

The



Leaflet

December Second Sunday Walk—Richard Stromberg

SPRING 2012

On December 11th Chris Lewis led ten people along Sherman's Mill Trail in the east section of Sky Meadows State Park. Chris helped the attendees identify trees and showed them views of the Piedmont and Blue Ridge. Sheryl Pollack took lots of pictures. They can be found at

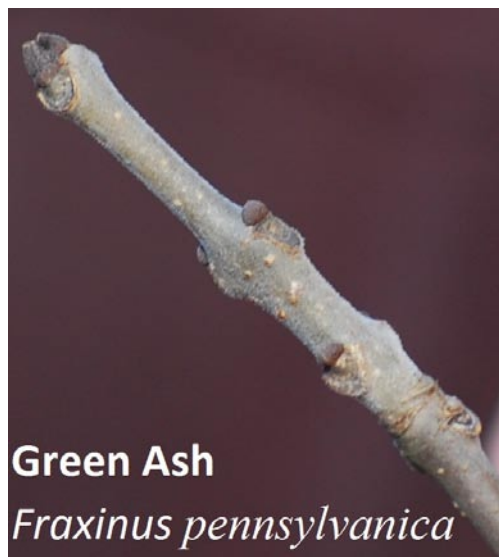
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/39432681@N05/>. They include close ups of bark, leaf scars, buds, leaves, and nuts that can help you identify the trees. Here are some examples:



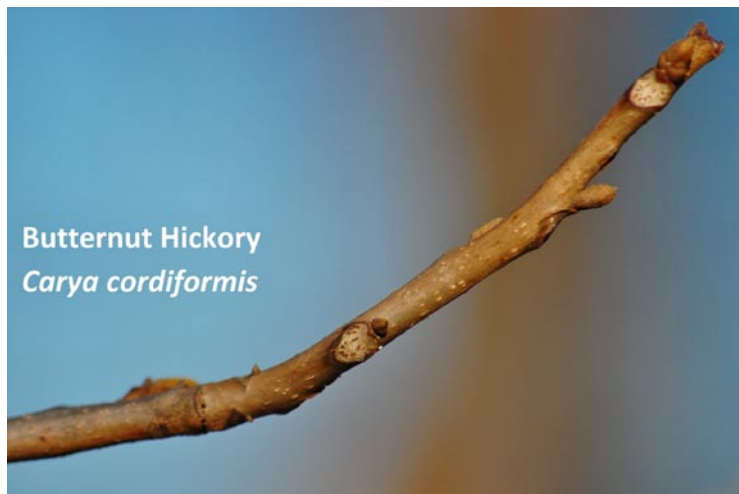
Chris Lewis shows nuts and twigs



Mockernut
Hickory
*Carya
tomentosa*



Green Ash
Fraxinus pennsylvanica



Butternut Hickory
Carya cordiformis



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

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Going Wild in Your Backyard—Brenda Crawford

Going Wild in Your Backyard was a good way to spend a mostly rainy winter day with lots of other nature lovers all more than ready for spring. On Saturday, February 4, the Old Rag Master Naturalists gave some 300 people a fine opportunity to learn, admire, and contribute at *Going Wild*. The Eastern View High School in Culpeper provided the venue, a large cafeteria with a wall of windows on one side and plenty of room for the 27 exhibitors.

Sally Anderson, Nicky Staunton, Carrie Blair, David Roos, Lisa Roos, Mary Keith Ruffner, and Brenda Crawford manned the Piedmont Chapter booth. They spoke with people of all ages, most of them well-informed. The *Leafsnap* program on David's iPad provoked a good deal of interest. *Leafsnap* uses visual recognition software to identify tree species from photos of their leaves.

Among the exhibitors were the Eastern View High School Envirothon Teams, demonstrating their award-winning Wetland Habitat Recovery Project. The school building itself, a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified campus, was part of the tours. Student members of the Envirothon Teams visited exhibitors, collecting lots of free information. We donated a copy of [Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas](#) to the team.

February Second Sunday Walk—Carrie Blair

On February 12, fifteen people braved a cold Second Sunday afternoon presentation at Farmers Delight Plantation & Arboretum in Middleburg. The first hour we got to know one another and learned the assets and risks of a mature conifer collection of great diversity planted in 12 circles by Ambassador George McGhee in the 1960's at his historic estate. The house has a plaque establishing it circa 1791. It is a significant structure, gracing the landscape among many large prominent land holdings of the pioneers who found rich productive soil and hardwood forests here.

The lovely though mostly foreign evergreens showcase many American, deciduous, canopy and ornamental trees. Of course, the 1960s was a time of showing off one's privilege of traveling and choosing the exotic over the native. The tree collection of over 100 species is significant and unique in the area and deserves future visits in nicer weather! Carrie Blair led the walk, and continues to document the arboretum. For more information see www.farmersdelight.org.

Wildlife Management Area Permits

Starting January 1, 2012, anyone visiting a Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Wildlife Management Area will need a permit. Licenses and Access Permits can be purchased online at www.dgif.virginia.gov. At this time Access Permits are for individuals only, so every member of a group outing must get his or her own permit or license.

Correction

In the Winter 2011 *Leaflet* we neglected to name the speaker at the Chapter Annual Meeting. It was Dick Marzolf, the principal investigator of the Long Term Ecological Research Program at the Konza Prairie site in Kansas.



Flora Britannica—Marjorie Prochaska

In last month's newsletter, Editor Richard Stromberg wrote about Richard Mabey's book on weeds. I discovered this English author a few years earlier when I came upon his book Nature Cure in the Warrenton library. He'd evidently had some sort of breakdown and repaired to an old house in Norwich for a year of healing. Nature Cure catalogues his recovery. What impressed me most was how easily he fit into the natural world. He moved as knowledgeably through the Norwich landscape as through his native Chilterns. He understood wetland ecology. He knew his plants, his birds. Then I discovered that he had written Flora Britannica. This I had to investigate.

Thanks to the miracle of inter-library loan and the good services of the reference librarians at the Warrenton library, a copy of Flora Britannica soon found its way into my hands. I could see right away that the book is not a traditional flora. It has no key to use to identify plants. It includes a fair amount of discussion of invasives. An accomplished author, with dozens of natural science books to his credit, Mabey must have puzzled for years over "the ancient engagements between plants, people and places." In 1991 he began to publicize and seek input from all over the British Isles. He wanted to create an anecdotal flora. Thousands of folks responded. The book is a comprehensive compilation of their stories and his years of research. In most cases their responses have been included verbatim.

Mabey devotes many pages to the English Yew (*Taxus baccata*). The species has a long association with churchyards. They can only be dated accurately to 400 years of age. After that, the core begins to hollow leaving no living heartwood to measure, and the tree passes into a slow-growth mode. Since some huge old specimens are estimated to be 2000-4000 years old. Mabey speculates that the Yews were planted before the churches, and the location of the tree prompted the location of the church, or the ancient pagan temple upon which it was built.

We are reminded that ours is not the only nation which has laid waste to its flora, destroying native species. Scotland was once covered with, yes, Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), but in the late 17th century, its great forests were pillaged to provide charcoal for the lowland iron foundries and later to provide timber to build ships for England's fleet. Later in the 18th and 19th centuries, the shameful Highland Clearances stripped the hills of their thick forests and replaced them with sheep and deer. Recovery has been slow.

English hedges, too, have suffered at the hands of agribusiness in the last half of the 20th century. As the hedges disappear, so does the diversity. The number of woody species in a 30-yard stretch of hedge equals its age in centuries. Some hedges have been determined to be 1000 years old. Archeological evidence dates some hedges back to the Bronze Age. Fortunately some supporters advocate saving the hedges by managing them, but others favor preserving them as 'derelict' hedges, or unmanaged, which is where the greatest diversity lies.

Another sign of the countryside is the sentinel tree. Scots Pines were planted in southern Britain as markers. A farmer moving his herd to market had a considerable journey from his home to a market town. He needed a place to rest and water the herd, and one where he too could find shelter. Farmers along a drove road would plant trees which would be visible from a distance. A Scots Pine can live about 250 years. Remnants of these marker pines live along what were drove roads in the past.

Many *genera* are familiar to us, as are the exotic but non-invasive plants we find in our own gardens. Many exotics have escaped and been naturalized, but the British seem much more tolerant of the escaped exotic than we are. Mabey even suggests that we might find Garlic Mustard a good ingredient for spring salads, and he relates some uses for the admittedly invasive Japanese Knotweed.

This is a book you can open up and begin reading anywhere. I found it enormously engaging.



Sunday	Mar 11	1pm	Second Sunday Walk
Shenandoah County. Look for first signs of spring on Bear Wallow Trail in George Washington National Forest, west of Front Royal. The hike is moderate, on gravel road and trail. For more details contact Sally Anderson at 540-722-3072 or rccsca@comcast.net , and Kristin Zimet at 540-550-4044 or kristinzimet@yahoo.com			
Sunday	Mar 18	2pm	Winter Speaker Series
Fauquier County. Marion Lobstein, retired Professor of Biology and well known expert on native plants, has been instrumental in publication of the new <i>Flora of Virginia</i> . She will take a closer look at our fascinating flora and put you in the mood for springtime. Tri-County Feeds Conference Room, 7408 John Marshall Hwy, Marshall, VA.			
Saturday	Mar 24	10am	Chestnut Planting
Culpeper County. Planting day for an American Chestnut breeding orchard at The Ranch in Boston, VA. Rain date March 25. Call Virginia Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation at 540-364-1922 for more information.			
Sunday	Mar 25	10am-1pm	Garlic Mustard Pull
Warren/Fauquier Counties. Participants are asked to come for any time period they have available to help eradicate Garlic Mustard on the Marjorie Arundel Trillium Trail at the G.R. Thompson WMA. Meet at the Trillium Trail Parking Lot on VA 638 north of Linden. If you plan to spend the day, pack a lunch. Contact Richard Stromberg at 540-631-0212 or risy@embarqmail.com for details.			
Saturday	Apr 7	10am	Ball's Bluff Walk
Loudoun County. Join naturalist John DeMary and discover some of our earliest ephemerals like harbinger-of-spring, bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches and others on a trail overlooking the Potomac River near Leesburg. This walk is jointly sponsored by Potowmack and Piedmont Chapters. To register, please contact Diana Carter at dcarter1776@yahoo.com or 703-620-2724, or Blanca Vandervoort at cvanderv@nelsoncable.com or 540-837-1637.			
Saturday	Apr 14	8am-5pm	Tomorrow's Landscape Conference
Frederick County. See details on page 5.			
Sunday	Apr 15	10am-Noon	20th Annual Calmes Neck Wildflower Walk
Clarke County. Gary Fleming, Vegetation Ecologist, Division of Natural Heritage, VA DCR, will lead this VNPS Registry Site walk in rich mesic forest and ravines along the Shenandoah River in Clarke County. Walk is moderate; expect to climb over downed trees. RSVP to Blanca Vandervoort at 540-837-1637 or cvanderv@nelsoncable.com			
Sunday	Apr 15	Noon-2pm	9th Annual Cedar Run Bluebell Walk
Fauquier County. Bonny Brook Farm, 8446 Old Dumfries Road, Catlett, VA, 20119. No charge, rain or shine. For more information contact Kristie Kendall. (540) 347-2334 or kkendall@pecva.org			
Sunday	Apr 29	1pm-3pm	Casey Trees Nursery Walking Tour
Clarke County. Learn about trees grown for Washington, DC, led by nursery manager Brian Mayell. Learn new tree production methods including Missouri gravel bed bare-root growth. Springsbury Farm, 2498 Briggs Rd, Berryville. More info at www.Caseytrees.org . Contact: Carrie Blair at 540-364-1232 or horseblanketcb@yahoo.com .			
Tuesday	May 1	10am-noon	Marjorie Arundel Trillium Trail Walk
Warren/Fauquier Counties. Retired Professor of Biology Marion Lobstein will lead a walk at the VNPS Registry Site in the Thompson WMA to see the Trilliums and other wildflowers. Meet at the Trillium Parking Lot on VA Route 638 north of Linden. To RSVP and for more details, contact Carrie Blair at 540-364-1232 or horseblanketcb@yahoo.com .			
Saturday & Sunday May 5 & 6		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 18 activities at http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/2012_WildflowerWeekend_Schedule.pdf .			
Saturday & Sunday May 12 & 13		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 .			

Editor's Corner

Hikes are different from flower walks. Including lunch and other stops, my hikes average about two miles per hour. A flower walk is about two hours per mile. Hikers never get down on their hands and knees with a hand lens. I have gotten comments from hikers like "I don't care about flowers, I just want views." and "We saw pink thingies and yellow thingies." One time, when the group hiked south on the Appalachian Trail from the masses of Large-flowered Trillium in Thompson WMA, I stopped at the seep at the bottom of the hill to see rare Nodding Trillium and showed them to other hikers, and one of them said, "That's not very impressive."

Soon after I started hiking regularly I got interested in flowers because of a couple hike leaders and Marion Lobstein, who introduced me to Newcomb's Guide to Wildflowers. I would hike along looking in my book hoping I could catch up the group and not fall. Once I got lost when the group had disappeared and I turned the wrong way after trying to identify a flower (it was "only" Wingstem). I know enough of the local flora now to no longer carry the book.

In 2004 I got a digital camera and was amazed to see how good its close-ups of flowers are. So I can identify the flower when I get home, though I came to realize that I had better check hairiness, and lower leaves and the underside of leaves.

So my hiking friends ask me what a flower is or did you see... and hopefully I can figure it out from their description, or I ask them to tell me when they see another one. And many of them tell me how much they appreciate the pictures I put online after the hike.

– Richard Stromberg

Tomorrow's Landscape Conference

–Sally Anderson



Piedmont/Blue Ridge Horticulture Society has partnered with the Environmental Studies Department at Shenandoah University to present a full day conference called *Tomorrow's Landscapes: More Birds, Butterflies, and Bees for YOUR Garden*. It will focus on environmentally aware gardens and landscapes. It will be held on April 14, 2012 at the Brandt Student Union at Shenandoah University in Winchester.

Experts will provide valuable advice on ways to increase birds and butterflies in yards with plant choices suited to the Virginia/ mid-Atlantic climate and soils. Shenandoah University Environmental Studies and Biology professor, Dr. Woody Bousquet, will moderate the conference. Featured speakers are Dr. Douglas Tallamy, author of Bringing Nature Home; Janet Davis, owner of Hill House Farm and Nursery; Vincent Simeone, director of Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park on Long Island; Jeff Lowenfels, author of Teaming with Microbes: A gardener's guide to the soil; Jim McCormac, author of Birds of Ohio and Wild Ohio; and Stephen Orr, author of Tomorrow's Garden: Design and Inspiration for a New Age of Sustainable Gardening. Selected books, plants, and tools will be available for purchase.

Preregistration is required and all registrations will be handled on-line. Space is limited. Registration is \$99 and includes coffee and a box lunch. For more information, please visit the Piedmont/Blue Ridge Horticulture Society website at <http://www.pbrhs.org/>.

Warm Winter—Richard Stromberg

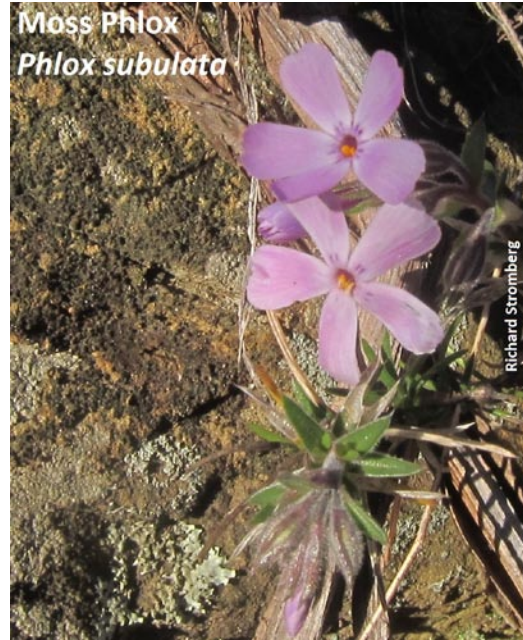
In past years we have wondered if the cold or amount of snow would affect the timing of bloom of our spring flowers. I do not think it has. The Trillium have always been in bloom in Thompson WMA on May 1st. This year I wonder if the warm winter will have an effect. Will bloom be earlier or sparser or even not occur at all because plants did not receive enough cold?

I have seen already two unusual things this winter, both at the north end of the Massanutten Mountains between Front Royal and Strasburg:

- On January 1st I saw Moss Phlox (*Phlox subulata*) blooming near the Front Royal Fish Hatchery overlook on the Buzzard Rock Trail at 1,500 feet on the east side of Fort Valley.
- In January Hairy Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*) started blooming in my yard. On a hike on the west side of Fort Valley on February 12th, it was blooming on the Tuscarora Trail near the junction of the Maneka Peak Trail at 2,000 feet, over 1,000 feet above the Bear Wallow walk scheduled for March 11 (see the schedule on page 4). What will we see then?



Hairy Bittercress
Cardamine hirsuta



Mass Phlox
Phlox subulata

Please check the date at the bottom of your mailing label below. It is your VNPS membership expiration date. If your membership has expired, please contact VNPS at 540-837-1600.

The Leaflet

PIEDMONT CHAPTER
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 336
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Curlyheads (*Clematis ochroleuca*)