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Rain, Glistening Rain:



Polemonium reptans, Jacob's Ladder, by Michelle Gooden.

*Send your native plant photos for possible inclusion in future newsletters to

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Join us for a potluck social and guided walks on June 9th! See the events section below for details.

Spring Plant Tour: Habitat Restoration and Native Plant Gardening in Augusta County



By Anna Maria Johnson

Great big thanks to our members Carol and George Taylor and Barbara Brothers for inviting folks to tour their native plant landscapes in Augusta County on April 28th. Each site demonstrated to visitors different ways to work with nature to create a

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The Taylors provided photos of what their land looked like when they bought it in 1992 – fields of grass depleted by years of agriculture and devoured by deer – in contrast to the magnificent shrublands, woods, and meadows we see today (still nibbled by deer!). With Carol, George, and their lovely helpers, we toured the grounds to see the more than 55 species of trees (up from only five species in the 1990s). We heard songbirds, saw pollinators, and identified an assortment of plants and trees. Carol shared her garden philosophy inspired by the book *Noah's Garden*.

For example, she explained how they have managed to remove invasive autumn olive without the use of chemicals by cutting them back to the ground, then repeatedly picking off the new green foliage each week until the shrubs gave up the ghost. She also showed us how she deters deer from her young plantings: using metal stakes as fence posts, she and her friends strung three rows of monofilament (fishing line) all around the newest meadow plot. Apparently, the deer can't see this fence and get confused enough by it to not jump over it. She supplements the monofilament fencing with home-made sprays containing water, soap, hot pepper, and stink. So far, the deer have not touched her newest meadow. One of my favorite stories was about how she and her helper planned to remove a bed of non-native oregano in order to replace it with native plant species, but they paused when they found a big, yellow-spotted salamander using it as a home. Although it is generally a good idea to replace non-native plants with native species, it is wise to make an exception when a non-native plant is clearly providing important habitat! I was inspired to see such sensitivity and careful reading of the ecosystem.

At Barbara's, visitors were treated to the sight of a largely undisturbed woodland with diverse floral gardens blooming in the shade beneath. Barbara maintains the hardwood oak forest and underlying shrub layer while mixing native and non-invasive introduced flowers into the shaded understory. The result is breathtaking, while ecologically rewarding. I even spotted a scarlet tanager making use of it, while visitors throughout the day enjoyed the music of birdsong and witnessed the buzzing of pollinators. Traditional garden plants like primroses, bleeding hearts, and daffodils intermixed with native ephemerals like trilliums, bloodroots, Virginia bluebells, and so many more.

It was special to see two different but equally valuable and beautiful ways to

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respectfully within it. Both represented decades of finely tuned sensitively responding to natural conditions and what is best suited to grow there.

In the Shenandoah Chapter, we hope to show that there are many good ways to lovingly tend the land – and we don't all have to do it the same way. Habitat restoration is not a quick project; it is a lifestyle, a way of being in the world. We are fortunate to have among our membership folks who have been practicing this lifestyle for a generation as well as newcomers who are just beginning to learn from nature.

If you have some land that you lovingly tend with native plants and ecological principles—whether it has been decades or just a few years— and if you feel comfortable sharing your place and gardening philosophy with fellow members, please be in touch with Katy about getting on the schedule for and upcoming event, either the late summer/early fall garden tour this August or next spring's April tour.

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Walking with the Gatewoods

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See more images from this walk here: Photos by [Betty](#) and [Katy](#).

On April 27th, Betty and Mark Gatewood led a group along the Madison Run Fire Road in eastern Rockingham County. The Sundial Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*) were in full bloom and absolutely stunning! Other plants seen were azaleas, Rattlesnake Weed, milkweed, Dogbane, Putty Root, Indigo, Bastard Toadflax, Alumroot, Yellow Pimpernel, Pipsissewa, the only known occurrence of Purple-stem Cliffbrake Fern (*Pellaea atropurpurea*) in SNP (!!!) and many others. As always, the Gatewoods were delightful guides, pointing out many native plants and providing other interesting tidbits along the way including historical information regarding a large iron furnace that used to operate along Madison Run and their work assisting SNP with Hemlock woolly adelgid monitoring.

Native Plant Sale at Gypsy Hill Park, Earth Day Staunton, April 20

By Ivy Makia

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From an abundance of plant donations from our members to the strong support of volunteers who brought plants to our booth and shared their love and knowledge of native plants with the local community. The day started off a bit chilly, but it gradually warmed up with every smile and every interaction. We raised about \$1000 to support our chapter activities!

To be surrounded by inquisitive minds and native plants is one of the best ways to spend a Saturday! Our chapter's participation in events like Earth Day Staunton is how we can uphold our mission of making native plant knowledge more accessible to the community. We look forward to participating next year!



Action Items

- Blue Ridge PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management) is surveying a broad group of participants to better understand what invasive plant species have been or are becoming, a problem for Virginia homeowners, farmers, commercial property owners, and natural area stewards. We need your help to identify which invasive plants you are seeing locally and are most concerned about. Please fill out the [Invasive Plants of Virginia Survey](#)
- Chris Bowlen has reached out to us about the least trillium patch near the campsite on Shenandoah Mountain. She says: “There is a need to pull the garlic mustard (GM) in that area to protect the trillium. Now is the best time to do that and we are in need of some help. We are wondering if Shenandoah Chapter VNPS could help by pulling the GM plants that have set seed, bagging and removing them?” If anyone is interested in helping, please reach out to [Chris](#).

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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!](#)

Guided Walks and Potluck Social at Sunnyside

Come take a walk around the beautiful 150+ acre, diverse-habitat campus at Sunnyside Retirement Community, right across the street from the Massanetta Springs Conference Center, the location of this year's annual conference. Learn how residents have partnered with Sunnyside over the past two years to create native plant corridors, remove invasive species and maintain a 40 nestbox bluebird trail, while at the same time keeping the plantings attractive to the community. Sunnyside has recently received Level 1 Arboretum status and has 52 qualified acres listed with Homegrown National Park. As a retirement community with an administration, residents have faced similar issues to those living with HOAs in planting natives and removing invasives around campus. Come see how this community is being the change! Residents look forward to meeting you! [More information on our website here.](#) Registration required for the free event. [Register here.](#)

Native Gardening 101 Webinar Series: Are you new to native plants? New to gardening? Or just having trouble figuring out what to do when? Join us for a three-part webinar series to get you started or help you along in your native plant journey. Ivy will walk us through the basics of what to be thinking about, planning, and doing in each season. Whether you are an experienced gardener or totally new to native plants, join us to learn tips and tidbits for everyone. *One [registration](#) (\$10) gains you access to all three webinars and their recordings.*

- Jump Start Your Growing Season – February 17, 2024 @ 10am
- Summer Maintenance Dos and Don'ts – June 8, 2024 @ 10 am
- Fall Maintenance & Planning Ahead – September 7, 2024 @ 10 am

Registration links will be emailed the Friday afternoon before each webinar. Please be sure to [register at least 24 hours in advance](#) to ensure you get the link on time!

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

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Native Plant Tour! *Save the Date:* August 17-18. More details TBA next month. Please contact [Katy](#) if you would be willing to host a stop on this open-house style tour.

Virginia Native Plant Society, Annual Meeting: We are excited to announce that this year's VNPS Annual Meeting will be in our service area at the Massanetta Springs Conference Center in Rockingham County from September 20th - 22nd 2024. More information will be available later in the year. If you have any splendid ideas for walks in the vicinity (or stellar people to lead them!), send your suggestions to [Lora](#).

Fall Native Plant & Seed Swap & Sale: October 19th 2024, 1-3pm, at Oakdale Park Shelter #3 in Bridgewater, VA. More [details here](#).

Other events in the works:

- 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!

Thank you to our volunteers!

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Logo Merchandise Now Available!

We are excited to be able to offer merchandise with both our green and purple logo through Bonfire. If you'd like to see more options (tote bag, hat, mug) or different logo-wear items, let us know!

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ABOUT

Conserving Virginia's wild flowers and wild places.



www.vnps.org/shenandoah/



Classic Unisex Tee
\$24.00



Premium Unisex Tank
\$25.00



Classic Long Sleeve Tee
\$26.00



Shenandoah Chapter Logo (green)



[Click here to see what's available!](#)

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



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