



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

February, 2023



**This will be a Zoom meeting because the speaker cannot travel.
Matt will be at LGBG for the watch party.**

Please join our speaker, Ben Kessler, of Little Bluestem and the "By the Seed of Our Plants" podcast for a conversation about cultivating beneficial ecological change over time, preserving genotypic diversity, building refugia, and other projects for working with nature in a time of extinction.

Little Bluestem is a local genotype native plant nursery and nonprofit organization for community education about ecology.

This will be a Zoom presentation because the speaker is unable to travel that evening, but members are welcomed and encouraged to join the watch party at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden.

The Zoom meet and greet and Lewis Ginter gathering start at 6:30. A short business meeting will follow the speaker.

Register in advance for this meeting at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUude2orTIqHNJ1EA_M4GC3PkWEsikrEPJe

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

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## Pocahontas Chapter President's Message

Hey folks,

We had a great Cumberland Marsh winter plant walk in January. Thanks to all who came out. We had chapter members and a few master naturalists. We may have set a recent hiking distance record for the chapter—3.9 miles! We saw some cool plants and had great views of the marsh through the dormant twigs and branches. Of interest to me were a few post oaks (*Quercus stellata*), mixed in with the common oaks, and some tall stands of common sweet leaf (*Symplocos tinctoria*) along part of the trail. I don't see these plants where I normally work and hike. (See trip photos on page 4.)

At the state level, the recently formed diversity, equity, and inclusion state committee, chaired by Melody Mobley, is finalizing its mission statement and official name. I'd like to thank chapter member Amy Ritchie Johnson for representing our chapter on this committee. Amy is passionate about things cool and important (e.g., native plants and diversity), and it shows.

We're planning a February trip to Dorey Park to see the skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) in bloom. Maybe next weekend. We'll send out an email announcement once the time and date are final. In the meantime, checkout our February plant-of-the-month article on *Tradescantia virginiana*, Virginia spiderwort, our chapter mascot, written by our very own vice president and ecological warrior Jason Aldrich.

Cheers,

Matt Brooks

President, Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS

**The Pocahontas Chapter February plant of the month:  
*Tradescantia virginiana*, or Virginia Spiderwort.**

by Jason Aldrich

Virginia Spiderwort grows in open habitats like fertile grasslands and savannahs, wooded edges and streambanks. She spreads by underground stolons. She prefers moist well-drained acidic soils and is shade tolerant. This ephemeral perennial arises in stately upright clumps in May, blooming blue to pink 3-petaled flowers steadily and aggressively through July before fading in the summer heat, leaving the long, narrow, green foliage. A second flush of fall blooms is achieved by cutting back the foliage once the mid-Summer flowers have faded. Six bright yellow anthers stand strikingly against the filamentous stamens who obscure a tri-lobed superior ovary. Faded flowers recurve into a capsular fruit. The smooth, sometimes sparsely-haired dull-green stems can reach 40 centimeters in height bearing between two and five elongate leaves each.



*Tradescantia* is the Pocahontas chapter mascot, and was the 2008 Virginia Wildflower of the year.

Consuming *Tradescantia v.* is delightful. It's leaves are delicious raw and are reminiscent of curly kale. Before consuming large quantities, any human grazer with an affinity for the foliage should be informed of its high calcium oxalate content and irritating raphides. It is therefore advised to boil and drain the leaves before consumption. The delicate ephemeral flowers can be candied. Collect the flowers in the morning before they melt by mid-day, dip

them in egg whites and sprinkle with sugar. Allow them to dry on a rack and then decorate a loved one's birthday cake with them. *Tradescantia* can be grown and easily harvested as a native crop grown in a dedicated space, or in a guild alongside *Rudbeckia laciniata*, *Asclepias syriaca* and *Urtica gracilis*.

**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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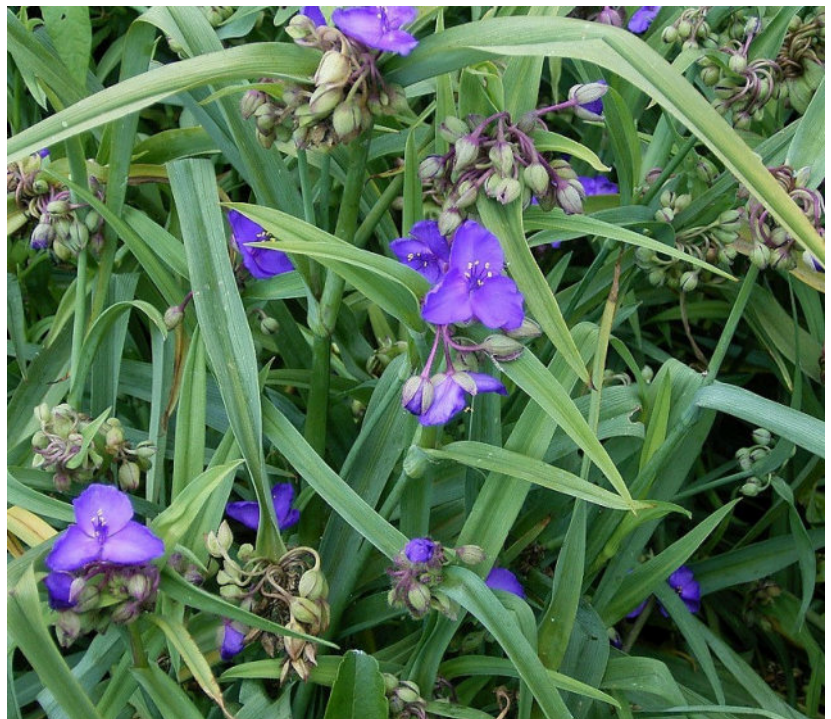


Photo from: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/tradescantia-virginiana/>

## Minutes of the January 5, 2023, Pocahontas Business Meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Matt Brooks, Jason Aldrich, Lisa Hamilton, Catharine Tucker, Joann Grayson, Alli Baird, Richard Moss and Lydia Nichols.

Members Absent: Becky Kyle.

### Agenda Items

- New interim secretary announced - Lydia Nichols. Catharine discussed the rules concerning an appointment mid-term.
- February Plant of The Month: Jason volunteered to do the February Plant of the Month - *Tradescantia virginiana*. He suggested getting merchandise with the plant on it since it's our chapter plant.
- January and February Plant Walks: Matt rescheduled the Cumberland Marsh walk for Jan 21, 2023 due to inclement weather. Lisa suggested to include a photo of the event location in the announcement email; Matt agreed. Matt asked for suggestions for the February walk. Lisa suggested pooling the membership to see if anyone would want to lead a walk and recommended including trip leads' contact only via email and not on Facebook posts. Jason recommended Hollywood Cemetery as a future walk location for the spring (May). Matt suggested doing more than one walk a month during the spring. Catharine suggested Dorey Park as a February location since the Skunk Cabbage will be in bloom.
- Modification of Chapter Bylaws: the change would include modifying board member terms to three years. Matt mentioned wanting to ensure the chapter is involved in this process. Removing the term "annual" was suggested by Joann and agreed upon. Catharine said that appointments are allowed for incomplete terms to be called "interim appointments". The modification was suggested in order to fall in line with the state level bylaws per Matt. Catharine motioned to move to adopt the proposed change. Lisa seconded. The proposal moved to vote; all members in favor, none abstained. Motion passed. Amendment as follows:  
"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.  
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 election of officers. If an officer resigns before the end of the three year term, the board may appoint an interim to finish the term.  
Matt said proposed language will be submitted to the chapter using the process noted in the chapter bylaws:

"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."

### Action Items

- Matt will send an invitation for suggestions regarding future plant walks to the chapter via email.
- Matt will look into scheduling February's plant walk at Dorey Park.
- Matt will research the start dates for the board terms.
- Board members should look at the summary document regarding the voting process made by Matt.
- Matt will send out information regarding the January plant walk at Cumberland Marsh.
- Matt will send out the proposed amendment separately to the chapter.

### Adjournment

- Matt adjourned the meeting at 7:29 PM.

# January 21 Field Trip to Cumberland Marsh Natural Area Preserve in New Kent County, VA



1. View of the marsh



2. A large oak tree.



3. Another view of the marsh

4. Our group exploring

5. Some sphagnum moss

6. Interesting bark of a Sweetgum tree (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)



7. Cranefly orchid (*Tipularia discolor*).



8. We had about 16 people at the field trip.



9. There was moss along the trail, this batch was growing in a decayed tree.

*Photos 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 by Lisa Hamilton; 2, 3, 4, by Matt Brooks.*