

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

August, 2015

UPCOMING MEETING

- **Sunday, August 16, 4pm, Stepping Stone Workshop.** Mary Craig and her husband, Dennis, will host the August meeting at their house. After a brief monthly meeting we will have a stepping stone workshop. Mary and Dennis will provide all the materials for the stepping stones, but if you have something special you would like to put in a stone, bring it along. Keep in mind, they will be outside; some items will rust or break down in the weather. Glass beads and seashells will hold up better than wooden letters, for example. One person put her late dog's dog tags in a stone with other items to remind her of her beloved pet. I have tons of embellishments of all kinds, so you don't have to bring anything if you don't want to. You may want to wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty, or bring an apron. They will have gloves. We will meet outdoors in the carport. They have quite a few chairs but if a few of you can bring chairs, that would help. They will provide ice, bottled water, iced tea and lemonade. Bring light potluck fare: snacks, desserts, etc. They have an RV right next to the carport and will use the kitchen in it to set up the food.

Directions: Off of Route 50, near the Shenandoah River. From Winchester, come out Rt 50, as soon as you cross the river turn right onto Howellsville Road and go 5.3 miles. 4396 Howellsville Road is on the left across the street from the barn in an old white farmhouse. A big red barn is on the right. The driveway is past the house, park beside the driveway on the grass.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Saturday, August 15, 10am to 3pm, Berkeley-Jefferson Extension Master Gardeners TomatoFest,** Morgan's Grove Park, Shepherdstown, WV. Free Tastings, Free Tomato Talks, Tomato Treats, Exhibits, Tomatoes for Sale. Call 304-264-1936 for more information.
- **Tuesday evenings 7pm to 9pm beginning September 8, Front Royal/Warren County Tree Stewards annual "All About Trees Class"** running for eight Tuesday evenings. Five Saturday classes emphasizing hands-on learning are also included (times and locations to be announced). Gain knowledge that you can put to use immediately on your own property. Certified Arborists and enthusiastic Tree Stewards will assist you on your journey. Topics include Tree Biology and Physiology, Tree Identification, Tree Care and Pruning, Soil Selection, Tree Planting. Classes meet at the Government Center on Commerce Ave in Front Royal. Contact the FRWC Tree Stewards at frwctreestewards@comcast.net or visit our web site at www.TreesFrontRoyal.com. You can also pick up a class brochure at the Kiosk at the Gazebo or the Happy Creek Arboretum on Commerce Ave in Front Royal. The course cost is \$60 (\$50 if registered by August 07, 2015). Individual classes are \$10 each

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR'S REPORT by Mary Flagg

Community Gardens serve their own purpose and come in all shapes and sizes. The Blandy Community Garden (pic #1) and the Millwood Community Garden (pic#2) are two gardens I have frequented lately. Both are unique in nature yet both serve the same purpose, all produce is donated to the local food bank to feed the hungry. As you step into the well tended gardens, a sense of pride overwhelms me as I notice the green beans and tomatoes strung up to the wire fencing. I am entertained by the bright garden décor that screams excitement and the sitting area that encourages peace of mind. I am impressed by the absence of weeds and the manicured walkways. All this right in my own backyard, literally. So, take a break and visit these gardens in Clarke County, it will be worth the trip. ENJOY !



FROM THE PRESIDENT by Susan Garrett

My goodness, have we had some hot weather for NSVMGA Association meetings! The temperature in my car was 102 degrees after the June meeting at the Belle Boyd Cottage in Front Royal and 98 degrees after the July meeting at Clermont Farm in Berryville.

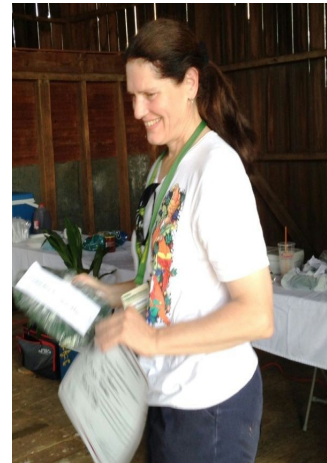


And yet, Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners are not deterred from our appointed rounds, and turned out in fine style to both meetings. I am proud of you!

I thought I'd give you a quick pictorial summary of the July meeting. As I said, you turned out strongly for the meeting in the barn at Clermont Farm, even in the heat, which was helped by the ice cold water handed out by

the Clarke County hosts, and the fans provided by Clarke County members and by Clermont. It was a good day to wear the new NSVMGA tank top (see James Jones in the middle of the picture, above).

In July, we recognized five new Master Gardeners from the Class of 2015, which means that less than two months after graduation, more than half of the class are already Master Gardeners! Here is a picture of Terry Hanahan, one of the 2015 Interns who received her certificate, badge, and shirt.



We also recognized Milestone Awards for those who had not attended the 2015 Master Gardener College and therefore had not received their Milestone pins and certificates at the Awards Night in Blacksburg. We were very pleased to recognize the award for 2000 hours service that was presented by Volunteer Coordinator Mary Flagg to Frank Baxter, our sole remaining member of the Intern Class of 1993, the very first class ever for the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association. (The newspaper article is the first written about the NSVMGA!)



Gardener graduates

Fifteen people from Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren counties recently completed the nine-week Cooperative Extension Master Gardener training course.

This course provides participants with in-depth instruction on plant botany, soils, fertilization, pruning, plant selection, entomology, pesticide usage, water quality, and more.

Upon completing this course, class members are required to volunteer 45 hours of their time to assist with local Extension programming and community service projects.

Class members are also eligible to become members of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardeners Association.

The following people received their certification as Master Gardeners: Ellen Payson-Bieschke of White Post; Frank Baxter of Front Royal; Roy Bowling of Front Royal; Stefani Cochran of Middletown; Janice DeForest of Front Royal; Johan Guss of New Market; Rhonda Headley of Middletown; Heidi Holland of Middletown; Richard Mazza of Front Royal; Dave Nees of Front Royal; Clair O'Hanlon of Front Royal; Nancy Phelps of Front Royal; Ina Robertson of Winchester; Frank Slivinski of Luray; and Maxine Zinman of Boyce.

And finally, we heard a wonderful presentation by Bob Stieg, Executive Director of the Clermont Farm Foundation. (In case you are wondering, in his introduction Bob told us he

was wearing his (very bright) shirt with flowers on it to honor Master Gardeners.)

For me, one of the most interesting facts he shared with us was that the Shenandoah Valley, as the “breadbasket of the nation” and then as the “breadbasket of the Confederacy,” was primarily a wheat-growing area--and that heavy reliance on that crop took its toll on the rich soil which originally drew people to farm the Shenandoah Valley, and left us in the present day with red clay and limestone outcroppings and the loss of 1-2 feet of topsoil.



PAGE COUNTY REPORT by Lesley Mack



Agricultural heritage and rural life are very much on display at county fairs. Local fairs may celebrate tractor pulls, pig races, chicken parades, or just a ride on a ferris wheel. At the Page County Fair, county folks focus *a lot* on their kids' achievements through animals, field crops, arts, crafts, hobbies, and yes, wonderfully, horticulture. Many notice that the adults are egging on their kids to enter as many items in the fair's premium list as possible because, for some folks, winning premium monies can be a part of their yearly income, which is always a help in these times.

With all this in mind, I hope you are able to volunteer at least one time at your local fair, just to have the experience. If you need some experience and/or some hours, Gayle Lansberry, Page County's adult horticulture organizer could use a little help. Each year the horticulture division grows a little bigger with entries, and an extra pair of hands or two sure help. Gayle's phone number is 540-742-9415. There are approximately 41 more county fairs in Virginia from August 1st to October 18th, so if you miss getting to one soon, there will be more. The website for 2015 fairs in Virginia is <http://www.vafairs.us/images/fairdates15b.pdf>.

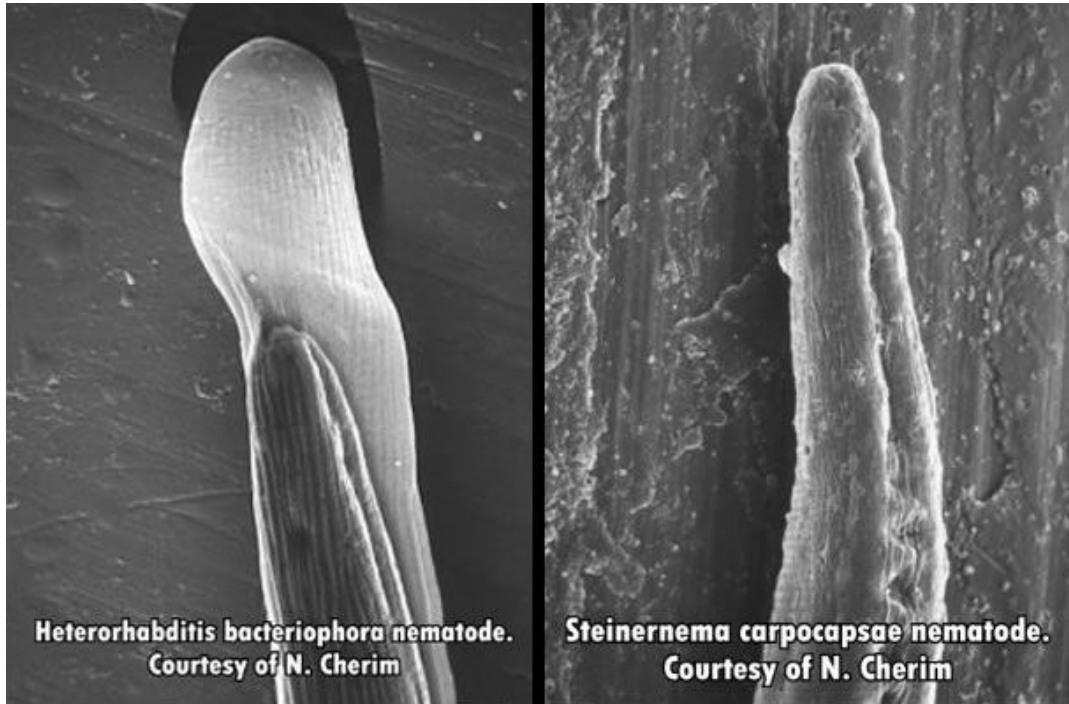
Frank Baxter and Skip Bowling spoke about pruning to the Hill & Valley Garden Club in Luray at their monthly meeting. Thanks to Frank and Skip to travel to Luray and give club members tips about how to maintain their trees and shrubs.

Helpline Questions, more like crisis line for some, poor dears.

Japanese beetles are such a bother, and killing females is a good thing. After mating the females dig small burrows in the soil and lay eggs. Egg laying lasts from mid-July to mid-August. A female can deposit 40-60 eggs in her lifetime. Eggs require moisture to

expand and develop and hatch in in 8-9 days. Immature grubs feed and develop until the soil starts to cool in the fall. At this point they burrow down about 4-8 inches and stop feeding. In the spring when soil temperatures start to warm, the grubs move up and start feeding again. The grubs reach full size in late May or early June and pupate. Adult beetles emerge several weeks later and complete the cycle. According to Va Tech,

Milky spore disease may work in some areas but reported results have ranged from effective to no control. No replicated university trials are available to determine effectiveness. If it is applied, no insecticides can be used for 2-3 years afterward so enough Japanese beetles are present to allow the disease agent to build up.



Nematodes, specifically entomophagous nematodes, can be very effective on controlling the white grub stage of this beetle. Use preparations containing *Heterorhabditis* spp., and apply them in mid-August. Irrigate with about 1/4 inch of water both before and after application of the nematodes. These nearly-microscopic non-segmented roundworms, called beneficial nematodes, live in the soil and spend their lives exploiting the larvae and/or pupae of over 200 organisms for their own gain. They are entomogenous (en-toh-MAH-jen-us), meaning they develop on or within an insect. *H. bacteriophora* (Hb) are typically offered as live 3rd stage juveniles, infective stage, and are the beneficial nematode of choice for the lethargic, deeply planted pests: Japanese beetle larvae/grubs (*Popillia japonica*). These nematodes boast a deep-moving (1–7"), active-hunting, "cruising" characteristic which make them superior to many other species for the purpose of grub control.

SHENANDOAH COUNTY REPORT by Sharon Bradshaw

The Fair Judging class enrollment has reached critical mass and will be held August 15, 1 to 4pm in the VCE classroom at 600 Main Street, Woodstock. This class does not require that attendees actually become produce judges at a fair, but does present the criteria judges use to determine which entries are awarded ribbons, etc. Instructor Carol Boyer is an experienced judge and will have vegetables on display to demonstrate qualities to be considered in judging. The class is a first step for those who wish to become county fair produce judges. The class is open to all, and there is room for more enrollees. If you are interested, contact Bob Carlton ASAP at bobnsam@shentel.net.

Shenandoah County MGs are lined up to staff our information table at the Fair each evening from August 29 – September 4. We traditionally have been in the exhibit hall with the produce, so knowledge of judging criteria is important in interacting with those who visit our table.

Our annual collaboration with the 4-H Day Camp this year is July 29 and August 5. From soil sifting to eating 'dirt' and making dirt babies, our members will be introducing activities that involve children in becoming more aware of soil as a valuable resource. FYI: 2015 is the International Year of the Soil, designated by the United Nations General Assembly. The purpose of the IYS is to raise awareness worldwide of the importance of soils for food security and agriculture, as well as in mitigation of climate change, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development.

MGs Kathy Doyle and Elena Lycas are working with a couple of 4-H students for the Hokey Bug Contest that will be judged on campus at Virginia Tech in October.

The two farmers' markets and Green Help Line are continuing to reach county residents with answers and suggestions. Unfortunately, we can't always deliver good news, but we work at putting a positive result for the action we recommend.

Vonnie Hepner was most grateful to Master Gardeners who donated garden tools and seeds for her villagers in Guatemala. A big thank you to each of you.

SING CUCCU by Anne Dewey-Balhizer

[Editor's note: Frederick County Coordinator John Kummer submitted "Sing Cuccu" with his report last month, and I asked if anyone knew whence it came. Anne Dewey-Balhizer responded.]

"Sumer Is Icumen In" (also called the Summer Canon and the Cuckoo Song) is a medieval English rota of the mid-13th century. The title translates approximately to "Summer Has Come In" or "Summer Has Arrived" (Roscow 1999). The song is composed in the Wessex dialect of Middle English. Although the composer's identity is unknown today, it may have been W. de Wycombe. The manuscript in which it is preserved was copied between 1261 and 1264 (Wulstan 2000, 8). This rota is the oldest known musical composition featuring six-part polyphony (Albright 1994), and is possibly the oldest surviving example of independent melodic counterpoint. It is sometimes called the Reading Rota because the earliest known copy of the composition, a manuscript written in mensural notation, was found at Reading Abbey; it was probably not drafted there, however (Millett 2004). The British Library now retains this manuscript (Millett 2003a).

CHICKEN GAMES by Cy Haley

The muggy heat of summer is upon us and Smokey is playing hide and seek with me. Whenever it starts getting really hot out she doesn't want to lay her eggs in the coop. It's fairly warm in there plus wild birds are creating a nuisance by going in there to steal the chicken's grain, and Smokey wants peace and quiet when she's laying. So she lays her eggs in the garden under lots, and lots, and lots of leafy cover, hence the game. She'll lay in one section for several days then find a new spot once I've discovered her "secret spot".

Here are the rules of the game "Egg Hide N' Seek"

(Not to be confused with Chicken Hide N' Seek which is a completely different game)

1. Always lay the egg during the day when you know the human mom is at work and can't hear the loud squawking noise you make when the egg appears.
2. Always make sure there are several layers of brush above the egg laying spot.
3. Always scratch up whatever vegetation might be trying to grow in that spot so your rear feathers come in contact with nice, soft (and now dead) vegetation.
4. When the human mom returns home be sure to follow her to the nesting coop and pretend like you may have decided to lay your egg in the designated spot.
5. Laugh out loud (this will sound like clucking to human mom) when she discovers, once again, that your egg is not in the coop.
6. Continue to follow human mom around the yard and play hot – cold while she looks for your new spot (this also will sound like clucking to human mom). As an added bonus be sure to constantly get in her way while she's reaching under layers of vegetation trying to lift heavy leaves and branches while looking for an egg.
7. Once human mom has discovered your latest spot let her collect eggs in that spot for a couple of days then find a new spot and start the game all over again. Always make sure you go to a completely different garden to lay the next egg. You don't want to make it too easy for human mom or she might get bored with the game.

Note: For extra bonus points occasionally let the dog find your egg (which she'll take and bury in an undisclosed location) so human mom can find it at a later date when she's digging in her many gardens. It's always fun to see that look on her face when she finds an old egg buried 6 to 8 inches below ground plus she always spends double the time looking for your egg originally. Cluck, cluck, cluck (translation: ha, ha, ha), what fun!

I've started collecting old frying pans to hang on the chicken run fence. Simply an indication that I love fried eggs, oh... and chicken, (hint, hint, Smokey).

2015 GARDENFEST by Cy Haley

Sorry I wasn't able to get a note in last month's newsletter about the wonderful job everyone did before, during, and after GardenFest this year! You should all feel proud of the great job you did.

Someone said it takes a village but we turned into a well-trained army for GardenFest!

We had a record breaking number (at least in my time here) of plants donated from Master Gardeners. Carolyn, Stacey, and so many others did a fantastic job of rallying the troops through potting parties and other ways to get plants brought in for the plant sale. We raised over \$3,500 on plants alone!

Cindy and her gang put on fun games for the Kid's Trail, and every child I saw walking around afterward had a big smile on their face. And you know if the kids are happy the grownups are doubly happy.

Suzanne brought in great vendors and they all seemed happy with their profits for the day and said they'd love to come back next year. If you know of a planter/pot vendor that would like to sell their wares at GardenFest please let Suzanne know so she can contact them. We're also looking forward to having Tom back next year with his birdhouses.

As Richard told you in last month's newsletter, the non-profits did very well too, each signing up several people who may be interested in becoming members of their organizations.

Siobhan out did herself with the petting farm. I think the MGs had as much fun learning about the animals as the kids did. She knows which animals appeal to the public and she has such gentle animals that even the tiniest ones were able to pet them. We may be in trouble with a few parents as I did overhear several kids begging for pet goats.

The raffles went over really well, and Barb was very creative in putting it together. I actually won the beautiful quilt Mary Carlton donated, and I gave it to my granddaughter. She has it hung above her bed, and her mother tells me it's her most prized possession. She's brought every friend she has into her room to show them her beautiful quilt.

Mary's workshops were a hit once again. Everyone loves hypertufa pots and stepping stones. And how creative were some of those stepping stones? We'll be given the opportunity at our next Association meeting to put out creative skills to test too!

The Speaker's Tent was standing-room-only, and we have Helen to thank for lining up very interesting speakers.

Jon and Glenn handled the parking which went more smoothly, however we may have to start selling cow patties at the next GardenFest. I wonder how much we can ask for fresh

manure? Glenn and his crew did a great job at tool sharpening too. I believe we set a record for donations!

It seems like everyone enjoyed themselves and all volunteers left tired both Friday and Saturday. The wrap up meeting is set for August 29 at 10:00 AM at Belle Grove. So...on to planning next year's GardenFest!

Congratulations to all of you for a job well done!

PUBLICITY AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE by Stacey Smith

County fairs are starting. We're also working in teaching gardens, children's gardens, and rain gardens. I challenge each project leader to send me a picture this month!

The committee held its summer meeting Saturday, August 1. I am writing this before the meeting, so I don't have an update for you, but we are still looking for more committee members. It's a variable time commitment. You can help for just one project or stay for the year. By joining the committee, you'll be sure you have the latest version of our official press release template, as well as access to other resources straight from Virginia Tech.

Projects – check the VMS calendar or get in touch with leaders to sign up for any of the below projects.

- Green Help Lines & Help Desks, times, days, and locations vary by county-- Project hours for answering questions, making IDs, and solving problems for the public. *Contact your county coordinator or county's project leader through VMS*
- Woodstock Farmers Market, 2nd & 4th Saturdays 9am-12pm, 1175 S Hisey Ave, Woodstock-- Project hours for answering questions, making IDs, and solving problems for the public. *Contact Sharon Bradshaw: bradrod573@gmail.com*
- Strasburg Farmers Market, Saturdays, May – Oct, Pot Town Organics, 181 W King St, Strasburg -- Project hours for answering questions, making IDs, and solving problems for the public. *Contact Belinda Palmer: bpdailily@yahoo.com*
- Berryville Farmers Market, Saturdays, May – Oct, Intersection Church & Crow Streets, Berryville-- Project hours for answering questions, making IDs, and solving problems for the public. *Contact Pam Hough: huffhohoho@aol.com*
- Clarke County Fair, Aug 10 – Aug 15, 890 W Main St, Berryville-- Project hours for answering questions and promoting NSVMGA to the public. *Contact Mary Craig: MCorneliaC@centurylink.net*
- Warren Heritage Society/Belle Boyd Garden, 101 Chester Street Front Royal-- Project hours for teaching the public about proper maintenance of perennials and shrubs. *Contact Katherine Rindt: jkrindt@comcast.net*

- Warren County Fair, Aug 2 – Aug 8, 26 Fairground Rd, Front Royal-- Project hours for answering questions and promoting NSVMGA to the public. *Contact Katherine Rindt: jkrindt@comcast.net*
- Belle Grove Demonstration Garden, 336 Belle Grove Road, Middletown-- Project hours for teaching the public about colonial era garden at a historic plantation. *Contact Claire Demasi: clairedemasi@gmail.com & Elena Lycas: elycas@lycas.com*
- Page County Fair, Aug 22 – Aug 29, 15 Fairlane Dr, Luray-- Project hours for answering questions and promoting NSVMGA to the public. *Contact Charlie Newton: cnewt1@yahoo.com*

My apologies for not getting a July report out to you. I was out of town in late June celebrating my niece's wedding in Hawaii on the island of Moloka'i. Tim and I decided to celebrate our 15th anniversary a little early and spent the week traveling around the islands. I loved the palm trees, the many colors of the tropical flowers, and the amazing scent of Plumeria. For anyone interested, I have a lot of pictures of flowers...and volcanoes!



EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

From July 31 to August 2, I attended a Virginia Native Plant Society field trip at the University of Virginia Mountain Lake Biological Station west of Blacksburg, led by Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Natural History Program botanist Johnny Townsend. The first day we walked to The Cascades Waterfall. The four-mile round trip took over seven hours, but my GPS said that we were moving for only one hour and 36 minutes, because of all the stops we made to examine plants. Some I knew. Some I didn't, but all we had to do was ask Johnny, "What's that?" He almost always knew, but sometimes the hand lens would come out, especially for grasses, sedges, and mosses. He went to North Carolina for a course on mosses after the field trip. He showed me an illustrated glossary for mosses. It was over an inch thick. The definitive glossary for vascular plants, Harris and Harris Plant Identification Terminology: An Illustrated Glossary, is barely half an inch thick, and it lists everything twice, once in a general glossary and again by category, e.g. stems, leaves, flowers.

After dinner, Henry Wilbur, UVA emeritus professor and former director of the Station, and his wife Becky took us into the woods to show us deer exclosures they set up nine years ago. They marked off twelve, ten-meter plots and enclosed half of them with eight-foot

fences. Outside plants were sparse and stunted. Inside the fence was lush, with much taller plants, dominated by Southern Mountain Cranberry (*Vaccinium erythrocarpum*). Outside, plants were sparse and stunted. For example, inside the fence Indian



Cucumber-root (*Medeola virginiana*) was in fruit while outside we could only find small, four-leaved plants. One of the cabins our group used is in an exclosure fence and has fabulous native plant garden.

The next day we stopped at Mountain Lake. Mountain Lake is one of only two natural lakes in Virginia. The other is in the Great Dismal Swamp. However, Mountain Lake drained a few years ago and has only a little pond at the north end. We went to the south end, where the resort is, and walked into the lake bed to see the plants that have sprung up, including a couple rare sedges. Another stop was the Potts Rail Trail to walk along the old railroad bed. Here we found six orchid species, all flowering or in fruit: Pink Lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*); Large Round-leaved Orchid (*Platanthera orbiculata*); Small Green Wood Orchid (*Platanthera clavellata*); Spotted Coralroot (*Corallorhiza maculata*); Bentley's Coralroot (*Corallorhiza bentleyi*) endemic to this area of Virginia and

West Virginia; and Bog Twayblade (*Liparis loeselii*), which is rare in Virginia.

Then we stopped at a bog and squished through peat moss (*Sphagnum*) admiring Cottongrass (*Eriophorum virginicum*), Grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia asarifolia*) and carnivorous Roundleaf Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), until many, full-flowering Yellow Fringed Orchids (*Platanthera ciliaris*) exploded into view.



Roundleaf Sundew
Drosera rotundifolia
in Peatmoss



Yellow-fringed orchid
Platanthera ciliaris

The third morning we went into the woods at the Station to see parasitic Sweet Pinesap (*Monotropsis odorata*) that Becky Wilbur had found. We found the red shoots popping up, and every time we moved the leaf litter, more appeared.



Sweet Pinesap
Monotropsis odorata

Then we walked to War Spur overlook, stopping periodically to see mostly moss and fungus. After an hour we had covered only one third of a mile, so we trotted off at a faster pace so we could enjoy the view and the Red Spruce (*Picea rubens*) at the Overlook and get back to the Station for lunch.

We interrupted the fast pace on the way back when we spotted another parasitic plant, Pinesap (*Hypopithys monotropa*) beside the trail.

After lunch was the long drive home.