



Plant Virginia Natives Initiative Grounded in Collaboration

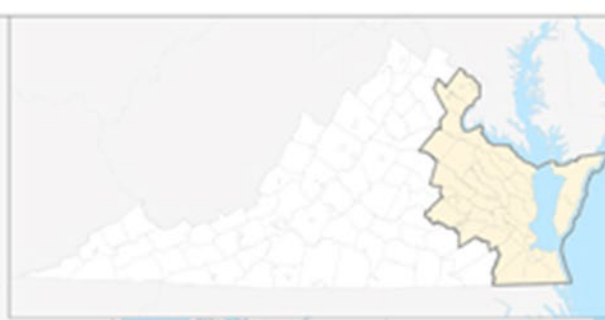
Virginia Witmer
Virginia CZM Program



Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Virginia's Coastal Zone



Network of state agencies and coastal localities that work together to protect and manage Virginia's coastal resources.

Virginia CZM Program

*Coastal Resource
Protection Goal*

To protect and restore coastal habitats and species.

To restore and maintain the quality of all coastal waters.

To protect air quality.

To reduce or prevent losses of coastal habitat, life, and property.

Plant Virginia Natives



PLANTVIRGINIANATIVES.ORG

Identify and prioritize opportunities to **collaborate** on Virginia native plant communication and marketing efforts and form **cohesive and coordinated messaging and strategies** to increase local availability and use of native plants state-wide.

Albemarle County
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine
Research Reserve of VA
Chesapeake Conservation
Landscaping Council
Flora of Virginia
Hampton Roads PDC
VA Dept of Conservation and
Recreation
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
Norfolk Botanical Gardens

Northern Neck PDC
Northern Virginia Regional
Commission
Piedmont Environmental Council
VA Audubon Council
VA Coastal Zone Management
Program
VA Dept of Agriculture and
Consumer Affairs
VA Dept of Environmental Quality
VA Dept of Forestry
VA Dept of Transportation

VA Dept of Wildlife Resources
VA Institute of Marine Science
VA Master Gardener Program
VA Master Naturalist Program
VA Native Plant Society
VA Nursery and Landscape
Association
VA Society of Landscape
Designers
VA Soil and Water Conservation
Districts
Wetlands Watch
Williamsburg Botanical Garden



Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership

Priorities:

- 1) Support development of a Virginia conservation landscaping certification;
- 2) Develop new strategies to help increase the availability of native plants including a framework and guidelines for native plant seed collection/propagation;
- 3) Develop new coordinated/collaborated state-wide native plant marketing strategies.



Draft Action Plan Goals:

Goal 1: Continue to encourage and increase collaboration and coordination among partners engaged in native plant education, communication and marketing.

Goal 2: Enhance knowledge of the value of native plants.

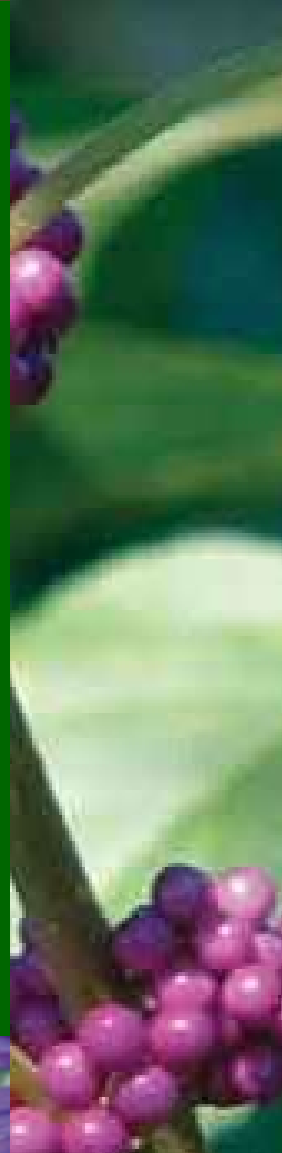
Goal 3: Increase Virginia grown native stock, and consumer access to native plants.

Goal 4: Increase demand and use of plants native to Virginia by:

- .Landscape and land use professions (including engineers, L.A.'s, anyone who specify for land development/use)

- .Homeowners

- .Landscaping and demonstration restoration projects on public and (state, federal) and also private (landowners or non-profit ownership)



Applying the Regional Native Plant Campaign Model Statewide

- Plant ES Natives
- Plant NOVA Natives
- Plant NNK Natives
- Plant Central Rapp Natives
- Plant RVA (Capital Region) Natives
- Plant Hampton Roads Natives
- Plant Southwest Virginia Natives
- Plant Southern Piedmont Natives
- Plant Northern Piedmont Natives

Plant
NNK Natives
Go Native – Grow Native

Plant
NoVA Natives
Naturally Beautiful!

Plant Central
Rapp Natives
BEAUTIFUL
BENEFICIAL
SUSTAINABLE

Plant RVA
Natives
A CAPITAL
IDEA!

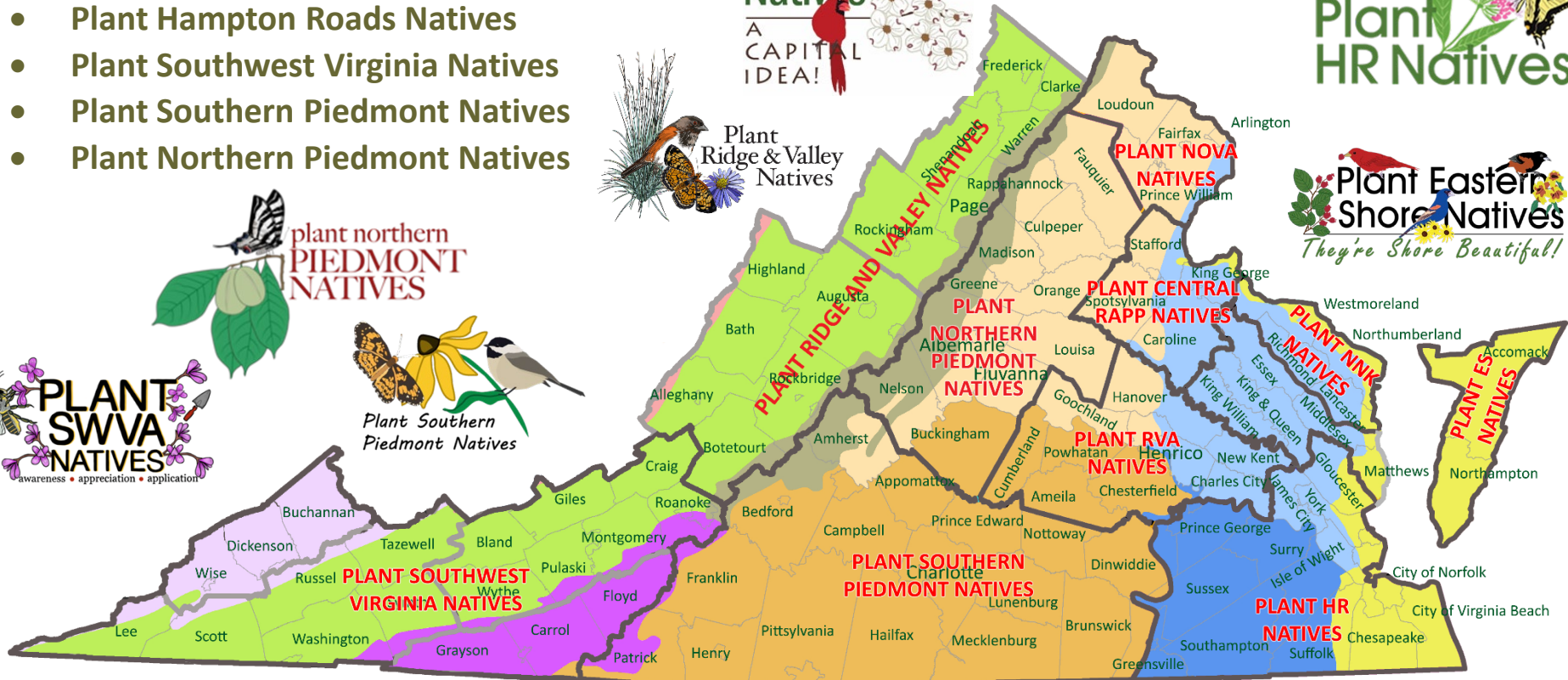
Plant
HR Natives

Plant Eastern
Shore Natives
They're Shore Beautiful!

plant northern
PIEDMONT
NATIVES

Plant Southern
Piedmont Natives

PLANT
SWVA
NATIVES
awareness • appreciation • application



Why Do You Plant?

“Survey Said...”

For beauty (92-94%)

Like to feed birds and butterflies (82%)

For relaxation & feeling close to nature (82%)



Why Not Natives?

Focus Groups Said...

Natives are scraggly and ugly

Lack of availability locally

Uncertainty about what is native

Regional Marketing Campaign Model

Captivating
Communications



Personal
Commitment/
Instilling New
Social Norm

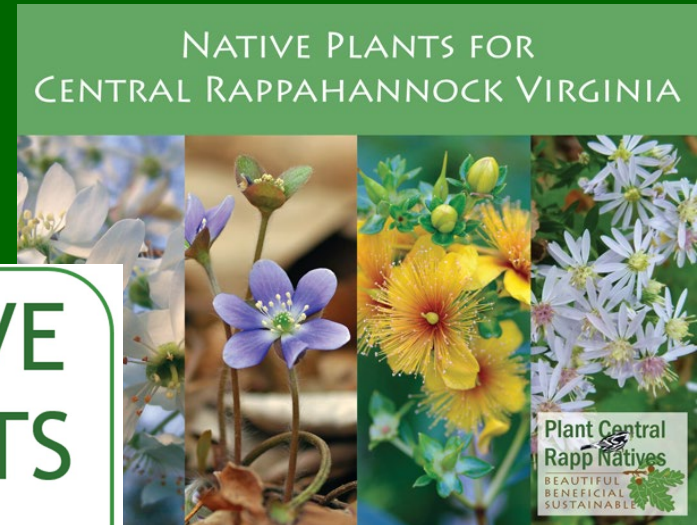


Point of Sale
Prompts



Regional Marketing Campaign Model

Captivating Communications



Coastal Regional Native Plant Guides

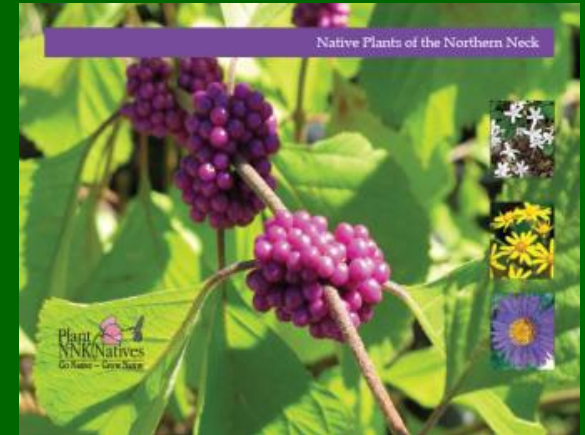
Native Plants for Accomack & Northampton



Native Plants for Northern Virginia



Native Plants of the Northern Neck



Native Plants for Southeast Virginia including Hampton Roads Region



NATIVE PLANTS FOR CENTRAL RAPPAHANNOCK VIRGINIA

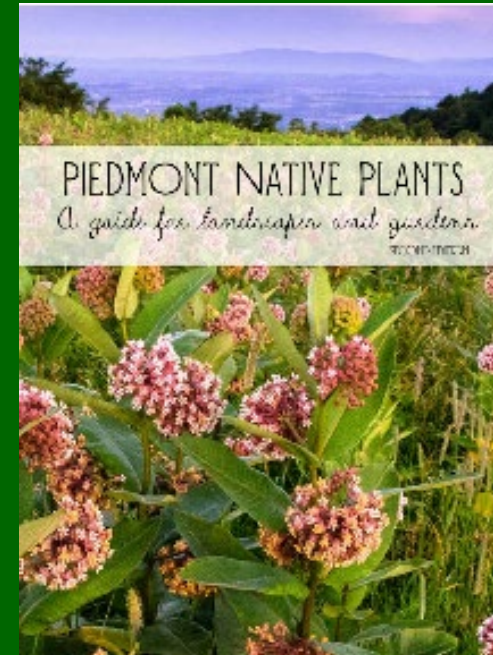
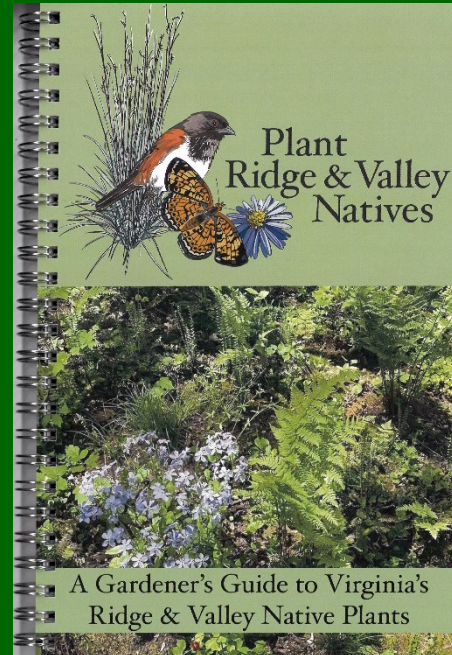
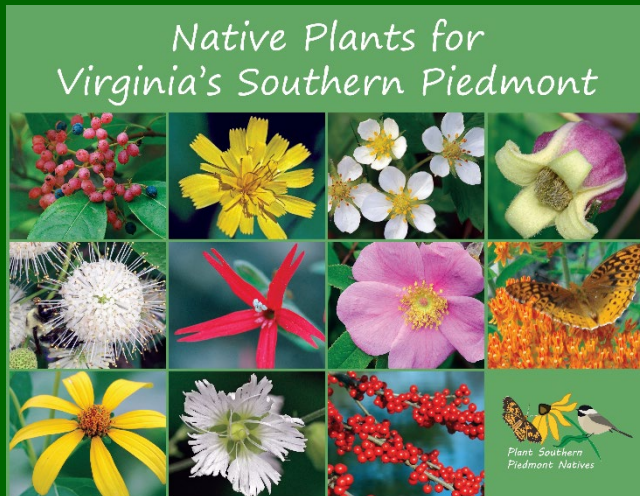
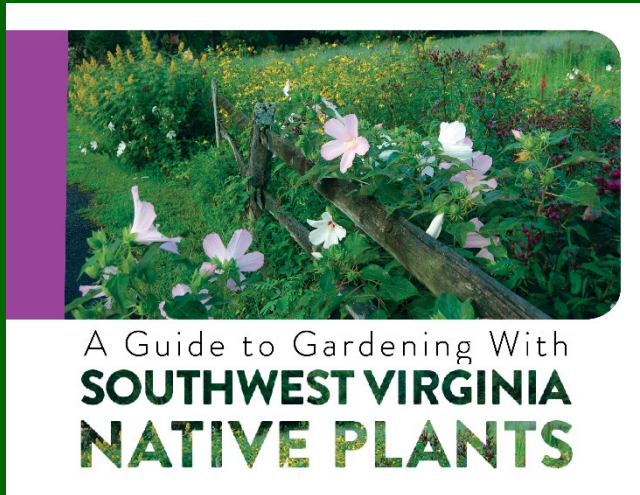


Native Plants for Virginia's Capital Region



PlantVirginiaNatives.org

Regional Native Plant Guides



PlantVirginiaNatives.org

Regional Marketing Campaign Model

Commitment/Instilling New Social Norm



Regional Marketing Campaign Model

Point of Sale



☐ THANKS FOR STOCKING VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANTS. I'LL BE SURE TO LET MY FRIENDS KNOW!

☐ PLEASE CONTACT ME

(email or phone number)

WHEN YOU STOCK THE FOLLOWING NATIVE PLANT(S)

(name of plant(s) - scientific name if you know it)

Provided by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program



Plant Virginia Natives

HOME

WHY PLANT VIRGINIA
NATIVES?

WHAT MAKES A PLANT
A VIRGINIA NATIVE?

REGIONAL NATIVE
PLANT
CAMPAIGNS/GUIDES

WHERE TO GET NATIVE
PLANTS

LEARN MORE ABOUT
PLANTS NATIVE TO
VIRGINIA

INVASIVE (NON-
NATIVE) PLANTS OF
CONCERN IN VIRGINIA

ANIMATED VIDEO -
CHICKADEES,
CATERPILLARS AND
OAKS, OH MY!

ABOUT PLANT
VIRGINIA NATIVES

Plant Virginia Natives



NAVIGATION
NOTE: CLICK
ON THREE
LINES IN
BANNER FOR
FULL SITE
MENU

86% OF LAND EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI IS PRIVATELY OWNED

This means that considering the ecological impact and value of
our own yards is so important.

EVERY SPACE, NO MATTER HOW SMALL, MATTERS

There are so many places around our homes, neighborhoods and
towns where we can make simple changes to improve habitat
quality for wildlife, and for the many other benefits we receive of
going native in our landscaping.

Every native plant added makes a difference. Any increase is

PLEDGE TO PLANT VIRGINIA NATIVES!

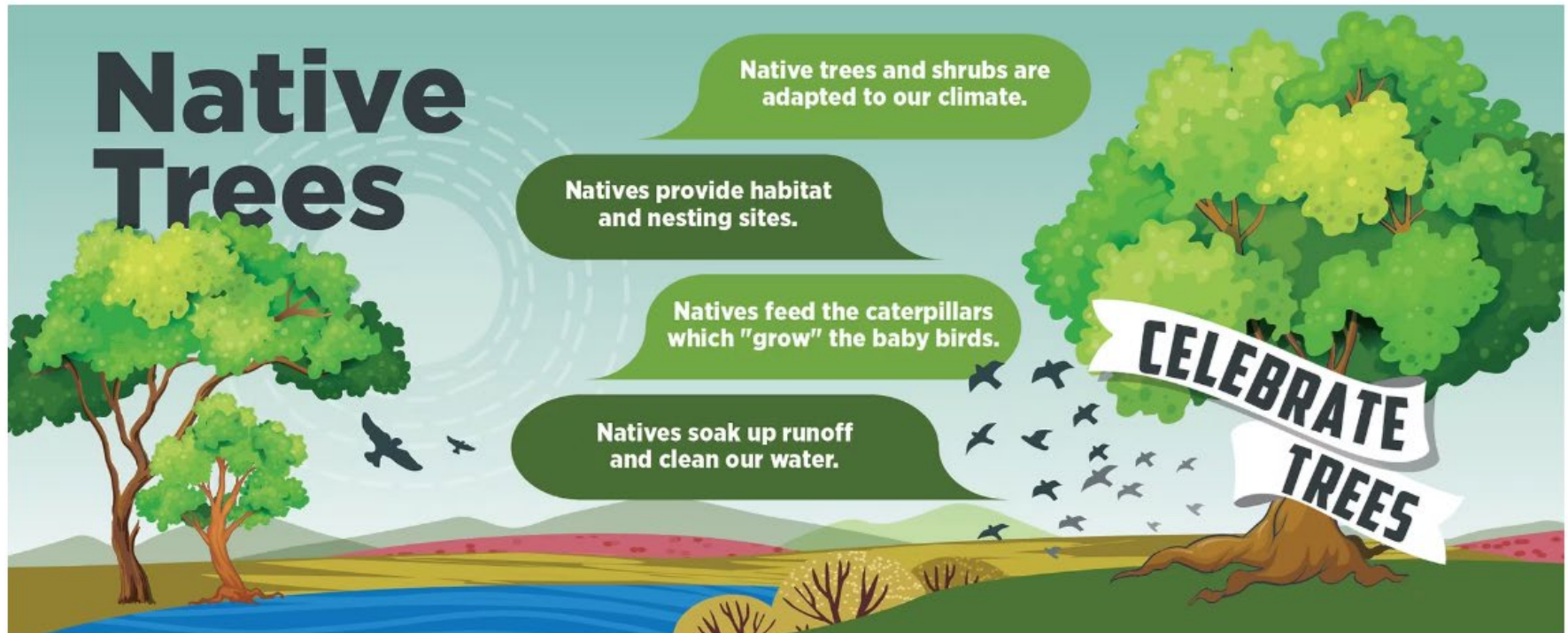


Receive this free decal as well as
Please Carry Cards to use when
you are shopping for your natives.
Remember to provide your
mailing address when you pledge.

Shared Outcomes

- Increased **use of** regional **natives**.
- Landowners **learn** about the benefits of **conservation landscaping**.
- Local garden centers **promote** and **increase** supply and variety of **native plants**. – reword to providers....
- **Local** jurisdictions strengthen **policies in favor of natives**.
- **Leverage** partner **resources**, create **consistent messaging** and provide **a rallying point** for partners.





Tree Rescuers Volunteer Education Program



Join our Northern Virginia program of community volunteers to help save our native trees from invasive non-native vines!

Please note: This is a public education program to inspire others to control invasive vines. To volunteer to do the actual vine removal, please see [this page](#).

Interested? Watch a video

- [2 minute intro](#) or [8 minute intro](#)
- [Introductory webinar](#) (37 minutes)

Then

[Sign up here](#)

And read the [handbook](#)



Plant RVA Natives Garden Center Liaison Program

Goals:

- Cultivate positive relationships between the Plant RVA Natives campaign and commercial garden centers and nurseries that serve those regions
- Foster practices and events that
 - Provide personal contact with consumers
 - Aid consumers in identifying and purchasing native plants
 - Discourage the continued sale of invasive plants



So, are we making a
difference with the regional
campaign approach?

2025 Behavior Change Survey Results

1st Regional Campaign Behavior Change Survey Results

Plant NOVA Natives

- In July, a professional company put out a survey of Northern Virginia homeowners to find out how well the native plant movement is doing. Notable improvements were noted compared to a similar 2013 survey.
- 31% feel “knowledgeable” or “very knowledgeable” today compared to 8% in 2013.
- More than one-third have been intentional about buying native plants.
- Information and conversations about native plants are having a BIG IMPACT. 68% are more likely to want native plants as a result.
- 75% would look to us for information about landscaping.
- Garden center volunteers are making a BIG difference by working with retail centers to label native plants.

By the Numbers...

Over 300 organizations engaged

600,000 plus unique visitors to PlantVirginiaNatives.org

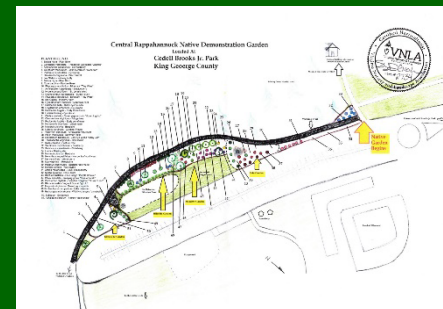
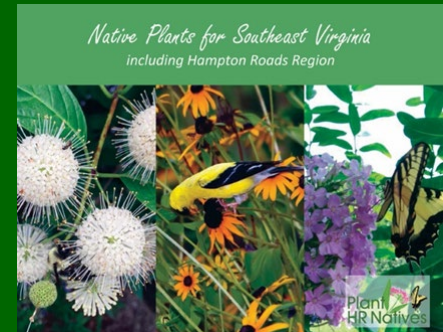
Over 125,000 coastal regional guides distributed

Over 10,000 home gardeners participated in and viewed a 2021 Webinar Series focused on landscaping with Virginia natives; new series to come

Over 5,000 signed pledges to Plant RVA Natives alone

2,000 hours – approximate time given by Master Naturalist per year to Plant Virginia Natives activities

3 awards, educational material in 8 languages, 7,200 Facebook followers achieved by Plant NOVA Natives



Feedback from Website Visitors and Pledgees:

I'm so grateful for the guidance as I transform our space to include more natives.

Many, many thanks for what you do and for promoting native plants here in the Old Dominion!

Thanks for the information that you provide in your website. It has been very helpful!

I only just found the website - LOVE IT!!

Thanks! Love the website and super interested in reading more!

Such a lovely program, thank you!

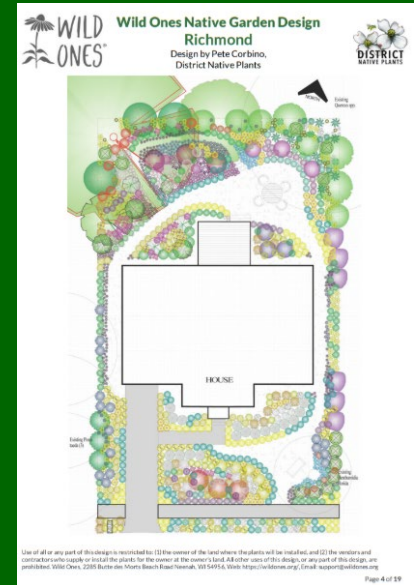
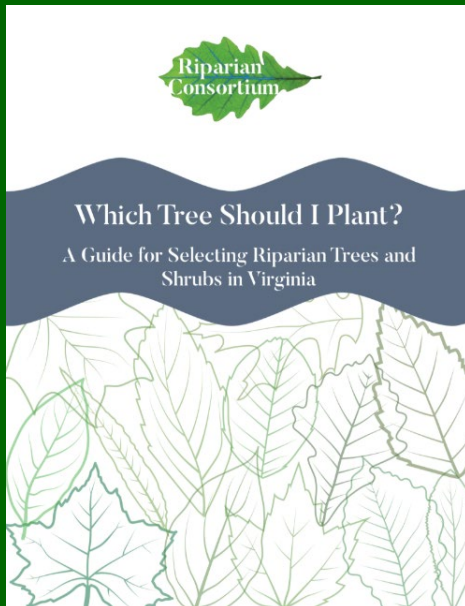
I began this adventure about 2 years ago, and am amazed and awed at the changes, both with the plants, as well as the animals, birds, insects. And such an education it's been! I am so glad organizations like this exist. Thank you.

I work for a small local construction company that has recently started landscaping for residential home builders. Your website has been so invaluable to me and has guided me into incredible resources and provided me with so many learning opportunities.

The decal I received has been great -- it looked great, was eye catching, and started many conversations out and about on why others should plant native Virginia plants.

Recent Projects with Plant Virginia Natives Partners:

Chickadees, Caterpillars, and Oaks, Oh My!



Recent Projects with Plant Virginia Natives Partners:

- DWR/DCR - *animated video production*
- DOF – *Throwing Shade incentive program*
- VDACS – *native plant provider survey*
- DCR – *update to Native Plant Finder*
- SWCD – *regional guides in all district offices*
- VNPS – *sales of regional guides*
- Upper and Middle James Riparian Consortium – *Guide for Selecting Riparian Trees and Shrubs in Virginia*
- Wild Ones, Richmond Chapter
- Virginia Master Naturalist Program – *Better Impact volunteer management and pilot Garden Center Liaison Project*
- Blue Ridge PRISM – *Virginia Invasive Plant Coalition*
- Keep Henrico Beautiful – *Plant Natives! Festival*
- Plant NOVA Natives – *statewide guide in Spanish*

Share the New Animated Video:
Chickadees, Caterpillars, and Oaks, Oh My!





QUESTIONS?

Virginia.Witmer@deq.virginia.gov

Goals of “Point-of-Sale” Activities

Overarching Goal

- **Increase the variety and quantity of native plants available across the region**



Supporting Goals

- ✓ **Cultivate positive relationships between the Plant RVA Natives campaign and commercial garden centers and nurseries that serve those regions**
- ✓ **Foster practices and events that**
 - ✓ **Provide personal contact with consumers**
 - ✓ **Aid consumers in identifying and purchasing native plants**
 - ✓ **Discourage the continued sale of invasive plants**

Contact with Point-of-Sale Providers



- ✓ Connects/establishes rapport through regular conversations
- ✓ Identify opportunities
- ✓ Identifies concerns
- ✓ Helps promote and sell more native plants
- ✓ Helps assess regionally available native stocks
- ✓ Encourages phase-out of invasive non-native plants
- ✓ Promotes customer awareness



Structured Approach to Point of Sale

1. Representatives of Plant RVA Natives*

- Establish contacts and conduct initial visits with garden centers or nurseries
- Explain the benefits of participation with the Plant RVA Natives campaign (and Plant Virginia Natives initiative) and invite the nursery or garden center to participate



2. Point-of-Sale (or Project) Leads**

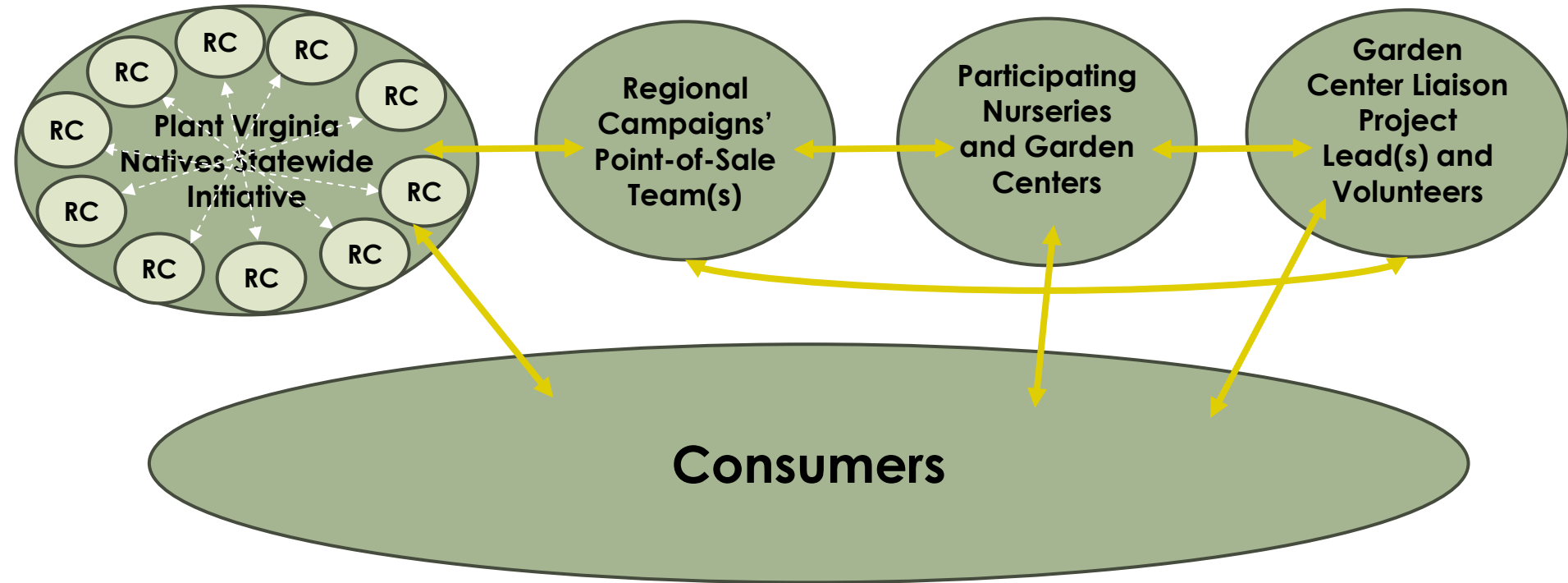
- Provide orientation to Garden Center Liaison volunteers
- Track participation, answer questions, and facilitate communications between Garden Center Liaison volunteers and Plant RVA Natives campaign



3. Garden Center Liaisons

- Meet at least once per calendar quarter with the assigned nursery or garden center contact
- Facilitate communications between the nursery or garden center and the Plant RVA Natives campaign, coordinating through the Point-of-Sale (or Project) Lead
- May also arrange to use Plant RVA Natives exhibit for native-plant-themed events scheduled at the nursery or garden center***

Enhancing Communication Opportunities



Establishing Liaisons at Centers

- ✓ **Point-of-Sale team meets with center** staff/center agrees to participate with the campaign.
- ✓ **Project Lead then assigns Liaisons** to work with a designated contact at the center, facilitates introductions (via email or phone), and ensures the Liaisons have necessary tools and information and are prepared for their first visit.
- ✓ **Liaisons** coordinate with each other and reach out to their designated garden center contact to **schedule a site visit**. Visits need not be long (anticipate 30 minutes to 1 hour). Many volunteers schedule a little extra time before or after the visit to explore the center and native plants sections.



Quarterly Visits by Liaisons

- Ideally, site visits take place **once a quarter**.
- **In-person** meetings **strongly preferred** to establish and maintain the connection.
- During visits, volunteers take notes to log comments and details—particularly any requests from the center to the regional campaign or information/requests from the campaign to the center.
- **Online forms** are available to record details from the visits.
- Virginia master naturalist and master gardener volunteers *also* record visit information in the Better Impact system to ensure they receive credit for their time under their approved projects.
- Liaisons who have difficulty using the online forms can send a record of the visit to the Project Lead (e.g., by text or email).



And Outreach Events



- Public events **hosted by nurseries and garden centers** are an opportunity for volunteers to do educational outreach highlighting the presence (and value) of native plants.
- A **portable tabling kit** is created for each participating center and made available for use by the assigned volunteers.
- If larger events are planned, liaisons can with their Project Lead can with their Project Lead to **invite help from additional volunteers** or arrange to **borrow larger exhibit materials from the regional campaign**.
- Participation in outreach events is **at the liaisons' discretion, as their schedules permit**.
- Notes from outreach events are recorded on a Contacts form and later uploaded to the online Events Log for the center.

Who Are Garden Center Liaisons?

- Garden Center Liaison (GCL) volunteers may be **Virginia Master Naturalists, Virginia Master Gardeners, or other volunteer groups or individuals** who have knowledge about native plants
- GCL volunteers **receive an orientation and access to campaign educational materials**, including their regional native plant guide, to help them convey consistent messaging in their role as a GCL
- To receive volunteer credit, Master Naturalist and Master Gardener volunteers sign up for a chapter-approved project in Better Impact (e.g., Riverine Master Naturalists can select “EO-DEQ Sponsor Work, EO Garden Center Liaison, Plant RVA Natives Point-of-Sale Campaign”)
- Chapter-approved projects have a Project Lead who provides the orientation and facilitates communication between GCLs and with the center and the regional campaign.



Resources Used by Volunteers

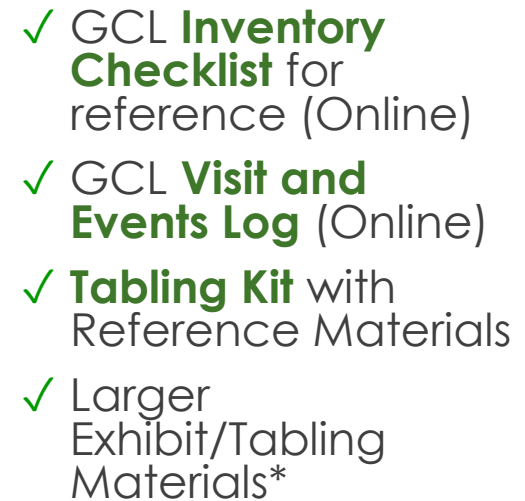
Accessible for download from **shared Google drive**:

- ✓ Point-of-Sale Reference Document (PDF)
- ✓ Garden Center Liaison Orientation (PDF of this presentation)
- ✓ [Region-Specific Native Plant Guide](#) (Link to downloadable PDF)



Orientation for Garden Center Liaisons

POINT-OF-SALE CONTACTS FOR PLANT RVA NATIVES REGIONAL CAMPAIGN
PLANT VIRGINIA NATIVES ([HTTPS://WWW.PLANTVIRGINIANNATIVES.ORG/](https://www.plantvirginiannatives.org/))



* Coordinated through Point of Sale Member or Project Lead