

The *Leaflet*

Walk “*Between the Hills*” at Sweet Run State Park by Su Puleo

SPRING 2025

Sunny, informative, and brisk describes our December 14 Walk at Sweet Run State Park, a new Virginia State Park. Emily Southgate was our host and teacher for the day. We walked a short distance.

Observations were many and detailed with discussion of plant, grass, as well as tree identifications and functions. All were encouraged to source various plant identification books, e.g. Winter Tree Finder by Watts & Theilgaard-Watts. Emily also cautioned that sometimes you can make one wrong choice as you work through the book’s illustrated dichotomous key, so you will need to go back to an earlier branch of the key, maybe to the beginning.

Emily shared research information that has been highlighted in the recent book The Light Eaters by Zoë Schlanger. In this book the author delves into the fascinating world of plant intelligence, challenging our traditional understanding of life on Earth. For example, plants can sense and respond to their environment in sophisticated ways from light, gravity, touch, and even sound vibrations. They communicate with each other through chemical signals, warning of danger or sharing resources. Plants can store information about past experiences and use it to adapt to future challenges. They exhibit problem-solving skills, such as finding water sources or defending themselves against predators.

Emily had us think of all the things plants do to adapt to their situations both during the active growing season and now in the winter. For example, the leaves at the top of the tree are typically smaller than those at the bottom. Why is that? Perhaps they have more access to sun but also are in more jeopardy of drying out more easily. Those at the top may also have stronger attachments to be able to handle wind and weather better. Leaves at the bottom must have more surface area to collect the smaller amounts of sunlight they get. She also showed us how a twig that may appear dead or dormant in the winter is easily lightly scratched to reveal that the chlorophyll is still doing its job.

Much interest and curiosity in our amazing world of plants was generated. It was a fascinating day!





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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Seeing Nature: Identifying and Sharing What You Have Seen

Master Naturalist and Piedmont Chapter Board Member Richard Stromberg presented the Chapter's first Winter Series talk.

He started by showing several books that can be used to identify plants. First were "Flora," which are books that describe all plants growing naturally in a specified area, e.g., the northeast quadrant of North America or a state. He showed how Floras use dichotomous keys to identify families, genera, and species. He then discussed Field Guides, which are small enough to carry into the field, but are not as complete as the Flora. He showed how three Field Guides work: National Audubon Society, Peterson, and Newcomb's. He then showed some guides to subsets of the plant world and some local guides. Then he showed information that you can find at Visitor Centers.

Moving on to the digital world, he showed what you need to include in a picture to enable you to identify the plant. Then he showed some online tools that show pictures of plants and show where they grow: USDA Plants Database, Atlas of Virginia Flora, and several similar databases around the world.

Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora Search Scientific Name or Synonym or Common Name Search

News & Announcements Group Family Genus County Excluded Taxa About Earlier Editions Contribute New R

Campanula divaricata Michx.

Native Status
 ● Native
 ● Introduced
 ● Uncertain

Show image with county labels

Detail

Family
 Campanulaceae

Botanical Name
 Campanula divaricata Michx.

Common Name
 Southern Harebell, Appalachian Bellflower

Next, he showed how the Flora of Virginia App's Graphic Key works and how the App displays the Flora's information. Then he described apps that use image comparison to identify things: iNaturalist, Seek, Google Lens, PictureThis, Pl@netNet, and LeafSnap.

Richard labels each photo with the common and scientific name and files them by date and location. Then he can find pictures to use in presentations and publications. He has loaded over 16,000 observations on iNaturalist, which has led to requests to participate in scientific studies.

His best tip to help you identify plants: take along people who know what they are looking at.



Reports on Funds Granted by the Chapter

The last two years, Emily and Tim Faltemier of Three Fox Vineyards & Brewery provided funds for grants to benefit native plants in Fauquier County. 2024 Grants were awarded to Mountain Vista Governors' School for student native plant projects, Clifton Institute for local-ecotype propagation, and Faire Meddow farm and the Friends of Sky Meadows for seed drills. 2023 Grants were awarded to Clifton Institute, Weston Foundation (Warrenton Antiquarian Society) for brochures on Weston's native plant population, and Fauquier County Parks and Recreation to support interpretive signage the new Riverside Preserve, along the Rappahannock River near Orlean. Reports on the grants follow.

Mountain Vista Governors' School for Science, Math & Technology

text & photos by Hannah Bement, Biological Sciences Teacher

One of the ways that I hope to connect my students to the world around them is by getting their hands in the dirt as often as possible! My students have created and maintained a native plant garden on the Fauquier campus of Laurel Ridge Community College for several years now. One of the core concepts throughout our environmental science class at Mountain Vista Governor's School (MVGS) is the importance of native plants, especially in terms of coevolution with insect pollinators and the stability of local ecosystems. Both the native garden and the students' learning have been a huge success, with over a dozen species of native plants grown from seed and students this year applying their knowledge to design educational signs for the garden.

Later this spring, my students will be creating "mini meadow" native planter pots and will be donating them to local schools, along with educating their peers about native plants. We are in the process of planting seedlings to gift to community members later in the year as well. (continued on page 4)





Mountain Vista Governors' School for Science, Math & Technology (continued)

Throughout the planning of these projects, my students completed independent projects focusing on an aspect of native plants that appealed to them. Some students wrote compelling proposals seeking local golf courses to increase their use of native plantings. One student made a guide to historical uses of certain native plants including for spiritual and medicinal uses. Another created an educational game called "Native or Non-native" where people can test their ability to distinguish which truly belong in Virginia. Another group reached out to the Fauquier Trails Coalition to design a sign for the portion of the trail that runs behind the campus to highlight some of the native plants that occur along it. Excerpts from student projects are included below. It gives me hope for the future of our planet that students are using their voices to advocate for native plants!

Aiden K:

Over the past century, urbanization in the US has transformed 150 million acres of habitats and farmland into fragmented landscapes dominated by lawns and exotic plants, disrupting ecosystems. Native plants, essential for supporting wildlife and local food webs, have been largely replaced by alien species, many of which have become invasive. This shift threatens biodiversity, as most human-dominated landscapes no longer provide the resources needed for birds and other wildlife to survive.

Sam L:

Biodiversity is the plurality of life in an ecosystem, and it is the cornerstone of a healthy world. This is because it makes the environment more resilient in times of change. Today, the world faces the rising threat of global warming, and biodiversity will help keep the natural beauty of our world alive. In Virginia specifically, we have a copious amount of native species that all work together to build climate change resistant communities. You can help your local ecosystem by planting native plants and eliminating invasive species. The MVGS Native Garden is a great example of biodiversity at work. The many different plants and animals, ranging from partridge peas to monarchs, make it extremely resilient. The best part is, anyone can do this at home! All it takes is a little research, and you can become an environmental superstar!

(continued on page 6)





Registration notices for Chapter events will be sent out three weeks before the event. Business meetings will conclude (about 3:30-4) with a discussion of a current topic. Members are encouraged to join us.

Tuesday	Mar 4	2-4pm	Piedmont Chapter Business Meeting
Clarke County. Blandy Experimental Farm Library. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Chapter Board at these Meetings. Discussion will be about Phragmites, Pros and Cons.			
Saturday	Mar 8	1pm	Walk at Clifton Institute
Fauquier County. Executive Director of Clifton Institute Bert Harris will lead a walk at the Institute.			
Sunday	Mar 30	1pm	G. Richard Thompson WMA Invasive Removal
Fauquier County. We will look for early signs of spring while we pull Garlic Mustard, led by Sally Anderson. Bring gloves and drinking water.			
Tuesday	Apr 1	2-4pm	Piedmont Chapter Business Meeting
Clarke County. Blandy Experimental Farm Library. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Chapter Board at these Meetings.			
Saturday	Apr 5	10am	Shenandoah River State Park Walk
Warren County. Master Naturalist Richard Stromberg will lead a walk to see Bluebells and other spring flowers along the Shenandoah River and up the hill to the spectacular Cullers Overlook.			
Saturday	Apr 12	10am-noon	Calmes Neck Bluebell Walk
Clarke County. VNPS members and Calmes Neck residents only. See early spring wildflowers along the Shenandoah River. Walk is moderate and a walking stick is recommended. Bring lunch, water, and insect repellent.			
Friday	Apr 25	5:30pm	G. Richard Thompson WMA Trillium Walk
Fauquier County. Master Naturalist Sally Anderson will lead this evening walk to see millions of Trilliums and other spring flowers.			
Sunday	Apr 27	1pm	Front Royal Lone Pine/Earth Day
Warren County VNPS Piedmont Chapter will staff\)))))))))) an information table at this festival.			
Tuesday	May 6	2-4pm	Piedmont Chapter Business Meeting
Clarke County. Blandy Experimental Farm Library. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Chapter Board at these Meetings.			
Saturday & Sunday May 10 & 11		9am-4:30pm	State Arboretum Garden Fair
Clarke County. Several native plant vendors and lots of information available. Another opportunity to help us by sitting at a Piedmont Chapter booth (includes free admission), contact piedmont@vnps.org . See https://blandy.virginia.edu/garden-fair for more information.			
Saturday & Sunday May 10 & 11		Wildflower Weekend at Shenandoah National Park	
Appreciate the diversity of wildflowers growing in the Blue Ridge. More than 1,300 species of plants thrive in Shenandoah National Park. Information at Shenandoah NP Wildflower Weekend 2025			
Saturday	May 17	10am	Great North Mountain Walk
Warren County. Master Naturalist Richard Stromberg will lead a walk to see Pink Lady's Slipper orchids and other late spring flowers and the aftermath of the forest fire last fall.			
Tuesday	Jun 10	2-4pm	Piedmont Chapter Business Meeting
Clarke County. Blandy Experimental Farm Library. All Chapter members are welcome to join the Chapter Board at these Meetings.			
Saturday	Jun 14	10am	Royal Shenandoah Greenway Walk
Warren County. Master Naturalist Richard Stromberg will lead a walk to see late spring/early summer flowers from Skyline High School to the Shenandoah River in Front Royal.			



Mountain Vista Governors' School for Science, Math & Technology (continued)

Christian L and Alex E:

Lots of our native insects that provide energy for the higher levels of the food chain have coevolved with our native plants over thousands of years. This means that these insects have become specialized to these specific native plants; without these plants, these insects have no habitat or food. This lack of vital needs takes a link out of the food chain, affecting not only the specific species but also the species on the food chain above them. One study, conducted at the University of Delaware, showed that increasing the biodiversity and the number of native plants in urban settings significantly improved the number of birds and native insects.

Katie C:

I never fully realized how important insects were! This quote, "Given that 96% of all terrestrial birds in North America rear their young in part or entirely on insects (Dickinson 1999), large-scale reductions in available insect biomass may have serious conservation implications that could be mitigated with changes in landscape practices," hit me especially. There are many, many more species of insects compared to other animal groups, and insects are as or more important as herbivores. Still, insect populations are very fragile due to their reliance on shared evolutionary history with the wave of non-native and invasive plant species.



Lexi S.

The choices that homeowners and landscapers make when it comes to whether they are planting native, non-native, or invasive plants effect the ecosystem a lot. The plants, insects, and birds are all connected. If there is a lack of native plants, then there will be a lack of insects, since the native insects like to stay with the native trees. This leads to a lack of native birds to eat the insects, therefor effecting the whole food chain. We need to be mindful of the choices we are making and landscapers/homeowners should be more aware of this study.

Research, Plant Propagation, and a Native Meadow at the Clifton Institute by Bert Harris

Clifton Institute was very fortunate to receive grant funds from the Piedmont chapter from 2021-2024 through the Cathy Mayes Memorial Fund and Three Fox Vineyards & Brewery grants. This funding supported a diverse group of projects that ranged from research on forest restoration to native plant propagation and establishing a new native meadow in honor of Cathy Mayes, who was a treasured VNPS member and Clifton Institute board member.

The forest restoration project that that was funded by VNPS is comparing the effects of prescribed fire and deer exclosures on restoring wildflower diversity in oak forests. We did baseline plant surveys in 26 10x10-meter plots at the Clifton Institute and Wildcat Mountain in 2022 and 2023. (continued on page 7)



Research, Plant Propagation, and a Native Meadow at the Clifton Institute (continued)

Then last spring we burned one-third of the plots, installed deer exclosures in a third, and left the remaining plots as unmanaged controls. We will re-survey the plots in 2026 after another round of prescribed burns. Our results will inform landowners how to bring back herbaceous plants in open forests and woodlands that have been impacted by fire suppression and deer overabundance.



At the Clifton Institute we collect seeds from the wild and grow 75 species of local-ecotype plants to provide seedlings to the public. We are also leading the Virginia Native Seed Project, which has the goal of launching the native seed industry in the state. VNPS funds supported the construction of a 16x32-foot deer-proof shade structure that will bolster our growing operation substantially. VNPS also supported the purchase of a freezer that we are using for long-term seed storage, sieves for seed cleaning, and staff time to grow plants. We host two plant sales per year where we sell 700 local-ecotype plants per sale. The seed project is also off to an excellent start with 10 farmers enrolled and the first harvests of 11 species coming in.

The third project funded by VNPS is the Cathy Mayes Memorial Meadow. We have now converted a one-acre fescue field to a (mostly) native meadow. The site had no topsoil and plenty of difficult weeds, but we did our best to control them, and we planted a diverse mix of seeds that we collected locally. We also worked with volunteers to grow and plant 2,000 plugs to increase the diversity and cover of native plants in the meadow. This is the first meadow of this size to have been planted with 100% local-ecotype seeds in Fauquier County. We will continue to manage the weeds in 2025 and install a memorial bench for Cathy.

We are so grateful for VNPS's support of our efforts to advance native plant conservation! Thank you!



Warrenton Antiquarian Society at Weston text & photos by Mary Ashton, past president

Since beginning in October 2023, we have taken over 2000 photos of native plants and landscapes along with fungi, insects, and a variety of wildlife. We have researched, identified, and written about more than 100 species, prepared a slide show tracking the site's history and seasonal characteristics, and developed the resources needed to finalize a first publication to be used this spring as a handout for wildflower workshops and hikes. The Piedmont Chapter grant is for printing it. These materials will enable participants and visitors to Weston to better see, understand and appreciate the interactions and transformations happening in our Piedmont fields and woodlands.

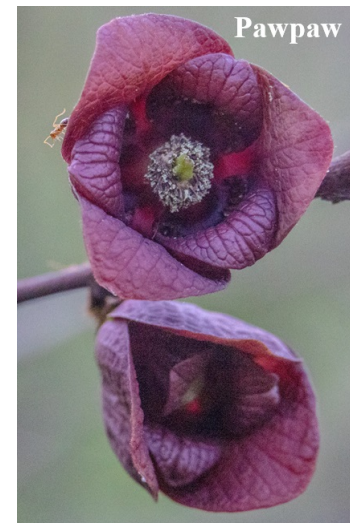
Emily Southgate, Sally Anderson, and Marion Lobstein have been guides throughout the project, helping us pursue our mission of recording and sharing history and stories about the environment with the larger community and to follow in the steps of the Nourse family women who began their love of observing, identifying and painting wildflowers in the early 1800s. Constance and Charlotte Nourse, who lived at Weston their entire lives, continued this tradition into the 20th century and left Weston to us with the hope we would help others appreciate the natural world they left behind.

Our first presentation will be 2pm March 9 at the John Barton Payne building in Warrenton.

We began the project by acquiring photography equipment, brushing up on our camera and computer skills, and meeting with plant and environmental experts. Over 16 months we walked many times around Weston's old fields, the Piedmont lowlands, and the Piedmont uplands of the Weston Wildlife Management Area adjacent to the historic Weston Farmstead, documenting seasonal changes

The paths became a slowly, then rapidly moving series of discoveries that revealed a community of species that invited attention even when it was unclear what was there. We took pictures of the emergence, transformation, and disappearance of plants, fungi, spiders, bees, butterflies, beetles, snakes, mammals, and the remnants of unknown past human structures: fencing, ditches, ponds, and many non-native plants.

The camera became a remarkable tool and a snare and a delusion. In spring, we celebrated our ability to photograph characteristics of species we had never seen before: the glorious insides of a Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*) flower, the sculptured brown bud of a Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) on a naked branch. How does one capture a delicate blonde spray of native grass found on the edge of a weedy old field path with limited lens and lighting? Wait for snow to provide a background for the dried plant, but then during the winter of 2024 it did not snow. So break the stem of the grass and find an artificial background, but somehow that feels unnatural and inappropriate. So wait until a snowstorm comes in January, 2025 and finally capture the portrait as best you can but it is fuzzy and nothing like what you have hoped for. And how does one possibly capture on camera the simultaneous presence of multiple bird species during the last week of January, 2025, shortly after sunset. The project, you know, is about wildflowers not birds, but these and other creatures live among these plants and many help them thrive and spread. They shouldn't be left out. So, in the darkness, too dark to take a photograph, listen to the persistent honking of geese overhead as they move towards the ice-free pond to Weston's north, and the simultaneous and repetitive "who-cooks-for you" call of a single Barred Owl in the pines behind you. And then, if you are quiet enough and listening closely, a Woodcock is (continued on page 9)





Warrenton Antiquarian Society (continued)

buzzing softly a few steps away in the wet woods to draw the attention of a nearby female. And all this happening before hurrying back to your car through the mud and by the dim light of a crescent moon. And none of it is capturable on your camera.

Observing and documenting nature, as many wildflower enthusiasts know and as we learned once again, is not only an adventure and a challenge, it is a meditative process. If you are smart, watchful, and patient enough, it allows us to appreciate land and the things that live on it. It provides a captivating and sometimes clarifying experience although often there is no clarity at all, just a lot of questions that pull us back to natural places to see what else can be found or understood. The project to observe and document, if you let it, never ends. But what you do find and experience feels humbling and important; a privilege we look forward to sharing with VNPS members, guests, and others.

Riverside Preserve Signs by Gary Rzepecki, Director of Fauquier County Parks & Recreation

Fauquier County Parks Recreation is grateful for the 2023 grant supporting Interpretive Signs at Riverside Preserve. As Piedmont Chapter President Mitzi Fox noted, “Interpretive signage provides a great conduit for native plant information.” These signs not only enhance visitors’ understanding of the site but also spark curiosity about surrounding flora. By drawing attention to plants that might otherwise go unnoticed, they encourage closer inspection of individual species and their unique characteristics.

Thanks to the VNPS grant, we installed 70 interpretive signs mounted on metal stakes throughout the Preserve. They are valuable tools for self-guided exploration and complement guided tours, allowing tour leaders to provide deeper insights into the native plants highlighted on the signs.

Riverside Preserve spans nearly 200 acres of primarily forested land, featuring a picturesque wildflower meadow and scenic frontage along the Rappahannock River. The property boasts approximately 2.5 miles of existing trails, with expansion plans underway. Future trails will traverse varying topography and sun exposures, leading to the discovery of new plant communities. As we explore the new trails, we will identify previously unrecorded plant species and need signs for them.



Hand in hand with our trail expansion efforts is a dedicated focus on invasive plant removal. Currently, our primary targets include: Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), Privet (*Ligustrum* spp.), Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*), and Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*). To restore the native ecosystem, we systematically remove these invasive species by cutting them down and treating stumps with herbicide. This process creates open spaces and increases sunlight, fostering the regeneration of native plants from existing seed banks. In the following years, we conduct spot treatments to manage any invasive regrowth.

As we continue restoring the Preserve’s native plant communities, we plan to expand our interpretive signage program. Future additions will include geological and soil information, highlighting their crucial role in shaping the site’s unique plant diversity.

Riverside Preserve is a hidden gem—a serene retreat where visitors can immerse themselves in nature without making a long drive to the mountains. Whether you seek the calming sounds of the Rappahannock River as it rounds the bend or the beauty of 200 acres of thriving native flora, Riverside Preserve offers a little slice of heaven.



VNPS Grant Fuels a Native Meadow Dream text & photos by Sue Puleo

Why do we go to all this trouble and expense to promote native biodiversity? Dr. Doug Tallamy opened the eyes of Sue and Bob Puleo, owners of Faire Meddow farm. Hearing him speak was a revelation—the urgent need to protect and grow more native plants.

North America has lost a staggering 30% of bird population since 1970! A single clutch of chickadees needs 6,000-9,000 caterpillars just to get to the point of fledging. We need to rethink how we manage our properties if we want to bring the birds back. The US has 44 million acres of lawn, and even *more* land dedicated to pasture and grasslands. Dr. Tallamy's Home-Grown National Park initiative aims to cut that lawn acreage in half, one yard at a time. Simply: native host plants = caterpillars = birds. The National Wildlife Federation website tells which native plants pack the biggest punch. They have fantastic Keystone Species charts for each eco-region, showing you the most beneficial plants in your area (<https://www.nwf.org/Native-Plant-Habitats/Plant-Native/Why-Native/Keystone-Plants-by-Ecoregion>).



Bob and Sue's mission is to continue to eradicate invasive trees and shrubs. Less lawn, more native meadows, and a whole lot of native trees. They have planted over 250 native trees and shrubs in the last few years. They have also created two small native meadows from seed. One, a 4,000 square foot patch, was established using the "kill and drill" method with Ernst's "Dry Mesic Meadow" mix. The other started with a 40x60 tarp staked down over clean dirt for six months (solarization). After that process, they hand-broadcast a mix from The Clifton Institute.

To share their journey and spread the word about native biodiversity, they named their little slice of heaven "Faire Meddow." It is on Google Maps! Feel free to visit by appointment. Their Facebook page tells what they are seeing and learning (<https://www.facebook.com/FaireMeddow>).

VNPS Piedmont Chapter gave them a \$1,000 grant last year to help with a larger native meadow project on one and a half acres. They will be sharing the progress of this project.

Creating a meadow from seed is, at a minimum, a three-year commitment. The first year is all about prep work. Last fall, they mowed the future meadow, mostly *Sericea Lespedeza* (continued on page 11)



VNPS Grant Fuels a Native Meadow Dream (continued)

(*Lespedeza cuneata*) before it went to seed. This helps reduce the seed bank of this aggressive invasive. Eliminating the competition is crucial for long-term success.

Every year, from mid-February to early March, they mow their established, native meadows. This is the *only* time they mow them, to protect resident box turtles. They keep paths mowed so the meadows can be enjoyed year-round. Annual mowing helps keep the meadows healthy and slows down the natural progression to forest.

Every March, right after the big mow, they host a free "You Dig" for the public to take home some of the Redbud, Persimmon, Sassafras, Winged Sumac, or any other saplings they happen to uncover. They announce the "You Dig" on the VNPS website and the Faire Meddow Facebook page.

In early June they will begin three rounds of herbicide application on the "to-be" meadow, the last at the end of September. They will use Glyphosate with a non-ionic surfactant and forestry dye (to see what has been sprayed and indicate if any splashes onto them). The dye fades away within a day or so. Safety first, always! We follow the product label instructions to the letter. They will use a backpack sprayer, working in a grid pattern for thorough coverage. They aim for applications every six weeks during the growing season following USDA guidelines. The goal is to spray when the target plants are actively growing, but try to avoid spraying during peak pollinator activity. This might mean an extra mowing in late summer (with the mower deck raised to 6-8 inches) to knock down those *Sericea lespedeza* flower heads before the final herbicide application.

We have contracted with Virginica LLC, a local native seed drill conservationist. Seed drills precisely and efficiently plant native meadow seeds. Native seeds come in all shapes and sizes. Some are tiny, others are fluffy. The native seed drill ensures they are planted at the correct depth and spacing, minimizing seed waste and giving the precious (and expensive!) seed mix the best possible chance to thrive. The distribution is much more even compared to hand-sowing, where seeds can easily blow or wash away.



The seed drill is scheduled for late fall/early winter 2025, perfect timing for spring germination. Fingers crossed for higher success rates and evenly distributed plants. It also helps preserve the soil structure and reduces weed competition.

(continued on page 12)



**PIEDMONT CHAPTER
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 336
THE PLAINS, VA 20198**

VNPS Grant Fuels a Native Meadow Dream (continued)



Sue and Bob have been busy collecting native forb seeds (responsibly, of course!). We never take more than 10% of the available seed, and never all the seeds from a single plant. They collect them when they are ripe (usually when the seed pods start to turn brown) and then dry them completely on a screen in a well-ventilated area before storing them in the fridge. These local seeds are perfectly adapted to our area and will supplement the mix we purchase from Ernst Seed Co.

A good Virginia native meadow mix has a 70/30 ratio of grasses to forbs. Native grasses are deep rooted and provide structure and stability, preventing erosion and improving soil health. Native forbs bring color and diversity. Their flowers are a vital food source for pollinators and birds through the fall and winter.

The seed mix from Ernst Seed Co. includes: 46% Little Bluestem, 20% Purpletop, 5% Slender Lespedeza, 4.5% Black-eyed Susan, 4% Butterfly Milkweed, 3.5% Spotted Bee Balm, 3% Calico Aster, 3% Heath Aster, 2.5% Appalachian Beardtongue, 1% Yellow False

Indigo, 1% Partridge Pea, 1.5% Sensitive Pea, 1% Mistflower, 1% Whorled Tickseed, 1% Wild Bergamot, 1% Narrowleaf Mountain mint, and 1% Gray Goldenrod. The seed mix costs about \$50.00 per pound,. They will order 20 pounds for the 1.5-acre project plus 45 pounds of annual winter rye as a cover crop. With the 5% mix fee, the total seed cost will be around \$1,075. The seed drill rental will be about \$1,250 for half a day.

From experience, they know the first year of a new meadow can be a bit underwhelming. Distinguishing wildflowers from the weeds, and hand-weeding isn't recommended because it can disturb the soil and encourage more weeds. Some wildflowers take two or three years to germinate, and most stay low to the ground the first year. They have learned that patience is key. Each year brings new forbs and new beauty.

