

Va Native Plant Soc. - Normally 2nd Wed nights @ 7:30 pm, ICNA.

Monticello Bird Club - Normally 2nd Th nights @ 7:30 pm, ICNA.

Third Thursdays Brown Bag Lunch Forums
Bring your lunch to the forum and learn about a variety of topics important to the Rivanna River.
When: Third Thursday of each month @ 12:00PM - 1:00PM
Where: Jefferson-Madison Regional Library ([MAP](#)), 201 E. Market Street



Virginia Native Plant Society Meetings

Meetings are free and open to all plant enthusiasts. Meet in the ICNA Education Building.

Wednesday, December 10, 7:30 pm. Native plant and seed exchange. Also bring pictures or collected items for a show and tell at this informal festive gathering of the [Jefferson Chapter](#) of the Virginia Native Plant Society.

Wednesday, January 14, 7:30 pm

Wednesday, February 11, 7:30 pm



Monticello Bird Club Meetings

Free of charge. Open to the public. Meet in the ICNA Education Building. Web: www.monticellobirdclub.org.

Thursday, December 11, 7:30 pm. Charles Ziegenfus will present on nesting success of juncos as related to acorns and chipmunks.

Thursday, January 8, 7:30 pm. Learn about the quail action plan in this talk titled "The Bobwhites and the Bees" which will explain why early-succession habitat is so important to a variety of species.

Thursday, February 12, 7:30 pm. Bob Schamerhorn shares his experience pertaining to nature photography especially for Virginia's native species from the coast to the mountains and deep wilderness to your backyard.



StreamWatch Training Workshops

Contact Rose Brown at 962-3527 or rose@streamwatch.org. Free of charge. Meet in the ICNA Education Building. We will have a StreamWatch introductory training workshop on Saturday Jan 24th, from 10am - 4pm.



Natural History Classes at PVCC

Love learning about natural history? Sign up for Introduction to the Natural History of Virginia (NAS 145). Dan Bieker and Tom Dierauf offer hands on lectures and field trips to learn about the native plants and wildlife of Central Virginia and the Blue Ridge Mountains. This 3-credit course meets ten Monday evenings in the Education Building at Ivy Creek with five Saturday morning field trips. Starts January 26th. Register early by logging onto the Piedmont Virginia Community College website at www.pvcc.edu.



Ornithology Classes at PVCC

For birdwatching enthusiasts from novice to expert, learn how to identify the birds of Central Virginia by sight and song in the field on Saturday morning field trips. Dan Bieker teaches NAS 160 starting Saturday, February 14th. For more information about this course, call Dan at 971-9618. To register, log onto the Piedmont Virginia Community College website at www.pvcc.edu.



Beekeeping Class

Learn about the basics of beekeeping from the Central Virginia Beekeeping Association. This indoor course covers bee biology, choice of bee species, and honey production. The class meets four Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm in February 2009. Classes are held in the new County Office Building Annex at 1600 Fifth Street Extended. More details in January at <http://www.albemarle.org/parks> under County Classes.



Tree Steward Training

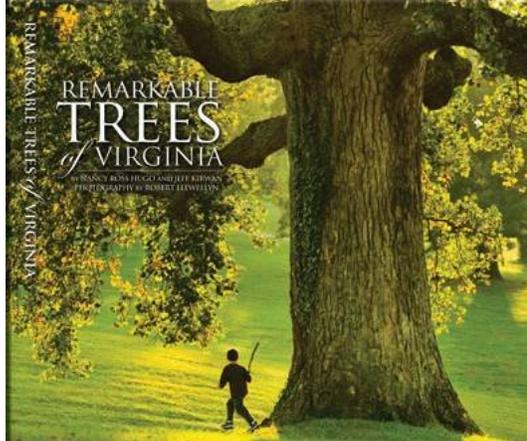
Tuesday, February 24, 9:00 am. Gain knowledge of tree identification, tree care, and how they benefit our urban and rural landscape by becoming a Tree Steward. After completing the 14 week training (Tuesday mornings until noon) at the

I have attached some information about the program. Feel free to visit the web site at www.forestryforthebay.org. FFB is essentially a clearing-house of forestry information for landowners. Take care,

*Craig Highfield, Coordinator, Forestry for the Bay
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 209, Annapolis, MD 21403
(410) 267-5723*



Remarkable Trees of Virginia



On October 29th, Rivanna Master Naturalists gathered to hear tales of trees by storyteller and forestry professor Jeff Kirwan. Some of us received a sneak preview of Jeff's presentation when we gathered on the downtown mall for snacks and tree talk. Then we assembled at the library for a slideshow presentation of the beautiful new book by Nancy Ross Hugo and Jeff Kirwan. From the 800-year-old bald cypress trees in Southampton County to the beloved Earlysville oak, photographer Robert Llewellyn magically captures Virginia's trees. Touching stories, beautiful photos and interesting tree facts make this book a must-have for all tree lovers.

Rose Brown



Mussels Matter

Did you know that there are 37 threatened and endangered species of mussel in Virginia? Mussels are the most endangered group of animals in the United States, and most declines in population are linked to water pollution. The Rivanna Watershed is home to the critically endangered James River Spiny mussel.

A group of Master Naturalists learned much about mussels on an October field trip to the Aquatic Wildlife Conservation Center in Marion, VA. Mussels are a vital aspect of our freshwater systems. They clean water, serve as indicators of water quality, and they are a food source for wildlife. A mussel can filter from 1/2 to 1 1/4 gallons of water per hour! Some mussels can live to be more than 100 years old.

A mussel begins its life as a microscopic larva, or glochidium. The larva must attach to the gills of a host fish in order to survive the next few weeks of its life. Each species of mussel requires a particular species of host fish. After about a month, the mussel larva builds a tiny shell of calcium carbonate, and drops off of the host fish. The mussel then spends up to 8 years growing to adulthood.

At the Conservation Center, Jonathon Orr showed us how he and other staff at VA Department of Game & Inland Fisheries are working to restore populations of threatened and endangered mussels. From the larval stage through adulthood, 24 species of mussel are cultivated, cared for, and observed. In order to find the optimum growing conditions for each species, there are experiments with substrates, water temperatures and algae contents. Most mussels are propagated in the summer and fall, and then kept in small tanks to grow throughout the winter. Some are kept for years, and some are released into the local streams.

What can you do to help these important mollusks? Water quality improvements are the most effective way to conserve mussels. Please do your part to reduce chemical runoff, water pollution, erosion and sedimentation. Each one of us can make a difference in our watershed, and make the future brighter for our mussels.



VA DGIF Mussel Restoration Facility



Jonathan Orr describes the life cycle of a mussel



The host for glochidia (mussel larvae)



A juvenile Pheasant Shell Mussel



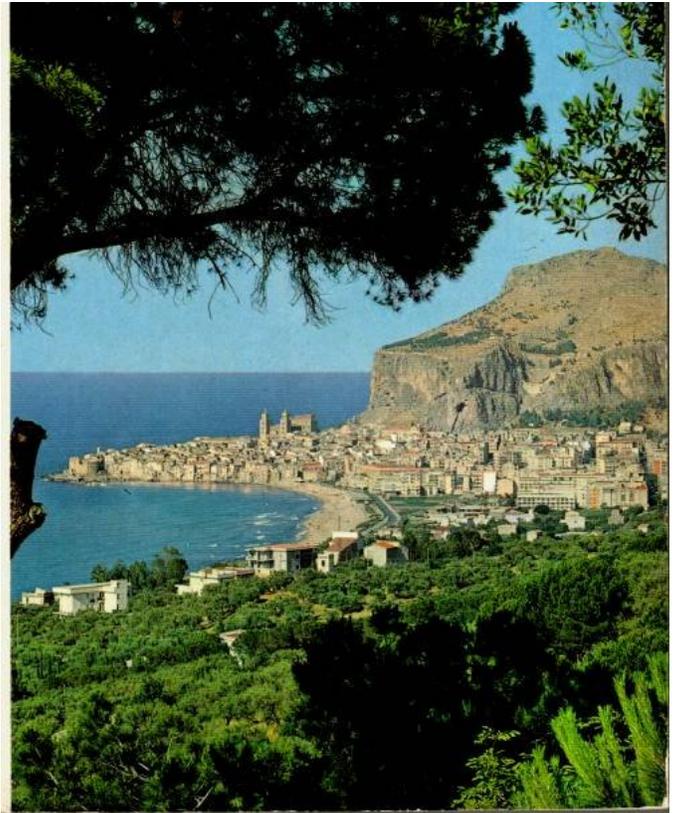
Rivanna Master Naturalists love to learn!

Rose Brown

Cefalu Mussels

As Rose states in her article, mussels filter stuff out of the water that surrounds them. If this water is contaminated, the mussels become contaminated as well. This was brought to me first hand during one of my 12 business trips to Sicily.

One really scenic town in Sicily is Cefalu situated east of Palermo on the northern coast. It is a town at the base of a cliff mountain.



Some co-workers and I visited this town on one trip. We went to the top of the hill and looked down upon the town and the coast. We saw what looked like a red tide coming from the east side of the mountain but curling back to the beach that you see above. We finally figured out that it was probably the discharge of a poorly operated sewage treatment plant.

A couple years later, my wife and I took a trip to England and Wales. After touring Wales, Oxford and thereabouts, I conducted a training class near London off the ring road before driving down to a hovercraft ferry that took us across the English channel. I had more business on a Sunday afternoon (at a restaurant, of course, where the client paid) in Rouen at the mouth of the River Seine. Tough life, but some of us had to do it. We then drove down to the Riviera and along it and then down the west coast of Italy to Sicily, taking the ferry from the "boot" over.

We decided to have lunch in Cefalu one Sunday afternoon. I had mussels. My wife, fortunately, did not. We came back to the Sigonella Inn on the NATO base west of Catania where I became deathly sick with diarrhea and vomiting. An Italian doctor came to my room and fixed me up. No charge. After all, I guess I could have been a NATO general for all he knew, but I like to think he was just being a nice Italian.

Were those mussels caught anywhere near that red tide that we saw a couple years before? Probably. I've been to lunch with co-workers at restaurants around Siracusa and Catania where they had mussels. No problems there.

Ralph Hall



Birth Of A Hummingbird

Keep in mind, the egg is smaller than a tic tac and a quarter fits the opening of the nest! This is truly amazing!



Be sure to click on NEXT PAGE at the bottom of each page; there are several pages.

A lady found a hummingbird nest and got pictures all the way from the laying of eggs to them leaving the nest.

It took 24 days from birth to flight. Because you'll probably never in your lifetime see this again, enjoy and please share! Ctrl +click (or copy & paste into browser address line) here: <http://community-2.webtv.net/Velpics/HUM/>

Ida Swenson

Wildlife Mapping Reports

I just heard of a 430 lb. bear killed in Albemarle Co. recently, and it was not a record. Usually, though, they are 200 lbs or even 150 lbs.

Frances Lee-Vandell

RMN Officers

Those bolded are up for election this year.

President
Susan Pleiss

*** President-elect (a contest wow!)**
Ida Swenson
Bill Feeney

Treasurer
Mary Lee Epps

*** Recording Secretary**
Tana Herndon

Corresponding Sec
Jackie Heath



Dede Smith

Deadline for items to be included in the newsletter is the **26th of the month before the next quarter (March)**. Please submit any announcements or articles of interest to be included in the next issue to *Rivanna Naturalist Notes* Editor, Ralph Hall, preferably by [e-mail](#), by facsimile 434-297-1962 or by USPS mail to 420 Ivy Farm Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901-8841.

