

Northern Neck Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society
President's February 2024 Native Notes
Betsy Washington

Happy National Invasive Awareness Week - February 26 - March 3, 2024!

Help the NNVNPS celebrate National Invasive Awareness Week by participating on your own property or by joining a team of fellow Native Plant enthusiasts at the Hutchinson Tract of the Rappahannock Rivers Wildlife Refuge on **March 1** to remove invasive Chinese Privet growing along the trails. See the article below. Enjoy our kick-off efforts with our new Invasive Plant effort spearheaded by Past-President, Nancy Garvey. And don't forget to get out and celebrate our early spring native wildflowers already starting to bloom!

Help Stop Invasive Species

(From Nancy Garvey and NISAW)

“There is a revolution taking place in the plant world as invasives effortlessly supplant natives within every human modified space. An invasive plant infestation is like a slow-motion explosion which left unchecked may severely alter a site’s natural beauty and economic contributions.” from ‘Lab Girl’ by Hope Jahren

The annual National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) is an international event held February 26 through March 3, 2024, which seeks to raise awareness about invasive species, the threat that they pose, and what can be done to prevent their spread. The term "invasive" is used for aggressive non-native species that spread and reproduce rapidly, displace native species, and cause major disturbance to the areas in which they are present. We are very concerned about invasives such as English Ivy, Japanese Stiltgrass, Japanese Honeysuckle and Phragmites which are highly visible in our landscapes. These are just a few of the 90 invasive species identified by Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Division of Natural Heritage.

During the week of Feb 26-Mar 3, NNVNPS is encouraging Northern Neck residents to survey their property for invasive plant species and begin the process of removing them. We suggest that people use plant identification smartphone apps such as *Picture This* or *Seek* by i-Naturalist. And double check identification and gain more information using ***Invasive Species Fact Sheets*** from the Department of Conservation and Recreation at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/invspdflist> or at Blue Ridge Prism “[How-To-Control-Invasive-Plants-MANUAL-Control-Blue-Ridge-PRISM.pdf \(blueridgeprism.org\)](https://www.blueridgeprism.org/)”



Before: Shoreline Garden Choked with Invasives



After: Invasive Plants Removed & Shoreline with Natives

Photos by Betsy Washington

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NN Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society's mission is to "Promote native plants through conservation, education and to encourage their preservation and cultivation." One of the most important things we can do to conserve and preserve our native flora is to remove and stop the spread of invasive plants." explains President, Betsy Washington. Our Invasive Plant initiative Coordinates with Blue Ridge PRISM to promote the removal of invasive plants and provides information on native alternatives.

Chinese Privet removal at Hutchinson Track of RRVNWR

Friday March 1, 9:30 am - Meet in the parking lot 19180 Tidewater Trail, Tappahannock, VA 22560

On Friday March 1 the NNVNPS Invasive management initiative is sponsoring a work project at the Hutchinson Tract of the RRWR. We are looking for 10 volunteers to work with refuge staff to eradicate small Chinese privet shrubs along the public trail.

Refuge staff will provide all tools and gloves, but you are welcome to bring your own if you prefer to use your own tools. Snacks and water refills will be provided. Please bring your own water bottle.

To sign up email Nancy Garvey nangarvey@hotmail.com

(Rain date Saturday March 8 - same time & place)

February 15 Program by Maeve Coker Was a Huge Success!

Many thanks to biologist Maeve Coker for a stellar presentation during our February meeting via zoom. We had well over 70 registered guests joining us for the presentation! Maeve presented a dazzling journey through the creation of her native plant garden and efforts to create habitat and re-wild her property after construction. Maeve and her husband Joey's efforts were beyond amazing and her photographic documentation superb! And the adage, "if you plant it, they will come" couldn't have been more obvious with Maeve's stunning photos of the growing numbers of pollinators, birds, and other wildlife she has documented using her garden, including rare or uncommon species.

If you missed this amazing program, we have recorded it and hope to have it available shortly on our website once our webmaster returns from vacation. We also hope to convince Maeve and Joey to allow us to come visit their garden on a field trip! Stay tuned... please send email to nvnps@gmail.com & we will notify you when posted.



Slide from Maeve's Talk showcasing the hundreds of species of wildlife attracted to her native plant habitat gardens

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March 20th Program - Landscape Designer & former Nursery Owner, Denise Greene

Denise Greene, noted landscape designer and former owner of the native plant nursery, Sassafras Farms, will be our speaker at Lancaster Community Library at noon on Thursday, March 20th. She will be sharing her firsthand experience of the different ways we can incorporate native plants into our landscapes. Focusing on our area, she will discuss the planting conditions and challenges we most often face and showcase native trees, shrubs and perennials that will thrive and benefit ourselves and wildlife. This talk is sure to inspire you as you plan for your spring gardens. Free and open to all.

As owner of Sassafras Farm Nursery Denise grew over 150 species of perennials native to the Eastern US. Now partly retired to the Northern Neck, Denise has continued to offer landscape design and consultation services specializing in using natives to create low maintenance, wildlife friendly gardens under her new business, Huckleberry Design. Past projects of note include the visitor centers for Westmoreland and Belle Isle State Parks as well as a National Wildlife Federation funded Certified Wildlife Habitat at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, VA among many others. Denise is a certified member of the VA Society of Landscape Designers and a certified Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional.



Denise Greene and her pup Belcross



Denise installing the gardens at the Westmoreland Visitors Center

Northern Neck Chapter Book Donations to our Northern Neck Youth and a Scholarship

Our Chapter recently donated four copies of the groundbreaking book, **Nature's Best Hope** by Douglas Tallamy to the four County Libraries in Northern Neck. This special edition was adapted by Sarah L. Thomson especially for readers from 5 – 18 years old and outlines strategies about how they can save nature beginning in their own yard. Susan explained that "Change starts with our youth. This new way of looking at nature is important as we move toward a more sustainable way of living. Our Slogan is *Go Native, Grow Native*". Thanks to Ted Munns for heading this effort.

Former President Ted Munns has spearheaded the Chapter's offer of a \$1,000 scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 to a graduate from a Northern Neck high school. The awardee will be one who expresses a desire to pursue studies in the field of Horticulture or the natural sciences. Details are at NNVNPS.org.

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Susan Titus donates a copy to Northumberland Public Library Director Jane Blue.



Ted Munns donates a copy to Lancaster Community Library Director, Alice Cooper

VNPS Plant of the Year, White Turtlehead, *Chelone glabra*

The 2024 VNPS Plant of the Year is the beautiful White Turtlehead, *Chelone glabra*. This fall blooming wildflower graces wet areas around the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula including seeps and seepage swamps, floodplain forests, stream banks and wet meadows. With handsome dark green foliage and a showy spike of pristine tubular white flowers a top 1 – 4' tall stems that look like... you guessed it –turtleheads, this statuesque plant lights up the fall landscape! Look carefully in the throat of the corolla tube and notice the white to pale yellow beard that is one of the distinguishing characteristics of this species. White Turtleheads are easy to grow in moist to damp soils in rain gardens, damp areas or along streams or ponds. We hope to offer specimens of this beautiful wildflower at our Fall Plant Sale in September. Read more about this beautiful plant at [Wildflower of the Year 2024 White Turtlehead \(*Chelone glabra*\) - Virginia Native Plant Society \(vnps.org\)](https://www.vnps.org/wildflower-of-the-year-2024-white-turtlehead-chelone-glabra)



White Turtlehead in October



White Turtlehead detail at Hickory Hollow

(Photos by Betsy Washington)

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Calling all Virginia Artists! Plant of the Year T-shirt Competition

The Virginia Native Plant Society is hosting its 3rd Annual Wildflower of the Year T-Shirt Design Contest!

- 🥇 – One (1) \$400 prize + one year VNPS membership
- 🥈 - One (1) \$100 prize + one year VNPS membership
- 🥉 - One year VNPS membership

All artist submissions need to be entered by March 17th, 2024.

For the full set of rules and to submit your design:

<https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSdRjWTHgcGwjo.../viewform>

VNPS Spring Workshop and Annual Meeting (From Kevin Howe)

This year's Spring Workshop is being finalized now with details out in the next week. It will be held via Zoom on two Thursday evenings from 7-9 pm on March 21 and March 28. Mark your calendars as four great speakers have been lined up, two each evening.

This year's Annual Fall Conference/Meeting will be held Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday - Sept. 20 to Sept. 22. It will be held in Harrisonburg at the Massanetta Springs Conference Center with dining and some lodging available onsite and many options in Harrisonburg. Friday night will be a meet and greet dinner with a short native plant program while Saturday morning will be another program and VNPS business meeting (short). Saturday afternoon and Sunday late morning will offer a series of field trips in the greater Harrisonburg region. More information will be forthcoming.

New Outreach and Volunteer Activities

We have signed up for several new and exciting Outreach and Volunteer activities this spring and **would love to have you join us!** We have been asked to advise the staff and partners of Habitat for Humanity on landscaping their newest home in Northumberland County. We are hoping to inspire the use of beautiful native plants with their many ecological benefits. We will be meeting with various partners at the end of February and will update you as our plans progress and let you know how you can help.

We have been invited to participate in Artwalk Awakening at Ware Church in Gloucester on March 16th. This is a wonderful event for six schools, students and their families. They are eager to learn more about natives and in adding native gardens or meadows. Contact Ann Williams annorganizer@yahoo.com and Nancy Garvey nangarvey@hotmail.com if you would like to help.

We will also be participating in the Master Gardener's Seminar, Historic Garden Week, and the Strawberry Festival in Heathsville. See the schedule below for dates and locations. Stay tuned for more information and ways to get involved...

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A Few Wildflowers Blooming Now or in the Next Few Weeks: (Photos by Betsy Washington)



Round-lobed Hepatica



Bloodroot



Virginia Pennywort



Southern Twayblade Orchid

Wildflowers, Cont'd.



Spring Beauty



Sweet Pinesap



Common Blue Violet



Northern Spicebush

Tentative Schedule of Meetings and Field Trips for Spring 2024

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|-------------------|--|
| Early Mar. | Field Trip to the new Heritage Park and Mascot (Middlesex Co.) for Bloodroot & more! TBA. |
| Mar. 16 | Outreach Event at Artwalk: Awakening, Gloucester, VA |
| Mar. 17 | Native Plant talk at Deltaville Maritime Museum |
| March 21 | Denise Greene – <i>The Best Native Plants for Various Growing Conditions and the Wildlife Benefits of Using Them.</i> Lancaster Community Library, Noon. |
| April 13 | Outreach Event at Master Gardens Seminar, Lancaster Elementary School |
| April 18 | Carol Martin – Shoreline Gardening. Lancaster Community Library, Noon. |
| TBA | Pat Lust – Propagation Workshop – look for upcoming member announcement |

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- April 24** **Outreach Event:** Historic Garden Week, Northern Neck
- Late April** **Field trip** to Rapp Refuge and Cat Point Creek – Tour new native gardens and plans for more and see amazing colonies of Pink Lady Slippers, Sundial Lupine, and more. Date TBD.
- May 16** Meeting & **Field Trip** to Hickory Hollow/Cabin Swamp to see Orchids and Spring Wildflowers in bloom. Look for updates.
- May 25** **Outreach Event** – Strawberry Festival, St. Stephens Church, Heathsville
- May - Aug.** Monthly Plant Sale Meetings as well as several “Potting” and Planning Parties to propagate plants for the Plant Sale. Dates and Times TBD.
- Aug. - Sept. TBD** Zoom Presentation by Betsy Washington on *Notable Plant Sale ‘Gems’ and Their Landscape Value* – This will be open to the public and held before the annual native plant sale.