



Shenandoah Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society April 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:

Wednesday April 1 Garlic mustard removal at Deep Run Ponds. Meet at noon. Contact Chris Bowlen
bowlenchris@comcast.net

Saturday April 18 Shenandoah Chapter Native Plant Sale. Staunton Earth Day 9-12.

We always sell a lot of plants, and thereby introduce more folks to the joy of gardening in a way that supports the environment. We have two plant sales this one and in Waynesboro on May 2 (see below).

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

****Donate extra plants from your gardens. We will pot them up in advance of the sale, and can even pick them up from you if necessary.**

****Sign up to work for a few hours the day of the sale, sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm. It is great fun!**

CONTACT: Anneli Tattersall at 540-248-0932, annelitatt@yahoo.com, or Eleanor Baker, 443-797-2824, eleanorbaker24@yahoo.com.

Thursday April 23 10:00. Wildflower Walk Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at James Madison University. Contact Michael Seth sethmj@jmu.edu

Sunday April 26. Wildflower Hike. Joint hike with the Southern Shenandoah Chapter of the PATC. See below for contact.

Saturday May 2 Shenandoah Chapter Native Plant Sale Riverfest Waynesboro 10-12

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Other Activities

- ❖ **Saturday April 4. Geology Hike on Shenandoah Mountain. Hike from Reddish Knob to Tilman Rd via Timber Ridge and Wolf Ridge Trails. 8.5 mi.** Meet at 8:30 Turner Ashby High School on Rt 42 just north of Bridgewater. Contact Malcolm Cameron, malcolmcameron@gmail.com (540) 234-6273.
- ❖ **Saturday April 4. Birds of the Valley.** Bird walk Hillandale Park Harrisonburg 8:30. contact: sc.shen.group@gmail.com
- ❖ **Friday April 10 Garlic Mustard Removal Ramsey Draft. 10:00-2:30.** Wild Virginia is carrying out this annual effort. Contact wildvirginia.org/recreation/events

- ❖ **Saturday April 11 Wild and Scenic Film Festival. Piedmont Community College at 7:00pm.** Sponsored by Wild Virginia. Contact wildvirginia.org/recreation/events
- ❖ **Mondays April 13, May 11, & June 8, 2015, *Monarchs at the Arboretum*, Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at James Madison University. Noon - 1:00 pm in the FPEC.** A three session (attend one or attend all three) workshop series with facilitator, Gail Napora, exploring the Monarch butterfly, its migration, life cycle, habitat needs and much more. This is a program for all ages. Young and Old will enjoy the thrill of releasing Monarchs at the arboretum at the second and third sessions. Online registration opens 30 days in advance of this session.
- ❖ **Friday and Saturday April 17 & April 18 *Arbor Day Trees and Native Plant Sale*, Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at James Madison University. 9:00 am -3:00 pm in the parking lot of the FPEC.** In the prime time of spring, the Arboretum offers a wide selection of wildflowers, contrasting foliage plants like native ferns, with unusual shrubs and trees that can make home and business landscaping ecofriendly and lovely! To honor those who educate youth, all city and county public school teachers receive 15% off tree purchases presenting a school ID!
- ❖ **Saturday April 18 Wild and Scenic Film Festival. Plecker Auditorium, Blue Ridge Community College at 7:00pm.** Sponsored by Wild Virginia Contact wildvirginia.org/recreation/events
- ❖ **Sunday April 19. Wildflower Hike. Doyles-Jones Run SN. 8.4 mi. Southern Shenandoah Chapter of the PATC and our chapter of the VNPS.** This is a moderate hike to identify wildflowers and ferns. Contact David Bennick (540) 337 or dbennick@verizon.net.
- ❖ **Wednesday April 22 Bird Walk Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at James Madison University. 8:00 am.**
- ❖ **Friday April 24 to Saturday April 26. Wild Virginia Special Fracking Outing.** For more information Contact wildvirginia.org/recreation/events
- ❖ **Saturday April 25 Shenandoah Wildflower Walks and Photo Tournament**
See below for more in information and the Headwaters Master Naturalist Web site for free registration: <http://headwatersmn.org/>
- ❖ **Sunday April 26 Wildflower Hike Mauhar Trail. 7.5 mi. Southern Shenandoah Chapter of the PATC.**
This is really a great place for trilliums among other spring wildflowers. Contact: Mike Smith foresmith@comcast.net.

Request for Volunteer for Shenandoah Wildflower Walks and Photo Tournament

From Chip Brown, cbrown2001@gmail.com

Hello wildflower resources and experts!

Thank you so much for participating in last year's Shenandoah Mountain Wildflower Walks and Photo Tournament. I hope that you will consider working with us again this year.

In anticipation of the walks on Saturday, April 25th, we are gathering volunteer hosts of the Headwaters Master Naturalists and as many of you experts as we can for an organizing meeting on Monday, March 16th from 6-8 pm at Blue Ridge Community College, Building E, Room 106.

In addition to doing some group planning for the wild flower walks, Lynn Cameron will be sharing her perspective on Shenandoah Mountain and its importance in the National Forest and Eric Jones will be giving a presentation focused on digging deeper than just learning the names of wildflowers.

We would be honored if you could join us.

Please contact me if you need more information. I will be sending out a reminder e-mail early next week.

If you cannot make it to this event, but are still interested in participating on April 25th, please contact me and I will make sure you are included on future communications. Feel free to call me if that is a better way to communicate with you. My number is 507-459-1839.

Thanks for work and may spring come soon!

Invasive Plant of the Month: Oriental bittersweet

Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) is a deciduous woody plant which grows as a climbing vine and trailing shrub. It is also known as Chinese bittersweet, Asian bittersweet and Round-leaf bittersweet. Like so many of our invasives this is native to China, Korea and Japan and thrives in our region. The vines have silver to reddish brown bark. They start off thin about 4 inches in width. Stems of older plants 4 inches in diameter have been reported. The leaves are alternate, rounded- about as wide as long, glossy with finely toothed margins. There are separate female (fruiting) and male (non-fruiting) plants. Female plants produce clusters of small greenish flowers in axillary clusters (from most leaf axils), and each plant can produce large numbers of fruits and seeds. The fruits are yellow, globular capsules that at maturity split open to reveal three red-orange, fleshy arils (fleshy coverings of seeds) each containing one or two seeds.

Oriental bittersweet infests forest edges, woodlands, fields, hedgerows, coastal areas and salt marsh edges, particularly those suffering some form of land disturbance. The seed, which is readily dispersed to new areas by many species of birds including mockingbirds, blue jays and European starlings. The seeds germinate in late spring. It also expands vegetatively through root suckering. It can also spread from tree to tree in the forest canopy.

Introduced into the U.S. in the 1860s as an ornamental plant, oriental bittersweet is often associated with old homesites from which it has escaped into surrounding natural areas. Oriental bittersweet is still widely planted and maintained as an ornamental vine, further promoting its spread. The abundance of showy fruits have made Oriental bittersweet extremely popular for use in floral arrangements.

While often found in more open, sunny sites, its tolerance for shade allows oriental bittersweet to move in. It is common and our area being a real problem in the Shenandoah National Park. It is has the “highest” rank in the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (see below). Besides displacing our native American bittersweet, *Celastrus orbiculatus* can kill trees and shrubs. It is a vigorously growing vine that climbs up a tree but coiling around it. It smothers vegetation which may die from excessive shading or breakage. As it girdles trees and shrubs it cuts off water and nutrients, thus literally strangling them. When bittersweet climbs high up on trees the increased weight can lead to uprooting and blow-over during high winds and heavy snowfalls.

If the plants are not too big they can be pulled up by their roots and placed in a plastic bag which is what we do in the park. Larger ones need to be killed with herbicides applied to cut surfaces.

Oriental Bittersweet and American Bittersweet

Not to be confused with American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*). American bittersweet produces flowers and fruits in single terminal panicles at the tips of the stems. Oriental bittersweet produces flowers in small axillary clusters that are shorter than the leaves. American bittersweet has fewer, large clusters of fruits versus Oriental bittersweet which has lots of fruit clusters emerging at many points along the stems. The leaves are distinctive as well. American bittersweet are nearly twice as long as wide and are tapered at each end. Oriental bittersweet has rounded leaves.

The two hybridize so sometimes it is difficult to tell them apart. But pure American bittersweet is quite distinctive. It is also much less common and becoming even less common being displaced from its ecological niche by its Asian cousin.

Sources: Plant Conservation Alliance's Alien Plant Working Group

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/ceor1.htm>; “Oriental Bittersweet” Michigan State Department of Natural Resources, <http://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/invasive-species/OrientalBittersweetBCP.pdf>



American Bittersweet leaves left and Oriental Bittersweet leaves right
(<http://www.carolinanature.com/trees>)

New Invasive Plant List by the Department of Conservation and Recreation

The list contains 87 invasive species of which 79 are found in our area.

The full list can be found at: http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/documents/nh-invasive-plant-list-2014.pdf

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