

The *Leaflet*

Hill School Walk—Carrie Blair

SPRING 2014

Sunday, January 12, Carrie Blair organized a visit to the remarkable "Hillscape" arboretum at Hill School, a kindergarten through eighth grade school in Middleburg. Polly Rowley conceived the teaching campus and planned and executed the ambitious planting of hundreds of trees over 20 years ago. It is now a lovely, mature collection of natives and cultivars, arranged according to their environmental preferences on an old farm annexed to the school through the gift of local benefactors. Ballfields are set among wildflower meadows and ponds with a backdrop of woods sheltering the 138 acre campus on the southern edge of town, giving the children a rich place to play and learn.



A complete list of about 200 species of trees and shrubs is available, giving their locations on the campus. A book with photographs of them is in the school library. Polly Rowley gave us a nice tour, identifying her choices that complete the vision of creating a country estate on old farmland, enhancing the well-endowed campus. There is a circle of native trees, copses of selections chosen for their ornamental qualities, and groups placed according to their tendencies to grow in high, dry places or low, wet areas.

This outdoor campus is also a diverse environment for the children who actively and passively enjoy the carefully nurtured wildlife habitat with many flowering trees. Many of the trees have identification labels. The students actually jog around the trails with their teachers. This community treasure is enjoyed by

the greater Middleburg community, who often stroll the fields with their dogs. The grounds are always open. Anyone wishing to learn more can access the tree list in the school library.

Twenty VNPS members enjoyed the bright chilly day on one of the prettiest school grounds you can imagine, appreciating the conscious blend of our finest native trees among ornamental favorites from around the world.



The Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS), founded as the Virginia Wildflower Society in 1982, is a non-profit organization of people who share an interest in Virginia's wild plants and habitats and a concern for their protection.

The Piedmont Chapter is a geographically defined subgroup of VNPS in the northern point of Virginia east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It includes Loudoun, Fauquier, Culpeper, Rappahannock, Warren, Clarke, and Frederick counties.

The Leaflet is published quarterly by the Piedmont Chapter of VNPS. Permission is granted to reproduce material with credit to the source.

The Leaflet can be seen online in color at www.vnps.org/piedmont

The Chapter's email address is piedmontvnps@gmail.com

Wildlife Habitat through the Seasons—Brenda Crawford

On January 26 we had a full house for the first of this year's Winter Speaker Series. Outdoors the weather was threatening and cold, but all was comfortable in the media room at Tri-County Feeds in Marshall.

Speaker Jennifer Seay of Piedmont Nursery in Markham brought us a four-season peek into the lives of plants and the wildlife that depend on them. Her presentation consisted of composite photographs and narrative descriptions of plants and the creatures that depend on our (mostly) native plants. She began with a deciduous holly, Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*). Hollies are a host for Henry's Elfin butterfly (*Callophrys henrici*) larva, a food source for bees, birds and butterflies, and favored by landscapers for year-round beauty. The program then progressed through the seasons, noting the variety of wildlife and the stages of the life cycles that can't do without our native plants.

Next in the Winter Speaker Series was Feb. 23 with James Barnes, manager of the Sustainable Habitat Program, Piedmont Environmental Council. The third and final speaker in this year's series is Charles Smith, Prince William Wildflower Society member and Fairfax County Park Authority Natural Resources Protection Manager, who will speak on March 23.

Piedmont Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society, presents the Winter Speaker Series, free of charge, 2:00 p.m. at Tri-County Feeds, 7408 John Marshall Highway, Marshall, Virginia.

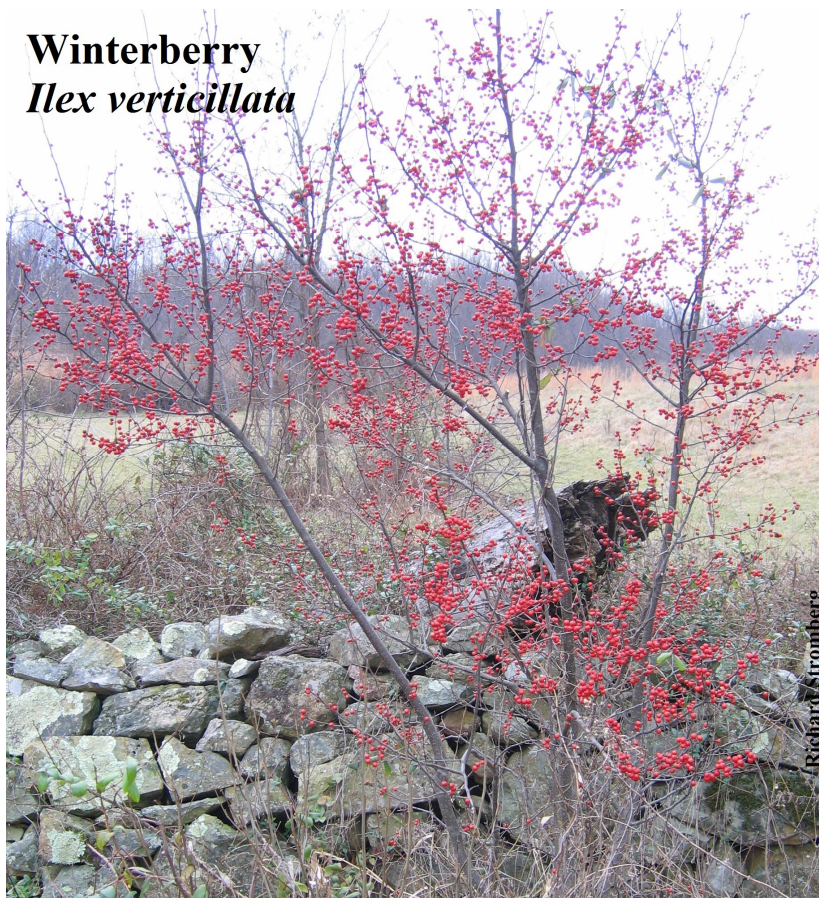
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Winterberry *Ilex verticillata*



Richard Stromberg



February Walk at Morven Park, Leesburg—Cindy Blugerman

The Chapter's second Sunday walk on February 9 provided an opportunity to identify the flora species that still have a visual story to tell during the winter season—namely, trees, shrubs, and vines. Chris Lewis led 13 participants along a two-mile trail loop through the forested section of Morven Park. This 1,000 acre historic property, once owned by a former Virginia governor, has 640 acres in conservation easement, including the 350-acre Catoctin Ridge forest where we hiked. Last year Morven Park and the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy worked together on building more trails and providing more environmental education programs to the public.

Chris provided us with a list of the 40 woody plant species to be discussed and then instructed us on how to identify those species by their bark, buds and leaf scars, branch forms, nuts or seeds, attached leaves (evergreen or dried deciduous ones that are winter-retained), and other characteristics. Carrie Blair brought along a couple woody plant field guides to share with the group. Along with the talk about the identifying characteristics of the species, the educational hike also encompassed discussions about forest insect pests and diseases that threaten some of these species, the habitats and plant community types involved, and whether the plants are considered to be native or invasive exotics. More information about the forested property and its ecological habitats can be found at www.morvenpark.org and www.leesburgva.gov/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=12707.



Cindy Blugerman



Poison ivy
Toxicodendron radicans
(native vine)

Oriental bittersweet
Celastrus orbiculatus
(invasive exotic vine)

Cindy Blugerman



Cindy Blugerman

Hophornbeam
(or Ironwood)
Ostrya virginiana



Bigtooth Aspen
Populus grandidentata



Cindy Blugerman



Northern Red Oak
Quercus rubra

Cindy Blugerman



Loudoun County Lyme Disease Control—Brenda Crawford

Loudoun County has proposed a spraying program to control the deer tick population in an attempt to reduce the Lyme disease threat. The Piedmont Chapter of VNPS has joined with the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and other groups in a position paper proposing an approach which does not include the spraying of toxic chemicals harmful to bees, fish and aquatic invertebrates and classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as a possible human carcinogen.

Other naturalist and conservation organizations, including the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, Loudoun Beekeepers Association, Piedmont Environmental Council Loudoun Board and Wild Ones Blue Ridge Chapter, have signed on to the Conservancy's paper. The report, "Rebalancing Loudoun County's Approach to Lyme Disease Mitigation", asks the Loudoun Board of Supervisors and the Loudoun Lyme Disease Commission to employ measures for Lyme disease abatement that do not use toxic substances.

Nicole Hamilton, LWC President, said the Conservancy objects to spraying as the primary defense against ticks and instead wants to focus on personal protection, which has a higher efficacy for protecting people. Hamilton explained, "We wanted to make sure citizens understood what the very best approaches were to protect themselves from Lyme disease."

Alyssoun Mahoney, LWC's Conservation Chairwoman, spearheaded the research project which led to the report to the County Board.

The LWC's recommendations are to:

- Cease using public funds to spray insecticides intended to kill ticks on public lands, as the practice has not been shown in scientific studies to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease.
- Encourage individuals to take personal protective measures that can significantly reduce the risk of tick bites: conducting regular tick checks, wearing long sleeves and light colors and using DEET-based repellents and permethrin-treated clothing.
- Emphasize the data collection, education and communication points outlined in the Loudoun Lyme Disease Commission's 2012 10-point action plan and update county informational materials to reflect current research regarding tick ecology.

The LWC research project came about after the county, in 2012 and 2013, sprayed public lands with the chemical bifenthrin (Talstar). Mahoney noted schools and homeowners associations also have used sprays on their properties, following the county's lead.

Loudoun County				
Year	Population	Reported Lyme Cases	Cases per 100,000 Population	Cases as % of Population
2007	289397	293	101.25	0.10%
2008	298420	235	78.75	0.08%
2009	304964	201	65.91	0.07%
2010	312311	223	71.40	0.07%
2011	320583	261	81.41	0.08%
2012	328533	219	66.66	0.07%

Population data per Loudoun County, VA Demographic Estimates and Forecasts. Population, Housing Units, Households, Employment (Updated January 17, 2013) Retrieved October 6, 2013 from

<http://www.loudoun.gov/index.aspx?NID=1913#Estimates>. Reported Lyme cases per Loudoun County, Frequently Asked Questions. (n.d.) Retrieved October 6, 2013 from <http://www.loudoun.gov/FAQ.aspx?QID=231>.



Tiny Pea Causes Big Excitement—Cathy Mayes

Last August, while surveying a hay field in Rappahannock, two members of Piedmont Chapter found a plant never before documented in our region. It has tentatively been identified as Tiny Pea (*Lathyrus pusillus*). This spring members of the chapter will return to the site to see if we can find Tiny Pea in flower and fruit, steps required to update the Digital Atlas of Virginia and other state botanical records.

Tiny Pea is a native, annual vine which is also called Singletary Pea, Tiny Vetchling, Low Peavine, Tiny Peavine, and Singletary Vetchling. In the United States, it is found in most Southern states, with an outlier population in Oregon. It is not common anywhere. Tiny Pea is also found in two or three countries in South America.

In Virginia, Tiny Pea has previously been collected only in Goochland, Henrico, and Mecklenburg counties. It is believed to be extirpated in North Carolina, which means the closest other documented populations are in Alabama (in two counties) and Mississippi. It is usually found in the Southern Plains: Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas.

NatureServe classifies Tiny Pea as “exotic” in Virginia, which means it may have been introduced by man (as opposed to birds?) at some point in the past. In 1988 it was given the global conservation status G5 (Secure), although it is rare in Virginia.

Tiny Pea typically occurs in fields, roadsides, and other open, disturbed habitats. Like other peas, it blooms April to June and produces a seed pod in the summer.

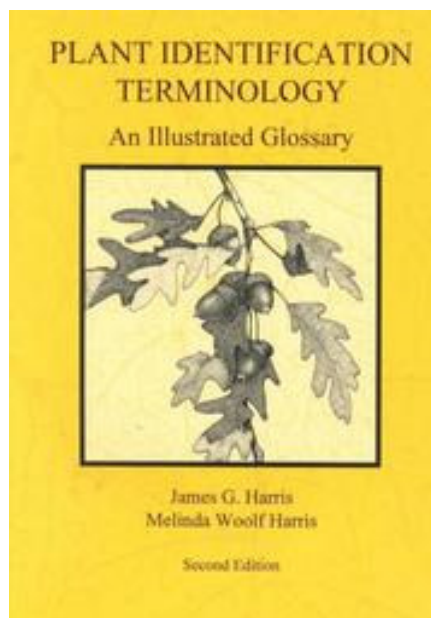
Tiny Pea is potentially poisonous. It is one of a few members of the pea family that contain a toxin that causes lathyrism (or neurolathyrism), a neurological disease of humans and domestic animals. A unique symptom of lathyrism is the atrophy of gluteal muscles (buttocks). Lathyrism is caused by eating large amounts of uncooked peas and is very rare today. Historically lathyrism arose in people or animals eating large amounts of raw peas or flour made of raw peas.

Plant Identification Terminology—Cathy Mayes

When you want to define the words you find in a wildflower book, the best place to go is *Plant Identification Terminology/an Illustrated Glossary* by James G. and Melinda Woolf Harris, aka Harris & Harris. James Harris is Professor of Biology at Utah Valley University and co-director of the University herbarium. This handy reference is so good that it is now in its 11th printing.

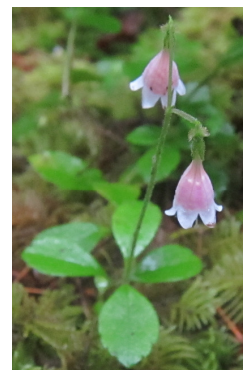
A daunting challenge for anyone using the new *Flora of Virginia* or any flora or field guide to plants is to understand the words used to describe the parts and characteristics of the plant. The *Flora*, as is typical, has an excellent glossary at the back, so you can keep one finger there and flip back and forth when reading a botanical description. But it is so much easier to have the glossary lying on the table beside you. And to have line drawings of the structures described is absolutely heavenly. There's a reason why people say a picture is worth 1,000 words.

Harris & Harris defines more than 2,700 botanical terms using 1,900 illustrations. The definitions are clear, as are the attractive drawings. It works both for serious botanists and for rank beginners. The first section is arranged alphabetically. The second section groups words by category *e.g.* root, leaf shape, surfaces, flower parts. This makes it an extremely useful addition to your nature library.





Sunday	March 9	1pm	Second Sunday Walk
Fauquier County. Old High Acre Farm, near The Plains, leaders Sally Anderson and Mary Keith Ruffner. For more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Sunday	March 23	2-3:30pm	Winter Speaker Series: How's Your Habitat?
Fauquier County. Tri-County Feeds meeting room (upstairs), Marshall. Charles Smith, Prince William Wildflower Society and Fairfax County Park Authority Natural Resources Protection Manager. For more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Saturday	Apr 12	10am-Noon	22nd Annual Calmes Neck Wildflower Walk
Clarke County. Gary Fleming, Vegetation Ecologist, Division of Natural Heritage, VA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), will lead this VNPS registry site walk along the Shenandoah River. Rich mesic forest and ravines promise a spectacular show of Bluebells, Twinleaf, Blue Cohosh, Columbines and many others. The walk is moderate, but expect to climb over downed trees. We plan a gathering by the river after the walk. Wear sturdy shoes and bring a sack lunch, water, and a folding chair. To RSVP and get driving directions contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Sunday	Apr 27	10am	Trillium Walk
Fauquier County. Trillium Walk at Marjorie Arundel Trillium Trail at Thompson WMA. Contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Saturday & Sunday May 3 & 4		Wildflower Weekend at Shenandoah National Park	
Appreciate the diversity of wildflowers growing in the Blue Ridge. More than 1,300 species of plants thrive in Shenandoah National Park, a haven for native woodland wildflowers. Choose from among many activities at the Park website, http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/index.htm .			
Friday	May 9	1pm	Invasive Removal
Loudoun County. Blue Ridge Regional Park with the Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountains. For more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Saturday & Sunday May 10 & 11		9am-4:30pm	State Arboretum Garden Fair
Clarke County. Select vendors with perennials, small trees and fine items for garden and home. Also: children's activities, gardening information, food and much, much more. Directions at www.virginia.edu/Blandy .			
Sunday	May 11	time tbd	Second Sunday Walk
Clarke County. Native plant walk at Blandy during Garden Fair. For more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Sunday	June 8	1pm	Second Sunday Walk
Hampshire County, WV. Ice formed in the winter in the thick talus of Ice Mountain creates a refrigeration effect providing habitat for plant species usually found in subarctic regions. Join Kristin Zimet for a walk through these plants unusual for our region. For more details, contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			





Shamrock—Richard Stromberg

What is a shamrock? The word shamrock derives from the Irish (Gaelic) word “*seamróg*” that means “little Clover”. Clover’s green, three-leaflet leaf is a symbol of Ireland. Clover’s genus name, *Trifolium*, means three-leaf.

Clovers are members of the Pea sub-family. The flowers of the Pea sub-family have five petals with a unique form that is called papilionaceous (which means it resembles a butterfly): the upper petal, called the standard, is often larger than the two side petals, called wings, and the two lower petals are united by their lower edges to form a keel. A vegetable gardener knows this form from his pea and bean plants; a flower gardener, from his sweet peas. Look closely at a redbud flower next month to get the idea.



Redbud
Cercis canadensis

You may think that a Clover flower looks like a ball. But look closely and you will see that the ball is made up of many flowers, and each flower has the typical papilionaceous form though the standard may wrap around the wings.

Arguments have been made that the shamrock is really Common Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), but Wikipedia says that is probably because the Irish name for Wood Sorrel, “*seamsóg*”, is similar to “*seamróg*”. Taxonomists have now decided that the European Common Wood Sorrel is the same species as our American Mountain Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis montana*). While Clover leaflets are round or oval, most *Oxalis* have heart-shaped leaflets. Most pictures of a

shamrock (including those on currency, heraldic shields, and stamps) show heart-shaped leaflets rather than round or oval leaves. So these pictures are portraying *Oxalis* leaves, not Clover.

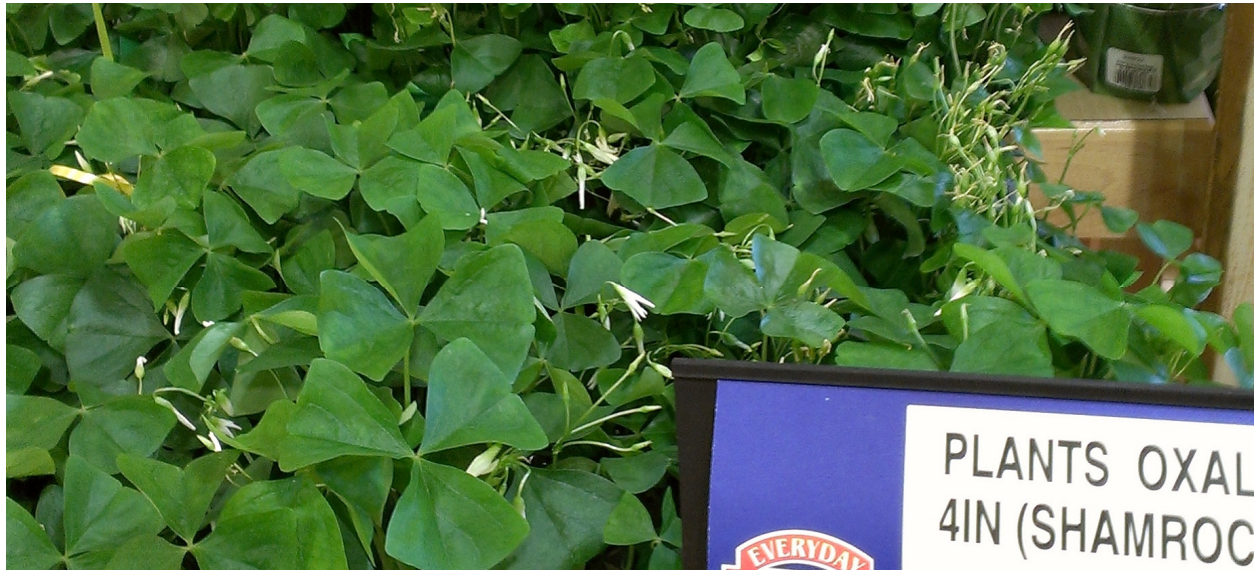
So what are the “shamrock” plants being sold in the supermarket? The flowers are arranged loosely or singly on the stem, not in a ball like a Clover, and the flowers have five petals arranged symmetrically, not papilionaceously. The label says they are *Oxalis*. Their leaves have three leaflets, certainly a requirement for a shamrock, but the leaflets are large and triangular, not heart shaped. Some of the plants have green leaves and white flowers. Others have purple leaves with white or pink flowers. They are *Oxalis regnellii* or *triangularis*, which are called False Shamrock and are endemic to Brazil. No Irishness there. So enjoy the sham shamrocks as a house plant, and have a happy St. Patrick’s Day.



White Clover
Trifolium repens



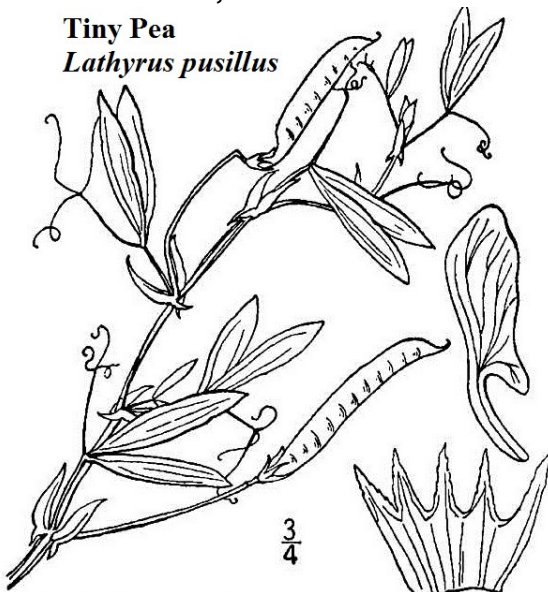
**Mountain
Wood Sorrel**
Oxalis montana



The *Leaflet*

**PIEDMONT CHAPTER
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
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**Tiny Pea
*Lathyrus pusillus***



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 2: 416.