

THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

February 2007



Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia virginiana*)

February Meeting

Thursday February 1, 2007 at 7:00 PM

at the Education and Library Complex of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
in Classroom 2

Our Presentation will be:

What is a Herbarium

by Greg Plunkett, the curator of the VCU Herbarium

Dr. Plunkett has a Ph.D. in Botany, from Washington State University, and is Associate Professor of Biology at Virginia Commonwealth University. He will discuss the basics of what an herbarium is, what people do with the collections, and information on some of the world's most important collections. The VCU Herbarium is now housed in the Education & Library Complex at LGBG (in the basement), so perhaps we will have a small "field trip" downstairs to see it.

Chapter News

Future Speakers:

March - Rain Gardens.

April - Vicki Shufer, *Native Plants & Their Uses* - a close-up look at native plants and how they were used for food, medicine and crafts by indigenous cultures.

Field Trip: February 3 - In connection with the LGBG program on Indian use of Native Plants, plans have been made with Joyce Krigsvold who is the potter at the Pamunkey reservation museum to meet with a group of us at the Museum at the Pamunkey Indian Reservation (no facilities). Joyce will demonstrate and talk to us about traditional pottery making. Invite anyone else who you think might be interested. Contact Daune Poklis (e-mail daune@poklis.org, ph 741-7838) or Peggy Keefe at (W) 675-5000x3676 or (H) 285-0579.

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### *Grasses For The Bay* project

Dana Wiggins of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation needs volunteers for the *Grasses For The Bay* project. Dana was our September speaker and presented the project and its importance to us. Volunteers will be asked to grow grasses for replanting in the spring in selected tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay. Volunteers are not required to help with the planting. Initially we had at least 8 volunteers. We need them to step up and confirm their desire to participate in the project and are hoping for even more members to participate in this activity. Interested persons should contact Peggy Keefe at 804-285-0579 H or 804-675-5000 x3676 W, or Daune Poklis at 741-7838 or by e-mail at [daune@poklis.org](mailto:daune@poklis.org) for the details.

# Events

**February 3** Field Trip to Pamunkey Indian Reservation. See above in *Events* for details.

**February 22-25** Anyone interested in taking advantage of the group admission rate for the Maymont Flower and Garden Show should contact Peggy or Daune Poklis at 675-5000x3676 or 741-7838

**February 24** *Streams of Stewardship* - A Symposium on Water Management. Innovative design approaches and stewardship practices that conserve water in the landscape, bring beauty to our built and natural environments, and contribute to a healthy watershed. **We need volunteers to staff an educational table.** For details and updates, go to [www.lewisginter.org](http://www.lewisginter.org). Registration begins January 2, 2007

**March 3** Annual Workshop, University of Richmond

**March 17** Field Trip to Native Plant Nurseries, Hyla Brooks, and others near Gordonsville, VA.

**April 23** A MAYMONT SPRING GARDEN AND TREE WALK, 6pm, Maymont Grounds & Gardens. Note Maymont has many interesting programs for more see <http://www.maymont.org/>. or contact Peggy M. Singlemann at (804)358-7166 ext 326 Pamunkey

**April 14** Field Trip to see wildflowers at Monticello

**April 22** Spring Fling at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Volunteers needed in Children's Garden 1- 4 p.m.

**April 28, May 26 June 23, July 28, Aug. 25, Sept. 22, Oct. 27** LGBG program on Indian use of Native Plants. Volunteers needed at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in the Children's Garden 10 am - 2 pm

**May 5** Annual Picnic and Field Trip at Richard Moss's house in Chester

**Oct. 28** *Goblins and Gourds* at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Volunteers needed in Children's Garden 1- 4 PM

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The Pocahontas Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

serves the counties of: Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King William, New Kent, Powhatan and the cities of Ashland, Hopewell, 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	Peggy Keefe
Vice President	Daune Poklis
Secretary	Judith Sheldon
Treasurer	Bucci Zeugner
Membership Chair	Pat Brodie

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VNPS Website - www.vnps.org

Minutes of the January 4, 2007, Meeting of Pocahontas Chapter

President Peggy Keefe introduced the speaker, Joy Ware, Professor of Pathology at VCU School of Medicine and Director of the Conservation Medicine Program for the VCU Rice Center. Her presentation focused on the work she is conducting at several wildlife refuges where she is studying the diseases of amphibians and reptiles. Because these animals spend a portion of their lives in the water, later life close to the ground, and are long-lived, they may provide evidence of contaminants in water and soil, and can therefore be studied as environmental indicators. Monitoring wildlife not only provides baseline information about the animal's health but may also serve to protect human health. An important feature of amphibians is that they produce anti-microbial secretions in their skin that kill pathogens.

Dr. Ware said there is evidence that a deadly fungal disease that invades the skin of salamanders and some frogs has spread from Australia and other parts of the world to amphibians in Virginia. She showed slides of healthy and infected tissue samples of salamanders. A problem in this research is the lack of baseline information to determine if an infection is new to the species or if it has been around for a long time.

Dr. Ware discussed the snake research she is conducting at the Rappahannock River Valley National Refuge, the James River Wildlife Refuge, and the Presquile Island Refuge. Snakes have had

symbolic meaning in medicine for centuries although tend to be under appreciated in the medical community. She showed slides of snakes with fungal infections. This research may have implications as to whether contaminants are greater in the agricultural setting of the Rappahannock River Valley or in the more industrial James River area.

Reptiles (snakes and lizards) can be bitten by ticks. Research has determined that the blood of the Western fence lizard will kill the spirochetes that cause Lyme disease, but it is not yet known if this is the case with the Eastern fence lizard. What we do know is that with more bio-diversity, fewer humans contract Lyme disease.

After the talk, Dr. Ware answered a number of questions. She said that she would like to collect 50 snakes per season from each study refuge in order to have a good representation for comparison, but catching snakes is labor intensive.

She strongly suggested that we monitor animals before disaster hits the amphibian and reptile populations by gathering baseline information. She also discussed the impact of climate change on the health of animals.

She invited interested chapter members to join the VCU team collecting snakes in the spring and summer. She can be contacted at JWare@MCVH-VCU.edu

Peggy Keefe reminded members of upcoming events and to check the sign-up sheets. Members are encouraged to participate in the CBF sea grass workshop and to tell others who may be interested to contact Peggy or Daune.

Field Trip to Ferndale Park on the Appomattox River, Jan. 20, 2007

We went to the park to see Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) in bloom and we were well rewarded. Before we got to the skunk cabbage we passed a pond which had numerous water ferns (*Azolla caroliniana*) floating on the surface. These ferns have small flat scale-like floating leaves with roots hanging in the water, and in winter are bright red.

Getting to the cabbages involved traversing several swampy areas and an encounter with some overly friendly green briars, but was well worth the effort. Along the way we found alder in bloom, wild ginger, several crane fly orchids, hepatica, corydalis, Indian current, Christmas fern, and mullen. When we got to the area with the skunk cabbage we found a large numbers of them in bloom. The flowers can generate a significant amount of heat which probably serves to disperse their fragrance to attract pollinating insects. To humans the fragrance is distantly skunk-like. After we left the park we went to see the cucumber magnolia (*Magnolia acuminata*) at Violet Bank in Colonial Heights. The Cucumber Magnolia is a deciduous magnolia and is the northernmost species of the Magnolia family. The tree at Violet Bank is supposedly the second largest one of its type in the world and was planted in 1718.



Azolla caroliniana floating in a pond at Appomattox River Park



Above: Skunk Cabbage flowers.



Right: Cucumber Magnolia at Violet Bank

**Virginia Native Plant Society Membership Application
Pocahontas Chapter**

**Make Check payable to VNPS and Mail to:
Membership Chair, Blandy Experimental Farm, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2, Boyce, VA 22620**

Name: _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone: _____ **E-mail** _____

___ Individual	\$30.00	___ Sustaining	\$100.00
___ Family	\$40.00	___ Life	\$500.00
___ Student	\$15.00	___ Associate Groups	\$40.00
___ Patron	\$50.00	(Garden Clubs, etc.)	

**I wish to make an additional contribution to ___ VNPS or ___ The Pocahontas Chapter,
VNPS in the amount of:**

___ \$10 ___ \$20 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 Other _____

**Pocahontas Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
12565 Brook Lane
Chester, VA 23831**

