



# THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

January, 2023



**We have no formal meeting for January due to the Festival of Lights holiday display at Lewis Ginter, but we will have a business meeting on January 5, 2023 via Zoom only at 7:00PM**

**The Meeting Agenda is on page 3**

To join see Below:

Topic: Pocahontas Business Meeting

Time: Jan 5, 2023 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89145728187?pwd=aE5YcW43dGZ4TFdOS1JLMS9MSE9LQT09>

Meeting ID: 891 4572 8187

Passcode: 691884

## **Pocahontas Chapter President's Message**

Hey folks,

Happy New Year. We're one month closer to spring. Remember, January is a good time to renew your VNPS membership. You may not get a reminder when your current membership expires.

January is a somewhat dormant month for the Pocahontas Chapter. We can't meet at Lewis Ginter because of their holiday light display. We will have a business meeting January 5, 2023, at 7:00 pm to discuss a modification to the chapter bylaws and to welcome our new secretary, Lydia Nichols. Welcome Lydia! We're thankful she stepped up and volunteered for this position. It's important we keep minutes of our meetings, and it's hard to multitask and keep minutes without a secretary. Anyone can attend the business meetings. You can find the Zoom link in the email I sent to the chapter on December 19, 2022.

Our main agenda item is modifying the text to our chapter bylaws to state that elected board positions are for 3-year terms. The draft modifications will be sent to the chapter for review and voted on during our February business meeting. If you're new to the chapter, our business meetings typically follow the guest speaker at our monthly meetings, which are the first Thursday of the month September through April.

We'll reschedule the winter field trip to Cumberland Marsh. So far, I'm looking at Saturday, January 21, 2023, weather depending. We'll send out an email announcement once the time and date are final. In the meantime, checkout our January plant-of-the-month article on *Equisetum praealtum*, tall scouring rush.

Cheers,

Matt Brooks

President, Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS

**The Pocahontas January plant of the month is tall scouring rush, *Equisetum praealtum*, also known as *E. hyemale*.** by Matt Brooks, photos from: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/equisetum-praealtum/>

The first thing to clarify is scouring rushes, also called horsetails, are not true rushes (Juncaceae) but are ferns in their own family, the Equisetaceae. This article will mainly focus on *Equisetum* in general.

When I was young, I learned that *Equisetum* was a fern ally, like the club moss December 2022 plant of the month. According to modern phylogenetic classification—2016’s *Plant Systematics: A Phylogenetic Approach* (4th Ed.)—*Equisetum* is nested within the ferns, or monilophytes. This means they share common ancestors with the other ferns we’re familiar with and reproduce from spores.

The Equisetaceae is an ancient group. Fossil relatives date back to the Devonian 408–360 million years ago, and they were major components of the Carboniferous forests. These were mainly understory plants, but some could reach 20 meters tall. The earliest *Equisetum* fossils are from the Eocene 54–38 million years ago.

The modern family Equisetaceae contains only the genus *Equisetum*, of which there are 15 species worldwide. They are cosmopolitan except for Australia, New Zealand, and Antarctica (It’s been introduced in New Zealand and is considered invasive).



**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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*E. praealtum* stems are rhizomatous, perennial, evergreen, and may be topped with a reproductive structure called a strobilus (strobili plural). At least one *Equisetum* species can reach

8 meters high, but most are under 1 meter. The raspy stems have external alternating vertical ridges and grooves, are usually hollow, and have a central canal and smaller canals under the ridges and valleys internally. The stems have distinct nodes with minute, whorled leaves fused into sheaths at the base.

Sometimes the nodes may produce branches in some species. The stems contain silica, which gives them a rough feel, and this is why they were reportedly used for cleaning cookware. Kind of like a scouring pad. I have used *Equisetum* in a pinch when camping, and they worked great.

*E. praealtum* occurs throughout Virginia in floodplain forests, mesic areas, and calcium-rich soils. The Flora of Virginia (with its new hyperlinked botanical terms!) shows records from almost every county in the commonwealth. Virginia has four *Equisetum* species, two of which are widespread and two of which are documented in only a few counties.

Besides scouring cookware, *Equisetum* was traditionally used as a diuretic. A U.S. Forest Service website reports *Equisetum* was used to clean resin off the wheels of hurdy-gurdy musical instruments.



## January 5, 2023, Pocahontas Business Meeting Agenda

### Agenda

1. New secretary Lydia Nichols
2. February plant of the month
3. January and February plant walks. Matt Brooks will reschedule Cumberland Marsh January 21 at 1100.
4. Modifying chapter bylaws to state that each board term is 3 years (see procedure below).  
The chapter shall have a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and other officers which the membership may decide are needed. Officer terms are for three years.

Each year at the end of an officer's three-year term, three members of the chapter shall be selected by the president to serve on the nominating committee that will prepare a slate of candidates for the annual election of officers.

### ARTICLE VII Chapter Bylaws

The bylaws of the chapter may be amended through the following process:

1. A proposed amendment is presented by a member for discussion at a regular meeting of the chapter. A majority of the members present agree that the proposal should be submitted in writing to the membership for consideration.
2. a statement presenting the proposed amendment and the rationale for this suggested change is sent to all chapter members.
3. At a chapter meeting at least 15 days following the mailing of this statement, the proposed amendment is presented to the members for a final vote. The proposal is approved by a majority of the members present.

—Calendar needs updating if this is approved with each board member's start and end dates.