

[View this email in your browser](#)



*Shenandoah Chapter*  
*Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places*



[Visit our website](#)

## WELCOME SUMMER!



Golden ragwort (*Packera aurea*) with friend, by Marty Diecchio.

\*Send your native plant photos for possible inclusion in future newsletters to [shenandoahchapter@gmail.com](mailto:shenandoahchapter@gmail.com)



# New Board Members Needed!

There are **two openings** on the board, and we need your help to fill these positions! Members who are interested in leading a specific project can reach out to any of the current board members.

The board meets most months via Zoom for about an hour with occasional in-person meetings.

As our chapter has grown, we're ready to add another position: **volunteer coordinator**! This position would help to coordinate and schedule volunteers for events such as our plant sales, potting parties, event tabling, etc.

In June, Ivy Makia relocated to North Carolina to pursue a master's in horticulture. While we couldn't be more proud or excited, we're sad to lose Ivy. Her position of **Outreach and Conservation** entails connecting with members and the greater community at talks and tabling events, promoting conservation events on social media and our website, and supporting fellow board members at various events.

If you are interested in either of these positions, please email us at [ShenandoahChapter@gmail.com](mailto:ShenandoahChapter@gmail.com).

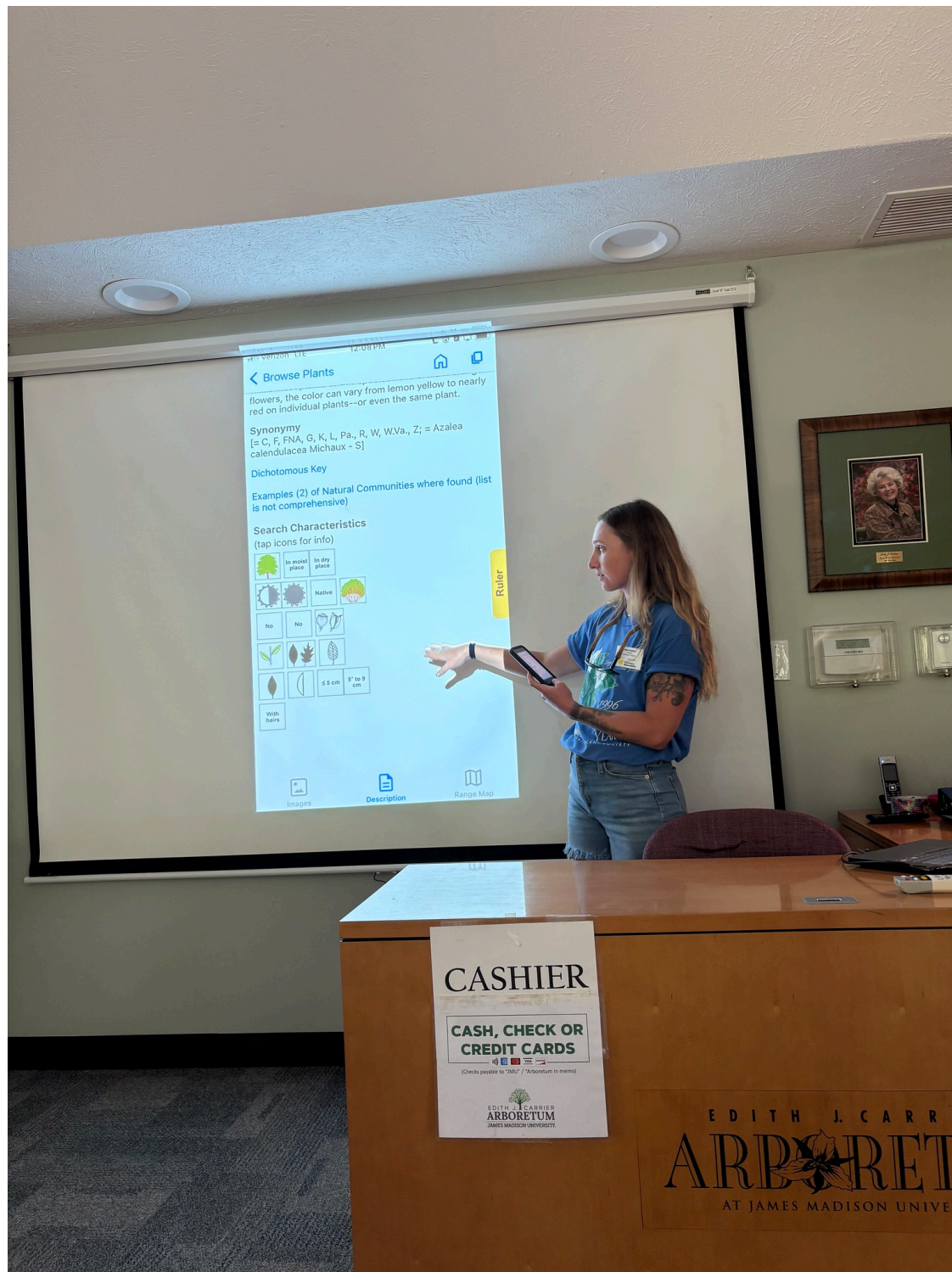
\*Note also that our regular elections will take place in August/September. According to our bylaws, terms are for two years, and board members may serve up to two consecutive terms in the same position. August 2025 will mark the end of the first term for all of our original board members!

---

## Flora of Virginia Brown Bag

Elaine Smith

Virginia app at the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU. Several VNPS members, master naturalists, and members of the public attended. Good job, Jess!







## Augusta Springs Guided Walk, 24 May 2025

Mark and Betty Gatewood

On a crisp Saturday morning, 17 old friends and new met at the Augusta Springs Wetland in the George Washington National Forest. We visited the remnants of the Augusta Springs resort which operated in the last quarter of the 19th century as a healing lithia spring. Springs occur wherever the underlying bedrock is limestone. Flowing groundwater carves its way through the limestone, occasionally breaking out above ground. Some spring water carries trace compounds of the element lithium. Resort springs, touting the medicinal qualities of these waters, came into being at the intersection of geology and advertising. The result was a “lithia water craze” which existed from about 1880 until the advent of the First World War. Unfounded medical claims brought people to the developed resort springs throughout the Appalachians and elsewhere. Augusta Springs claimed among its clientele urbanites from the elite of New England. Now, only cellar holes, stonework, a now-dry fountain and the flowing spring remain.

We found Bur-reed, our first native plant, emergent in the stone-walled pond. Upstream in the spring run we found Watercress and a robust cluster of Sensitive Fern. Betty found a clump of Walking Fern, *Asplenium rhizophyllum*, on the rocks by the spring. See Betty’s photo and lovely artwork below.

removed swathes of woody invasives along the wetland boardwalk and native herbaceous plants are coming in. We saw Wingstem, Goldenrods and Asters revegetating the area. Betty showed the viewing spot for an extensive colony of Skunk Cabbage. We also found Solomon's Seal, False Solomon's Seal and Tall Meadow-rue in bloom. Time constraint prevented us from walking the entire Upland Trail, so we missed the collection of rusted cars distributed along the otherwise lovely Liptrap Run. We did get to view the well-known "toilet tree," consisting of a tree improbably growing out of a discarded toilet and standing in a mass of bottles and rusting cans as a monument to 19th century trash disposal practices.

Though it was nominally a "native plant walk," the group observed Eastern spotted newts, an Egret and a Great Blue Heron overhead and Redwing Blackbirds and Cedar Waxwings over the flooded Alders. Monarch and Tiger swallowtail butterflies appeared as the day warmed. Among the history we presented was the story of how Elliot Knob was once thought to be the highest peak in the Appalachians and was briefly renamed Mount Rogers in honor of the Virginia State Geologist. We also gave a brief introduction to the origins of the eastern national forests.

Augusta Springs Wetland is at its best in late summer and early fall when closed gentians and moisture-loving asters line the boardwalk. The boardwalk loop is accessible for all ages and abilities. Cheers to the U. S. Forest Service for developing and maintaining this site.

The group got a good overview of what's available at Augusta Springs and we were a bit late in adjourning, getting back to the parking lot at 12:30.







## Good news, bad news on the Madison Run Fire Road



We never thought much about butternut trees (*Juglans cinereus*) until Betty found some nuts along the side of the road and looked up to see a 14" dbh butternut standing overhead. We've walked past it for thirty years not knowing what it was. Butternut is near its southernmost range event in Virginia, and it's threatened everywhere by a canker with a name so long I won't even try to reproduce it here. This year, it's only 30% leafed out, so it's probably a goner.

Farther up the road is a 3" butternut, not impressive but healthy. In one of this spring's wind events, a huge oak fell and smashed the little butternut flatter than Wiley Coyote in a Roadrunner cartoon. So, on to the good news.

We found a single plant of Dwarf Spiraea (*Spiraea corymbosa*) on the roadside. The only time I've seen Dwarf Spiraea was where the 2016 Rocky Mount Fire crossed the Appalachian Trail. The Flora says dwarf spiraea reaches one meter in height, but this one was so diminutive it barely stood above the surrounding vegetation to get its picture taken. Close up, the inflorescence is like a galaxy of five-pointed stars.

So, good news and bad news but we keep on looking.





## Upcoming Events

- **VNPS Virtual Book Club**, contact [Eunice Sill](#) for more information. July 15th, 7pm via Zoom. *Night Magic* by Leigh Ann Henion. Eunice reports about last



- **Clean Water Advocate Training**, application deadline June 27th. This free online education program through [Wild Virginia](#) is designed to equip and empower individuals, communities, and organizations to protect Virginia's water quality. The program provides participants with fundamental knowledge of federal and state water protection laws, regulatory processes, and essential advocacy skills to influence environmental decisions and outcomes. More information [here](#).
- **Pollinator Talk**, Saturday, July 12th, 1-2:30 pm. Room 104, Ice House Members are invited to stop by after checking out the native plants at the Harrisonburg farmer's market. Bring any and all questions about the pollinators you work hard to provide a habitat for! A light snack and refreshment will be provided.

[Andrea Berardi](#) is an assistant professor of Biology at James Madison University and is a plant biologist. She studies flower color evolution, plant-pollinator interactions, and speciation. Her current focus in her lab is understanding the nature of red flower color evolution in the genus *Silene*, with a particular focus on *Silene virginica*.

- **Working Together: How Neighborhood Associations Can Address Invasive Plants**, July 16th, 11:30am - 1pm. During this free webinar by [Blue Ridge PRISM](#), a panel of three neighborhood association leaders will share how their communities address invasive plants in their neighborhoods. They will share stories, discuss the hurdles, and give tips on how to organize and train a group to work together as a community. More information and registration [here](#).
- **Fall Native Plant & Seed Swap & Sale Saturday**, October 11th, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm. Oakdale Park (Bridgewater, VA), shelter #3. More info [here](#).
- **Wildflower walks!** We would love to offer more guided walks this spring and summer. If you would like to lead a walk, please [contact Katy](#).
- **Fall Native Plant Tour**, September.
  - Please consider hosting! Short interest [survey here](#).
  - Direct all questions to [Katy](#).

---

## Volunteer Opportunities

- Member Katie Rhodes, inspired to look for opportunities to add more native plantings in our communities, has obtained permission to turn an area at the Bridgewater 7/11 into a **native garden**! Not only will this improve the aesthetic appeal of the lot, but it's an excellent opportunity for a high visibility native planting in the community. If you are interested in learning more or helping out, please contact [Marty](#).
- **Invasive Plant Removal Workday**, July 25th, 10am - 12pm. Event by [Blue Ridge PRISM](#) at Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU. Learn to identify and remove invasive plants that threaten the health & enjoyment of this beautiful natural area Spaces limited to 10. [Register here](#).

---

## Ridge & Valley Native Plant Campaign!





## A Gardener's Guide to Virginia's Ridge & Valley Native Plants

The Ridge & Valley Native Plant campaign encourages our members to support local plant nurseries that stock our native plants.

[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate ▼](#)

ridge & valley, go to [Shenandoah Ecology](#).

Donate!

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



*Copyright (C) 2025 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](#).

