

The



Leaflet

January Second Sunday Walk, Morven Park—Brenda Crawford

SPRING 2013



A cool, foggy January day, threatening with rain didn't stop a dozen or so Second Sunday walkers at Morven Park in Leesburg. We had a leisurely tour of gardens and grounds around the historic mansion that was home to two governors, Thomas Swann of Maryland and Westmoreland Davis of Virginia.

Guided by Carrie Blair, we explored, identifying as we went, gardens dominated by Magnolias, Willow Oak, Holly, Ash, Viburnum, Redbud, and others, and we marveled at the size of a huge old Post Oak near the house.

The 1200 acres of fields and woods was also home to the Morven Park Equestrian Center, a world-class instruction and training facility. It had also been temporary home Carrie, who was one of the lucky few riders in the first class of resident equestrian students at the Center.

February Second Sunday Walk, Tudor Place—Brenda Crawford

Martha Washington's granddaughter, Martha Parke Custis Peter, turned an \$8,000 inheritance from her step-grandfather George into a Georgetown showplace, still appreciated by neighbors and visitors, more than 200 years later. The Tudor Place house was a winter home overlooking the Potomac. It stayed in the family for all those years and gives us much to think about and study.



Carrie Blair organized the Chapter's February 10th walk, a chilly, cloudy day. Our group of 15 included Piedmont Chapter members Robin Williams, Mary Keith Ruffner, Carla Overbeck, Kristin Zimet, Sally Anderson, Brenda Crawford, state VNPS President Nancy Vehrs and her husband Harry, Carrie's sister Robin and two guests. After the house tour we walked down the hill to Wisconsin Avenue for lunch.

The house has five parts, built in installments and has been furnished with many objects of historical interest. The head gardener, a young woman with an enviable job, showed us plantings all over the property. We saw much of interest to native plant people: some huge trees and unusual forms of shrubs, such as a large weeping form of boxwood and a smoke tree in bush form.

We walked around the five and a half acres for about an hour. The gardener provided us a history of the lawns and gardens and stories of how the plantings had changed over time. A discussion about a part of a boxwood garden that had been moved away from Tudor Place was interesting because the Tudor Place gardener did not know about the place it had been moved to, Avenel, a Virginia site known to Carrie. So now the gardener can fill in some gaps in the garden's history.

After seeing the grounds we were happy to get into the warm gift shop and the house tour. The docent was especially informative and keenly interested in his subject matter. He herded us through the many rooms on the lower and top stories of the house. As we all took interest in an unusual teapot, the docent found a reference to the item and read us a description of the "SYP" teapot, one of the treasures of this house.

Tudor Place is a fine place to visit in the winter and will be even better when things are blooming.



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.

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

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

Winter Speaker Series—Sally Anderson

Our Winter Speaker Series so far this year has featured Janet Davis of Hill House Farm and Alonso Abugattas of Arlington County Parks and Recreation. Both have been interesting speakers. The venue at Tri-County Feeds in Marshall, VA is comfortable for our group. The Piedmont Chapter board has provided wonderful support and refreshments.

Janet spoke about using native plants as groundcovers and also about native vines. Her main point was that in order to use natives for ground covers, we might need to expand our definition of ground cover to include plant of different heights. She showed plantings of many types, from very low growing plants up to plants a couple of feet in height in mass plantings. Another point, however, was that in a truly ecological context, plants need to be mixed rather than having all large areas of a single plant. She carefully explained how the complex interaction between native plants and the food web, usually via insect life, is critical to some of the wildlife like birds that we all want to see, and to we humans that depend on the complex interactions of nature. Janet can be found online at <http://hillhousenativeplants.com>.

Alonso's talk on Floral Folklore and Ethnobotany (the relationship between people and plants) covered a lot of ground, while showcasing some favorite plants. Again, interactions among plants, people and wildlife was a key point. The plants he spoke about were related to wildlife, but also to uses as food, medicine and dyes in a period covering many thousands of years. He began with the use of several flowering plants from 60,000 years ago, told us about the study of botanical medicine in the southern US during the Civil War as a result of blockades that caused shortages, and related recent investigations of plants as medicines. Some recommended books about human uses of plants were shown and discussed, and plants were on display. Alonso made a piece of cordage on the spot from a dogbane stem and related his experiences with plants found locally, often in his own yard.

Our final speaker will be Marion Lobstein, who will help us understand the many facets of the new Flora of Virginia and explain some of the changes in plant names and their causes. It is sure to be a third interesting and educational look at our native and naturalized plants. Join us on March 17 at 2 pm for our season finale. Then it will be time to go out and see new plants, or to see our old plant friends in a new way.

Wildlife Management Area Permits

Anyone visiting a Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries Wildlife Management Area will need a permit. Permits can be purchased for one day or the whole year. This year one-day group permits can be obtained as well as individual permits. Users of only the Appalachian Trail are exempted. Permit waivers are available for volunteer work. A waiver has been obtained for our March 24th Garlic Mustard Pull at Thompson WMA. Fishing or hunting licenses will also permit access, and they can be purchased for the year or lifetime. Seniors can get lifetime fishing/hunting licenses at greatly reduced rates. Licenses and Access Permits can be purchased online at www.dgif.virginia.gov.

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Thursday	Mar 7	7pm	Alien Weeds
Loudoun County. Free lecture, "Alien Weeds, Art from the Invasive Plant Harvest" by Patterson Clark, an artist and naturalist who writes and illustrates the "Urban Jungle" weekly natural history column for the Washington Post . Sponsored by the Loudoun County Master Gardeners at the Rust Library in Leesburg. For information contact www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org .			
Friday	Mar 8	6:30-8:30pm	Vanishing Vernal Pools
Loudoun County. Free. Seasonal pools, streams, permanent wetlands & their inhabitants by Mike Hayslett of Virginia Vernal Pools at Morven Park Coach House. Optional field trips on the weekend to Morven Park's vernal pools. Preregister at www.loudounwildlife.org .			
Sunday	Mar 10	1pm	Second Sunday Walk
Fauquier County. C.M. Crockett Park in Fauquier County, led by Carrie Blair and Chris Lewis. Fauquier County vehicles are free. Fee for non-Fauquier County vehicles is \$6. We will form carpools at Carousel Frozen Treats, Routes 29 & 211 in Warrenton at 12:30 sharp. To RSVP contact Carrie at horseblanketcb@yahoo.com .			
Tuesday	Mar 12	2pm	VNPS Piedmont Chapter Board Meeting
Clarke County. The Chapter Board of Directors will meet at the State Arboretum at Blandly. All Chapter members are welcome. For more details, please contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Sunday	Mar 17	2pm	Winter Speaker Series
Fauquier County. Marion Lobstein will talk about the newly published Flora of Virginia at Tri-County Feeds in Marshall. For more details, please contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Sunday	Mar 24	10am-noon	Garlic Mustard Pull & Spring Plant Hunt
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. We will do a flower walk afterwards. If you plan to spend the day, pack a lunch. For more details, please contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Tuesday	Apr 2	2pm	VNPS Piedmont Chapter Board Meeting
Clarke County. The Chapter Board of Directors will meet at the State Arboretum at Blandly. All Chapter members are welcome. For more details, contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Saturday	Apr 13	10am-Noon	21st 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 Jocelyn Sladen at piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Sunday	Apr 21	1pm	Harpers Ferry Walk
Loudoun County. Contact Sally Anderson at piedmontvnps@gmail.com for details.			
Thursday	Apr 25	5pm	Trillium Walk
Fauquier County. Evening Trillium Walk at Marjorie Arundel Trillium Trail at Thompson WMA. Contact Sally Anderson at piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			
Saturday	Apr 27	9am-4pm	Home and Garden Show
Fauquier County. Third Annual Home and Garden Show at Fauquier County Fairgrounds.			
Sunday	Apr 28	11am-4pm	Earth Day at the Loudoun Family Festival
Loudoun County. Contact Sally Anderson at piedmontvnps@gmail.com if you can help with ideas for a family friendly booth or to help at our booth.			



Tuesday	Apr 30	9am-12:30	Marjorie Arundel Trillium Trail Walk
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. Sponsored by the Foundation of the State Arboretum. FOSA members \$8, nonmembers \$10. Carpool from Blandy. Call 540-837-1758 ext 224 for details.			
Saturday & Sunday May 4 & 5		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 .			
Sunday	May 5	1pm	Cedar Creek Battlefield Walk
Frederick County. Flower walk in Cedar Creek Battlefield in Middletown. Contact Sally Anderson at piedmontvnps@gmail.com for details.			
Saturday & Sunday May 11 & 12		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 12	10am	Second Sunday Walk
Clarke County. Native plant walk at Blandy during Garden Fair led by Carrie Blair.			
Tuesday	May 14	2pm	VNPS Piedmont Chapter Board Meeting
Warren County. The Chapter Board of Directors will meet at Richard Stromberg's house. All Chapter members are welcome. For more details, contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com .			

Winter Wonders—Richard Stromberg



Seedbox
*Ludwigia
alternifolia*

Richard Stromberg

What does a wildflower watcher do in the winter—besides travel to warmer climes? There are always trees to identify from bark and buds. Biennial rosettes hug the ground (unfortunately, mostly Garlic Mustard). Puttyroot (*Aplectrum hyemale*) and Cranefly (*Tipularia discolor*) orchid leaves appear on the forest floor. (The leaves disappear before the plants flower later in the year).

Stalks and seeds/fruits remain from last year, mostly Goldenrods and Asters. Some remaining fruits have interesting forms, like the three-sectioned, Chinese lantern-like Wild Yamroot (*Dioscorea villosa*). Walking by a pond near Elizabeth Furnace last month, I saw stems of Seedbox (*Ludwigia alternifolia*) with their cube shaped pods, clearly showing where they got their common name.

On winter hikes you see beautiful snow and ice formations and many views that are closed off during the growing season. Rime and snow covered

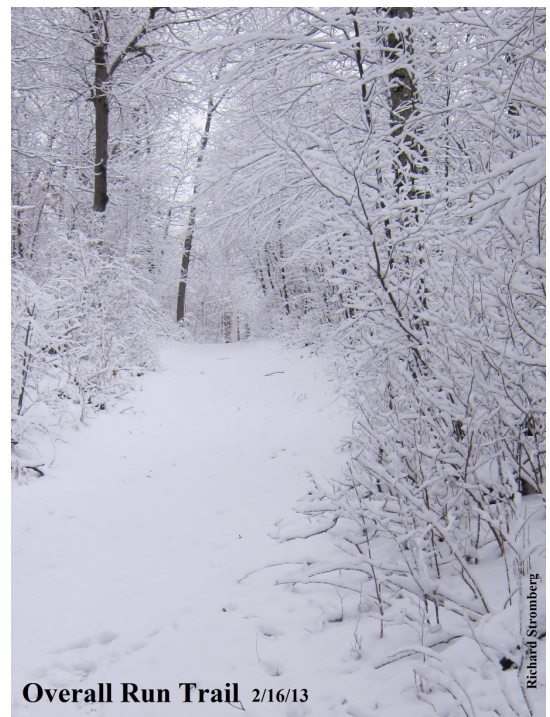
branches provide fantastic “powdered sugar” shows. Snow cover allows us to see animal tracks that are rarely seen along our rocky trails. Rock faces offer massive, cathedral-organ-pipe-like icicle formations. Some ice formations arise from the ground via capillary action when flowing underground water contacts air that is below freezing: ice needles from the soil and ice ribbons extruded through hollow plant stems. Near Elizabeth Furnace I saw ferns poking through the snow and fantastic ice shapes forming around stems in flowing water.

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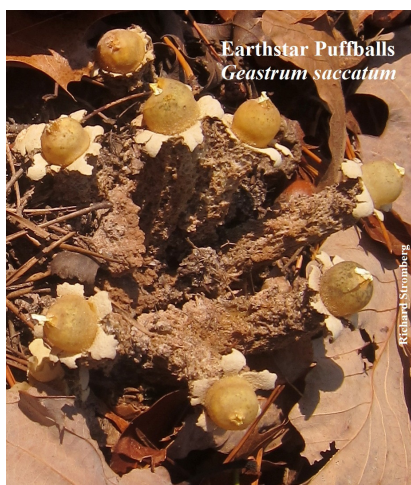




Winter Wonders (continued)



This is the time of year that I notice the lichens on trees and rocks. I saw British Soldier lichen (*Cladonia cristatella*) at the Denton Shelter on the Appalachian Trail near the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute outside Front Royal. It grabs attention because the spore-making parts atop its spikes are bright red—like a Revolutionary War British soldier. It covered the whole roof of the Shelter!



This winter I have seen several fresh mushrooms/fungi. On the Sherman Gap Trail near Elizabeth Furnace I saw Earthstar Puffballs (*Geastrum saccatum*). In Shenandoah National Park I saw Witches Butter (*Tremella mesenterica*), so-called because of its golden color, and small Scarlet Cups (*Sarcoscypha coccinea*) on Stonyman; and on Overall Run, Tree Ear (*Auricularia auricula*).

Then I saw the year's first flowers, Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*).





Bear tracks

Richard Stromberg



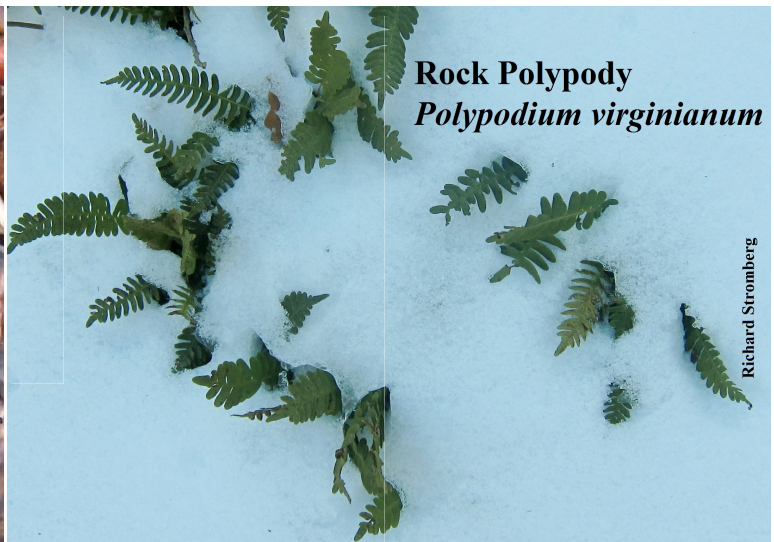
The *Leaflet*

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Skunk Cabbage
Symplocarpus foetidus

Richard Stromberg



Rock Polypody
Polypodium virginianum

Richard Stromberg