



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

February 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 Feb. 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 February Meeting will be
“Native Biodiversity Conservation and Restoration Challenges in Urbanized Areas”
by Rod Simmons**

Natural resources are irreplaceable features of the indigenous landscape that include topography (land shape), geology, soils, surface and ground water, natural communities, plants, and animals. Native flora and plant communities are the dominant natural resources on parkland in the eastern U.S., and those that remain are diverse and require protection and careful stewardship. Native flora and plant communities are the foundation of biodiversity, as well as the measure of an ecosystem’s overall health and functionality. Simply put, the preservation of biodiversity and natural heritage cannot be achieved without the large-scale conservation of native plants and their natural habitats.

We will discuss conservation and restoration challenges in heavily urbanized areas of the mid-Atlantic, such as City of Alexandria and Richmond, as well as successes in preserving native biodiversity.

Our speaker Rod Simmons is a plant ecologist who has worked extensively in the fields of natural resource management and ecological restoration for nearly 30 years. He is a member of the Virginia Botanical Associates; and works closely with the Virginia and Maryland natural heritage programs. He is a member and a past president of the Botanical Society of Washington, a past president of the Maryland Native Plant Society, and serves on the board of the Virginia Native Plant Society, and is a regular field trip leader for all of these organizations. He is the Natural Resource Manager and Plant Ecologist for the City of Alexandria, Virginia.



Pocahontas Chapter Leadership Changes, But We Need Your Help!

We still don’t have someone to serve as President of our chapter!

Please contact Catharine Tucker if you would be willing to lead us into the 2020’s.

Amy Ritchie Johnson has already hit the ground running to plan our programs as our new Vice President. Ashley Moulton will continue to as our Secretary. Alli Baird has agreed to serve as chapter Treasurer. Our newsletter will continue to be provided by Richard Moss, our publicity by Lisa Hamilton, and Ginger Stone will be our membership contact. These folks are due applause for volunteering to help keep this chapter going.

Chapter Meetings

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

To join the meeting go to zoom.com and join the meeting by clicking on "JOIN A MEETING" then entering the Meeting ID then following the directions.

For the February Meeting the Zoom Meeting ID is 851 3624 1846 and the Passcode is 304494

If you need to download the zoom app, go to 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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If you have requests or suggestions for program topics or speakers, please contact our vice president Amy Ritchie Johnson, at xaritchie@gmail.com.

## The Pocahontas (Richmond) chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society is seeking a Board President.

No previous membership is required.

Do you want to support local efforts to promote native plants and biodiversity, while working against invasive plant species in the area? It doesn't matter if you're a plant professional or a plant-loving amateur, we need you!

Duties of the president include:

### 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

**President.....Vacant but for this Meeting Leslie Allanson**  
(804) 335-5866.....leleorr4@gmail.com

**Vice President.....Amy Ritchie Johnson**  
.....xaritchie@gmail.com

**Secretary.....Ashley Moulton**  
(703) 554-5860.....moultona@vcu.edu

**Treasurer ..... Ali Baird**  
(804) 233-4509.....artb101025@aol.com

**Membership..... Ginny Stone**  
(804) 379-0926.....stonev114@gmail.com

Address all other correspondence to:

Richard Moss, Editor  
12565 Brook Lane  
Chester, VA 23831  
richard@mossrd.org

**Website**  
vnps.org



- Presiding at all chapter meetings, 7-9 pm on the first Thursday of the month, Jan-April and September-November. Meetings are currently taking place on Zoom, but historically take place at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden.
- Supervising the affairs of the VNPS chapter; signing and countersigning certificates, contracts, and other instruments of the Society as authorized by the Board
- Reporting to the Board and membership on information gathered from the state VNPS Board.

For more information or questions, please follow the link to contact a board member: <https://vnps.org/pocahontas/about-us/>



## Variety vs. Cultivar

By J. Hayden

Photo to the left is best called *Persicaria filiformis*, a species from Asia, known to be invasive in this part of the world. It was named as a distinct species by Thunberg in 1784. At some point in the past it was reinterpreted to be a naturally occurring variation of *Persicaria virginiana*, accordingly, it became known as *Persicaria virginiana* var. *filiformis*. For a long time, the species *Persicaria virginiana* was thought to occur naturally in North America and east Asia, and the North American plants were referred to as var. *virginiana* and the Asian plants, var. *filiformis*, but that is not the current consensus on these plants. At some point in time, certain plants of the Asian

"*filiformis*" lineage with prominent epaulette-shaped marks on the leaves were selected from the naturally occurring range of variation in "*filiformis*" and given the cultivar (cv) name 'Painter's Palette.' Cultivar 'Painter's Palette' entered commercial horticulture but, unfortunately, proved invasive.

For future reference, "variety" can be a formal taxonomic category. "Variety" (noun) or "varietal" (adjective) does not necessarily mean that the entity so named is a product of human selection. As the term variety is used in systematics, most varieties are naturally occurring entities. Do not equate variety with "bad!" Our native Elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis*, is considered by some to be a naturally occurring variety of the European Elderberry, *Sambucus nigra*, in which case our plant would be called *Sambucus nigra* var. *canadensis*. "Cultivar" is a better term for a category of plants that, in some way, has had some human influence as a basis for their designation as something different or distinct. The point of having the category of "cultivar" is to have a convenient and FLEXIBLE category used to designate some subcategory of cultivated plants that stands out from the rest in some way. In some cases, cultivars are merely individual plants selected from naturally occurring wild populations and brought into cultivation because they stand out in some way deemed in the opinion of whoever made the selection as special and desirable. Pink Flowering Dogwoods selected from wild populations offer one such example. Slight color variations in Redbud flowers offer another; white Redbuds are more strikingly different, but also, just a naturally occurring variation selected for horticultural interest. In other instances, cultivars have been derived from naturally occurring mutations of plants in cultivation; such mutations might or might not survive in nature, but in the garden, if they are pleasing in some way, people may make efforts to perpetuate them. On the other hand, the category of cultivar can be applied to an entity that is the result of intensive manipulation by humans, such as a breeding program involving several generations of controlled hybridization. Given that we have two terms, variety (which can be used in a strictly taxonomic sense) and cultivar (which is applied only to cultivated plants), it is misleading to make statements like "all varietals" should be avoided. Some may well wish to avoid all cultivars in favor of truly wild native-derived plants . . . but in some cases, cultivars are just that, simply individuals selected from nature because they are a little different from the average, or commonly encountered entities.

## Exploring the Nearby Woods in Late January

by Richard Moss

1. These little rosetts of leaves, photo taken Jan. 19, 2021, I think are overwintering bluets. Some bloomed here last spring. I'll follow up in the spring.

2. I was hoping this heartleaf would have some developing flowers, which can appear this time of year, but none were visible.

3. Two spotted evergreen (*Chimaphila Maculata*) plants, one green (top) and the other redish (bottom). They tend to turn more red in the winter but I thought the difference in this photo was interesting.

