



South Hampton Roads Chapter Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places

Upcoming Events

At A Glance



Jan 23: General meeting, Old Admin Bldg, NBG. Open discussion on best practices for dirt and soil.

Jan 25-26: Flower and Garden Expo, VB Convention Center.



Early Heads Up: Virginia Beach Master Gardeners **Fall Gardening Festival** on **October 3, 2020**, Hampton Roads Agricultural Research & Extension Center in Virginia Beach. Rain date is October 10.

COASTAL PLAIN TALK

Newsletter of the South Hampton Roads Chapter
January 2020

President's Column

Is it truly winter? With temps in the 60's and 70's in January, I have paperwhites and other bulbs already blooming for a couple weeks. Some of the natives are poking their first leaves out already. Cranefly orchids are plentiful in my yard, they push leaves out to take advantage of lack of deciduous cover to store energy in the winter, going dormant before sending up their tiny flowers on 6-12" spikes in mid-summer. I have rattlesnake plantain leafing out as well.

Congratulations to the Ruling Robot Falcons (Joshua and Luke) who won their competition for Virginia, and are planning a bumble bee friendly multiple location planting project on March 7, 2020, in Newport News. They will compete in the world championships in April, slated for Detroit, MI.

Our Chapter Treasurer, who also is Treasurer for State VNPS, was instrumental in garnering a \$5000 donation for State VNPS by quickly acting with a proposal for the donation in December! Congratulations Kathleen Stasulis on efforts to secure this funding for State!

Our next meeting is Thursday, January 23, 6:30pm at Norfolk Botanical Garden. We should be in the Old Administration building, but **please** ask the guard at the entrance for confirmation. With the ground fairly bare now, this is a good time for an open presentation/discussion on Dirt and Soil. I will lead the discussion, but let's all bring ideas on how we improve our ground.

I recently viewed "Symphony of the Soil", suggested and provided by Sandy Ricks (available at the Virginia Beach Public Library). It is nearly two hours long, but gives a good background about the makeup of quality soil. Great variety of locations and some rather impressive scenery as well.

Big Bird? Ballerina Doe?
Homeschool teacher? ...



Mother Nature has
the best box of
crayons.

—Unknown

If you haven't already signed up for participation in the Flower and Garden Expo January 24, 25 and 26 at the Virginia Beach Convention Center, please consider doing so. There are still slots open. Anyone on the Volunteer List gets in for free so you can enjoy the event before or after your time slot. Amy Jones is again coordinating what traditionally has been the best educational booth at the show. Sign up at our meeting or email Amy (amynally1@aol.com).

The South Hampton Roads VNPS spring sale will be at Francis Land House on Saturday, April 4. We will need all hands on deck to provide another blockbuster event. Last year we sold out by 2pm on a rainy, dreary day!

—Steve Stasulis



Wildflower of the Year for 2020: *Geranium maculatum*

Native wild geranium is an herbaceous perennial woodland plant of eastern North America. It colonizes by rhizomes, but not aggressively.



Pinkish-purple flowers float above dissected leaves brightening a deciduous woodland. It is not deer resistant.

Thank you, [Amy Jones](#), for another beautiful poster for the Wildflower of the Year!

The poster will be on display in our booth at the Flower and Garden Expo later this month.



Bee Byway Project

In case you missed the meeting on November 7, we had an interesting presentation by Joshua Nichols and Luke Marsten, The Ruling Robot Falcons. The team competed in the FIRST LEGO League for seven years and competed twice at the World Championship. The organization called FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is an international youth organization that inspires kids ages 6-18 to learn about science and technology. Each year, FIRST LEGO League introduces a scientific and real-world challenge for teams to solve.

In 2016, The Ruling Robot Falcons team project focused on creating a solution to the decline of native bees. In 2017, they worked on using native plants to take nitrogen and phosphorus out of soil through phytoremediation. But these solutions relied on homeowners to implement and they didn't really work unless people used them. The 2019 challenge, City Shaper, challenged kids to choose a problem with a building or a public space and come up with an innovative solution to that problem.

The team decided to create a solution that would use the city's wilder public spaces to create bee habitat and feeding stations to reduce fragmentation between areas where bees can forage and rest. This Bee Byway will extend through the North-West section of Newport News between Huntington Park and Newport News Park creating a pollinator corridor of perennial flowers that are food for native bees and wilder areas for them to nest in. The vision is to create bee habitat pathways one third of a mile apart along a line of waypoints in the public areas in Newport News to tie isolated pockets of food and habitat together. Based on their research, the team plotted 52 sites through the designated Newport News corridor.

Creating the way-stations is a very large community effort which will take 50-100 people to plant at 36 points on The Bee Byway on the morning of March 7th. Each site will take approximately one hour to finish. All the sites are within one third of a mile apart. Volunteers are welcome to plant one site or multiple depending on their time availability.

If you are interested in volunteering for this effort, please let them know, along with how many hours you are available, and they'll add you to their list! We have created an event on our Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/events/585850218646450/>.

Once the project is evaluated, it's possible this approach can be expanded in the future to South Hampton Roads.

—M.C. King



Congratulations!
Since their November presentation to us, Luke and Joshua won the 1st place Virginia State Championship in December, and will be competing in the FLL World Championship in Detroit in April. Well done! We're looking forward to hearing the results of your project.

The Bee Byway
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Environmental-Conservation-Organization/The-Bee-Byway-103592891120292/>

Schedule of Chapter Meetings and Events

Chapter meetings are held the fourth Thursday of the month, September through May, except as noted below. Meetings are free and open to the public so bring a friend. Light refreshments are served before the meeting at 6:30 pm. The speaker starts at 7:00 pm followed by a brief chapter meeting. Any time changes will be noted in the schedule.

All meetings will be held in the refurbished Old Administration Building, Garden Room, at Norfolk Botanical Garden (NBG). Note that occasional scheduling conflicts at the Garden may necessitate a room change. The alternate room will be listed in the schedule and in the sidebar on the first page of this newsletter. *Please check the schedule each month to verify the location of our meeting.*

2020 Meeting and Event Schedule

- January 23: General meeting in the Old Administration Bldg. Open discussion on best practices for dirt/soil.
- January 24-26: Booth at Flower & Garden Expo in VB.
- February 27: General meeting. Speaker TBA.
- March 26: General meeting. Speaker TBA.
- April 23: General meeting. Speaker TBA.
- May 28: General meeting. Speaker TBA.

Plant Sales:

- April 4: *Plant Sale* at Francis Land House
- May 1-2: *Plant Sale* at Norfolk Botanical Garden

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• **Speakers**

• ***We need your help with speakers.*** If you

• know someone who is plant, conservation or

• nature oriented, especially if they are a

• compelling speaker, please ask them if they

• would be interested in speaking at a meeting

• and pass the info on to Steve Stasulis at

• stasuliss@hotmail.com

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Vacant - One position

Chapter Board of Directors

We still need a *Vice President* and a *Social Media* person.

Please consider volunteering and submit your name to Steve Stasulis at stasuliss@hotmail.com.

Newsletter

I hope you enjoyed this newsletter. I welcome any feedback and suggestions. If there's a topic you'd like to see covered, please let me know.

I do my best to proofread the final product, but sometimes we humans see what should be there rather than what is there. Any errors are mine. Please let me know if a correction should be included in the next issue.

Thanks, M.C. King

mck5110@charter.net