

New River News

January 2018

New River Valley Chapter, VNPS

Spring Programs

All of our programs for spring 2018 will be on the **2nd Tuesday** of each month, at **7 pm** in the Village Center at Warm Hearth retirement community in Blacksburg. Our membership is quite diverse, so we try to have a variety of programs. Because there are several avid gardeners in our Chapter, each year we plan a few talks related to gardening. This year we have two programs gardeners will enjoy. The first will be by Scott Douglas, who came to Blacksburg less than one year ago to head the Hahn Garden at Virginia Tech. The second features Ian Caton who has created a new talk just for us. Ian owns Wood Thrush Natives, a native plant nursery in Floyd County. As in the past, Ian will bring plants that you have ordered, as well as some “extras” that anyone may purchase that evening. Our third spring program will be an introduction to the new Extension Entomologist for bees and beekeeping, James Wilson.

February 13: New Ideas for the Hahn Horticulture Garden (Scott Douglas)

Scott Douglas began working as the Director of the Hahn Horticulture Garden in August 2017 and he has brought a variety of ideas to expand and improve the garden. His presentation will include an overview of his career as a landscape architect and a few preliminary design concepts for garden improvements. He is beginning to create a new master plan for the garden and he wants to provide an opportunity for members to offer feedback on the current state of the garden and possible future improvements.

March 13: From Squash Bugs to Bees (James Wilson)

James Wilson became a faculty member in the Entomology Department at Virginia Tech in December 2016. He is currently teaching the Bees & Beekeeping course, as well as handling an online course covering general entomology. His talk will cover a variety of topics, including his background, some of his research, the latest news about bees and pesticides, and what resources there are for people who want to learn more about bees, and to try and identify them.

April 10: What's in a Name (and what's not) (Ian Caton)

A discussion on the variability of characteristics within a species and how that is or is not communicated effectively to gardeners and nursery growers.

Spring Outings

Why is the 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 time to plan more walks. Think about a place that is special to you, and that you would like to share with others. Then just send Mary Rhoades a note (mrhoades@vt.edu).

Saturday, March 3. Tree Identification walk with John Seiler at Stadium Woods, Virginia Tech campus. From **10 am to noon**. Meet near the flagpole—on the hill behind the tennis courts on Washington Street in Blacksburg.

Sunday, May 13. Wildflower walk with Mary Rhoades at Claytor Lake State Park. Most spring flowers 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. Start at **2 pm** from the Overflow Lot (across from the Water's Edge Meeting Facility).

Saturday, June 30. National Forest Appreciation Day at Pandapas Pond. This year we would like to focus on plants and animals living in the pond and around the edge. Including pond scum! We also want to have the pollinator garden open to visitors. Hours will be **10 am to noon**, or possibly until 1 pm.

Mountain Lake Biological Station

Just up the road from Blacksburg is the Mountain Lake Biological Station, run by the University of Virginia. At 4,000 feet elevation you are in quite a different world up there. The summer courses for 2018 are now listed on the station's website at mlbs.virginia.edu. Besides formal courses, the station has other educational offerings each summer that are free and open to the general public, like seminars and an open house. Another useful item on the website is a link for information on maps and trails.

Flora of Virginia Activities—Thanks to Jordan Metzgar

Jordan is our newest member. He came to Blacksburg less than a year ago, and has organized and participated in many community outreach activities in just a few short months. As you will see by reading pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter, he has arranged several special events starting in February to highlight the arrival of a panel from the Flora of Virginia project to be on display at the Massey Herbarium. Especially nice is the inclusion of activities for children. Be sure to check them out. Jordan has everything posted on the website for the herbarium (masseyherbarium.org). If you don't find details there yet, look again in a week or so.

The Flora of Virginia Comes to the New River Valley!

By Jordan Metzgar

The publication of the Flora of Virginia in 2012 was a monumental event for naturalists, scientists, and native plant enthusiasts in Virginia. The text was the first comprehensive guide to Virginia's plants since the 1700s. Covering 3,164 species, this book (and now the app!) has become an invaluable reference for botanically-minded residents. Virginia Tech's Massey Herbarium thinks it is time to celebrate this effort!

The herbarium has partnered with other campus units and community organizations to bring six weeks of exhibits, activities, workshops, and contests to the area. Exhibit activities will occur across the Virginia Tech campus and the New River Valley during February and March.

There will be two indoor displays. The Massey Herbarium (Derring Hall, Room 3017) will have a panel display covering the botanical history of Virginia over the last few centuries. This display was created by the Library of Virginia to celebrate the publication of the *Flora of Virginia* in 2012.

The Special Collections in the University Libraries at VT will have several historical items on display. Including an original copy of the *Flora Virginica* from 1739! Several of Mark Catesby's illustrations from 1771 featuring native plants will also be on display.

The Hahn Horticulture Garden is sponsoring a visit from Lara Call Gastinger, who illustrated much of the *Flora of Virginia*. She will deliver a workshop and a seminar on botanical illustration on March 15. Registration for her events is through the garden.

A more active event will occur on March 3 when noted dendrologist Dr. John Seiler will lead us on a winter tree identification hike in Stadium Woods.

There are several youth events as well. We will bring herbarium specimens and a make-your-own-specimen craft activity for a Botany Day at both the SEEDS—Blacksburg Nature Center and the Christiansburg Library's STEM Club. We will also have a botany discovery center in the Christiansburg Library for the month of February. It will feature our brand new, kid-friendly digital microscope and hands-on botanical items. Kids will also be able to enter our Lego contest there!

The Botanical Bricks contest will judge submissions for botanical Lego creations and photographs that combine Lego minifigures or pieces with plants. Entries will be judged in two different age categories (K-5th and 6th-12th grade) and the top three winners in each category will receive new Lego sets! Kids can enter the contest online at home, in addition to the Christiansburg Library.

Flora of Virginia Exhibit Activities

February 5—March 16

For more details: MasseyHerbarium.org/FOV

FREE EVENTS

Massey Herbarium (Derring Hall, Room 3017)

- Panel display on the history of Virginia's flora

Special Collections, University Libraries (Newman Library, first floor)

- Original copy of *Flora Virginica* (1739)
- Period illustrations by Mark Catesby (1771)

Stadium Woods

- Winter tree ID walk: **Saturday, March 3, 10am-12pm**
- Dr. John Seiler

SEEDS - Blacksburg Nature Center

- Botany Day: **Saturday, February 10, 9am-1pm**

Christiansburg Library

- Botany day with the STEM Club: **Monday, February 12, 1-2pm**
- Botanical discovery station, **February 1-28**

Online

- Botanical Bricks Contest
- Enter by **March 1**
- Multiple age categories and prizes for K-12 students
- MasseyHerbarium.org/contest

ADMISSION FEE

Hahn Horticulture Garden (hort.vt.edu/hhg/events)

- Seminar (**10:00-11:30am**) and workshop (**12:30-2:30pm**) on botanical illustration: **Thursday, March 15** (seminar is free for students)
- Lara Call Gastinger, botanical artist and *Flora of Virginia* illustrator