

THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

January 2012

Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia virginiana*)



January Meeting

Thursday January 5, 2012 at 7:00 PM

**at the Education and Library Complex of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in the Lab
The room is available at 6:30, come early and Socialize**

Because of Garden Fest, guests are asked to enter through the garden entrance of the ELC building. Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS meetings are free and open to the public.

The Pocahontas Chapter/VNPS is pleased to announce a presentation by award-winning author, Leonard M. Adkins. Profiled by Backpacker magazine, and referred to as the “Habitual Hiker,” Mr. Adkins will present
Wildflowers of the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains.

The Habitual Hiker has walked more than 19,000 miles in North America, Europe and the Caribbean. Among others, his photographs and articles have appeared in Islands, Backpacker, Caribbean Travel and Life, Blue Ridge Country, and Blue Ridge Outdoors. His book, *The Appalachian Trail: A Visitor's Companion*, was presented the Society of American Travel Writers Foundation's Lowell Thomas Journalism Award.

Leonard shares his love of the outdoors by presenting multimedia programs about his trips. January 5th's program is a presentation that is accompanied by folk, classical, and new age music and is an exploration of the southern Appalachian Mountains' floral wonders, from the lowest elevations to the loftiest heights.

The book the program is based upon has received enthusiastic reviews:

Charleston Gazette--“In the ever-expanding pantheon of guidebook writers, Leonard Adkins reigns supreme. *Wildflowers of the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains* is his latest regal effort.”

Blue Ridge Outdoors-- “Adkins' insights are as stunning and beautiful as the wildflowers themselves. Each detailed description reveals Adkins' lifelong immersion in the Southern Appalachian landscape. It's a precise, practical, and powerful guide for novices and experts alike.”

Butch Kelly, former natural history interpreter on the Blue Ridge Parkway--“This book is a tribute to the author's kinship with nature. It truly demonstrates his passion for the colorful treasures of the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains.”

His presentations receive high acclaim:

Cindy Sandberg, President Blue Ridge Wildflower Society--“I heard many comments that this was our best pilgrimage program ever.”

Mount Rogers Naturalist Rally--“We're still receiving notes and comments thanking us for sponsoring this wonderful one-of-a-kind nature program.”

Chesterfield County Winter Lecture Series--“People did not just hear and see the program; they experienced the trail right along with Adkins.”



Mr. Adkins will be available for book signings before and after the program. You may find out more about him and his other books, which include *Walking the Blue Ridge: A Guide to the Trails of the Blue Ridge Parkway*, *50 Hikes in Northern Virginia*, and *50 Hikes in Southern Virginia*, at www.habitualhiker.com.

Chapter Events

January 5, 2012: Chapter Meeting and Chapter Elections:

The Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS nominating Committee has nominated the following people for chapter offices:

Catharine Tucker --- President
Pat Brodie-----Vice President
Daune Poklis-----Secretary
Richard Moss-----Treasurer

We would like to have the new officers installed at the January meeting.

Due to the New Year's holiday, it is unlikely a ballot could be mailed back in time for the January Meeting so you can either vote in person at the meeting, call 748-2940 and vote, or go to the internet link below, <http://pocahontaschapter-vnps.org/ballotform.html>, where you can select the nominating committee's choice or write in someone else, then by clicking on the submit button, your choices will be e-mailed to Richard Moss.

February 2, 2012 Chapter Meeting: Speaker to be announced.

March 1, 2012 Chapter Meeting: Speaker to be announced.

April 5, 2012 Chapter Meeting: We will discuss and plan the September VNPS Annual Meeting

May 5, 2012 Chapter Annual Picnic

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.

Questions concerning membership can be addressed to our Membership Chair, Daune Poklis at (804) 741-7838 or daune@poklis.org.

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Chapter Website
pocahontaschapter-vnps.org

VNPS ANNUAL MEETING September 14-16, 2012

SAVE THE DATE!! RESERVE A ROOM NOW!

The VNPS 2012 Annual Meeting, hosted by the Pocahontas Chapter, will be held September 14-16, 2012 in Richmond, VA at Wyndham Virginia Crossings, a lovely facility overlooking the site of the Civil War Battle of Yellow Tavern. Rooms are limited; there is no block of rooms saved. You're encouraged to make your reservations as soon as possible directly with Wyndham to receive our special room rates. Rates are per room (plus tax), not per person, and include buffet breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday:

Single \$109.00, Double \$119.00 (including 2 breakfasts), Triple \$129.00, Quad \$149.00.

Please give Wyndham the event name "Virginia Native Plant Society Rate Quote" when making your reservation. Call 1-888-444-6553 (toll free).

Focusing on "Then and Now Along the James," field trips will be planned throughout the surrounding metropolitan area. Watch for registration forms for the VNPS meetings & programs in the spring VNPS newsletter with descriptions of field trips and opportunities to select according to your interests.

Winter Workshop:

The 2012 VNPS Winter Workshop will be held at the University of Richmond, on March 10, 9:15 - 3:15.

Speakers will present an overview of Virginia's Ecosystems. Martin Ogle of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority will be the keynote speaker with retired forester, Tom Dierauf presenting forest ecology, Mike Hayslett of Sweetbrier presenting non-tidal wetland ecology and Ben Tracy of Virginia Tech speaking on ecology of grasslands. The fee for this year has been raised to \$45. Registration will begin the last week of January (details later) and will be due March second. However, having sold out the past three years, folks are advised to register early.

If you make a reservation and find you cannot attend, please cancel. Each year we have several no-shows who do not cancel. Thus, we have a few empty seats. Participants will be asked to include telephone contacts. If we have a wait list and if space becomes available as late as 6 PM on March ninth, we will make every effort to give the seat(s) to wait listed individual(s). Registration will be available online. Details later.

The Pocahontas Chapter will provide refreshments etc. as in the past.

First Skunk Cabbage of the Year

This skunk cabbage, located in Surry County, VA, was in bloom on January first.

The Eastern Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) in summer has large skunky smelling leaves, which are the source of the plants common name. The leaves though not harmful to touch but are not considered edible raw, because the roots are toxic and the leaves can burn the mouth, however, the leaves may be dried and used in soups and stews. The leaves die back in summer, and the mottled purple flowers appear in winter to early spring.

Skunk cabbage flowers are notable for their ability to generate temperatures



significantly above air temperature in order to melt their way through frozen ground, placing it among a small group of plants exhibiting thermogenesis. Even though it flowers while there is still snow and ice on the ground it is successfully pollinated by early insects that also emerge at this time. Some studies suggest that beyond allowing the plant to grow in icy soil, the heat it produces may help to spread its odor in the air. Carrion-feeding insects that are attracted by the scent may be doubly encouraged to enter the spathe because it is warmer than the surrounding air, fueling pollination.

Eastern Skunk Cabbage has contractile roots which contract after growing into the earth. This pulls the stem of the plant deeper into the mud, so that the plant in effect grows downward, not upward. Each year, the plant grows deeper into the earth, so that older plants are practically impossible to dig up. They reproduce by hard, pea-sized seeds which fall in the mud and are carried away by animals or by floods (1).



1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symplocarpus_foetidus

2. Steve Hurst @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

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