



Shenandoah Chapter  
Virginia Native Plant Society  
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February 2009

**Mission Statement:**

We are a conservation organization dedicated to conserve Virginia's native plants and their ecosystems through education, advocacy and activities that promote appreciation, stewardship and appropriate use.

**Next Meeting:** February 12 (Bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin), 7:30 BRCC Plecker 126. Speaker: Rick Webb of the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia will give a presentation on "Industrial Wind Development on Virginia's Forested Mountain Ridges"

**Calendar 2009**

Feb 8- Hardscrabble Knob 6mi hike moderate difficulty. Hike starts at trailhead on FR 95 10 AM Sponsored by Wild VA. Leader Chris Bowlen. Call 289-6801 to sign up as there could be a route change depending on trail conditions.

Mar 7-VNPS Workshop University of Richmond 9:15-3:15. Topic is High Mountain Flora. Brochures with details and registration have been mailed to members

Mar 24- Deep Run Ponds Garlic Mustard removal day.

Apr 4-5- Flower Camp with Laura Call Gastinger. For more information, visit [www.flowercamp.org](http://www.flowercamp.org) or contact Nancy Ross Hugo at [nancy@flowercamp.org](mailto:nancy@flowercamp.org) or 804-798-6364.

Apr 11 -Black's Run Clean-up Harrisonburg

Apr 18- Earth day in Staunton

May 1-3 Wildflower Weekend Webster County WV Camp Ceaser Visit Webster County WV website or contact Jay Shaner 540-886-5763 for additional information

July 11 - Cranberry Bog WV. Leader Jay Shaner

*I wish people were trees. I think I could enjoy them then.* Georgia O'Keefe 1921

**Woods in Your Backyard Workshop** March 7 Blue Ridge Community College. Headwaters SWCD plan to offer a ***Woods in Your Backyard*** workshop for owners of 1-10 acres to learn how to manage existing natural areas and or create new natural areas. The workshops will use the newly published manual, *The Woods in Your Backyard: Learning to Create and Enhance Natural Areas Around Your Home*. This full-color 139-page manual helps you to identify your goals for your land, walks you through the step to achieve them. Whether you are interested in converting lawn to forest, creating wildlife habitat, or providing a useful outdoor space for your family, this book is for you. To order a copy, visit: [www.vt.edu.org](http://www.vt.edu.org). You can also contact Matthew Yancey with Virginia Cooperative Extension to receive registration materials for the workshop. He can be contacted at 540/564-3080 or [yancey@vt.edu](mailto:yancey@vt.edu).

**GW National Forest Plan Revision meetings: January 29 and Feb 5**

These will probably be the final public meetings before a draft Forest Plan is released. The topic of both meetings is Forest Plan components. Meeting logistics are as posted on the GWNF website. Information on previous meetings and the planning process for the GWNF can be found at the GWNF website, [www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwj/forestplan/revision/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwj/forestplan/revision/).

**Websites to check out:**

[www.wildlifegardeners.org](http://www.wildlifegardeners.org)

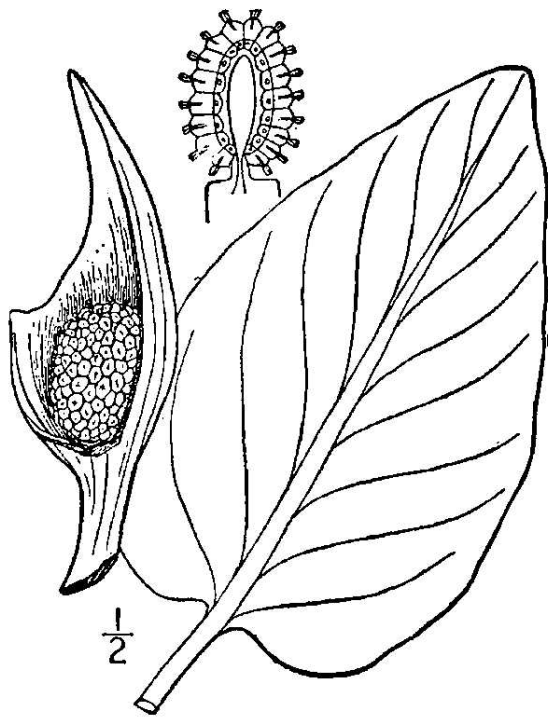
Wildlife Gardeners Forums 50 different topics related to gardening and wildlife such as birds, butterflies, organic gardening, native plants, mosses ferns, woodies etc. Exchange\_info and answer questions with no additional 3rd party ads showing up

[http://www.windows.ucar.edu/citizen\\_science/budburst/index.htm](http://www.windows.ucar.edu/citizen_science/budburst/index.htm)

Project Budburst: a web site that asks people to register first foliage and bloom events yearly on species in their areas. From the map, the middle valley could use some representation. A number of us could contribute in a way that documents season alterations due to climate change. Submitted by Joe Scharrer

**Wildflower of the Year 2009 Skunk Cabbage - *Symplocarpus foetidus***

Pungently malodorous and possessing only modest beauty, skunk cabbage offers its quirky blooms in winter when there is little else to attract the attention of devoted wildflower enthusiasts. Skunk cabbage is a member of the arum family.



Skunk cabbage is an obligate wetland plant. It grows in the muck soils of wet meadows and swampy woods, extending to regions of shallow water or upward along the lower reaches of adjacent hillsides, presumably where its roots can still reach the water table. As noted above, it flowers in winter (commonly in January), a phenomenon permitted, in part, by the fact that the plant is thermogenic (generates significant metabolic heat, a rare phenomenon in plant biology).

To learn more about this plant, visit the VNPS website:  
<http://www.vnps.org/wildflowerofyear.html>

To see this plant in bloom, Joe Scharrer describes two sites in Augusta County are easy to access. Augusta Springs and Rt 340 north of Crimora. The Crimora site had several blooms already by Jan 25.

George Washington National Forest Augusta Springs: The Augusta Springs area is good but much more in the shade and requires some bushwhacking in the briers. The best place there is near the trail close to the highway where there are observation platforms that adjoin the stream.

Crimora: There is a good colony of skunk cabbage on 340 just to the west of the highway heading south. (between the RR tracks and the highway 1 mile north of Crimora BP gas station and 6 miles south of the Grottoes Food Lion) A good place to park is the drive into what I think is the VA Dept of Forestry tree nursery. Then walk back north and look for the wet areas. The water is usually low and the briers are minimal. It takes a bit of time to adjust your eye to find the plants but they are abundant there. Easy to photograph too.

## **Shenandoah Chapter Volunteer Opportunities**

Working Group Needed for educational outreach about VNPS and invasive plants in our region.

Sat April 11, 2009 is Blacks Run Clean Up Day in Harrisonburg. Blacks Run provides the natural drainage for the City of Harrisonburg and although improved, is still highly impaired. Shenandoah Chapter has had a table at several of the annual cleanups presenting general info about the Native Plant Society and the Chapter. This would be a very good opportunity for us to do some education on the types of invasives in our area and how to manage or reduce them

What is involved: We need to update the educational boards and materials used previously. We also need to decide what would be the best way to present material to non-plant people and have enough people to make it happen the day of the clean up. We need YOUR ideas and your energy. Please consider helping, even if you can only give a small amount of time—notify Elaine Smith or Chris Bowlen. We will have a meeting of interested planners as soon as possible to be ready for early April. The educational boards will be used for future events such as Earth Day Staunton April 18

## **2009 Top Five Invasive Plant Species For Southern Forests Named**

This article was released January 13, 2009 on red orbit.com.

U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station (SRS) Ecologist Jim Miller, Ph.D., one of the foremost authorities on nonnative plants in the South, yesterday identified the invasive plant species he believes pose the biggest threats to southern forest ecosystems in 2009.

“Cogongrass, tallowtree, and Japanese climbing fern are among the fastest moving and most destructive nonnative plant species facing many southern landowners this year,” said Miller. “Rounding out the top five invasive species that I'm very concerned about would be tree-of-heaven and nonnative privets. While our forests are besieged by numerous invasive plants, these and other nonnative species present serious financial and ecological threats to the South and its forests in 2009.”

Nonnative species often out-compete native forest plants and may degrade forest productivity, wildlife habitat, recreational values, and water quality. Invasive species also greatly increase expenses as public and private land managers work to combat their spread and deal with their effects (such as increased wildfire risk and severity).

Nonnative plants can be introduced and spread by wildlife or through other natural means. Humans also spread invasive species by planting them in their gardens and yards and by seeds hitchhiking on their clothes. Additionally, tractors and mowers used in multiple locations without being cleaned often spread nonnative plants.

In an effort to inform forest managers, landowners, and others about where the most threatening invasive plants are in the South and to help them prepare for these threats, Miller collaborated with SRS Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) scientists to develop maps showing the spread, county-by-county, across the Southeast of more than 30 of the most serious nonnative plant species. The invasive plant data were collected on FIA plots throughout the southern United States in cooperation with State forestry agencies. In partnership with the University of Georgia's Center for Invasive Species Science and Ecosystem Health, SRS researchers recently posted the maps and occupation levels online.

Maps posted at <http://www.invasive.org/fiamaps/acres.cfm> show the number of acres in a county covered by each nonnative species. Maps posted online at <http://www.invasive.org/fiamaps/percent.cfm> show the percent of subplots analyzed in a county that have each invasive species. A spreadsheet found at

<http://www.invasive.org/fiamaps/summary.pdf> shows the total acreage of 33 invasive plant species in 12 Southeastern States (data for eastern Oklahoma is missing as SRS FIA just completed this part of the State's inventory this month). Users can access the maps and spreadsheet via <http://www.invasive.org/fiamaps/>. Current plans are for researchers to update the information annually.

Miller hopes government agencies, forest managers, natural resource professionals, landowners, students, and others will use the information to help combat the spread of nonnative plant species in southern forest and grassland ecosystems.

Details on the five invasive plants mentioned above can be found online via:

[http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/gtr/gtr\\_srs062/](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/gtr/gtr_srs062/). The Web page features Jim Miller's book titled *Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests: A Field Guide for Identification and Control*, published in 2003. Based in Auburn, AL, Miller is a scientist in the SRS Insects, Diseases, and Invasive Plants of Southern Forests unit.

[http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/1622263/2009\\_top\\_five\\_invasive\\_plant\\_species\\_for\\_southern\\_forests\\_named/](http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/1622263/2009_top_five_invasive_plant_species_for_southern_forests_named/)