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Virginia Native Plant Society
Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places



October 2026 Newsletter



Monarch caterpillar chewing on a milkweed (Butterfly weed in this photo) pod! Photo taken 9/ 25/ 26, by Barbara Brothers.

Board Positions

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, events coordinator, and social media coordinator.

Marty Diecchio is nominated to transition to the president's role, so we need someone to take on the treasurer's position. Also nominated to join the board is Annette Naber, as vice president.

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 the board send us an email at shenandoahchapter@gmail.com.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Jack Monsted (who is a new father!) is stepping down from the position of botany chair on the board. Nominated to take on this role is Natalie Izlar. She has been working as a field botanist, mostly in grassland systems, over the past 6 years. She is passionate about understory herbaceous systems, graminoids, and all the little green stuff! She is currently a Smithsonian Research Fellow and working towards her Master's of Biology at JMU.



Natalie Izlar

Fall Plant Swap

Saturday October 24th, starting at 1pm. Oakdale Park in Bridgewater. Ben from [Little Bluestem](#) will be there selling plants. Bring your volunteer plants to trade or give away and perhaps find something new to add to your garden!



Native Plant Garden Backpack October Update!



We're thrilled to announce the Native Plant Garden Backpacks are now available at all Massanutten Regional Library branches! To check one out,

stop by your local branch and ask a librarian! You can also find more info in MRL's catalogue [here](#). Spread the word to friends and neighbors who might be interested in getting their own native plant garden started.

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 are now available 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!

7/11 Garden Update

The native plant garden at the Bridgewater 7/11 is looking good. Would any locals be willing to volunteer to help maintain this lovely spot? For more information please contact [Katie Rhodes](#).



Book Club

The Book Club is taking October off. Contact [Eunice Sill](#) for more information.

Blue Ridge PRISM Webinar

Fall Invasive Plant Workshop: Introduction & Identification October 13, 2026.

Register [here](#).

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. JMD held their 2nd annual Native Plant Celebration on Saturday, September 19, 9am-4:30. We rolled out our new banner for the event!

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.

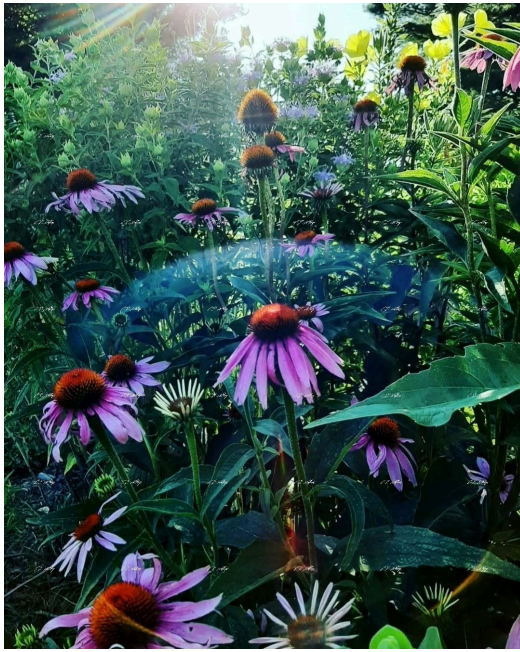
Choose your Perfect Level of Chapter Engagement

- Subscribe/contribute to the newsletter
- Follow and participate on social media (Instagram and Facebook)
- 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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