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What Color!



Geranium maculatum, wild geranium with fabulous fall color, by Barbara Brothers. She also shares this quotation: “And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don’t believe in magic will never find it.” Roald Dahl

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

Chapter Board Election Results

And the votes are in!

Anna Maria Johnson: President

Katy Melton Simpson: VP and Events Coordinator

Elaine Smith: Secretary, Newsletter Coordinator, and Historian

Marty Diecchio: Treasurer

Anna Finch: Membership and Volunteer Coordinator

Rebecca Clark: Technology & Education Chair

Jack Monsted: Botany Chair

Charlie Wilfong: Member at Large

FROM MEMBERSHIP AND VOLUNTEER

Coordinator, Anna Finch

Hi everyone, my name is Anna Finch, your new Membership and Volunteer Coordinator! I would love to hear from members on what kind of activities in 2026 that you would like to volunteer for and/or participate in. Each of us have our own unique strengths and passions, so it can be leading walks, being a friendly face at a booth educating folks about native plants, or anything else that lights you up. Please email me at annafinch85@aol.com. I would love to get to know you more and help provide opportunities that align with your time and preferences.

Chapter Events

- **Second Sundays Native Plant Social**, December 14th, 1:30-3 pm. This monthly gathering (the second Sunday of every month) provides a chance to socialize with other native plant enthusiasts. Co-hosted by the Edith J. Carrier Arboretum (providing the location) and the Shenandoah Chapter (providing refreshments).
- **VNPS Virtual Book Club**, contact [Eunice Sill](#) for more information. The Club is going to take a holiday in December. Next meeting will be January 20th, 7pm via Zoom. [How Can I Help?: Saving Nature with Your Yard](#), by Douglas Tallamy.
- **Guided walks?** We would love to offer more guided walks this fall. If you would like to lead a walk, please [contact Katy](#).

Events By Our Partner Organizations

- **Invasive Plants in Winter**. Wednesday, December 3, 1-2pm. Free webinar by [Blue Ridge PRISM](#). Learn how to identify invasive plants in the Virginia winter landscape. Valuable for beginners and experts! [Register here](#).

by [Blue Ridge PRISM](#). You'll learn how to manage and control invasive plants in the winter season. Techniques will include manual and mechanical methods, as well as careful, strategic use of herbicides where necessary. Come ready to learn practical management skills that you can apply on your own property to help curb the spread of invasives. [Register here](#).

- **Invasive Plant Training Workday.** Friday, December 5, 11am - 1pm. Free event by [Blue Ridge PRISM](#). Event at [Fernbrook Preserve](#) in Albemarle County. PRISM staff will go over how to identify and treat invasives, particularly vines like English ivy and bittersweet. Following the training, we will put this knowledge to use by treating invasives within the preserve. Questions? Please contact Brynna Strand at brynna.strand@tnc.org. [Register here](#).
- **General Assembly Preview.** Sunday, December 6, 9am - 12pm. Free event by [Blue Ridge PRISM](#) in partnership with Virginia Conservation Network and Community Climate Collaborative to host a General Assembly Preview Charlottesville Watch Party! Join us in person OR virtually to learn about the environmental policies & issues we expect to see during the 2026 General Assembly session. [Register here](#).
- **Learn about Christmas Bird County in Virginia!** Free event by [Wild Virginia](#). Join Wild Virginia and Jeff Wright on Tuesday, December 9th at 7PM for a webinar on Christmas Bird Counts! [Register here](#).

Hill House Native Plant Nursery



Hill House Native Plant Nursery of Castleton, Virginia, held an open house on Saturday 11/15 at their new location on Eldon Farms. The farm is a 7100 acre property in Woodville, about 10 minutes south of Sperryville on Route 522. Janet Davis shared that she has operated the nursery out of her home/property for 20 years and has actually sold the nursery to Eldon Farms but will continue to run the operation as Hill House. They plan to be fully operational in the spring of 2026. There will be four large greenhouses enclosed in 3-4 acres surrounded by an 8' deer fence! Some highlights are that they will be developing education/experimental gardens, working with the Clifton Institute and including hard to find natives and local ecotypes in their stock. They will have room to hold workshops and keep an eye out for volunteer days! Check out the link for Eldon Farms and Hill House [here](#).

Marty Diecchio

First Second Sunday Social!



We had a great turnout at our first social gathering at the EJC Carrier Arboretum at JMU. Next social will be December 14th. Photo by Elaine Smith.

National Forest Trail Survey

Trails are a gateway to time spent in nature, connecting us with birds, plants, solitude, friends and family, and the stunning beauty around us. Please consider sharing what you love most about our local National Forest trails, and what opportunities exist to improve them, in this [community input survey](#). Organized by collaborators at the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition and Friends of Shenandoah Mountain, the survey seeks input from hikers, trail runners, birders, mountain bikers, hunters, conservationists, horseback riders, plant lovers, and more on how to improve trail experiences, enhance ecological stewardship, and welcome the next generation of visitors to our shared public lands.

Volunteer Opportunity: Veterans Garden of Augusta, Staunton

(and proud owner of a new native plant nursery), I'm also coordinating the Veterans Garden of Augusta, a small nonprofit project focused on horticulture therapy, veterans growing vegetables, learning together, and donating our harvests back to the community.

Next to the garden, there's about a quarter acre of steep hillside that isn't usable for raised beds, but I'd love to turn it into a native meadow with grasses and wildflowers to pull in pollinators and make the space both beautiful and functional.

I've already spoken with the City's Public Works Director, they mow a strip along the road now, they are letting me take over that area if I can make it look nice and reduce the mowing for them. I'd love to partner with the Native Plant Society to plan and plant this space. I've already partnered with Kadrin Anderson the biology and botany professor at Mary Baldwin, the Master Naturalist program as well as Staunton Tree Stewards with a background as a professional landscape architect to help create a solid plan for this project. I'm looking for any guidance, plugs, seeds, or local seed collection help anyone might be willing to share.

I've started the process with VCAP pollinator meadow restoration cost sharing program to make this happen. We don't have a budget yet (the garden is under a nonprofit), so any donations, extra plants, or advice would go a long way. My goal is to make this hillside something special a place that supports pollinators, educates visitors, and connects veterans with Virginia's native plants.

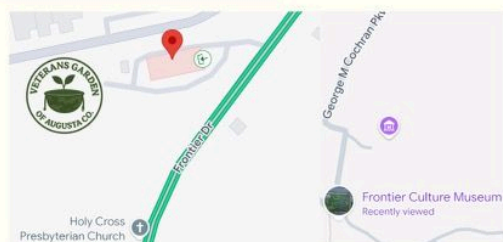


Learn some, grow some, give some.

The Veterans Garden of Augusta is a community-based, not-for-profit project created by and for veterans, and it's still a work in progress. Our goal is to build a space where veterans can grow food, connect, and find healing, but we need help to get there. Whether you can share advice, volunteer your time, lend equipment, or simply want to join the garden. Every contribution matters.

Interested? Let's connect! Let me show you the garden and join our community!

Directions



212 Frontier Dr, Staunton, VA



Website

Jordan Foster: (540) 280-5454 · VeteransGardenofAugusta@gmail.com
www.VeteransGardenofAugusta.org

If you are interested in helping/volunteering please contact Anna Finch, at annafinch85@aol.com

Volunteer Opportunity: Shenandoah National Park

Shenandoah National Park is looking for Volunteer Gardeners to maintain healthy and vibrant gardens near historic buildings, including [Massanutten Lodge](#). Maintaining the gardens will help visitors better understand the lives of people who were instrumental in the park's early years.

Resources Division volunteers will work together and divide labor throughout the year. Volunteers should have gardening experience with minimal supervision required. Tasks include:

- Working with the Museum Curator to craft an annual garden plan
- Removing weeds and woody vegetation
- Trimming vegetation near walkways
- Removing invasive species
- Making minor fence repairs
- Sowing seeds, transplant cuttings, and planting established plants
- Establishing and maintaining trellises when needed
- Watering as needed

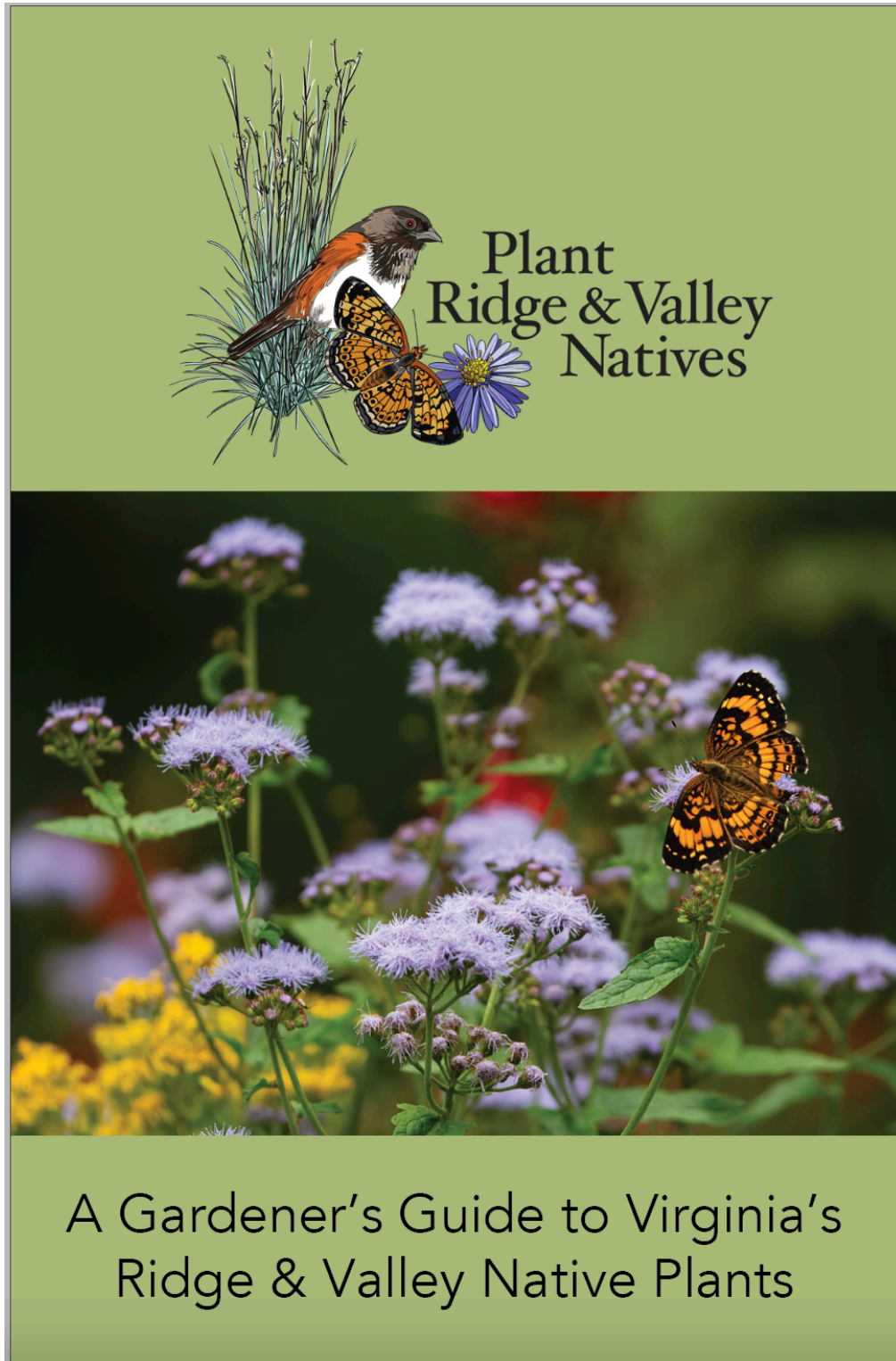
Volunteer Gardeners may work alone or in a group. Volunteers should expect to work 8-24 hours per week shared with a team. Volunteers need to be 18 or older, with the ability to travel to garden sites. Personal protective equipment and tools may be provided; volunteers can also use their own equipment if they are able and comfortable. Volunteers should be prepared for a variety of weather conditions and gardening on slopes with the presence of biting/stinging insects and snakes.

Interested individuals should visit this [link](#).



Massanutten Lodge

Ridge & Valley Native Plant Campaign:



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

local plant nurseries that stock our native plants.

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

Until Next Time!

Donate!

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



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