

New River News

August 2021

New River Chapter, VNPS

A word from the president

The second half of 2021 is hoping to be a better one in terms of the covid pandemic. Members of the New River Chapter of the Virginia native plant society will follow local, state, and CDC Guidelines during the pandemic. You are encouraged to follow whatever additional protective measures you feel appropriate when participating in chapter activities. Please be mindful of varying comfort levels of the diverse members of our community.

This summer has been a hotter and mostly drier one. Some of the plants are starting to wilt and could use some more summer rains. But I and others have been able to get out more into the nearby woods and enjoy the wildflowers through the spring and summer.

Our first outdoor event was a mini plant sale at Barbara Glaser's house in April which resulted in \$640 for our grant for youth native plant gardens. We had our second outdoor event on June 26 with a picnic at Wong Park which we normally hold in September but decided to have it earlier this year. About twenty people attended and Carol Schwobel held a mini plant sale and sold \$376 worth of plants. I was sorry I was unable to attend but finally after a long three months, my shingles is finally starting to get better. Be sure to get your shingles vaccine if you are over 50 years of age.

The chapter still plans on placing a sign at Wong Park showing some of the wildflowers and invasive plants at the park but **we need your help to finish designing it**. We have two invasives, autumn olive and multiflora rose we want to include. We wish to place four photos on each side for each of them to show off the entire plant, their leaves, their flowers and their fruit. But we are having trouble aligning all eight of them. Can someone that is more familiar with the Gimp and Publisher software we are currently using please help us? Contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com for more details.

The first field trip will be held on August 14 at the Depot Park in Christiansburg and Beth Umberger will lead it. More details about it is available on the last page of this newsletter.

If anyone has suggestions for more field trips this year or wishes to lead one, please contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com.

The board decided to purchase one case of 50 copies of the following title "Plant invaders of Mid-Atlantic natural Areas 6th ed". We will receive them sometime this fall and distribute them at one of our in-person monthly chapter meetings. Exact prices will not be available until then since bulk order prices have not been established yet. Be sure to get your copy then since the publisher does not expect to have more copies for several years. The book's resources section has been completely revamped and

now includes more publications and websites on the 80 plants you love to hate and the native species appropriate for your area to replace them.

Fall/Winter Programs

ALL of our meetings for fall/winter 2021 will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month and start at 7 pm. These are the programs for 2021 so far. If you have any ideas for speakers for 2022, please send details to Mary Rhoades at mrhoades@vt.edu.

Locations for the programs will vary so be sure to check where they will be held. Some of them will be via Zoom (especially if the speaker is not local) but others may be in person. This will depend upon the recommendation of the CDC about the coronavirus pandemic and what everyone here is comfortable with.

In either case, the program will be videotaped and placed in our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC0xV2LLc4XjltHhAlpdtug/featured>) for later viewing for those unable to attend. The Zoom password details will be sent to members about a week before each meeting. Non-members will have to send a request for the Zoom password to nrchaptervnps@gmail.com.

Tuesday, September 14 – VNPS- New River chapter meeting - Chestnut Ridge Natural Area Preserve: Protecting and restoring old growth forests by Ryan Klopf, Va. Division of Natural Heritage, 7 pm to 9 pm via Zoom.

This talk will introduce the audience to a recently expanded natural area preserve in western Virginia that is being managed to protect and restore old growth forest communities.

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What trees do for us, how we manage them, and how people can get involved—all through the context of my work at VT and past work in Roanoke. The presentation includes photos and is a lot like a remote tour of trees at VT and in the surrounding region.

November 9 – VNPS – New River chapter meeting – Radford University Greenhouse and Outdoor Native Plant Display by Stephanie Huckestein, Location to be determined, 7 to 9 pm.

Stephanie will explain how the greenhouse is used for both research and outreach.

December 14 - **VNPS – New River chapter meeting – Member presentations and refreshments**, Location to be determined, 7 to 9 pm

Each December we invite members and non-members to take a few minutes to share something they think will be of interest to other plant lovers. It can be photos or slides from a trip, an interesting website or app, a new book, a site you visited this year, or a project you volunteered on, etc. .

Mark your calendars for this year's Native Plant Sale of our chapter!

September 18, 10-3, Price House Nature Center, Lee Street, Blacksburg.

You will be receiving an inventory list soon.

This year we have more plants and a bigger event, so don't miss it!

If you would like to volunteer let Carol Schwobel know at shadeperennial@gmail.com

Remember the proceeds are funding grants for youth native plant gardens in our community.

More details about the grant itself can be found at <http://vnps.org/newriver/>

Some news from the state level of the VNPS

Our own chapter member, Tom Wieboldt (who retired five years ago as the longtime curator for the Massey Herbarium at Virginia Tech), was interviewed by our current president, Nancy Vehrs. The whole article is in the state blog at <https://vnps.org/tom-wieboldt-profile-of-a-virginia-botanist/>

Peggy Stevens died on June 24 of this year. She had been instrumental in preserving Virginia's open spaces and leading Virginia's United Land Trusts.

Earlier this year Nancy Vehrs received the highest award that National Garden Clubs gives to non-members — their [National Award of Excellence](#). It was great to see Nancy given national recognition for her work and dedication in conservation and native plant initiatives.

A news item published by the Native Plant Society of the United States (formerly the Native Plant Conservation Campaign) titled “Federal government, and states working to increase production of local native seed and materials for restoration” can be read at <http://ymlp.com/zbvDrL>. I (Brenda Graff) had never heard of this organization before but if you are interested in what they are doing, visit their website at <https://plantsocieties.cnps.org/>. The VNPS is one of their affiliates.

Contributions from our members

Mary Rhoades and Brenda Graff report that the native plant gardens planted on mothers day last year by both our chapter members and the local master naturalists have been doing great since then.

The combination of the hay-scented ferns and cardinal flower in front of the entrance sign where you first enter the park have all survived. The butterfly weed and evening primrose that were planted in front of the sign for the Waters Edge building did not all make it but Mary reports that she counted 17 monarch caterpillars chomping on the butterfly weed last September. And she found three chrysalis, so hopefully some of those hatched and made it to Mexico. The plants placed behind some of the cabins included hoary mountain mint, thread-leaf coreopsis, evening primrose, foamflower, cardinal flower and phlox. Most of those looked fine this spring.



Kenny Strum, a park ranger, took this photo in 2020 of Sharon Crane and Jean Elliott and their dog planting hay-scented fern and cardinal flowers on mothers day



Judy McCord took this photo a year later



Brenda Graff took this photo a year later of foamflower, phlox and cardinal flower behind one of the cabins

Rosemarie Sawdon found this article by Wild Virginia (www.wildvirginia.org) very interesting and wanted to share it with our members. It was titled “Spicebush chronicles: cuckoo bees and pollinators” and can be read in its entirety at their Facebook at

https://wildvirginiainfo.salsalabs.org/spicebushpollinators?wvpId=249b19c1-3dbb-4459-9336-40495bd50fa2&fbclid=IwAR3K_WsDuObdL15Vo_jm-vhnKpCjtAclxCnapmMUJIQpqY1JwVZ60e84W6E

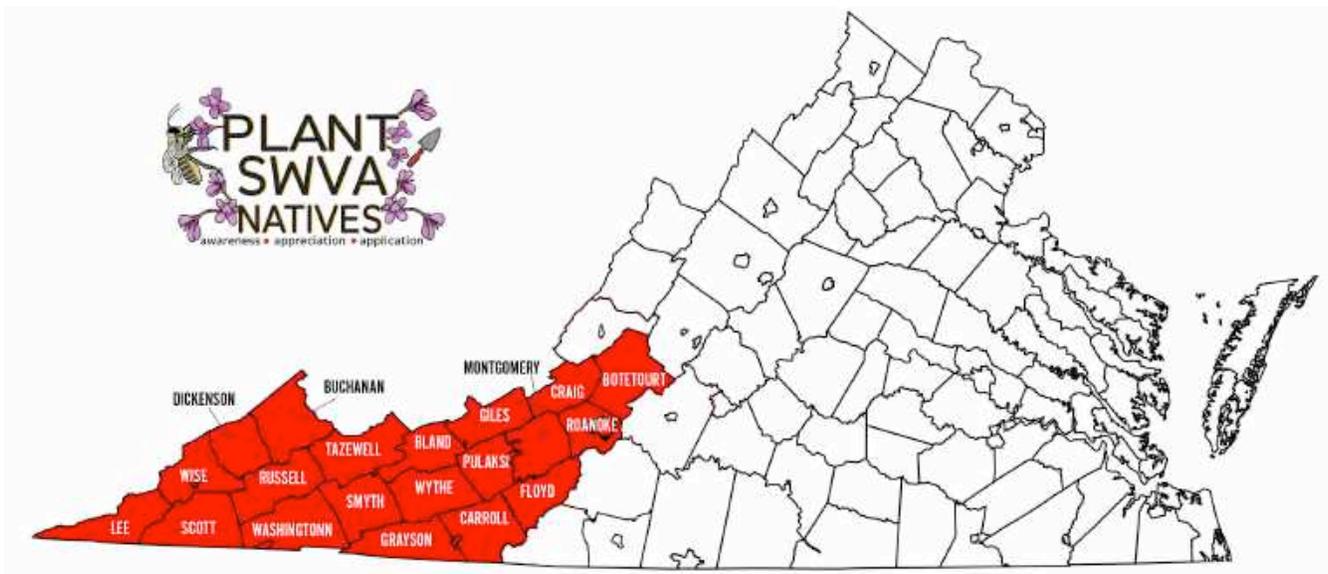
To whet your appetite, here is the first sentence of the article: The cuckoo bee has earned its name by behaving in a manner akin to the cuckoo bird—by laying her eggs in the nests of other bees rather than by building her own. In the case of cuckoo bees, they use only the nests of solitary bees (such as mining and mason bees)—never of social bees like honeybees...

Bruce Grimes took this photo of a Canada lily this summer on the Apple Orchard Mountain on the Blue Ridge Parkway.



Status of the Plant Southwest Virginia Natives campaign by Nicole Hersch

The Plant Southwest Virginia Natives Campaign is picking up momentum and now includes all of the localities in Southwest Virginia.



The New River Valley Regional Commission was recently awarded funds from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to support the Plant Southwest Virginia Natives Campaign. Partners on the project include, but are not limited to, the New River Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Blue Ridge Wildflower Society, New River Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists, Sustainable Blacksburg, and Live, Work, Eat, Grow. The funds will be used to create, print, and distribute the Plant SWVA Natives Guide, implement a native forest demonstration garden and start a community-supported native plant propagation center.

The Regional Commission is currently collecting contributions to the guide. Needed areas are plant photos, volunteer writers or editors-to write or edit short blurbs on a variety of native plant and gardening topics, as well as artists who could create some graphic content for the guide. If you are interested in participating in any of these areas or have other ideas, please reach out to Nicole Hersch at nicole@nrvc.org. All contributions will be credited within the final document.

Through this work, the Campaign seeks to eliminate barriers that prevent people from frequently utilizing native plants in local landscapes. Our goal is to work with local growers and nurseries and partner with landscape professionals and local governments, to learn more about barriers to native landscaping and work collaboratively to begin to address them.

In order to promote the campaign across Southwest Virginia, we recently received a donation of Plant Natives for Pollinators stickers as well as Please Carry Cards. The cards can be used to request nurseries carry more natives, more often. As always, we request that the Please Carry Cards are used to politely ask nurseries to carry more natives. It always helps to introduce yourself and tell them why natives are important. And do not forget to tell a nursery they are doing a good job! Stickers are free of charge and will be distributed across Southwest Virginia. And at in-person monthly chapter meetings this fall and at our September 18 plant sale.



An additional \$3500 has been raised through the 2021 Give Local Campaign, hosted by the New River Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society. These funds will be used to support Plant SWVA Natives Demonstration Garden Collaborators and Nursery Collaborators. Interested demonstration gardens and nurseries will soon be able to apply for Plant SWVA Natives signage, which will further support the mission of the project. Feel free to reach out now if you have a nursery or garden in mind!

Whether you want to put in a flower garden, attract wildlife, reduce lawn maintenance, or establish or restore the landscape around your home, we invite you to Go Wild, Plant SWVA Natives!

Visit our website at <https://www.plantvirginianatives.org/plantswvanatives> and visit our parent website, Plant Virginia Natives, at <https://www.plantvirginianatives.org>

Volunteer Projects and Outreach Programs

August 6-7 - Steppin' Out in Blacksburg, 10 am to 10 pm

August 21 – Heritage Day in Christiansburg, 10 am to 3 pm.

Saturday, September 18 – VNPS-New River chapter plant sale at the Price House Nature Center on Lee Street in Blacksburg, 10 am to 3 pm. See article earlier in this newsletter

October 2 though December 31 – Hokie Bugfest will be both virtual and selectively in-person to various classrooms. We will once again have our own virtual booth. Please contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com if you would like to contribute toward it. We must have our virtual booth ready by September 15 so we need to get started right away.

The Plant Southwest Virginia Natives campaign – see article earlier in this newsletter

Native plant gardens need volunteers this summer and fall. For gardens and contact people, see our chapter website at <https://vnps.org/newriver/projects/native-plant-demonstration-gardens/>.

Just around the corner: Election of several board members

Terms of several board members are up in October. Details will be posted via our list-serve in September.

Events so far for August thru December 2021

August 6-7 - Steppin' Out in Blacksburg, 10 am to 10 pm

Jackie Brown is helping out at the Sustainable BB table which will have brochures of the VNPS. Stop by their booth and enjoy the rest of the festival

August 21 – Heritage Day in Christiansburg, 10 am to 3 pm.

We have had a table at the Heritage Day for several years. Most of the tables will be located in downtown Christiansburg but our table will be located in front of the pollinator garden next to the county museum. Volunteers please contact Brenda Graff at graff...@hotmail.com. Info on Heritage Day itself is available at <https://stayhappening.com/e/heritage-day-celebration-2021-E2ISTTMXCVB>

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Friday, September 17 and Saturday, September 18 – VNPS annual conference and program via Zoom.

This year's conference is titled "Virginia is for Conservation Lovers". For more details, go to <https://vnps.org/events/vnps-2021-annual-meeting-via-zoom/>

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