

**Monday, March 30, 2015:** The Lynnhaven River Now organization and the Backbay Foundation are co-hosting the ***Watersheds Forum: Envisioning our Future*** at the Virginia Beach Convention Center from 8:15-12:30 p.m. Register at [www.bbf.org](http://www.bbf.org) or [Shannon.davis@bbf.org](mailto:Shannon.davis@bbf.org) for \$20.00 which includes breakfast.

**Saturday, April 4, 2015:** will be the ***Native Plant Sale*** at the Francis Land House during the ***Gathering of the Guilds Celebration***. The Butterfly Society, the Beekeepers Association and the Beekeepers of Tidewater, the Blacksmith, the Wood Turners and more groups will be on site for a great family outing. Check it out at: [www.museumsvb.org/museums/francis-land-house](http://www.museumsvb.org/museums/francis-land-house)

Plant sale hours: 10 AM-4PM. This is Easter weekend folks so let's kick off the warmer season with no more snow! Let's enjoy the colors of spring!!!

**Saturday, April 18, 2015:** Field Trip: ***Spring Canoe/ Kayak Trip*** will be on the Blackwater River in conjunction with Clean America Day. We will put in at RT 617 at Walls Bridge, Surry County. Take-out will be at RT 621, Johnson Corner. If you wish to drive directly to the route 617 put-in, please arrive around 10 AM. Otherwise meet us at 9 AM at: Westminster Reformed Presbyterian Church, 3488 Godwin Blvd., Suffolk, VA. We will be able to load our boats and form carpools.

This part of the Blackwater River can be difficult to paddle because it frequently transitions from defined channel to braided character several times. As a result, it will be important for participants to stay with the group and not wander. The first one third of the trip is the most challenging but it does improve. This section of river features many old growth bald cypress and tupelos, some with weird shapes.

Please be sure to bring:

- 1) Boats, paddles and life vests
- 2) Beverages lunch and snacks
- 3) Sunscreen and insect repellent
- 4) Change of clothing stored in dry-bag

We are sorry to report the passing of our friend and fellow paddler, Sharon Cross who died March 14th. Sharon was a regular participant in our paddling group for many years. She had been in declining health for some time. Her husband, Preston will be with us and has requested that we have a brief memorial. We will do this during our lunch stop.

At the conclusion of the trip we plan to dine at the Virginia Diner in Wakefield if arrangements can be made. Everyone is invited to join us to unwind and rehash our adventure.

Please call us if you have any questions, concerns or if you will need a boat or partner, and we will attempt to match you with someone. It would help us immensely if you could call or email us of your plans to attend or not. If you received this email in error or you no longer wish to be on our list, please let us know and we will remove your name.

Byron & Jean

Home: (757) 934-0588

Byron's cell: (757) 705-2035

Jean's cell: (757) 651-5300

**Thursday, April 23, 2015:** The topic of our presentation will be on ***Native Plants of First Landing Park or Seashore State Park for this Local*** by Beth Richardson, Native Plant Lover. Membership and guests meet at 7 PM in the Magnolia Room at the Norfolk Botanical Garden. And the yummy refreshments hosted by Amy Jones, our Hospitality Chairperson.

**Friday, April 24, and Saturday, April 25, 2015: Spring Heirloom Plant Sale + Garden Weekend**

Please join the **Hermitage Museum in Norfolk** for their annual Plant Sale and their inaugural Garden Weekend! Locals love the annual plant sale so much they have decided to expand it. As always, they will have heirlooms, annuals, perennials, shrubs, native and wetland plants, trees, and more for sale but this year they have added a garden cafe, free demos, community tables, kids' activities, and more. View the schedule below:

**Friday, 9am to 3pm:**

- Ongoing Plant Sale
- Rose Garden Cafe brought to you by Sweetwater Cuisine, 11am-2pm
- Free Seminar: Let's Talk Tomatoes! 11am-12pm
- Free Gardens & Wetlands Tour at 12pm

**Kayleigh Felderman**, Norfolk's Grace & Gratitude Farm, shares the joy of growing heirloom tomatoes. During this informative seminar, participants will hear growing tips and learn about the tomato varieties that do well in the Tidewater area. Kayleigh will discuss the differences among heirlooms, hybrids, and GMOs and will explore the history and future of growing tomatoes.

Saturday, 9am to 2pm

- Ongoing Plant Sale
- Rose Garden Cafe brought to you by Sweetwater Cuisine, 11am-2pm
- Free Demonstration: Container Gardening 10am-11am

**Marie Butler**, Landscape Coordinator for the Virginia Zoological Park, will discuss container selection, preparation, design, planting, and care for several different growing conditions. Marie will incorporate plants available for purchase at the Heirloom Plant Sale into her presentation.

- Free Gardens & Wetlands Tour at 12pm
- Community Tables & Kids Activities, 10am-1pm

Meet representatives from some of the area's environmental and garden-related organizations including the Elizabeth River Project, Norfolk Master Gardeners and others.

Kids will enjoy a hands-on seedling activity and can explore the grounds with our scavenger hunt! Please reserve your seat by emailing [mball@thehermitagemuseum.org](mailto:mball@thehermitagemuseum.org) or calling 757-423-2052 x 207 or visit:

<http://thehermitagemuseum.org/events/spring-heirloom-plant-sale-garden-weekend>

**Saturday, May 2, 2015**: ***Virginia Beach Master Gardeners Plant Sale*** from 9-3 p.m. and **Sunday, May 3, 2015** from 10-2 p.m. at the Farmer's Market at Princess Anne Road and Dam Neck Road. Rain or shine. Cash or check only please. ATM is on site. [www.vbmg.org](http://www.vbmg.org)

**Friday & Saturday, May 8-9, 2015**: will be the ***Native Plant Sale*** at the Norfolk Botanical Garden. Plant sale hours: 10 AM-3PM. Happy Mother's Day weekend! Show your mother how special she is with a native plant. You will always be thought of warmly when she sees that plant you chose for her because she is such a special lady.

**President's Message**: **Carol Heiser**, Habitat Educational Coordinator, with the Virginia Department of Games & Inland Fisheries spoke to us on current projects being developed promoting native plants. WOW! Carol slammed us with lots of information for varying tastes in gardening and conservation. We had a nice crowd to welcome Carol back as she is a favorite in our industry. Carol challenged the members to educate people on the importance of biodiversity for the wellbeing of our insect population as well as our own.

Carol supports **Doug Tallamy's** message to welcome back nature by planting native plants to help the declining insect population. His book, ***Bringing Nature Home***, is an excellent read and reference. Not all bugs and insects are bad! Insects are the main food source for baby birds and the insects are looking for their own main sources of food. For example, milkweed is important host plant to the Monarch butterfly which may feed on nectar from other plants but would not be able to reproduce without the supply of native milkweed. We felt renewed for spring after Carol's presentation as we quest for to spread the word to friends and family.

I want to thank to all those who came out to the last meeting because the Virginia Native Plant Society is here to educate the public on the wonderful world of native plants. We were welcomed by the beautiful and breath-taking display of bulbs at the entrance of the Norfolk Botanical Garden Thursday evening. I thought it was so pretty I jumped out for a photo shoot! And the yummy refreshments hosted by Amy Jones, our Hospitality Chairperson, were just the trick to make our meeting festive. Enjoy the beginning of spring. Wild about native plants!

Beth