



Shenandoah Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
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February 2011

Mission Statement:

We are a conservation organization dedicated to conserve Virginia's native plants and their ecosystems through education, advocacy and activities that promote appreciation, stewardship and appropriate use.

February 2011: No Meeting This Month

Next meeting date: March 10, 2011.

Calendar of events

March 5, VNPS Annual Workshop, University of Richmond: Down Under Geology and Native Plants. For more info: www.vnps.org

March 11, Deadline for Headwaters SWCD Tree Seedling sale (see below)

April 9, Blacks Run Cleanup, Harrisonburg

April 14 Wild Virginia Film Festival at Visualite Theater in Staunton

April 16, Earth Day, Staunton includes Shenandoah Chapter plant sale

April 15 and 16 Arbor Day Tree Sale & Native plant sale at Edith Carrier Arboretum JMU

April 30, Riverfest Waynesboro includes Shenandoah Chapter plant sale

April 30 JMU Arboretum Notable Wildflowers Field Trip: The Trillium Trail at G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area

Shenandoah Chapter Annual Plant Sale

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 16th when we will once again set up our booth at the Earth Day Festival in Staunton 9 am-Noon, across from Sunspots (near the Farmer's Market). Our second Saturday sale will be April 30 at the Waynesboro Farmer's Market for Riverfest. The potential for making this a big fundraiser is great if we can get enough plants and helpers.

All proceeds from these plant sales will benefit the Flora of Virginia Project.

We will need your help in two ways:

- (1) Bags of potting medium and pots will be available at the March meeting. Some of you may have already started plants from seed and as plants emerge from the ground please pot some of your "extras" to offer for sale. You can bring your plants to the April meeting or we can make arrangements to pick them up from you.
- (2) We will need volunteers to work the day of the sale. Please mark your calendars now and try to give an hour or two to help.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Barbara McSweeney at (540) 363-1116 barbmcs@newhopetel.net, or Anneli Tattersall (540) 248-0932
annelitatt@yahoo.com

Tree Seedling Sale

Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District is having their annual tree seedling sale. The deadline to place orders is March 11 with pickup on March 19 at the Augusta County Government Center USDA offices. Trees come bareroot or as seedlings. Trees are grown locally in Augusta County at the Virginia Department of Forestry in Crimora. Unless you are able to water them conveniently through the summer, bareroots trees have much better success if you can pot them, heel them into garden soil and keep them well watered through the summer for fall planting. Tree shelter kits are available in 2' or 4' sizes to protect you seedlings from browsing mammals

Order forms are obtained from the web site: www.headwatersswcd.org or call 549-248-6218 Ext 3

The Trillium Trail at G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area

This will be a half-day van tour, led by Arboretum Board and Virginia Native Plant Society member, Joe Sharrer. Come with us and see thriving banks of trillium in full bloom in their natural forest setting. Walk and interact with trip lecturers along a mountain trail. This mountain ecosystem is a northern plant paradise and one you need to see! The fieldtrip will be taken rain or shine. Pack your picnic lunch and be sure to dress for an outdoor excursion. Be advised, you should be in relatively good physical condition for this scenic destination. Contact the Arboretum offices 568-03194 or by e-mail at turnbugl@jmu.edu for more information.

Departure at 1:00 p.m. from the Frances Plecker Ed Center parking lot, return approximately 5:00 p.m.
Cost: \$20 per person, pre-registration is required.

Get Ready for Spring

While you are inside, waiting to find those spring ephemerals, test your knowledge of native plants with the "Wildflower Quiz" from the National Wildflower Center. <http://www.wildflower.org/collections/quiz.php>

Native Plant Feature

The Headwaters SWCCD tree seedling sale has several wonderful native shrubs available for planting, including Red Chokeberry, *Photinia pyrifolia*, a member of the Rosaceae family. I bought a bundle of these seedlings at a SWCCD about 4 years ago and can attest to the heartiness of the species. Not only has it been mowed to the ground at least twice and still managed to grow back, flower and bear fruit; it has also survived my tough love policy of once you are in the ground you are on your own. Rabbits did not nibble it and the dogs did not dig it up. I'm not sure how deer unfriendly it is because since we have dogs, we don't have deer browse. No one has eaten the fruit which is still attached in February so maybe it is not a favorite, or maybe it has not yet been discovered.

For those who would like just a bit more information about this fine native shrub, it goes by two Latin names: *Photinia pyrifolia* and *Aronia arbutifolia*. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center data base has two synonyms for red Chokeberry: *Aronia arbutifolia*, *Pyrus arbutifolia*

I could find no reason for all the names, so I moved on to the features. Here is what the Virginia Tech Tree ID fact sheet had to say:

Leaf: Alternate, simple, elliptical, 2 to 4 inches long, finely serrated margins, shiny dark green above, midrib has stiff, raised dark glands on upper surface (may need a hand lens), much paler and fuzzy below, orange-red fall color.

Flower: White, 5 petals, 1/2 inch across, dark anthers, occur in clusters at ends of twig, appearing in spring.

Fruit: Small pome, 1/4 inch, reddish, ripen in late summer to early fall, persistent.

Twig: Slender, reddish brown, generally pubescent, terminal buds long, 1/3 to 1/2 inch (resembles serviceberry), leaf scars narrow.

Bark: Reddish brown, smooth, lenticled, developing diamond-shaped splits.

Form: Upright shrub to 15 feet, often multi-stemmed.

Red Chokeberry resembles black chokeberry, downy serviceberry, Chikasaw plum and American plum. It is usually found in wet places, but will tolerate dry. It is native to the east coast from Nova Scotia down to Florida over to eastern Texas. Call it what you will, Red Chokeberry could be an excellent addition to your landscape.

C. Bowlen

If you have announcements, articles or reviews for the newsletter (no matter how short), please contact Elaine Smith antigone16@comcast.net

And if you know of any speakers who might be interested in addressing one of our meetings, please contact Michael Seth, sethmj@jmu.edu