

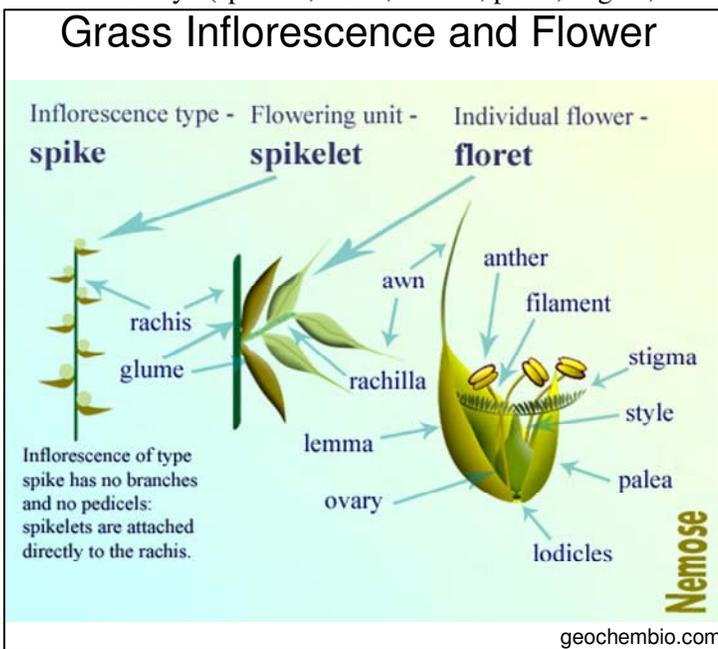
The



Leaflet

A Day in Class Learning To Identify Grasses in the Lab—Blanca Vandervoort AUTUMN 2011

“Sedges have edges; rushes are round; grasses are hollow right up from the ground.”...with that Dr. Emily Southgate, a research scientist and VNPS member, took us on an adventure and introduced us to the intricate world of grasses. On July 13, 10 enthusiastic novices (5 from our chapter) gathered at the biology lab of Notre Dame Academy in Middleburg. After a brief introduction, we walked through an old pasture nearby and collected and tagged grass specimens and “look-alike” plants. Back in the lab Emily gave a PowerPoint presentation telling what grasses are (they are monocots: vascular plants with parallel veins), and how to look for their parts (stem, sheath, node, auricle and blade) and the parts of the inflorescence and flower that cannot be seen with the naked eye (spikelet, floret, lemma, palea, stigma, stamen, lodicule). Then the fun part began...pick one of the specimens we collected, pair up with a buddy, go to a dissecting microscope and identify the grass. A pocket magnifier is very useful when looking at wildflowers, but you need a microscope to look at tiny grass flower parts. Using the microscopes was a lesson in itself, but with the able assistance of Larry Blount, the Academy’s biology teacher, we were soon to discover what grasses are made of. Using reference books we were able to key out and identify some of the grasses collected. We also learned how to distinguish real grasses from “look-alikes”, for example, the English plantain which lacked certain critical parts of a grass. Some of the native grasses we looked at were Purple Top (*Tridens flavus*) and Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*).



Other field grasses were Timothy (*Phleum pratense*), Orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata*), Cutgrass (*Leersia oryzoides*), Fox Tail (*Setaria* spp.). I’m sure we all learned a lot and Emily did an excellent job. Her material was informative and easy to retain.

Next time I’m out in the field I will also stop for grasses and think of the many ways they contribute to our quality of life—and my husband has an excuse for not mowing the lawn.

References

- Hitchcock, A. S. 1971. *Manual of the Grasses of the United States*. 2 volumes. Dover
- Gleason, Henry A. and Arthur Cronquist. 1991. *Manual of Vascular Plants of Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada*. Second edition. New York Botanical Garden. With the Volume of Illustrations.
- <http://plants.usda.gov>
- <http://www.herbarium2.lsu.edu/grass2/>



Nova Scotia Sojourn—Marjorie Prochaska

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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Some years ago, my husband and I discovered the perfect vacation spot for us. Every other year or so, we make the trek to unwind at Milford House, a former 19th century hunting and fishing lodge in southern Nova Scotia. This year we took our grandchildren, ages 12 and 15, with us.

After ferrying over from St. John, New Brunswick, we spent our first night on tiny Brier Island, named for the profusion of Roses (*Rosa virginiana* and *Rosa rugosa*) which cover the island. From there we went on a whale watch cruise in a tiny boat expertly captained by a local fisherman who read the waters and found humpback whales for us to follow—two adults and later a mother and half-grown calf. They surfaced and dived and swam under the boat knowing full well we were there, tolerating us. Did they know how entranced we were? What do they know, I mused? Reed, our captain, showed us where to look carefully under the water to see their white markings many seconds before they surfaced. The day was glorious, and I saw my first Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), and Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*), Northern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) and Wilson's Storm Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*), all firsts for me.

On the drive over to Milford House, I marveled at the Queen Anne's Lace (*Daucus carota*) everywhere. I wondered where it was first identified, where the holotype was. It certainly flourishes in Maine and in the Maritime Provinces. Once ensconced in our rustic wood cabin with our own dock and canoe, I promptly took Conor and Mary on Pompey Trail, which circles the peninsula between the two lakes enclosing our resort. I showed them the Eye of the Needle, explaining the challenge and the fun of canoeing through it. At Pompey's Rock I showed them where I would stand and drink sweet hot tea during my one-hour swim from lake to lake in my younger days.

The trail owns it all however, and I whooped for joy as I dropped to my knees over and over to point out something to the kids—Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*) to die for, whole beds of Bunchberry (*Cornus Canadensis*) and Bluebead (*Clintonia borealis*) and everywhere, the leaves of Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*) vying with the pine needles to carpet the forest floor. All of these were in fruit, of course, but some of the equally abundant Pipsissewa (*Chimaphila umbellata*) held on to their flowers. I saw evidence of Trilliums, and abounding throughout, the leaves and scapes of a Lady's Slippers, most likely *Cypripedium acaule*. For the first time I thought seriously of returning in May to catch these spring beauties in bloom and to greet the returning warblers as they mated and nested.

Our grandchildren are city kids, but now Conor can now tell the difference between a Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*) and a Cinnamon Fern (*O. cinnamomea*), and he is comfortable picking up a frog. It was he who, at dinner time one night, called excitedly for me to come and identify a huge bird which had alighted in the top of a pine tree across the lake. It was big, clearly a bird of prey, and as I thumbed through my Peterson, I ruled out a Peregrine Falcon and a Gyr. Its beak was huge. Clearly, it was an immature Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and he perched patiently for us a full ten (continued on page 3)



Nova Scotia Sojourn (continued from page 2)

minutes so we could clearly observe him through our binoculars. Conor also who spotted the endangered Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingi*) as we canoed through Pike's Run, a narrow watercourse draining one lake into another. We paddled into a marsh where I searched in vain for the American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) I had seen on earlier trips. Instead we were treated to Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), Yellow Pond-lily (*Nuphar lutea*), and the fragrant water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*). I saw Bog Rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) for the first time. In the ditches Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium*) alternated with, sadly, Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), although the latter was not as pervasive as I expected, and everywhere, my candidate for the quintessential Nova Scotian wildflower—Meadowsweet *Spiraea alba*, var. *latifolia*. I even saw it growing up through asphalt.

We took one long day trip to the Atlantic shore to visit the Kejimikujik National Park Seaside Adjunct, "Kedge" to the locals. We hiked in two miles through a high bog and were treated to Pitcher Plants (*Sarracenia purpurea*) and numerous tiny orchids I couldn't identify. I was able to key out a White Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera blephariglottis*) growing by the trail, but my greatest pleasure was seeing and keying the Horned Bladderwort (*Utricularia cornuta*). When we reached the beach, the rocks were covered with cormorants and seals, and we walked as far as we could before coming to the protected area where the Piping Plovers (*Charadrius melodus*) were nesting, and the beach was closed to foot traffic. It was on this beach opposite the seal rocks that I saw my first and only Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) in '04. I was so excited, but I had to wait a year before a ranger could confirm that yes, indeed, I could have seen this pelagic bird on the beach.

I can't say that the trip turned either grandchild into a budding naturalist, but neither of them wanted to leave either. I'm hoping that as they turn over in bed on a cold winter's night, they'll remember the cry of the loon out on the lake and the song of the wood thrush which sang each evening. I, too, hated to leave, and already I am thinking about what we shall do next time. A trip in the spring perhaps?

Spring Revisited on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan—Carla Overbeck

My husband Julius and I drove to the Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan on June 16th, returning to Virginia on June 23rd, partly to see old and new sights and partly to reconnect with friends and family. We visited Mackinac Island (most of which is a forested state park) and the Upper and Lower Taquamenon Falls areas in the eastern UP and the Seney National Wildlife Refuge in the central part of the UP. While in the Norway area in the western UP, just a few miles from the Wisconsin border, we visited Quinnesec Falls (Fumee Falls), the Fumee Lake Natural Area, and Piers Gorge, formed by the Menominee River that separates part of Wisconsin from Upper Michigan.\

While I had hoped to see Yellow Lady's Slippers (*Cypripedium parviflorum*) on Mackinac Island, I was floored (continued on page 4)



Meadowsweet
Spiraea alba,
var. *latifolia*

Richard Stromberg



Yellow
Lady's
Slipper
*Cypripedium
parviflorum*

Carla Overbeck

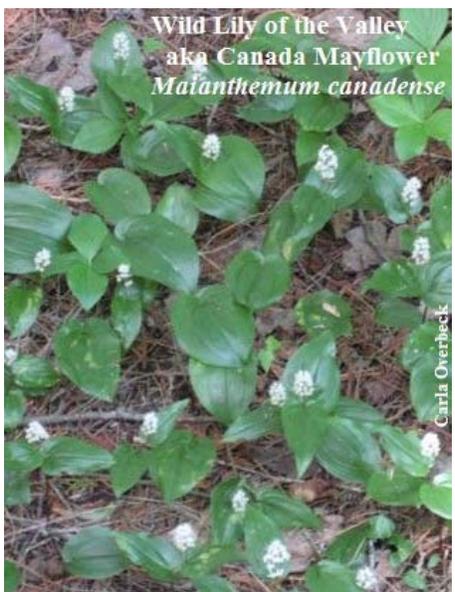


Spring Revisited on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (continued from page 3)

by the number of other wildflowers we saw there and at Taquamenon Falls: huge False Solomon's Seal



(*Maianthemum racemosum*), Starry False Solomon's Seal (*M. stellatum*), Bluets (*Houstonia caerulea*), White Clintonia (*Clintonia umbellulata*), Bachelor's Button (*Centaurea cyanus*), Tall Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), and Daisy Fleabane (*Erigeron philadelphicus*). Unfortunately, the Large-flowered Trilliums (*Trillium grandiflorum*) had finished blooming by that time.



The Lower Taquamenon Falls walking area boasted May Apples (*Podophyllum peltatum*), Wild Lily of the Valley (*Maianthemum canadense*), Orange Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*), Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*), Nodding Trillium (*Trillium cernuum*), more False Solomon's Seal, and two new plants for me: Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*) and Bluebead Lily (*Clintonia borealis*). The Upper Falls area revealed Ox-eye Daisies (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*). Walking along a snowmobile path near our old hotel in Hulbert that evening, we noted Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia Canadensis*), Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*) in the marshy areas near the trail, and more Buttercups and Ox-eye Daisies.

The Seney National Wildlife Refuge the next day was a treasure. Pasture or Swamp Rose (*Rosa carolina* or *palustris*), Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), and Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*) made their appearance, as well as Bunchberry, Ox-eye Daisy, Wild Columbine, Buttercup, and Orange Hawkweed. Beautiful Wild Calla Lily (*Calla palustris*) graced a few ponds, and American Vetch (*Vicia americana*) was especially pretty with white, purple, blue, and yellow on the same flower.

Finally arriving in Iron Mountain for the visit to Norway, we saw Canada Anemone (*Anemone canadensis*) and more Ox-eye Daisy, Orange Hawkweed, Wild Strawberry, and Wild Columbine at Quinnesec Falls, evidently now known as Fumee Falls. At the Fumee Lake Natural Area, where Norway used to get its drinking water, we saw Red Trillium (*Trillium erectum*), Purple Vetch, Yellow Pond-lily (*Nuphar lutea*), Wild Columbine, Yellow Lady's Slipper, Indian Paintbrush, Swamp or Pasture Rose, Bunchberry, Blue Flag Iris, and Ox-Eye Daisy.



At our last nature spot, Piers Gorge, we saw a few Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), Swamp Rose (*Rosa palustris*), and most of what we had seen at the Fumee Lake Natural Area a few miles away. A new flower for me in that area is Water Avens (*Geum rivale*), which fellow VNPS board members and Nicky Staunton helped me identify.

Following the beautiful Virginia spring wildflowers with those in the UP was a real treat which I will long remember and recommend to others.

VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
PIEDMONT CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2011, 12 NOON



Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve

AGENDA

- Pot Luck Luncheon
- Business Meeting– Election of Officers
- Honors
- Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) program at the Konza tall-grass prairie site in Kansas by Dick Marzoff

The Board of the Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society presents the following candidates for election to serve the Chapter in 2011-2012. Expiration of terms is shown in parentheses. Nominations are welcome from the floor.

Officers:

President: VACANT
 Vice President: Brenda Crawford (2012)
 Secretary: Blanca Vandervoort (2013)
 Treasurer: Carla Overbeck (2013)

Directors:

Continuing:
 Carrie Blair (2012)
 Sally Anderson (2012)
 Mary Keith Ruffner (2013)
 Robin Williams (2012)
 New David Roos (2013)

2011 Piedmont Chapter Ballot

I am in favor ___ not in favor ___
 of proposed Officers and Directors

I am in favor ___ not in favor ___
 of proposed Officers and Directors

Signature _____

Signature _____

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING ON OCTOBER 16 , PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BALLOT AND MAIL BY OCTOBER 12 TO Piedmont Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 336, The Plains, VA 20198

Our keynote speaker is Berryville resident Dick Marzoff. Dick has been on the faculty at various western and mid-western universities, and was the original principal investigator of the Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) program at the Konza tall-grass prairie site in Kansas. The program was established by the National Science Foundation and will be the subject of his talk. Several of us will find this a great follow-up to the VNPS trip we made to Kansas to visit the tall grass prairies in June.

According to our By-Laws, Board members and Officers alike may be elected to two consecutive 2-year terms, but then are ineligible for reelection for one full year to assure opportunity for others to participate and contribute new ideas. This year Cathy Mayes, Ramona Morris, Marjorie Prochaska, Jocelyn Sladon, Richard Stromberg, and Kristin Zimet must rotate off the Board. They plan to continue to be active and to offer support to the new board in a non-voting capacity.

We hope to have a few more nominees by the time we meet in October and invite members to come forward and add their name to the list. If the president's position continues vacant, chairmanship of the board meetings will rotate among past and present board members until someone comes forward. We are confident there is someone on the horizon.



Calendar of Events

(Don't forget the State Annual Meeting, Sep. 16-18)

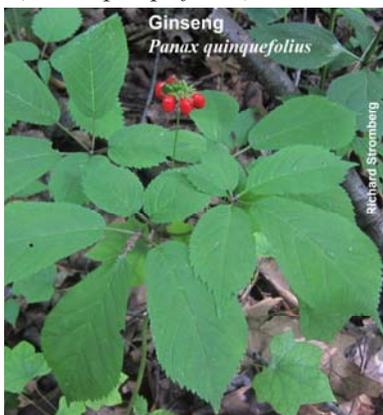
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| Sunday | Sept 11 | 1pm | Second Sunday Walk |
| <p>Southern Fauquier County. Join Ron Hughes, Lands and Facilities Manager at C.F. Phelps Wildlife Management Area, on a stroll through rolling low hills near the Rappahannock River to observe fall flowers in the meadows. With gold selling for \$1,800 an ounce, the Phelps is worth \$ trillions. The fields are ablaze in the golds of Beggarticks (<i>Bidens sp.</i>), Goldenrods (<i>Solidago spp.</i>), Senna (<i>Senna hebecarpa</i>), Wingstem (<i>Verbesina alternifolia</i>), and</p> | | | |
| <p>Bluecurls <i>Trichostema dichotomum</i></p> | | | |
| <p>Yellow Crownbeard (<i>Verbesina occidentalis</i>). Managed as a game bird preserve, the Phelps has many botanical treasures. In addition to wildflower meadows, there are sandy areas with some of the most delicate flowers around, like Bluecurls (<i>Trichostema dichotomum</i>) and Orangegrass (<i>Hypericum gentianoides</i>). Dry lake beds have plants we don't often see in our area: Ditch Stonecrop (<i>Penthorum sedoides</i>), Bugleweeds (<i>Lycopus spp.</i>), and a carpet of Virginia Buttonweed (<i>Diodia virginiana</i>). Contact Cathy Mayes for more details 540-364-4525 or MayesCD@aol.com. For directions go to: http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wmas/detail.asp?pid=17</p> | | | |
| | | <p>Orangegrass <i>Hypericum gentianoides</i></p> | |
| Friday | Sept 23 | 8:30am-2pm | Autumn Equinox Tree Lovers School |
| <p>Fauquier County. Carrie Blair will instruct how to identify trees by fall foliage at her house followed by a field trip nearby. Maximum 15 participants. Fee of \$20 to Carrie for the class. Bring a lunch, field guides, an ocular, and binoculars. Call Carrie at 540-364-1232 to register by Sept 10.</p> | | | |
| Sat & Sun | Oct 8-9 | 9am-4:30pm | Arborfest at the State Arboretum Of Virginia |
| <p>Clarke County. This fall festival and plant sale offers fine items for home and garden. Free guided tours and children's activities. Look up our VNPS' booth and meet friendly and knowledgeable volunteers who will answer your questions about native plants you encounter. There is a donation for parking.</p> | | | |
| Sat & Sun | Oct 9 | 1pm | Second Sunday Walk |
| <p>Clarke County. The second Sunday walk will be a tour of the 35 acre native grass meadow at Blandy Farm. The tour will leave from the Amphitheater 1 pm and will last about 2 hours. Look for a green and white VNPS event sign. The walk will mostly follow a gravel path that loops through the meadow, and we will also briefly visit the Rattlesnake Springs wetland area, where we will be on a boardwalk. Please wear comfortable shoes and dress for whatever weather we have that day. The fall colors in the meadow should be wonderful. Blandy Farm's Arborfest Event will be going on, and there is a donation for parking.</p> | | | |
| Sunday | Oct 16 | Noon-2pm | Piedmont Chapter Annual Meeting |
| <p>Loudoun County, Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. Lunch, election, and presentation on Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) program at the Konza tall-grass prairie site in Kansas by Dick Marzoff. See details on the previous page. Contact Cathy Mayes for more details 540-364-4525 or MayesCD@aol.com.</p> | | | |

Editor's Corner

At this time of year flowers are scarce along the woodland trails I hike. Leaves are starting to change color and so are the berries.

While counting Chestnut trees along the Appalachian Trail Marjorie Prochaska and I admired some *Caulophyllum thalictroides* that were telling us why they are called Blue Cohosh: the berries atop the plant had turned light blue. Nearby an Indian Cucumber-root (*Medeola virginiana*) was putting on its display to attract seed-distributing, berry consumers. This plant starts its above-ground life with a single whorl of 5-9 leaves. When it is strong enough, it grows a second story with a whorl of 3-5 leaves whence flowers sprout. The styles dominate the flowers, looking like antennas, except the flowers usually droop below the leaves so the antennas are upside down. The berries are dark purple, almost black, so not readily apparent to berry eaters by themselves, but the inner edge of the upper-story leaves below them are splashed with red.

A little further on we spotted what has become a rarity, Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) with a



cluster of bright red berries screaming for a seed disperser but, unfortunately, also calling poachers looking for a cash crop to smuggle to Oriental consumers.

– Richard Stromberg

Calendar of Events (continued)



Thursday Oct 20 7-8:30pm The Future American Landscape: Getting Off The Treadmill

Frederick County, Stimpson Auditorium, Halpin-Harrison Hall at the Shenandoah University. Neil DiBoll, President of Prairie Nursery in Wisconsin, will speak on the benefits of native species and why natives are the logical choice for landscapes in a future world of global warming, escalating energy costs, and constrained landscape budgets. The talk will focus on the economic and ecological problems of traditional lawns and the chemicals used to maintain them, and how native plant landscaping can be a beneficial alternative. DiBoll received his degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1978. He has since worked for the National Park Service in Virginia, the U.S. Forest Service in Colorado, and the University of Wisconsin. In 1982, Neil began his involvement with Prairie Nursery, producing native plants and seeds and designing native landscapes. He has since devoted his efforts to championing the use of prairie plants, as well as native trees, shrubs and wetland plants, in contemporary American landscapes. Neil's work includes designs for residential, commercial and public spaces throughout the Midwest and Northeast United States. The essence of Neil's philosophy is that we, as stewards of the planet, must work to preserve and increase the diversity of native plants and animals, with which we share our world. The protection of our natural heritage and our soil and water resources is essential to maintaining a high quality of life for today, and for the children of future generations to come. The lecture is free and open to the public. Co-sponsors: Smithsonian Institute, Virginia Native Plant Society, Blandy Experimental Farm, Virginia Working Landscapes group.

Saturday Oct 22 7-8:30pm Nature Walk

Rappahannock County. Join naturalists Neil DiBoll, Cole Burrell, Sally Anderson, and Peter Heus for tours about the farm of Bruce and Susan Jones, near Washington, VA. Explore meadows, woodlands, and wet areas, with observations of nature through the eyes of these naturalists, who will discuss how native species can restore backyards and landscapes. Limited space, reservation required. Fee for nature walk: \$10; fee for walk and box lunch: \$15. For reservations and location please contact: khopkins@pecva.org or bwest@pecva.org or call 540-316-9978. Co-sponsored by: the Smithsonian Institute, the Virginia Native Plant Society, Blandy Experimental Farm and the Virginia Working Landscapes group.

Sunday Nov 13 1pm Second Sunday Walk

To be decided

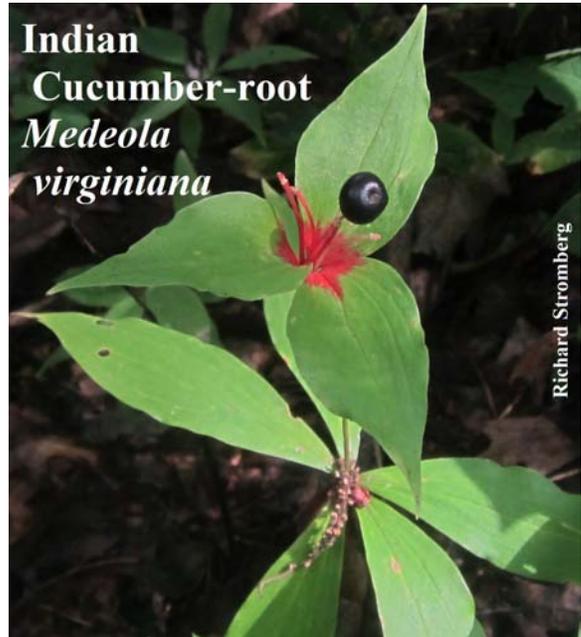
Friday Nov 18 NoVa Urban Forestry Conference

Make Room for Trees: The Urban Forest Continuum, Algonkian Regional Park Conference Center 47001 Fairway Drive, Sterling VA. A vibrant forest canopy in urban, suburban and urbanizing areas faces many challenges. Join us for a full day of exploration, discussion and motivation as we frame the issues and discover solutions for the next 100 years of Urban Forest Canopy in Virginia. Key note address by Bill Elemendorf, Penn State University. Agenda and registration information will be available at: <http://www.treesvirginia.org>.



Indian Cucumber-root
Medeola virginiana

Richard Stromberg



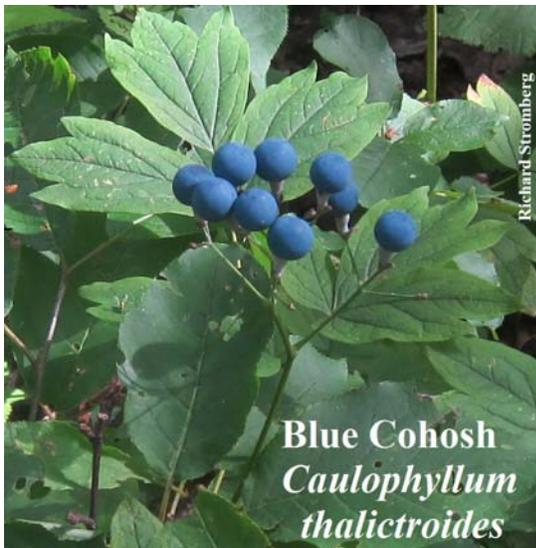
Indian Cucumber-root
Medeola virginiana

Richard Stromberg

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The  *Leaflet*

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Blue Cohosh
Caulophyllum thalictroides

Richard Stromberg