

Neal Peterson breeds pawpaws, and it all began with a fruit he tasted as a student at the University of West Virginia. Neal's goal has been focused on taste with fewer seeds and his work as a breeder has seen many ups and downs as he has tracked down historic pawpaw growers and hybridizers. Currently he has selected and distributed seven hybrids, available through designated nurseries.

Wednesday, April 9th 7:00-8:30 | Chapter Meeting Topic: Solidago- the Keystone Goldenrods, Joey Thompson (Zoom Meeting)

Joey is a Vegetation Ecologist with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Natural Heritage Program which oversees 67 Natural Area Preserves totaling approximately 70,000 acres. He is a regional expert on the diversity and current condition of vegetation communities throughout the Commonwealth.

Wednesday, May 14th 7:00-8:30 | Chapter Meeting Topic: Digitizing Virginia Herbaria, Lena Artz, Andrea Weeks (7:00-8:30)

Andrea is a professor of botany at George Mason University and director of its Ted Bradley Herbarium, in Fairfax. At Mason she teaches undergraduate courses in plant biology and conducts research in angiosperm systematics. Since 2014 she has led a National Science Foundation-funded initiative to digitize Virginia herbaria, which has made more than a quarter million herbarium specimens discoverable through the SERNEC Symbiota portal.

Guided Plant Walks at Ivy Creek

Stay tuned—our guided plant walks at Ivy Creek will resume soon!

Potting Party

The Potting Party will take place on March 30th at 1:30 PM (rain date March 31st). Hosted by William Hammersky at Full Tilt Farm (470 Taylors Gap Road, Charlottesville) about 10 minutes west of Charlottesville. We rely on volunteers to bring plant divisions for potting and they should be robust enough to be sellable for \$5 within 30 days.

Annual Native Plant Sale

The plant sale will be held at Ivy Creek Natural Area on Sunday, April 27, from 1PM to 4PM. **New this year, members can shop early starting at 12:30.**

- ☛ If you're interested in helping to setup on April 26th and/or in the morning of the sale on April 27th before doors open, please contact Carol Carter at rcarter112@aol.com or Phil Stokes philipfs@embarqmail.com or 434-293-4217.

Member Contributions

Sedum ternatum: A Native Woodland Stonecrop

By: Karen Rexrode, Chapter Member

Native to most of Virginia, (including Albemarle, *Sedum ternatum* is a low growing sedum that prefers the shady garden or wooded understory. Its name comes from *sedeo* (to sit), and *ternatum* (in threes) reflecting its compact growth and clusters of three-parted leaves. From late April to early May, delicate white star-shaped flowers bloom on radiating cymes, adding charm to the spring landscape. In the wild, this species can be found in shaded rock outcrops, bottomlands, and moist forests, though it is also tolerant of drier shade, making it a unique exception among stonecrops.

I have grown this species for over 30 years, finding it easy to propagate, particularly through summer cuttings, though it can also be grown from seed. As a low-growing groundcover, it reaches about six inches in height when in bloom. In the right conditions—such as high shade—it forms dense, attractive clumps.

Flowering coincides with many spring flowering natives, so consider pairing woodland stonecrop with *tiarella*, *Phlox divaricata*, *Aquilegia canadensis*, or *Iris cristata*. For another partner, as a groundcover mix, consider *Phlox stolonifera*. Additionally, its hardy nature and attractive foliage make it an excellent container plant, where it serves as a graceful spiller.

Some sources claim it is deer resistant, but I have found that rabbits or deer occasionally nibble on mine. A simple solution: placing a small teepee of thin branches around the plants has successfully deterred browsing in late fall and winter, when its semi-evergreen foliage remains. Otherwise, it stays untouched.

This plant will be available for our native plant sale on April 27th at the Ivy Creek Natural Area —a great opportunity to add this versatile native to your garden.

Spring's Beauty: A Closer Look at What's Growing and Why It Matters

By: Annemarie Abbondanzo, Chapter Member

Spring in Charlottesville doesn't just arrive—it rushes in, filling the city with familiar sights of both native and non-native blooms. Daffodils push up beside sidewalk cracks, forsythia bursts into yellow, and tulip leaves stretch from planters outside coffee shops. It's a comforting scene, but look closer, and you'll see both invasive species thriving alongside native ones—a reminder that not all spring beauty supports local ecosystems.

Beyond the well-tended gardens and street trees, Charlottesville's native plants and wildlife are stirring. Along trails and in hidden pockets of green, Virginia bluebells, bloodroot, and trout lilies bloom briefly, offering food to early pollinators. Redbuds splash pink across yards, their flowers vital to bees, while golden ragwort and violets provide nectar and shelter for butterflies. Meanwhile, maples and elms send out early buds, and dogwoods and serviceberries prepare for their spring show. Yet among them, invasive plants continue to spread—disrupting habitats and outcompeting the native species that support our wildlife.

While it's easy to admire spring's beauty without questioning what's growing, but it's just as important to ensure that native species reclaim their space. As nature wakes up, gardeners and conservationists get to work—planting native wildflowers in gardens, parks, and trails while clearing away invasives like English ivy, Japanese stiltgrass, and bush honeysuckle. These efforts help restore balance, making sure that the plants filling our landscapes don't just signal spring—but also sustain

Remembering Tom Dierauf: A Legacy in Forestry and Conservation

By: MaryLee Epps, Chapter Member

Tom Dierauf passed away recently. He was a long-time member of the Jefferson Chapter and will be sorely missed. After he retired from the Virginia Department of Forestry, he freely shared his expertise with various environmental organizations in the Charlottesville area, including Jefferson Chapter.

Tom and Mo Stevens were instrumental in helping Albemarle County's Natural Heritage Committee select several "High Priority Conservation Target Sites" in the County, giving a talk to Jefferson Chapter on six of these botanically special sites. Another talk he gave to us was about research done under his leadership on evidence of human disturbances in the Montpelier Landmark Forest largely during the Madison years.

But it was in leading walks for us, for Ivy Creek Natural Area, and for others that his knowledge of forest ecology and his gifts as a teacher really shone. Tom also co-led with Tim Williams a group of Jefferson Chapter and Rivanna Master Naturalist volunteers in vascular plant surveys of Ivy Creek Natural Area and of Preddy Creek County Park. The survey of Ivy Creek was particularly useful because it allowed us to compare the plants present (and in some cases absent) in 2010 and 2011 with those that had been found in several earlier surveys beginning in 1980.

Tom along with Chip Morgan- another gifted botanist we recently lost- was instrumental in persuading the Ivy Creek board to allow us to establish an herbarium of Ivy Creek plants with pressed specimens and a record of where and when collected, thus giving us a physical record of what was growing in the Natural Area at the time of the survey.

A Natural History Note on Tom Dierauf and Old-Growth Forests

Below is a Natural History Note about Tom Dierauf and a talk he gave to the 500-Year Forest Foundation. It was written by Bess Murray and is a reading in the book, *From Worms to Whales: Natural History Notes*, which is a collection selected from the Natural History Notes that Bess researched, wrote, and gave as weekly, five-minute radio spots on WTJU, the University of Virginia's radio station between 1992 and 2005.

Tom Dierauf and the 500-Year Forest Foundation (November 29, 2003)

It's always worthwhile to hear retired forester Tom Dierauf talk about trees. The most recent occasion was at a meeting of the 500-Year Forest Foundation, dedicated to working with forest landowners to promote forests with old-growth characteristics.

There are many ways to describe an old-growth forest other than one that has great big trees. In fact, it doesn't necessarily have great big trees. It does have old trees, at least trees that are more than halfway through the normal life expectancy for their particular species. And trees in an old-growth forest are not all at the same stage. There's a mixture of "stages of ages."

There's an uneven-aged canopy structure caused by small scale natural disturbances and differential shade tolerance among species. When a big tree falls, a sudden opening in the canopy is formed, creating opportunities for the accelerated growth of species that like more light, such as oaks. But Tom's observations in some local forests recently suggest that canopy gaps are still sometimes being filled by shade-tolerant seedlings, such as black gum, and maple, he cited specifically; beech is another one that grows in the shade.

Our normal hardwood climax forest around here would have been oak-chestnut-hickory. Hickories are still doing quite well, but chestnuts, of course, all went with the chestnut blight 100 years ago, and now oaks seem to be facing a number of problems. They are especially attractive to gypsy moths, and eastern forests have been seriously ravaged. And they are not re-growing as vigorously again for several reasons we do know about and no doubt more that we don't.

As we've all seen, there's been an explosion in the deer population, and deer will eat oak seedlings preferentially, another setback. What they are more resistant to than other species is fire, and Tom is a strong proponent of the view that recent policies of rigid fire suppression have been responsible for many forest changes, including possibly contributing to the oak decline by failing to eliminate competitive species.

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By: MaryLee Epps, Chapter Member

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Tom's an advocate for the re-introduction of fire in some places to increase forest health and to promote old-growth statistics. He stresses that we can't ever return completely to the original forest, too much has happened, some of it beyond our control, some of it directly caused by human activity. But we can do some things, and stop doing some things, to help the evolution of old-growth forests, which is what the 500-Year Forest Foundation is all about.

They estimate that there's only a quarter percent of the original old growth left in Virginia. But 13 million acres of that are in private hands (10 million in the hands of individuals, and the rest corporations). The Foundation is working to form partnerships with as many of these as they can.

There are other features of old-growth forests that make them such centers of diversity. Fallen tree trunks and standing dead wood make important habitats for so many species. "Think of the woodpeckers," called out one person at the meeting. Pits and mounds form as a result of the root mat thrown up into the air when a big tree falls. The mat might stick up 10 or 20 feet into the air. A pond could form behind it for breeding amphibians in the spring. The roots and trunk become seed beds for innumerable ferns, mosses, and other plants. Small mammals find cozy places in the rotting trunk; larger ones enjoy the shade and water. Birds find constantly changing opportunities.

Soil is mostly undisturbed and full of organic matter, with good tilth and interesting root holes and cavities. Some of the suggestions of both Tom and the Foundation do involve considerable management, such as timber harvesting, which does disturb stability, but they stress minimal disturbance wherever possible. And there's always an ongoing discussion with all people interested in forests about the level of management desired, affordable, and possible to deal with whatever the latest threat is, for example, invasive aliens, hemlock adelgid, or dogwood anthracnose. The list goes on, and the news is often not good. The Foundation is to be commended for their work with private lands and may more such efforts be extended to our public forests.

The Flora of Virginia in Action!

By: Jenny Norwood, Chapter Member

Our February 12 meeting featured an introduction to the Flora of Virginia Project, offering insight into its history, mission, and impact. The highlight was a live demo of the Flora App, though technical difficulties made for a less-than-seamless experience. Despite these challenges, Ann Regn—Flora of Virginia board member and founding member of our VNPS Jefferson Chapter—skillfully navigated the presentation, demonstrating the app's powerful features and potential for plant enthusiasts.

For those curious to learn more, additional resources on the Flora of Virginia Project and its app are available in the App's Reference Library.

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@ecosystems-services.us with the subject line "Newsletter Submission".

Virginia Native Plant Society, Jefferson Chapter

P. O. Box 6281
Charlottesville, VA 22906

Contact:

Carol Carter
Chapter President
rcarter112@aol.com

Conserving Wild Flowers
and Wild Places



Photo of the Spring 2023 Potting Party courtesy of Phil Stokes, Plant Sale Chair