

THE DECLARATION

FALL 2022



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Evolution of a Meadow

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

Botanical Garden of the Piedmont planted a wildflower meadow last year.

It is located parallel to Melbourne Road to provide a natural buffer, add a visible and vibrant presence to all those who drive or walk by, and, most importantly, to attract a greater number of pollinators and birds to the Garden site.

A group consisting of Board members, volunteers, staff, and meadow professionals from J.W. Townsend Landscapes selected the plants for this bed.

Priority was given to plants that are good pollinators, are aesthetically pleasing, and have enough structural integrity that they do not flop over.



Eastern tiger swallowtail visiting a common zinnia.

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Late Bloomers

By: Annemarie Abbondanzo, Newsletter Editor

With autumn days watching, the garden displays the late summer blooms. These late comers are summer's most patient flowers. They wait past the peak of green leaves for summer's graceful hour.

If, as some say, September is the Sunday of summer, then these blooms are summer's 'Sunday best'. Blooms of grey, showy, and stiff goldenrod are a reminder that late bloomers are not really late at all. Rows of mist flower, and shows of fall phlox, false golden aster, and orange coneflower wear 'late' as a badge of honor and flourish at their own pace. The timing of the bloom does not diminish its contribution.

This display, among the oldest blooms and lingering buds, is a timely reminder of the importance of patience. Like flowers, we are freed by patiently waiting for conditions and blooming in our own time. In words often attributed to Homer "wise to resolve and patient to perform".



Chapter Meetings & Plant Walks

Jefferson Chapter will be offering our usual monthly talks starting in September and plant walks will continue into the fall. Preliminary information is below. Watch for more details via email.

Saturday Mornings 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Plant Walks at Ivy Creek

Through October (and possible November), the Jefferson Chapter and Ivy Creek Natural Area will continue to co-sponsor monthly plant walks, usually on the third Saturday morning of each month. Meet by the kiosk near the parking lot. Free and open to the public.

Saturday, October 15, 9:00 -11:30, October Plant Walk

Join Mary Jane Epps, Associate Biology Professor at Mary Baldwin University and Jefferson Chapter member, to hunt for mushrooms and other fungi and learn about how they interact with plants and animals to shape the ecology of our forests. Fall is the peak mushroom season in our area so there should be lots to discover.

Wednesday, October 12, 7:00-9:00 | Chapter Meeting Topic: Biscuit Run Park

In October, Tim Padalino, with Albemarle County, will speak with the Chapter about the development of our local Biscuit Run State Park. This talk will include information about the ongoing planning process and park development, as well as discussion about some of the interesting plant communities and native plant management on site, such as treatment of a grove of hemlocks.

Wednesday, November 9, 7:00-9:00 | Chapter Meeting Topic: Spicebush Swallowtail

Chapter president, Mary Lee Epps, will expand on her recent article for the VNPS newsletter to present on spicebush swallowtail. The talk will discuss the spicebush swallowtail butterfly, its host plants, and the laurel wilt disease that is threatening both.

Member Contributions

Maple Flats

By: Mary Lee Epps, Chapter President

Recently a group of Jefferson Chapter members and friends spent a long morning exploring Maple Flats in Augusta County under the leadership of John Holden. Maple Flats has some unusual geological features, resulting in rather unique habitats and therefore a number of rare species.

Maple Flats is underlain by limestone with a number of sinkhole ponds. But because of thousands of years of erosion, the sinkholes have a deep layer of rubble from the western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains and therefore the soil is actually highly acidic. In addition, many of the ponds are flooded for part of the year but then dry up so that any plants growing in or adjacent to the ponds must be able to tolerate extreme fluctuations in moisture. All these factors have resulted in a rich diversity of unusual flora.

Our group saw two species of chokeberry with ripe fruit (*Aronia arbutifolia* and *A. melanocarpa* or possibly *A. prunifolia*), two species of false foxglove in bloom (*Aureolaria pedicularia* and *A. laevigata*), and lots of American chestnut sprouts and chinquapins, several of the latter with burs.

We also saw a truly stunning black gum, deep red and dominating the tree line at the back of a grassy area. Even more remarkable was that two of the main trunks had been completely girdled by beavers yet the tree appeared healthy, was fully leafed out and bearing fruit.

We also saw three rare herbaceous species in full bloom—Virginia sneezeweed (*Helenium virginicum*), Valley doll's-daisy (*Boltonia montana*), and seven-angled pipewort (*Eriocaulon aquaticum*). And capping it all off were two particularly beautiful finds: striped gentian (*Gentiana villosa*), not quite open but with very large buds, and a few plants of meadow beauty (*Rhexia marilandica* or possibly *virginica*) in full flower.

With John Holden leading the group, we widened our focus to include several types of wildlife. We saw several butterflies, mainly spicebush swallowtails and red-spotted purples, and one very special salamander, a young Tiger salamander. Tiger salamanders are listed as endangered in Virginia. In addition, they are mostly found in the Coastal Plain, but there is “a remnant population of an ancient lineage” * in Augusta County. The sighting was particularly exciting because our salamander was just leaving the water to enter its terrestrial adulthood.

In John's own words “[The Tiger salamander is a] rare species with just a few locations in the coastal plain and also Maple Flats. Eggs [are] laid in the Winter in ponds. [For the past several months] it has been a larva in the pond. We were there when it took its first steps on land. Thus it was not moving until maybe after dark. Today it is probably 2 feet underneath [the] ground until December when [it will] come out to breed, even with snow on the ground. I sent my ID to two experts, and both had never seen this, but confirmed Tiger.”

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Plants ready for last year's spring sale.



Photos by Jill Trischman-Marks

Evolution of a Meadow

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

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A meadow evolves as it ages. During the first growing season a meadow depends on annuals for structure, flowers, and seasonal interest. If you explored the wildflower meadow last growing season you would have seen the garden's annual flowering plants: partridge pea, cosmos, zinnias, and annual coreopsis. At the end of the first season some of the perennial flowers and grasses were only between one and six inches tall.

Experts consider the second growing season, this year for our meadow, to be the gangly adolescence of its evolution. Biennial plants were added into the seed mix to fill in the second-year gap. In this case, Queen Anne's Lace and some of the coreopsis were selected. We also over-seeded with some annual flowers to add more interest and color.

In the third growing season, the perennials shine! Three grasses (Little Bluestem, Purple Top and Side Oats Gamma) and 19 different perennial species such as Milkweed, False Indigo, Aster, Hyssop, Mountain Mint, Coneflowers, Coreopsis, Sunflower, Goldenrods, Blazing Stars, Beebalm, Vervain and Yarrow will be the stars of our wildflower garden. This variety of plants guarantees an extended season of color and interest in the meadow, for the benefit of both pollinators and people.

Brian Yoder, from J.W. Townsend Landscapes, presented background information to the Garden Guardian volunteers about maintaining the meadow as part of the educational component provided to them before working in the Garden on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. He explained the process of preparing the area for the meadow, which included the prudent use of herbicide to kill the existing Bermuda grass, lespedeza, and other invasive plants that out compete the desired meadow plants.

A soil test revealed that the soil lacked the needed phosphorus for the plants to thrive. To avoid erosion, the thatch was left in place and a (no-till drill) aerator was used to plant the meadow seeds.

Please come visit the meadow at BGP, which is located at 950 Melbourne Road in Charlottesville. The Garden is free and open to the public every day from sunrise to sunset. You can learn more about us at our website: <https://piedmontgarden.org/>

Maple Flats

By: Mary Lee Epps, Chapter President



Virginia sneezeweed (Photo by Mary Lee Epps)



Striped Gentian (Photo by Mary Lee Epps)



Meadow beauty (Photo by Betty Traux)



Young tiger salamander (Photo by Mary Lee Epps)

Join us for Plant Sale Potting at Fran's October 16th

By: *Phil Stokes, Plant Sale Chairman*

It's time to begin potting for our Annual Jefferson Chapter VNPS Native Plant Sale in late April. After the quickest ever complete sellout at last April's sale we're facing demand for even more plants. We'll get a good start by holding a fall potting event again at Fran Boninti's. Please plan on helping on Sunday October 16 starting at 1:30 PM (flexible). Fran's spectacular garden with superb potting accommodations (even protection from rain) is in the Ivy area at 2505 Holkham Dr. Sign up not required.

We'll have enough ordered bare root ephemerals and plugs to keep us busy, no need to bring dug up divisions for this potting event. Already on order are plugs of favorites consisting of Blue False Indigo, Dense Blazing Star, Blue Wood Aster, Nodding Wild Onion, Hairy Alumroot, Blue Flag Iris, Virginia Mountain Mint, and Wild Stonecrop. Not ordered again were several taller species that we found to have root bound plugs which presented potting difficulties. In fact we have several flats from last year's potting that needed a second year to recover from our not having opened up crowded roots when initially potted.

Of course we'll have scads of bare roots to pot including Trillium, Wild geranium, Virginia Bluebells, Mayapple, and Shooting Star. Phil's already potted two trays of Spring Beauty back in May given that our bare root vendor doesn't provide them in the fall. A few dozen Trilliums from last year's potting weren't in sellable condition at sale time. They've been repotted and most should recover.

On hand should be plenty pots, soil, trays, and labels. If you have 4" square pots (deep or shallow) to recycle please bring them. It will reduce the number of pots we need to order in the future. Not essential but bring your small gardening shears to trim small stems and roots if you have them.

With our wholesale vendor having sold out of some species we normally pot in the fall we'll need members providing more divisions for spring potting(s) or pot them up themselves. The chapter can provide pots, trays, soil, and labels. Already you plant sale chair has potted 3 trays of Wild Basil, 2 trays of Wild Blue Phlox, and 2 trays of Grey Goldenrod.

It's important to have a large turnout of members at Fran's; plants don't pot themselves. Enjoy a fall afternoon potting with friends old and new. Also the plants will be happier once again nestled in ample soil. We'll also delight customers with the sale's variety of natives.

Mid-Summer Highlights of the Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden

By: Tana Herndon, Chapter Member

On sunny summer days, the Ivy Creek Pollinator Garden is alive with busy pollinators. The garden's plantings provide a diverse selection of flowers throughout the growing season, and by mid-summer a variety of native plants are blooming. But, as all local gardeners know, the success of plants in unfenced gardens depends on what the local deer find tasty.

By mid-July, common milkweed has finished blooming, and the spires of Culver's Root flowers are beginning to fade. Spiderwort and Butterflyweed are sending out occasional blooms, mainly from plants that the deer munched on in the spring. Most plants flowering now are in either the Mint or the Aster (Composite) families. Mints are not a favorite of deer and, although Aster family plants when young seem to be tasty treats, deer leave most alone once they start to bloom.

The garden does have a number of mid-summer wildflowers that are not mints or asters. Northern rattlesnake-master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) is an unusual plant with leaves similar to yucca and white flowers reminiscent of buttonbush. It's a stunning structural feature in the garden, but it also attracts pollinators and, as a member of the Apiaceae, provides food for the caterpillars of black swallowtail butterflies. Along the garden path, Nodding Onion (*Allium ceruum*) blooms in July with light purple flowers attractive to bumblebees that will cling upside down to the flowers while foraging. Deer do not like onions!

In August, Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) starts to put forth its red blooms that hummingbirds love.

Mint Family:

Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) has lovely lavender flowers that are very attractive to butterflies and other pollinators. It blooms throughout the summer and, although like many mints it will spread with runners and by seed, it is easy to control. Its cousin, Scarlet Beebalm (*Monarda didyma*), blooms mainly in the early summer, but, as long as it has some moisture, continues to provide a few red blooms, enough to attract hummingbirds to the garden.

The garden has three types of Mountain-mints: Short-toothed Mountain-mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*), Hoary Mountain-mint (*P. incanum*), and Narrow-leaf Mountain-mint (*P. tenuifolium*). They all have tiny white flowers speckled with purple that bloom throughout the summer. Many Mountain-mints, especially the Short-toothed Mountain-mint, are aggressive spreaders.

The lovely blue mid-summer blooms of Hoary Skullcap (*Scutellaria incana*) are attractive to pollinators especially bees and hummingbird moths. We have a garden policy of leaving seed pods for wildlife use and for winter interest.

Many gardening experts now recommend planting in layers starting with a base layer of ground-hugging plants such as sedges and violets that act as a green mulch to discourage weeds and create a more naturalistic look. Many areas of the Pollinator Garden are covered not only with the Common blue violet but also Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*), a short fuzzy mint with small pink flowers which blooms most of the summer. You'll have to look carefully under the taller plants to locate them, but bees easily find these flowers.

Aster (Composite) Family:

The Pollinator Garden contains a number of mid-summer blooming plants in this family. Dense Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*) adds a pop of color for a few weeks in July. Its torches of purple flowers are very attractive to skippers and bumblebees.

The white flowers of wild Quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*) start to bloom in late spring and can continue until late summer. The yellow flowers of Thread-leaf Coreopsis (*Coreopsis verticillata*) also start blooming early and continue for much of the summer. Its frilly whorled leaves add an interesting texture to the garden. Oxeye (*Heliopsis helianthoides*), with its yellow sunflower-like flowers, also starts blooming in June and can continue until late summer. The similar flowers of Whorled Rosin Weed (*Silphium asteriscus*) are especially attractive to butterflies and are also long blooming.

Sweet Goldenrod (*Solidago odora*) starts blooming in mid-summer with yellow plumes of flowers and has leaves that smell like licorice. This is the only goldenrod blooming this early in the garden and a harbinger of the goldenrods to come. By mid-August, Upland Ironweed (*Vernonia glauca*), Sweet Joe-pye-weed (*Eutrochium purpureum*), and Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) have begun to bloom. Their purple and blue flowers seem to herald the end of summer when the garden is dominated by flowers in the Asteraceae: the asters, goldenrods, sunflowers, and so much mistflower.

Partner Events

Blue Ridge PRISM's 2022 Workshops

Blend of two virtual sessions and an optional in-person field session. Register for the virtual sessions or a field session or both!

Session 1 (virtual): Introduction to Invasive Plants and Identification, October 12, 2022, \$10

Session 2 (virtual): Control of Invasive Plants, October 13, 2022, \$10

Session 3 (in-person): Join PRISM's knowledgeable staff and volunteers in the field to learn invasive plant ID, herbicide safety, basic management strategies, and a how-to for manual/chemical control techniques.

This fall workshop will take place on Saturday, Oct 15th from 12:30 – 3:30 pm at Pen Park in Charlottesville, Va., and will include an invasive plant identification walk and in-person instruction. Space is limited to 25 participants. The registration fee is \$25.

Invasive Vines Workshop with Blue Ridge PRISM at the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

Join Blue Ridge PRISM's knowledgeable staff on the grounds of the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont to learn how to identify and control some common invasive vines during the late autumn/early winter. We will cover basic management strategies, including manual and/or chemical control techniques.

This workshop will take place on Saturday, November 12th from 1:00 – 4:00 pm and will be **outside**– so dress warmly if the weather indicates. Registration is free. There will be a limit of 25 participants.

Homegrown National Park with Doug Tallamy, October 18, 2022, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm.

Join us via Zoom for our Fall Meeting when we welcome Doug Tallamy as our speaker. His presentation “Homegrown National Park” will include a discussion on how we can regenerate biodiversity in our landscapes. Dr. Tallamy will have a Q&A with the audience at the end of his presentation.

This is a free online event, but donations are welcome. The webinar will include a question & answer period with the audience. Those who register will receive access to the recording. Register today!

To register for any of these events, go to blueridgeprism.org

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".

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Conserving Wild Flowers
and Wild Places