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Shenandoah Chapter
Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places



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Coming in Hot.



Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*) with friend, by Marty Diecchio.

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

Recruiting New Board Members!

There are at least **two openings** on the board, and we need your help to fill these positions!

The board meets most months via Zoom for about an hour with occasional in-person meetings. If you're interested in joining the board, please join us at our next board meeting (via Zoom) on August 5th at 7pm. Thanks to those of you who have expressed interest!

Specific needs:

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

Additionally, we could use someone in the role of **Outreach and Education** to fill the role left by Ivy Makia when she moved to North Carolina for graduate school.

We'd also love to welcome a **Botany Chair**, as our current board consists of people who love native plants but don't have formal training.

If you are interested in any of these positions—or another one based on the skillset you have to offer—please email us at ShenandoahChapter@gmail.com for a link to join our next meeting on **Tuesday, August 5th at 7pm**. Anna Maria or Katy will send you a Zoom link upon request.

*Note 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! After the August 5 meeting, we'll send out e-ballots to vote for our new members.

Pollinator Talk

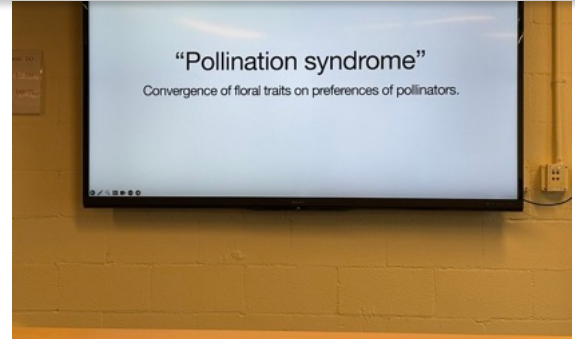
On Saturday July 12th, Dr. [Andrea Berardi](#) spoke to us about the evolution of plant color. Andrea is an assistant professor of Biology at James Madison University and is a plant biologist. She studies flower color evolution, plant-pollinator interactions, and speciation. Her current focus in her lab is understanding the nature of red flower color evolution in the genus *Silene* (pinks), with a particular focus on our special local *Silene virginica* (Fire Pink). You might see these bright red fire pinks in summer at higher elevations on woodland edges. They don't seem to prefer growing in the lower elevations of the Valley, though some of us have tried.

Here are some fun facts Dr. Berardi shared during her talk:

- Of all flower colors, red is the least common. **Only about 1% of the flowers on earth bloom red!**
- *Silene virginica* (fire pinks) tend to be darker in color at higher elevations and lighter in color at lower elevations.
- “Pollination syndrome” refers to the convergence of floral traits on pollinator preference. For example, hummingbirds prefer red flowers, flies prefer flowers that smell like garbage, and bees prefer yellow and purple/blue flowers.
- Among the different species within the *Silene* genus, pink and purple *Silene* are pollinated by bees, white are pollinated by moths, and red are pollinated by hummingbirds.
- The red color in flowers come from chemicals called anthocyanins and carotenoids. The flowering time of red *Silene* such as our own regional *S. virginica* coincides with the timing of hummingbird migrations. This suggests that the hummingbird preference for red may have been an evolutionary driver for this species. Dr. Berardi's lab uses a combination of genetic data, iNaturalist data, and other sources to learn and explore more about this correlation.

Thanks so much to Dr. Berardi for sharing her research!





Golden-Winged Warbler

Moriah Owen, with the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service, reached out to us about their [Golden-Winged Warbler Program](#). USDA provides both technical and financial assistance for landowners interested in creating and conserving young forest or shrub-dominated habitats, which are crucial for the golden-winged warbler, a severely declining migrant songbird. These habitats also support grouse, turkeys, rabbits, other songbirds, and more. They can work in both forested and old field scenarios and are looking for landowners with a minimum of 10 acres. **Interested? Reach out to Moriah (moriah.owen@usda.gov) ASAP.**



Upcoming Events

- Free **Webinar** through Wild Virginia: **Bad Naturalist: One Woman's Ecological Education on a Virginia Mountaintop**, August 4th at 6:30. More information and registration on the [Wild Virginia website here](#). *Bad Naturalist* is a memoir about Paula Whyman's attempts to restore native meadows on a 200-acre mountaintop--about the obstacles she encountered, the mistakes she made, the failures and the all-important successes, and the discoveries she made along the way.
- **VNPS Virtual Book Club**, contact [Eunice Sill](#) for more information. August 19th, 7pm via Zoom. [The Comfort of Crows](#) by Margaret Renkl.
- Free **Webinar** through Wild Virginia: **Oceans of Possibilities: Community, Exposure and Access in the Outdoors**, August 21st at 6:30pm. More information and registration on the [Wild Virginia website here](#). Join [Black in Marine Science's](#) Andrew Walker on Thursday, August 21st at 6:30pm to hear

- Free **Webinar** through Blue Ridge PRISM: **How to Submit Invasive Plant Specimens for Research**, August 22nd from 12-1pm. More information and registration on the [BR PRISM website here](#). Join us for this to learn how you can collect and submit invasive plant specimens for research studies across Virginia. Herbariums are large collections of botanical specimens, and they need your help to learn how invasive plants are migrating across the Commonwealth. Join Dr. Andrea Weeks for this tutorial on an easy way to help scientists study invasive plants.
- *Save the date!!* **Guided Walk** with Annette Naber, Highland County, Sunday, September 21st at 1:00 pm. Join us in this first joint event with Shenandoah Valley Conservancy on a walk around parts of a 400-acre property in Highland County. This property contains a high-elevation wetlands complex, rare plants, and native gardens surrounding the home. More information and registration information coming soon! Free registration will be through SVC.
- **Invasive Plant Identification Walk** through Blue Ridge PRISM at Edith J. Carrier Arboretum, October 1st from 10-11:30am. Join Jacob Edel, Invasive Management Specialist at Blue Ridge PRISM and the [Edith J. Carrier Arboretum](#) in Harrisonburg for this **FREE field training** where you'll learn how to identify invasive plants in the spring. This session includes a short hike along trails, some with uneven surfaces. **Space is limited to 20 participants**. More information and registration on the [BR PRISM website here](#).
- **Invasive Plant Identification Walk** through Blue Ridge PRISM at the State Arboretum of Virginia in Blandy, October 3rd from 10-10:45am. Join Natali Walker, Invasive Management Specialist at **Blue Ridge PRISM**, and the [State Arboretum of Virginia](#) in Boyce for this **FREE field training** where you'll learn how to identify invasive plants in the spring. This session includes a short hike along trails, some with uneven surfaces. More information and registration on the [BR PRISM website here](#).
- *Save the date!!* **Plant tour** at **Carol and George Taylor 31-acres in Swoope**, Virginia. Their property has been a 'work-in-progress' since 2000. The

species, and management plans at her slides/ poster. Most recently, vernal pools have been added to the property which already contained several mini-ecoregions, including a woodland, savanna, wildlife corridors, and meadows, one of which was planted over a geothermal installation. Details to come.

- *Save the date!!* **Fall Native Plant & Seed Swap & Sale Saturday**, October 11th, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm. Oakdale Park (Bridgewater, VA), shelter #3. It's never too early to start potting up cuttings and divisions! More info [here](#).
 - **Invasive Plant Removal Workday** through Blue Ridge Prism, October 17th, 10am-12pm. Join in to tackle invasive plants at the [Edith J. Carrier Arboretum](#) in Harrisonburg. Learn to identify and remove invasive plants that threaten the health & enjoyment of this beautiful natural area. **Space is limited to 10 participants**. More information and registration on the [BR PRISM website here](#).
 - Shenandoah Valley Conservancy's 2025 Annual **Conservation Celebration**, October 19th, 5:30-7:30pm at Brix & Columns Vineyard, \$60 per person. More information and registration on the [SVC website here](#).
 - **Invasive Plant Removal Workday** through Blue Ridge Prism, October 24th, 10-11:30am. Join in to tackle invasive plants at the [State Arboretum of Virginia](#) in Boyce. Learn to identify and remove invasive plants that threaten the health & enjoyment of this beautiful natural area. **Space is limited to 10 participants**. More information on the [BR PRISM website here](#).
 - **Guided walks?** We would love to offer more guided walks this fall. 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](#).
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Outreach

Our chapter president, Anna Maria Johnson gave an ecological gardening talk at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg on Sunday, July 27th. It was well attended. Many participants purchased guides. Trinity Presbyterian Church has a pollinator garden and a bio-retention project planted with native wildflowers and sedges on site. Kudos to this local institution for nurturing buttonbush, brown-eyed Susans, and many other wonderful species on their land.



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

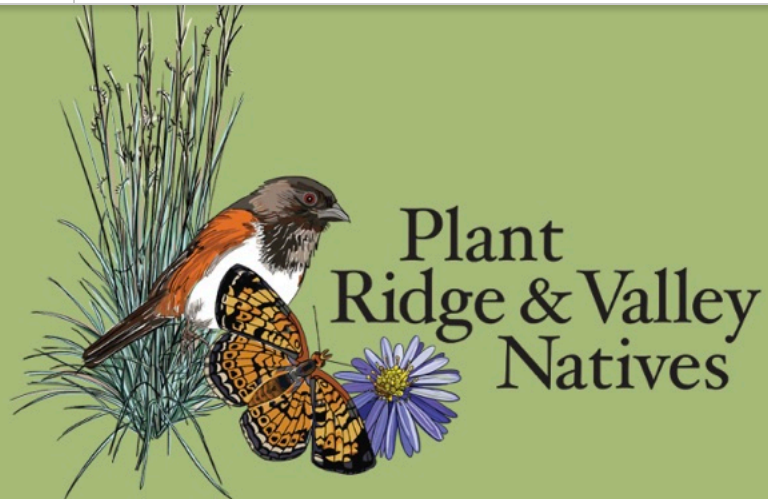
- more or helping out, please contact [Mary](#).
- Anna Finch has volunteered to help organize some workdays to help out a wheelchair-bound octogenarian native plant enthusiast in the Fulks Run area. The intention is to remove pressure from invasive plants such as autumn olive and release the beautiful native plants that Dottie remembers enjoying. Dottie has offered to share her native plant knowledge with volunteers who come to help out. Thanks to several of our members who have expressed interest in this project via the Virginia Ridge & Valley Natives Facebook group. To get involved, you can **connect with Anna Finch via Facebook or, if you don't use that platform, send an email to shenandoahchapter@gmail.com** and we will forward your contact information to Anna.
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Three Years!

Three years ago we held the initial meeting to discuss reviving the chapter; can you believe it?! We have accomplished so much since then. Kudos to everyone who has worked so hard to help us succeed!



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.

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

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



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