



Shenandoah Chapter *Virginia Native Plant Society* *October 2014*

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.

Upcoming Chapter Events:

September 2015 Annual Meeting. Our chapter will host the annual state meeting of the Virginia Native Plant Society next fall - September 13-15 2015 at the Frontier Cultural Museum Pavilion. More details will emerge in the coming months but we will be looking for volunteers help including leading or co-leading walks and tours.

Other Activities

Saturday, October 4: Turk Mountain and Blue Mountain Brewery

This early fall hike will cover one of the shorter but very scenic hikes in the southern part of Shenandoah National Park, from Skyline Drive to Turk Mountain and back. The Turk Mountain Summit is a rocky hill (2981' elevation) with excellent views of the Shenandoah Valley and of the wilderness area at the southern end of SNP. The hike will also include a short section of the AT. We'll start at the Sawmill Run Overlook, about 10 miles in from the southern entrance to the park. From there we'll go north on the AT to the Turk Mountain Trail, and then west for a mile to the Turk Mountain Summit.

Total hiking distance is about 5 miles, with 1000 ft. elevation change. Total hiking time will be about 2.5 hours. This is a moderate hike, with a few hilly and rocky sections.

Contact: Ralph Grove, ralph.grove@gmail.com or (540.478.3677)

Mondays and Wednesdays October 6, 8, 13, 15, and 20, Beginning Acrylic Wash Botanical Illustration Workshop at the Frances Plecker Education Center JMU Arboretum

Stunning fall colors abound this time of year. Capture the beauty in this painting class for beginners, or for anyone who has not painted in acrylic wash before!

Sunday, October 12, Fall Color Horse Drawn Carriage Rides 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Celebrate the 2014 fall tree color in the EJC Arboretum in a memorable way. The beauty of the woods in fall color can be enjoyed in a carriage drawn by beautiful Percheron horses. Travel the woodland trails in a relaxing way celebrating the changing season. Whether out of town guests for JMU Family Weekend, or locals, all can enjoy one of the nicest ways to experience the EJC Arboretum. For the per person cost of a movie ticket for a flick they'll soon forget, make a lifetime memory!

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, October 13, 15, and 17, Children's Nature Workshops 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm JMU Arboretum.

These dates are the fall themed workshop in an ongoing series of seasonal workshops for children's art instruction that will allow children to produce their own botanical journal. The Monday-Wednesday-Friday afternoon classes will focus on drawing fall season leaves, nuts and seed pods found within the Arboretum.

For more information about the above three events: <http://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/>

Friday October 17- Sunday October 19 Annual State Meeting of the VNPS. Will be at the Virginia Beach Resort Hotel. Go to the VNPS website for more information: vnps.org

Pipeline Hike Series

As you may have heard, Dominion is proposing to build a 42" natural gas pipeline through Highland, Augusta, and Nelson counties. The pipeline will have an impact on some of our favorite trails as it crosses Shenandoah Mountain south of the Confederate Breastworks, passes through the Braley Pond recreation area, over Hankey Mountain and then across the Valley and over the Blue Ridge between I-64 and Humpback Rocks.

Sunday October 19 Pipeline Hike

Sunday, Oct. 19. Pipeline Hike. Southern Shenandoah Chapter of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. **Shenandoah Mountain - Georgia Camp Trail.** 6.2 mi. Moderate. Begin at Rt. 250 on Shenandoah Mountain and hike south to Signal Corps Knob, where the pipeline crosses the crest, then down Georgia Camp Trail. Georgia Camp is a Civil War site. Leaders: Malcolm and Lynn Cameron, malcolmgcameron@gmail.com, (540)234-6273. Meet at Churchville TasteeFreez at 9:00 a.m.

Saturday. Nov 15 **AT from Rockfish Gap to Humpback Rocks.** The pipeline will cross the AT about midway. 6.5 mi. Meet at Rockfish Gap at old Howard Johnson restaurant at 9:00 a.m. Leader: David Bennick, (540) 337-5330, dbennick@verizon.net.

Sunday. Nov. 23 **Dowell's Draft – White Oak Trail on Hankey Mountain** 6.3 mi. Moderate. The pipeline will follow Dowell's Draft Road and Trail and cross the access road to White Oak Trail. Meet at Churchville TasteeFreez at 9:00 a.m. Leader: Stefanie Morris, stefka555@gmail.com, (540) 476-1231.

Saturday. Dec. 6 **Ramseys Draft to Braley Pond** 5.7 mi.. Moderate. The proposed pipeline will cross Braley Pond access roads in two places. Leader Richard Hottel, rbhottel@comcast.net, (540) 337-7346. Meet at Churchville TasteeFreez at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday. Dec. 14. **Shaw's Fork - Shenandoah Mountain** Highland County. 6.5 miles. Moderate. Shuttle. Begin at Shaw's Fork Horse Camp, hike up a well-graded trail on the west side of Shenandoah Mountain and then along the forest road to Rt. 250. Meet at Churchville TasteeFreez at 9:00 a.m. Leader: Jean Fraser, jeancfraser2@yahoo.com, (540) 490-0195.

Saturday October 25 Gardening in Deer Country

Merrifield Garden Center, Gainesville. 6895 Wellington Rd. Manassas 10:00 am

Larry Shapira, Merrifield Plant Specialist & Prof. Emeritus, NVCC

Has your garden become a smorgasbord for deer? If so, don't miss this seminar. Professor Larry will help you develop an effective strategy to protect your landscape with deer-resistant plants, animal repellents and other deterrents.

See the Merrifield Garden Center [website](#) for more information.

Filed Under: [Programs](#), [Prince William](#) Further Information at vnps.org

Sunday November 8, 2014 Staunton Water Monitor Training - Time: 9:15 am - 4:15 pm Staunton Public Library 1 Churchville Ave Staunton, VA 24401

Learn from Trout Unlimited (TU) how to monitor water quality throughout Marcellus Shale regions in Virginia's national forests.

Wild Virginia will host this one-day training for citizen volunteers to learn how to properly conduct water quality monitoring which includes how to conduct chemical monitoring on water samples, measure stream flow, test water temperatures and turbidity and conduct visual assessments. No prior experience necessary, but a serious commitment to ongoing monitoring once per month is expected.

Requiring pre-registration. Contact <http://www.wildvirginia.org/wild-virginia-to-host-water-monitoring-training/>

Asters

This time of year the variety of wildflowers diminishes but we still have the asters. This was once a genus with 600 species of the family Asteraceae, the composites. But botanists a few years ago decided most New World asters really belong to several different genera. There are still 180 Old World species of the genus *Aster* and more than 400 others species that belong to ten other genera all members of the *Astereae* tribe. Only one member of the genus *Aster* is found in the Americas the Alpine Aster (*Aster alpinus*) which grows in Canada and the northern part of the U.S. Our populist Peterson and Newcomb guide books are now dated giving the old scientific names but the common names are the same. Most of our asters belong to the genus *Symphyotrichum*. This includes *Symphyotrichum cordifolium* or Heart-leaved Aster (formerly *Aster cordifolius*). This perennial is one of the commonest in our woodlands and is easily recognizable by its heart shaped leaves and blue flowers. Other common asters in our area are: *Symphyotrichum ericoides* White Heath Aster, *Symphyotrichum lowrieanum* Lowrie's Aster, *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* New England Aster, *Symphyotrichum pilosum*, *Symphyotrichum prenanthoides* Crooked Stem Aster, *Symphyotrichum racemosum* Small White Aster, *Symphyotrichum lanceolatus* Panicked Aster, and *Symphyotrichum undulatum* Wavy-leaved Aster.



Then there the Calico Aster *Symphyotrichum lateriflorum* (formerly *Aster lateriflorus*). This common aster has long horizontal branches and sparse flowers. The flowers have rays numbering 8 to 15 vary from white to blue to pink. The disc flowers also 8 to 15 are yellow or pink becoming purple or brown. The flowers are scattered along branches and grow along the upper side of the branch. They are found in field and open areas, along the sides of trails and even along forest roads preferring slightly shaded areas. The leaves are alternate, simple and entire and similar to Panicked Aster but smaller, elongated and lance-shape. The plant is about 11-31 inches high, and the stems are long horizontal branches spread out from the main stem. They resemble the Heath Aster somewhat, but the leaves are smaller and more numerous and the flowers are very numerous on the Heath Aster. Also no other aster has quite the variety of colors.

Invasive Plant of the Month: Ailanthus

Commonly known as tree of heaven or just ailanthus *Ailanthus altissima* is one of our most familiar invasives. It seems to be found everywhere. I recently found several starting to grow in my yard and a vacant lot nearby is virtually a miniature ailanthus forest. It is a problem in some sections of the Shenandoah National Park. The woodlands along the beautiful Jeremy's Run in the north section of the park, for example is nearly dominated by ailanthus. It can be difficult to get rid of, earning it another name "tree of hell."

As is the case of so many of our invasives it comes from East Asia. It is a temperate climate species, however, most of the members of its genus are tropic plants, and it has a somewhat tropic look. In China the roots, leaves and bark are considered to have medicinal value and have been used to treat mental illness and baldness. It also has important economic value as the host of the ailanthus silkmoth. Considered attractive by some, it has often been planted in Western countries including the U.S. In Europe it commonly found in parks and gardens, I found lots of it growing in Albania, but it doesn't seem to be nearly as invasive as it is in North America. Its introduction to urban spaces in Europe was due to its ability to thrive there. An extremely hardy tree it will grow even in harsh urban environments, a quality famed in the 1943 novel *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith. For all its desirable qualities it is a much hated tree. Aggressively pushing out native competitors. It is also foul smelling- its Chinese name chouchun means the "foul smelling tree."

Ailanthus is a rapidly growing tree reaching 15 meters in 25 years. It is a short lived species, however, rarely living beyond fifty years. It is a temperate climate tree, thriving in moist, foaming soils but it is very hardy and can adapt to a wide variety of soil types. It prefers sunny areas, and does not do well in shade. The bark is smooth and light grey, often becoming somewhat rougher with light tan fissures as the tree ages. The twigs are stout, smooth to lightly

pubescent, and reddish or chestnut in color. They have lenticels as well as heart-shaped leaf scars (i.e. a scar left on the twig after a leaf falls) with many bundle scars (i.e. small marks where the veins of the leaf once connected to the tree) around the edges. The buds are finely pubescent, dome shaped, and partially hidden behind the petiole, though they are completely visible in the dormant season at the sinuses of the leaf scars.^[4] The branches are light to dark gray in color, smooth, lustrous, and containing raised lenticels that become fissures with age. The ends of the branches become pendulous. All parts of the plant have a distinguishing strong odor that is often likened to peanuts, cashews, or rotting cashews.

The leaves are large, odd- or even-pinnately compound, and arranged alternately on the stem. They range in size from 30 to 90 cm (0.98 to 2.95 ft) in length and contain 10–41 leaflets organized in pairs, with the largest leaves found on vigorous young sprouts. The rachis is light to reddish-green with a swollen base. The leaflets are ovate-lanceolate with entire margins, somewhat asymmetric and occasionally not directly opposite to each other's. Each leaflet is 5 to 18 cm (2.0 to 7.1 in) long and 2.5 to 5 cm (0.98 to 1.97 in) wide. They have a long tapering end while the bases have two to four teeth, each containing one or more glands at the tip.^[4] The leaflets' upper sides are dark green in color with light green veins, while the undersides are a more whitish green. The petioles are 5 to 12 mm (0.20 to 0.47 in) long. The lobed bases and glands distinguish it from similar sumac species.

The flowers are small and appear in large panicles up to 50 cm (20 in) in length at the end of new shoots. The individual flowers are yellowish green to reddish in color, each with five petals and sepals. The sepals are cup-shaped, lobed and united while the petals are valvate (i.e. they meet at the edges without overlapping), white and hairy towards the inside. They appear from mid-April in the south of its range to July in the north. *A. altissima* is dioecious, with

male and female flowers being borne on different individuals. Male trees produce three to four times as many flowers as the females, making the male flowers more conspicuous. Furthermore, the male plants emit a foul-smelling odor while flowering to attract pollinating insects. Female flowers contain ten (or rarely five through abortion) sterile stamens (stamenoides) with heart-shaped anthers. The pistil is made up of five free carpels (i.e. they are not fused), each containing a single ovule. Their styles are united and slender with star-shaped stigmas.

The male flowers are similar in appearance, but they of course lack a pistil and the stamens do function, each being topped with a globular anther and a glandular green disc. The seeds borne on the female trees are 5 mm in diameter and each is encapsulated in a samara that is 2.5 cm long (1 in) and 1 cm (0.39 in) broad, appearing July through August, but can persist on the tree until the next spring. The



samara is large and twisted at the tips, making it spin as it falls, assisting wind dispersal, and aiding buoyancy for long-distance dispersal through hydrochory. The females can produce huge amounts of seeds, normally around 30,000 per kilogram (14,000/lb) of tree, and fecundity can be estimated non-destructively through measurements of dbh.

Removal of young trees is best done by pulling the young seedling as soon as they are large enough to grasp, before their taproots develop. Moisten the soil to make it workable, grasp the stem firmly and pull the undesirable tree of heaven seedling out from the soil along its roots. Collect the broken roots from the planting hole and discard them to keep the seedling from re-sprouting. Then plant something else in the hole. If it is an established tree, girdle it during spring when it is actively growing. Using a hatchet, form one inch long two inch wide and half inch deep cuts or notches around the trunk of the tree. Spray herbicides over the cuts. The chemicals penetrate tree and translocate to the roots, causing it to die. Wipe the excess spray down the trunk to keep it from falling over the grass below. Dig a trench two feet away from the base of the tree. Keep it as deep as required to expose dead or dying roots. Insert a shovel under the root ball to pry it out of the soil. Rock the tree back and forth to break the roots that hold it in the soil so it is easier to remove.

Ailanthus is sometimes confused with sumac. They can be distinguished by smell, and the fruits of the Staghorn Sumac, but leaves are different as well. Note below the top is the Ailanthus the bottom is the Staghorn Sumac.

Sources: www.carolinanature.com/trees/aial.html; plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=AIAL; Wikipedia; www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/Plants/Species_Profiles

Dr. Norlyn L. Bodkin

Dr. Norlyn L. Bodkin, 77, of Harrisonburg, died at Sentara RMH September 29th after a brief illness with leukemia. He was the son of the late Joe P. Bodkin and Nellie Painter Bodkin, and was born in Rockingham Memorial Hospital. He was raised on a farm in Upper Tract, W.Va. His elementary education was in a two-room school in Upper Tract and he graduated from Franklin High School (now Pendleton County High School). He earned his BA and MS degrees in biology from West Virginia University and his Ph.D. in systematic botany from the University of Maryland at College Park.

A memorial service will be held at the Arboretum at James Madison University on Saturday, Oct. 25, at 2 p.m. with a rain date 24 hours later. Donations may be made in his honor to the JMU Arboretum, The Arthritis Foundation, or The American Cancer Society.

(The complete obituary can be seen in the September 30th edition of the Daily News Record.)

Please send any articles or announcements to Elaine Smith, antigone16@comcast.net.