

[View this email in your browser](#)



Shenandoah Chapter VNPS

[Visit our website](#)



Mark and Betty Gatewood report that they have walked past this 12-inch diameter butternut on the fire road without knowing what it was. Betty found some nuts and they looked up and saw the clusters that characterize butternut. Even the forest health contact at SNP didn't know about this tree.

Photo by Betty Gatewood.



John Holden, photo by Eunice Sill

Eunice Sill

John Holden led group members to explore the wonders of Maple Flats on October 4. John's knowledge and enthusiasm were boundless as he led the group through the landscape dotted with man-made ponds, vernal pools, an empty sinkhole pond, and Spring Pond. Not only did he find numerous red spotted salamanders and a marbled salamander, but he was also able to point out three rare native plants that were blooming: Virginia Sneezeweed (*helenium virginicum*), Nodding Ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthescernua*), and Striped Gentian (*Gentiana villosa*).

More photos [here](#).

Hankey Mountain Update

Lynn Cameron

Together 35 volunteers, in partnership with the Forest Service, made a concerted effort to wipe out Mile-a-Minute from Hankey Mountain. After the Forest Service sprayed the patch with a pre emergent herbicide in May, we gathered on June 3 to pull tens of thousands of MM vines on a several-acre patch. This was the first time many of us have tackled Mile-a-Minute, and several of us have been wondering what the patch looks like now. Did we miss some? If so, how many? Did more MM vines germinate after our pull? Did our efforts make a difference?

Chris Bowlen, Malcolm and I drove up to the patch on Thursday October 5 to check it out. As we neared the site, I said, "This is like opening a Christmas present; we have no idea what we will find."

When we arrived at the site, we parked and walked along the forest road. We could not find a single MM along the road. Our hopes rose. Then we hiked through the upper section above the road looking for the vines and blue berry-like seeds. Last year at this time, the patch was loaded with vines and seeds. We



Then we made our way into the steep area below the road. This is where the vines had covered the trees with dense growth last year. We didn't find a single MM within 100' of the road. We moved on down the mountain to the lower half of the downhill patch. Finally, we found a few MMs among native vines. All three of us scoured the patch for a couple of hours. We found a few more isolated plants which we pulled. Some had seed that was only partially developed and still green. We are hoping it's too late in the year for the green seeds to mature and become viable. Malcolm managed to find 2 mature blue seeds. We bagged them and carried them out. HaHa!



Malcolm found 2 ripe MM seeds.



Native vines on the right. MM with immature green berries on the left. We hope they will not mature and become viable.

I hope all of you are as pleasantly surprised as we were. This was the best Christmas present ever!

along the Wild Oak Trail and throughout the trail network into special natural areas on Shenandoah Mountain where it would destroy natural communities and biodiversity. After our site visit, I'd say we kicked Mile-a-Minute's butt off Hankey Mountain.

There is no doubt that our efforts made a difference, but we wonder if the drought discouraged seeds from sprouting and new sprouts from surviving. The soil was very dry at the site, and the MM has a weak and shallow root system.

This was a tremendous team effort involving PATC, Virginia Native Plant Society - Shenandoah Chapter, Headwaters Master Naturalists, Blue Ridge Prism, Friends of Shenandoah Mountain, and the Forest Service. Many of us hoped our efforts would be successful, but feared this would be an exercise in futility - like Sisyphus trying to roll a large rock up the mountain, only to have it roll backdown. What we saw on Thursday indicates that our pull, in combination with the pre-emergent spray, (and possibly aided by drought conditions), was a huge success. As Margaret Mead said, "Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has."

I want to thank each of you for your role in making the Mile-a-Minute pull such a resounding success. We learned a lot about this non-native invasive that is new to the Shenandoah Mountain area, and we had fun, too!

We will go back to the site and look for shoots next spring. Seeds in the seed bank can germinate for several years, and we want to stay ahead of any new growth. A small crew should be able to pull any that emerge.

Glad to be the bearer of good news!

Seed Saving Tips

Lora Steiner



Transforming your space from grass or invasives to native plants can be costly and time-consuming. Seed saving is one cost-effective way to help expand your own garden and share with others.

“If you propagate native plants from seeds, expect failures,” says Will Shaw. Shaw was the main presenter at a workshop and swap in early October cosponsored by

Key things to keep in mind as you're collecting and saving seeds, per Shaw:

Make sure you have permission. (Plant and seed harvesting is not permitted on public lands.)

When a seed is viable, the husk darkens and dries out. Some seed pods, like milkweed, will split.

Marking tape can be useful for remembering which seeds you want to harvest so that when it's no longer in bloom, you're still able to collect the seed.

Most importantly, don't forget to mark what you've collected, so you don't—in Shaw's words—have to rely on your aging, failing memory.

Nearly all native seeds require cold stratification, so can be sown in the fall or early winter, or stored in the fridge until spring.

Berries, fruits and nuts generally need to stay damp, so Shaw advises storing them with a damp paper towel, or with vermiculite or peat moss. (Note: this includes paw paw seeds.) Pulp inhibits germination—birds' digestive systems clean out the pulp and leave them ready to sprout—so you'll have to clean that off to best prepare them.

Shaw says to not worry very much about planting chaff with seeds, as chaff doesn't usually have inhibitors.

If you're growing seed in pots, store the pots outside over winter and don't use too small a pot. Make sure you take precautions for wildlife—squirrels love uprooting things—and water them regularly through the winter if they aren't getting other moisture.

Shaw's final bit of advice: If you Google, you'll get 900 different ways to collect, store and propagate seeds. Try what you want, he says.

"If it works, it works."



VNPS Annual Meeting

The Virginia Native Plant Society annual meeting was held October 6-8 at the Virginia Institute for Marine Science in Gloucester. More than 70 percent of

spoke on Saturday morning, saying that plants play an important role in the strategy to revitalize the Chesapeake Bay.

The event included the usual components—business meeting, electing new leadership, picking up VNPS swag—as well as field trips to local parks and preserves. Outings this year included Dragon Run, Grafton Ponds Natural Area Preserve, the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, Beaverdam Park, and more.

Virginia's eco-regions include the ridge and valley, Blue Ridge mountains, Piedmont, and coastal plains, and one of the most interesting parts of any tour is to see both the similarities and differences. The bald cypress tree is common throughout the coastal plain but not native to the ridge and valley, while other plants like heartleaf, arrow-arum, Maryland golden aster, rose mallow, and bloodroot (all plants seen on our outings) are native to much of the commonwealth.

New leaders elected at Annual Meeting

Society members and friends gathered in early October at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester. In addition to the exciting speakers and field trips, a slate of candidates was also elected to serve in a leadership capacity for the Society. Take a moment to read through these biographies and learn about the dedicated volunteers who are passionate about native plants and the VNPS mission of furthering the appreciation and conservation of our native plants and habitats.

Unless noted, all terms expire in Nov. 2026.=incumbents*

Second Vice President:

Sally Anderson*

Sally Anderson has been a native plant enthusiast for many years and has served as Secretary, President and Second Vice President on the state board in addition to holding several offices on the Piedmont Chapter board. She has been the VNPS representative on the board of the Flora of Virginia Project since 2013 and co-teaches the botany section and leads a field trip for the Shenandoah Master Naturalists. She first learned botany in Texas where she was raised. These days she likes hiking with frequent plant stops, mostly in the mountains of Virginia and in the West Virginia highlands. She volunteers at the Native Plant Trail at Blandy Experimental Farm as well as Sky Meadows State Park.



Horticulture Chair: Laura Beaty*

Laura Beaty has been working outdoors since she was old enough to hold a rake. As the current VNPS Horticulture Chair and Potowmack Chapter Propagation Committee Chair, Laura manages the



native plant beds of the Potowmack Chapter at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria, growing and selling plants. Laura also volunteers to help restore nearby parks, and rescues native plants from development. She is a popular speaker on native plant-insect relationships and has presented the "Native Plant" component for Green Spring Garden's Master Gardener candidates. She worked for the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the National Parks Conservation Association.

Secretary: Anna Finch



Anna Finch learned about the wonders of native plants at Huntley Meadows Park where she volunteered and worked. She is a Virginia and Oregon Master Naturalist. She loves to travel and hike with her husband. She also loves spring wildflowers especially *Claytonia virginica* (Spring Beauty). She resides in Staunton and is a Park Ranger at Grand Caverns in Grottoes. She recently completed her Certificate of Applied Positive Psychology where she is interested in encouraging others to connect to nature and themselves.

Fundraising Chair: Emilia Godwin

[To fill an unexpired term ending November, 2024]

Emilia Godwin comes to VNPS with more than 20 years experience in fundraising, development, communications, and nonprofit management, gained in a variety of cause-driven



organizations. Born in Bulgaria, she moved to the U.S. in 1995.

She has master's degrees in business, history and cultural anthropology; she has been educating herself in horticulture, and growing native plants for many years. In addition to VNPS, Emilia is a member of the American Horticultural Society. She is married and has a daughter, Audrey, a sophomore at Christopher Newport University.

Treasurer: Melissa Korzuch



Melissa Korzuch is a graduate of Penn State University and has a degree in horticulture business. She spent the early part of her career as a director of a nonprofit in Washington, D.C., and currently works for Prince William County. She is the president and treasurer of the Prince William SPCA. She was active in Girl Scout leadership for many years. Melissa lives in Woodbridge with her husband Bill, daughter Natalie (currently a freshman at Penn State), and rescued Maine Coon cat, Roary.

Conservation Chair:

Barbara Ryan*

Barbara Ryan has devoted herself to conservation and environmental issues since retiring from her 40 year professional career in 2018. In addition to degrees in economics, she holds a masters in sustainable landscape design and is a Virginia Certified Horticulturist, certified Level 2 Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional, and certified Fairfax Master Naturalist. Through her sustainable landscape design firm, Barbara designs native landscapes



(See VNPS leaders, page 12)

Our chapter member Anna Finch was elected to the secretary position.

Botanical Art and Nature Journaling Workshop with Betty Gatewood

Katy Melton Simpson, photos by Anna Maria Johnson



On September 23rd, [Betty Gatewood](#) presented a combined [Botanical Art and Nature Journaling Workshop](#). Betty's quick smile and easy laugh made all

explaining the difference between botanical art (more detailed, accurate, and scientific) and nature journaling (quicker, less detailed, more about the feeling or memories of a place or plant). Betty proceeded to show some of the supplies she uses to sketch and paint out in nature and then explained some of the basic techniques. All participants were given paper samples and supplies to use to get started during the workshop. As participants practiced, Betty offered support and advice. She also brought numerous books on the topics for participants to peruse and discussed good sources of information and ways to learn more. Participants went home with items from the event including watercolor paper samples, a [Quickstart Guide to Nature Journaling](#) from [John Muir Laws](#), and other goodies. Betty is excellent at making participants feel welcome and capable and these art forms accessible. It was a fun and informative event!



Upcoming Events

We have a number of events coming up for you! Be sure to keep an eye on our [Chapter Events Page](#)!

Iara's talks will be offered the first Wednesday of September, October, and November at 5:30pm. Each of Iara's 45-minutes talks will be followed by a Q&A session. The last series topic will be:

- November: Designing Landscapes with Native Plants- An overview of some of the considerations when planning out your own native plant garden, and when to ask for expert help.

[Register Here](#) for the fall webinar series. Please register at least 6 hours before the webinar to allow us ample time to get the link out to all attendees. Only register once! One \$10 registration fee gives you access to all three webinars.

And on October 22nd our second annual Fall plant swap and sale will take place. This [free event will take place on October 22nd from 2-4pm at Oakdale Park](#) (shelter #3) in Bridgewater, VA. After the swap, we will hold a short chapter meeting to update on pertinent information, vote on bylaws, and officially vote on the board for the upcoming year.

You do not have to bring plants to swap in order to come! The chapter will have a selection of plants for sale, there are often leftovers from the swap, and Little Bluestem Nursery will be at the swap/sale again this year!

Chapter Board

We need to officially elect a board! The full chapter needs to vote on approving the bylaws as well. This process will start at our October plant swap/sale and meeting and official voting will be conducted online, so no trip to the polls is required. Barbara Brothers and Ivy Makia have agreed to serve on the nominating committee (thank you!) along with Katy Melton Simpson. If you would like to make a nomination, please [contact Katy](#).

Everyone on the current interim board who served for the first year is willing to continue serving.

As we've worked together this past year, our underlying goals have always been collaboration, transparency, and fun—we're grateful to everyone who has

input as we continue to forge ahead.

From the interim board: Great big thanks to our 157 dues-paying members! We literally would not have this chapter without you. In fact, just a little over a year ago, we didn't. In summer 2022, a handful of folks set a goal to find a critical mass of 35 people to get the chapter going again after several years of dormancy, and now, here we are!

Opportunities to Volunteer

Outreach to Garden Centers

As part of the Plant Ridge & Valley Natives Initiative (see bottom of letter for details), Barbara Brothers has been busy working this year with several garden centers to encourage them to stock more native plants and to gently educate them about invasive species. Thanks to Eunice, Kelly, Susan, and others who have reached out individually to local garden centers also. If you would be willing to help Barbara with the work of partnering with more garden centers to encourage them to carry more natives, and to affirm them when they do, she would be glad for more help. We plan to provide signage with the Ridge & Valley Natives logo to indicate regionally native species and want to have volunteers check periodically for accuracy in displays. Contact Barbara by email at barbarabroth@gmail.com or by phone at 540-255-4032.

The Plant Guide, 2nd edition

In just a few months since publication of the plant guide Plant Ridge & Valley Natives: A Guide for Gardeners, we have sold most of the 2,000 copies we printed. Before our next printing, we'd like to make some small edits. If you have found any errors or if you have suggestions, please share them with Anna Maria at shenandoahchapter@gmail.com. Anna Maria will manage the revision process in InDesign, and Barbara will organize the volunteers and distribution. We plan to use Mid-Valley Press again for the printing since they did a great job with our first edition. Isaac has volunteered to manage the photos as he did on the first printing.

Linda Matkins is interested in organizing volunteers to support monarch butterflies and waystations. If you have ideas and time you would like to contribute to that effort, please contact Linda Matkins directly: linda.matkins@gmail.com

Leading a Walk, Talk, or Workshop

If you are willing to lead a native plant identification walk or other type of activity sometime in the next several months, please reach out to Katy Melton Simpson who coordinates our chapter events: katymeltonsimpson@gmail.com

Thank you to our volunteers!



Plant Ridge and Valley Native Plants!

The *Plant Ridge & Valley Natives* guide has received wonderful from individuals and our partner organizations. We are planning now to revise this winter and release a second edition in spring 2024. We raised \$15,000 to support the first printing and will need about that much again to pay for the next printing. Sales have allowed us to raise some seed money for the second edition, but we will need to do some additional fundraising and another round of pre-orders, too.

During fall 2023, the state-wide native plants campaigns will focus on encouraging folks to plant more native trees and shrubs.

counties included in the Shenandoah Chapter but also six more: The Virginia

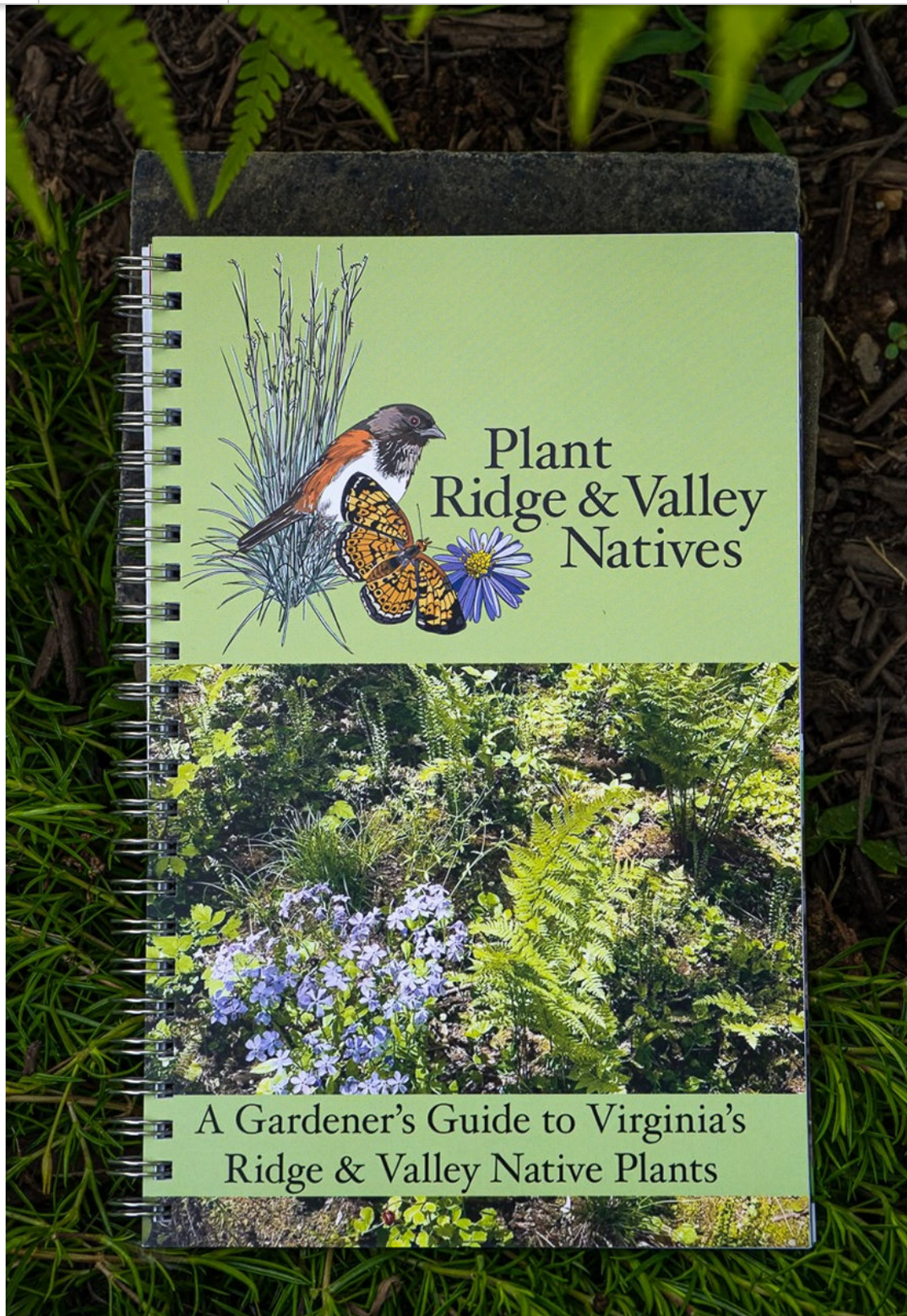
Ridge & Valley (also called the “Mountain” region in state publications): Frederick, Clarke, Shenandoah, Warren, Page, Rockingham, Highland, Augusta, Bath, Rockbridge, and Alleghany.

It is part of a state-wide effort to market native plants for home gardening and landscapes. This effort originated under the leadership of Virginia Witmer from the Department of Environmental Quality in the Coastal Zone as part of the Chesapeake Bay clean-up efforts, and has spread state-wide due to its usefulness and popularity. Learn more at www.plantvirginianatives.org

The plant guide is available for [order online for \\$15/copy](#) (including sales tax and shipping).

Follow this effort on the associated Facebook group and [page](#) – Plant Ridge and Valley Native Plants.

DONATE



Our Partners (whose pre-order contributions supported the cost of our first printing)

August 2018

Blue Ridge PRISM

Blue Ridge Wildlife Center

Central Valley Master Gardeners

Edith J. Carrier Arboretum

Friends of the Middle River

Foundation of the State Arboretum of Virginia (State Farm at Blandy)

Headwaters Master Naturalists

John C. Myers Elementary School

Plains Elementary School

Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners

Valley Conservation Council

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

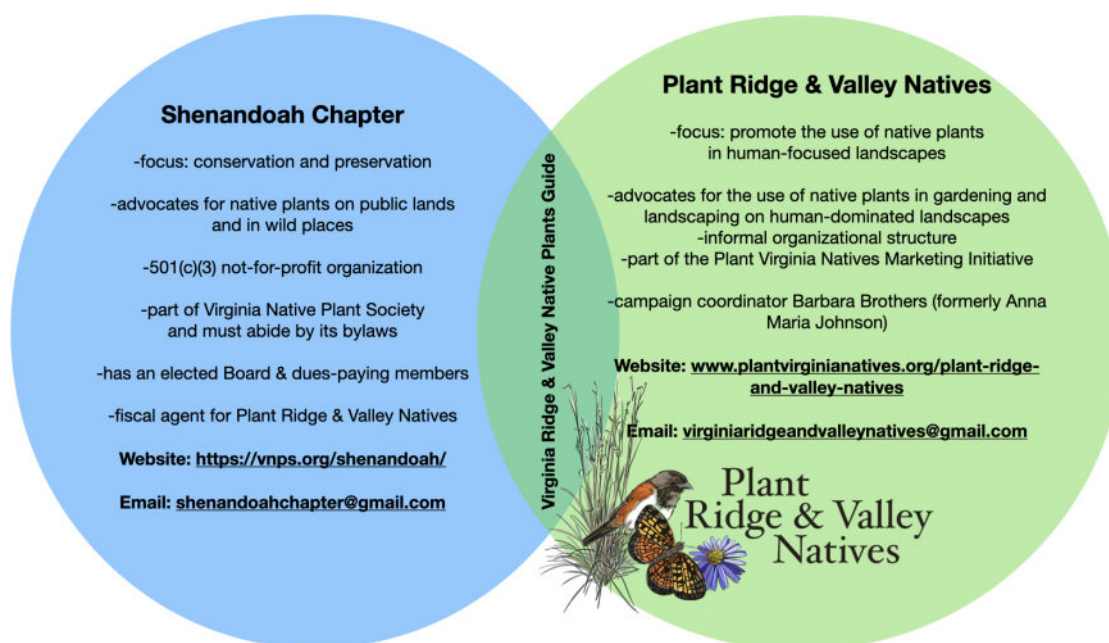
Virginia Museum of Natural History Foundation

Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS)

Piedmont Chapter, VNPS

Shenandoah Chapter, VNPS

In case you are wondering, “what’s the relationship between Shenandoah Chapter and Plant Ridge & Valley Natives?” — here is a visual aid.



Shenandoah Chapter is part of the Virginia Native Plant Society and is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization with an elected board and a set of bylaws. VNPS works on

shenandoahchapter@gmail.com. The current president is Anna Maria Johnson.

Shenandoah Chapter serves as the fiscal agent for the **Plant Ridge & Valley Natives Marketing Initiative**. The Plant Ridge & Valley Natives marketing initiative is an informal partnership between public, private, and government agencies all working to promote native plants in gardens, public spaces, landscapes, garden centers, and elsewhere. Learn more about Virginia's regional native plants marketing initiative at <https://www.plantvirginiannatives.org/virginia-regional-native-plant-campaigns-guides>.

During the past two years, Anna Maria has served as the coordinator for the Plant Ridge & Valley Natives marketing initiative, but now Barbara Brothers is taking on that role. Anna Maria will continue to help Barbara with the plant guide and other activities, but Barbara will be the lead contact person for garden-related activities. You can reach her at barbarabroth@gmail.com.

Please send [Elaine Smith](#) any items for the next newsletter!



Shenandoah Chapter
Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

If you were forwarded this newsletter, you can subscribe [here](#).

