



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

December, 2022



**Chapter Meeting 7:00 PM, Thursday December 1, 2022
at the Libbie Mill library, 2100 Libbie Lake East St, Henrico Va 23230.
The room is available at 6:30, come early to socialize
This meeting will also be available via zoom.**

Hello Pocahontas chapter! This December's meeting will be a little different. On Thursday December 1st at 7 pm, we will congregate in the Meeting room at Libbie Mill library at: 2100 Libbie Lake East St, Henrico Va 23230. Our guests will be virtual and in-person. We will be welcoming Courtney Hayes and Pat Calvert to speak on wildlife corridors. **Please register for the Zoom meeting here.** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8442288442288>

Preserving habitat connectivity helps keep ecosystems healthy and intact. Specifically, preserving wildlife corridors, or connections between patches of important habitat, protects public health, reduces wildlife-vehicle collisions, allows wildlife to move to more suitable habitats, and makes our state more resilient in the face of a changing climate. We will discuss the importance of wildlife corridors, what work is being done to protect them in Virginia, and what work still needs to be done. A preview of which is available here: <https://engage.vcnva.org/event/general-assembly-preview/e442288>

Courtney Hayes received a bachelor's degree in Biology and is currently finishing her Master of Science degree in Biology from Eastern Kentucky University where her research focused on mesocarnivore ecology, especially of the eastern spotted skunk. She has worked as a zoologist and data scientist for the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Courtney is passionate about protecting wild animals, plants, and ecosystems through scientific research, good management practices, and getting people involved. In her free time, you can find Courtney at the summit of a mountain or in the woods looking for salamanders.



Since 2017, Pat Calvert has served as Senior Policy & Campaigns Manager for Virginia Conservation Network -- facilitating a diverse partnership to collectively develop and execute strategic campaigns that advance clean water, resilient communities, and land & wildlife conservation policy across the commonwealth. His non-profit career continues to this day as one of a communicator, facilitator, and advocate of our shared natural resources and health. When not at work, you will find him in or atop a creek or river.

This hybrid meeting (live or via Zoom) is free and open to the public. The live meeting will be at Libbie Mill Library in the Meeting room. The meet and greet starts at 6:30 pm, followed by the presentation at 7 pm. A short business meeting will follow the presentation.



Presidents Message

Hello Pocahontas Chapter,

Well, it may not be officially winter, but it's the dormant season. Zzzzz. As some of you may know, this is my least favorite time of year. Sure, it's an excuse to drink a dark beer, grow a beard and/or stop shaving legs, but botanically it's boring. This is the time of year my grumpy-meter goes from a 3-5 to a steady 7 or 8. But there are things to do to keep our botanical interests wet.

First, despite the time of year, we hope to have several plant walks over winter. Hopefully one each month December through February. We will plan these at our business meeting following our speaker this Thursday (Libbie Mill Library instead of Lewis Ginter this month). Anyone can lead a plant walk. Pick a place and time, and we can get it on the schedule and let the chapter know. At least a few good botanists tend to show up for the walks, so the lead doesn't need to know every plant.

Second, if you want to get outside and mingle with fellow plant lovers, you can also attend the February Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden workday. I had a good time at the last two. I got to meet chapter members I had not met, see some again I haven't seen in a while, and pull some invasive species. We got to know poison ivy in its dormant state really well last time. I can spot those rusty terminal buds a mile (1.6 km) away now.

Third, if you missed any of our speakers at our in-person and Zoom hybrid meetings, these are online now here: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8250536>. For all VNPS recordings, go here: <https://vimeo.com/vnps>. Thanks to IT guru Mark Murphy for posting these monthly.

Lastly, try to enjoy the dormant plants. I love nerding out over twigs, buds, bark, and leaf scars. I also have two books on winter herbaceous plants. Let me know if you need some recommendations.

On another note, we are looking for a new chapter secretary. Our current secretary, Rachel Fortin, has done a great job, but she is stepping down to spend more time with her family. The primary duty of the secretary is keeping minutes of our business meetings. Please let me know if you're interested.

Cheers,

Matt Brooks, President, Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS

VNPS Pocahontas Chapter November Meeting Minutes, 3 November, 2022 at 7:00 PM

Presentation:

Kaity Bevenour, owner & operator of Parallel Nursery, presented on the native plant industry and her horticultural journey.

Chapter Business Meeting:

Board Members Present

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

Agenda Items:

1. December Plant of the Month- Catherine volunteered to do the plant of the month and will send the information to Richard.

2. December Meeting Format- Jason has already spoken to the Libbie Mill Library so the meeting will be both in person at the library and on Zoom.

3. Chapter Support for Native Plant Projects- Matt developed a document with processes to advise and support projects he sent to the Board. Lisa suggested keeping a database of information on the Chapter Drive to send them. Catherine recommended referring them to the VNPS website for more information. Jason suggested a digital document to serve as a project plan or "recipe". The group decided to pass on Matt's plan and refer most project requests that involve consulting to the VNPS website. Catherine volunteered to serve as a consultant for some projects. Lisa also recommended referring them to the Master Gardener SMART Scapes for Native plants.

New Business:

Lisa asked when the next election would be held. Matt said he would look on the Chapter Drive for details and dates and email the Board.

Action Items:

Lisa will be attending the meeting for donating the money the group designated for the new printing of the Flora.

Matt will email the Board more information on the election process.

Rachel Fortin, Secretary

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.

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Pocahontas Chapter Plant of the Month

Miniature Trees - Ground Pine (*Dendrolycopodium obscurum*)

by Catharine Tucker

Every Christmas, my parents and I would collect evergreens to decorate the house. At times, the bottom limbs trimmed from the Christmas tree itself were enough. Sometimes we trimmed shrubbery in our yard. Sometimes, friends would invite us to join them in collecting red-cedar, pine and holly from their property.

Despite seeing street vendors selling wreaths and bundles of pine and cedar, piles of holly and bunches of mistletoe, we never even considered *buying* greenery. As a youngster, I never considered where these came from, but my mother knew. They were gathered from the wild, not always with permission, even using shotguns to cut mistletoe from treetops. Most disturbing to her were the wreaths of ground pine and running cedar. She saw those as robbing the woods by pulling up and killing entire patches (Photo 1).



Mom put twigs of pine and holly around candles on the mantle beside the tree. We added small branches of red-cedar to fill in spaces. I hung bunches of pine and holly tied with huge red bows on the front and back doors. The pungent smell of evergreens filled the house.

When we moved to the house in Hanover, Mom was delighted to discover three large patches of Ground Pine in the woods. She would proudly tell people about our woods, but always protectively omitted those ground covering evergreens. She had learned - and taught me - that these patches are clones, each patch a single plant, slow-growing and reproducing primarily vegetatively. (Photo 2)



We identified our plants as Common Ground-pine or Tree-clubmoss, *Lycopodium obscurum*. Older field guides will still use this name, but it is now *Dendrolycopodium obscurum*. Recent taxonomic changes have resulted in several related genera for what I learned as “fern allies.” These are vascular plants (having separate tissues for transporting water and nutrients), and they reproduce by spores, not seeds. They are grouped separately from ferns into the family Lycopodiaceae, shortened to ‘Lycopods’! The Flora of Virginia records 6 genera and 10 species in this state. Some species are restricted to narrow habitats; some are more widespread. *Dendrolycopodium obscurum* or Common Ground-pine is known from nearly every county in Virginia in habitats varying from medium to dry acidic upland forests, hummocks in seepage swamps to damp flatwoods. While considered “frequent to common,” these slow-growing plants are disappearing due to habitat loss in the more developed and heavily populated areas of Central, Eastern and Northern Virginia.

Ground-pine is perennial and terrestrial with tree-like upright shoots from deeply subterranean horizontal stems. Leaves of the main stem are appressed against the stem. **(Photo 3)** Branches are almost in whorls, are evenly forked and slightly flattened, 6-9 mm (~3/8 in) wide. Leaves are 6-ranked, but the top rank are slightly smaller than the others. **(Photo 4)**



Reproductive spores are produced in a strobilus, sessile at the tips of stems. The strobili appear in the fall with spores borne in sporangia at the base of “leaves”

(Photo 5). These characteristics help differentiate the Common Ground-pine from the other two species of Tree-clubmoss in Virginia and from other Lycopods.



Each Christmas here in Hanover, Mom and I would make an expedition to pick one stem of the Common Ground-Pine and add it to a bouquet of holly on the kitchen table. It always lasted well into February! **(Photo 6)**



Again this Christmas, I will pick one stem and keep a bit of evergreen indoors all winter.

