Summer 2010

Vol. 29, No. 3
ISSN 1085-9632

Bulletin

A publication of the VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
Conserving wild flowers and wild places
www.vnps.org

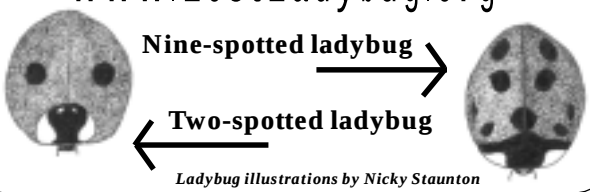
Nine-spotted ladybug
(Coccinella novemnotata)

Wanted Alive!

Have you seen this painted lady?

If you have spotted these rare native beetles in your backyard or in the greater outdoors, please let the folks at the Lost Ladybug Project know!

www.LostLadybug.org



Ladybug illustrations by Nicky Staunton

Native Connections

Lost ladybugs signal habitat changes

Have you seen some painted ladies of the summer in your fields, forests, and gardens? Chances are that you have already seen a few of these beetles this year, but they are probably not the native beetles that were once common in America. There are more than 5,000 species of ladybugs around the world and 500 in North America, but many of the North American beetles are disappearing—pushed aside by more aggressive Asian introductions or declining in numbers because of lack of habitat.

Without their evolutionary partner insects that help ward off predatory insects (many of which are introduced as well), some native plant species will suffer as well. The Lost Ladybug Project at Cornell University is seeking assistance in documenting ladybugs in this country with the Lost Ladybug Project as they try to unravel the mysteries of the disappearing ladybugs. You can sign up as a ladybug advocate and help document what ladybugs there are in your corner of Virginia's habitat by visiting www.lostladybug.org.

There are three ladybugs that the project is particularly interested in finding:

(See Ladybugs, page 4)

Quail dependent on native grasses

The northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), commonly known as bobwhite or just quail, was once a common sight throughout most of Virginia. Quail numbers have declined primarily due to the loss of early successional habitat, such as fields and savannah-like forests. These habitats also support many other types of wildlife and insects as well as native plants adapted to these areas. Historically, these areas were maintained by fire, which promoted herbaceous vegetation and controlled much of the shrub and tree encroachment. The incredible variety of native plants that thrive in these communities and support an abundance

(See Habitat, page 6)

Quail illustration by Spike Knuth

Annual Meeting registration inside! Room sign-up deadline is Aug. 9.

From the president . . . . . .

Plant connections happen everywhere

Hello VNPS,

This is a letter from the road. . . this year May was a month when I was roaming the eastern seaboard from New Jersey to South Carolina, and finding people and plant connections as I went. After a wonderful April visiting lots of familiar plant places, I began my travels with a quick trip to the pine barrens of New Jersey with my own Piedmont Chapter, led by member Emily Southgate. In the midst of extensive sandy-soiled woodlands we saw pygmy pine stands, cranberry bogs and white cedar swamps with grassy openings locally known as savannahs.

*Next came the VNPS trip to southwest Virginia, with a great group of members from many chapters around the state. With Butch and Betty Kelly keeping us organized and well fed, we visited lots of special places. White Top, one of our highest peaks, has an open bald and boreal woods, but also trilliums (*T. erectum*) and other spring flowers, reminding me a little of the Thompson WMA where we see the trillium (*T. grandiflorum*) display each spring. The limestone feature of Natural Tunnel is the home of a population of the federally listed plant Canby's mountain lover (*Pachistima canbyi*). Back at home the following week I went to a battlefield in Frederick County where the same plant is found on limestone cliffs at the opposite end of Virginia's mountains. The rich ferny slopes found in several areas that we botanized were echoed the following week when I visited with the New River Chapter and walked the rich slopes of Cedar Run on the edge of Blacksburg.*

*Now, I'm writing from South Carolina, where I'm visiting the Congaree River, on foot and by kayak. It's a big change to bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and tupelo (*Nyssa aquatica*) swamps, but I am also back in piney, sandy woods that have plants in common with New Jersey, and riverine forests that have many species familiar to us in Virginia. This park has a long list of state and national champion trees, reminding me of the two giants we saw in Burke's Garden in Tazewell County on the VNPS trip.*

Another connection I've found here is a person, Shenandoah National Park Superintendent Martha Bogle. She was formerly in charge of Congaree National Park, and in the visitor center I found that she was fondly remembered. She responded very warmly when we decided to hold the VNPS annual meeting in Shenandoah this fall. I hope many of you will come to our meeting, enjoy some familiar plants, see some that are different, and take time to thank Martha and the park staff who will be helping us. Now it's on to the coast, where I'll look for some salt-loving species that I might have already seen in Saltville in southwest Virginia. . . .

Your president, Sally Anderson

Dominion, Maryland NPS back the Flora of Virginia Project

The Flora of Virginia Project has received two donations you'll want to know about. Dominion Resources has provided a $10,000 grant to support the writing of family treatments for the *Flora of Virginia*. The grant is part of Dominion's 1 million Earth Day initiative supporting community-based environmental projects and organizations in the 11 states where it provides energy. April 22 was the 40th anniversary of Earth Day.

"Dominion's commitment to the environment has been longstanding, as evidenced by the nearly $3.5 billion we have invested in the last decade to reduce the impact of our operations on the air, water, and land," said Thomas F. Farrell II, chairman, president, and CEO. "We also recognize the importance of the efforts of other likeminded organizations, so we are pleased to be able to partner with them through these grants to help protect endangered species, restore wetlands, preserve forests, educate the public, and support environmental outreach."

In Virginia, Dominion provided almost $520,000 to 41 organizations. Other recipients included Ducks Unlimited, the Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Dominion is the state's largest electric utility.

So far, the Flora Project has necessarily focused on research, writing, and illustration—the nuts and bolts of creating a book—but the *Flora*, to be published in 2012, will be a pivotal reference for environmental stewardship and education. And though its focus is taxonomy, its practical scope will be broader, extending to ecological communities and systems.

We at the Flora Project have always felt that the *Flora* would be welcomed in neighboring states. When we received in May a $1,000 donation from the Maryland Native Plant Society, we realized that botanists beyond our borders were

(See Flora project, page 5)

Natives used in rain garden, bioswale

It began when the owner of the small shopping center in Greenville (Augusta County) contacted Riverheads Supervisor Nancy Sorrells about some pavement failure associated with drainage issues at the southern edge of the village. A visit to the site in consultation with the Virginia Department of Transportation got Mrs. Sorrells thinking about loftier solutions to the problem that would involve partnerships with the schools and community groups.

When she heard about matching water quality grants being offered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation she was off and running. In October of 2007, then Gov. Tim Kaine announced that Augusta County received one of three water quality improvement grants awarded to the area.

The grant of $40,000 from the state was to be matched with money and in-kind services coordinated through the county. The local dollar match was approved by the Augusta County Board of Supervisors and come from the Riverheads infrastructure funds.

Fast forward to the spring of 2010 and that idea is a reality. A nice smooth entrance leads visitors into the southern end of the mini-mall, a 3,000-square foot bioswale between the parking lot and Rt. 11 is planted with native plants and mulched. The bioswale,

(See Rain garden, page 7)

BEFORE & AFTER—The DCR water quality project retrofitted a poorly functioning and ugly stormwater management basin (left) into a rain garden (above) planted entirely with native plants. The plants provide a nicely landscaped garden area and clean the rainwater before it heads to the South River (a tributary of the Shenandoah River). (Photos by Nancy Sorrells)

Follow the money.....

VNPS Treasurer offers snapshot of society finances

Revenues	Fiscal 2009	Fiscal 2008
Dues	$ 25,844	$ 23,677
Donations	11,352	18,482
Registration fees	23,486	19,374
Other	614	2,591
Total revenue	$ 61,296	$ 64,124
Expenses	Fiscal 2009	Fiscal 2008
Programs	$ 24,124	$ 13,758
Office & admin.	36,046	19,561
Total expenses	$ 60,170	$ 33,319
Net revenue	$ 1,126	$ 2,611
Net worth	$65,765	$ 64,639

Notes:

1) Dues Revenue does not include the portion of dues that is forwarded to the chapters. That amount is reflected in their reports.

2) Most Donations Revenue is money we raised to support the Flora of Virginia Project in 2008 and the Natural Treasures Hunt for the Virginia Natural Heritage Program in 2009.

No doubt you've heard the advice, if you want to know what an organization stands for, look at where it spends its money. Here is some information about our money—where it comes from and where it goes. (Further details, of course, are available to all who may inquire.)

The VNPS fiscal year is November 1 through October 31. These are the revenues and expenses of the state office. As you can see, in the broadest sense, the state portion of the dues covers the administrative responsibilities—membership, the *Bulletin*, the website, and the annual fund-raiser—necessary to run a nonprofit organization. Registration fees largely offset state program expenses.

In addition to the state funds, the compilation of our individual chapters' reports for fiscal 2009 reflects revenues of $44,138, expenses of $41,930. Because the state is paying most of the administrative cost of the organization, each chapter's money is used almost entirely to further the VNPS mission.

Catherine Mayes, VNPS Treasurer

Ladybug Line-up

Spotted pink (*Coleomegilla maculata*)

Thirteen-spotted convergent (*Hippodamia convergens*)

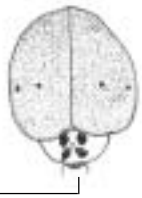
Two-spotted (*Adalia bipunctata*)

Nine-spotted (*Coccinella novemnotata*)

Parenthesis (*Hippodamia parenthesis*)

The Natives

Checkerspot (*Propylea quatuordecimpunctata*)



Multicolor Asian (*Harmonia axyridis*)

Seven-spotted (*Coccinella septempunctata*)

The Non-natives

Ladybug illustrations by Nicky Staunton

• Ladybugs

(Continued from page 1)

the nine-spotted ladybug (*Coccinella novemnotata*), the transverse ladybug (*Coccinella transversoguttata*) (not illustrated) and the two-spotted ladybug (*Adalia bipunctata*). As you might have guessed, the beetles are named for the number and positioning of spots across their backs. The nine-spotted has four spots on each side and one in the middle; the transverse has markings that look like a band close to the front; and the two-spotted is very bright red with a dark spot on each wing.

When you do your ladybug search, you might also run into three natives that are still fairly common: the 13-spotted convergent ladybug (*Hippodamia convergens*) that has two converging white lines on its neck shield; the spotted pink ladybug (*Coleomegilia maculata*) that is more oval shaped with no white; and the parenthesis ladybug (*Hippodamia parenthesis*) named for the pair of parenthesis marks on its back.

Undoubtedly when you search for ladybugs you will find some introduced species and the Lost Ladybug volunteers want to know about those finds as well. The most common introduced species are the multicolored Asian ladybugs (*Harmonia axyridis*), which is a very large and round ladybug introduced from Japan to help control other insects. Unfortunately these voracious eaters munch on the same food as many native ladybugs and sometimes eat other ladybug larvae. We all know these beetles from their annoying habit of clustering inside houses by the hundreds in the winter.

Another non-native is the checkerspot ladybug (*Propylea quatuordecimpunctata*) that has a yellow and black checkerboard pattern on its back. And, finally, there is the seven-spotted ladybug (*Coccinella septempunctata*) that looks like the native nine-spot but is missing one spot on each wing.

Although these fascinating insects are called "bugs" they are really in the Coccinellidae family of the beetle order, Coleoptera. Beetles are unique because they undergo complete metamorphosis and their forewings harden into a protective cover. True bugs belong to the order Hemiptera and include squash bugs, boxelder bugs, and plant bugs.

The bold, bright colors of the ladybug are meant as a warning of a not-so-tasty meal. They exude a distasteful fluid that repels many would-be-predators such as birds and reptiles. However, a few insects like assassin bugs and stink bugs as well as toads and spiders are not averse to dining on a ladybug.

Here is an interesting fact about this tiny little insect. Legend has it that this "red-robed" beetle got its name in medieval Europe because the farmers believed the beetles were sent by the Virgin Mary ("Our Lady") to protect their crops from insect damage. Whether or not there was divine intervention, most species of this beetle are predatory insect feeders and help control aphids and scale insects including mealybugs. Many ladybugs supplement their insect diet with pollen.

The ladybug project needs field

(See Finding ladybugs, page 8)

Native plant symposium offers valuable information

Attending conferences, symposiums, and workshops is often inspirational. Wonderful sources of new information are revealed and we are reminded of things forgotten. Another advantage is gaining resources for learning more about the themes addressed at the meetings. The speakers at the 2010 Lahr Native Plant Symposium at the National Arboretum provided all these aspects.

Landscape architect Darrel Morrison spoke on the topic of "Where Art and Ecology Meet." He began by telling the audience about those who influenced his architectural style. Jens Jensen, the Chicago based Prairie Style landscape architect, introduced him to the mystery created by curving lines in the landscape of Columbus Park designed in 1916-18. Jensen's design was inspired by the park's natural history and topography. Edith Roberts and Elsa Rehmann wrote *American Plants for American Gardens,* which is an excellent resource for information on planting in ecological associations. Steve and Rachel Kaplan of the University of Michigan taught him about the effect of the natural environment on humans through their book *With People in Mind: Design and Management of Everyday Nature.*

Speaker Kim Winter of the National Wildlife Federation Habitats Programs explained "Gardens in Partnership with Biodiversity: How to Attract and Sustain Animal Populations." She spoke of the important roles insects play in the environment and referred to two books: *Insects and Gardens: In Pursuit of a Garden Ecology* by Eric Grissell and *Insects and Wildlife* by John Capinera. Pollination is an important function of insects. More information on pollinators and the plants that attract them can be found in online Ecoregional Planting Guides at www.pollinator.org.

Scientific names are important in the botanical world. As we all know, many of these names have been changing in recent years. Speaker Alan Whittemore, taxonomist at the National Arboretum, explained this in his talk "Why Can't They Decide What to Call this Plant?" Name changes in genera are occurring due to advances in genetics and chemistry. These changes are not occurring with species names because the DNA sequencing is too close to tell a difference. Whittemore states that this will gradually change as the science evolves. As scientists make discoveries through DNA, they propose name changes to the Botanical Congress, which decides how to apply plant names based on the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature. The Code was created in 1960 and was applied to plants discovered and named going back to the 1700s. In 2010, the Botanical Congress will look at rejecting the name *Quercus prinus b*ecause all current *Q. prinus* are one of two plants—*Quercus montana* or *Quercus michauxii*—with the difference between the two being noted by the bark and acorns. Alan Whittemore suggests referring to the following websites for the most up-to-date information: Flora of North America at www.efloras.org, GRIN database at www.ars-grin.gov for economic plants, and the United States Department of Agriculture plants database at http: / / plants.usda.gov.

Bill Cullina, Plant and Garden Curator at the Coastal Maine Botanical Garden (formerly the nursery director at the New England Wild Flower Society) spoke about "Botany by Design." He highlighted a few principles of landscape design like planting in drifts by clumping a number of the same plant together for impact. For interest, he reminded everyone to consider plant texture over flower color. He suggested taking a photo and removing the color to see if you have planted different textures. Cullina also spoke of some interesting plant characteristics. Fuzzy leaves slow water loss and reflect light to help keep the plant cool. A chemical called anthocyanin gives leaves red coloration that masks chlorophyll and offers frost protection in spring. Bill Cullina's new book, *Understanding Perennials,* covers these subjects and many more.

The speakers at the 2010 Lahr Native Plant Symposium were inspirational, engaging, and knowledgeable. The references provided for additional information were invaluable. They will provide a never-ending source of information for learning more about your favorite plant subjects.

Kim Strader, VNPS Horticulture Chair

•*Flora project*

(Continued from page 2)

indeed anticipating the publication of the *Flora*.

"I'm a member of VNPS myself, and when I received Sally Anderson's letter soliciting donations to the Flora Project this year, it occurred to me that MNPS might offer support," said Kirsten Johnson, MNPS president. "It took no persuasion whatsoever at the board meeting. The discussion was short, and the vote unanimous." Members of the two groups attend each other's conferences and workshops, and "most of us travel the short distance into Virginia several times a year for botanizing," she said. The societies were co-plaintiffs in a lawsuit concerning development proposed for Fort Dupont Park in Washington, she said.

Maryland has a flora (separate volumes on woody and herbaceous plants, by Brown and Brown), but it's out of print now and expensive when available. "There is no question that the *Flora of Virginia* will be an important reference tool for Maryland botanists, as I would expect it to be for other neighboring states," Johnson said.

Thank you also to each VNPSer who sent a gift for the Flora of Virginia Project, the designee of the 2010 fundraising letter. Your generous donations of $13,190 will help support the last two years of preparation for publication in 2012. If you would like to join in reaching our VNPS goal of donating $20,000 toward the *Flora*, please send your gift to VNPS Fundraising 2010, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unite 2, Boyce VA 22620.

Thanks to Dominion, the Maryland Native Plant Society, the Virginia Native Plant Society, and the many other groups and individuals supporting the *Flora of Virginia.* Everybody's behind this important project!

Bland Crowder, Associate Director
Flora of Virginia Project

Habitat key to quail return

(Continued from page 1)

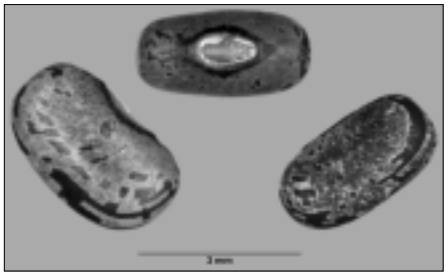
of species may be key to the recovery of quail and other species of wildlife.

Throughout its range, the quail eats seeds and parts of hundreds of different plant species. Considered a granivorous bird, a quail's diet consists of about 70 percent seeds, 15 percent insects, and 10 percent green vegetation with the rest being miscellaneous items. These percentages fluctuate as the seasons change (i.e., breeding and nesting) and as availability of food items changes. While agricultural food items, such as corn, can be important to quail, native plants provide a greater variety of foods, support a more diverse suite of insects, and offer better habitat components like nesting and cover.

Even though quail eat from so many different species of plants, they often show preferences for certain plants. They tend to consume seeds with hard seed coats. Depending on availability, seeds of forbs usually make up most of the seed component, while grass seeds and seeds from shrubs and trees round out their seed diet. The genera of grasses and related plants that quail most often eat seeds from are *Panicum*, *Paspalum*, *Setaria*, *Urochloa*, and *Scleria*. Most of the bunchgrasses that provide excellent nesting for quail, like the bluestems (*Andropogon* spp.), have seeds that are rarely eaten by quail.

Seeds from the legume family (Fabaceae) are some of the most highly preferred by quail in the Southeast. Many landowners are familiar with partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata* and *C. nictitans*) that produce yellow flowers and abundant seed during the fall. Other native species in this family that are eaten by quail include wildbean (*Strophostyles* spp.), spurred butterfly pea (*Centrosema virginianum*), and milkpea (*Galactia* spp.). These species are creeping or twining vines that can produce large patches of showy white, pink, or purple flowers. The sticktights or beggarlice (*Desmodium* spp.) that get stuck to people's clothing are also good seeds for quail with several native species in this genus. While there are several species of introduced lespedezas, including *Lespedeza cuneata* and *L. bicolor*, there are also several species of native lespedezas that produce quality seed. Some of these found in Virginia include *L. capitata, L. hirta, L. procumbens,* and *L. repens*. A few other native plants in this family that are beneficial to quail are snoutbean (*Rhynchosia* spp.), pencilflower (*Stylosanthes biflora*), and American hogpeanut (*Amphicarpaea bracteata*).

Several of the more preferred native forb seeds from families other than *Fabaceae* that occur in Virginia are sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp.), ragweeds (*Ambrosia* spp.), violets (*Viola* spp.), smartweeds (*Polygonum* spp.), nightshades (*Solanum* spp.), northern croton (*Croton glandulosus*), geranium (*Geranium carolinianum*), and poor-joe (*Diodia teres*). Many of these plants are often considered weeds and can be found in and around agricultural fields. The small seeds from woodsorrel (*Oxalis* spp.) are often eaten by quail as are the succulent leaves. Other lesser-used native forbs eaten by quail are touch-me-nots (*Impatiens* spp.), bluecurls (*Trichostema* spp.), morning-glories (*Ipomoea* spp.), camphorweed (*Heterotheca subaxillaris*), and spurges (*Euphorbia* spp.).



*Native plant species eaten by quail include spurred butterfly pea (*Centrosema virginianum*), the flower and seeds of which are seen above. Photos are from author Drew Larson's book on wild quail management.*

Quail illustration by Spike Knuth

Subshrubs, shrubs, and trees can provide food for quail as well as good cover. Shrubby thickets and some hardwood saplings often provide the best protective cover for quail. Some of the native shrubby plants that supply seeds for quail are blackberries (*Rubus* spp.), huckleberries (*Gaylussacia* spp.), waxmyrtle (*Morella cerifera*), American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), and sumac (*Rhus* spp.). Native woody vines valuable to quail as seed producers are poison-ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), and several species of wild grapes (*Vitis* spp.). Oaks (*Quercus* spp.) that produce smaller acorns can be important to quail especially as the colder months approach. Pines (*Pinus* spp.) are among the most consumed and important seeds for quail in the Southeast. Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), hollies (*Ilex* spp.), and some fruit trees (*Prunus* spp.) are also significant native seed producers for quail.

The list of native quail foods could go on and on. While quail are generalists according to the foods they eat, their need for early-successional plant structure seems to be the more important. Rarely is food a limiting factor for quail populations in the southeast. For people

(See Quail, page 8)

• *Rain garden*

(Continued from page 3)

planted just hours before December's blizzard, and then added to with plant donations in April and May now includes sundrops, ironweed, coneflower, big bluestem, redbud, blue lobelia, sassafras, switchgrass, and buttonbush. And, as of early April, the big ugly non-functioning retention basin next to the post office is a fully functioning bioretention area, commonly called a rain garden. Both the rain garden and bioswale were planted by Riverheads High School ecology and environmental science students. The rain garden includes wild geranium, rudbeckia, goldenrod, aster, coreopsis, Joe-pye weed, river oats, creeping phlox, itea, silky dogwood, high bush cranberry, and elderberry.

The work has turned an unsightly stormwater basin into a nicely landscaped area that will enhance the village entrance, will better address the drainage issues in the area, and will clean the stormwater runoff of pollutants coming off the mall roof and parking lot before sending it back into the South River.

After a few spring rains, the group working on the project noticed that rainwater was sheeting off the parking lot and cutting trenches through the bioswale. A decision was made to work with Mother Nature to correct this problem. The students went to work creating a rock-lined feature through the bioswale lined with about 10 tons of tan river rock.

The most exciting part of the project is the community partnership. Most of the in-kind cost was "paid for" by the students. Over the course of the last two-and-a-half years, 18 different classes of students participated in one aspect of the project or another. Earlier classes saw the project at the beginning and learned about stormwater management and water quality. Classes last year learned from the local landscaping company how to pot up plants and prepare them for winter. They also had class discussions on the importance of native plants.

Last fall as construction work on the project got under way, Sorrells began locating appropriate native species to plant in the bioswale and rain garden. At least 10 people helped find and donate hundreds of plants. Heavy consultation with the Upper James River Chapter's Peggy Dyson-Cobb, Katherine Smith, and the Wintergreen Nature Foundation's Doug Coleman helped decide on just the right species for the wettest parts of the project (down in the basin and along the bioswale rock feature) and the driest parts (along the banks and in the remaining bioswale). Most of the plants came from the Rockbridge, Augusta, and Rockingham areas, as the Shenandoah Chapter was also very involved in donating to the project. Some native grasses came from as far away as Reva!

For Augusta County, the project will help showcase forward-thinking low impact development techniques. As the county updates its ordinances to include more environmentally sensitive ways of handling stormwater management, this project will serve as a model for how to better address water quality and storm run-off practices.

A sign describing the rain garden and the importance of native plants in this project and thanking sponsors (including VNPS) has been erected on the bank of the rain garden. Making that sign possible were several VNPS members who donated appropriate photographs. It is anticipated that more fill plants might be needed to fill in some spaces until the plants are well established in a few years. If you have plants that you would like to donate, please let Nancy Sorrells know at lotswife@comcast.net or 540-377-6390.

Nancy Sorrells, VNPS Bulletin editor

See the address label for your membership expiration date

VNPS Membership/Renewal Form

Name(s)_____

Address_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

___Individual $30 ___Student $15

___Family $40 ___Associate (groups) $40*

___Patron $50 ___Sustaining $100

___Life $500

*Please designate one person as delegate for Associate membership

To give a gift membership or join additional chapters: Enclose dues, name, address, and chapter (non-voting memberships in any other than your primary chapter are $5)

I wish to make an additional contribution to ___VNPS or_____Chapter in the amount of ___$10___$25___$50___$100___$(Other)_____

_____Check if you do not wish your name to be exchanged with similar organizations

_____Check if you do not wish your name to be listed in a chapter directory

Which chapter do you wish to join? (See www.vnps.org)_____

Paying by credit card? ___MC ___Visa ___Discover Exp. date_____

Card #_____Security code_____ Signature_____

Make check payable to VNPS and mail to:

VNPS Membership Chair, Blandy Experimental Farm, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2, Boyce, VA 22620

Membership dues are tax deductible in the amount they exceed $5. Contributions are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

The ***Bulletin***

ISSN 1085-9632

is published five times a year (Feb., April, June, August, Nov.) by the

Virginia Native Plant Society

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Nancy Sorrells, Editor

The deadline for the next issue is **July 15**

Our Mountain Roots
2010 Annual Meeting plans take shape

What makes a fen? Who once lived in these wild mountains? What plants can be found at 4,050 feet? As plans fall into place for the VNPS annual meeting in Shenandoah National Park, September 10-12, members of the Piedmont Chapter have assembled an impressive weekend package. The meeting site, Skyland Resort with its awesome views, will be the gathering place as members share meals and featured events

As for field trips, arguably the main draw for a large number of members, opportunities include various special natural areas in this fabulous park such as Hawksbill Mountain, the Limberlost Trail, the Big Meadows Swamp and others, all to be experienced under the guidance of experts who know these places best. Gary Fleming, Wendy Cass, Marion Lobstein, John Townsend, Richard Stromberg, Bob Pickett, Doug Coleman and others will lead the outings. Botanical treasures, geology, and cultural history are all part of the mix. Offerings will include vigorous hikes for the fit and ambitious, along with gentle outings, including a car safari.

During Saturday evening's events, VNPS President Sally Anderson will call the membership together for its brief annual business meeting, which includes election of officers and board members. Dinner speakers are Park botanist Wendy Cass and Virginia Natural Heritage Program Vegetation Ecologist Gary Fleming (Friday and Saturday nights respectively).

Check out the registration form in this *Bulletin* and get on board today. You will not want to miss out.

•*Finding ladybugs*

(Continued from page 4)

volunteers to help document these beetles, both native and non-native, across the nation. Volunteers should go out and collect and document the ladybugs. Photograph each beetle, and note the date, time, location, and habitat including the exact plant they were found on if possible. Then release the ladybugs safely to the wild and send your information and digital image to www.lostladybug.org.

The website offers tips on how to safely capture ladybugs, identify them, and chill them slightly so you can slow them down enough to photograph them. Ladybugs are most active between May and October so get out there and look. Whatever you find will add to the knowledge of these painted ladies and the habitats they call home.

Nancy Sorrells, VNPS Bulletin editor

•Quail

(Continued from page 6)

looking to improve their land for quail and other early-successional wildlife, management practices such as prescribed burning and disking can often stimulate native plants useful to quail. Unfortunately, invasive exotics may respond positively to these practices too and should be monitored. At present, there are not many commercially available species or sources of quality native seeds beneficial to the bobwhite quail. Perhaps in the future, managers and resource conservationists will have access to more quality native plants or their seed to promote the habitats that the bobwhite and other wildlife need.

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