



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

April 2022



NOTE:

Pocahontas Chapter VNPS programs will be shared via Zoom until further notice. We will not be meeting at Lewis Ginter.

The Zoom meeting will start at 6:30 on Thursday April 7th.

Access the zoom meeting with the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85039341153?pwd=UnQ4dWNpQVkxdzBaVWcrR0c4UFZkZz09#success>

The meet and greet starts at 6:45 pm followed by the presentation at 7 p.m.

A short business meeting will follow the presentation.



For our Thursday, April 7th meeting, as our respective gardens warm up, our chapter Vice-President Jason Aldrich, (at right with pawpaw) hopes to warm you up to the idea of Native Plant Agriculture. Native Plant Agriculture (NPA) is the implementing of edible native plants as the basis of a primarily perennial agricultural system that mimics native plant communities in format. The goal of NPA is to expand native vegetation back into agricultural land in order to restore a significant level of biodiversity while improving human-food productivity for a changing climate and growing population.

Jason Aldrich is the owner of First Virginia Ecological Restoration Services LLC (1st VERS), a conservation landscaping company operating in Richmond, Virginia since 2019. He graduated from Horticulture and Sustainable Agriculture programs at J. Sargeant Reynolds and is a Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association (VNLA) Certified Horticulturist as well as a Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP) and a member of the Virginia Association for Biological Farming (VABF). His intersectional ethics and punk-rock history drive his passion for native, conservation, and guerrilla-style gardening.



April 2022 Pocahontas Chapter President's Message

Hello Pocahontas Chapter members. The April meeting is our last meeting until September. For May we will have a Chapter Picnic and field trip at Dory Park in Henrico county.

I was recently contacted by Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden about in-person meetings. We'll need to setup a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the garden, and I would like to find the technology for hybrid in-person/live-streaming meetings. Stay tuned. This message is short because I spent my time on the April chapter plant of the month.

Chapter news: We're donating \$1,000 to the Virginia Flora Project. If you missed the VNPS Annual Workshop, you can watch the four excellent talks here: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/9346728>. Thanks to Richard Moss for leading the April 3 field trip at the John J. Radcliff Conservation Area. We have lots of walks and events planned and in the works. Staffing events depends largely on chapter volunteers. I recently had the pleasure staffing the Rosedale Neighborhood Cherry Blossom Festival with our Vice President and April speaker Jason Aldrich and new chapter member Mae Nguyen. It was a success despite gale-force winds. Mr. Aldrich can really work a booth. He even talked me into joining the VNPS Pocahontas Chapter. It wasn't until I got home that I realized what happened. Upcoming field trips so far:

May 22 Dorey Park picnic and field trip with everyone. 12:00–4:00

June 4 Cumberland Marsh Natural Area with Matt Brooks. 10:00–12:00

We're planning more field trips at our business meeting April 7.

Other events:

April 30. 9:00–1:00. Henrico Native Plant Festival

Dorey Park

2999 Darbytown Rd, Henrico, VA 23231

Volunteer signup: <https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/YaOkY5Na>

May 7. 9:00–1:00. The Bookstore Event.

Chamberlayne Heights UMC

6100 Chamberlayne Rd, Richmond, VA 23227

Contact Pat Brodie 804-350-8125

May 14. 9:00–3:00. Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens Plant Festival

Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

1800 Lakeside Ave, Henrico, VA 23228

We'll be sharing a booth with Kat Cox of RVA Homegrown Natives.

Volunteer signup: <https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/zbq5xL3b>

June 11. 8:30–4:00. Pollinator Festival

Deep Run Park & Recreation Center

9900 Ridgefield Pkwy, Richmond, VA 23233

Volunteer signup: <https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/Rb4wxwga>

There will be more events. We'll send out announcements accordingly for display events and field trips. See you in the field.

Matt Brooks, President, Pocahontas Chapter

March 3, 2022 Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS Meeting Minutes, at 7:00 PM via Zoom

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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Presentation

Frank Holzman spoke on a variety of topics from sustainable agriculture to potting soil recipes to companion crops in a “radio-style” presentation.

Chapter Business Meeting

Board Members Present: Matt Brooks, Jason Aldrich, Alli Baird, Lisa Hamilton, Richard Moss, Becky Kyle, and Rachel Fortin.

Agenda Items

- Donation to VA Flora- Alli Baird noticed a typo from the previous meeting minutes, noting that the board previously agreed on a \$1000 donation, not a \$500 donation as stated. Rachel Fortin will correct the previous meeting minutes to reflect the correct amount. Alli will send the \$1000 donation to VA Flora. Alli noted that with donations to Flora come small “thank you” gifts, and Lisa Hamilton suggested that if we receive them, we could raffle them off at events where the chapter has a booth.

• Henrico Native Plant Festival on April 30th, 9am-1pm at Dorey Park-

Matt printed promotional materials with QR codes to use at the event. Since cost to sponsor is determined by the sponsors, Catherine made a motion to sponsor the event for \$100 that Lisa seconded. The motion went to a vote and passed unanimously. Matt will send Alli the information she needs in order to send a check to our contact there. Jason previously volunteered to man the table. He will get the required materials from Matt and Lisa.

- Rosedale Neighborhood Civic Association Cherry Blossom Festival on March 26, 11am-3pm at Christ Ascension Episcopal Church- The board agreed to set up a table there, and Jason volunteered for this one as well.
- Blooms & Books Event on May 7th from 9am-1pm at Chamberlayne Heights United Methodist Church- Pat Brodie is looking for vendors and items, and would like a chapter booth there. Any volunteers should email Pat at phbrody@outlook.com. Matt will add this information and event to the list for the call for volunteers.
- Plant RVA Natives Donation- Neither Alli nor Matt have been able to attend the meeting required for more information on donating \$1000. Matt or Alli will attend the meeting when able and report back.
- April–October Field Trip Schedule- Jason expressed interest in options that are farther away from Metro-Richmond. Matt suggested Cumberland State Forest. Alli suggested Quarry Park. Matt suggested Maple Flat Ponds, especially in the fall. Richard suggested Big Meadows, especially in the summer. Richard and Catherine discussed Rockfish Gap to Reed’s Gap and Blue Ridge Parkway stops. Jason also mentioned that Lee Park would be a good option. Since March is already underway, it was decided the chapter will not schedule a field trip for this month.
- Cumberland Marsh Natural Area- Matt will lead this event, and the date of June 4th was decided upon. Lisa will put this online and on the chapter’s Facebook page.
- John J. Radcliff Conservation Area- Richard will lead this event, and the date of April 2nd [rescheduled to Apr 3 due to scheduling conflict] was decided upon in order to see the trout lillies. Lisa will put this online and on the chapter’s Facebook page.
- May Picnic/Field Trip- Lisa suggested Dorey Park for the May field trip in order to do a lady’s slipper walk and combine it with a potluck picnic. The board decided on the date of May 21st from 12pm-4pm, eating first, then walking. Matt will reserve the shelter.

New Business

- Jason will be hosting classes on Conservation Landscaping (March 29th at 12pm) and Native Plant Agriculture (June 18th at 12pm) in collaboration with Sneed’s Nursery. The cost is \$5. Lisa will share Sneed’s advertisement or event to the chapter’s page to promote it.
- Lisa asked if the chapter intended to exhibit at the Lewis Ginter Plant Fest this year. The idea of “piggy-backing” off of a vendor like Ashley or Jason’s friend Kat Cox, owner of RVA Homegrown Natives. At the time of the meeting minutes publication, Jason has already brought Kat into the conversation with the board via email, in order to share a table and compliment one another at potential events.
- Jason revisited the chapter shirt conversation, and presented the group with the idea of commissioning an artist to design our shirt for a modest fee. The previous idea of a contest among our chapter calling for designs was brought up again, and agreed upon. Lisa will mock up a post/ideas and send it to Jason, and it will be shared to social media.

Action Items

- Rachel will correct the error in February’s meeting minutes.
- Alli will send the check for \$1000 to VA Flora.
- Matt will send Alli the information needed to send our sponsorship check of \$100 to the Henrico Native Plant Festival.
- Jason will get the materials for the booth from Matt and Lisa.
- Matt will send an email to the entire chapter for the events the board agreed to attend calling for volunteers.
- Matt or Alli will coordinate their attendance to one of the meetings required in order to decide upon the \$1000 donation to Plant RVA Natives.
- Matt will contact Dorey Park to reserve the shelter for the May 21st picnic.
- Lisa will put the upcoming field trip and picnic dates on Facebook and online.
- Matt will send the event reminders for the field trips during the months where the newsletter is not being published.
- Lisa will share the information on Jason’s Sneed’s classes as the information becomes available.
- Lisa will collaborate with Jason regarding the shirt contest for social media.

Meeting adjourned.

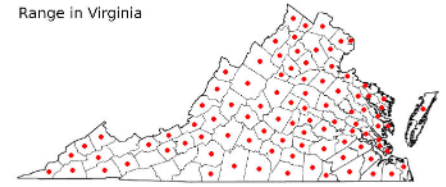
Rachel Fortin, Secretary

Pocahontas Chapter Plant of the Month - Pawpaw, (*Asimina triloba*)

by Matt Brooks

Asimina is the only temperate genus of the widespread and diverse tropical family *Annonaceae* (custard-apple). It's one of the odoriferous, or smelly, tropical woody plant families, along with the *Lauraceae* (e.g., spice bush), *Magnoliaceae*, *Myristicaceae* (nutmeg), *Rutaceae* (citrus), and others. Juices from the fruits of species of *Annona* are common in Neotropical counties—look for “soursop” or “guanabana.” Canned juices are readily found at any local Latin market. If you find yourself in the tropics, where ID to woody plant family is an achievement, one “killer synapomorphy” for the *Annonaceae* is the bicycle-spoke pattern in a twig cross section. Gentry (1993), in his *A Field Guide to Woody Plants of Northwest South America*, describes the following family characteristics: Ranalean odor, two-ranked leaves, and typically myristicaceous branching (think eastern white pine whorled branching).

Asimina triloba (L.) Dunal
Range in Virginia



In the U.S., *Asimina* is most diverse in Florida and Georgia, with *Asimina triloba* (pawpaw) ranging the farthest north and west, reaching Canada and Kansas, respectively. *A. triloba* retains some of its tropical roots like the drip-tip leaves and lack of terminal bud scales. Noted by a member of European invader Hernando de Soto's crew in 1541, the name pawpaw may be from “papaw,” a Spanish word for papaya.

Pawpaw is a shrub or small tree up to 15 meters. It frequents floodplains, well-drained forests, and prefers base-rich soils but also occurs in acidic soils. In Virginia, it's most common in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont. Pawpaw is expanding into drier forests. Reasons may include its lack of palatability to deer and fire suppression.

The flowers bloom in March–May with the leaf flush. Described as “not showy,” I think their color is pretty and uncommon among local flower colors. Indeed, this

color indicates a fetid-smelling fly- and beetle-pollinated flower. I saw a reference to hanging roadkill in a pawpaw patch to attract pollinators. The flowers are not self-compatible, meaning they can't self-fertilize. This can pose a challenge because, while often growing in clusters, the plants may be a single organism connected by roots.

The pawpaw is the largest edible fruit in North America.

The sweet fruit—a berry up to 15 cm long—is eaten by mammals and fruit-eating birds. The fruits drop raw in the fall, where they ripen on the ground, turning dark. The

fruit reportedly can cause contact dermatitis in some people and hurt tummies in others. John James Audubon's illustration of Yellow-billed Cuckoos shows them in a pawpaw tree. Pawpaw foliage provides larval food for the zebra swallowtail and pawpaw sphinx moth.

Pawpaws are propagated for fruit cultivation, and there are numerous cultivars like Potomac, Shenandoah, and Rappahannock. VNPS discourages native plant cultivars. Pawpaws are easily grown from seed, so find some nearby fruits in the wild if you want some in your yard or restoration area. I assume Thomas Jefferson did the same when he (or his slaves) planted pawpaws at Monticello.

Sources:

Callaway, M. B. 1993. *Pawpaw (Asimina triloba): a "tropical" fruit for temperate climates*. P. 505–515. In: J. Janick and J.E. Simon (eds.), *New Crops*. Wiley, NY.

Darrow, G. M. 1975. Minor temperate fruits. P. 276–277. In: J. Janick and J. N. Moore (eds.), *Advances in Fruit Breeding*. Purdue Univ. Press, West Lafayette, IN.

Gardeningknowhow.com/edible/fruits/pawpaw/propagating-pawpaw-trees.htm

Nps.gov/articles/pawpaw.htm

Petersonpawpaws.com/pollination/

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Wildflower.org

