

# *The* *Leaflet*

Fauquier County's Riverside Preserve by Emily Southgate

SUMMER 2024

About a dozen intrepid native plant enthusiasts showed up at Fauquier County's Riverside Preserve for a walk with Fauquier County Director of Parks and Recreation Gary Rzepecki just as the rain ended and the



sun peeked through the clouds. The ground was not carpeted with blooming spring ephemerals, but, rather, the mostly white flowers sparkled more like stars on a dark night. Seeking out those brave little flowers was even more fun than seeing a multitude. We found Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), Rue Anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*), Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), Yellow Fumewort (*Corydalis flavula*), Star Chickweed (*Stellaria pubera*), and blue and yellow violets (*Viola* spp.), plus (continued on page 2)





The Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS), founded as the Virginia Wildflower Society in 1982, is a non-profit organization of people who share an interest in Virginia's wild plants and habitats and a concern for their protection.

The Piedmont Chapter is a sub-group of VNPS in the northern point of Virginia east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It includes Loudoun, Fauquier, Culpeper, Rappahannock, Warren, Clarke, and Frederick counties.

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*The Leaflet* can be seen online in color at [www.vnps.org/piedmont](http://www.vnps.org/piedmont)

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## Fauquier County's Riverside Preserve (continued)



blooming shrubs and trees, especially Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) and Boxelder (*Acer negundo*). Across the river from the preserve was a large serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.) just about in bloom. Promise of things to come were abundant: Trout Lily (*Erythronium americanum*), Downy Rattlesnake Plantain orchid (*Goodyeara pubescens*), Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), and Golden Ragwort (*Packera aurea*).

In addition to the wildflowers, we heard from Gary about his vision for this preserve. He told us that it is his favorite among the Fauquier County parks, which showed in his enthusiasm for his plans for controlling invasives and adding native plantings, all designed to build on the natural landscape. The wooded area is cut by fairly steep ravines, with rocky outcrops, with a Beech-dominated forest. The floodplain along the Rappahannock River is a meadow, with trees and shrubs along the steep banks of the river. Gary's crews have removed large areas of invasives, especially shrubs, and added a variety of native plants. They found some Strawberry Bush (*Euonymus americana*), a native *Euonymus* in the woods above a stream, and have planted several of these along that bank to augment the naturally growing ones.

We admired several large Hornbeams (*Carpinus caroliniana*), also known as Ironwood and Muscledwood, and a large field-grown (continued on page 3)





## Fauquier County's Riverside Preserve (continued)

American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) tree in the woods surrounded by smaller stems, a testament to former clearing of that area. Another highlight for me were the large River Birches (*Betula nigra*), growing naturally. Most of those that I see have been planted along riparian areas or in lawns, and are mostly fairly small. Some of these were at least a foot in diameter, growing on small stream banks or in the floodplain.

We noticed some strange black growths on some of the Beech trees. iNaturalist identified these as Honeydew Eater (*Scorias spongiosa*) a sooty mold fungus that grows on aphid honeydew, only found on American Beech trees. The aphid is called Beech Blight Aphid (*Grylloprociphilus imbricator*), though I found no reference that indicated that they spread a blight. Their alternate name is Boogie-woogie Aphid, since, if a thick colony is disturbed, the aphids all stick their tail ends in the air and wave them synchronously. Check it out if you see the remains of this blight on a tree and find tight clusters of woolly-looking aphids.

Visit this preserve at any time of year and enjoy the numerous trails along the river and through meadows as well as in the forest. Any season will delight you with diversity of habitats, plants, birds, and other woodland creatures.



## Royal Shenandoah Greenway Bluebell Walk text and photos by Harper Alerion

Whispers of blue, pink, and occasional white lie scattered across the vibrant Shenandoah riverside as it flows by Front Royal. Though - as you pause to think - "whispers" is not quite the right word. The buds springing forth from the dark earth are like a friend calling out to you within the hushed halls of a library or a cathedral, the space too sacred to welcome commotion, the relationship too sacred not to acknowledge. The Bluebells are an invitation to remember where you are. *Skennen'kó:wa* is the Kanien'kéha (Mohawk) word for "great peace." It rhymes with Shenandoah. The rhyming pair becomes inseparable in your mind. Whether or not the words are related, you cannot deny how well-suited they are to each other. "Great peace" is abundant in this place.

The Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), with their bowed heads, are an invitation to humble yourself. You kneel by the wooden fence lining the pathway and peer through it, no longer above the flowers but nearer to their height - in other words, nearer to their perspective. At this level, you are instantly transported to childhood summers in the hillsides of home, where fireflies danced in the purple twilight to the song of tree frogs hiding in the dogwoods and maples, every one of those beings a *daoine síth* from the Celtic fairy tales you grew up with. A little god or ancestor making their own form of magic in the world. As you rise, you realize you had forgotten how much you had grown.

The Bluebells are an invitation to regard the little gods all around you. The bright blooms catch your eye, but once they do, they cede the floor (albeit reluctantly) to the charms of others. The many facets - some brilliant, some dull - of a lump of quartz; the dew-beaded web of a tiny spider; the pastel petals of Purple Deadnettle (*Lamium purpureum*), graced by a wandering honeybee. The surge of something resembling strength and wonder in your belly. The world is full of treasures worthy of both notice and protection.

(continued on page 4)

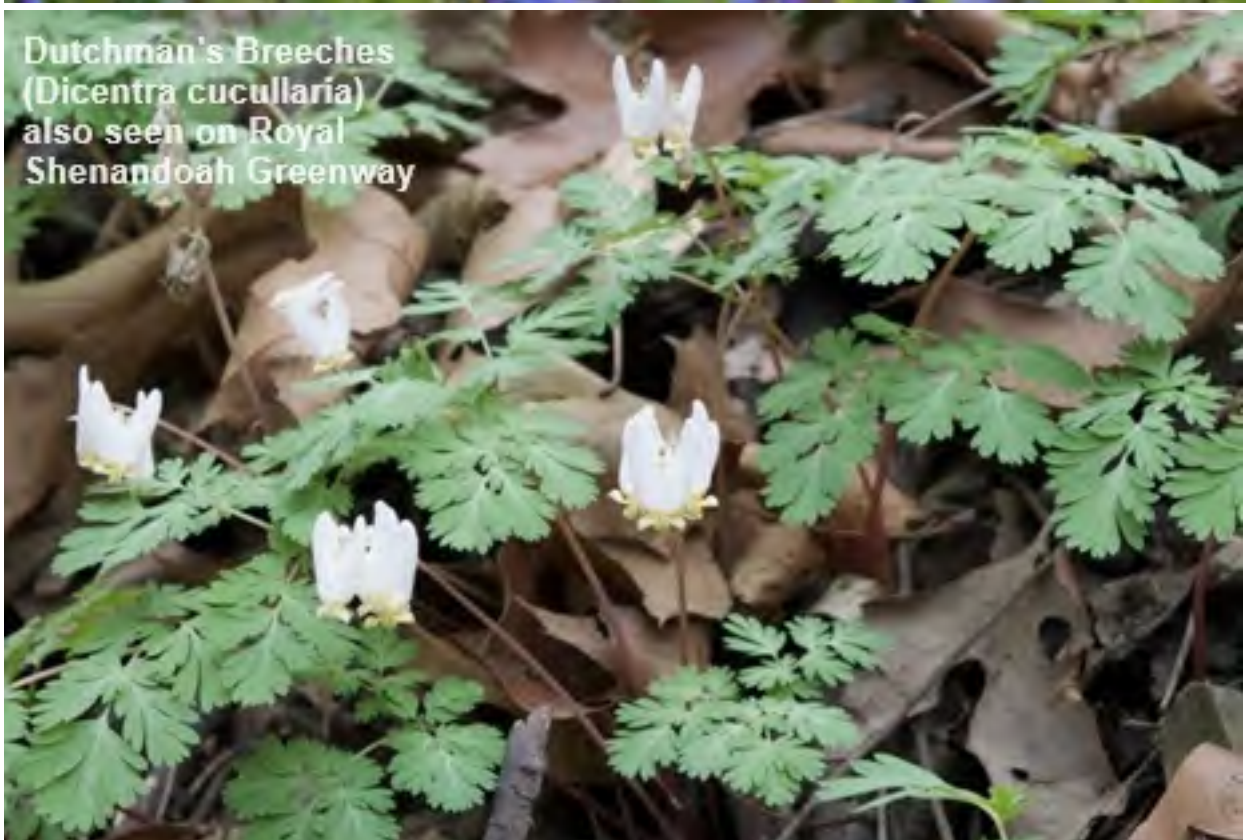




**Royal Shenandoah Greenway Bluebell Walk (continued)**



Dutchman's Breeches  
(*Dicentra cucullaria*)  
also seen on Royal  
Shenandoah Greenway





Registration notices for walks will be sent out three weeks before the event.

|   |                  |               |   |
|---|------------------|---------------|---|
| <b>Tuesday</b>  | <b>June 4</b>    | <b>2-4pm</b>  | <b>Piedmont Chapter Business Meeting</b>        |
| <b>Clarke County.</b> Blandy Experimental Farm Library or Sky Meadows Picnic Area. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Chapter Board at these Meetings.     |                  |               |   |
| <b>Saturday</b>   | <b>June 8</b>    | <b>1pm</b>    | <b>Elizabeth Furnace Walk</b>                   |
| <b>Shenandoah County.</b> Walk the Pig Iron Trail to see how iron was smelted 200 years ago while seeing masses of Mountain Laurel blooming.                        |                  |               |   |
| <b>Wednesday</b>  | <b>June 19</b>   | <b>12-7pm</b> | <b>Warren-Page NAACP Juneteenth Celebration</b> |
| <b>Warren County.</b> Piedmont Chapter will have a table at this Celebration at the Gazebo in Front Royal.  |                  |               |   |
| <b>Tuesday</b>  | <b>July 2</b>    | <b>2-4pm</b>  | <b>Piedmont Chapter Business Meeting</b>        |
| <b>Clarke County.</b> Blandy Experimental Farm Library or Sky Meadows Picnic Area. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Chapter Board at these Meetings.     |                  |               |   |
| <b>Friday</b>   | <b>July 12</b>   | <b>1pm</b>    | <b>Locust Run Woodland Walk</b>                 |
| <b>Fauquier County.</b> Bert Harris, co-director of Clifton Institute will lead a walk near Orlean.   |                  |               |   |
| <b>Tuesday</b>  | <b>Aug 6</b>     | <b>2-4pm</b>  | <b>Piedmont Chapter Business Meeting</b>        |
| <b>Clarke County.</b> Blandy Experimental Farm Library or Sky Meadows Picnic Area. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Chapter Board at these Meetings.     |                  |               |   |
| <b>Saturday</b>   | <b>Aug 10</b>    | <b>1pm</b>    | <b>Walk in Shenandoah National Park</b>         |
| <b>Page County.</b> Master Naturalist Richard Stromberg will show the amazing variety of species growing in the rocks behind the Hogback Overlook of Skyline Drive. |                  |               |   |
| <b>Tuesday</b>  | <b>Sep 3</b>     | <b>2-4pm</b>  | <b>Piedmont Chapter Business Meeting</b>        |
| <b>Clarke County.</b> Blandy Experimental Farm Library or Sky Meadows Picnic Area. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Chapter Board at these Meetings.     |                  |               |   |
| <b>Fri-Sun</b>  | <b>Sep 20-22</b> |               | <b>VNPS State Annual Meeting</b>                |
| Massanutten Springs Resort, Harrisonburg.   |                  |               |   |

### Thompson Wildlife Management Area Trillium Walk text and photos by Natalie Izlar



Our trillium walk took place on a Friday evening on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Led by Sally Anderson, we walked the along the ridgeline before descending to a wetter seep area filled with ferns, Solomon's Plume (*Maianthemum racemosum*) budding, and Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) leaves. Along the way, we saw a rich understory community of Large-flowered Trilliums (*Trillium grandiflorum*), Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), Bear Corn (*Conopholis americana*) Wild Yam (*Dioscorea villosa*),

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Curlyheads (*Clematis ochroleuca*)

### **Thompson Wildlife Management Area Trillium Walk (continued)**

various Violet species (*Viola spp.*), Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*), as well as some Yellow Lady's Slippers (*Cypripedium parviflorum*) just starting to bloom. Showy Orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*) were budding and almost ready. We also heard some warblers singing including the Cerulean Warbler (*Setophaga cerulea*), the Hooded Warbler (*Setophaga citrina*), and the American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*). Thanks to the garlic mustard pull of a few weeks ago, we were able to enjoy a host of native plants along this trail



### **Hair on Plants part 4** (continued from the Fall and Winter, 2023, and Spring, 2024, issues of *The Leaflet*) by Richard Stromberg

In addition to the terms botanists use to describe a hairy surface (listed in the Fall 2023 issue), individual hairs (Winter 2023), and tufted hairs (Spring 2024) here are terms having to do with **fringed hairs** (hairs or bristles along the margins):

Ciliate—Having a marginal fringe of hairs, shorter and finer than fimbriate

Ciliolate—Having a marginal fringe of minute hairs

Cilium—A small hair or hairlike process, usually along the margin of a structure

Fimbriate—Fringed, usually with hairs along the margin, longer and coarser than ciliate

Fimbrillate & Fimbriolate—Fringed with very fine hairs

Fringed—With hairs or bristles along the margins