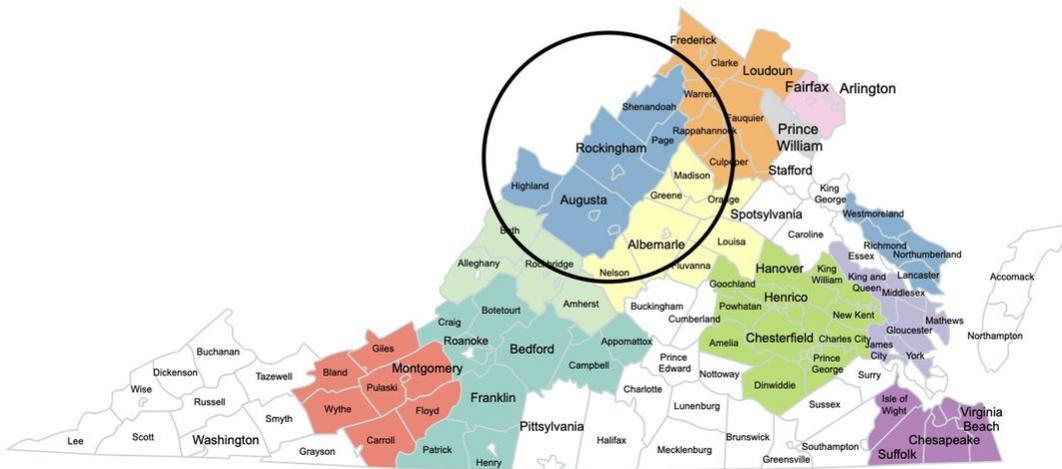


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Shenandoah Chapter, VNPS

September 2022

It's official! On Monday September 12, 2022 the Shenandoah Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society was unanimously reinstated by the VNPS Board!

We have also been approved by the IRS as a tax-exempt public charity under Section 501(c)(3). This means the Shenandoah Chapter can accept tax-deductible donations to fund our projects.

To become a member (if you have not done so already), please go through the state-wide Virginia Native Plant Society website: <https://vnps.org/select-membership-type/>

Join Today!



President

Anna Maria Johnson remembers taking nature walks in rural Iowa with her nature-loving Grandma Alice, who introduced her to Jack-in-the-pulpit, wild mint, Dutchman's britches, and trees that smelled like root beer. Once they saw a mother turtle laying eggs at the edge of a pond—an image that has remained throughout her life. She studied nature writing at the Vermont College of Fine Arts and now teaches in the School of Writing, Rhetoric, and Technical Writing at James Madison University. She is married to local conservation photographer Steven David Johnson.



Treasurer and Plant Specialist

Spending the majority of his life exploring the Rockies and Appalachian Mountains, Isaac Matlock finds true peace when in the wilderness. His admiration for the natural world has led him to a life dedicated to advocating for our native flora. For the past decade, he has led and participated in projects prioritizing restoring and conserving our Ridge and Valley plant communities. Isaac is currently prioritizing volunteer work with several groups including the Shenandoah Valley VNPS Chapter and will continue partnering with various entities that share his commitment to ecologically focused work.



Vice President

Katy Melton Simpson started gardening with fruits and medicinal plants about 15 years ago while homesteading in Southern Virginia. Through learning about the vital role native plants play in ecosystem biodiversity, she fell in love and has been fervently planting natives ever since. Aside from gardening with natives, she enjoys horseback riding, beading, reading, hiking with her family, and most any other outdoor activity. Katy is an instructor of veterinary technology at Blue Ridge Community College and lives just outside of Harrisonburg with her husband, 2 kids, and multiple pets.



Vice President and Membership Coordinator

Lora Steiner's route to native plants began with her interest in organic gardening, which led her to beneficial insects, which took her to native plants and how they support ecology. Her particular area of interest is identifying and removing invasive plant species. When she's not at her day job or ripping out privet, she enjoys long bike rides and cheese. Lora lives in Staunton with her compost worms.



Secretary and Newsletter Coordinator

Elaine Smith is a native Virginian, and other than almost ten years in NOVA, she has been growing happily in the Shenandoah Valley for decades. As a member of the original Shenandoah Chapter of the VNPS she handled the monthly newsletter and was briefly a member of the state board. Her efforts at staving off dementia are concentrated on learning/remembering botanical Latin names. She also enjoys hiking, kayaking and cross-country skiing. Elaine has worked at JMU for 30+ years, and lives in Elkton with her rescue dog Weezie.



Upcoming Event: Plant and Seed Swap

Plant & Seed Swap

Location: Oakdale Park, Shelter 3 in Bridgewater

Date & time: Saturday, October 15, 1-4 p.m.

Bring native plants, cuttings, and seeds you'd like to share from your garden, and swap them for plants you'd like to add.

What do I need to do if I have plants I want to swap? Pot them up, and label them with the common and botanical names, if you can. (See below if you need help IDing your plant.) Please only bring plants free from diseases and invasive pests. Please also clearly label cultivars.*

Can't make it to the swap but have plants you want to share? Email lora.steiner@gmail.com or call 540-908-0897.

What if I don't have anything to swap? Can I still come? Yes! You don't have to bring anything, or take any plants home if you don't want to. [Seven Bends Nursery](#) will also have native plants for sale.

What makes something a "native" plant? Native plants are trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses that grew in Virginia before Europeans arrived. They are adapted to local soil

Native plants provide a host for larva, pollen, nectar, seeds, and habitat for insects, birds and other wildlife. They support the full life cycle of many insects--for example, Monarch butterflies may flock to a butterfly bush (a non-native, invasive shrub) for its pollen, but Monarch caterpillars only recognize milkweed as food. Eighty percent of a hummingbird's diet is insects and spiders. Chickadees will only eat caterpillars when breeding, so need extensive host plants around them to raise their young. It's all connected.

My grandmother planted this beautiful groundcover I have--it's native, right? It might be--or it might not. Many plants that are non-native have been in the U.S. much longer than we realize: Japanese honeysuckle was first planted this side of the Atlantic in 1806. English ivy was introduced in the early 1700s. Even apple trees aren't native to the U.S.; they first arrived with French Jesuits in the 16th century.

Need some help IDing your plant? If you have an Android smartphone, Google Lens can identify plants. On your iPhone, take a picture and tap the info button at the bottom of the screen, then look for the leaf icon. Seek is another free plant ID app. On Facebook, the [Virginia Native Plant Society Group](#) helps with general plant IDs and determining native status.

*The Virginia Native Plant Society encourages wild-type, straight species plants wherever possible. Read their statement and find more resources on cultivars and the ecological benefits of cultivars vs. straight species [here](#).

Membership Meeting

Stay after the plant and seed swap for a short membership meeting from 4 - 5pm! We'll introduce you to our current projects and member benefits.

Please send any items for the newsletter to Elaine Smith ([smithes at jmu.edu](mailto:smithes@jmu.edu)) before the 10th of October.

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