

New River News

January 2019

New River Chapter, VNPS

Winter/Spring Programs

Please mark your calendars now. **ALL** of our meetings for winter/spring 2019 will be on the **2nd Tuesday of each month and start at 7 pm.** Keep in mind we do not hold a meeting in January. We will again be meeting at the Village Center at Warm Hearth (located at 2387 Warm Hearth Drive, Blacksburg, VA) in the Woodland Studio room, which you can reach by walking straight ahead once you enter the building.

We welcome any suggestions for topics or speakers for this coming fall. The invasives talk in March was a suggestion by a new member. Please contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com.

February 12 – Landscaping for the Birds (Debra Graff)

Discover how to landscape for birds using native plants including wildflowers, shrubs, trees and vines. These plants are important sources of food, shelter and both materials and sites for nests. Handouts will be provided on how to design a bird sanctuary along with lists of plants beneficial to birds.

March 12 – Non-native invasive plants in our yards (Beth Umberger)

Non-native invasive plants have escaped from our yards into native habitats. This talk will cover the plants causing the most problems in our native habitats and how to remove them from your yard. Bring pictures of problem plants for discussion and identification.

April 9 – Propagating Wildflowers (Ian Canton)

Ian will show us how he propagates wildflowers so he can grow and sell them from his Woodthrush Natives Nursery (<http://www.woodthrushnatives.com>) instead of digging them from the wild like some other unscrupulous wildflower nurseries do.

He will also bring wildflowers to sell to us. I will send you details in March on how to reserve them for your pickup during this meeting.

Winter/Spring Outings

Why is this list so short? We can only schedule outings when we have volunteers to lead them. The year is still young, so we have plenty of more time to plan more walks. Think about a favorite place of yours ie. your own land or a neighbors, one of the county parks, a Nature Conservancy park, a state park or natural area, or a federal area. Contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com

April 13 – Wildflower hike in Shawsville at 2 pm

Carol Schwobel will lead a hike along the bank of Spring Branch to see the beautiful Virginia bluebells and other ephemeral wildflower blooming at that time. More details will be sent via the VNPS-NRV list-serve around April 1.

April 14 – Wildflower hike at Claytor Lake State Park, 2-4 pm

One of the hikes at the Hike for Hospice at Claytor Lake State Park will be on wildflowers. Brenda Graff will lead hikers along the Shady Ridge, Bent Tree and Poplar Leaf trails. Contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com for more information.

May 12 - Wildflower hike at Claytor Lake State Park, hours to be determined

Brenda Graff (graff_brenda@hotmail.com) will lead this walk. Most spring wildflowers will be past their peak, but in mid-May the pink lady's slippers are in bloom and they are always a joy to see.

Volunteer projects and Outreach Programs

The mission of the VNPS is to save wildflowers and their habitat in Virginia. To this end our chapter is spreading the word to the public by various means. Our monthly meetings are open to the public. We have donated copies of the Flora of Virginia to our local libraries and have contributed money to the digital version of the book. We have helped out at the National Forest Appreciation Day which was created in 2017. Our members have held talks at local libraries. We have helped out at the local Bugfest.

In the coming months, Brenda Graff will provide information on how chapter members can volunteer with local projects at pollinator gardens and with invasive plant removal. And how we can partner with local organizations ie. Virginia master naturalists and public schools and libraries to give presentations, lead hikes or offer other help.

If you know of a local organization that is interested in knowing more about wildflowers or native habitat, please let Brenda Graff (graff_brenda@hotmail.com) know before April 1 and she will develop a list of these organizations and pass them along to the chapter members.

Would you like to become more involved in the New River Chapter of the VNPS?

Our Board would like to create three committees: the Membership Committee, the Publicity Committee and the Program committee. All committee members will serve two year terms. The chairs of these committees will be on the chapter Board of Directors which meets about twice a year.

Membership Committee will take steps to welcome and orient new members into the chapter.

Publicity Committee will find ways to announce our activities in public places to encourage attendance at our meetings and increase membership. These public places may include listings in local papers (Roanoke Times NRV Sunday section, The News Messenger, The Burgs) and posting fliers at local libraries and other places.

Program committee identifies and arranges activities for the chapter. These may include speakers at chapter meetings, leaders for hikes to view wildflowers or finding volunteer projects.

Committees will have some license to create actions and policies, approved by the Board, to enhance and promote our visibility in the community.

Contact our President, Brenda Graff, at graff_brenda@hotmail.com, if you are interested in contributing.

First Day Hikes—A Big Success

by Mary Rhoades

Several members of the New River Chapter came out to Claytor Lake State Park on January 1 to participate in the First Day Hikes, or just to enjoy some time at the park. All state parks in Virginia are free each year on Jan. 1. The hope is that folks will start the new year right and get outdoors and exercise.

Two officers of the New River Chapter led hikes this year. Brenda Graff led a 2-mile morning hike (61 people!), and Mary Rhoades led a 3-mile afternoon hike (13 people). The weather was great so no one was in a hurry to leave. Later in the afternoon, for the first time ever, the park offered a walk for dog owners and their pets. About 25 people went on that walk. So about 100 folks joined in on the guided walks, and park staff estimate that about another 100 people ventured out on their own that day, making total participation about 200.

Besides guided hikes, a photo contest is held each year for the best pictures taken on January 1st in a state park. There are several different levels of prizes, the top category being a \$500 gift certificate to use at any state park. The only photo taken at Claytor Lake State Park that was a winner was taken by Carrie Jubb. Those of you who work the Bugfest at VT might know Carrie. Her squirrel photo was one of the third prize winners. You can view all the photos that won this year by accessing the First Day Hike Contest Winners article on the state parks website. Go to dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/, then scroll down until you see the several boxes. One of them should have "First Day Hike 2019 Contest Winners." Click on that, and the photos are at the very end of the article.

Results of the November 2018 election for officers

For those of you who weren't able to attend the November chapter meeting, new officers were elected for the next two years. They were: Brenda Graff for president, Mary Rhoades for vice president, Carol Schwobel for treasurer, and Dave Jenkins for secretary.

Events for February thru April 2019

All Wednesday Walk or Talks at the Hahn garden will start at 12 pm and will meet at the pavilion at 200 Garden Lane. All talks are free and open to the public. A visitor pass is required to park in the Hahn Garden visitor lot. Come early to grab a pass from the Hahn Garden staff and find a place to park before the talk begins. For more information call 540-231-5970. Their website at www.hort.vt.edu includes an event calendar which you can check every week or you can sign up to receive an e-mail at vtgarden@vt.edu to be notified of future events.

February 6 – Tangled Up in... Poison Ivy Ecology, 12-1 pm

At the Wednesday Talks at the Hahn garden, John Jelesko, Associate Professor in the School of Plant and Environmental Science, will talk about what is both familiar and "strange" about poison ivy biology and ecology.

February 6 – Movement to plant perennial flowers more naturally, 6-7:30 pm

Join the Hahn Horticulture Garden for a talk by Paul Westervelt, Annual and Perennial Production Manager for Saunders Brothers, Inc. since 2004. Paul's talk will cover the perennial counter movement that embraces a more natural look and a different pallet of plants while creating beneficial habitat and food for pollinators. This event is \$5 for Friends of the Garden/students and \$15 for the general public. Contact vtgarden@vt.edu by Feb. 1st to register.

February 12 – Regular monthly chapter meeting, 7 pm

February 18 - Plant Invasions Associated with Change in Root-zone Microbial Community Structure and Diversity, 7-9 pm

Mark Williams, Associate Professor of Soil Microbiology and Ecology at Virginia Tech, will explain his current research project and will be seeking individuals interested in volunteering to help with it. This meeting is sponsored by the NRV chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists and is free and open to the public. It meets on the Virginia Tech campus in room 145 in the Goodwin Hall located at 635 Prices Fork Road. No parking pass is required after 5 pm. Contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com for more information.

February 20 - Gardens of the Pacific Northwest, 12-1 pm

At the Wednesday Talk at the Hahn garden Robert McDuffie, retired professor from Virginia Tech, will take us on a virtual tour of his 'Gardens of the Pacific Northwest' Trip. Robert is a Landscape Architect and was a professor of horticulture and the previous director of the Hahn Horticulture Garden. Robert now co-owns MCDUFFTOURS LLC and organizes and lead tours to visit great gardens around the world.

March 12 - Regular monthly chapter meeting, 7 pm

March 15 – Shenandoah Valley Plant Symposium, 8 am to 4:15pm

Two of the speakers talk about native plants. There is a fee and it is located in Waynesboro, Va. Several people from this area will be attending so there is a possibility to carpool. For more details, visit <https://www.waynesboro.va.us/971/Shenandoah-Valley-Plant-Symposium>. Contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com for possible carpools.

March 18 – Medicinal Plants, 7-9 pm

Dr. Jim Chamberlain, a research scientist with the USDA Forest Service, is a global expert on non-timber forest products management, production and valuation. Jim leads research to quantify and articulate the ecological and economic impacts of harvesting non-timber forest products, particularly edible and medicinal forest products. This meeting is sponsored by the NRV chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists and is free and open to the public. It meets on the Virginia Tech campus in room 145 in the Goodwin Hall located at 635 Prices Fork Road. No parking pass is required after 5 pm. Contact Brenda Graff at graff_brenda@hotmail.com for more information.

March 20 - Exotic Flowers of Madeira, Portugal, 12-1 pm

At the Wednesday Talk at the Hahn garden Mary Rhoades will show photos about the exotic flowers of **this** small island off the west coast of Africa. Its subtropical climate is a gardener's delight, and plants from all over the world can be grown there. In fact, Madeira's nickname is the "Isle of Flowers."

March 23 – Spring wildflowers at Claytor Lake State Park, 2-3 pm

Slide show to be given at the Radford library (located at 30 W. Main Street) by Mary Rhoades.

March 27 - Bee-friendly beef and using wildflowers in pastures to conserve native bees, 12-1 pm

At the **Wednesday Talk at the Hahn garden**, Jennie Wagner, PhD Student in the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, will talk about adding wildflower habitats to pasture systems as one potential way to conserve declining populations of native bees in a habitat that lacks pollinator resources.

April 9 - Regular monthly chapter meeting, 7 pm

April 12 - Introduction to Mushroom Foraging: Learn A Year's Worth of Wild Edible Mushrooms in One Day, 6-7:30 pm

Join the Hahn Horticulture Garden for a talk by Frank Hyman as we learn to safely identify morels, chanterelles, chicken of the woods and other edible mushrooms? Class includes slide show, handout and Q&A time. Space is limited for this talk so please register by 4/5/19 to ensure a spot. Contact the garden at vtgarden@vt.edu or 540-231-5970 to register. Cost is \$15 for Friends of the Garden and \$20 for the General Public.

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April 25-27 – Hahn Garden plant sale, all day

Hahn garden will be selling all kinds of native and exotic wildflowers, shrubs and trees at 200 Garden Lane on the Virginia Tech campus. More details can be found at their website at www.hort.vt.edu.

April 27 - May 4 – Virginia Historic Garden Week, all day

May 4 is the the tour at Roanoke. There is a fee. For details visit <https://www.vagardenweek.org/main/tourdetails?id=426>