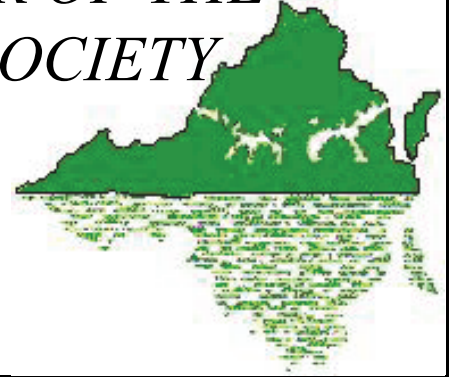


THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia virginiana*)

November 2013



Chapter Meeting

Thursday November 7, 2013 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

Our Speaker will be Barbara Wiedekehr who will present:

“Wildflowers of Virginia: Native Treasure”

Barbara Wiedekehr is a certified VA Master Gardener and VA Master Naturalist who teaches and conducts tours at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. Barbara maintains a practice in clinical psychology, and includes spiritual and restorative values of nature in her practice.

Pocahontas Chapter Programs - Fall 2013

- Nov 14 FIELD TRIP to the RICE CENTER. Trip Leader: Catharine Tucker, email is cath.tucker@gmail.com; cell phone is 804-938-6941. We will leave at 12:15 pm from Henrico County's North Park Library. Please let Catharine know if you will be coming AND if you will be joining the group at the library. If it's more convenient for you to go directly to the Rice Center from home, please let me know that also! The staff expects 6-7 of us to arrive at 1:15. Dr. Len Smock, Director of the Rice Center will be our guide in the habitat restoration areas. This is a special opportunity for our chapter since several of us have already seen the research and meeting facilities. He responded to Catharine's request: "I would be pleased to provide your group with a tour of the Rice Center on Nov 14. We have our regularly scheduled open house that afternoon; however, I will provide a tour specifically to your group." **Don't forget to communicate with the trip leader!!**
- Dec 14 Christmas Party, Location to be announced.
- Jan 9 **Note change of Date and location - 2nd Thurs.** Beth Farmer, chapter member, on growing native plants. **NOTE:** Meeting will be at the **Glen Allen Branch Library, 10501 Staples Mill Road Glen Allen, VA.**
- Feb 6 Daune Poklis on the VNPS trip to Smokies
- March 3 VNPS Workshop at U.of R. -Topic Climate Change. Pocahontas Chapter will provide a continental breakfast and be responsible for box lunches for the speakers as in the past. The program will be held in the Jepson Center which is a larger venue but more difficult for us to set up. We will need lots of volunteers to help with set up and take down. Don't forget that to attend the workshop, you must register!
- Mar 6 Emily Gianfortoni, chapter member, on identifying invasive plants and dealing with them
- Apr 3 OPEN
- May Picnic at Amelia County Wildlife Management Area

Other event of interest:

November 16-17 CCLC's Fifth Turning a New Leaf Conference will be held at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Pre-Registration is REQUIRED for this venue. Registration will CLOSE ON THURSDAY, November 14th, 2013. See <http://www.chesapeakelandscape.org/event/2013-turning-new-leaf-conference> for more information.

President's Message

In such beautiful fall weather, despite occasional showers, I don't want to be indoors. Even pulling up lady's-thumb, privet, English ivy, periwinkle and oriental bittersweet is an excuse to enjoy the golden colors of hickories and multicolored sweet gum. I've given up on the stilt grass - just mowed it!

As of this writing, the Chapter still needs a slate of officers for the coming year. Did anyone read the chapter by-laws that were distributed last month?



Or the descriptions of duties of the various officers? The current officers remain active chapter members, and will be glad to help orient and assist new officers.

Please contact me if you are interested in serving the chapter in one of these leadership roles. That's our first priority.



We have programs with speakers confirmed through March 2014. We have a field trip to the Rice Center planned for November 14, but we need some more suggestions for field trips. Please contact me, or Daune or Richard if you have suggestions or requests for a topic or speaker for April, or for field trips, or if you have other ideas.

The project to remove invasive plants along the creek at the Garden continues as part of our contribution to the Garden. See the separate article with photos of the results of our work in October. We'll announce another work day at the November meeting.

I'm looking forward to an enthusiastic presentation by Barbara Wiedekehr on November 7, and to our trip to Rice Center Nov 14. (Details are in the calendar.)

Please make a special effort to greet and welcome new members and visitors at our meetings.

Catharine Tucker, President

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 Catharine Tucker
804-938-6941 cath.tucker@gmail.com
- Vice President Pat Brodie
804-266-3070 owpa03v@gmail.com
- Secretary Daune Poklis
(804) 741-7838 daune@poklis.org
- Treasurer Richard Moss
(804) 748-2940 richard@mossrd.org
- Membership Daune Poklis
(804)741-7838 marydaune@poklis.org

Address all other correspondence to
Richard Moss, Editor
12565 Brook Lane
Chester, VA 23831
richard@mossrd.org

Chapter Website
pocahontaschapter-vnps.org

Fall Plants: Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*)

Phytolacca is a genus of perennial plants native to North America, South America, East Asia and New Zealand. Some members of the genus are known as pokeweeds or similar names such as pokebush, pokeberry, pokeroot or poke sallet. Other names for species of *Phytolacca* include inkberry and ombú. The generic name is derived from the Greek word φυτόν (phyton), meaning plant, and the Latin word *lacca*, a red dye.

The genus comprises about 25 species of perennial herbs, shrubs, and trees growing from 3 to 82 ft. tall.

The species native to Virginia, Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*) is a perennial herbaceous plant which can reach a height of 10 feet, but is usually 4 to 6 feet. It forms an upright, erect central stem early in the season, which changes to a spreading, horizontal form later in the season with the weight of the berries. The stem is chambered with pith and often red as the plant matures. The plant dies back to the roots each winter. The leaves can be 12-16 inches long, are alternate, entire and medium green, smooth with what some characterize as an unpleasant odor.

The flowers come in clusters up to 10 inches long. Each flower in the cluster is small (1/4 inch wide) and white. Pokeweed blooms from July to September.

The fruit is a dark purple berry growing in clusters on bright red stems. Each berry is about 1/4 inch across. As the berries ripen, they change color from green to purple and the clusters droop from the weight.



Pokeweed is found in woods, fields, roadsides, gardens, and waste places.

All parts of the plant are poisonous. Young pokeweed shoots, which contain very low levels of toxins, were used as food by Native Americans and others. In the Southeastern United States, some people still cook and eat “poke sallet.” It is thoroughly boiled in water that is changed twice during cooking. Native Americans also used pokeweed in herbal remedies as a heart stimulant and to treat cancer, rheumatism, itching, and syphilis. The pokeweed root was also used as a laxative and to induce vomiting. European settlers adopted the use of pokeweed, which went on to become a common folk medicine.

The highest amounts of poison are found in the roots, leaves, and stems. Small amounts are in the fruit. Cooked berries and leaves (cooked twice in separate water) can be eaten (although there is no guarantee that they are safe). The roots should never be eaten. Deaths have been reported. Improper cooking of leaves or eating some of the roots with the leaves can cause serious poisoning. Eating more than 10 uncooked berries can cause serious problems in children.

Juice from the berries was once used to make ink and dye, and it is still used by the food industry to make red food coloring. Farmers and dairymen use an alcohol extract or tincture of pokeweed to reduce swelling of cows’ udders. Followers of President James Polk (1845-1849), wore pokeweed twigs during their candidate's election campaign, mistakenly believing that the plant was named for him.

A much larger *Phytolacca*, native to South America, is *Phytolacca dioica*, commonly known as ombú, is a massive evergreen tree native to the Pampa of South America. It has an umbrella-like canopy spreading to a girth of 40 to 50 feet and can attain a height of 40 to 60 feet. Because it is derived from herbaceous ancestors, its trunk consists of anomalous secondary thickening rather than true wood. As a result, the ombú grows fast but its wood is soft and spongy enough to be cut with a knife. These properties have led it to be used in the art of bonsai, as it is easily manipulated to create the desired effect. Since the sap is poisonous, the ombú is not grazed by cattle and is immune to locusts and other pests. For similar reasons, the leaves are sometimes used as a laxative or purgative. It is a symbol of Uruguay and Argentina, and of Gaucho culture, as its canopy is quite distinguishable from afar and provides comfort and shelter from sun and rain.

This species is also cultivated in Southern California as a shade tree.



References: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phytolacca_americana

1. <http://www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/pokeweed.htm>

2. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002874.htm>

3. <http://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatmentsandsideeffects/complementaryandalternativemedicine/herbsvitaminsandminerals/pokeweed>
4. <http://floradeluruguay.blogspot.com/2008/12/phytolacca-dioica-omb.html>

The Great American Privet Pull

Five of us spent about two hours on October 15 clearing the invasive privet from the west bank of the creek at the northwest corner of Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. The area has much more sunlight reaching the ground now. This is an advantage for seedlings of the native trees and shrubs there. And spring ephemerals like the may apples we discovered last May can flourish. The area looks like there's now room for the bluebells to spread down the hill. There are both Christmas ferns and cinnamon ferns visible now, and who knows what we may find there next spring!

There is still a lot of honeysuckle and periwinkle to pull out, so we need to plan more work days. Thank you to the folks who helped this time. We hope more folks can turn out to get the satisfaction of working together and enjoying what we've accomplished.



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



POCAHONTAS CHAPTER VNPS
Meeting Minutes October 3, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 by acting president Catharine Tucker. She welcomed members, guests and visitors.

She introduced John Hummer who extended a personal invitation to all who were present to attend his Wet Lands Tour on October 20 (rain date Nov. 3). His property has 6 ecological areas including a seep, shrub bog, and savannah with a wide variety of south-eastern coastal natives.

The details of the event and property were in the September newsletter.

All interested in car pooling to his property are to meet on Saturday Oct. 20 at the North Park Library at 10:30 am.

Catharine introduced our speaker, John Hayden, botany chair of the VNPS and past department chairman of the University of Richmond. John's topic, the Botany of Fall Color was, as he described it, "some science and a lot of pretty pictures"; many of which he took on the U. of R. campus and at the Powhatan Wildlife Management Area. Leaf color change is the result of environmental and developmental signals which trigger the movement of food to the roots for storage. An abscission layer forms at the leaf base which inhibits xylem and phloem transport. This layer separates the leaf from the plant with an impenetrable cork layer. The leaf falls off and a leaf scar remains. All deciduous plants change leaf color as the leaves senesce (die). Not just trees but also shrubs, herbs, monocots and dicots. Colors range from purples and reds, to oranges, yellows, browns and whites. As the leaf dies, the pigments previously hidden by the chlorophyll become visible. The carotenoid and xanthophyll pigments are yellow, and are found in the chloroplasts. The anthocyanins are water soluble and found in the vacuoles of plant cells. They are responsible for the reds and purples.

Color progression can move from distal to proximal or proximal to distal areas of the leaf and/or branch or of the plant in general.

Some leaves are marcescent, that is they die but remain attached to the plant. They may wither and die or may change color in response to changing conditions.

Announcements:

October 15 Privet Pull at LGBG. Meet in the Lobby at 10:00. Don't forget that these hours count for VMN credit

November 14 1:00 PM, Rice Center open House - Meet at Noon at North Park Library

November 16-17 CCLC's Fifth Turning a New Leaf Conference will be held at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia

December 14 Christmas Party- Location to be announced.

January 9 Meeting at Glen Allen Library at usual time. Speaker will be Beth Farmer

February 6 Daune Poklis – The VNPS trip to the Great Smokey Mountains

March 3 VNPS Workshop at U.of R. –Topic Climate Change. Pocahontas Chapter will provide a continental breakfast and be responsible for box lunches for the speakers as in the past. The program will be held in the Jepson Center which is a larger venue but more difficult for us to set up. We will need lots of volunteers to help with set up and take down. Don't forget that to attend the workshop, you must register!

March 6 Emily Gianfortoni -- Invasives

April 3 To Be Announced

May Picnic at Amelia County Wildlife Management Area

Discussion: Catharine led the discussion with her concern that there are no members stepping up to fill the vacant officer positions. We still need President, Vice President, Secretary, and Membership chair. None of these positions is difficult or demanding and the retiring officers are glad to help and support the ones taking over. It is imperative for any organization to have new leadership on a regular basis in order to remain fresh. Pocahontas chapter needs new ideas and energy if we are to continue. Please contact Catharine if there is something you can do to help.

The remainder of the discussion time was spent brain storming ideas for field trips in the spring. They included, Powhatan Park, Pocahontas Park, James River Wildlife Management Area and the Hardware River.

Respectfully submitted,

Daune Poklis