



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

September 2016



**Chapter Meeting 7:00 PM,
Thursday September 8, 2016
at the Education and Library Complex of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
in the Lab**

The room is available at 6:30, come early to see Ginter's new native plant garden

This month's topic will be

“Native Communities in a Sea of Invasives: The Stories”

by Robert Whitescarver, soil scientist and conservationist

Bobby is a knowledgeable and entertaining storyteller with a great sense of humor. He has gathered accounts of his adventures and accomplishments, so be prepared to be both informed and amused by light-hearted stories from this “man of the land.” He writes about these in his blog, “Getting More on the Ground.” His blog has recently been recognized with an award from the Outdoor Writers Association.

Retired from the US Department of Agriculture, Whitescarver is now President of Whitescarver Natural Resources Management LLC. As an independent environmental consultant and a special consultant to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, he specializes in persuading and assisting landowners to restore native habitat. Actions to form riparian buffers, such as fencing cattle out of streams and planting native trees and shrubs lead to remarkable environmental improvements.

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## **Chapter Meetings:**

October 6th – Joan Maloof, author of Teaching the Trees.

November 3rd – Andrea Ash discussing vegetation changes on the James River.

## **Chapter Events:**

**Note: Signing-up for a field trip should be no later than 8 P.M. the day before the event.**

September 10 – Point of Rocks Park. Richard Moss (richard@mossrd.org or 804-748-2940) will be trip leader.

October 22 – Quarry Garden at Schuyler. 25-person limit. Register with Leslie (248-1758 or leleorr4@gmail.com).

## **President's Message**

Hi Everyone,

I hope this finds everyone well and geared up for the fall. We have some wonderful meetings, speakers, field trips and outreach opportunities coming up. I am happy to report I have added several new plants to my “life list” after seeing them in the wild for the first time. That is always so much fun. One literally in my back yard, amazing what you can see when you look. You could see something new if you join us for our upcoming walks at R. Garland Park at Point of Rock, Dorey Park, Richmond Battlefield Park, The Quarry Gardens at Schuyler, Hummers Wetlands or even our private tour of the new native garden at LGBG.

I have a request from our Outreach Committee. We need pictures to use in our various presentations. We are looking for pictures of natives plants used in landscapes, both residential and commercial, pictures of the James River, a Virginia wetland “in bloom”, pictures of natives and habitats in the wild. I know lots of us take lots of pictures, so if you have some you would like to share and would allow use of, please send to Peg Mohar, at dmohar@aol.com. Include the plant name, approximate location and any “backstory”.

Also, we are in need of a new Secretary. After doing a bang up job for several years, Irene is ready to pass the baton, as she is taking on a larger role in another organization. The role of Secretary are fairly straight forward....be

able to commit to MOST of the monthly and board meetings, take notes (handwriting is not a factor) type them up and send them out J. If you are interested in being more active, please contact me. Last but not least, I hope you have signed up for the annual meeting 9/9 to 9/11 in Blacksburg. This will be my first time attending and I am really looking forward to it. Registration closes 8/30, so don't delay. **Note:** Grace Chapman will be at Thursday's Chapter Meeting at 6:30 to give us a tour of the new Native Garden, so folks should come early. See you in September,

Leslie Allanson

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Field Trip to Low Line Walk and Chapel Island.

Saturday morning in RVA was warm and muggy, pretty much the norm for August. Nevertheless, 6 folks ventured out to explore the Low line Walk and Chapel Island. The Low Line is the brainchild of Capital Trees. It is a linear park along a critically important but neglected stretch of the Kanawha Canal and Virginia Capital Trail. Dubbed the "Low Line", with a nod to New York City's High Line, the site connects a recently enhanced Great Shiplock Park (GSP) with Richmond's much-loved Canal Walk. While the plants chosen for this site are not all natives, the vast majority are. We zigzagged between the newly planted beds and the natural shoreline of the canal. In the beds were river oats, joe-pye weed (1), baptisia, cardinal flower, blue lobelia, echinacea, various milkweeds, red twig dogwood, river birch, sweet bay magnolia, redbud and more. Along the edge of the canal were New York ironweed, elderberry, poke berry, creeping cucumber, marsh mallow, rubeckia and more. Once on the island, we saw more cardinal flower "in the wild" and came across both our native dayflower (2) and the



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.

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yellow passionvine (3), both new finds for me. I really enjoyed the walk, it is always fun to venture out with like-minded folks to see what we can see and learn from others. Capital Tree's does have occasional volunteer work days, as does James River Park system. You can learn more about both on their website capitaltrees.org and jamesriverpark.org.

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### "In Search Of": Botanical Adventures of a Plant Detective

by Robert Wright

I have personally been "studying" plants and gardening in Richmond since I was in 7th grade, but really started investigating the Richmond Flora during college (1983). In the intervening years, I have amassed much data and documentation through library and archive trolling, herbarium research, preparation of herbarium specimens and personal observations, starting with the James River and branching out into its tributaries. Always being interested in weeds and exotics, I later started to focus on the vast areas of disturbed ground in all of the City, including Henrico and Chesterfield Counties. There is no dearth of these types of plants. And we have special novelties as well – the subject of this newsletter segment.



In doing so, I have come to appreciate the unusual, strange, exotic, and novel, as well as the uncommon, rare and otherwise botanically significant plants in the Richmond area. Now, I have decided to share these with the Chapter membership in hopes that this new section of the newsletter will inspire some to seek out new and wondrous species right here in town. I will feature one local plant each month that is worthy of our esteem and attention. The theory behind this is simple. Get out and discover new places and new plants. Take some pictures. Record some notes. Once you do, please share your experiences with me so I can report the information to our editor so that everyone can benefit. We can then have discussions about these finds at our Chapter meetings and by email at [RVApplantdetectives@hotmail.com](mailto:RVApplantdetectives@hotmail.com).

We have two targets this month:

### 1. *Dryopteris spinulosa* (O. F. Mueller) Watson, Spinulose Wood Fern

= *Dryopteris carthusiana* (Vill.) H.P. Fuchs of many modern treatments.

Spinulose wood fern, like other wood ferns (classically *Dryopteris*), is of hybrid origin, originally sterile but becoming fertile when chromosomes are doubled, and itself prone to hybridization with its generic cousins. What makes this species unusual is that one of its parents can only be guessed, and is likely an extinct progenitor destroyed by glaciation.

In November 1946, a C&P telephone engineer, W. W. Hopkins, collected the marginal wood fern “in a fairly open, moist ravine, 3 miles southwest of Bon Air, VA and placed the specimen in the State Seed Laboratory Herbarium of the Virginia Department of Agriculture in Richmond. This places the location of this fern station on the headwaters of Pocoshock Creek or headwaters to various branches of tributaries to Falling Creek within or very near the current-day Smoketree or Walton Park Subdivisions.

In the Richmond area, the spinulose wood fern is very uncommon, and unusual places where it would be found are very localized. I am not aware of many stations for it near Richmond.

Anyone seen this fern around ??



public domain photo, source: [http://www.kolibrikerteszet.hu/files/Kepek/pafrany/Dryopteris\\_carthusiana.jpg](http://www.kolibrikerteszet.hu/files/Kepek/pafrany/Dryopteris_carthusiana.jpg)

### 2. *Smilax laurifolia* L. Laurel Leaf Greenbrier

Perhaps the laurel leaved greenbrier is a keystone species when considering ‘magnolia bog’ flora. It is distinctive in the greenbriers by being very robust stems with heavy, strong, awl-like prickles and a dark green leathery leaf. Unfortunately, this tough wetland vine is believed to have been extirpated from the City of Richmond. It was earliest described in the 1739 *Flora Virginica* (Volume I) and later drawn by Queen Mary’s court physician and royal gardener, Leonard Plukenet for the Linnaean type specimen. It is likely that John



Banister observed the Virginian plant in the 1680s. Later, in 1887, it was collected in Richmond by Issac Burks (specimen at the Philadelphia Museum of Natural Sciences) and was well known through the 1950s around the flat meadows and headwaters of Goodes Creek off Jefferson Davis Highway near Oak Grove and elsewhere. As a species of seeps, shaded toeslopes, and small stream heads, much of this habitat has disappeared within the City Limits. It is still found with regularity in Chesterfield, Henrico, and Hanover in such places, but reports from the City have not occurred in many years. I’d like to receive any reports of it within the City of Richmond. Have you seen it?

Photo sources:

<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=smilax+laurifolia&view=detailv2&id=8BFBCC93A4E3F6ADF93AF8D7D425410C877DFCCE&selectedindex=42&ccid=ktW9D1vM&simid=608014546705058161&thid=OIP.M92d5bd0f5bcc9aa214bd003880e9e40co0&mode=overlay&first=1>

<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=smilax+laurifolia&view=detailv2&id=3EB5E9A3F273951300F31931000D0B28746595DE&selectedindex=43&ccid=ofX5CJwR&simid=607995189295582328&thid=OIP.Ma1f5f9089c11a6b13b8d45fda2d4b079o0&mode=overlay&first=1>

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