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Shenandoah Chapter VNPS

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Happy New Year!



Thanks to Rae Kasdan for the photo above of milkweed seedpods.

Don't they look like fireworks?!

*Send your native plant photos for possible inclusion in future newsletters to shenandoahchapter@gmail.com

January Musings

Mark Gatewood, photos by Betty Gatewood



When the autumn leaves are down and brown, we start looking for the pinstripe leaves of puttyroot, *Aplectrum hyemale*. Its strategy is to put up a single leaf over the winter to mine the sun's energy without interference from leafy trees. In late spring, the leaf withers and the flower stalk appears. The flowers then become brown seed pods on a 12-inch stalk. The rather unlovely common name refers to a mucilaginous substance derived from the corms. *Aplectrum* describes the lack of a nectar spur on the flower and *hyemale* describes the winter emergence.



The seed pods are full of dust-sized seeds, but puttyroot also reproduces underground via its corms. With all our attention to puttyroot, we have yet to see flowers. That will be our mission this summer. Until then, we'll enjoy the overwintering leaves as a sign that spring will prevail.

Imagining a Virginia Without Invasive Plants, A Statewide Future Search Strategic Planning Workshop

Isaac Matlock



Figure 1. Brainstorming session that resulted in a “brain map” detailing trends related to invasive plants in Virginia.

Our chapter treasurer and Virginia Native Seed Project coordinator, Isaac Matlock, was invited to attend the Blue Ridge PRISM Future Search workshop. The purpose of this three-day event was to identify and launch a series of new statewide initiatives and actions plans to make significant progress against invasive plants. This workshop also focused on the role that advocating for the use and increased accessibility of native plants.

“I feel that this event was extremely valuable. Although, it can be overwhelming to really think about how much work needs to be down to reduce invasive species in Virginia, I felt that even the action of getting all these organizations in the same place made a small difference. I felt that we all left there as one mind and a unified voice across all the participating individuals and their associated organizations.”

For more information go to this [link](#).

NEWS AND ACTION ITEMS

- The Shenandoah Chapter has contributed \$500 to the Natural Area Preserves Fund. Find more information [here](#).
- The Chapter budget is available for members to see. Please email shenandoahchapter@gmail.com to request a copy.
- James Madison University is the first university in the state to earn a Virginia Pollinator-Smart Program [Certification](#).
- Please consider lending support to these two legislative items:
 - Supporting Conservation Landscaping in HOAs. [HB28](#).
 - Building Native Habitats at Federal Facilities Act. The bill will protect pollinators, conserve water, and reduce pesticide usage near federal buildings and federal government facilities. More info [here](#).

Events

We have a number of events coming up for you! Plant sales, tours, walks, webinars and more! Be sure to keep an eye on our [Chapter Events Page](#)!

Upcoming **Webinar**: Native Gardening 101 with Ivy, Saturday, February 17th @ 10am.

Winter **Botanical Art and Nature Journaling Workshop** with Betty Gatewood. Saturday, February 3rd (rain/snow date of February 10th). This event requires a registration fee to cover the cost of supplies and to secure your spot. [More information and a registration link here](#).

may see even some shrub plants in bloom on Saturday, April 20th. This free walk is limited to 6 participants due to the sensitive nature of the area. [More information and a registration link here.](#)

Plant Sale: We will be participating in Earth Day Staunton again this year. This fun, family-friendly event will be on April 20th. We will have plants for sale at this event (and will be soliciting plant donations!).

Guided walk at Maple Flats with John Holden to see azaleas in bloom and other spring flora on Sunday, April 21st. This free walk is limited to 12 participants. [More information and a registration link here.](#)

Guided walk at Madison Run fire road with Mark and Betty Gatewood to (hopefully) see lupines in bloom among other spring botanical beauties on Saturday, April 27th (rain date May 4th). This free walk is limited to 12 participants. [More information and a registration link here.](#)

A **Spring Native Plant Tour** is in the works! The tentative date for this year's tour is Sunday, April 28th to highlight spring ephemerals. If you would like to be a host site for the tour, please fill out [this Google Form](#). We may plan a late summer tour as well. Be on the lookout for more information about plant tours as we head into

Summer Equinox guided walk at Madison Run fire road with the Gatewoods to see early summer flora on Thursday, June 20th (rain date Thursday, June 27th). This free walk is limited to 12 participants. [More information and a registration link here.](#)

Other events in the works:

- The statewide VNPS annual meeting will be held in our area this year, in late September or early October. Stay tuned for more details.
- Fall plant swap/sale in Bridgewater, VA.
- Fall webinar series with Dr. Iara Lacher.

We would love to schedule more guided walks and need people to lead them! If you are willing to lead a walk (Cowbane, anyone?), please [email Katy](#) to get something scheduled. All you have to do is let us know when, where, and if we need a sign-up to limit participants and we can put it on the schedule. Thanks for sharing your plant knowledge with the community!

Native Plant Production Webinar

Katy Melton Simpson



On December 16th our own Isaac Matlock presented a webinar for the Chapter Native: Plant Production: Collection, Storage, and Propagation. This informative and free webinar started with information regarding The Clifton Institute and its Native Seed Pilot Project. This grant-funded project, led by Isaac, is working to collect local ecotype seeds from a variety of native plants and partnering with farmers to grow the seeds with the end goal of eventually having these seeds available commercially.

The webinar was a detailed how-to for anyone interested in collecting seeds or just starting to grow native seeds for the first time. Isaac covered the necessary supplies, check-lists to help plan ahead, protocols for how to collect different types of seeds, and how to clean and store seeds. Next, Isaac discussed germination strategies, how he determines when to sow various species, and seed starting mixes. The webinar lasted just under two hours and is available for free on our chapter website [here](#).



Plant Ridge and Valley Natives Campaign Update

Last Spring, we had 2000 copies of our regional guide book, Plant Ridge & Valley Natives, printed by Mid-Valley Press in Verona VA, and the response was amazing. We were thrilled to hear the accolades and to know that the book was guiding

The regional Plant Ridge & Valley Natives campaign covers not only the five counties included in the Shenandoah Chapter, but also six more. The Virginia Ridge & Valley (also called the “Mountain” region in state publications) includes Frederick, Clarke, Shenandoah, Warren, Page, Rockingham, Highland, Augusta, Bath, Rockbridge, and Alleghany counties.

Our campaign is part of a state-wide effort to promote native plants for home gardening and landscapes. This effort originated under the leadership of Virginia Witmer from the VA 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. To learn more, go to: www.plantvirginianatives.org

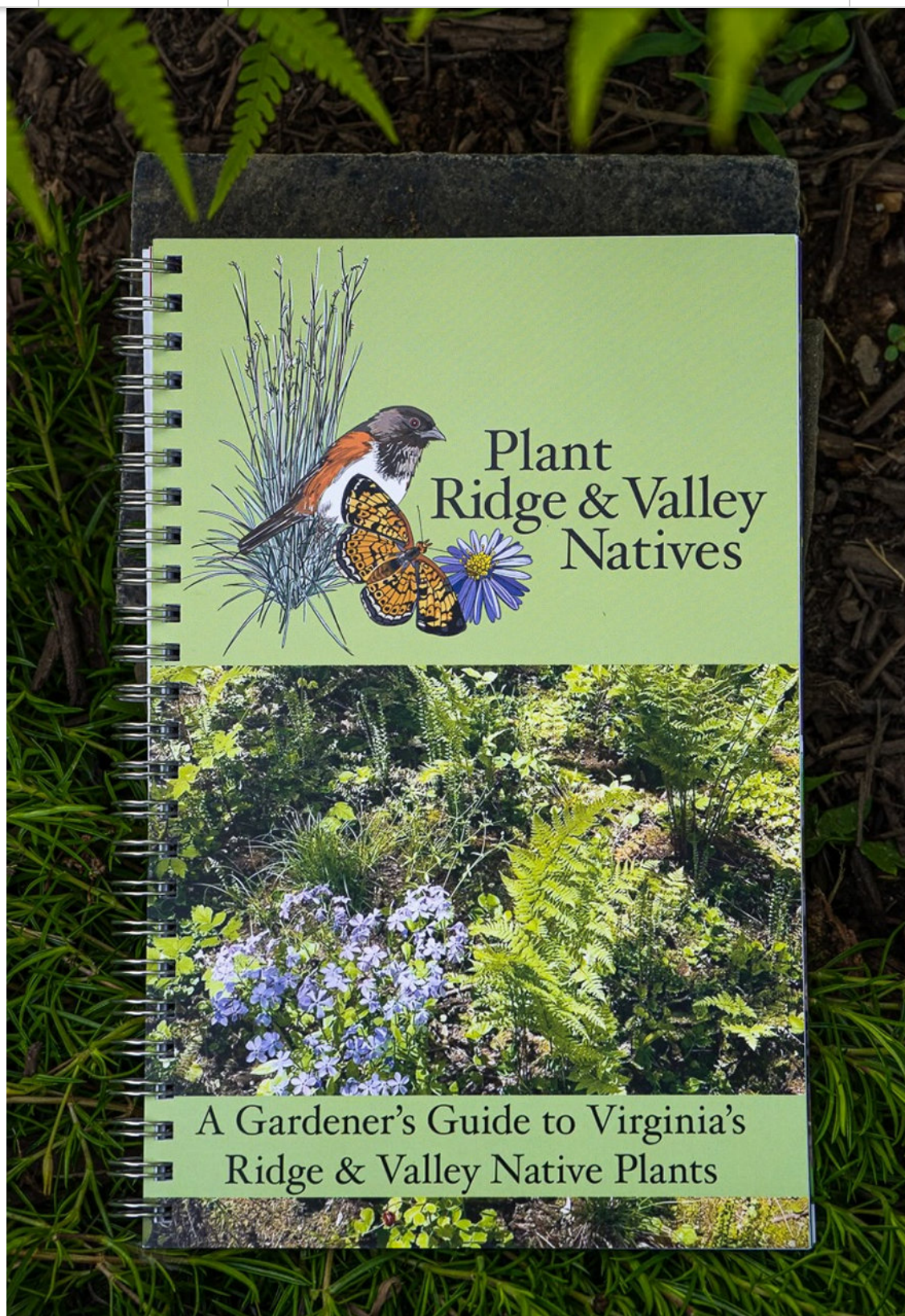
This fall and throughout 2024, the state-wide native plants campaign is focusing on encouraging folks to plant more native trees and shrubs.

<https://www.plantvirginianatives.org/virginia-native-trees>

If you would like to help with any aspect of this project, please contact Barbara: barbarabroth@gmail.com or by phone at 540-255-4032.

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

DONATE



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



Shenandoah Chapter
Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places

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