



# THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

November, 2022



**Chapter Meeting 7:00 PM, Thursday November 3, 2022  
at the Kelly Education Center of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden  
in the Robins Room**

**The room is available at 6:30, come early to socialize  
This meeting will also be available via zoom.**

**Our speaker will be Ms. Kaity Bevenour who will discuss the Native Plant Industry**

On November 3, 2022, the Pocahontas chapter is pleased to bring you Ms. Kaity Bevenour. Kaity is an ecological horticulturalist and the owner/operator of Parallel Nursery, a sustainable plant nursery in Richmond, VA, specializing in growing species from the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast U.S. Kaity will be discussing her entrepreneurial journey with Parallel and the exploding native plant industry. She will discuss small business resources, how to bring others into the native plant community, and thoughts on the future of the industry.

Since beginning her horticulture education in Cuyamaca College in El Cajon, CA, Kaity has worked on both U.S. coasts in many different roles. Now living in Richmond, VA, she has combined her myriad experiences—plant propagator, landscape designer, project manager, integrated pest management specialist, and beyond—to build a business that encourages people to love our natural world and discover what makes us unique. She is passionate about providing opportunities and creating a community that empowers people of all walks of life to feel safe, knowledgeable, and excited to find their own joy in nature. In her “free time” she is a mixed media artist and history nerd who also enjoys wandering along the James River, enjoying the unique scenery of RVA.

This hybrid meeting (live or via Zoom) is free and open to the public. The live meeting will be at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Kelly Center. The meet and greet starts at 6:30 pm, followed by the presentation at 7 pm. A short business meeting will follow the presentation.

**Register for Zoom at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/joinMeeting/register/tZwkcOiopjMuGd0eIDeRPQEnoDn5LI9p50bD>**

Cheers,

Jason Aldrich

Vice President, Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS



# Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter Meeting at Louis Ginter Botanical Gardens on October 6, 2022

**Speaker:** Our guest speaker, Suleka Deevi, spoke about the ecological impacts of invasive species. She discussed practical solutions to remove invasives from your yard or park and how to recognize a healthy ecosystem. She also discussed invasives found in urban areas within Richmond and as well as invasive species taking over forests.

**Announcements:** None

## Business Meeting:

Prevent a Litter Project Nonprofit. Public space in Cary Street. Tammie Valverde partnered with Pocahontas. \$200 donation for plants and gardening materials?

Discussion on donating \$200, conditional that 75% is spent on natives from local providers on our website. Richard moved, Alli seconded, passed unanimously. Alli will send check.

**November plant of the month:** Jason will do *Morella cerifera*, Southern Wax Myrtle.

**Shelter/tent with logo:** Matt will look into purchasing a tent with chapter name for display events. Matt Brooks, acting Secretary.

Matt also sent photographs from last weeks work day at Lewis Ginter where we helped remove invasives.



## 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.....Matt Brooks**

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## Plant of the Month - Southern Wax Myrtle

by Jason Aldrich

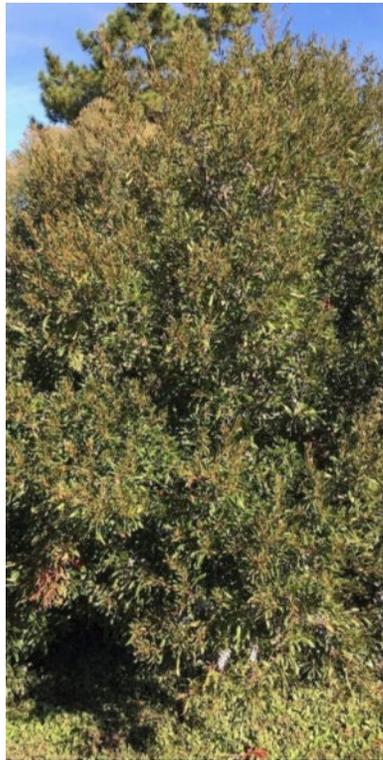
*Morella cerifera*, or Southern Wax Myrtle is a shrub or small tree.

*Morella c.* is the southern speciation of *Myrica pensylvanica*.

Southern Wax Myrtle is commonly called by its northern name:

“Bayberry”, though it is decidedly different in growth habit, fruit, and leaf. Leaves can range from obovate to oblanceolate, from 4 ½” long and 2” wide to a more typical size of 1 ½” to 3 “ long to 1/3” to ¾” wide. The waxy drupes are grey and globose, 1/8” wide and massed on sessile cluster of 2-6 on previous

year’s growth. Like the author of this article, the flowers are uninteresting and imperfect. In Richmond mature specimens have an open growth habit and wispy appearance and can grow to 20’ high and wide.



Southern Wax Myrtle prefers moist soils but is draught tolerant. She rhizomatically colonizes the Coastal Plain in interdune swales, maritime swamps, and mesic tidal forests. You will increasingly notice groves of them on the eastern side of interstate 95 all the way to the barrier islands. She can tolerate difficult environments including clay, pollution and salt spray and fixes nitrogen in her roots. However, the better you steward her, the more she will reward you and the ecosystem she occupies.

The waxy fruits borne on female plants are prized by native and migrating birds during the winter and have also been a source of candle wax. In spring, an amateur may identify them simply by the pleasant odor they emit, and the crushed leaf provides an aromatic delectation unrivaled. Because Wax Myrtle is hardy in zones 7 to 11 we can expect them to provide an evergreen hedge in our region; an AWESOME alternative to Privet. She prefers full sun but will be just fine in the part shade and pollution of the city environment. Propagation is easy, requiring root nodal cuttings taken in early to midsummer in a simple layering with bottom heat. Seeds sown in Autumn are most successful, if you can keep the critters away from them. Just plant some for the critters, too. If this is not an option, you may make a slurry of the root of wild violets (*Violaceae*) and coat the berries before planting. Most foraging fauna can sense this potential poison and disregard treated seed. This species is susceptible to *Colletrichum acutatum*, an anthracnose spread by an invasive Eriophyd mite vector. Affected plants present spotting and browning. Take care to remove and dispose of affected material and report the incident to the Virginia Extension for guidance.

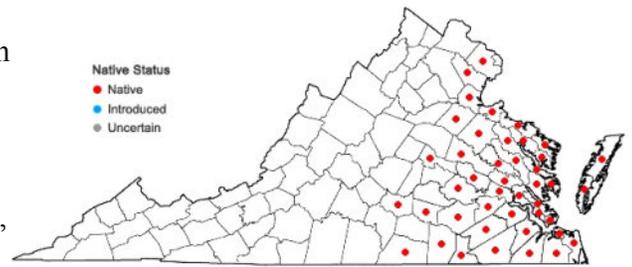
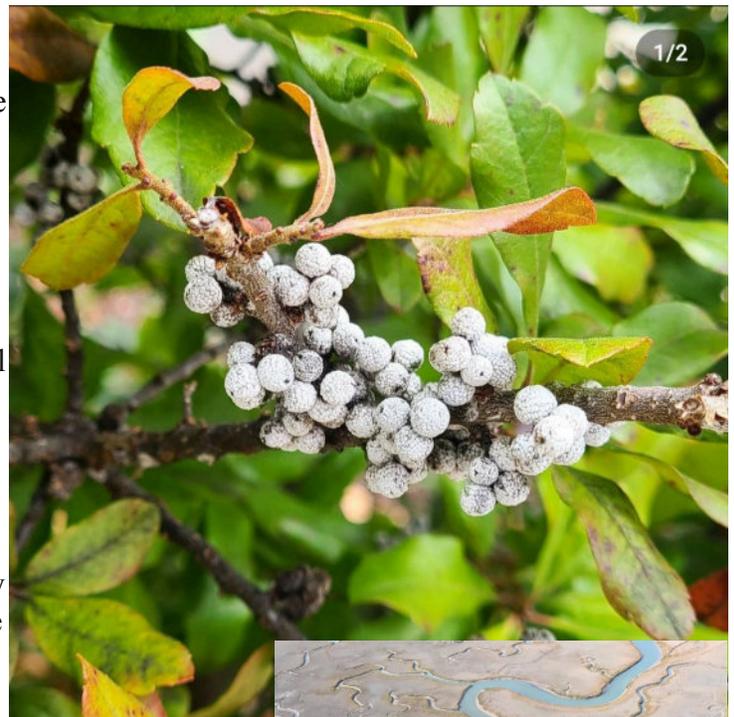


Photo from Wikipedia: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/13/Southern\\_Wax\\_Myrtle\\_Flower\\_Sexing.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/13/Southern_Wax_Myrtle_Flower_Sexing.jpg)



### How to extract the wax from bayberries

Gather about 15 lbs of berries when fully ripe in early to mid-fall, October to November in most areas. The berries will remain on the bush into the winter, unless they are eaten by birds. 15 lbs of berries will produce 1 lb of wax.

Wash the berries under cold water. Using a pot reserved for wax, place the cleaned berries into the pot. Fill the pot with cold water so that the water comes to at least 2 inches above the top of the berries. Simmer the berries for one hour, but do not boil. Boiling the water will reduce the fragrant scent by releasing the essential oils.

Pour off the water while it is still hot, reserving the water. It will contain bayberry wax. Add fresh cold water and simmer the berries again for one hour. Pour off the water into the pot with the first water. The wax will float on the surface of the water. Simmer the water, briefly, so that all the wax is floating on the surface of the water. Turn off the heat and let the water cool overnight. The extracted berries may be safely composted.

Once the wax has solidified, remove it from the surface of the water.

### How to clean the wax:

At this point, the wax may contain bits of twigs, bugs, and debris, captured in the floating wax. Place the wax into a cleaned wax pot. Add three inches of water to the pot. Simmer the wax once again in this freshwater, just long enough to melt the wax. Remove any twigs or debris that are floating on the surface. Turn off the heat and let the wax solidify again in a cool place.

Remove the solid wax. Lay it out on a clean surface to dry fully. Once the wax is fully dry it may be stored until you are ready to use it.

The wax is hard, brittle, and fatty to the touch. When using it for candle making add beeswax to the wax formula in a 1:2 ratio of beeswax to bayberry wax, by weight. Use a gram scale for accuracy. While you can make candles out of 100% bayberry wax, the addition of beeswax makes the candles more stable and less brittle.

Sourced from: <https://joybileefarm.com/diy-bayberry-candles/>

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### Wingstem vs Crownbeard:

These native plants bloom in the late summer to early fall and from a distance look alike, with both having winged stems and yellow aster like flowers. Large numbers appear in R. Garland Dodd Park in Chesterfield and are quite spectacular. Until recently I had mis-identified the plants in R. Garland Dodd Park as wingstem (*Verbesina*

*alternifolia*) when actually they were Yellow Crownbeard (*Verbesina occidentalis*). The easiest way to tell them apart is by the leaves. Wingstem, photo on the left, has alternate narrower leaves. and Crownbeard, photo on the right, has opposite more ovate leaves.

The pictures were taken on September 18th at Battersea Plantation in Petersburg, VA, where both were found.

*Richard Moss*

