

The



Leaflet

President's Corner—Marjorie Prochaska

SUMMER 2010

Spring was a busy time for us native plant folks as we scurried from Calmes Neck to Bull Run to catch the successive waves of bluebells. These were succeeded by the wonderful show of trilliums in the Thompson WMA. This year the Yellow Lady's Slipper orchid (*Cypripedium parviflorum*) made a particularly good showing. My husband and I drove down the Blue Ridge Parkway to the Great Smoky Mountains to spend two days at the Wildflower Pilgrimage. We repeated the fern walk of last year with retired professor Murray Evans of the University of Tennessee. Joined by a former student whom he had trained and another UT graduate student, the three held our small group transfixed as they shared the complexities of the fern life cycle. We had no inkling of the role that water plays in the guise of rain or dew in transporting the male gamete to the female. Sometimes the plants have to wait multiple seasons for fertilization to occur. This year the obscure Southern Adder's Tongue (*Ophioglossom vulgatum*) was in plentiful supply. Last year we saw only one, this year we saw several dozen within an arm's breadth of each other.

The next day we walked the Lynn Camp Prong. Once again we had three marvelous leaders who handed off the leadership to one another with great collegial good humor. While many leaders come from the University of Tennessee, many move on to other areas, yet they come back year after year to lead hikes during the Pilgrimage. It's old home week for them, and they share not only their knowledge but their enthusiasm with us. We found the views of the Prong even more spectacular than those of the famed Porter's Creek Trail. In the woods, the many Carolina Silverbells (*Halesia carolina*) were shedding their blooms, and we had good sightings of the retiring Yellowwood (*Cladrastis kentukea*), Buckeyes (*Aesculus* spp.) and White Basswood (*Tilia americana*), all omnipresent in a cove hardwood forest. We left with vows to return next year and hike the strenuous Ramsay Cascade Trail.

Four of us from the Piedmont Chapter—Kristin Zimit, Carrie Blair, Mary Keith Ruffner and myself—were enrolled in the Virginia Master Naturalist program this spring. It was very time consuming but also very stimulating. The State has a vested interest in training skilled interpreters of the out-of-doors to do what tax monies simply cannot cover in our parks and natural areas. We are all pledged to remain involved and to give back of our individual talents and skills in the service of this natural world we love so well.

In addition, your Board is heavily involved in planning to host the state VNPS annual meeting in Shenandoah National Park September 10-12. Our Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month at various locations. Call me 540-364-1029 to tell me how you can be involved. The more folks we have helping out, meeting and greeting, the better. See you on a hike this summer!

Virginia's Master Naturalists Rock!—Cathy Mayes

Virginia started a Master Naturalist Program in 2006. By the end of 2009

- 27 local chapters have been established
- 1,474 people have completed Basic Training
- Master naturalists have helped more than 300 local governments and non-profits with environmental education, stewardship, and citizen science projects, logging nearly 95,000 hours of volunteer time
- 465 people have completed the requirements to be designated Certified Virginia Master Naturalists

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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 sub-group of VNPS in the northern part of Virginia east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It includes Loudoun, Fauquier, Culpeper, Rappahannock, Warren, Clarke, and Frederick counties.

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The Leaflet Editor
Richard Stromberg

Virginia's Master Naturalists Rock! (continued)

In our region, the Old Rag Chapter is now accepting applications for its 2010 class, set to start August 12. The Old Rag chapter serves Madison, Rappahannock, Culpeper, Greene, and the western portions of Fauquier and Orange counties. The Shenandoah Chapter started its 2010 class in March and serves the Northern Shenandoah Valley: Clarke, Warren, Shenandoah, Page and Frederick counties. Loudoun County has the Banshee Reeks Chapter.

The Master Naturalist Program is a terrific partnership—in exchange for a first-class Training Course, volunteers give back 40 hours of their time per year in volunteer activity. The 40-hour Basic Training covers the full spectrum of natural sciences: ecology, biodiversity, research tools (taxonomy and classification; interpretation; science skills; key-based identification), botany, forests, watersheds and water ecology, climate and weather, and native fauna. The three chapters' training focuses on the ecosystems in the Piedmont and Blue Ridge regions.

VMN is sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension; the Virginia Departments of Conservation and Recreation, Forestry, and Game and Inland Fisheries; and the Virginia Museum of Natural History. Because it is virtually self-supporting, it is not threatened by state budget cuts like so many other state programs.

For information on becoming a Master Naturalist or teaming with Master Naturalists to help preserve and protect our environment, contact any Piedmont Chapter board member, since most of us have joined the pack.

February Tree Lovers Walk at the State Arboretum—Carrie Blair

February 28, our snow date for the Second Sunday walk in February, produced a grey windy day to tramp through the remaining snow among Blandy's outstanding collection with Piedmont Chapter's former President, Carrie Blair. She has been studying trees for 35 years and inaugurated a new venture with her Tree Lovers School at the State Arboretum.

A group of Master Naturalists convened at one o'clock to achieve two hours advanced training in tree identification. Nineteen native Virginia conifers were illustrated and studied, while many handsome, imported trees were also appreciated. Carrie had oculars and books for sale, handouts and samples of cones and needle forms to insure the success of the students.

Other people joined at two o'clock, and 40 people walked with Carrie after everybody was welcomed by the Piedmont Chapter Board with hot chocolate and treats in the warm dining room.

Recent snow damage to many original, 80-year-old *Arborvitae* trees on the entrance path showed how the trees succumbed to the weight. Trees with a western exposure were swept clean of snow by wind and did not suffer as those on the eastern side did, according to attendee Scott Johnston of Johnston Tree Care. We learned the difference between evergreen, semi-evergreen, and deciduous foliage; conifers (including three deciduous conifers) and broad-leaved evergreens (Holly, Rhododendron, etc.). Majestic White Pines (*Pinus strobus*) flank the old, limestone-walled driveway to Blandy's manor house and the information kiosk. The naked Bald Cypress, (*Taxodium distichum*), Dawn Redwood, (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), and the (continued on page 3)



February Tree Lovers Walk at the State Arboretum (continued)

Larches (*Larix* spp.) illustrated the deciduous conifers. Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) was noted by its "tagged" cone. Enormous Japanese Cedars (*Cryptomeria japonica*), Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*), Umbrella Pine (*sciadopitys verticillata*) were unbroken by the recent record snow, proving their adaptation to harsh winters and ability to shed snow or recover when the weight is released. We should all be so flexible! Blandy will be using grant money to clean up the damage and add to the conifer collection with new, interpretive literature. We plan to repeat this event every winter because it was so well received.

Piedmont Chapter Members Visit New Jersey Pine Barrens—Sally Anderson

"I'd never have gone here if I didn't know you all," said Chapter President Marjorie Prochaska. Chapter member and Pine Barrens trip leader Emily Southgate had us ankle deep in a 'savannah', a local name for grassy marshes found between patches of White Cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*). This one also supported scores of Sundews (*Drosera rotundifolia*, *D. intermedia* and *D. filiformis*), Pipewort (*Eriocaulon* spp.), Pitcher Plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*) and Foxtail Clubmoss (*Lycopodiella alopecuroides*) and many others.



Emily Southgate, Marjorie Prochaska and Kristin Zimet in the savannah

According to The New Jersey Pinelands Commission (<http://www.state.nj.us/pinelands/reserve/>),

The Pinelands National Reserve (PNR) was created by Congress in 1978. The PNR encompasses approximately 1.1 million acres covering portions of seven counties and all or parts of 56 municipalities, 22% of New Jersey's land area. It is the largest open space on the Mid-Atlantic seaboard between Richmond and Boston and is underlain by aquifers containing 17 trillion gallons of some of the purest water in the land. In 1983 the area was designated a U.S. Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO, an agency of the United Nations, and in 1988 it was recognized as a International Biosphere Reserve.

The trip in Wharton State Forest centered around historic Batsto village, once a bog iron and glass production area. The visitor center has exhibits on both the natural and cultural history of the Pine Barrens.

Several other special habitats are interspersed with the dry, sandy, pine-oak woodlands. Especially interesting was the Pygmy Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*) and scrub oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*, *Q. marilandica*) forest, which sits atop a high flat area. The trees are not much taller than a person, and seem to be genetically different from the surrounding forest, since the trees remain dwarf even when planted elsewhere.

The ground around the trees had patches of Pixie Moss (*Pyxidantha barbulate*), not a moss but a flowering plant with needle-like leaves and white flowers on a low mat.



Three years of cones on Pygmy Pitch Pine *Pinus rigida*

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Calendar of Events



Sunday	June 13	1pm	Limberlost Walk
Shenandoah National Park. An easy walk on the Limberlost loop trail (3377 ft elevation) led by Carrie Blair near Skyland. Carrie will point out the virgin Hemlock forest destroyed by Woolly Adelgid. The resulting understory opening gives thought to what vegetation will replace the Hemlocks. This trail is suitable for wheelchairs. Meet at the trailhead at mile post 42 south of Skyland. To RSVP and for more details, please contact Carrie at 540-364-1232.			
Saturday	June 26	10am-1pm	Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute
Front Royal. Norm Bourg, Plant Ecologist and Ecological Research Programs Manager, will lead a tour, including a 25 hectare plot that is being used to study carbon sequestration. Within this plot is a 4 hectare deer enclosure where you can see the effects of limiting deer herbivory on sapling growth, native wildflowers and invasive plants. Also visit an American Chestnut orchard and, if time permits, look at a pasture restoration site. Bring a picnic lunch, as we will end the trip at a high hill with great views. Bring water and a hat, and be prepared for the usual insects and ticks. Register by June 14. Cost is \$10. To register call the VNPS office at 540-837-1600.			
Saturday	June 26	10am-3pm	Chestnut Data Collection Training
Shenandoah National Park. The morning class will teach participants how to collect data on American Chestnut trees while hiking on the Appalachian Trail followed by small group practice on the trail in the afternoon. Participants are expected to collect and submit data from at least one segment of the AT within three weeks of the training. Contact kathymarmet@gmail.com if you would like to participate.			
Sunday	July 11	1pm	Dark Hollow Falls
Shenandoah National Park. Join Kristin Zimet as she explores the scenic Dark Hollow Falls trail (3429 ft elevation) at the 50.7 mile post of Skyline Drive near Big Meadows. The walk is moderate. To RSVP and for directions, please contact Kristin at 540-869-0046 or email kristinzimet@yahoo.com .			
Sunday	August 8	1pm	State Arboretum Walk
Join VNPS President Sally Anderson for a leisurely walk through the 30 acre meadow at the State Arboretum of Virginia near Boyce. Bring friends and family and a picnic. The walk will follow the picnic. To RSVP and for more details, please contact Sally at rccsa@comcast.net .			

Piedmont Chapter Members Visit New Jersey Pine Barrens (continued)

Only slightly taller, the Sandmyrtle (*Leiophyllum buxifolium*) formed a white flowering mound. Patches of Sheep Laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*), Maleberry (*Lyonia ligustrina*) and some ground hugging Trailing Arbutus (*Epigaea repens*) were also spotted.

We stopped to look at a working cranberry bog, and then found an abandoned commercial bog where we found cranberries as large as Bing cherries on thin ground-covering vines creeping over sphagnum moss. Pine Barrens Heather (*Hudsonia ericoides*) formed large yellow mats along the roadsides, and we saw Pink Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) and Birdfoot Violet (*Viola pedata*) on the trails. At another stop we saw Broom Crowberry (*Corema conradii*), another low shrub that is characteristic of the barrens.



Pine Barrens Heather
Hudsonia ericoides

The plant communities are some of the most fire prone places that exist, and the pine cones contain a type of wax with a high melting point that holds the cones of pitch pines closed so that fire is needed to disperse the seeds. Towhees flock to the area after a fire to take advantage of the seed bonanza. There were more habitats and plants to visit, but for an overnight trip we saw quite a lot. Hearty thanks to Emily for showing us around. Come along some time, and find yourself in a place you never thought you'd be!

Editor's Corner

Like Marjorie Prochaska (see page 1), I got a chance to head to southerly mountains in April—four day-hikes on the Appalachian Trail on the Tennessee-North Carolina Border.

As we started out on a cold, somewhat gray day, I thought, “No flowers!” After a little while someone behind me said, “What are these purple things.” I started looking closer and saw them, Fringed Polygala aka Gaywings (*Polygala paucifolia*). Then



Gaywings (*Polygala paucifolia*) someone ahead called, “Trillium”. I got there and was delighted to see that it was something I knew but had never seen before—Painted Trillium (*Trillium undulatum*). We saw a few more of them later. We also saw lots of Red Trillium (*Trillium erectum*), which I also had not seen before. We also saw several relatively rare yellow *T. erectum*.

Hiking along those ridgelines I was surprised to see plants I usually see only in soggy seeps or creeksides: miles of Trout Lilies (*Erythronium rostratum*) and some False Hellebore (*Veratrum viride*). On the third day I came to understand how they got enough moisture when we spent the whole day in the fog.

I met disappointment near the end of the last hike. I saw another new flower, Large-flowered Bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*), but my camera had broken, so I didn't get a picture.

– Richard Stromberg

Plant Mounting—Marjorie Prochaska

The second Sunday in March Dr. Andrea Weeks, professor of environmental science and curator of the herbarium at George Mason University, instructed us in the finer points of plant mounting at Blandy Farm. First she explained what an herbarium is—a collection of dried plant specimens preserved with archival-quality materials and maintained for scientific study and reference, in essence, a library of dried plant specimens. With proper mounting and storage conditions, mounted plants can last indefinitely.

After a slide presentation she used one of the dried plants she had brought to demonstrate how to place it on a standard acid-free herbarium sheet and attach it. The collecting label, was glued on in the lower right hand corner. The sheet was covered with waxed paper and blotter paper, and then slipped between cardboard sheets to be pressed once again, gently, until the glue dried.

She passed around previously dried and pressed plant specimens encased in their newspaper folders. Working in pairs, we used long tweezers to manipulate the stems and leaves and artfully arranged them on the mounting sheets and attached them with glue. We had a certain amount of discretion as to how we arranged them on the paper. Some plant material was easier to work with than others. She showed us how to make a slurry of glue and water in which to actually dip a somewhat flimsy plant and how to transfer it to the waiting sheet (carefully!)

We admired each other's work, and all agreed that it was a lot of fun. We may explore doing this again. Dr. Weeks was great company, and she reminded us that we are welcome to visit the Ted R. Bradley Herbarium at George Mason University, but we need to make an appointment first.

April Walk along Carters Run—Carrie Blair

On April 25, Carrie Blair led a group of twelve on a perfect sunny and breezy afternoon. Our thanks to former Piedmont Chapter Board members Ellie and Jim Leonard for inviting us to visit their wooded hill property south of Marshall. Their daughter Pam and her young son Jack led us on a loop upstream along steep banks of blooming Pink Azalea and Mountain Laurel.

We followed Capstone Creek gradually downhill for a half mile in a wide picturesque ravine affording wind shelter and ample water to large Beech and Tulip Poplar trees. The understory is typical Dogwood, Ironwood, Red Maple, Black Walnut, Black Locust, and the lovely Bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*) with its distinctive three-part compound leaf. (The only other tree with only three leaflets is Hop-tree (*Ptelea trifoliata*), native to more mountainous counties.)

Dramatic rock outcrops are home to tenacious trees and rock-loving spring flowers. We noted Rue Anemone, Kidneyleaf Buttercup, and Violet Wood Sorrel. The joy of the walk was two clumps of the diminutive Showy Orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*) along the driveway.



Painted Trillium
Trillium undulatum



Richard Stromberg

Showy Orchis
Galearis spectabilis



Richard Stromberg

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Curlyheads
Clematis
ochroleuca



NRCS PLANTS Database /
Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913.
Illustrated flora of the northern states and
Canada. Vol. 2: 125.