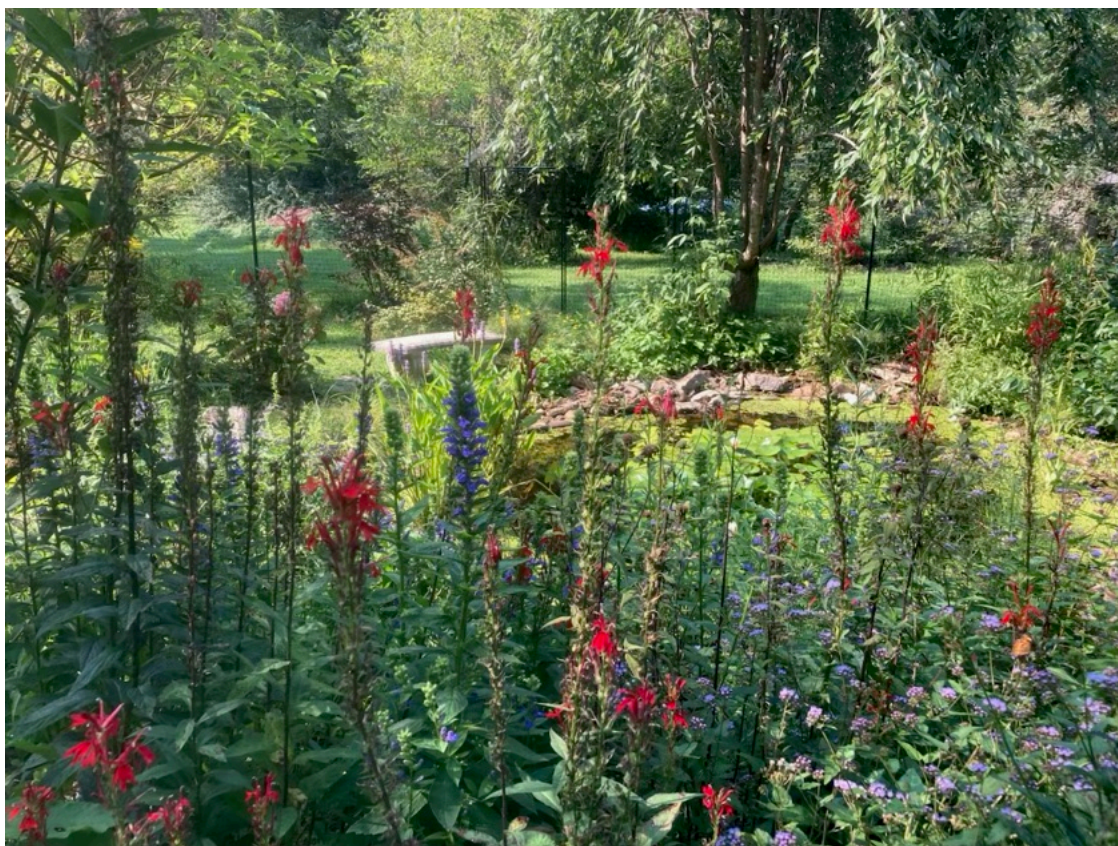


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Shenandoah Chapter
Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places

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FLOWER FLOWERS:



Maggie's Pond, by Anna Maria Johnson. *Lobelia siphilitica* (blue lobelia), *Lobelia cardinalis* (cardinal flower), and *Conoclinium fistulosum* (blue mistflower).



Silvery checkerspot butterfly on *Asclepias tuberosa* (butterfly weed) by Karen Milne.

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

Recruiting New Board Members!

person meetings. If you're interested in joining the board, please [email the chapter](#). Thanks to those of you who have expressed interest!

According to our bylaws, all 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 October Plant Swap and member meeting, we'll send out e-ballots to vote for our next slate of board members.

Our current board members include:

***Anna Maria Johnson**, President (ending first term; willing to continue or step down if someone expresses interest in serving as chapter president)

Katy Melton Simpson, VP and Events Coordinator (ending first term; willing to continue for a second term)

Elaine Smith, Secretary, Newsletter Coordinator, and Historian (ending first term; willing to continue)

***Lora Steiner**, VP and Membership Coordinator (ending first term; declining a second term)

Marty Diecchio, Treasurer (started first term in 2025)

Board Nominees

Volunteer Coordinator Anna Finch is a Naturalist, Writer, Positive Psychology Practitioner, and Park Ranger residing in Staunton, Virginia. Anna's favorite Virginia native plants are spring wildflowers like Mayapples, Spring Beauties, and Virginia Bluebells. Anna is interested in the position of Volunteer Coordinator with the Shenandoah Chapter because she loves connecting people together to care and give service to our natural world. She sees the strengths in each person, and can light others up, and loves seeing others connect to nature and to themselves.



Botany Chair Jack Monsted is an assistant curator at Blandy Experimental Farm, where he curates and manages the State Arboretum's Native Plant Trail. He has a master's degree in plant biology from Ohio University, where he examined how forest plant communities re-assemble following abandonment from agricultural land use. This research has led to a passion for ecological restoration and native plant conservation, which he practices in Blandy's extensive grasslands and woodlands. He enjoys sharing plant knowledge with others and regularly presents plant walks, lectures, and other plant-related content with Blandy's visitors.

writing articles for the newsletter, leading occasional plant walks, and offering some of his native plant lectures to the chapter via Zoom.



Education Chair Rebecca Clark says: “I am a bilingual educator with experience in science and history communication. I also have professional experience in writing text copy, editing, and graphic design, primarily in academic/educational settings. ... I'm passionate about building community connections and making education/information accessible to folks of all walks of life. I'd be thrilled to contribute these skills to support VNPS as a board member or in another capacity!”



Flora of Virginia Ambassadors

Meet the Flora of Virginia [Ambassadors!](#)

The Valley Ambassadors are: Anthony Adamovich, Judy Bartlett, Laura Cooper, Jess Daddio, Anna Maria Johnson, Eunice Sill, Gail and Robert Steele. This

accomplishments, and we hope they will offer presentations in the future.



Upcoming Events

- **VNPS Virtual Book Club**, contact [Eunice Sill](#) for more information. September 16th, 7pm via Zoom. [Wildscape: Trilling Chipmunks, Beckoning Blooms, Salty Butterflies, and other Sensory Wonders of Nature](#), by Nancy Lawson.

Education and Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake. Registration now open! Program and registration [here](#).

- *Save the date!!* **Guided Walk** with Annette Naber and Martha Teeter, 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, located just south of Monterey, boasts a high-elevation wetlands complex, rare plants, and native gardens surrounding the home. Free registration will be through SVC. Keep an eye on their [events page here](#) as *registration will be limited!*
- **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](#).
- **Fall Native Plant Tour, September 27th**, 10am - 1pm. This open-house style native plant tour features properties all over the region. If you would like to host, please fill out [this form](#) by September 12th. For additional information about the tour see our [website here](#). A plant tour website will go live the week before the event with property addresses. Send questions to [Katy](#).
- **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's** 31-acres in **Swoope**, Virginia, **October 4th, time TBD**. Their property has been a 'work-in-progress' since 2000. The Taylor's have focused on habitat restoration for wildlife, planting native species, and management without

property, which already contained several natural ecoregions, including a woodland, savanna, wildlife corridors, and meadows, one of which was planted over a geothermal installation. Details on [our website here](#).

- **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](#).

Volunteer Opportunity: Bessie Weller Learning Trail

Bessie Weller Elementary School in Staunton is home to a growing outdoor learning trail in the forest behind the school, fondly called the *Weller Woods*. The trail was originally spearheaded by Tamra Willis through a Virginia Outdoors

inviting place for students to learn and explore. With strong community support, the school has expanded projects that foster both student experiential learning and forest health. Partners, including the Shenandoah Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, have helped introduce native species to both students and the trail.

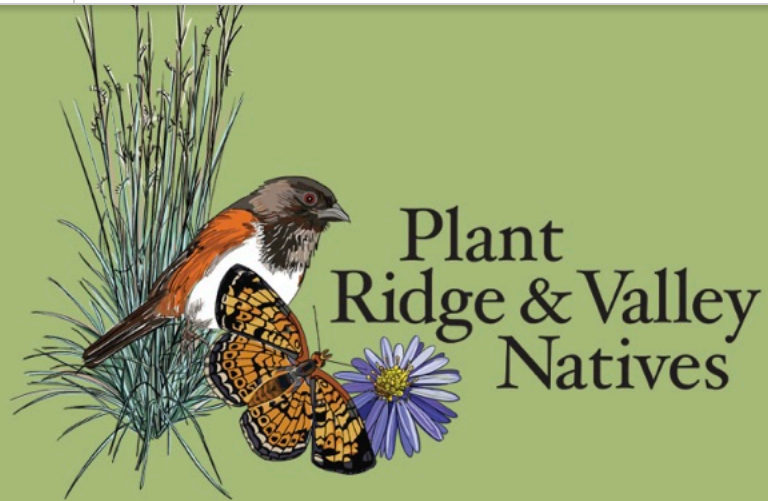
There is still much to be done to improve forest health and engage the broader community. On September 20, Bessie Weller will host a *Weller Woods Work Party* to move and spread mulch around existing plantings and cut back vines threatening trees. We welcome volunteers and community members to join us in this effort. For more information, please contact [Bree Hersch](#), Staunton City Schools' first Outdoor Learning Coordinator. We look forward to growing together!



Volunteer Opportunity: Bridgewater lot

- 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](#).

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.

Bookstore and Farmer's (Produce) owner Kara Baecker (a former employee of the local nonprofit Sustainability Matters) is quoted as saying: "To my surprise and delight, the best-selling title in the store in our first two months was *Plant Ridge & Valley Natives*, a guide to local native plants published by our local chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society. ... It's so important that we work to restore native habitats, and that begins in each of our yards, with knowledge from books like *Plant Ridge & Valley Natives*."

To learn more about the various native plant campaigns in Virginia, including our Ridge & Valley, go to plantvirginianatives.org.

Until Next Time!



Photo by Barbara Brothers. Monarch caterpillar on milkweed.

[Donate!](#)

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



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