Virginia Native Plant Society

Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places

November 2026

Dear Friends of Native Plants and Wild Spaces,

In our busy and oftentimes challenging lives, we look to the holidays for a glimmer of light and hope. Along with them, we welcome the season of giving and generosity that helps uplift both the lives of those who receive gifts and those who give them.

Each year, we ask for your generous support for causes and projects that complement our mission and parallel our values. This year, our fundraising campaign, with your generous help, will support three worthy projects. Our goal is again $50,000 and we hope you can help us reach it.

For more than 25 years Blandy Experimental Farm and the State Arboretum of Virginia have given Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS) a home, including office space, storage, and support for our office manager in various aspects of her job, including a lot of valuable technical assistance. The local chapter is given meeting space there.



In 2026-27 Blandy turns 100 years old. The property was transferred in 1926, and the arboretum was established in 1927. Importantly for VNPS, the arboretum made a commitment to represent Virginia's native flora by opening a large native plant area in the heart of the property. Graduate and undergraduate students from many places attend UVA's Environmental Sciences department's summer research programs at the arboretum, usually studying native flora and fauna and their relationships.

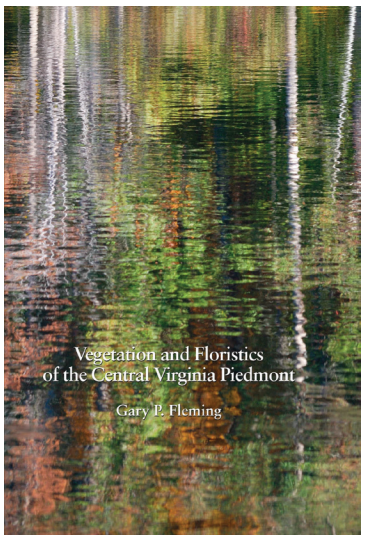


During the upcoming year the Foundation of the State Arboretum will raise funds for an unrestricted endowment that will maintain and enhance the arboretum, support environmental research and student learning, expand community programs and provide financial footing for the upcoming century. VNPS would like to support this effort with a gift at the level of Centennial Circle, $10,000.

Many of you know **Gary Fleming**, an active VNPS lifetime member since the mid-1980s, as a leader of fascinating walks and field trips at statewide events and contributor of content and photos to VNPS newsletters, websites and social media. By leveraging his 30-year tenure with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Virginia Natural Heritage Program, as well as years of personal field work, Gary has compiled all of his studies of the region's plant communities and its flora into an **amazing new book, *Vegetation and Floristics of the Central Virginia Piedmont***, which includes more than 300 beautiful photos.

The Piedmont is Virginia's largest physiographic province, covering 38% of the state between the Coastal Plain to the east and the Appalachians to the west. Lacking the topographic diversity of the mountains and the wetland diversity of the Coastal Plain, the Piedmont has received less attention historically from ecologists

and botanists. Yet it is essential for understanding the distribution of plants across Virginia. The book covers 10 Piedmont counties and emphasizes the relationship of the flora to biogeographic patterns and environmental influences imposed by climate, geology, topography, soils, and human activities while covering 1,975 plant taxa.



Your donation will cover the cost of high-quality offset printing of Gary's book and make possible the donation of the book to schools and libraries across the region.

In addition to these two projects, we ask for your support for **native plant research grants**. Originally conceived as a project funded by an undesignated and unexpected bequest to the Society, these grants have become core to our mission over the past 12 years. From humble beginnings of two $5,000 grants in 2015, this year we spent $27,788, with worthy applications totaling more than $50,000 that were left unfunded. When the VNPS board decided to fund grants, the goals were to encourage the study of native plant biology and ecosystems, and to advance botany education. We have funded diverse areas of research, from digitizing herbarium samples in 2015 to investigating the vegetative and fire history of Buffalo Mountain this year. Federal support for science grants has diminished, and budgets are tight across the spectrum as expenses continue to rise. Help us bridge some of the gap in our Commonwealth.

As we reflect on joys and successes, as well as losses and challenges that were part of our lives in 2026, we hope you join us this year, again, in support of these projects that are important to all of us as we protect and conserve native plants and their habitats. You can send your gift through the mail or donate online at www.vnps.org.

Deeply grateful for your support,

Nancy Vehrs

Nancy Vehrs, President

Emilia Godwin

Emilia Godwin, Fundraising Chair

VNPS ANNUAL FUND APPEAL 2026

Please give generously to support the **VNPS Special Projects Campaign.**

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of: ☐ $1,000 ☐ $500 ☐ $100 ☐ $75 ☐ $50 ☐ Other $____

To contribute online, visit vnps.org/donate

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Phone_____E-mail_____

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Want to pay by credit card? (Discover, MasterCard, Visa, or American Express)

Card number_____Expiration date_____Security code_____

Print name_____Signature_____

Make checks payable to VNPS and mail to: **VNPS Special Projects Campaign,** 400 Blandy Farm Lane #2, Boyce, VA 22620. Thank you! VNPS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.