



Virginia Master Naturalists

The Pollinator

News from the Virginia Master Naturalist Program
Spring 2025



In mid to late spring, Woodland Box Turtles are becoming active again. Watch out for them on the roadways; hundreds or more box turtles are killed each year by cars. [Report your box turtle sightings](#) to the Virginia Herpetological Society. In addition, Northern Neck Master Naturalists have been assisting with a local box turtle study in their region that will continue this year. Photo by Michelle Prysby.

From the VMN State Program Office

Dear Virginia Master Naturalist community,

Happy Spring!

As we announced last quarter, we are celebrating the *Tremendous* 20th anniversary of the Virginia Master Naturalist program this year in a variety of ways, including with a statewide service focus on trees and forests. We're asking all VMN volunteers to do at least one service activity this year focused on trees. [See examples and learn how to report your tree-related activity.](#) Already, more than 50 volunteers have reported their #Tremendous20th service, including several tree planting events, tree walks for schools and community members, and protecting native trees from invasive vines.

Meanwhile, spring is springing all around! For VMN volunteers, that means vernal pool monitoring, bluebird box monitoring, tabling at Earth Day and Arbor Day community events, trying to tackle the invasive plants while they are still manageable, starting up seasonal nature walks in parks, and identifying all sorts of species for the City Nature Challenge.

Spring also brings many basic training course graduations. Nearly 300 new VMN volunteers are fledging as they complete their training requirements and begin to focus more on volunteer service. Please welcome this diverse and talented group of new volunteers as they embark on what we hope will be both a rewarding and a long experience in our program.

Michelle D. Prysby
VMN Program Director & Senior Extension Specialist
Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation



Tidewater Master Naturalist class of 2025 during their field session at False Cape State Park. Photo by Sherie Coleman.

Features

The Friends of the Bassett Trace Nature Trail

By Rick Brown, VMN-Historic Rivers Chapter

Learn how a VMN chapter has refurbished a nature trail at Colonial Williamsburg and now provides both in-person and online opportunities to learn about the diverse plants and animals there.

[Full article>>](#)



Historic Rivers Master Naturalists provide citizen science, stewardship, and education at the Bassett Trace Nature Trail in Colonial Williamsburg. Photo by Michelle Prysby.

Paspahegh Demonstration Garden: A Bridge to Harmony and Healing

By Linda Hughes, VMN-Historic Rivers Chapter

Like our nation's Native American peoples, Virginia Master Naturalists have a goal of building communities of people committed to harmony and healing our ecosystems.

In collaboration with the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation (JYF), an educational agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Linda Hughes and Dan Foster, Historic Rivers Master Naturalists, established the Paspahegh Demonstration Garden in December 2024. The project will educate school groups & visitors on the plants used at "Paspahegh Town," a Powhatan Indian outdoor interpretive site at Jamestown Settlement.

[Full article>>](#)



Dan Foster, co-lead, breaks ground for a Northern Spicebush at the Paspahegh Town interpretive site at Jamestown Settlement. Photo by Linda Hughes.

Volunteer News

Laurels - Winter 2025

Each quarter, we invite VMN chapters to share stories of volunteers' awards and accomplishments.

This quarter, learn about a garden to monitor ozone pollution, wildlife advocate and Earth Flag awards, a partnership with the American Horticultural Society, and hundreds of new pine trees planted in Isle of Wight County.

[Full article>>](#)



Anne Doll (left), Jon Bell (center), and Barbara Hoffheins (right), part of the Arlington Regional Master Naturalist chapter's ozone biomonitoring garden team.

From Our Sponsors and Partners

We've Got News from DOF, DEQ, and VIMS!

Learn about upcoming public events at VIMS, DEQ's online educational series, and DOF's financial help for protecting ash trees.

[Full article>>](#)



Middle Peninsula Master Naturalist volunteer Bill Corbin greets Teaching Marsh visitors during VIMS Marine Science Day. Photo by Karen Duhring, VIMS.

Support

Thank you to the incredible support you delivered to the VMN program on Virginia Tech's Giving Day! Your gifts at any time of year help us provide mini-grants to our chapters, lower the cost barrier for basic training, and continue to grow the program as our corps of volunteers grows.

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Contributors

This edition of *The Pollinator* was compiled by Michelle Prysby (VMN Program Director). Contributors of text and images for the blog stories included Rick Brown, Sherie Coleman, Lori Chamberlin (DOF), Karen Duhring (VIMS), Nancy Gorry, Janet Harper, Barbara Hoffheins, Linda Hughes, Ross Johnson, Judy Jones, Jerry Nissley, Livvy Preisser (VCE), Brian Scott, and Tiffany Brown (VMN Program Assistant).

We welcome submissions from chapters, volunteers, sponsors, and partners about initiatives that would be of interest to our audience. Please [contact Michelle Prysby](#) if you have something to share.

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Virginia Master Naturalist Program

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