



# Virginia Native Plant Society

*Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places*

October 31, 2019

Dear Fellow Native Plant Lover,

As members of the VNPS, we see conservation as our mission. We strive to help maintain and protect natural native plant communities. We know that once a plant community has been destroyed, it is gone forever. Restoration is admirable, but it does not replace what Mother Nature created originally.

Most of us also live in, or are surrounded by, built environments where natural communities have been altered. Are we to throw up our arms and declare defeat? No, of course not! Birds, insects, and other wildlife are dependent upon native vegetation, and we have an opportunity to help provide them what they need by looking to the millions of yards across Virginia.

Native plant guru Doug Tallamy writes that “because nearly 85% of the U.S. is privately owned, our private properties are an opportunity for long-term conservation if we design them to meet the needs of the life around us.”

The thousands of acres that make up our neighborhoods and communities can provide “stepping stones” or “conservation corridors” of native vegetation between Virginia’s remaining natural areas, with the added benefit of reconnecting Virginia’s citizens with nature.

*We need more people to plant more Virginia native plants.*

*How do we achieve such a seemingly monumental task?*

*We do all we can to spread the message.*

Ten years ago, the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program and its partners launched the Plant ES (Eastern Shore) Natives campaign, a social marketing strategy designed to grow demand and change the social norm in favor of native plants. The first step was to understand why people make the choices they do. During public research, Virginia CZM heard that residents enjoyed seeing wildlife in their backyards, but native plants were still described as scraggly and weedy. The Plant ES Natives campaign set-out to change that perception, and has become a model for five more campaigns across coastal Virginia, including the Plant RVA Natives launched in April.

The regional native plant marketing campaigns help landowners learn more about their property and the benefits of a native plant landscape and conservation landscaping. Landowners learn that if they plant natives they can impact the ecological diversity and sustainability of natural landscapes beyond their property, neighborhood, and community. The campaigns also engage local garden centers to promote the native plants they offer and to increase the variety and supply of the native plants they carry.

By far, the most popular resource provided through each campaign is a beautiful, full color, regional native plant guide that identifies and highlights the beauty and variety of



Virginia's natives. There are now seven regional guides available for the Eastern Shore, Northern Neck, Northern Virginia, Southeast Virginia/Hampton Roads, Central Rappahannock, Capital/Richmond and the Northern Piedmont.

Production and printing of all the regional campaigns and guides in Tidewater Virginia were largely funded by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program with grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). A separately-funded effort produced the guide for the Northern Piedmont (Charlottesville) region since it was outside the coastal region and not eligible for the NOAA funding.

The Virginia Native Plant Society has been a partner at the table from the beginning – with leaders representing VNPS on regional campaign planning teams, and helping write and edit content for the regional guides.

This summer, the Virginia CZM Program collaborated with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to hold workshops with regional and local partners in the Southern Piedmont and Northern Piedmont and Shenandoah to share all that the regional campaign model has to offer. Once again our regional VNPS chapters were at the table.

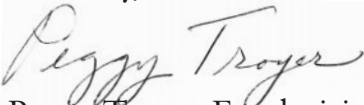
Now we are at a turning point. As a statewide organization, the VNPS would like to continue to support the regional native plant marketing effort. In particular, we would like to help reach the goal of publishing a regional native plant guide for every area of the state. In addition, some of the guides currently in print are running low or the campaigns have exhausted their supply, and there is limited grant funding available to reprint. VNPS has an opportunity to play a significant role in producing a full, statewide, set of regional guides. We are calling on you, our members, to provide seed money for these guides.

The interest in planting natives is growing. We are at a pivotal moment to keep public sentiment moving in the right direction. These regional guides have proven that they are an inspiration to homeowners who are new to native plant gardening. Imagine what an impact we can have for wildlife, including the birds and pollinators we love, by helping influence whole communities to plant more natives. With the launch of each new regional campaign and guide, the use of the adjectives scraggly and weedy in connection with Virginia's native plants will continue to fade away garden by garden.

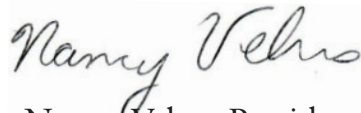
Printing costs decrease substantially per unit with larger orders, and larger orders mean more households who hear the message. Those orders take cash up front.

Please consider supporting this effort to "Plant Virginia Natives" with a tax-deductible gift to the VNPS today.

Sincerely,



Peggy Troyer, Fundraising Chair



Nancy Vehrs, President

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## VNPS ANNUAL FUND APPEAL 2019

Please give generously to support PLANT VIRGINIA NATIVES!

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

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Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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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: Plant Virginia Natives!, 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.