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Virginia Native Plant Society
Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places



September 2026 Newsletter



Brown-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia triloba*, New York Ironweed *Vernonia noveboracensis*, and Cardinal Flower *Lobelia cardinalis*, by Barbara Brothers.

Call for New Board Members

Want to get more involved with native plants in our community?

We're looking for several new board members!

Soon it will be time for our fall annual meeting when we elect and vote in our new board members. It's always a good practice to keep new energy flowing through an organization. If you (or someone you know) might have energy to give, relevant skills, and some time on your hands (five or more hours per month), we'd love to connect with you! Board positions we may need are treasurer, VP, events coordinator, and social media coordinator.

We're also creating a nominating committee to help select new board members!

According to our chapter bylaws created in August 2022 (which you can view on the VNPS website under the Shenandoah Chapter subpages), we need to set up a nominating committee of three people (1 board member and 2 not on the board). If you're interested in a short-term one-off commitment, ask us about joining the nominating committee!

Timeline and logistics: We will be selecting a slate of nominees to be presented at a meeting in October. The new board member terms will start on November 1, 2026.

To inquire about joining either the board or the nominating committee, send us an email at shenandoahchapter@gmail.com.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Fall Native Plant Tour

Seeking Hosts! and Save the date!

Our Fall Native Plant Tour will be **September 26th (10am-2pm)** and **27th (12pm-4pm)**. You can host one day or both. Please consider helping to increase interest and awareness about the beauty, diversity, and importance of native plants! ***Without more hosts, we will need to cancel the tour.*** Anyone interested in hosting, please submit your [information here](#).

We'd love to have a range of planting stages and types to showcase the different life stages and possibilities of planting with natives. Your plantings do not need to be perfect or pristine! We hope these plants tours will attract not only native plant enthusiasts eager to see what others are doing, but also novice gardeners and those interested in learning more about native plants.

We are looking for all kinds of locations: small urban gardens, fully landscaped yards, reclaimed meadows, woodlands, those in transition from

conventional to native plantings, and everything in between.

Host sites featured on the tour should *ideally*:

- Be 60-70% native species or more
- Be predominantly plants native to the ridge and valley region based on state/county level of the Virginia Flora
- Have no intentionally planted exotic invasive species
- Have intention/plans or be in the process of working to eradicate exotic invasive species
- Use no pesticides
- Gardens and meadows in the 40-60% native range are welcome if they are in transition towards more native plants!

Contact [Katy](#) with any questions!

Native Plant Garden Backpack Update!



We're thrilled to announce the Native Plant Garden Backpacks will very soon be available at all MRL branches! They are expected to be ready for check out by mid-September. Stop by your local branch and ask a librarian to check them out. Spread the word to friends and neighbors who might be interested in getting their own native plant garden started. Happy gardening!

What are the Native Plant Garden Backpacks?

The Native Plant Garden Backpacks contain **basic gardening tools**, a **native plant guide**, and **garden planning resources** to help you begin your very own native plant garden.

These backpacks will be available beginning in mid-September 2026 at all seven Massanutten Regional Library (MRL) branches. They will be a part of MRL's existing "Library of Things" — a collection of non-traditional materials available for library patrons to borrow for free, just like books!

Who are these backpacks for?

These backpacks are ideal for anyone new to planting native plants.

Whether you have a large backyard or a small container garden on the porch, this backpack is for you. No space is too small for native plants!

Start your own native plant garden today by visiting your local MRL branch and asking a librarian about the Native Plant Garden Backpack!

Thank you!

Generous contributions from both our membership and local organizations/businesses made this project possible! Thank you for partnering with us on this project!

Special thank yous to: Anne Elise Lintelman (Wilder Landscapes), Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU, Dr. Iara Lacher (Seven Bends Plant Nursery), Milmont Greenhouses, Parentheses Books, Randy's Hardware in Bridgewater, Stone Soup Books, and Walkabout Outfitters.

Interested in getting involved with this project or becoming a sponsor?

[Learn more!](#)

Native Plant Mobile Exhibit is now on display!

When: September 2026

Where: MRL's Central Library in Harrisonburg, on the 2nd floor

We've curated a native plant mobile exhibit that will be on display at Massanutten Regional Library's Central Library during the month of September. Find our new bilingual wildflower coloring sheets, wildflower of the year brochures, and more. Drop by during operating hours to check it out!



Rebecca with the mobile exhibit at Central Library

Presidential Kudos

Chapter President Anna Maria Johnson wishes to express special appreciation to outstanding members for their work on special projects this summer: Rebecca Clark joined the board in the past year and has already made her mark with her signature backpack project. From idea to implementation, Rebecca has shepherded the process of creating educational backpacks for our local library system. She designed the materials, sought permissions, raised funds, packed the bags, and set up a mobile display to educate our community about the importance and joy of native plants. Thanks also to Marty Diecchio, whose supportive collaboration enhanced the project.

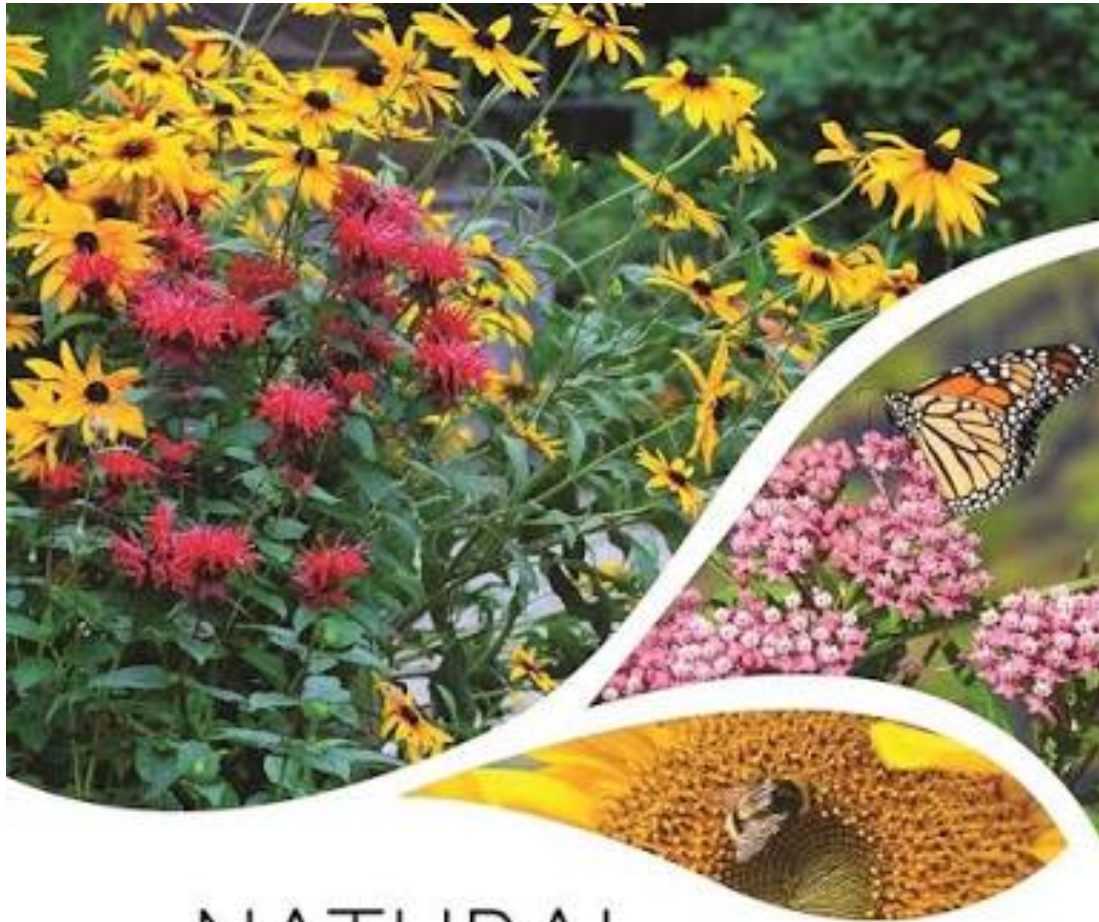
Barbara Brothers continues to take the lead on distributing copies of the *Plant Ridge & Valley Natives: A Guide for Gardeners*. Through her advocacy, several plant providers in our region now stock an expanding supply of native plants, making them more accessible to all gardeners. Her outreach to

local bookshops has helped to expand the native plant market as well. Thanks so much, Barbara, for your ongoing work on this front. Thank you, especially, for storing a couple thousand books in your home as they wait to be ordered! Thanks also to Marty for handling orders, invoicing, and some of the delivery logistics.

Huge thanks to our summer intern, Anna Melley, whose graphic design work you will see in our future displays and events starting this fall. A recent James Madison University graduate, Anna Melley designed a beautiful tabling concept including a colorful, beautiful banner featuring native plant photography, a tablecloth with our organization's name and logos, and social media templates to give us a consistent look in our posts. We hope she will find more ways to connect with native plant organizations in her hometown near Virginia Beach, as she is an absolute joy to work with and the plants bring her joy in return.

Book Club

The next meeting of the book club will be September 15th at 7pm, and the book will be [Natural Habitats and Wildlife Gardening: Inviting Nature into Your Backyard](#) by Shaun McCoshum. Contact [Eunice Sill](#) for more information.



NATURAL HABITATS & WILDLIFE GARDENING

INVITING
NATURE
INTO YOUR
BACKYARD

SHAUN
McCOSHUM

Second Sunday Socials

We are discontinuing our Second Sunday Socials for the time being, and plan to redirect our energies into our other programming areas.

Homeschool Hour at Staunton Public Library

When: Thursday, September 10th, 1:30pm-2:30pm

Where: Staunton Public Library

What: Join us at Staunton Public Library for this interactive program for students in grades 3-5. Our VP Katy will be presenting this program, titled "Pollinators and Native Plants." Check out [Staunton Public Library's website](#) for more details!

Native Plant Sales

Check out this [list](#) of upcoming plant sales around the state!

JMD Native Plant Celebration

The best kept secret in the valley is out! JMD Farm Market and Garden Center has the best selection of native plants in the central Shenandoah Valley. Join us for their 2nd annual Native Plant Celebration **Saturday, September 19, 9am-4:30**. All native plants will be on sale along with many other selections. We will be there with a table sharing information and answering your native plant questions.

JMD is tucked away between Verona and Waynesboro, near Barren Ridge Vineyard and Stable Craft Brewery. Fall planting season is here!

NEW! A Community Native Plant Grant

In 2026, for the first time ever, the VNPS Shenandoah Chapter will award a total of \$1,000 to one or more well-defined projects located within the Virginia counties of Augusta, Highland, Page, Rockingham, or Shenandoah that address the VNPS Mission and Goals.

Grants will be awarded to projects that incorporate one or more of the following themes:

- Conserving native plant communities in their natural habitats through conservation and land stewardship practices.
- Educating the public about the value of native plants and how to encourage them.
- Establishing gardens, preserves, or parks that incorporate native plants.
- Projects that incorporate public education or consistent, current and long-term public access will be given priority.

Grant proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis.

For application requirements and to apply, download the application at <https://vnps.org/shenandoah/community-native-plant-grant/>

Seeking Wildflower Walk Leaders!

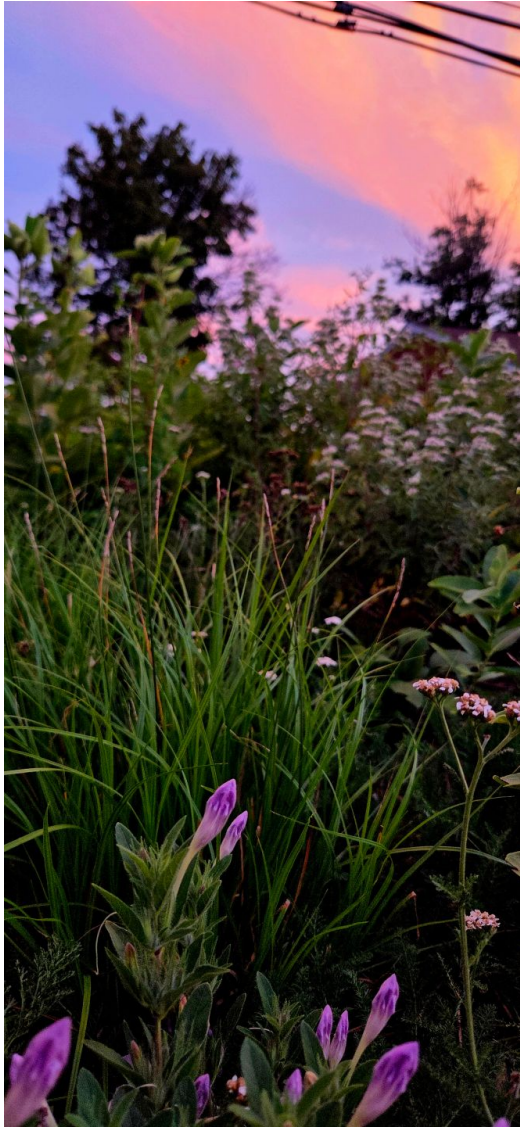
We would love to offer some late summer or fall wildflower walks! Do you have a familiar walk where you can identify a few native plants? Consider inviting our members to come appreciate them with you! Contact [Katy](#) if you'd like to lead a walk.

Choose your Perfect Level of Chapter Engagement

- Subscribe to the newsletter
- Follow and participate on social media (Instagram and Facebook)
- Attend Second Sunday Plant Social (every month in person)
- Join as a full voting [member](#) through VNPS
- Lead a native plant walk or bioblitz
- Volunteer

Reach out to us at [Shenandoah Chapter](#) to see how you can level up your engagement.

Your Moment of Zen



By Charlie Wilfong.

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Virginia Native Plant Society
400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit #2
Boyce, VA 22620