



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

March 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 March 3rd.

Please Register in advance at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91025601000>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Please join us Thursday, March 3, 2022, for our monthly meeting. Our speaker this month is Frank Holzman, organic horticulturalist and sustainable farming consultant. He will speak on native companion planting for regenerative agriculture.

Frank has worked in organic horticulture and small-scale agriculture since the early 1970s. Through his non-profit, REAP, he has worked in various parts of the U.S., Southeast Asia, and Central and South America. He operates a large market garden on 4 acres in Georgia, conducting biodynamic research and education. His recently published book, *Radical Regenerative Gardening and Farming*, offers insights and perspectives presented in his workshop on *Balanced Ecosystems*.



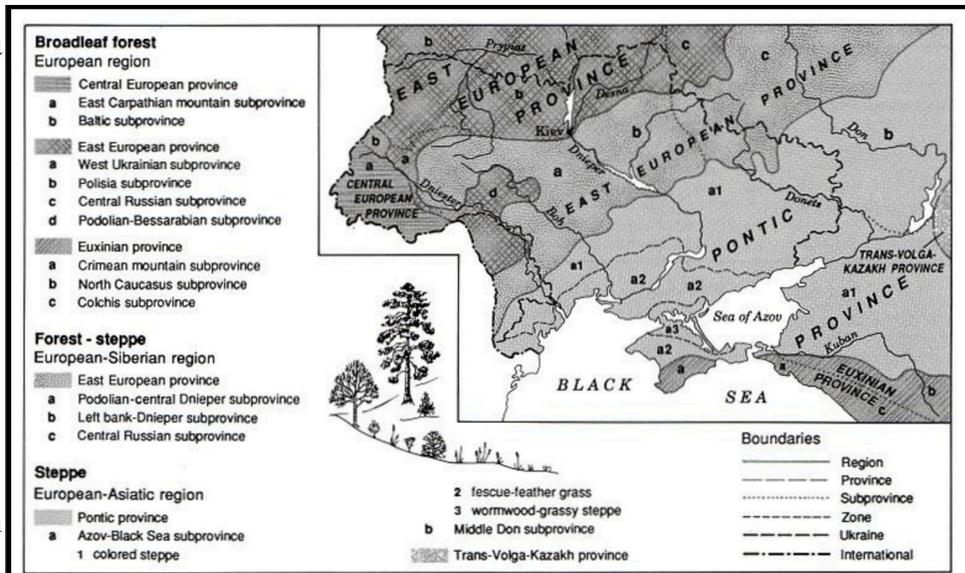
The meet and greet starts at 6:45 pm, followed by the presentation at 7 p.m. A short business meeting will follow the presentation. The instructions for signing up and joining the meeting will be sent out shortly to membership.

March 2022 Pocahontas Chapter President's Message

Hello Pocahontas Chapter members. We're fortunate to enjoy plant walks and monthly meetings. You know what impedes the conservation and enjoyment of native plants? Having your country invaded. As I listen sadly to news from Ukraine, I wonder what natural plant communities they have and how they view conservation. I don't know much about Ukraine. I know they grow a lot of wheat, border the black sea and seven countries, and were an original member of the Soviet Union.

According to the Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Toronto office, Ukraine's biogeography is classified into several regions: the forest belt, forest-steppe belt, and steppe belt, with some mountain and Mediterranean habitat (Figure 1). Steppe is a term for grassland. In the Great Basin Desert, we have shrub-steppe habitat. Geo-cultural regions include Left-bank Ukraine and Right-bank Ukraine, which are divided by the Dnieper (Dnipro) River (on which Kyiv is located).

Ukraine contains the range boundaries



VEGETATION REGIONS

of multiple woody plants. It includes the northeastern boundary of the beech (*Fagus silvatica*) and silver fir (*Abies alba*); the eastern boundary of the sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), linden (*Tilia platyphyllos*), and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*); the southern boundary of the Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*); and the western boundary of the steppe cherry (*Prunus fruticosa*).

The forest belt extends through northern and western Ukraine. The beech is most common in western Ukraine. Other common species include silver fir (widespread in the Carpathian Mountains), oaks (*Quercus sessiliflora*, *Q. pedunculata*), linden (*Tilia cordata*), elm (*Ulmus campestris*), birch (*Betula verrucosa*), sycamore maple, Norway maple (*A. platanoides*), Scots pine, and spruce (*Picea excelsa*). The main forest trees are pine (57% of forest area), oak (21%), and birch (10%). Meadows and bogs occur interspersed in the forests, and meadows occur where forests have been logged. Across the region, species composition varies depending on soils, geology, moisture, and the usual biogeography-influencing suspects.

The forest–steppe belt occurs in central Ukraine. This area is a mix of forest and steppe, with most of the steppe under cultivation. Oak comprises about half of the forest trees in this region. Dominant understory shrubs include hazel (*Corylus avellana*), small-leaved field maple (*Acer campestre*), and spindle tree (*Euonymus verrucosus*). Where steppe exists, common species include low sedge (*Carex humilis*), sheep fescue grass (*Festuca sulcata*), narrow-leaved bent grass (*Agrostis tenuifolia*), feather grasses (*Stipa capillata*, *S. joannis*), yellow bedstraw (*Galium verum*), meadow sage (*Salvia pratensis*), and lousewort (*Pedicularis comosa*). Thickets on the steppe consist of blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), steppe cherry, wild rose (*Rosa spp.*), Ruthenian broom (*Cytisus ruthenicus*), and cut-leaved meadow sweet (*Spiraea crenifolia*).

The steppe covers southern Ukraine. This area contains many of the species mentioned above along with rhizomatous grasses like bromegrass (*Bromus riparius*), bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), and couch grass (*Agropyron glaucum*) and various tumbleweeds like sea cabbage (*Crambe tataria*), sea pink (*Statice latifolia*), and Cossack tumbleweed (*Phlomis pungens*).

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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Mediterranean vegetation extends along the Crimean southern shore and the Caucasian coast of the Black Sea. Mountainous areas include the Carpathian Mountains, Crimean Mountains, and Caucasus Mountains. There is a ton of cool vegetation and habitats in the mountains, including subalpine and alpine habitats. According to the National Report of Ukraine on Conservation and Biological Diversity (Ministry for Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety of Ukraine 1997), forests cover around 14% of the landmass, compared to 45% at the beginning of the 20th Century. The steppe is greatly reduced due to agriculture and the damming of rivers for power generation. There are approximately 5,100 species of vascular plants in Ukraine. On May 12, 1997, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Strategy for Conservation of Biodiversity in Ukraine, which is exactly what it sounds like. The National Report of Ukraine on Conservation and Biological Diversity was Ukraine’s first such national report and attributes, in part, the massive loss of natural areas in the 20th Century due to the “former Soviet-style system of management of the national economy and environmental policy.”

Matt Brooks

Interesting Note:
Sunflowers are the national flower of Ukraine, but they are not native there. Sunflowers made their way to Ukraine through the efforts of the early explorers of North America. Seeds were brought back to the old world, and found to grow well in hot,

dry places with rich soil, such as the “Black Earth” regions of Ukraine.

The Orthodox Church comes into the story because during Lent, believers were not supposed to use butter or lard for cooking. Since sunflower oil was a fairly recent arrival, there were no specific restrictions on its use. Sunflower culture took off. By the 1800s, there were big fields of them all over Ukraine and western parts of Russia, and people were chewing the seeds and spitting out the shells.

<https://www.mircorp.com/why-is-the-sunflower-the-national-flower-of-ukraine/>



Pocahontas Chapter Plant of the Month - Crane-fly Orchid, (*Tipularia discolor*) by Catharine Tucker

Crane-fly orchids seem to have their growing and dormant seasons reversed. It's now mid-January, and I'm sitting in a clearing near the house, two clusters of robust green and purple Crane-fly orchid leaves (*Tipularia discolor*) at my feet. I came out to check on my favorite clusters. One group has green leaves with purple undersides, and one has all purple leaves. And the clumps are less than three feet from each other. This variation is normal by what I've read.

Each plant has a single leaf. All winter, while the hardwood canopy branches are bare these orchid leaves will produce carbohydrates by photosynthesis and store them in a bulb underground (Photo 1). By the end of May, each leaf will die and no parts of the plants are visible for more than a month.

In July, bloom stalks will emerge above ground (Photo 2)— the earliest I've found was July 8. Growing from a bulb's stored food, each stalk will produce a 12-18-inch tall raceme of a dozen or more 1-inch flowers. The three-lobed lip and spur make each flower resemble a hovering crane-fly (genus *Tipula*). The flowers are pale faded pinkish-tan (Photo 3). Hence, the name *Tipularia discolor*. They are pollinated by noctuid moths that pick up and transfer the orchid pollen sacs on their compound eyes. Even in groups of 10-20 stalks, these blooms are difficult to see against a forest floor covered by tan, dry leaves.

By the end of August, seedpods develop (Photo 4), seeds disperse, and stems w/ pods are dry & brittle. Of the many plants I know are there, only a few dry stalks are evident in September.

But in October, this perennial, terrestrial orchid produces new leaves to renew this annual cycle (Photo 5), alternating food-producing leaves in winter with food-consuming flowers and seeds in summer.

Look for the leaves now under dry to mesic hardwoods,. The oval leaves feel slightly fleshy, have prominent parallel veins and are often pock-marked with bumps. The combination of dark green and purple is distinctive. When you find leaves, remember the location so that you may find flowers in July.

There are so many dry stalks of seedpods and so many new leaves in my favorite clusters that Winter 2020-2021 must have been particularly favorable for these plants. Even though only a portion of



them will bloom next July— perhaps less than half, I look forward to the pale pinkish-tan haze of Crane-fly orchids across the forest floor within a few yards of my house.



VNPS, Pocahontas Chapter February Meeting Minutes, 03 FEBRUARY 2022 at 7:00 PM Via Zoom

Katharina Spears, Library and Archive Manager of the Lora M. Robins Library at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden presented on the history behind the “Lee Park” Herbarium, the work of Mary “Donald” Claiborne Holden and the Petersburg Garden Club (instrumental in the herbarium’s development and preservation) and the watercolors of Bessie Neimeyer Marshall.

Chapter Business Meeting

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

Agenda Items

- 2022 Budget- Matt Brooks suggested that we put \$100 more into each category of the proposed budget to account for inflation. After discussion, he made a motion, the motion was seconded and subsequently passed. The group discussed if we should add \$500 to the donation/grant category to the budget to donate to The Flora of Virginia Project. The motion was brought and seconded and passed unanimously. Alli Baird updated the budget accordingly. The motion to pass the updated budget as presented by Alli was brought, seconded, and passed unanimously. In regards to future donation candidates, the Nature Camp Foundation was discussed as a prospect, and our chapter will be in touch with them for more information on scholarships/donation at a future date.
- Future Speakers- Jason Aldrich proposed Amyrose Foll, an Indigenous farmer, ethnobotanist, and founder of The Virginia Free Farm. The board approved the suggestion and agreed she would be worth a keynote speaker fee. His second proposed speaker was Frank Holzman, author, organic horticulturist, and expert on sustainable land use. The board also approved this suggestion. His third proposed speaker was Pamunkey tribal citizens, facilitated by Shaleigh Howells. One member is an artist with plant motifs, and the other creates plant fiber textiles. They would be best suited as a potential field trip, due to the unreliable internet access on the reservation, and they prefer to present outdoors. Jason will contact them for their availability.
- Plant of the Month for March- Catharine Tucker suggested the crane-fly orchid (*Tipularia discolor*) and volunteered to do the write-up on it to be included in the March newsletter.
- Chapter Merchandise- Catharine suggested that we utilize the design Nicky Staunton created for us. Pat Brodie has the design originals and files and can send it to the board to put in our Drive. Jason suggested a contest amongst our chapter to get new, fresh designs. John Hayden suggested waiting on the design and committee. Rachel Fortin suggested utilizing a fundraising-style website for on-demand printing like Bonfire to eliminate the need for inventory.
- April to October Meetups- The group discussed the need to have all plant meetups for April to October to be scheduled by April. This will be the main priority at the next meeting. Options discussed were Lee Park (possibly April?), Quarry Garden (possibly May?), though it is by appointment only, a wetland such as Dutch Gap (maybe August/September?), the Maple Flat Ponds (possibly in August for the sneezeweed?), Wahrani Nature Trail (Joey Thompson could assist, possibly earlier in year due to the heat?), Dorey Park (possibly in May for the pink lady’s slipper), and maybe Three Lakes or another Henrico park. Setting this schedule is now an agenda item for next month.

New Business

- Pat Brodie requested to advertise her church’s plant /book sale in the newsletter. Matt agreed to include it.
- Jason suggested we host meet and greet(s) somewhere indoors for those who want to meet up outside of the picnics and plant walks.

Action Items

- The chapter will donate \$500 to The Flora of Virginia
- Catherine Tucker will contact Nature Camp Foundation for more information regarding scholarships and notify the board.
- Jason Aldrich will contact Shaleigh Howells/the Pamunkey prospective speakers regarding availability in order to progress with scheduling.
- Catherine Tucker will take on March’s Plant of the Month.
- Pat Brodie will send the art for potential chapter merchandise to the board.
- The board will finalize plant meetups next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned