



# THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

March 2021



## **NOTE:**

**Pocahontas Chapter VNPS programs will be shared via Zoom until further notice. We will not be meeting at Lewis Ginter. Our next meeting will be on Thursday Mar. 4, 2021 starting at 6:45 PM. Information on how to connect to Zoom is on page 2**

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**The topic of the March Meeting will be  
“Surveying pollinator assemblies on Virginia native plants”  
by Nicholas Ruppel, PhD.**



Come hear the latest research results on the variety and numbers of pollinators that Dr. Ruppel and his students have found in the native plant garden on Randolph Macon Campus in Ashland. A VNPS grant in 2017 helped establish this garden.

Dr. Nicholas Ruppel is Associate Professor of Biology at Randolph Macon College. He has made involving the local community, from school classes to seniors, an important part of his classes & research.

## Chapter Meetings

The March meeting will be via Zoom on March 4 at 6:45PM.

To join the meeting go to [zoom.com](https://zoom.com) and join the meeting by clicking on "JOIN A MEETING" then entering the Meeting ID then following the directions.

**For the March Meeting the Zoom Meeting ID is 82638975136 and the Passcode is 466759**

If you need to download the zoom app, go to [zoom.com](https://zoom.com) and click on "RESOURCES", then "Download Zoom Client". If you have problems or questions concerning the Zoom connection, please contact Leslie Allanson or Richard Moss at the email or phone numbers given on page 2.

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**April 1, 2021 Chapter Meeting:** Botanical Art: Illustrations, Watercolors and Nature Journals by Lara Call Gastinger

Join Lara as she speaks about being a botanical artist, from her initial illustrations with the Flora of Virginia project to her paintings and perpetual journals. She is a member of the VNPS Jefferson Chapter and enjoys inspiring others to observe and draw plants around them.

Lara Call Gastinger is a botanical artist and Illustrator in Charlottesville, Virginia. She was the chief illustrator for the Flora of Virginia Project after she received her master's degree from Virginia Tech in Plant Ecology. She has been awarded two gold medals (2018, 2007) at the Royal Horticultural Society garden show in London and her work has been in numerous American Society of Botanical Artist exhibits, the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation and published books such as the Peterson Field Guide to Mushrooms. She is widely known on Instagram for promoting and teaching how to create a perpetual journal.

## SAVE-THE-DATE! March 5, 2021 ZOOM with Doug Tallamy!

On Friday, March 5 at 6:30 pm, join an engaging ZOOM presentation by Dr. Douglas Tallamy entitled "A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard." Renowned author of Nature's Best Hope, Dr. Tallamy's

photography and message of hope is not to be missed! This is the first presentation in the 2021 Spring and Fall Webinar Series, "Landscaping with Natives" presented by the Plant Virginia Natives Marketing Partnership.

Many people have learned that using native plants in our yards helps improve the environment for us, our community and Virginia's wildlife, but where do you start? These webinars will guide you through the why and how to turn your home garden into a beautiful retreat for your family and a native habitat for birds and other wildlife.

The Plant RVA Natives Campaign, of which Pocahontas VNPS is a partner, is pleased to be collaborating with similar campaigns across the state to offer this series of 12 webinars - 6 this spring and 6 this coming fall. Dates for the next webinars will be announced as soon as speakers are confirmed. You may sign up for all 12 webinars for just \$10!

Details of registration for Doug Tallamy on March 5 will be provided soon on [PlantVirginiaNatives.org](https://PlantVirginiaNatives.org) and in our chapter announcements.

For now, SAVE THE DATE!

The Plant Virginia Natives Landscaping with Natives webinar series is being coordinated and funded, in part, by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program through grants from the NOAA Office for Coastal Management to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

The webinar is also being sponsored and hosted on Zoom by Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and Blue Ridge PRISM. Catharine White Tucker

### The Pocahontas Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

serves the counties of Amelia, Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King William, New Kent, Powhatan, Prince George and the cities of Ashland, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, Petersburg, and Richmond. It meets the first Thursday of September through April at 7:00 PM in the Education and Library Complex of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, unless otherwise stated.

#### Chapter Officers

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Spring is coming!  
The heartleaf is blooming in my yard and the moss was producing lots of spores. Photo 7 of the trumpet vine, I thought was interesting because of the numerous roots growing to trapped debris or decaying wood in the crepe myrtle branch.

*Richard Moss*



1. & 2 Virginia heartleaf, *hexastylis virginica* starting to bloom.

3. Shows the flowers fully opened (from the internet) This plant is also known as little brown jug from the flowers.

4. & 5. This patch of moss is growing on the remains of the stump of an overturned tree. There were lots of erect spore cases before the last freezing rain flattened them.

6. This little member of the bittercress family probably *Cardamine hirsuta* a Eurasian native has been in bloom for a week or so.

7. This hairy vine growing up a crepe myrtle is a trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*)





## **Special Election for President of the Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS**

We have two candidates for the office of president. Their responses to questions posed by the board are given below. Please vote before our upcoming Chapter Meeting on March 4, 2021 at 6:45 pm via Zoom, by going to this url : <https://forms.gle/YFagqPBUDe9yqxTY7> (copy it and paste in your browser)

**Candidate Name: Matt Brooks**

**What is your favorite Virginia Native Plant?**

Sassafras albidum.

**Tell us about your relationship with nature?**

This question tempts me to respond with something spiritual and salacious. Something like, nature is my church; my mistress. The truth, however, is more mundane. My relationship with nature is recreational and professional. I loved playing in the woods as a child. My Boy Scout leaders taught me my first trees and respect for the outdoors. I studied ecology and field biology in college, flunking bio 101 my freshman year because I hiked too much. My adult life has consisted of various ecological research and environmental education jobs, graduate school for wildlife biology, environmental consulting, and traveling to explore nature. I botanize and I bird wherever I go.

What do you personally think are the most pressing issues for Richmond, VA in regards to native plants?

Within the city, I think invasive species is the biggest issue facing native plants. Bryan Park, near my house, is a showcase of invasive species. In rural areas, urban sprawl decimates forests and fields. The phrase “land for sale” upsets me. Climate change exacerbates most threats to native plants.

**Describe your previous experiences with VNPS OR in protecting biodiversity and habitat, especially with a focus on native plants?**

My experience with the VNPS mirrors my experiences with other state nature societies. I belong to the VA Ornithological Society, Richmond Audubon, and the VA Herpetological Society. I have belonged to native plant societies in North Carolina, New Mexico, and Louisiana, in addition to other state ornithological societies and many journal-publishing professional societies. In most of these I pay dues, read the newsletters and journals, and attend the occasional field trip or meeting. I would not describe my VNPS activities to date as involved. This past year has increased my desire to participate in the nature groups I belong to. I think the members would appreciate my love of nature and my good nature.

My experience protecting native plants is mostly indirect: the way I vote, landscape, work, and educate. I support candidates who support conservation. I plant and encourage natives in my yard while battling English ivy. I’ve worked within the legal frameworks of state, federal, and tribal governments to assure agencies and private sector companies comply with environmental regulations. I attempt to inform others while realizing not everyone is as nerdy as I am. While I’m very passionate, I admit I’ve never camped in or chained myself to a tree.

**Given that the VNPS Board is currently developing policy on the use of cultivars in the garden, what are your thoughts on the use of cultivars?**

For cultivated edible fruits and vegetables and houseplants, I have no problem with cultivars. Humans have selected plants for more petals and fruit for eons. When it comes to native plants for use in landscaping, I’m not down with cultivars. Leave the evolution of native plants to natural selection.

**How do you envision your role as president of the Pocahontas chapter?**

The role of the president, in the most basic form, is promoting the VNPS mission to conserve native plants. Mission activities are described in the society’s administrative handbook (which I propose we rewrite into a dichotomous key—just kidding). These include public education, conservation advocacy, field trips, and other activities.

This past year has sprouted challenges the society must address to continue growing. First, we must navigate activities during the pandemic and, hopefully, the post-pandemic age. While virtual field trips don’t satisfy many people, virtual meetings have increased monthly meeting participation. How will we hike together again? How will we meet in person while maintaining a virtual option? Second, I think we must increase the generational and racial diversity of our chapter. How will we do this? I don’t know yet. But I will confront these challenges as president of the Pocahontas Chapter.

**Is there anything else you would like to tell our membership about yourself?**

My other passions include gardening, chile peppers, playing music, and tropical ecology.

**Candidate Name: Jason C. Aldrich**

**What is your favorite Virginia Native Plant?**

Excuse the flowery language, but to demand favorites of one's mother is unfair. To answer this question, I will speak highly of a few plants that have served me well. *Rudbeckia laciniata* is grandiose in her stature with a domineering emergence of height and sprawl, especially in the wetland biome I call home; she drinks deep the standing water in my yard. *Pycnanthemum muticum*, feeding wildlife with voracity, hosts an audible buzz from a distance; I see more pollinator species visit her than any other native garden specimen. Also, she is uplifting, and makes a darn fine mojito. I never like to leave *Eurybia divericata* off of these lists because I find her stately nature pleases anyone who invites her to stay. I would be foolish not to note *Cercis canadensis* for the pop of color she tempts the city with early every spring; ditto *Liriodendron tulipifera*, one of the tallest hardwoods, which would give any brave climber a view of surrounding counties and through whose prolific nature the tiger swallowtail perseveres (and whose fallen bracts make great craft material for my four-year-old!). Lastly, I favor *Asimina triloba*, as many savvy fruiterers must.

**Tell us about your relationship with nature?**

Nature and I are in an intense long-term polyamorous relationship. I visit with Her daily, asking for her guidance and offering my hand in her soil, till death do us together.

**What do you personally think are the most pressing issues for Richmond, VA in regards to native plants?**

Invasive plants and inadequate dissemination of information.

**Describe your previous experiences with VNPS OR in protecting biodiversity and habitat, especially with a focus on native plants?**

I graduated from the Sustainable Agriculture and Horticulture courses at J. Sargeant Reynolds. I've worked in the establishment landscaping industry, which many in our vein see as antiquated and input-heavy. This experience left me with a (quite literal) "bad taste in my mouth" -- partially because of the almost daily use of chemical inputs. I broke away and began "First Virginia Ecological Restoration Services LLC". I actively consult, design and maintain conservation landscapes and sustainable urban gardens. I've adequately turned my passion into my career. I'm VNLA (Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association) Horticulturist certified, CBLP (Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional) certified and have taken the Ginter Urban Gardener Program; I've also successfully organized river trash cleanups, native tree-planting fundraisers, and native wildflower seed-bomb workshops. In short: I have dedicated my life to ecological conservation.

**Given that the VNPS Board is currently developing policy on the use of cultivars in the garden, what are your thoughts on the use of cultivars?**

As members of VNPS, and persons versed in the externalities of our decision making, we should simply adhere to the rule that the straight species is always the better choice.

**How do you envision your role as president of the Pocahontas chapter?**

I envision this being similar to a representative democracy, where the power lies within the Board, and the head of state is representative of such. I would attend and preside over local meetings and then bridge the information gap between our chapter and the state board, especially at the VNPS annual meeting. I understand that I will "...supervise the affairs of the Pocahontas chapter ie; sign and countersign certificates, contracts, and other instruments of the Society as authorized by the board, and make reports to the Board and memberships of information gathered from the state VNPS Board." Section III.B.3.d of the VNPS Administrative Handbook describes the "representative" of the chapter, in our case being the President: "Chapter representatives are named by their respective chapters to serve as voting members of the VNPS board. A chapter's representative brings the chapter's perspective to board discussions and may ask the board to consider issues of particular concern to that chapter; reports to the board on chapter activities; and keeps the chapter board informed about statewide programs and plans."

**Is there anything else you would like to tell our membership about yourself?**

I am 37 years old. I have a four year-old daughter who would rather be in the forest most of the time. A life-long musician, I currently play bass in a metal band. The best dog EVER follows me around. Some other hobbies include: wood-turning, amateur taxidermy, officiating marriages, bike riding and rock-hounding. Whilst attending university I was President of the Horticulture club. I am hyper-social and would absolutely relish the opportunity to learn from and with the best botanists and conservationists of our time and space.