



Online Arbor Vitae

From the Foundation of the State Arboretum of Virginia | Fall 2021

Have a Joyous, Family- and Friends-Filled Thanksgiving!

As always, we're so very thankful for you!

At this time of year – after many months of disrupted plans and missed gatherings for all of us – we want to say a very heartfelt “Thank you!” for your continued support of Blandy Experimental Farm and the State Arboretum of Virginia. Your love of nature and caring for our mission of environmental research and education ensure we all continue to grow and prosper in this often crazy and unpredictable world. We’re very grateful for you!



Blandy Partners with the Clifton Institute for Local Plant Conservation

by Jack Monsted, Assistant Curator,
Native Plant Trail

“The goal of these plantings is to produce enough seed to distribute to interested local landowners through sales and seed swaps.”

When most people think of endangered species conservation, a few well-publicized species spring to mind: giant pandas, tigers, African lions, polar bears, and spotted owls. These large, charismatic animals on the brink of extinction are easy to recognize, easier to

love, and receive the lion’s share (no pun intended) of the attention and funding for conservation. But one endangered species that almost no one knows about is Torrey’s mountain mint. Even as a botanist, I’ll admit that the first time I heard about this plant my reaction was mostly confusion: Who is this Torrey person, and will their mint be tasty in a mojito?

[Read more](#)

The Arboretum Pushes Back Against Spotted Lanternfly

by T'ai Roulston, Curator of the State Arboretum of Virginia

“It’s like trying to kill a vampire: Weaken him with sunlight, holy artifacts, and garlic, then stab him a few hundred times and see what happens.”

Last year, we found the first spotted lanternflies at Blandy. We squished, squashed, and scraped both bugs and eggs then worked to reduce their favorite host, the tree of heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*. This is no easy task, as it is one of the most common weed trees in our area. It thrives in vacant lots, roadsides, fields, and light gaps in forests; it finds the corner of your yard that goes uncut and takes over, and when you cut it down, it sprouts a forest of itself. You have to cut and poison it to kill it, or cut it for years, or dig until your blisters have blisters. It’s like trying to kill a vampire: Weaken him with sunlight, holy artifacts, and garlic, then stab him a few hundred times and see what happens.



[Read more](#)



Bee Campus, a Pollinator Conservation Program, Arrives at UVA -- and Blandy, Too

by Dave Carr, Director of Blandy Experimental Farm

"In spring 2022, you too can be part of Bee Campus and do your part to increase our understanding of the pollinators that make life as we know it possible."

The decline of bee populations in many parts of the world has been in the headlines for the past few years. There is probably no single reason for the decline, but factors include the loss of appropriate habitat, pesticides, and introduced diseases and parasites. The Xerces Society (headquartered in Portland, OR) is one of the leading pollinator conservation groups in the country, and they have created programs that aim to work toward a more bee-friendly world. To raise awareness and improve land management for

pollinators, the Xerces Society developed its Bee City and Bee Campus programs.

[Read more](#)

Volunteers from Navy Federal Come Out in Force on Day of Caring

We asked, and Navy Federal Credit Union volunteers delivered! In September, as part of the local United Way's Day of Caring, nearly 20 employees from Winchester's Navy Federal Credit Union facility joined the Blandy staff to work on several long-postponed projects. One hearty team helped clear invasive (and prickly!) buckthorn from the Native Plant Trail. Another team spent hours meticulously scrubbing Blandy's older memorial and honorary teak benches to restore them to their original look. And a third team cleared the Community Garden for the season.



But they're not finished: The Navy Federal team will help prepare for the Arboretum's annual holiday wreath workshops by trimming greenery and boxing it for participants.

Thank you for your giving spirit, Navy Federal Credit Union!



Blandy's Ginkgoes Draw Faithful Crowds During a Unique Year for Foliage

by Ariel Firebaugh, Director of Scientific Engagement

Ginkgophiles flock to Blandy each fall to watch the ginkgo leaves change from green to gold. The ginkgoes put on a bit of a strange showing this year. Many mature trees dropped their leaves while still green, perhaps due to a prolonged cold snap in early November. Nevertheless, thousands of visitors still made a pilgrimage to Blandy on weekends to celebrate these unique trees.

[Read more](#)

Plant Lovers Prepare for the Seed Exchange at Blandy on January 29, 2022

Don't miss the return of this annual day of trading seeds!

The packets filled quickly when volunteers with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association met at Blandy in early November to begin packaging and labeling precious seeds gathered from many, many gardens. The treasures will be traded at the upcoming Seed Exchange, hosted by the NSVMGA. Mark your calendar now for a fun-filled visit when you'll leave with seeds to grow vegetables, herbs, perennials, annuals, vines, woody plants, and more. (And start gathering your own seeds to exchange!) More details at <https://nsvmga.org/events/seed-exchange/>

