

# florascope

NEWS FROM THE FLORA OF VIRGINIA PROJECT

Please help us 'Keep the Science Current' as we keep you up-to-date on Virginia botany



Since the *Flora of Virginia* was written, species new to science have been found—such as, from Virginia's shale-barren region, a distinctive white *Monarda* that deserves a name—and others, known elsewhere, have been collected here. Many species considered "waifs" in 2012's *Flora* will soon get the full treatment, as they are more common or more firmly established than was thought then. DNA is still shaking up taxonomy, and with that often come changes in scientific names.

The *Flora's* your reference, and we're keeping it current by taking those changes into account. But this is hard work, and a lot of it, and writers, illustrators, botanists, and programmers must, of course, be paid. As you know, our entire budget comes from donations and a few grants. We're hoping you'll step up again and boost our efforts, which will get the newest info on Virginia plants into your pocket. [Click here](#) to donate and to learn how your donation will help.

Thank you!

Illustration from a larger painting of *Monardas* by Nicky Staunton.

## Great work, Lara!



Lara with her RHS entry, at top, and "April."

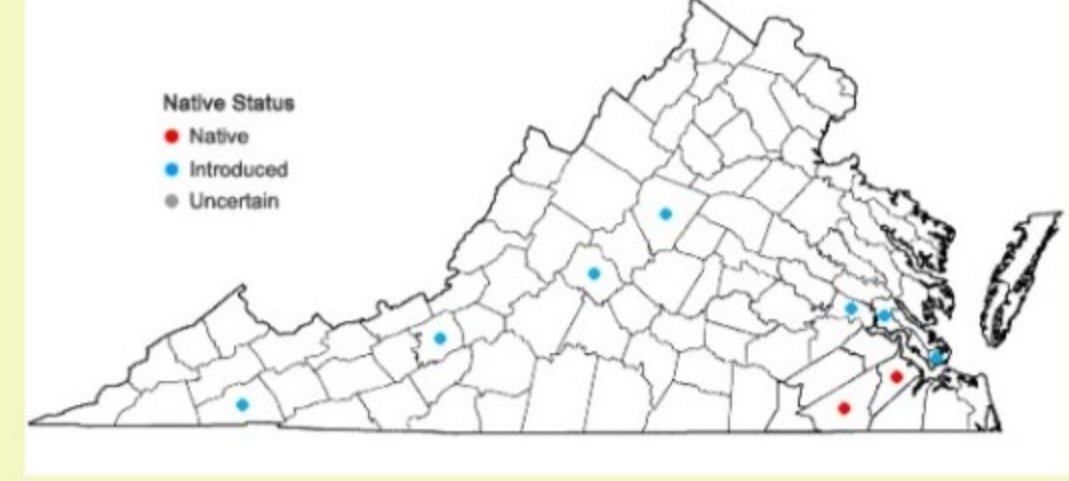
Lara Call Gastinger received a gold medal at the Royal Horticultural Society London Botanical Art Show 2018, held July 11–12. The gold medal (her second from the RHS—she went for the gold in 2007 too) was for her series, *Seeing Plants: A Year in Virginia*, which included a grouping of plants for each month.

Once judged eligible to enter the show, an artist must exhibit at least six paintings with a distinct, unifying theme. "My collection hearkens back to the illustrated plates of Ernst Haeckel," Gastinger writes. "I painted plants that are commonly seen each month with a very deliberate and symmetric layout. I used only sepia to emphasize the compositions and to minimize the distractions of color." The subjects are common species found within 50 miles of her Charlottesville home. Judges look for botanical accuracy and aesthetic appeal, but grading also considers overall presentation, including labels and layout, she said.

Gastinger is well known among Virginia plant people, as chief illustrator of the *Flora of Virginia* and for her popular watercolor and nature-journaling classes. [Click here](#) for information on her upcoming fall sessions. She is widely followed on Instagram, where she shares her nature journals and painting processes.

**Species in Lara's "April" painting.** *Dicentra cucullaria*, *Zizia aurea*, *Trillium grandiflorum*, *Aquilegia canadensis*, *Thalictrum thalictroides*, *Dicentra eximia*, *Erigeron pulchellus*, *Podophyllum peltatum*, *Rhododendron periclymenoides*, *Stylophorum diphyllum*, *Asimina triloba*, *Phlox divaricata*, *Polystichum acrostichoides*, *Adiantum pedatum*, *Dryopteris marginalis*, *Cornus florida*, *Chrysogonum virginianum*, *Erythronium americanum*, *Osmundastrum cinnamomeum*, *Onoclea sensibilis*, *Matteuccia struthiopteris*.

## Update: Current science for the App



New range map for *Calycanthus floridus* var. *floridus*, Sweet-shrub.

Get ready for a big update to the Flora Mobile App in September as we release our first major upgrade since the App was released a year ago at the Tri-State Native Plant Conference. Here's what you'll see:

- All-new range maps**, now color-coded (by county) as to whether a plant is native or nonnative (or whether nativity is uncertain). These maps from the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora, provided by our designated partner, the Virginia Botanical Associates, which manages the Digital Atlas.
- Updated (and combined) habitat and status information.** This information (labeled **H**; and **S**; in *Flora* species descriptions) dated to 2011, and it has been well updated since. Compiled for the Digital Atlas by Gary Fleming, an ecologist with our key partner, the Virginia Natural Heritage Program, it is maintained in the Digital Atlas as one field. Now we will present them as one field too, "Habitat and Status," a natural pairing.
- Updated rare plant information**, from Natural Heritage as compiled annually by *Flora* co-author Johnny Townsend.
- Corrections.** Users of the *Flora* and the App have let us know of errors and typos, and the App's a great way of getting these corrections out there.

Do stay in touch about how you're using the App!

## About Giant Hogweed in Va.



Extension agent Corey Childs with Giant Hogweed in a Clarke County landscape. (Virginia Tech News)

It's a sure bet you've had Giant Hogweed come up in conversation since it made blistering headlines in June. Here's a rundown on the plant in Virginia, which can help keep those conversations well informed. This is about Virginia only.

Giant Hogweed is suddenly notorious because it can do beastly things to your skin. With the scientific name of *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, it's listed in Virginia as a tier 1 noxious weed, but here it's not a naturalized escapee, is not spreading across the landscape. In fact, only three instances have been confirmed here, all in home gardens and planted many years ago. It has not spread from those sites. One occurrence each was confirmed in Clarke, Rockingham, and Fauquier counties. It's not treated in the *Flora of Virginia* and is not slated for addition, nor is it listed in the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora.

Giant Hogweed is not "creeping into Virginia," as Fredericksburg.com proclaimed in a July story reporting severe burns to a young landscaper in Spotsylvania County, it was presumed from contact with the plant. Yet the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services could not confirm that Hogweed was the culprit, because no plant material was available for identification.

That is not to say, of course, that the plant isn't hazardous when encountered. Contact with its clear, watery sap, combined with exposure to the sun, can cause terrible burns and blistering. And even though encounters are unlikely here, better safe than sorry, so the Virginia Invasive Species website warns: **Do not touch this plant!**

Giant Hogweed is native to the Caucasus region of Asia but has been introduced around the world, often by collectors working for botanical gardens. The plant is large and striking. Wild populations do exist in some parts of the United States, like the Pacific Northwest, Maine, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. It has been reported from one county in North Carolina.

It's a herbaceous perennial that can reach 7–15 feet in height, and its flower heads can be 2 feet across, packed with tiny white flowers. It's in the Apiaceae—the Carrot or Parsley Family—whose distinctive flowering heads are called umbels (the family is also called the Umbelliferae; think umbrella). A number of plants in the family have food value (such as carrot [the same species as Queen Anne's Lace], dill, coriander/cilantro, and celery). Others are less benign, such as the Poison Hemlock.

For more information:

**Giant Hogweed: Early Detection Species of Virginia**  
On the Virginia Invasive Species website, run by the Virginia Invasive Species Working Group. [Click here.](#)

**Giant Hogweed: Identification and Control**  
A new guide from Virginia Cooperative Extension. Includes photos of Giant Hogweed and plants that may be confused with it, as well as details on identification, how to report a possible sighting, and control of the species. To download a PDF, [click here.](#)

**Lookalikes**  
Some other species might be mistaken for Giant Hogweed. Four are listed here, with links to their pages on the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora. They are also described in the *Flora of Virginia* and the Mobile App. The first three are in the Apiaceae (like the Giant Hogweed). The elderberry is in the Adoxaceae (the Moschatel Family).  
• Cow-parsnip, *Heracleum maximum*, native  
• Hairy Angelica, *Angelica venenosa*, native  
• Poison Hemlock, *Conium maculatum*, nonnative  
• Common Elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis*, native

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