

Northern Neck Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

President's April Native Notes

Betsy Washington

Happy April, but honestly it feels more like summer today with afternoon temperatures hovering around 87 degrees this afternoon.

This past month we have been hard at work sharing our love of Northern Neck native plants. Five of us represented NNVNPS at the **Master Gardener's Symposium on March 25th**. The reception of those attending was heart-warming with so much interest in NNK native plants. We ran out of two packages of our Revised Native Plant Guides by lunch and had to call out for more! The speakers' messages were right on target too, stressing the importance of native plants to our native bees and other pollinators as well as healthy ecosystems and ecosystem services. If you haven't read **Heather Holmes** books, you are in for a real treat! I especially love *Pollinators of Native Plants – Attract, Observe and Identify* *Pollinators and Beneficial Insects with Native Plants*. I also highly recommend *Bees - An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide* which is a winner of four book awards. Visitors to our booth were delighted with our display and the small vials filled with the blooms of our Northern Neck native wildflowers.



Betsy, Ellen Clarke, Nancy Garvey, and Ted Munns, with Jeff Wainscott missing from the photo.

Historic Garden Week in Northern Neck

Paula Boundy and Nancy Garvey represented our Chapter at Historic Garden Week in Warsaw on Wednesday, April 19th. They were delighted by the enthusiastic response to our Outreach Table and especially to Native Plants in general. They gave away over 60 Native Plant Guides, a real testament of the growing appeal and benefits of Growing NNK Natives!

Native Plant Identification and Field Class for Master Naturalist Trainees

I was delighted to lead a botany/native plant field trip with the help of Chapter member Anne Parker, to Hickory Hollow Natural Area Preserve as part of the Botany class for this year's Master Naturalist trainees.. The class of 16 students and mentors was especially enthusiastic and it was wonderful to share the fascinating life history of many rare and unusual plants that grow at Hickory Hollow and particularly at Cabin Swamp, a globally rare Plant Community type known as a Basic Seepage Swamp. The globally rare Basic Seepage Swamp at Hickory Hollow has base rich soils and extremely high levels of calcium from a number of seeps infiltrating down through ancient layers of shells and lime-sands. Did you know that Cabin Swamp is incredibly biodiverse with over 500 species of plants (many rare) and over 130 species of birds? Examples of Mountain Disjuncts in bloom were the lovely Marsh Marigolds, the statuesque False Green Hellebores and the Dog Violets, among many others. Animal diversity is directly connected to Plant biodiversity.



Spring Walk on Hickory Hollow Natural Area Preserve Sunday April 30th at 1:00pm

If you would like to take a walk in Hickory Hollow to see many of these wildflowers you are in luck! NNVNPS Members and their friends are invited to join us on a Spring Walk at Hickory Hollow next Sunday April 30th at 1:00 to learn about Hickory Hollow and its many rare and wonderful plants and spring wildflowers. We will hike down the White Trail which is fairly level and easy to the steep and narrow Cabin Swamp Trail that descends a steep ravine to the globally rare Basic Seepage Swamp, at Cabin Swamp. The Walk should take between 2 to 3 hours depending on how many wildflowers we stop to enjoy!

Bring sturdy shoes that can get a bit dirty and perhaps a walking stick and your camera and join us for a wonderful spring treat! Parking is limited so carpooling if possible is encouraged. Regina Road, Lancaster, VA 22503. You can find more information at: [Hickory Hollow Natural Area Preserve \(virginia.gov\)](http://www.virginia.gov) The walk will be canceled in the event of rain. Send any questions to bwash99@verizon.net

The April Plant of the Month is our beautiful and Carolina Jessamine. Members should have received an email copy; if not *Check out our Plant of the Month Article on our Website at www.NNVNPS.org, on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/NN.NativePlants>*

PROPAGATION PROGRAM AND WORKSHOP ON APRIL 20TH

Both the program and workshop were a huge success! Experienced Propagator & Chapter Member Pat Lust presented a program on a variety of **Propagation Techniques** so that we can all now multiply our own native plants and contribute plants to our Fall Plant Sale. After the presentation, Pat taught a workshop to 13 eager participants. She was a masterful instructor and delighted us all with the amazing plants she shared with us. We planted tiny seeds of Cardinal Flower, Beebalm, Common Milkweed and American Bellflower, then moved onto transplant tiny seedlings of more wonderful natives, all being careful not to touch the stems, only handling the tiny plants by their leaves and roots. How delightful! Next we took stem cuttings of beautiful Black Chokeberries carefully clipping off the terminal leaves and buds and dipping the cut end into rooting hormone. Finally we divided Blue-eyed Grass and Green and Gold and carefully tucked them into new pots. What a splendid and productive afternoon! We can now all look forward to propagating many more plants from our own gardens and sharing them at the Fall Plant Sale. It is going to be better than ever! If you missed out, we are hoping we might entice Pat back to offer another workshop in the fall. Cross your fingers...



Garden Work Day at Wilna Gardens at Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Join us for a Demonstration Garden workday at the Wilna Pollinator Garden and Administration Gardens **Tuesday, April 25 from 9:00am to noon**. Bring a pair of garden gloves and your favorite weeding tools and meet at the Wilna Lodge at the Rappahannock River Valley Wildlife Refuge, Warsaw. Email me at bwash99@verizon.net if you need more information or show up.



Spring Clean-up on March 28th in the Pollinator/Native Plant Gardens at Wilna Lodge and the Administration Offices. Photo on right by Steve CoAngelo

Save the Date: Join us Thursday, **May 18th Program** for a general meeting at the **historic Shiloh School**, on the corner of Shiloh School Road & Balls Bluff Rds., Northumberland County. **Come learn about the garden and tour this lovely demonstration garden.** It is truly one of the best pollinator/butterfly gardens in NN! Bring a brown bag lunch and join us for a picnic beforehand at noon. Jack Moore will tell us about the history of the Schoolhouse and gardens, Paula Boundy will talk about the design, and Betsy Washington will talk about the pollinators and butterflies that flock to this vibrant garden.



Old Courthouse Gardens in Heathsville

A Big Thank you to Paula Boundy, Bonita Russell, Nancy Garvey, Molly Calloway and Jeff Wainscott for a great spring clean up in the Old Courthouse Garden at Heathsville. They were able to remove the large Magnolia that was shading the garden (with help from staff member Curtis and move the bench to a better position). The gardens are looking great and a new design by Paula Boundy will complete this garden renovation in the near future. Stay tuned!

Volunteers Needed for the Strawberry Festival in Heathsville at St. Stephens Church on May 27th. This is a great and fun event that attracts hundreds of people that we don't usually reach. And it is a really fun day so think about volunteering a few hours at our Outreach Tent. Email Nancy Garvey if interested at nangarvey@hotmail.com

The Lancaster-Northumberland 5th Annual Butterfly Spring Count And Workshop

The Northern Neck Chapter of the VNPS will once again sponsor the Spring Butterfly Count in Lancaster and Northumberland Counties. The Count is part of the North American Butterfly Association held around the United States and the world. As most of you know, the vast majority of our butterflies depend on specific native plants with which they have co-evolved to lay their eggs and feed their caterpillars. The importance of regionally native plants is really spot-lighted on these Butterfly Counts. The data from these counts is extremely important to researchers that are assessing changes in butterfly populations especially in light of climate change. Plus we have observed many new records for butterflies not previously reported in our area.

If you are not familiar with our local butterflies, we have you covered. Jeff Wright, Count Coordinator and I will be offering a zoom **workshop on Sunday evening June 11th and will cover how to identify a number of our butterflies and information about their native host plants and a bit about gardening to support butterflies.** Look for more information in your local newspapers and in our member email announcements. The first of the summer butterfly Counts will be held in Essex, Westmoreland and Richmond Counties on June 27th.



Butterfly Volunteers at Dug In Farms and a Red Admiral nectaring on Virginia Sweetspire (May 31, 2022)

Volunteers Needed to Help Pot Up Plants for the Fall Plant Sale and for the Strawberry Festival.

We held a pop-up Potting Party at Bette and Roger Grubens "Birdhouse" property in early April and potted over 100 bareroot plants for the fall plant sale. We need volunteers to step up and take a few of these plants home to care for them until the fall plant sale.

We are expecting about 50 more plugs from Mid-Atlantic Nursery to arrive at the beginning of May. Look for a Member Email Announcement asking for volunteers to help pot these new plants up. In addition we plan to pot up about 50 – 70 small pots of our native Virginia Strawberries for the Strawberry Festival on May 27th.

Membership Chair, Ellen Clarke, sent this report. *"We have a large membership in the Northern Neck Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society. This month, we have around 192 members, including three new members who joined in March. Ten members are Life Members.*

When I became Membership Chair in mid-2018, we had around 128 memberships. We seem to be getting the word out about our Chapter and about how important it is to include Virginia native plants in our gardens and yards. People are eager to attend our annual plant sale, read about the Plant of the Month in the newspaper, and easily attend our educational meetings on Zoom. I know that these activities have taught me so much about Virginia gardening. The weather is beautiful - let's get outside and plant natives!"

Indeed, it takes a village sometimes to make a difference so let's all volunteer for some of these fun events or get outside and help tend one of our demonstration gardens, propagate a few plants for our plant sale, or join us for a walk at Hickory Hollow. And I definitely hope to see you at the historic Shiloh School and beautiful gardens next month! Until then happy gardening. May your gardens be filled with butterflies, songbirds and joy!

2023 Calendar of Events

While subject to changes, meeting reminders will be emailed in advance

All members are welcome to all Board & Committee meetings

General Meetings begin at Noon for a social lunch & talk of native plants and gardens so bring a brown bag lunch.

Programs begin around 12:30

- April - Thursday 20th** **General Meeting 12:00 pm Propagation Presentation and Workshop at 2:00**member
Pat Lust, Wicomico Parish Church - **Board meeting 10:00am**
- Tuesday 25th Garden Work Day at Wilna Gardens, Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge, 9:00
- Saturday 29th [Shoreline Workshop w/ Carol Martin, Dug In Farms, registration required, 10 am](#)
- Saturday 30th Field Trip to Hickory Hollow NAP, 1:00 – 4:00 for Members and friends
- May – Saturday 6th** [Plant This, Not That Workshop at Dug In, Betsy Washington, 10am](#)
- Saturday 13th [Monarch Habitat Gardening by VNPS member Karen Williams 10 am](#)
- Saturday 20th [How to Garden for Pollinators, Workshop at Dug In Farms, VNPS Denise Greene,
\(to register for any workshop visit: \[Workshops – Dug In Farms\]\(#\)\)](#)
- Thursday 18th** **General Meeting and brown bag lunch 12:00 at Shiloh School Native Plant Garden,**
presentation and garden tour by Jack Moore, Paula Boundy & Betsy Washington
- Saturday 25th Strawberry Festival, St Stephens Church in Heathsville 9 – 3, volunteers needed
- Tuesday 31 [Save the Date: Lancaster-Northumberland County Butterfly Count sponsored by our
chapter, NNVNPS. Look for member email notices for more information](#)
- June - No General Meeting**
- Sunday 11th [Butterfly Identification and Native Host Plant Workshop with Jeff Wright and Betsy Washington
To celebrate National Pollinator Month](#)
- Tuesday 27th [Save the Date: Lancaster-Northumberland Butterfly Count sponsored by NNVNPS](#)
- July - No General Meeting**
Plant Sale Meeting/workshop TBD
- Aug. Plant Sale meeting, Thursday 17th & Call for Volunteers**
- Sept. Fall Plant Sale at Dug In Farms, White Stone!**
- Fri. Sept 15th** **Members only Pre-Sale Friday afternoon, Sept. 15th**
- Sat. Sept. 16th** **Sale open to the Public at 9:00 am**
- Sat. 23rd** **Sale open to the Public at 9:00 am**
- October –**
Thurs 19th General Annual Meeting, Election of Officers, Budget
At and with a Shoreline Field Trip at Belle Isle State Park
- November**
Nov 16th General Meeting: Pollinators Attracted to a Native Plant Garden by Maeve Coker
- December - No meeting**