

**CHESSIE TRAIL March 27, 2022**

**Bring binoculars to better see plants on cliff**  
**Upper James River Chapter, VA Native Plant Society**

**ID# 1** *Lindera benzoin* **Spice Bush** (Native). **FEMALE** Both male and female shrubs have yellow flowers in the early spring. The female flower has one white pistil. The male flower has multiple yellow anthers so it seems like the flowers are brighter. Only the females will have small green fruits (wherever their flowers were pollinated). These will grow to about 1/2 inch long, turn red, then black, and be relished by many birds! Host plant to the Spicebush Swallowtail butterfly. Broken twigs smell spicy.



**ID#2** *Lindera benzoin* **Spice Bush** (Native). **MALE**

**ID#3** *Celtic occidentalis* **Hackberry** (Native tree) Likes moist condition but it is tough and used in many urban areas. Note funky bark; its small fruits are loved by birds.



**ID# 4** *Ranunculus abortivus*. **Littleleaf buttercup** (Native). There are several members of the buttercup family with small yellow flowers, but the leaf shape is pretty unique for each species. The wide shape variation between the basal and top leaves makes Little-leaf Buttercup pretty easy to identify



**ID# 5** *Osmorhiza* (can't tell which one - not in bloom but likely Sweet Cicely) with bottlebrush grass beside - across from this spot is the huge tree toppled over from the top of the steep slope. It tore limbs off other trees in its descent which leaves quite a hole in the canopy. Perhaps the tree and limbs will provide the ground enough shade to keep the numbers of invasives in check somewhat. Also note the decomposing section of boxelder just behind the *Osmorhiza*, offering homes and sustenance to many insects, fungus, etc, which is what we hope for the huge fallen tree.

*Osmorhiza claytonii* **Sweet Cicely** (Native)—"sweet" because its foliage and root smell like licorice. A tall plant with leaves divided into threes, hairy stems, and flat clusters of small white flowers.



*Elymus hystrix* **Eastern Bottlebrush grass** (Native)

Perennial grass that grows 3-4' and does well in part-shade and moist areas.

*Acer negundo* **Boxelder maple** (Native tree) Looks like both an ash and elderberry. New growth is green. Likes moist areas. Note the stems are opposite (Maple, Ash, Dogwood). About 290 species of moth and butterflies will

use this tree to lay their eggs. The caterpillars become good baby bird food.



ID#6

***Cardamine concatenata* Toothwort** (Native) owes its name to the tooth-like projections on its underground stems (rhizomes). Member of the mustard family. The flower provides nectar for honeybees and bumblebees.



ID# 7






***Mertensia Virginia* Bluebells** (Native) Grows fast. The flowers start off pink and gradually to light blue as they mature. Leaves are wide and soft. Bees, especially female Bumblebees that fly in early spring, will often be seen visiting the flowers. Only the largest bees have the ability to push their way up the tube. The significant pollinators are butterflies and moths. Spreads readily by seed.



ID# 8

***Sanguinaria canadensis* Bloodroot** (Native). The seed pod will turn reddish after about 2 weeks, and then it will pop and spread its seeds. Like many seeds, these have elaiosomes (fleshy appendages that are rich in fatty acids and diglycerides), which are attractive to ants. The ants gather the seeds and carry them to their nests, where the elaiosomes are eaten and the seeds discarded.



ID# 9	<p><b><i>Rosa multiflora</i> Multiflora rose</b> <b>On state invasive list.</b>  The branchlets or canes have paired (at times), stout, curved thorns or prickles. The leaves are alternate and compound (composed of five to eleven leaflets. White flowers appear from May through June. (native rose flowers are pink) Red fruits (i.e. berries) appear in August and persist into the winter months as clusters of round ¼ inch hips. Brought in by USDA for erosion control and hedgerows.</p> 
ID# 10	<p><b><i>Polymnia canadensis</i> Small Flowered Leaf Cup</b>  (Native) Small yellow flowers in summer. Grows along woodland edges. Has a funky smell when pulled out.</p> 
ID#11	<p><b><i>Staphylea trifolia</i> Bladdernut tree</b> (Native) Flaggers suggest it should be called Balloon-Nut, a more attractive name. Note dark speckled new growth. Pretty bell like white flowers. Cool “bladder-like” seed pods that look like little balloons. Great favorite of bees and other pollinators.</p> 
ID#12	<p><b>LOOK up to see....<i>Sedum ternatum</i> Woodland sedum</b> and many other names (Native) Easy to grow; widely available commercially. <b>AND <i>Pellaea atropurpurea</i> Cliff-brake fern</b> (Native) Likes crevices in limestone. The leathery leaves and the wiry stem resist desiccation.</p> 
ID#13	<p><b><i>Eurybia divaricata</i> White wood aster</b> (Native). Similar to <b><i>Symphotrichum cordifolium</i> Heart-leaved Aster</b>. Both have lower leaves that are heart-shaped - they don't differentiate much until they're taller. Both flower in late summer just when bees really need nectar and are quite common on the forest floor. White wood asters flower on black stems. Heart-leaved aster flowers are a bit purple. Deer resistant. White wood aster on left and Heart-leaved on right.</p> 
ID#14	<p><b><i>Heuchera americana</i> Alum root</b> (Native) Look up on cliff. Flower panicles emerge in the spring on leafless</p>

stalks above the foliage. The individual tiny flowers are bell-shaped with extended stamens and are greenish or creamy with a pinkish tint. Good early bee plant. Plant contains tannins so somewhat deer resistant. **Highly modified cultivars have no wildlife benefit.**



ID#15

***Thuja occidentalis* Arborvitae or White Cedar** (Native). "Arborvitae," means "tree of life," because Native Americans reportedly used the tree for medicinal purposes. Not common because deer love them. Evergreen; grows 50'



Also see the 2.5 inch thick vine climbing cliff with side stems that from this distance look like poison ivy ***Toxicodendron radicans*** (Native). Three almond-shaped leaflets, somewhat shiny, sometimes toothed. New leaves have a purplish tone and later range from light to dark green to orange in Fall. Will grow into a vine eventually but can get quite tall as a little treelet. The berries are enjoyed by birds. Many people get an itchy rash from the compound *urushiol* in leaves.



ID#16





ID not certain at this stage. Either ***Euonymus alatus* Burning Bush** **On State Invasive plant list** or ***Euonymus americanus*** (Native) known as **Hearts a-bustin** or **Strawberry Bush** for its unique seed pods. When mature, Burning bush has "wings" along its stems.



ID#17

***Lonicera fragrantissima* Sweet Breath-of-Spring** (Non-Native) **On state invasives list**. Up on the cliff Chinese honeysuckle with fragrant white flowers. I see this now more and more out in the county.



ID#18	<p><b>LOOK up about 8 feet.</b> This fern is currently being researched to determine its species.</p>
ID#19	<p><b><i>Dicentra cucullaria</i> Dutchman's Breeches</b> (Native)  Feathery foliage and the flowers look like pantaloons. Seeds are dispersed by ants, who are enticed to carry the seeds underground because the seeds contain Elaisome, a favorite to many ant species. The fruit is a two-part capsule, pollinated by bumble bees whose proboscises are long enough to reach the nectar. Other insect species that can't reach the nectar will snip a hole at the bottom of the flower to "steal" it of nectar.</p> 
ID#20	<p><b><i>Boechera canadensis</i> Sicklepod/Rock cress</b> (Native)  The flowers are minimal but the seed pods are a cool sickle shape.</p> 
ID#21	<p><b>LOOK up about 4 feet.... <i>Thalictrum dioicum</i> Early Meadow Rue</b> (Native) Rue has soft gray-green foliage that might remind you of the delicate leaves of columbine. Male and female flowers are on different plants (dioecious) and are different colors. The dangling male flowers have no petals and are mostly made up of yellow anthers. The female flowers can be green to purple.</p> 
ID#22	<p><b><i>Alliaria petiolate</i> Garlic Mustard</b> (Non-native) <b>On state invasives list.</b> It is allelopathic meaning its roots have a chemical that inhibits growth of other plants. Small white flowers, prolific seeder. Before it goes to seed, people use the leaves to make a tangy salad or pesto.</p> 
ID#23	<p><b><i>Hydrangea arborescens</i> Smooth Hydrangea</b> (Native). Shrub w/ broad oval leaves with pointed tips. Likes loamy, well-drained soil. This is the plant that the common 'Annabelle' hydrangea was developed from. Unfortunately, 'Annabelle' has sterile florets so produces</p>

no nectar. Not deer resistant, so is present mostly on steep slopes.



ID#24 ***Asimina triloba* Paw Paw Tree colony** (Native ) Also known as American Custard Apple. Produces maroon flowers that become green sweet banana flavored fruits in late summer. Fly pollinated. Host plant to the Zebra Swallowtail butterfly. Trees often are flat or two dimensional.



ID#25 ***Trillium sessile* Toadshade trillium** (Native) Has one stinky flower w/ no stalk (sessile). It is pollinated by flies and beetles. Also note Sicklepod and Dutchman's Breeches.




ID#26 [Pictures are above in earlier flags] Large **Poison Ivy** vine...LOOK up for sedum, Heuchera and ***Aquilegia canadensis* Wild Columbine** (Native). Three leaflets with rounded lobes. Will have lovely orange and yellow bell-shaped flowers. Hummingbirds are attracted to this color combination. Its seed pods "pop," and so it spreads well. Further along to the left is a **Boxelder** tree leaning over path with signs its rootball is pulling loose.


ID#27 ***Dryopteris maginialis* Marginal Wood Fern** (Native) Is a leathery, evergreen fern, blue-green above and light green on underside. It gets its name from the sori (aggregations of spore-bearing structures in ferns) located at margins or edges of the underside of the pinnules.



ID#28 ***Claytonia virginica* or *caroliniana*** (leaves longer and narrower than virginica) **Spring Beauty** (Native) One of the earliest spring flowers so it is important for many species of native bees and flies.



ID#29	<p><b><i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i> River Oats (Native)</b> Note the stem with last year's seeds and new leaf-spikes emerging from the root. This is a tough riparian grass and a host plant for the Pepper &amp; salt skipper butterfly, Bell's road side skipper butterfly, and Bronzed roadside skipper butterfly.</p> <p>BEHIND the river oats are <b><i>Elymus hystrix</i> Eastern Bottlebrush grass (Native)</b> Perennial grass that grows 3-4' and does well in part-shade and moist areas.</p> 
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ID#30	<p><b><i>Equisetum hyemale</i> Horsetail/Scouring Rush (Native)</b> The evergreen stems are particularly noticeable in winter and can provide significant interest to the landscape. Stems have a high silica content and were used by early Americans for polishing pots and pans. Moist areas.</p> <p><i>Equisetum</i> is the single surviving genus of a class of primitive vascular plants that dates back to the mid-Devonian period (350 + million years ago). Today, the equisetums are categorized as fern allies in large part because they, like the ferns, are non-flowering, seedless plants which reproduce by spores.</p> 
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Photos from Wiki common. Thank you Jen Coluzzi for formatting to fit phones.