



Shenandoah Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society November 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:

Our Chapter's Board will be meeting on November 10th at 3:30 p.m. in Bridgewater. If anyone interested in attending contact Eleanor Baker for details, email: eleanorbaker24@yahoo.com 443-797-2824.

Winter Botany Walk- there will be one possibly in January but date, place etc. TBA.

Upcoming Events:

Saturday November 7 Birds of the Burg. Shenandoah Group Sierra Club.

Walk the park trails and learn about the amazing variety of birds found right here in our city parks! School-age children and families are welcome. All children (under 18) MUST be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Bring binoculars and bird guides if you have them.

Sponsored by Sierra Club Shenandoah Group with the assistance of volunteers from the Rockingham County Bird Club and Virginia Master Naturalists. For more information, contact: Kathy Byers (540.820.6517), or Ralph Grove (540.478.3677)

**Tuesday November 10 Bonsai Workshop. Edith J. Carrier Arboretum. Frances Plecker Education Center
Noon to 1:00.** <http://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/>

Saturday November 14 Pipeline Monitoring Program. Wild Virginia

Learn from Trout Unlimited (TU) how to monitor water quality throughout Virginia's national forests. Wild Virginia will host a one-day training at the Staunton Public Library 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. We will be placing special emphasis on monitoring sites along the Atlantic Coast Pipeline route.

Staunton Public Library 1:00. For more information contact wildvirginia.org

Sunday November 15. Humpback Rock Hike. Wild Virginia. For more information go to wildvirginia.org

Sunday November 15. Annual Meeting of the Southern Shenandoah Chapter of the PATC.

SSVC Annual Meeting and Potluck at 3 p.m. The annual meeting will be held at the PATC Cliff's House Cabin 11-12 miles northeast of Elkton. Bring a dish to share, utensils and your beverage.

We will discuss hiking and protecting our natural heritage. Non-hikers welcome. Cabin parking is limited. We must carpool from Food Lion in Elkton. Meet at the Elkton Food Lion at 2:30. Cliff's House Cabin is available for the night and sleeps 6.

Contact Karen Waterman with your plans and for directions. karenswaterman@gmail.com or 540 337 1273. Hope to see you there!

Tuesday November 17 Bonsai Workshop. Edith J. Carrier Arboretum. Frances Plecker Education Center
Noon to 1:00. <http://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/>

Wednesday November 18 Forest Defense Force. Staunton Public Library Wild Virginia. For more information contact wildvirginia.org

Sunday November 22 Overall Falls Hike. Shenandoah Group Sierra Club. Contact: Ralph Grove - 540-999-8734 ralph.grove@gmail.com

Invasive Plant of the Month: Oriental Lady's Thumb

There are 100 to 150 species of the Persicaria worldwide, mostly in temperate regions. Fifteen are native to Virginia. Known as Smartweed, Lady's-thumb are members of the buckwheat family (Polygonaceae). *Polygonum Cespitosum*, or more commonly known as Oriental Lady's Thumb, is a forb/herb (a forb/herb is a non-woody plant that is not a grass) of the genus Polygonum and is one of the most troublesome of our invasive plants. Walk in the Shenandoah National Park and you are likely to find it within a few minutes going along a trail. And it seems to be spreading. Little Devil Stairs, for example, one of the great places for wildflowers in the spring as well as a geological wonderland is increasingly overrun with this plant. More troublesome is that it is invading even relative pristine places in our area. An example is on Buck Mountain. Take the trail that starts on Hearthstone Lake and hike the eight miles up to the top of Shenandoah Mountain near Reddish Knob and you are in one of the most remote parts of the George Washington National Forest. In fact there is one point on the trail or just off it, that is said to be the furthest from a road of any point in Virginia. It is truly as much of a wilderness walk as one can have in our state. Yet Lady's Thumb has covered a large area of the forest floor. At a spot not far from the lake it extends out from the trail on both sides as far as one can see. It is an annual which means it grows for one season only.

Polygonum Cespitosum or Oriental Lady's is a summer annual weed plant of the family Polygonaceae, native to eastern Asia, from China to Japan and Southeast Asia, and introduced into North America. The plant grows to 3.5 feet (105 cm) in height with elliptic to lanceolate leaves, usually 20-75 mm (0.4-30.0 inches) long. It has small pink or red flowers arranged in tight terminal spikes. *Polygonum persicaria*, a closely related species is also called Lady's thumb and is similarly an expanding invasive. The two are difficult to distinguish. Around the stem of both these species there is a papery sheath known as an ocrea with stiff spine-like hairs at the top, but in *P. caespitosum* these hairs are much longer, as long as the visible portion of the ocrea, whereas in *P. persicaria* they are much shorter.

The best way to control these evil sisters is by pulling them up in the spring and bagging them. While nearly as prevalent as Japanese stiltgrass, these invasives seem easier to control if one repeatedly pulls them up.

Sources: www.plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=POCEL; ; *Flora of Virginia*.



Polygonum Cespitosum with its trademark “thumbprint” on the leaf.

Source: <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-yId7q0RQsw4/T5r6xCTznRI/AAAAAAAAACpU/WMcKgsagC2Q/s1600/smartweed+leaf+lorain,+cespitosum.jpg>

Chestnut Oaks

The November issue of *The Potomac Appalachian* has an interesting article on Chestnut oaks (*Quercus prinus*) focusing on our area. Since this is one of the most abundant trees on our mountain ridges, especially in Massanutten it is worth learning more about this tree. Did you know that they mast every four or five years instead of every two or three years as with most other oaks? That the average acorn contains 5.76 percent protein, 10.07 percent crude fat, 78.9 carbohydrates, 0.15 percent magnesium with traces of calcium?

Perhaps more on this in another newsletter.

Please send any articles or announcements to [Elaine Smith](#)