



Regional Native Plant Campaigns Supported by Virginia CZM Program

In spring 2009, the Virginia CZM Program and its partners launched the *Plant ES Natives* campaign using proven social marketing tools and techniques with a focus on making planting natives fun, easy and popular. Plant ES Natives is going beyond awareness to change individual behavior and establish a social norm for use of native plants.

The campaign strategy was designed after listening to Eastern Shore residents and identifying the barriers that were inhibiting their planting of natives, the benefits they would receive by increasing their use of natives, and the outlets through which they receive information. The campaign's planning team then selected community-based social marketing methods that would most effectively convey a campaign message that would resonate with this audience – "They're Shore Beautiful!". For example, a colorful guide to Eastern Shore native plants highlights their beauty and makes it easier for residents to identify native plants, and a series of noticeable, eye-catching, self-explanatory prompts at point of sale makes it easier to find them. Native plant demonstration gardens follow the rule that seeing is believing and showcase the beauty of ES native plants. Most importantly, leaders in the community are helping make planting natives more popular.

The *Plant ES Natives* campaign social marketing strategy has been a model for development of other regional campaigns funded by the Virginia CZM Program (described on the next page). The regional campaigns are visibly linked through their names and shared design elements in their campaign logos, and are programmatically linked as they share their progress and experiences. Many of the same organizations are participating on the regional campaign planning teams, including local chapters of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Audubon and Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Components of the Plant ES Natives Campaign strategy - such as a regional plant guide (based on the *Flora of Virginia* published in December 2012 - <http://floraofvirginia.org/>) and garden center plant tags, have been easily transferrable to address barriers common in all the regions to planting natives. Each region however is unique and the planning teams have adopted and are continuously evaluating which place-based approaches are most effective in reaching their gardening population.

For more information visit <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/NativePlants.aspx> : Virginia Witmer, Outreach Coordinator, Virginia CZM Program – 804.698.4320 or Virginia.Witmer@deq.virginia.gov (updated 5-08-2014)

What Is Social Marketing?

While education and advertising can be effective in creating public awareness and in changing attitudes, numerous studies show that behavior change rarely occurs as a result of simply providing information.

Social marketing campaigns are based on traditional commercial marketing principles – targeted audience research and the four "P's" for success - product, price, place and promotion.

A social marketing campaign treats the desired behavior as the **product**. Like commercial marketing campaigns, social marketing campaigns also require an exchange—giving up an ingrained behavior in exchange for a valued benefit. The **price** is what the targeted audience must do to obtain the product. The price cannot exceed the benefits or the perceived value of the product will be low and the behavior will be unlikely to be adopted. The next "P" to consider is **place**, which describes where your product reaches your targeted audience. People will not go out of their way to find your message, so it must be placed where your target audience is likely to see it.

Promotion refers to your campaign's message and how you communicate your message to your targeted audience.

Community-Based Social Marketing

Community-based social marketing is based upon research in the social sciences that demonstrates that behavior change is most effectively achieved through initiatives delivered at the community level which focus on removing barriers to an activity while simultaneously enhancing the activities benefits.

Community-based social marketing involves four steps:

- 1) Identifying the barriers and benefits to an activity,
- 2) Developing a strategy that utilizes "tools" that have been shown to be effective in changing behavior,
- 3) Piloting the strategy, and
- 4) Evaluating the strategy once it has been implemented across a community.

Current Regional Native Plant Campaigns

Plant ES Natives (region 1) –



www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/NativePlants/PlantESNatives.aspx

Primary Audience – Eastern Shore Gardeners (mainly female, between the age of 35 – 85)

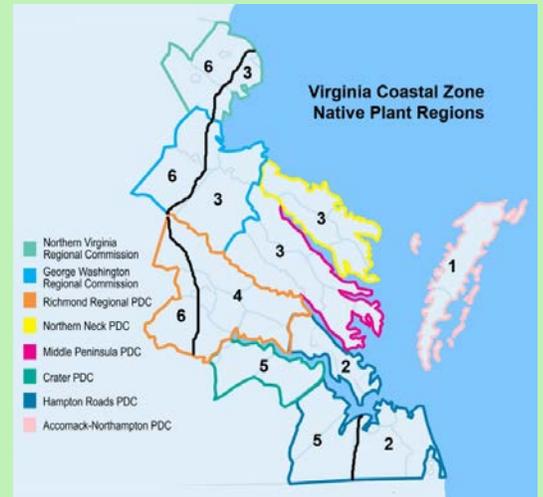
Secondary Audience - Garden center owners, retail nursery owners and landscapers

Key Message – Eastern Shore native plants are colorful and beautiful!

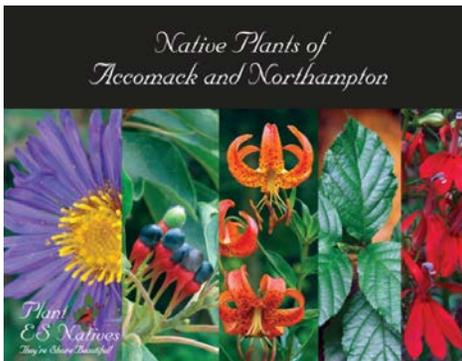
Current Campaign Strategy Components –

- **Trained Community Leaders** (pin recognizing trained leader and CL Outreach Kit)
- **Point of Sale** – banners, plant tags, decal, posters, info kiosk at centers; partner native plant sales
- **Demonstration Gardens** – plant ID markers, demo videos
- **Communication materials** – radio ads; native plant guide; website; Facebook; exhibits; native plant of the week articles

Virginia Coastal Native Plant Regions



The Virginia CZM Program hopes to have a campaign in every coastal planting region – map above. These native plant regions were delineated by DCR Natural Heritage. The map shows the alignment of these planting regions with Virginia's 8 coastal planning district commissions.



May 2014 Status –

Focus remains on engaging and coordinating the efforts of a corps of Community Leader volunteers. A multi-day public native plant celebration and sale is planned for fall 2014, including tree planting on local government property. A QR code (2D bar code used to provide easy access to information through a smartphone or other mobile device – links to website) has been added to plant ID markers in the campaign's nine demo gardens. Partners are currently editing video tours of two demo gardens.



Plant NNK Natives (region 3) –



<http://vnps.org/northernneck/go-native-grow-native/>.

Primary Audience – Northern Neck Gardeners (demographic mirrors ES; retirees moving to area)

Secondary Audience - Garden center owners, retail nursery owners and landscapers

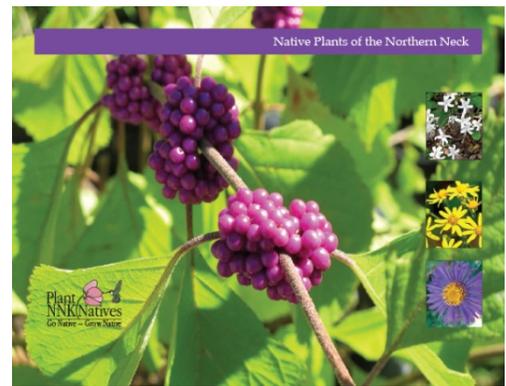
Key Message – Northern Neck native plants help give the Northern Neck its unique character and are colorful and beautiful!

Current Campaign Strategy Components –

- *Point of Sale* – native plant days at local retailers, banners, plant tags, flags; notecards sold at retailers; partner native plant sales
- *Communication materials* – native plant guide; website; exhibits; native plant of the month articles

May 2014 Status –

The campaign, coordinated by the Northern Neck Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, is looking for other sources of funding. The regional native plant guide was named the best guide in the region by a local paper. In October 2014, the campaign will sponsor a native plant celebration at Stratford Hall, including dedication of new native plant habitat garden. An evaluation survey of the campaign's effectiveness will be done when funding permits.



Plant NoVA Natives (regions 6 and 3) –



www.plantnovanatives.com (not live yet)

Primary Audience – Homeowners living in single family homes or townhouses with incomes of \$150,000 who care for plants on their property. Age was not a strong factor in determining interest in native plants.

Secondary Audience– Landscaping industry and garden center staff

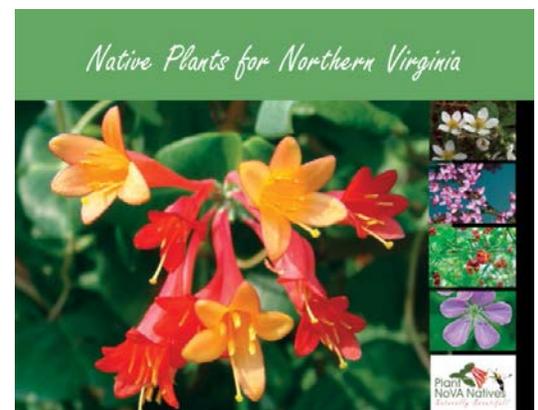
Key Message – Northern Virginia native plants are colorful and beautiful and require less maintenance when established

Current Campaign Strategy Components –

- *Trained Community Leaders* (Community Leader Coordinator and CL Outreach Kit)
- *Point of Sale* – info kiosk at garden centers, banners, plant tags
- *Demonstration Gardens* – plant ID markers
- *Communication materials* – native plant guide; native plant cards or brochures at garden centers highlighting either native trees, shrubs, ferns, vine or forbs; website; exhibits

May 2014 Status –

This campaign is being coordinated by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, with the current president of the Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society serving as the campaign committee chair. The Virginia CZM grant to NVRO is open through the end of September 2014. The campaign – Fairfax, Arlington, Loudon and Prince William - will be piloted this fall and fully implemented next spring 2015. Design of the campaign is being guided by pre-campaign research conducted in 2012. The campaign planning team is currently finalizing its regional native plant guide and other campaign strategy elements. The planning team conducted a series of four meetings in April 2014 – one in each county - to introduce the campaign to community members interested in serving as campaign Community Leaders – over 200 people attended. NVRC has hired a Community Leader Coordinator, initially funded by Virginia CZM, to manage these volunteers.



Plant HR Natives (regions 2 and 5) –

Virginia CZM contracted with HRPDC in February 2014 to bring together a planning team to conduct pre-campaign research to guide design of the campaign. There is great interest in this campaign by organizations in the areas as well as retailers, growers and landscapers.

For more information visit <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/NativePlants.aspx> : Virginia Witmer, Outreach Coordinator, Virginia CZM Program – 804.698.4320 or Virginia.Witmer@deq.virginia.gov (updated 5-08-2014)



Virginia Native Plants Marketing Partnership

Although the Virginia CZM Program's federal CZMA funding must be spent in Virginia's coastal zone, the efforts the program and its partners have generated interest in western areas of the state, and presented an opportunity for the program to encourage and support state-wide coordination and collaboration on native plant marketing. In 2011, the Virginia CZM Program reached out to other state and regional focused partners engaged in native plant marketing efforts and initiated the **Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership** (VNPMP)- a forum to collaborate and coordinate, leading to more consistent messaging to the general public and greater efficiencies in the use of limited resources - <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/NativePlants.aspx> . A Steering Team for the VNPMP was formed - see member organizations listed on next page.

To engage other interested VNPMP partners-at-large - organizations, businesses and individuals interested increasing the use of Virginia native plants - the Virginia CZM Program Office and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries hosted a Virginia Native Plants Marketing Partnership Forum - **Increasing the Use of Virginia Native Plants: Social Marketing, Collaboration and Coordination**, in May 2013 (to gather input on priorities for the VNPMP), and a second forum - **Growing Our Community and Cultivating Our Ideas**, in January 2014 (for more feedback and ideas on addressing VNPMP priorities).

Together the VNPMP Steering Team has compiled a *Native Plant Marketing Partner and Resource Directory* http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Portals/0/DEQ/CoastalZoneManagement/Virginia_Native_Plants_Marketing_Partners_and_Resources_Directory_revised_April_2014.pdf and has identified collaborative projects that will be more effectively and efficiently addressed and supported through the partnership. In August 2013, the VNPMP Steering Team prioritized the following goals:

1. Development of a Virginia conservation landscaping certification
2. Development of a framework and guidelines for native plant seed collection/propagation and an increase in the availability of Virginia native plants
3. Development of coordinated state-wide native plant marketing strategies

The VNPMP has garnered improved communication and collaboration. For example, in its 2014 Guide to Virginia Growers, the Virginia Nursery and Landscaper Association, a member of the VNPMP Steering Team, has highlighted the availability of plants that are native to the Chesapeake Bay region (according to the USFWS Chesapeake Bay native plant database). The guide also includes ads for the Flora of Virginia and an ad outlining the habitat value of natives. The guide will help the VNPMP reach growers, landscape architects and designers, and contractors and is a great first step in the VNPMP's efforts to increase the wholesale availability and distribution of Virginia natives.

At its May 2014 meeting, the Virginia Native Plants Marketing Partnership established two Work Groups to focus on addressing the priority areas selected by the VNPMP Steering Team:

- 1) **Native Plants Availability Work Group** - Dot Field, Chair
This group not only will look at propagation protocols for Virginia natives but also more broadly into the issue of availability, exclusive of marketing. If you are interested in serving on the Native Plants Availability Work Group, or have a suggestion for membership on this group, please e-mail Dot Field – dot.field@dcr.virginia.gov.
- 2) **Chesapeake Bay Landscaping Professional Certification Work Group** – Shereen Hughes, Chair
This Work Group will focus on providing any support needed as it relates to Virginia specific native plants design, installation and maintenance modules and content during certification curriculum development and piloting. We can begin to collect existing information between now and October 2014, but don't anticipate significant work until we

For more information visit <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/NativePlants.aspx> : Virginia Witmer, Outreach Coordinator, Virginia CZM Program – 804.698.4320 or Virginia.Witmer@deq.virginia.gov (updated 5-08-2014)

receive confirmation of funding from NFWF in October. If you are interested in serving on the CBLPC Work Group, or have a suggestion for membership on this group, please e-mail Shereen Hughes – shereen.hughes@wetlandwatch.org.

New State-Wide Marketing Strategies

All Steering Team members will remain directly engaged in the development of any new state-wide marketing strategies, and engage the broader VNPMP membership in this effort. In May and early June 2014, the Team will prepare an informal survey for VNLA members and other growers to gauge their perspectives on the efficacy of propagating and selling a broader diversity of native plant species. The draft survey will be shared with the VNLA Board in June. A contingency of VNPMP will attend the VNLA Field Day on August 14 in Blacksburg to speak with attendees and solicit additional responses to the industry survey.

New VNPMP Google Group Established

A Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership Google Group has been established - <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/virginia-native-plants-marketing-partnership> - to facilitate communication between Steering Team and other partnership members. Please ask to join this group in Google Groups or contact Virginia Witmer – Virginia.Witmer@deq.virginia.gov if you would like to join this group.

Next Meeting of VNPMP Steering Team

The Steering Team will meet again this fall during which time the team will be focus on its workplan to clarify short and long-term goals, outline action items needed and set a timeline – including the creation of any position papers the Team feels will be necessary to support its efforts. Updates from the workgroups will be shared and the Team will review the informal VNLA/Grower survey conducted over the summer as it continues to strategize on development of new collaborative native plant marketing approaches and tools.

Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership Steering Team (Current Organizations and Representatives)

Albermarle County - *Repp Glaetli*, Water Resource Specialist & co-coordinator of *Piedmont Native Plant Initiative*

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay - *Nissa Dean*, Director, Virginia Office (alt - Anna Mathis, VA Program Coordinator)

Chesapeake Bay Foundation – *Robert Jennings*, Grassroots Field Specialist, Assistant Director of Media Relations

Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve of VA – *Sandra Erdle*, Coastal Training Program Coordinator

Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council - *Christin Jolicoeur*, President; Arlington DES, Watershed Mgmt Planner

Flora of Virginia - *Bland Crowder*, Editor and Associate Director

Hampton Roads Planning District Commission – *Julia Hillegass*, Administrator, Public Information and Community Affairs (alt – Ben McFarlane, Physical and Environmental Planner; Katie Callipher, educator)

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden – *Jay Austin*, Horticulturist

Norfolk Botanical Gardens - *Syble Stone*, Board Member (alt - Donna Krabill, Director of Education)

Northern Virginia Regional Commission - *Corey Miles*, Coastal Program Manager & coordinator, *Plant NoVA Natives Campaign*

Piedmont Environmental Council – *James Barnes*, Sustainable Habitat Program Manager, PEC's *Go Native Go Local* Campaign (alt – Cecila Vuocolo)

Virginia Audubon Council – *Mary Elfner*, Director

Virginia CZM Program (VNPMP Co-Chair, Coastal Area) – *Virginia Witmer*, Outreach Coordinator & Coordinator of *Plant ES Natives Campaign* (also *Laura McKay*, Program Manager, *Beth Polak*, Coastal Planner; *Shep Moon*, Coastal Planner)

Virginia Dept of Conservation and Recreation, Natural Heritage Division - *Dot Field*, Eastern Shore Natural Area Steward & Co-Coordinator of *Plant ES Natives Campaign*; *Gary Waugh*, PR Manager and *Julie Buchanan*, PR and Marketing Specialist – coordinators of *Plant More Plants Campaign* (also *Chris Ludwig*, chief biologist & Executive Director of *Flora of Virginia Project*)

Virginia Dept of Environmental Quality – *Ann Regn*, Director, Office of Public Information and Outreach

Virginia Dept of Forestry – *Ellen Powell*, Trainer and Instructor; *Barbara White*, Urban & Community Forestry Partnership Coordinator (invited)

Virginia Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries (VNPMP Co-Chair, Piedmont Area) – *Carol Heiser*, Habitat Education Coordinator

Virginia Institute of Marine Science – *Karen Duhring*, *Living Shorelines Initiative*

Virginia Master Gardener Program - *David Close*, State Coordinator

Virginia Master Naturalist Program - *Alycia Crall*, State Coordinator

Virginia Native Plant Society – *Nancy Vehrs*, President (alt - *Sue Dingwell*, Webmaster); *Janet Pawlukiewicz*, NNK chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society & Coordinator of *Plant NNK Natives Campaign* (alts – *Jeff Wainscott*, *Ted Munns*, *Paula Bundy* and *Carol Hammer*)

Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association - *Virginia Rockwell*, representative, landscape designer, horticulturist and *Tom Thompson*, representative, landscape designer

Virginia Society of Landscape Designers – *Michele Fletcher*, Marketing/Social Media Chair (alt - *Tom Thompson*, Vice-President)

VA Soil and Water Conservation Districts – *Beth Sokolik*, Education & Training Coordinator, VA Assn. of SWCDs; *Lonnie Murray*, Thomas Jefferson SWCD, board member, co-coordinator of *Piedmont Native Plant Initiative*

Wetlands Watch - *Shereen Hughes*, Assistant Director

For more information visit <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/NativePlants.aspx> : Virginia Witmer, Outreach Coordinator, Virginia CZM Program – 804.698.4320 or Virginia.Witmer@deq.virginia.gov (updated 5-08-2014)