



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

April, 2023



**Pocahontas Chapter meeting, Thursday April 6, 2023 at 7:00 PM
at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in the Kelly Education Center**

You may also attend the meeting via Zoom by pre-registering at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUod-2urT4rEtLUVO6uDHIN3rtkTsoHJP7>

A meet and greet will start at 6:30 both via Zoom and at Lewis Ginter. A short business meeting will follow the speaker.

As we gear up for spring, we are pleased to offer, on Thursday, April 6th, at 7 pm at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden (and Zoom), the learned perspective of Mr. Jacob Varney, who will be presenting on horticulture as conservation.

One of the more encouraging aspects of the growing interest in gardening with native plants--indeed a driving force behind it--is the practice of "gardening for wildlife." More people are recognizing the value of creating habitat to help preserve biodiversity of animals, particularly when it comes to butterflies, birds, and bees.

However, too many people fail to see that this is also a golden opportunity to help preserve the diversity of plant species or even to think of plants at all when considering biodiversity. There are also wildly differing views on how to best approach species preservation. Many prefer a hands-off approach to rare plant species, reasoning that the possibility of exploitation prevents responsible propagation and sharing of said plants, even though the #1 threat to almost all species is habitat loss. Many others ignore the threat to native genomes by planting cultivars and sister species of native plants, or the threat to native ecosystems posed by planting non-natives or trying to conform to HOA codes. Some actively engage in shaming those who differ from their views.

In this talk, we'll look at a number of ways to think flexibly to enhance and increase biodiversity across the board, using individual plant species to illustrate some of the ways to reach maximal species and habitat preservation. Jacob Varney is a lifelong nature nut and has been growing and studying the plants of Virginia for over 30 years. He is a co-founder and an owning partner of RVA Homegrown Natives, an RVA-based native plant nursery specializing in RVA native species under the mantra "We grow the stuff nobody else does."

He has worked in the field for many years, including volunteering at Lewis Ginter, 3 years at Great Big Greenhouse & Nursery and Meadows Farms, and more than a decade at Sneed's Nursery while founding RVA Homegrown. He has also worked with plants at Sandy's Plants, Ed's Landscaping, and Azalea Aquariums. He spent much of his childhood wandering through the woods and swamps of central Virginia and is always happy for a nice day to enjoy nature. A graduate of Roanoke College, with a Bachelor's in English, he spent those years hiking extensively in the mountains of Virginia and planted a garden on campus.

In addition to botany, he has studied ichthyology and herpetology (he is known as "The Snake Guy" at Sneed's, where he gives an annual talk on the subject) and has dabbled in ornithology, entomology, and malacology. He loves geeking out with people about nature and the natural world and recommends checking out <http://rvahomegrownnatives.com/> and following them on Instagram.

A meet-and-greet at 6:30 pm precedes the presentation at 7:00 pm. The meeting will be live at Lewis Ginter Kelly Education Center and available on Zoom. A short business meeting will follow the speaker.

Register for the Zoom event here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUod-2urT4rEtLUVO6uDHIN3rtkTsoHJP7>



President's Message

Hey folks,

Spring is here. Thanks to those who joined us at our March Lewis Ginter workday and our plant walk at Leakes Mill Park. This seemingly nondescript park has some great spring ephemerals. We encountered carpets of yellow trout lilies (*Erythronium americanum*). Other blooming treats were heartleaf (*Hexastylis sp.*), spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), star chickweed (*Stellaria pubera*), rue-anemone (*Thalictrum thalictroides*), early bluegrass (*Poa cuspidate*), and Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pennsylvanica*). Not yet blooming but cool were crane-fly orchids (*Tipularia discolor*) and puttyroot (*Aplectrum hyemale*). We also saw carpets of common running-cedar (*Diphysastrum digitatum*) and a patch of shining clubmoss (*Huperzia lucidula*).

If you'd like to lead a plant walk, pick a place and some dates and contact me.

Thanks to Catharine Tucker for her write up on the April plant of the month bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). Also, thanks to Vice President Jason Aldrich for taking the lead on our new chapter logo design. This artwork will be used to print chapter swag—stay tuned.

Please note the April meeting at Lewis Ginter is our last meeting until September 2023. We'll have field trips and our display booth at events in the meantime. We'll even have a Pocahontas-branded shade tent for events.

The next LGBG workday is scheduled April 29. This will be our last until fall 2023. Thanks to all who came out for our March 11 workday.

Cheers,

Matt Brooks

Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS March Meeting Minutes, 8 March 2023 at 7:00 PM

The Pocahontas Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

serves the counties of Amelia, Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King William, New Kent, Powhatan, Prince George and the cities of Ashland, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, Petersburg, and Richmond. It meets the first Thursday of September through April at 7:00 PM in the Education and Library Complex of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, unless otherwise stated.

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Presentation:

Alonso Abugattas, the Capital Naturalist presented his seminar titled "Ethnobotany, Floral Folklore and Gardening for Wildlife". In his presentation, he talked about how people - both past and present - relate to and use plants, whether it be for medicine, tools, or food. He discussed the lore behind the names of some native plants as well as how they can be integrated into our gardens to provide resources for wildlife.

Chapter Business Meeting

Members Present: Matt Brooks, Jason Aldrich, Lydia Nichols, Catharine Tucker, and Alli Baird

Members Absent: Richard Moss, Becky Kyle, and Lisa Hamilton

Agenda Items

- April Plant of The Month: Catharine offered to do the write up on Bloodroot.
- March Plant Walks: Rockwood, Pocahontas State Park and John J. Radcliffe were suggested again, along with Robious Landing Park, Tuckahoe Park and Leakes Mill Park. Catharine offered to lead the March plant walk at Leakes Mill on 3/18 and will contact Matt to give the time and meeting location. Matt agreed to lead a walk at Cumberland State Park in April to look at spring ephemerals.
- Jason unveiled the new chapter logo and Alli Baird wrote a check for \$200 in order to pay the artist, Jared Gaines for his work.

New Business

- Matt has researched a website to produce the shade tent with chapter name and logo and expects it will run about \$1000.
- Catharine suggested adding a “Save the Date” to the upcoming events the chapter may want to attend.
- Jason discussed the Punks for Plants event on 10/31 and would like to set up a steering committee to help set it up.
- Catharine brought up having John McGee as a future speaker and gave his contact info to Jason who will check with him.

Action Items

- Matt will work on scheduling the April Plant Walk.
- Matt will reach out to his contact at LGBG regarding their sale in order to secure a spot for the chapter booth.
- Jason will work on a quote for ordering merch with the new chapter logo on it and will reach out to Jared Gaines to see if he can help source vendors for it.

Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM.

Plant of the Month - Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)

by Catharine White Tucker

Spring is here along the James River!

Drifts of Bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, line the ravine slopes in places along Buttermilk Trail in Richmond's James River Park. They are one of the earliest of the spring ephemeral wildflowers, meaning those that bloom, set fruit and die down by the time hardwood trees are fully leafed out.



Bloodroot is often found in moist, hardwood forests, occurring with other spring ephemerals like the Cut-leaf Toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*).

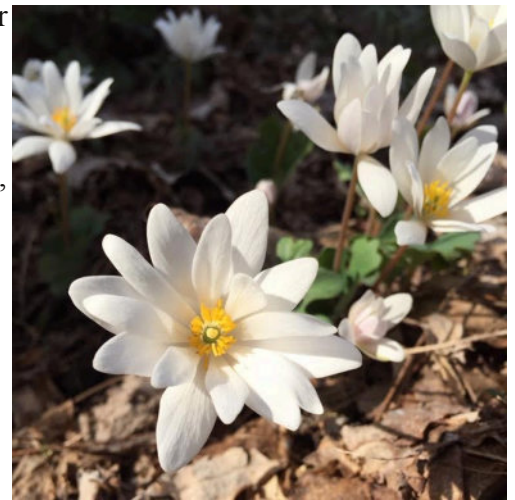
Sanguinaria is a monotypic genus in the Poppy family, *Papaveraceae*. Both the common name Bloodroot and the genus *Sanguinaria* refer to the blood-red sap produced by these plants (sanguis is Latin for blood), most visible in the rhizomes. The sap has been used as a dye and as medicine, but is considered toxic to humans. It's white, poppy-like flowers open early in the day and close by late afternoon. Just a dark cloud passing over the sun in the middle of the day will cause them to drop petals!

The succulent, scalloped leaves are just beginning to unfurl when the plants bloom, not maturing to their full glory until the blooms have passed. Then the ripening capsules stand up above the leaves, and when dry, split and release the small seeds (2-3 mm). Bloodroot produces elaiosomes - a fat-rich appendage attached to each seed which attracts ants. Ants collect the seeds, bring them back to their nests and feed on the elaiosomes. After stripping off the nutrient rich appendages, they discard the bare seed outside their nests. An incredible adaptation for seed dispersal! This tactic is known as myrmecochory, and is common among spring ephemerals.



Now that I know these are blooming along the James and in several other locations, I'm going back out in my woods here to see if the plants found by the Master Naturalist class several years ago are blooming on the hillside across the creek.

(Many thanks to Anne Wright, Nathan Miller and Lily Byrd for permission to use their photos.)



Workday at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens on March 11

We have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Lewis Ginter to use their space for our monthly meetings. Per the MOU, we donate some money, books, and labor. They provide the space at a much-reduced cost. We schedule four 4-hour work days between October and April. For this time they had a bunch of English ivy (*Hedera helix*) for us to tackle. Our goal is to have at least six volunteers per work day. The next LGBG workday is scheduled April 29. Contact Matt Brooks with questions.



Buffet of Flowers in the back yard, some on sticks, and a toad

Richard Moss



1. Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). 2. Common blue violet (*Viola sororia*) with variegated form also known as Confederate violet, (*Viola sororia priceana*). 3. Blue violet, multicolor variant, this one seems confused. 4. Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*). 5. Bluets (*Houstonia caerulea*). 6. Devils walkingstick (*Aralia spinosa*) leaves coming out. 7. Toad (*Anaxyrus americanus*), this one was large and quite colorful.

Announcements

On April 22, 2023, active chapter member and RVA-city employee Jym Coleman is hosting a workday for his Dell Meadow Restoration Project. This project embraces the mission of the VNPS. With limited resources, Jym could use some help from VNPS members. Below are project details from Jym.

This area sits on about an acre of land inside Byrd Park. In the past, this area was used as a dump site filled with various debris. As recently as two years ago, the sight was inundated with invasive plants and mostly swallowed by kudzu. Work has been going on for about a year to remove the debris and begin creating beds and planting some natives. I have been tasked with creating a natural play/learning space. The plan is for about 30% of Dell Meadow to be kept as a wildflower/pollinator area and the remaining area to be for various natural play learning “spaces.” I have been collecting various hardwood pieces from around different parks to turn them into play elements. We are planning to have a “grand opening” on June 1st to celebrate the work that has been done by my Thursday volunteer group from Northstar Academy. Needless to say, there is so much work left to be done, and I can use all the good help I can get. I can always use more native plants, too. Any help the Native Plant Society can offer will be very much appreciated!

Contact Jym at james.coleman@rva.gov if you'd like to help.

Second Annual Native Plant Garden Open House

*See how people have created
habitat for birds, bees, and
butterflies in their own yards!*

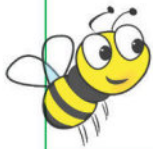
Free! No tickets required.

Saturday, May 13th, 2023

9am to 1pm

Rain or Shine

No pets, please



Leatherflower
(Clematis viorna)

For more information: goingnativerichmond@gmail.com

Second Annual Native Plant Garden Open House

Saturday, May 13, 2023 9am to 1pm

Rain or Shine

See how people have created habitat for birds, bees, and butterflies in their own yards! The gardens use a mix of native and nonnative plants, with an emphasis on planting native plants and removing invasives. Visit any or all of the gardens, in any order. All people are welcome. No pets, please. Nine locations!

For further information, contact Sheryl Smith at goingnativerichmond@gmail.com



ASHLAND

206 Elm Street, Ashland. Established in 2018, this garden has mostly native plants, including perennials, trees, shrubs and grasses. There are buttonbush, American plum, and pagoda dogwood. Also red chokecherry, which is a lovely plant with an unattractive name!



ASHLAND

11615 Cedar Lane, Ashland.
Please use the ample parking spaces across the street at Elmont Elementary School, 12007 Cedar Ln., Ashland.

Established in 2017. This 4/5-acre yard includes 123 native plants in four habitats: dry sun, dry shade, moist sun and moist part-shade. Two styles of rain gardens are present. Plants are marked with tags for easy identification and numerous free plants will be shared. Be aware that 2 beehives are at the rear of the property.



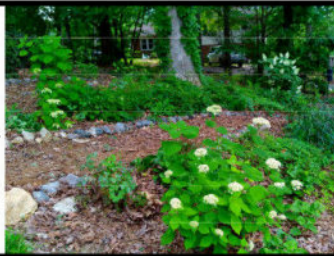
ASHLAND

12157 Melton Place Dr. Ashland. Established: by nature! The meadow and woods on this 4.5 acre property are reverting to their native roots from the original soil seed bank, now reappearing. Grass removal on the front lawn began last year, based on a native design by Beth Farmer. This year, converted lawn gardens include golden alexander, Viburnum dentatum, beautyberry, Spiraea alba and others. The lawn slopes towards a meadow with a small wetland and successional pine woods. Most of the natives now taking root are part of the original soil seed bank that was opened up once the area was protected.

Native Plant Garden Open House, May 13, 9am to 1pm, page 2

FAR WEST END

10325 Waltham Dr. Henrico. NOTE: the entire yard is steeply sloped, with lots of uneven terrain. Established in 2017, this partially wooded garden features over 150 species of native plants. Paths curve through shady areas where woodland phlox, wild geranium, Jacob's ladder, and bloodroot grow along with Trillium and ferns. There are many native shrubs, including sweetshrub, smooth and oakleaf hydrangea, and four species of viburnum. Erosion is being controlled at the street using river oaks, obedient plant, mountain mint, and bee balm. There is a backyard pond which has all native water plants and native fish.



GLEN ALLEN

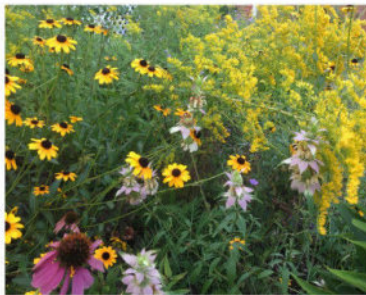
9311 Cason Rd, Glen Allen 23060.

Established in 2021 with a large expansion in 2023! A quarter acre suburban lot with over 50 species of native trees, perennials, and grasses including spicebush, mistflower, asters, goldenrods, and milkweeds. Three pollinator and woodland gardens with established vegetable/herb beds and new native container gardens.



WESTOVER HILLS

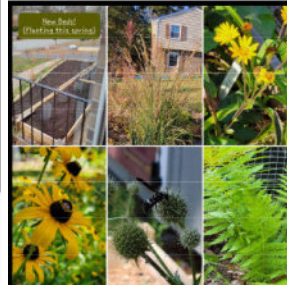
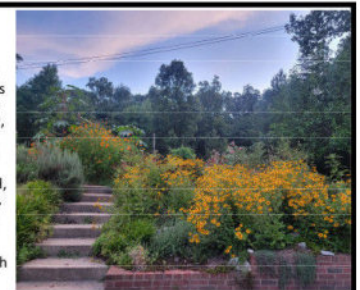
5101 Caledonia Road, Richmond. NOTE: The flagstone paths are uneven in spots, so please watch your step! Established 2019. Entering the front gate, follow flagstone paths through a backyard garden with a large variety of straight species native plants as well as scattered cultivars, mixed with a few non-natives. Despite anaerobic soil and compacted clay, plants are thriving and spreading. The climate varies from overly wet to overly dry, full shade to full sun. There are asters, rudbeckia, cardinal flower, downy lobelia, great blue lobelia, purple love grass, Carolina wild petunia and several varieties of goldenrod. Potentially blooming are blue-eyed grass, heuchera, phlox, green and gold, Jacob's ladder, foamflower, lyre-leaved sage, Carolina geranium, and fringe tree. Other natives include fothergilla, Gro-low sumac, blackhaw and arrowwood viburnum, and black chokeberry. There will be a variety of free potted plants available!



Native Plant Garden Open House, May 13, 9am to 1pm, page 3

CHESTERFIELD

1540 North Mt Bella Road, North Chesterfield.
Established 2017. This 3 acre garden was overrun with invasive plants with over an acre of lawn. Our focus has been on establishing native plants, a food forest, and a large vegetable garden. There is a mixed terrain of dry, wet, full sun and shade. Native shrubs include native azalea, elderberry, buttonbush, chokeberry, American hazelnut, and blueberry. Large sections of native flowers and grasses are established including ironweed, milkweed, big bluestem, river oaks, Rudbeckia maxima, spiderwort, columbine and colonies of fern and spring ephemerals. Native honeysuckle, Virginia creeper and Carolina jessamine sprawl on our fences and trellises. Moss covered paths wind through woods where English ivy, vinca and wisteria removal is ongoing.



MIDLOTHIAN

12330 Little Pond Lane, Midlothian. Established 2019.

Our yard showcases an ongoing transition toward 70% (or more) native plantings. Mature oaks, pines, and tulip poplars anchor recently planted native shrubs and perennials on a sloping site that ranges from deep shade to full sun. In fall 2022 we installed a backyard rain garden/bioswale to help manage stormwater and a small (still early-going) "pocket meadow." In front we continue reducing lawn with new pollinator-focused beds. Signs will identify many plants, and a plant list and information about resources for native plant gardeners will be available on our backyard deck.

BON AIR

8831 Trevillian Rd. North Chesterfield. Established 2017. Features both sunny and shady areas with a small pond with native frogs. In the shade under a chestnut oak, there are natives including Jacob's ladder, pussytoes, and native sedges, green and gold, dwarf crested iris, white wood aster, and partridge-berry. Native shrubs include rhododendron, spice bush and pinxter azaleas. There are eastern redbuds, dogwoods and American holly. Winding paths lead to different planting beds with Maryland meadow beauty, mistflower, partridge pea, obedient plant, mountain mint, bee balm, and oxeye sunflower. Some shrubs are indigo bush, buttonbush, American beautyberry, bottlebrush buckeye, and sweetshrub. Coral honeysuckle, loved by hummingbirds is on a fence and trellis.

