



Shenandoah Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society January 2015

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:

Sunday February 15 Winter Tree ID Walk Deep Run Ponds

We will meet at Deep Run Ponds at 11 am. For directions and information contact Chris Bowlen chris.bowlen@gmail.com In case of cancellation we will meet the following Sunday February 22 at 11 am.

Other Activities

Monday February 2 Wild Virginia's Forest Watch Training

Time: 6:45 pm - 8:45 pm

What are the threats to our forests? How can you stop them? Wild Virginia is proud to offer an informative discussion of "hows" and "whys" of forest plans and projects. Learn about the new George Washington National Forest Plan and how it relates to major work on the ground like the Cowpasture Project. Contact

www.wildvirginia.org

Wednesday February 11 JMU Arboretum *Terrarium Workshop*,

Wednesday, noon-1:30 pm, in the FPEC. Arboretum Director Jan Sievers Mahon, demonstrates and guides participants through the process of creating a terrarium. Create a wee world with different kinds of botanicals each year to use as home or business decor. Registration opens online 30 days in advance of the workshop.

Saturday February 21 Pipeline Route Hike Dowell's Draft Forest Road on Hankey Mountain. Southern Shenandoah Chapter of the PATC. 7 miles. Anyone is welcome to join for a shorter distance and turn back when they wish. Meet at Churchville TasteeFreez at 9:30 a.m. contact Malcolm Cameron 540 2346273,

malcolmcameron@gmail.com

Tuesday February 24, JMU Arboretum *Frances Litten Botanical Lecture*,

Tuesday, 7:00-8:30 pm, Festival Conference Center, Ballroom A. The 9th annual lecture offered free to the public, held in the Festival Conference Center on the campus of James Madison University. The lecture begins at 7:00 p.m. and will once again give the public practical tips and information about many exciting and innovative uses of common plants in landscape designs and home gardening. Learn about transforming any garden into an outdoor gallery of pleasures with the 2015 talk, Art and Artifacts in the Garden with Doug Croft a staff horticulturist at Chanticleer Garden. Book and arboretum products sales after the lecture 8:30 pm to 9:00 pm.

Saturday February 28 & Saturday March 7, JMU Arboretum *Winter Children's Art Workshop*,

Both Saturdays from 1:00 to 3:30pm in the Frances Plecker Education Center (FPEC), with facilitator artist Jewel Yoder Hertzler.

PIEDMONT CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
2015 Winter Speaker Series Schedule
Tri-County Feeds Conference Room, 7408 John Marshall Hwy, Marshall, VA

[www.vnps.org](http://vnps.org) <http://vnps.org/wp/piedmont> Send inquiries to piedmontvnps@gmail.com

Sunday, January 25, 2 pm

Join Richard Stromberg...

Adventures in Plant Identification: Tools, Tips, and Tricks for identifying plants when you are away from home

Scarlet Loco, Photo by Richard Stromberg

Richard is editor of the Piedmont Chapter of VNPS newsletter. As a Virginia Master Naturalist he monitors rare plant communities in Shenandoah National Park and surveys plants for the Virginia Working Landscapes project. He also leads hikes and maintains trails for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. He will describe how he has unraveled the mystery of the identity of the plants he has come upon on hikes in various places in the USA and Europe.

Sunday, February 22, 2 pm

Join Dr. Emily Southgate...

Familiar Flora amid Siberian Splendor

Photo by Emily Southgate

Emily teaches graduate courses in botany and ecology at Hood College in Frederick, MD. Her major research interest is the historical ecology of the Eastern United States, especially New York, New Jersey and Virginia. She found that she felt at home, botanically, in Eastern Siberia and will tell a tale of drifting continents and volcanoes and glaciation to help explain why we share so many genera of plants with eastern Asia.

Sunday, March 22, 2 pm

Join Marion Blois Lobstein...

Our Spring Wildflowers and Their Western U.S. Relatives

Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) *by M.Lobstein*

Marion is Professor Emeritus of Biology at Northern Virginia Community College, member of both Piedmont and Prince William Chapters VNPS, and Vice-President of Flora of Virginia Project. She still volunteers for workshops and walks at the State Arboretum of Virginia.

All lectures are free. Refreshments provided

VNPS Research Program

The Virginia Native Plant Society is pleased to announce a new research grant program to encourage the study of native plants and native plant habitats in Virginia. The focus of the program is on graduate, upper undergraduate, and post-graduate research. We will pilot test the program in 2015 with an appropriation of \$10,000 for one or more projects.

Information about the program and application instructions are on the Internet at

<http://vnps.org/conservation/vnps-research-grant-2015/>

Applications are due February 16, this is an extension from our original announcement.

Pipeline Threatens Habitats for Native Plants in Our Area

Dominion Virginia Power, Duke Energy and Piedmont Natural Gas, have decided to move forward with plans to build a 550-mile natural gas pipeline through Virginia. The company will ask the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for approval, which Dominion hopes to secure by 2016.

The \$2 billion pipeline will carry fracked natural gas from West Virginia through Virginia to North Carolina. The pipeline route cuts through national forest lands traversing areas of outstanding ecological integrity here in Virginia, including Camp Ridge, Sulfur Springs Hollow, Signal Corps Knob, and Brushy Mountain. The proposed 42" natural gas pipeline through Highland, Augusta and Nelson counties will have enormous impact on some of our most pristine places for native plants.

This route crosses approximately 13 miles of Virginia's national forests. It cuts across Shenandoah Mountain just 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 Humpbacks Rocks. (See the Pipeline hikes above). It also comes dangerously close to Staunton's drinking watershed. The connection to the possibility of fracking in the George Washington National Forest has not gone unnoticed.

The vast construction, access roads, the grading and leveling of mountainsides etc. is likely to change these areas forever with a serious impact on our native plants. The Virginia Native Plant Society mission is to protect these plants and the wild places where they grow. So we cannot ignore this threat. Most chapters of the VNPS have come out against this proposed route although our chapter has yet to take a stance.

The Virginia Native Plant Society has recently approved of the following resolutions:

Resolution #1: Virginia Native Plant Society, in accordance with its mission to protect the natural areas of Virginia, opposes the construction of the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Pipelines.

Resolution #2 In opposing the construction of the Atlantic Coast and Mountain Valley Pipelines, the Virginia Native Plant Society resolves to join the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance, a coalition of non-profit organizations concerned about the damage pipelines would cause.

Invasive Plant of the Month: Autumn Olive

Fairly common in the George Washington National forest among other places is Autumn Olive *Elaeagnus umbellata*. It is also known as Japanese silverberry, autumn elaeagnus and spreading oleaster, although I have never heard them called any of these. The species is indigenous to China, Korea and Japan. Autumn olive is a deciduous shrub that can grow as tall as 20 feet. Its cream to pale yellow flowers bloom in early spring and bring on an abundance of pink to red berries dotted with scales. The plants leaves are elliptically shaped with a slightly wavy margin. It is distinguished from other similar shrubs by the silvery scales found on the lower leaf surface.

Autumn Olive is wider than tall, up to 30 feet in width while a height of only 20 feet. More often they are only about 12 feet in height. The stems are silvery or golden brown, speckled, often with thorns. The grayish green leaves with their silvery scales have a shimmery look that makes it easy to identify. The flowers which bloom in April to June are in clusters of one to seven, bell-shaped, with cream to light yellow petals and are very fragrant. They are small about half an inch. The fruits, also small, about a quarter to a third of an inch in diameter, are fleshy, and are at first silvery with brown scales then mature to a speckled red. Although very small the tree bears abundant fruit. They are edible not just to animals but to humans. They are tart-tasting, with chewable seeds. Has anyone eaten them? Their content of carotenoid and lycopene is some seven to seventeen times higher than that of tomatoes. Reproduction is by seed or propagation by stump sprouting and or by roots. It is not new to the United States having been grown here since 1830. However, in the 1950s it was widely promoted as a great way to provide wildlife habit and erosion control in environmentally disturbed areas. The Forest Service planted many of them along the forest roads in the George Washington. Because it fixes atmospheric nitrogen in its roots, it often grows vigorously and in infertile soils where is



outcompetes native species. It did make available habitat and food for wildlife but soon became a major problem as autumn olive began to rapidly spread. To make matters worse, attempts to remove the shrub by cutting and/or burning created even more autumn olive. Hand pulling autumn olive seedlings is an effective way to rid yourself of the plant. In fact, control efforts before fruiting will prevent the spread of seeds. If the plant is too big to pull, herbicides will be necessary to eradicate the plant from the general area of invasion. You will need to cut and apply herbicide to the trunk repeatedly.

A similar evasive plant is *Elaeagnus angustifolia*, often called Russian Olive but also known as Silver Berry and Persian Olive. It is native to western and central Asia, Afghanistan, from southern Russia, and the Steppe region from Kazakhstan to Turkey and Iran. It is now also widely established in North America as an introduced species.

Elaeagnus angustifolia is also a thorny shrub or tree but grows a little higher than Autumn Olive up to 16 to 25 feet. Its stems, buds, and leaves have a dense covering of silvery to rusty scales. The leaves are alternate, lanceolate, 1 1/2 to five inches long and a half to one inch broad, with a smooth margin. The highly aromatic flowers, produced in clusters of 1-3, are 4 inches long with a four-lobed creamy yellow calyx; they appear in early summer and are followed by clusters of fruit, a small cherry-like .4-.7 inches long, orange-red covered in silvery scales. The fruits are also edible and sweet, though with a dryish, mealy texture. In Iran, the dried powder of the fruits is used mixed with milk for rheumatoid arthritis and joint pains. It is also one of the seven items which are used in Haft Sin or the seven 'S's which is a traditional table setting of Nowruz, the Persian spring celebration.

Neither Autumn Olive nor Russian Olive are actually olives. They are members of the Oleaster (Elaeagnaceae) family. Our well known edible olive, *Olea europaea*, is in a different botanical Olive (Oleaceae) family. The name comes from the similarity of its fruits. (Sources: Nature Conservancy www.nature.org; U.S. Forest Service "Autumn Olive" a.fs.fed.us/.../factsheets/pdf/autumn-and-russian-olive.pdf); Connecticut Botanical Society <http://www.ct-botanical-society.org/galleries/elaeagnusumbe.html>)

Plant Trivia

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 2006 there are 258,000 species of flowering plants (Magnoliophyta) in the world. About 0.6 percent are found in our state. However, this is most likely an undercount since there are many plants not yet classified or whose classifications are disputed. Most of these are in the tropics.

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