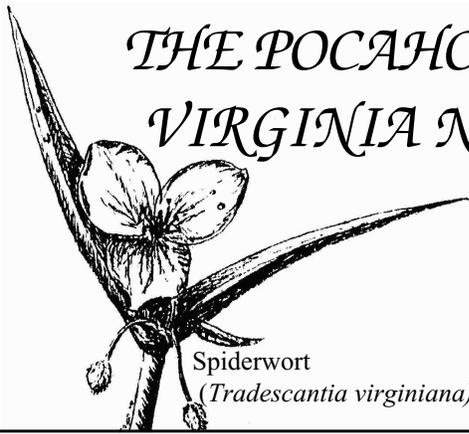


# THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

December 2003



Spiderwort  
(*Tradescantia virginiana*)



*Sarracenia purpurea*  
Photo: Thomas G. Barnes  
@ USDA-NRCS Plants Database

## DECEMBER MEETING

### “Insectivorous Plants”

by Phil Sheridan

Thursday, December 4, 2003 at 7:00 PM

Breakout Room in the Education and Library Complex  
of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

Phil Sheridan’s primary mission in life is the preservation of North American pitcher plants. He has undergraduate and master’s degrees in biology from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Ph.D. from Old Dominion University. He founded Meadowview Biological Research Station in Caroline county in 1995, and it became a non-profit organization in 2000. Meadowview is dedicated to preserving and restoring rare wetland plants, habitats and associated ecosystems on the coastal plain of Maryland and Virginia. Dr. Sheridan’s programs at Meadowview include **1.** Discovery, which involves identifying new bogs or seepage areas which contain rare bog species. **2.** Research, which includes conducting studies on the genetics, biochemistry, ecology, and population biology of the pitcher plants, long leaf pine and white cedar which form an associated ecosystem. **3.** Propagation of rare bog plants, both from seed and divisions, to serve as a backup for wild populations and to augment existing populations. Pitcher plants are also raised at Meadowview to sell in order to raise money for the station’s work. **4.** Reintroductions and Outplantings - Meadowview is actively soliciting landowners with appropriate environmental conditions to receive and maintain unique populations of bog plants. This includes working with the Virginia Department of Transportation to establish populations of pitcher plants at suitable highway interchanges. **5.** Education - the key to preserving our natural heritage in the future. Biologists from Meadowview are available for instruction on the proper care and maintenance of bog habitats. For more information on Meadowview see the web site [www.pitcherplant.org](http://www.pitcherplant.org).

Insectivorous plants are fascinating; they are carnivorous, they are pretty, and they use all sorts of tricks to trap and devour insects.

~~~

**After the talk we will have a holiday party. Please bring finger food such as cookies, candies, nuts, little sandwiches or anything one can eat with one’s fingers. Please bring your own favorite mug for spiced apple juice or cider.**

---

## CHAPTER NEWS

**NOTE:** The January meeting will be held in the Education and Library Complex on **Thursday January 8**, because the first Thursday of January falls on New Years Day

~~~

November’s program, given by Dean Walton, was a slide lecture on the Ecological Communities of the Northern Virginia Blue Ridge produced by Gary P. Fleming of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage. “This informative show has stunning images of the communities and component flora of the Northern Blue Ridge province of Virginia, and was presented Oct. 4, 2003 at a multi-state Native Plant Society conference entitled “The Blue Ridge Mountains and Potomac Valley in Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia: Native Plants and the Geology of the Blue Ridge Province” in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.” This presentation is available for download at <http://www.dcr.state.va.us/dnh/community.htm>. It is a large file (18 Megabytes) so download time with a standard 56K modem will be about 1.5 hours. For your convenience the chapter can supply a copy on a CD. Contact Richard Moss at 748-2940 or e-mail at [mossrd@mindspring.com](mailto:mossrd@mindspring.com)

---

---

## OTHER EVENTS

**Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens** (for the complete list of events at the Ginter see <http://www.lewisginter.org>)

**GardenFest of Lights November 28, 2003 - January 4, 2004 Nightly 5 - 10 pm.**

A holiday tradition! The show features more than 500,000 lights arranged in botanical themes throughout the Garden. Exquisite hand-crafted botanical holiday decorations are also on display. Tickets available in advance and at the door. Holiday dinners are available in the Garden Café and the Robins Tea House. Reservations are suggested for the Tea House; please call (804) 262-9887, ext. 399.

**Great Holiday Greens Exchange** Tuesday, Dec. 9 Bring your greens: 9 - 11 a.m. Greens Sale: 11:30 am - 4:30 pm. In front of the Education and Library Complex (Garden admission required) The general public is invited to bring greens in bags or buckets to donate to the exchange between 9 - 11 a.m. In return, participants will receive credit to use toward purchases at the Greens Sale from 11:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Most bundles of greens will be priced under \$10. The location is in front of the Education and Library Complex. In addition to greens, this is also a great chance to get interesting cones, berries and branches for holiday decorating. Hard-to-find items including some valuable evergreens from the Garden such as Japanese umbrella pine and Himalayan cedar will be part of the sale (subject to availability).

---

---

### Minutes of the November 6, 2003 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Dean Walton, President. He announced that our speaker Phil Sheridan had to cancel his engagement because of surgery on Friday so Dean would be our speaker at the meeting. Phil Sheridan will be the speaker for the December meeting. Dean greeted two visitors to our meeting.

### The Pocahontas Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

serves the counties of: Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King William, New Kent, Powhatan and the cities of Ashland, Hopewell, Petersburg, and Richmond. It meets the first Thursday of September through April at 7:00 PM in the Education and Library Complex of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, unless otherwise stated.

#### Chapter Officers

President	Dean Walton
Vice President	-
Secretary	Peggy Furqueron
Treasurer	Bucci Zeugner
Membership Chair	Pat Brodie,

Address all correspondence to  
Richard Moss, Editor  
12565 Brook Lane  
Chester VA 23831  
[mossrd@mindspring.com](mailto:mossrd@mindspring.com)

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:** Duane Polkis asked everyone who is attending the December meeting to bring a dozen cookies for refreshments. Richard Moss, the new newsletter editor, will be changing the format to a four page newsletter so he will have more space for articles. He asked members submitting articles to have the material to him by Nov. 18. Office Max will charge 20 cents a copy and will do the printing in one day. There was some discussion on how to make the public more aware of the chapter and its meetings. One suggestion was to have the Audubon Society list us on their list server on their Website.

**Program:** Dean Walton gave a slide lecture on the Ecological Communities of the Northern Virginia Blue Ridge. Dean talked about the three broad categories of communities: the Matrix, the large patch and the small patch communities. There are three main geologies which determine the types of plants that can grow in these areas. The slides for this lecture were quite beautiful and it was an informative evening. Meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Peggy Furqueron, Secretary

# NATIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH

## Mistletoe (*Phoradendron leucarpum*)

By Mary Welch-Keesey, Purdue University Consumer Horticulture Specialist, and Martha Bailey, volunteer, at White River Gardens



Mistletoe is the common name for shrubs in the Viscaceae family, most of which are parasitic. The ancients considered the plants to be mystical because mistletoe would suddenly appear in trees and did not have roots. They did not realize that fruit-eating birds distributed mistletoe seed by rubbing their beaks against the trees and via their droppings. The plant was considered sacred in pre-Christian Europe. It was variously credited with curing diseases, rendering poisons harmless, and protecting the house from ghosts. It became associated with the Christmas season because the Druids were said to welcome the new year with branches of mistletoe. Over the centuries the berries have had medicinal uses; the Native Americans used the shrub long before the Europeans arrived in America. However, the berries are toxic if eaten.

American mistletoe or Oak mistletoe (*Phoradendron leucarpum*) and English mistletoe (*Viscum album*) are similar in appearance. The American generic name is based on the Greek Phor meaning “thief” and dendron meaning “tree” because it steals the life juices from the

host tree. The English generic name refers to its sticky white berries. The American mistletoe is the plant which is available in North American holiday markets.

Mistletoe forms a drooping yellowish evergreen bush about 2-3 feet long on the branch of a host tree. It has thickly crowded, forking branches with oval to lance-shaped leathery leaves about 2 inches long, arranged in pairs, each opposite the other on the branch. The flowers, in compact spikes, are bisexual, unisexual, or regular. They are yellower than the leaves and appear in the late winter; they soon give rise to one-seeded, white berries, which when ripe are filled with a sticky, semi-transparent pulp.

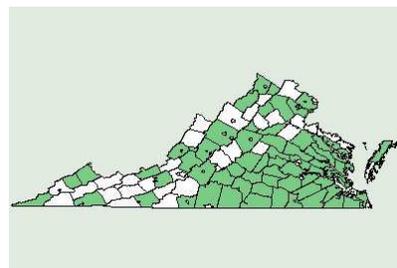
After germination a modified root penetrates the bark of the host tree and forms a connection through which water and nutrients pass from host to parasite. Mistletoes contain chlorophyll and can make some of their own food. Species in America parasitize many deciduous trees, including oaks. Mistletoes are slow-growing but persistent; their natural death is determined by the death of the hosts. They are pests of many ornamental, timber, and crop trees. The only effective control measure is complete removal of the parasite from the host.

One custom which the English and Americans share is that of kissing under the mistletoe, a practice that originated in England in the 19th Century. Since the berries are toxic, it is wise, when bringing a spray into the house, to hang the plant high enough that children cannot reach it. Often, plastic berries are substituted for real ones to prevent poisoning and increase shelf life.

The range of *Phoradendron leucarpum* in the US is from New York to Arizona. In Virginia it is found in most counties east of the Blue Ridge Mountains (see range map below) and it is very common and grows particularly well in fresh water tidal wetland forests such as those on the Pamunkey River.

Mistletoe photo from Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center by Robert L. Stone.

Range of Oak Mistletoe in Virginia



# Virginia Native Plant Society Membership Application

## Pocahontas Chapter

**Make Check payable to VNPS and Mail to:**  
Membership Chair, Blandy Experimental Farm, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2, Boyce, VA 22620

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

___ Individual	\$30.00	___ Sustaining	\$100.00
___ Family	\$40.00	___ Life	\$500.00
___ Student	\$15.00	___ Associate Groups	\$40.00
___ Patron	\$50.00	(Garden Clubs, etc.)	

I wish to make an additional contribution to \_\_\_ VNPS or \_\_\_ The Pocahontas Chapter,  
VNPS in the amount of:

\_\_\_ \$10    \_\_\_ \$20    \_\_\_ \$50    \_\_\_ \$100    Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Pocahontas Chapter**  
**Virginia Native Plant Society**  
**12565 Brook Lane**  
**Chester, VA 23831**

