



# WILD NEWS

## Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Web site: [www.pwws.vnps.org](http://www.pwws.vnps.org)

Number 2012-04

July-August 2012

**MONDAY, JULY 16, 2012**

**PWWS Membership Meeting**

**“Ethnobotany of the Bull Run Mountains”**

**with Susan Leopold**

**7:30 p.m., Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas**



Susan Leopold is the current executive director of United Plant Savers ([www.unitedplantsavers.org](http://www.unitedplantsavers.org)).

She has a Doctorate in Ethnobotany from Antioch New England and a Master's in Environment Landscape Design from the Conway School. Currently she lives in Linden, Virginia where she raises goats and grows medicinal herbs. Susan is a native to

Prince William County, born and raised in Woodbridge. Her doctoral thesis was on the loss of ethnobotanical knowledge in the Bull Run Mountains and ecological changes since H.A. Allard did his historical plant surveys of the 1940s, in comparison to Gary Fleming's 2000 ecological communities study. Her talk will cover the methods of the dissertation and the life of a true naturalist, H.A. Allard.

Please join us for this stimulating presentation and discussion. Refreshments will be served. All are welcome! Prince William meetings are free and open to the public.

### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER, July 2012**

The three H's: hazy, hot, and humid. That's the typical summer forecast for Northern Virginia. As I write this, our area is recovering from a not-so-typical weather event: a “derecho.” I think that it is fair to say that that is a new term for many of us. What widespread

devastation it wrought! So many beloved trees were uprooted or damaged, and power outages were common. In my Manassas area neighborhood, it was mainly the reviled Bradford pears and some mimosas that sustained significant damage. Unfortunately, Prince William County lost its Four Seasons Liberty Oak, the champion white oak located in the Dumfries area. It's always sad to lose a magnificent old tree, but it is important to plan for the future and keep on planting native trees that will grow to take their places.

This month's program on the ethnobotany of Bull Run Mountain by Dr. Susan Leopold should be very enlightening. According to the *New World Encyclopedia*, the term “ethnobotany” was coined in 1895, by J.M. Harshberger, an American botanist at the University of Pennsylvania. As I understand it, the field combines elements of anthropology, botany, archeology, geography, medicine, linguistics, economics, landscape architecture, and pharmacology! Our little mountain to our north has a rich history that should not be forgotten. Let's do our part to keep its rich botanical history alive.

Speaking of history, we are celebrating 30 years of VNPS history with this year's state annual meeting/conference in Richmond. What began with respective efforts in both Prince William and Fairfax Counties in 1982 led to the creation of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society, later renamed the Virginia Native Plant Society. Charter members will receive special recognition, so I hope that many of our chapter's original members will consider attending the September 14-16 meeting that will include lectures, tours, field trips, and banquet.

While it is satisfying to celebrate our past, we must also look to the future of our organization. PWWS has been operated by a core group of individuals for a number of years, and we need to broaden our leadership board. To that end, we welcome **Rose Breece**, **Carol Thompson**, and **Janet Wheatcraft** to our board of directors. We are

still seeking someone for chapter publicity as well as anyone else who would like to assist with running the chapter and advancing our mission to protect and preserve the native plants of Virginia and their habitats. Could that be you?

See you on the 16<sup>th</sup>! --Nancy Vehrs, president, PWWS

### Native Plant Eagle Scout Project

My name is *Christian Rector* and I am part of Boy Scout Troop 1352 of Occoquan, Va. For my Eagle Scout project I will be designing, excavating, and landscaping the entrance area to the Lake Ridge Marina dock facility. This will involve replacing all current plants with native Virginia plants, which will include the following:

- Virginia Willow
- 30 Virginia Blue Flag
- 20 Orange milkweed
- 40 Black eyed susans
- 20 fire pink
- Sweet pepper bush
- Fragrant sumac
- Mistflower
- 40 purple coneflower
- 40 green headed coneflower

The planting will occur in October. I am requesting donations of the listed plants for my Eagle Scout Project. If you are able to donate plants or participate please contact me at: email [jrector@verizon.net](mailto:jrector@verizon.net); home phone (703) 878-2626; cell phone (703) 835-0368; address 11729 Crest Maple Dr. Woodbridge VA 22192.

Thank you for your consideration.

### PWWS Members Help Plant Butterfly Garden

In early June PWWS members helped a Girl Scout troop based at Manassas Park Elementary School and the school's garden club with two small butterfly/pollinator gardens. Around 20 students, several parents, and the



principal from the school participated. PWWS members and friends participating included Deanna High, Karen Waltman, Nancy Vehrs, Nancy Arrington, Cindy Patterson, and Gordon Olson.

Manassas Park Elementary School is LEED Gold certified and is landscaped entirely with native plants. Only natives, including milkweeds, coreopsis, beebalm, blazing star, phlox, and coneflower were used in the planting. For more information about the school: see <http://www.asla.org/2011awards/456.html>. A colorfully creative thank you note from the students is posted on our web site, <http://pwws.vnps.org>.

[Master Gardener Cindy Patterson demonstrates proper planting procedures: Photo by Gordon Olson]

### TURTLEHEAD (*Chelone glabra*)



*Chelone glabra*, commonly called turtlehead, is a perennial member now placed in the Plantaginaceae (Plantain Family) but formerly in the Scrophulariaceae (Snapdragon Family). Occurring in most of Virginia's counties, this distinctive plant with

flowers resembling a turtle's head blooms from July into September, and is found in moist conditions such as stream banks, ditches, damp woods, and swamps. This species ranges from Newfoundland to Georgia and west into Missouri. The genus name of *Chelone* is derived from a Greek term for tortoise and its species name of *glabra* means "smooth." Other common names of turtlehead are balmoney, bitter herb, snake head, snake mouth, shellflower, and fishmouth.

The white to pink flowers of turtlehead are approximately one-inch long with a calyx of 5 sepals, a two-lipped corolla with an arching upper lip resembling the top of a turtle's head and a lower three part lip, 5 stamens (one of which is sterile), and a pistil with two carpels. The flowers are

found in tight terminal clusters as well as single flowers in the opposite leaf axils. Primary pollinators of turtlehead are bumblebees strong enough to pry open the corolla. Butterflies and even hummingbirds also may visit these flowers. The fruit that develops from each fertilized flower is a one-half inch long capsule with a papery covering that contains numerous square, winged brown seeds only 1/8 inch long that are wind-dispersed.

Each plant has a smooth, slightly angular stem that may be one to three or more feet tall. Shiny, dark green leaves are opposite, lance-shaped, and 3-6 inches long. Turtlehead is a primary host plant for the caterpillars of the Baltimore checkered butterfly.



Medicinal uses of this plant by American Indian tribes as well as in folk or herbal medicine are numerous. These included use as a bitter tonic and/or leaf tea to simulate appetite as well as liver and stomach activity. Turtlehead also was used as a gentle laxative and to expel worms (one of its most important functions). Other uses included treating jaundice, fever, and malaria with a tonic or leaf tea. Leaves and stems were made into an ointment or poultice to treat piles, ulcers, sores, and fever blisters. Young shoots and leaves were parboiled and panfried by some Indian tribes, especially in times of famine.

In late summer and early fall, keep an eye out for this most unusual and attractive flower. Use your imagination to enjoy the mental image of a group of small turtle heads on this unusual and attractive plant! --*Marion Lobstein*

[Turtlehead photo: R.W. Smith, Native Plant Information Network, Wildflower Center Digital Library, NPIN Image ID #31019, [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org); Baltimore checkerspot photo: Barbara Spencer, 7/23/2006, Northampton, North America Butterfly Association, [www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org); Botanical illus., Mary Walcott, <http://wisplants.uwsp.edu>]

### Changes in Taxonomy of *Chelone glabra* and the Traditional Scrophulariaceae (Figwort Family)

*Chelone glabra* or smooth turtlehead has had an interesting taxonomic journey. Called "*Chelone acadensis flore albo*" by Tournefort in 1706 (*Flora Virginica*, 1762), turtlehead

was assigned its current binominium by Linnaeus in 1753. *Chelone* traditionally has been placed in the Scrophulariaceae (Figwort family). This family (as well as Plantaginaceae) was proposed by A.L. de Jussieu in 1789. The taxonomy of Scrophulariaceae has been a challenge since that time and is one of the flowering plant families undergoing recent significant change or disintegration. Over the last two centuries, this family has been divided into subfamilies and tribes: Orobanchaceae (Broomrape family) has moved in and out of that family as have other families such as the Paulowniaceae. Since the early 1990s, continuing DNA research on members of the Scrophulariaceae has resulted in this family being disintegrated into a minimum of five families for genera occurring in Virginia. The listing below shows the families and genera assigned to these families:



- ◆ Scrophulariaceae: (Figwort family-redefined)
  - *Scrophularia* (figwort), *Verbascum* (mulleins)
- ◆ Orobanchaceae (Broomrape family) [traditionally included only *Conopholis* (cancer- or squaw-root), *Epifagus* (beechdrops), and *Orobanche* (broomrape) -all species are plant root parasites]
  - Former Scrophulariaceae genera (all hemiparasitic on roots of other plants) genera to some degree] reassigned to Orobanchaceae are: *Agalinis* (false foxgloves), *Aureolaria* (false foxgloves), *Buchnera* (bluehearts), *Castilleja* (Indian paintbrushes), *Melampyrum* (cow-wheat), *Pedicularis* (louseworts)
- ◆ Phrymaceae (Lopseed family) [traditionally included only *Phryma* (lopseed)]
  - Former Scrophulariaceae genera reassigned to Phrymaceae are: *Mazus* (mazuses),

*Micranthemum* (micranthemums), *Mimulus* (monkeyflowers)

◆ Plantaginaceae (Plantain family) [traditionally included only *Plantago* (plantains) genus from our area]

■ Some modern taxonomists such as Richard Olmstead propose placing most of the former Orobanchaceae genera into the family Veronicaceae (Durande, 1782) but this family name is not valid.

■ Former Scrophulariaceae genera reassigned to Plantaginaceae are: *Antirrhinum* (snapdragons), *Bacopa* (water-hyssops), *Chelone* (turtleheads), *Collinsia* (blue-eyed Mary), *Cymbalaria* (Kenilworth ivy), *Gratiola* (hedge-hyssop), *Kickxia* (cancerworts), *Limosella* (mudworts), *Linaria* (toadflaxes), *Lindernia* (false pimpernel), *Mecardonia* (axilliflowers), *Nuttallanthus* (toadflaxes), *Penstemon* (beard-tongues), *Veronica* (speedwells), *Veronicastrum* (Culver's root)

◆ Paulowniaceae (Princess tree family)

■ *Paulownia* (Princess tree)

This dismantling of the Scrophulariaceae is a very complicated situation; if you would like to check out some online references for more detail on this disintegration of this family, here are some you may want to explore:

- **Disintegration of the Scrophulariaceae**  
<http://www.amjbot.org/content/88/2/348.full>
- **Review of the systematics of Scrophulariaceae s.l. and their current disposition**  
[http://phylodiversity.net/dtank/Tank\\_Lab/Publications\\_files/Aust.%20Syst.%20Bot.%202006%20Tank.pdf](http://phylodiversity.net/dtank/Tank_Lab/Publications_files/Aust.%20Syst.%20Bot.%202006%20Tank.pdf)
- **Piecing together the "new" Plantaginaceae**  
<http://www.amjbot.org/content/92/2/297.full>
- **Parasitic Plants: Molecular Phylogenetics of Scrophulariaceae/Orobanchaceae**  
<http://cwd.huck.psu.edu/parastcplnts.html>
- **Molecular systematics of the parasitic genus *Conopholis* (Orobanchaceae) inferred from plastid and nuclear sequences**  
<http://www.amjbot.org/content/98/5/896.full>

- **Phylogeny of the parasitic plant family Orobanchaceae inferred from phytochrome A**  
<http://www.amjbot.org/content/93/7/1039.full>
- **Phylogenetic relationships of North American *Antirrhinum* (Veronicaceae)**  
<http://www.amjbot.org/content/91/6/918.full>
- **Redefining Phrymaceae: the placement of *Mimulus*, tribe Mimuleae, and *Phryma*<sup>1</sup>**  
<http://www.amjbot.org/content/89/7/1093.full>

Marion Lobstein will continue to explain or expand on the changes of names (taxonomy) of our Virginia plants in the upcoming *Flora of Virginia*.

### Prince William Wildflower Society Membership Meeting Minutes, Monday, May 21, Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas

President Nancy Vehrs introduced the guest speaker, Leslie Paulson. Leslie is a member of PWWs and Virginia Native Plant Society and a Master Ggardener. She spoke on Audubon at Home, a program designed to foster better stewardship of nearby nature. Audubon at Home's guiding principles are the following:

- Conservation and protection of water
- Removal of invasive plants
- Replacement of non-native plants with native species
- Reduction or elimination of commercial fertilizers and pesticides and
- Greater preservation of public and private natural areas.

For the area around your home to be considered eligible for Audubon's Wildlife Sanctuary certification, action on the above items would be necessary. Also evidence of 10 out of 30 species of wildlife would need to be found in your yard.

Leslie provided the following tips and suggestions for making your yard healthier for wildlife:

- \*Leave snags (standing dead trees) so pileated woodpeckers will make holes in them, and little brown bats and some butterflies can overwinter in the holes. For safety close to your home, the snags can be cut to 12 feet or so.
- \*Make a monarch butterfly way station by planting milkweeds. The females lay their eggs on milkweeds, and the monarch larvae eat only milkweed leaves.
- \*To get rid of English ivy, you can mow over a large area of it and paint the new growth with Roundup, a herbicide which is not harmful to the surrounding plants.
- \*Millions of birds are killed by cats each year, so please keep your cats inside.
- \*There are many solitary bee species, and you can attract solitary Mason bees by installing a Mason bee house in which the females lay eggs in tubes. Pollination of nearby plants is the advantage, but sorry, no honey is produced.
- \*Resources are available to help you know what to plant and to

find local native plants to purchase. Leslie suggested *Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping* by Chesapeake Bay Watershed. (Note: I found a used one being offered on Amazon.com, but it was \$99.99, so maybe a library has one. And I found free downloadable pdf versions on Native Plants Center Chesapeake Region, also on Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.)

Leslie urged everyone to take Audubon's **Healthy Yard Pledge**: I promise to the best of my ability to reduce pesticide use, conserve water, protect water quality, remove invasive exotic plants, plant native species, and support birds and other wildlife on my property.

So, take the pledge, pull out the garlic mustard, plant some natives, install a rain barrel, and then apply for Audubon at Home's Wildlife Sanctuary certification.

**Announcements**

Fourteen PWWS members carpoled to Delaware on May 17 and 18 and attended tours of Mt. Cuba and Winterthur. Some

went on to Chanticleer. The gardens were beautiful. Marion Lobstein reported that the publication date for *Flora of Virginia* is to be December 2012.

Doorprizes-New member Tamea Boone received the book, *A Growing Gardener*, and Helen Rawls received a book on cut flowers.

**Thank you** to Brenda Hallam and Rose Breece for bringing delicious cookies and strawberries for refreshments.

Those in attendance: Brenda Hallam, Leslie Paulson, Cindy Patterson, Jannell Bryant, Helen Walter, Nancy Vehrs, Marge Walther, Kathy Sobno, Mary Sherman, Marion Lobstein, Helen Rawls, Carol Thompson, Rose Breece, Gordon Olson, Nancy Arrington, Jeanne Endrikat, Barbara Deegan, Tamea Boone, William Hendrickson, Maggie Hart, Harry Glasgow, Nancy Vehrs, Karen Waltman.

--Respectively submitted, Karen Waltman, Secretary, PWWS

**PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY**  
**P.O. Box 83 - Manassas, VA 20108-0083**  
**Chartered: January 10, 1983**  
**Logo: *Mertensia virginica* - Virginia Bluebells**  
**Web site: [www. http://vnps.org/pwws](http://vnps.org/pwws)**

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<b>Plant Sale</b>	<b>Nancy Arrington</b> , 8388 Briarmont Lane, Manassas, VA 20112-2755 Email: <a href="mailto:narrington1@verizon.net">narrington1@verizon.net</a>	H: 703-368-8431 W: 703-368-1462 C: 703-408-7446
<b>Programs &amp; Registry</b>	<b>Helen Walter</b> , 10553 River Run Court, Manassas, VA 20112-3007 Email: <a href="mailto:helenwalt43@verizon.net">helenwalt43@verizon.net</a>	H: 703-330-9614
<b>Publicity</b>	VACANT	
<b>Refreshments</b>	<b>*Rose Breece</b> , 6102 Plainville Lane, Dale City, VA 22193 Email: <a href="mailto:Bjbreece3@msn.com">Bjbreece3@msn.com</a>	H: 703-590-6919
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## EVENTS OF NOTE

### JULY

**Saturday, July 14, 9:00 a.m. to Noon.** "Saturday in the Garden Series," Prince William Master Gardener Volunteers, Teaching Garden at St. Benedict Monastery, 9535 Linton Hall Road, Bristow, 20136. "What's Buggin' My Plant & Composting Inside and Out." Children's Program: "Eat Your Garden!" All programs are free. A children's program is offered concurrently with each Saturday in the Garden program. Space is limited. A registration form is required for children's programs. To register, please call (703) 792-7747.

**Sunday, July 29, Bird Walks at Merrimac Farm, on the last Sunday of every month, beginning at 8:00 a.m., Merrimac Farm, Stone House Visitor Center, 15020 Deepwood Lane, Nokesville, Va.** We'll look for birds and other wildlife, especially butterflies and dragonflies, as we travel through the uplands to the edge of the floodplain, covering a variety of habitats, including open fields and woodland edges. Everyone is welcome. Dress for the weather, bring binoculars and cameras. More info and RSVP (not required) to PWCA (703) 499-4954 or [alliance@pwconserve.org](mailto:alliance@pwconserve.org).



### AUGUST

**Saturday, August 11, 9:00 a.m. to Noon.** "Saturday in the Garden Series," Prince William Master Gardener Volunteers, Teaching Garden at St. Benedict Monastery, 9535 Linton Hall Road, Bristow 20136. "The Good, the Bad, the Tasty & Fall Vegetable Gardening & Extending the Season." Children's Program: "Weave It To Me! Weave some grasses!" All programs are free. Registration is requested. A children's program is offered concurrently with each Saturday in the Garden program. Space is limited. A registration form is required for children's programs. To register, please call (703) 792-7747.

**Wednesday August 15** *Trees Virginia* and *Virginia Cooperative Extension* are sponsoring a workshop titled: "Street Trees in Virginia - What We Have, What We Want, and How We Get There." We will be presenting this workshop in four locations around the state; chose the location and date that is convenient for you. Please see [www.treesvirginia.org](http://www.treesvirginia.org) for an agenda and directions to each location: Culpeper, August 15; Hampton Roads, August 16; Lynchburg, August 17; and Wytheville, August 20. **Who should attend:** arborists, horticulturists, urban foresters, municipal planners, public works professionals, civic groups, and interested citizens. Space is limited in these

workshops to 50 people so register early! The registration fee is \$20, which includes morning break and a boxed lunch. Three ISA CEUS will be offered.

**Introduction to the Prince William County Master Gardener Program** Find out about becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer with Virginia Cooperative Extension. Please plan to attend one of the information sessions:

**Monday, August 20, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.,** McCoy Room at Sudley North Government building 7987 Ashton Avenue, Manassas 20109; or

**Wednesday, August 22, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.,** Development Services Building Room 202 A & B, 5 County Complex Court, Prince William, 22192.

**Free, but registration is necessary. Please call 703-792-7747**

**Sunday, August 26, Birdwalks at Merrimac Farm...** on the last Sunday of every month, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Merrimac Farm, Stone House Visitor Center, 15020 Deepwood Lane, Nokesville, Va. We'll look for birds and other wildlife, especially butterflies and dragonflies, as we travel through the uplands to the edge of the floodplain, covering a variety of habitats, including open fields and woodland edges. Everyone is welcome. Dress for the weather, bring binoculars and cameras. More info and RSVP (not required) to PWCA (703) 499-4954 or [alliance@pwconserve.org](mailto:alliance@pwconserve.org).

### SEPTEMBER

**Thursday, September 6, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.,** Bull Run Universalist Unitarian Church, Manassas. **Characteristics of a Healthy Stream**, with Chris Ruck, sponsored by the Prince William Conservation Alliance. What is a pristine stream? Is there any such thing? In this session, participants will learn the characteristics of healthy streams and explore the link between stream health and the watershed. This session will integrate the hydrology, geology, chemistry, and biology of stream corridors into a watershed-based approach to stream health. **Questions and RSVP:** [alliance@pwconserve.org](mailto:alliance@pwconserve.org) or (703) 499-4954. **Stream Stewards Certificate** is awarded to participants who attend seven activities in this series.

**Saturday, September 8 at Prince William Forest Park,** "Healthy Stream Tour," with Chris Ruck. Sponsored by the Prince William Conservation Alliance. Extending information presented on Sept. 6, participants will gather physical, chemical, and biological data to assess the stream quality at Prince William Forest Park, which is over 95 percent forested and considered to be one of the few "undisturbed" watersheds in Northern Virginia. **Questions and RSVP:** [alliance@pwconserve.org](mailto:alliance@pwconserve.org) or (703) 499-4954. **Stream Stewards Certificate** is awarded to participants who attend seven activities in this series.

**Saturday, September 8, 9:00 a.m. to Noon.** "Saturday in the Garden Series," Prince William Master Gardener Volunteers, Teaching Garden at St. Benedict Monastery, 9535 Linton Hall

Road, Bristow 20136. **Master Gardener Plant Sale!** Plant Sale proceeds go to Master Gardeners of Prince William and directly benefit the Teaching Garden. "Go Native! Beauty & Benefits of Native Plants & Pocket Meadow: A Lawn Alternative." Children's Program: "Plant Your Pockets! Native flower gardening for kids." To register, call (703) 792-7747.

**Friday-Sunday, September 14-16. VNPS Annual Meeting,** Richmond, Va. Please see <http://vnps.org> for details and registration.

## More Turtles— in the Garden

*Chelone glabra* (White Turtlehead) and other turtleheads are very easy, garden-worthy, late-blooming plants if you have the right conditions for them. White turtlehead grows 2 to 3 feet tall, in partly sunny, moist soil. It has no serious insect or disease problems. There is some susceptibility to mildew, particularly if air circulation is poor or if soil is too dry. A great, late summer bloomer for moist borders, woodland gardens, pond edges, and bog gardens, both white and pink turtlehead attract butterflies and require little to no maintenance. There are cultivars available as well. 'Black Ace' is a popular and widely available *Chelone glabra* cultivar (pictured above). For dark pink flowers, *Chelone lyonii* and its wittily named cultivar, 'Hot Lips' grow well in our area of Virginia. Moist, rich soil, some sun (more the better, as long as it's moist), and a good memory are the only requirements to grow turtlehead, and the last is only because I tend to forget about them until they pop open in late summer/early fall. Turtlehead goes dormant and disappears in the winter, so be sure to mark where you put them.

Is turtlehead deer-resistant? Well, as usual, there is a wide variance of opinion floating on the surface of the Web on this topic, but turtlehead notably often is cited by experts (Mt. Cuba Center, for ex.) and advertised by nurseries as deer and even rabbit resistant. The latter, however, seems to belie Bebe Miles' charming account of how she learned to



Monday, September 17, PWW  
**ANNUAL MEETING** (combined with  
regular membership meeting), 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.,  
Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas. Our  
program will include a special presentation by Lisa  
and Christopher Bright from Earth Sangha on  
native plant propagation and habitat preservation.  
Meeting and Program are Free and open to all.

"prune" her turtlehead: "A rabbit taught me an interesting lesson: when spring growth has reached about 6 inches, nip off the chelone's tender tips. This produces fine, bushy, branching plants, less tall and much more floriferous." Good advice, no matter who does the nipping.

As Marion notes above, White Turtlehead is one of two host plants for the stunning Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly. I discovered that there is disagreement over the use of pink turtlehead *Chelone lyonii* (cultivar or species) as a possible host plant for Baltimore Checkerspot.

Current plant wisdom holds that only *Chelone glabra* is a viable host, but on-line discussions reveal that gardeners and butterfly enthusiasts willing to try both white and pink turtlehead in order to "grow" colonies of Checkerspot caterpillars have met some success with *C. lyonii*.

## Propagation and Cultivation

### Seed Collection and Treatment:

Plant seeds outside in the fall or moist-chill and plant in spring. Seedlings germinate after one year and flower after two. To collect seeds, wait until the flower withers, when it will reveal a green, half-inch fruit containing many small, flattened, winged seeds. The

papery capsule turns darker shades of brown when the seeds approach maturity. The seeds are usually ready for harvest at or near the first frost. Air-dry the capsules, separate the seeds and store in sealed, refrigerated containers. Moist-chill stored seeds six weeks (some

sources say 4 months) prior to sowing. Turtlehead will self-seed if the soil is moist in the late summer and early fall. (William Cullina notes that turtlehead seeds may need light to germinate. He prefers two-noded stem cuttings taken in late spring, which root reliably, to seed propagation.)

**Root divisions and Cuttings:** Divide roots in early spring or late fall while the plants are dormant. Space root divisions about 18" apart and 1 inch deep. Stem cuttings may be taken in the summer before flowering. Take a 6-inch cutting and plunge into moist sand until the top withers in the fall. Then transplant newly formed rootstock to its location.

**Culture:** Turtlehead is not picky with regard to soil, but slightly acid soil is ideal and some sources suggest heavy clay as a good medium. (No shortage of that in our area!) Apply compost and rotted manure around the root zone when planting to help retain moisture and nutrients. Turtleheads are virtually hassle-free and will thrive if kept from drying out. Good companion plants are *Physostegia virginiana* (Obedient plant), and native



Lobelias (*L. siphilitica* [pictured left] and *L. cardinalis*). Henry Art also lists Larger Blue Flag (*Iris versicolor*), Closed Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*), and Culver's Root (*Veronicastrum virginianum*) as natural companions of Turtlehead. Mt. Cuba Center's list of garden companions includes Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*), Black Cohosh (*Actaea racemosa*), and Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*). Such a grouping would make a fantastic butterfly, hummingbird, and pollinator magnet! Cullina suggests that pink turtlehead (*C. lyonii*) is preferable as a garden plant to

*Chelone glabra*, because it has "broader, more lustrous foliage, denser inflorescence, and a more tightly clumping habit," but the hope of feeding a Checkerspot is reason enough to plant white turtlehead—or both.

--Deanna LaValle High

[Sources: William Cullina, *Growing and Propagating Wildflowers of the United States and Canada*, New England Wildflower Society, 2000; Henry W. Art, *A Garden of Wildflowers: 101 Native Species and How to Grow Them*, Storey Communications, 1986; Bebe Miles, *Wildflower Perennials for Your Garden*, Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1976. Photos: *Lobelia siphilitica*, Missouri Botanical Garden, accessed at [www.missouribotanicalgarden.org](http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org); Baltimore Checkerspots, North American Butterfly Association, [www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org); 'Black Ace,' Niche Gardens nursery catalogue; *Chelone glabra*, Steve Bauskauf, accessed at [discoverlife.org](http://discoverlife.org) ]



PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY  
A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society  
P.O. Box 83, Manassas, Virginia, 20108-0083

*Next Meeting:* Monday, July 16, 7:30 p.m.

“The Ethnobotany of the Bull Run Mountains” with Susan Leopold  
Bethel Lutheran Church, 8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas, Virginia 20110