

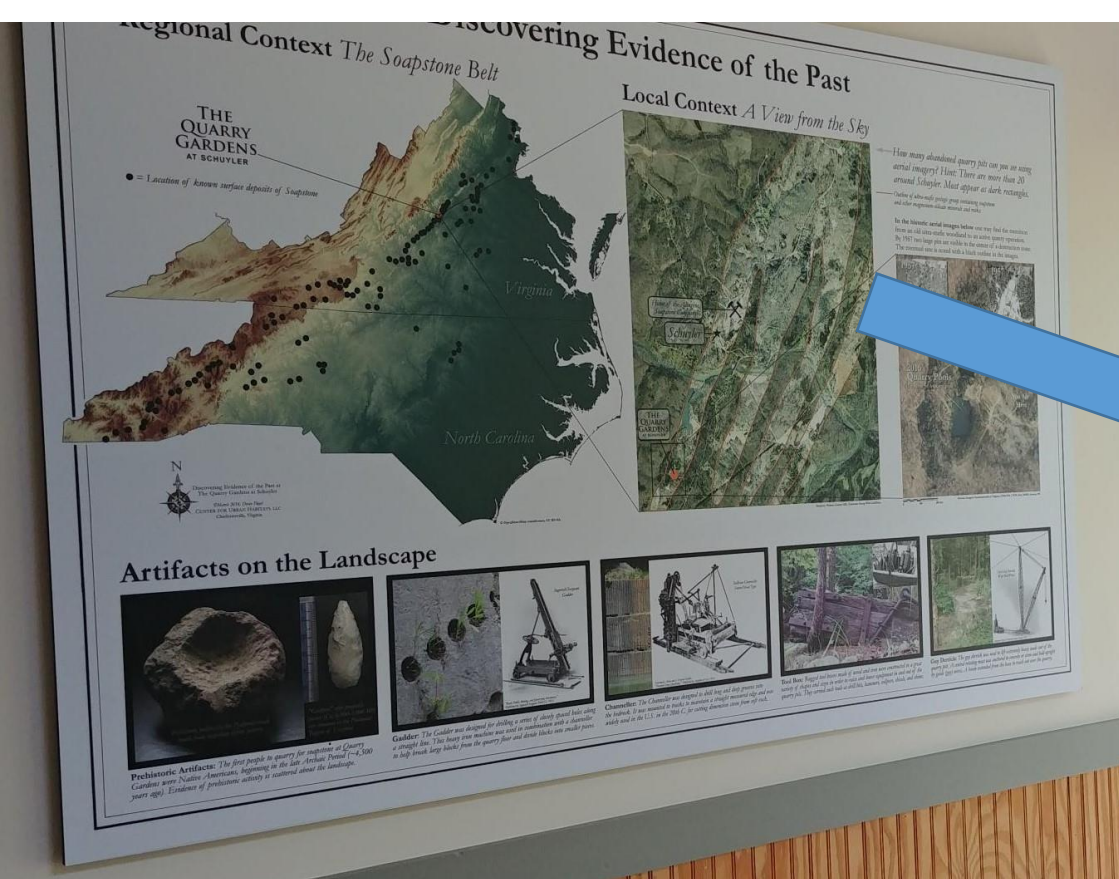
THE QUARRY GARDENS AT SCHUYLER

<http://quarrygardensatschuyler.org/>

The Quarry Gardens at Schuyler is nestled into a 600-acre property owned by Armand and Bernice Thieblot since 1991. The featured quarries were actively mined for soapstone between the 1950s and 1970s, then for about a decade used as a community dumpsite. For more than half a century, it was the reason and livelihood for the community.

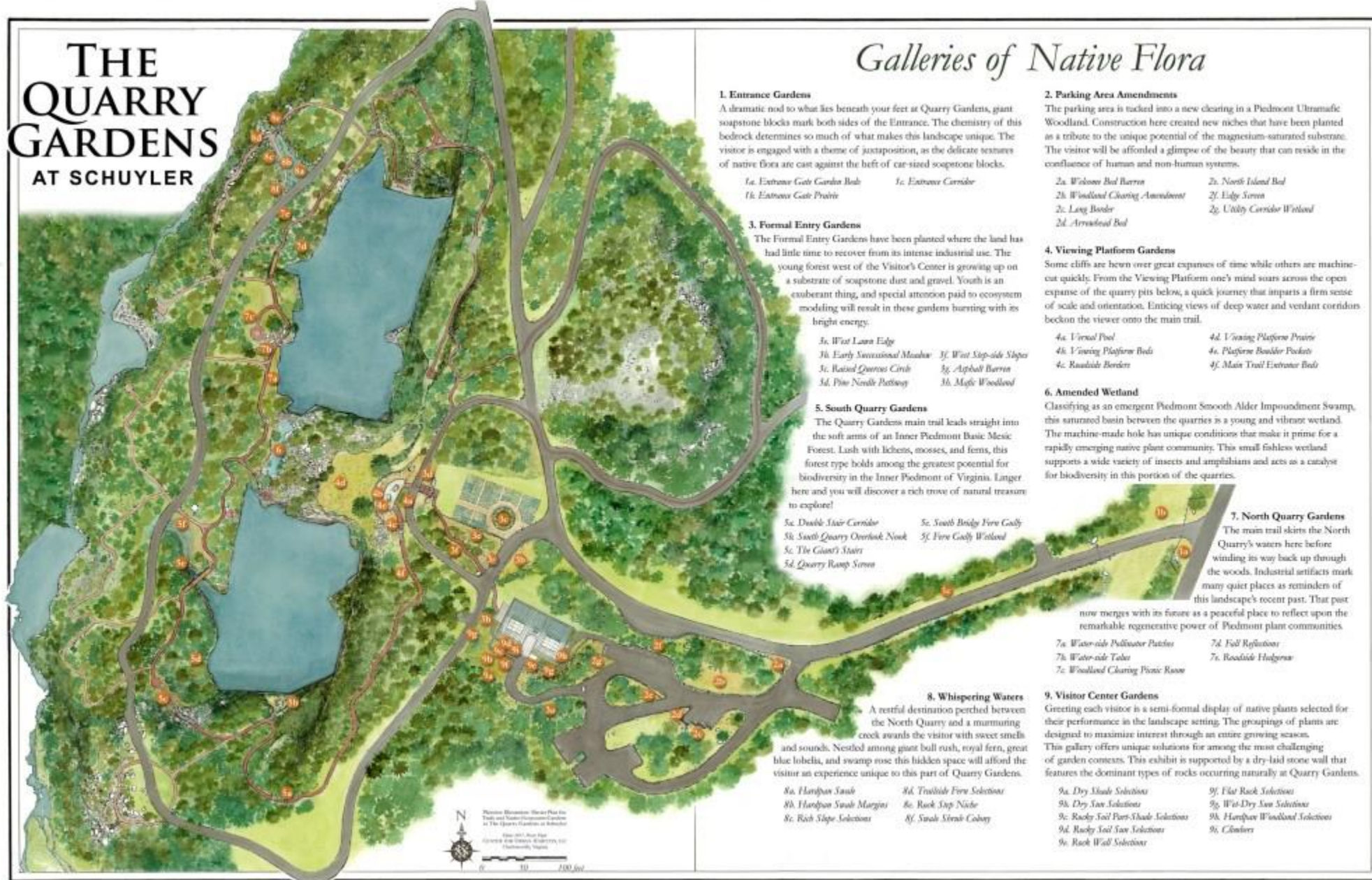
Soapstone exists in only a few places in the world. Over 175 million years ago when the world had one supercontinent called Pangea there as a large vein of soapstone. After the continents split that vein divided into deposits which are now located in Finland, Brazil and Central Virginia.

40 acres, with trails through native plant communities, are a private garden for public enjoyment and learning. The plan of the gardens is to protect, advance succession, and build out native plant communities in 14 ecozones and 7 conservation areas of Schuyler.



Location of soapstone veins in Schuyler region

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Our group of 40 was divided to make up two groups. Armand and Bernice each took a group for our two hour tour.





Armand's group began with an orientation presentation.

They were lucky enough to be accompanied on their hike by Schuyler.





The development of the Nelson and Albemarle Railroad model has been three years in the making, and although still not quite finished, it's up and running for the entertainment (and elucidation) of visitors to the Quarry Gardens.



Another view of mining operation.



Don't we all love model trains.





1. Armand told us lots of neat stories like one about Black-eyed Susans. One of the three major horse racing events each year is the Preakness which is held in Maryland in May. It is typical to hang a wreath around the winning horse made of the state's flower. Maryland's state flower is the Black-eyed Susan which do not bloom until June. So they use a wreath of carnations with the centers painted black.



2. Yarrow (*achillea borealis*).
Yarrow has been
used to stop
bleeding.



3. Lots of pollinators on
shrubby St. John's Wort
(*Hypericum prolificum*)



4. New England Aster



5. Mountain mint (*pycanthemum muticum*). There are several different varieties in the garden.



6. There were several different quarries viewed from various angles.





31. Armand told a story about catching some boys after they had been swimming in one of the quarries despite many no swimming signs. Armand advised them that as soon as they got home they should rub their entire body vigorously with a box of baking soda. That was to be followed by a shower as hot as they could stand it for at least 10 minutes. He told them that maybe if they did that they would be okay. He doubted that that particular group would ever come swimming in the quarry again.



7. Staghorn Sumac (*rhus typhina*)



8. Prickly-pear cactus and Quill flameflower (*phemeranthus teretifolius*) which grows in very dry places. It produces a flower for just a few hours in the afternoon. If it is not pollinated by a passing bee it will close and self fertilize. It is accompanied by a brownish moss. They are always seen together.

Prickly-pear cactus can be eaten taking care to avoid spurs and thorns.



9. Maypop / passion flower
(*passiflora incarnate*) seed
and spent bloom.



10. Narrow leaf mountain mint
and ?



11. Maybe amsonia?



12. Maybe ageratina or
Possibly Blue Mistflower
(Conoclinium
coelestinum)?



13. Dwarf crested iris (*iris cristata*)
or Spider Wort-*Tradescantia*
virginiana or Monkeyflower
(*Mimulus* sp.)?



14. Slender Path Rush - *Juncus tenuis* ?



15. Reindeer Lichen
(*cladonia rangiferina*) –
grows very slowly.
Probably one of the
largest concentrations on
east coast. It is soft when
wet and stiff when dry.



16. Dynamite shed left from mining days. To be converted to restroom.



17. Designed to repel deer. It puts out a scent that attracts the deer. When they put their nose to it they get a mild shock. It is hoped that they will avoid that area after getting the shock. Emitters must be moved frequently once the deer become familiar with the shock.

18. Thimbleweed?





19. Purple-flowered
Raspberry (*Rubus
odoratus*)



20. Bench made from single beech tree.



21. Willow oak with curved trunk.



22. Water Lilies.



23. Plants that like high and dry – prickly-pear and coral bells.



24. Downy Rattlesnake Plantain (*Goodyear pubescens*) was named as the Virginia Native Plant Society wildflower of the year in 2016. It was used for medicinal purposes in the past. The fresh leaves and root make an external application for scrofulous sores, skin rashes, bruises, and insect bites. Native Americans used root tea for pleurisy, snakebites; leaf tea was taken (with whiskey) to improve appetite, treat colds, kidney ailments, blood tonic, toothaches. Notice the toad on one of the upper leaves.



26. Umbrella magnolia
(magnolia tripetala)



27. Woodland Stonecrop
(*Sedum ternatum*) grows
between the stones but not
over them.



28. This sardine tin had grown into the devil's walking stick tree. Armand figured that it had to have been left by one of the mine workers between 1950 and 1970.



29. When we looked carefully we could see a hornet nest in this pine tree.



32. Wild Ginger



33. Striped Wintergreen



Deadman weight was used as a counter balance for the cranes used in the mining process. Once the crane was disassembled there was no way to remove the counter weight.



30. Even the parking lot had things to see.

Other tidbits:

- Persimmon trees need both sexes to reproduce
- Hornbeam tree has a very dark bark (also called Muscle tree due to striations on bark that look like a muscle)
- Dragon flies appear after the butterflies
- Saw blue indigo but it was not in bloom. Loved by bees. Bees prefer the color yellow but see blue as yellow. Wonder how someone figured that out?
- Seen but no photo – white snake root (*Ageratina altissima*) which contains the poisonous substance tremtol which may have killed Abraham Lincoln's mother.

More tidbits:

- After quarries are no longer mined they will fill up with water. Fish appear probably from eggs that are transported on the feather of birds. The quarry also has eels. Eels lay eggs in the ocean and then return to rivers and creeks. They have been known to crawl across dry land to end up in places like the quarries which have no connection to other bodies of water.
- Saw hairy lip fern which is a rare native
- Shrubby St. John's Wort provides pollen, no nectar, excellent for pollinators.

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