

[View this email in your browser](#)



Shenandoah Chapter VNPS

[Visit our website](#)

Can you guess?

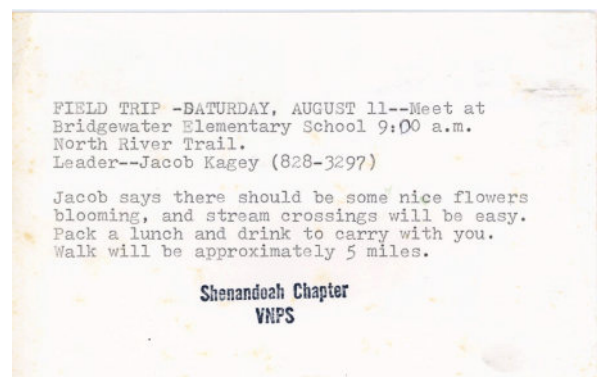




Thanks to Rae Kasdan for the above photos of her winter garden.
To check if you guessed correctly see the end of the newsletter.

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

Mark Gatewood

**Mark your calendars! See below for more details.**

- Spring Garden Tour HOSTS NEEDED!
- Harrisonburg Pollinator Event March 23rd.
- Garlic Mustard Pull, Hone Quarry, April 13th.
- John Holden walk April 21st TIME CHANGE. Will start at 1pm.

Botanical Art and Nature Journaling Workshop with Betty Gatewood

Elaine Smith



Betty Gatewood showing us a (non-native but still beautiful) witch hazel on the grounds of Blue Ridge Community College. Photo by Elaine Smith.

On Saturday February 3, 2024, Betty Gatewood again graced members with her talent and expertise in botanical art and nature journaling. She encouraged participants to “see, hear, feel, smell and taste” their surroundings. We spent four hours full of wonders, and are deeply grateful to Betty for sharing her time with us.

News and Action Items

- Art Exhibition: Riverine by Steven David and Anna Maria Johnson. Bridgewater College. More info [here](#).
- February is time to sow! From The Flora of Virginia project. [Link](#).
- Please consider lending support to these two legislative items:

- **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](#)!

Pollinators in Your Yard Saturday, March 23, 2024, 1-4 pm, Ice House Building in downtown Harrisonburg. Several chapter members will be presenting and/or attending. This free event includes updates on the Harrisonburg's Pollinator Program, as well as informative talks on creating pollinator-friendly spaces and protecting pollinators from invasive species and pesticides; education tables/interactive displays to learn the best types of plants to attract pollinators, ways to get involved with local community science projects, potential funding sources for pollinator habitat and more. There will also be children's activities and a pollinator Bingo card and a chance to win prizes.

Guided walk near Maple Flats with John Holden to see special wildflowers and maybe even some swamp pinks in bloom on Saturday, April 13th. This free walk is limited to 6 participants due to the sensitive nature of the area. [More information and a registration link here](#).

Garlic Mustard Pull, Hone Quarry, April 13. Join with the Headwaters Master Naturalists. More information soon!

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

[A registration link here.](#)

A **Spring Native Plant Tour** is in the works! HOSTS NEEDED! 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 Gardening 101 Webinar with Ivy Makia

Katy Melton Simpson

On Saturday, February 17th, Ivy Makia presented the first in a season three-part webinar series called Native Gardening 101. This series provides information, tips, and tricks that would be useful for people just getting started with gardening and those wanting to switch from conventional to gardening more with native plants. Ivy's first webinar, titled "Jumpstart Your Growing Season" was just that! Information on all the things to be thinking about or doing now: choosing a planting site, picking plants, preparing beds, mulching, watering, and more! This interesting and

recording and slide deck were emailed to all participants after the event for reference. The next two webinars will be "Summer Maintenance Dos and Don'ts" on June 8th and "Fall Maintenance & Planning Ahead" on September 7th. One \$10 registration fee gains you access to all three webinars (Zoom attendance or recorded). Contact [Katy](#) with any questions.

What about Peat??

Thanks to Barbara Brothers for planting the "seed" for this article.

You might wonder what peat moss has to do with native plants, but peat moss is a component of rare bog ecosystems which are harmed when the peat is harvested.

Many decades ago, purchasing at least one large plastic-covered bale of peat moss was part of the spring gardening prep ritual for many of us. I'm not sure when I stopped, but I think it was when I started home composting about 35 years ago. I never really liked the process of getting the peat to absorb water, but I had no idea of the environmental ramifications of using peat moss.

So, what is the environmental impact of harvesting peat for all of those nurseries around the world who prefer it as a primary potting ingredient? Just knowing that peat is the largest natural store of CO₂ on our planet, storing twice as much as all the trees and other growing plants combined, should be enough to convince us to not be supporting its harvest by using it as a growing medium. Add to that fact that it takes approximately 1000 years for one square meter of peat to grow and replace that plastic-covered bale, then we can understand why it has been designated as "a precious, non-renewable resource" by climate scientists. See the January/February issue of [The American Gardener](#) for the article "Looking Beyond Peat" by Gail Hudson.

What can we do as gardeners? We can talk to our nurseries when we are making purchases of potted plants or growing mediums, letting them know our concerns and our reasons for not wanting to use peat moss. And we can use alternatives to peat moss when we are "potting up" or preparing planting beds. Compost, homemade or purchased, is a reliable and available first choice. There are also peat-

products, vermiculite, perlite and coconut coir.

Also check out the product called [Pitt moss](#) for peat free potting mixes.

Peat moss is often used when propagating new seeds of native plants. When propagating native plant seeds, be sure not to use peat moss as harvesting it actually harms native plants elsewhere.

Let's all do what we can to help our natural environment when we have the knowledge and the opportunity!

Thank you to our volunteers!

Spring is Coming!



Lupine, Michelle Gooden



Yellow corydalis (*Corydalis flavula*), Mark Gatewood



Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*), Mark Gatewood

In Rae's photos at the top are ironweed and little bluestem.

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



Shenandoah Chapter
Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places

Copyright (C) 2024 Shenandoah Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society.
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](#).

