



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

January, 2017

**Chapter Meeting 7:00 PM,
Thursday January 12, 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 socialize

Our speaker John Townsend presents “Mosses and Liverworts, the Unsung Flora of Virginia”

Townsend is a well regarded botanist in the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Division of Natural Heritage and is one of the authors of the Flora of Virginia. His new emphasis for the past several years has involved mosses and liverworts. He encountered a steep learning curve and some great discoveries learning the plants and a new aspect of plant diversity as well as finding some rare and unusual species in Virginia. His Flora work included: editing of taxonomic descriptions; editing of illustrations, ensuring that they accurately and truly depict key characters; and provision of Virginia-specific information on status and habitat. Townsend was previously curator of the herbarium at Clemson University.

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## **Chapter Meetings:**

February 2, 2017      John Hayden, speaker, on “Skunk Cabbage and Other Botanical Adventures, August 2016.

## **President's Message:**

Happy 2017 Everyone,

I hope this finds you all well and warm. I am writing this watching the snow fall and the birds "fight" over the best position in my cherry tree to have easy access to the feeders...don't think I will every truly understand why a blue jay is not really blue. I started the New Year out right, participating in the First Day Hike at York River State Park. I am looking forward to the outings we are trying to line up for our Chapter. At the State level, the first field trip of the year is March 18th, to Goshen Pass Natural Areas, with geologist David Spears and botanist Tom Wielboldt, registration opens January 16th. I am going to watching some skunk cabbage locally and may send out an impromptu invitation to go see it at Dorey Park if I find it in bloom. Also coming up on March 4th is the winter workshop at University of Richmond. Our chapter will be setting up and serving the continental breakfast and breaking tables down at the end of the day. We need YOU to help. Please email me at [leleorr4@gmail.com](mailto:leleorr4@gmail.com) if you can help in the morning or afternoon or both

Hope to see you all on Thursday and don't forget to bring a friend.

Be blessed,

Leslie

**“In Search Of”: Botanical Adventures of a Plant Detective by Robert Wright. This month’s target: *Isoetes engelmannii* A. Braun, Engelmann’s Quillwort.**

Unexpectedly wondrous surprises await the ardent botanist upon first encountering an unusual habitat type locally. Perhaps one of the most uncommon finds around Richmond area is Engelmann’s quillwort. Some years ago while exploring the backwood areas of upland swamp remnants in South Richmond between Hull Street, Chippenham Parkway, Midlothian Turnpike and Jahnke Road I came upon this plant in shallow depression pools off Carnation Road. Having seen it elsewhere along streams west of Richmond, I quickly deduced that its occurrence around Richmond has been under-reported, likely because supporting habitats for it are limited. There, in a loblolly pine-dominated stand of mixed swamp hardwoods (willow, water oaks, red maples, sweetgums, and blackgums) was this dainty aquatic. It stood out amongst the darkened leaves so indicative of shallowly inundated forest pools on undrained flats. I’d like to receive any reports of it within the City of Richmond, and especially in Henrico County. Have you seen it?

photo source:

[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/\\_iABBmWtUYhc/TBxRRvoXD2I/AAAAADAI/DP2DHc9hq6I/s1600/Appalachian+Quillwort+\(+Isoetes+engelmannii+\)+-+Alan+Cressler+PNG.png](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_iABBmWtUYhc/TBxRRvoXD2I/AAAAADAI/DP2DHc9hq6I/s1600/Appalachian+Quillwort+(+Isoetes+engelmannii+)+-+Alan+Cressler+PNG.png)

My own photos posted in the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora. See: <http://vaplantatlas.org/index.php?do=plant&plant=893>



**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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**The little black mushrooms are back!**

Every year, these little mushrooms appear in my front yard from late December to January.



Photo 1 was taken Dec. 23, 2016. The mushroom is on the right, the object on the left is a cap from an acorn. When fully grown the mushroom will be about 1 to 1.5 inches tall.



Photo 2 was taken Dec. 31, 2004. Note the mushroom is older here and the stem is beginning to peel, revealing a white core.



## Winter Views

1. Miniature ice cream cones! Elephant's foot seedhead (*Elephantopus sp.*)
2. Black lace against the evening sky & gibbous moon.
3. Green & white "lace" of snow-covered loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*)
4. Snow on American Holly (*Ilex opaca*) and Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*).

Photo Credit: 1,2,3: Catharine Tucker. 4: Richard Moss





## Plant Thermometers

Catherine Tucker pointed out to me several years ago that rhododendron leaves can be used as a rough indicator of temperature. January has illustrated this quite well. Around freezing temperatures the leaves begin to droop, then start to curl as the temperature goes below 25. They are curled maximally by about 20 degrees.

See: <https://viettes.wordpress.com/2010/12/09/brrrrrrrrrr-its-cold-outside-says-my-rhododendron/> for more information.

The photo on the left was taken January 10th when the temperature was 34 F. The photo on the right was taken on January 8th when the temperature was 17 F.



Interestingly, the same appears to be true for cross vine (*Bignonia capreolata*). The left picture was taken when the temperature was in the upper teens and the right picture taken the next afternoon when the temperature was in the mid 30's.

Richard Moss

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