

THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Tradescantia virginiana

March 2014

**Chapter Meeting 7:00 PM,
March 6, 2014**

**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 Emily Gianfortoni, Pocahontas Chapter member, who will
present: *Challenges of Replacing Exotic Plants with Natives in a Suburban Yard***

Pocahontas Chapter Programs - Spring 2014

- March 25** Privet removal at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden from 9:00 to 1:00. Tools will be furnished but bring gloves and favorite tool if you want. Bring water and snack.
- April 3** *Botany 2013: Into the Bayou and Beyond*, presented by Deanna Dong and W. John Hayden, of the University of Richmond.
- May 3** Chapter Picnic.

Our Chapter Officers have completed their terms and have either declined to serve another term or are now working on overtime.

Our Chapter is in danger of collapsing at the end of the April meeting without volunteers to provide leadership.

Please step forward to help. Contact any of last year's officers to volunteer or to learn more about the tasks.

Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS Meeting, February 6, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 with 25 people in attendance. Several guests were introduced who said they had read about the program. President Tucker thanked Publicity Chair Suzanne Jenkins for her effective notices.

During the Business Meeting, the routine items were covered. Minutes of the January meeting were published in the February newsletter. Treasurer Richard Moss reported that the chapter account balance is \$4922.14. The dues rebate from the state has not yet been received. President Tucker noted that there are several anticipated expenses: donations approved at the January meeting (\$400), expenses for the Winter Workshop refreshments (to be determined), and \$150 for books for the LGBG Library.

Under Old Business, Chapter Officers are a work in progress. The positions of President, Vice-president, and Secretary remain open. Richard Moss has agreed to continue as Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. RubyJane Robertson volunteered to serve as Membership Chair and will work with Daune Poklis to transfer this task smoothly. Project leaders for removal of invasives at LGBG are Beth Farmer & Caroline Meehan. Suzanne Jenkins will continue to provide publicity.

President Tucker announced she learned this afternoon that Natural Bridge has been sold to a conservation group and it is destined to become a state park. This news was greeted with enthusiastic applause.

The VNPS Winter Workshop on Plants and Climate Change will be Saturday, March 1. Registration opened in mid-January, and the web address for registration is in the newsletter. Pocahontas Chapter is host for the refreshments again. RubyJane Robertson has recruited the following volunteers: Suzanne Jenkins, Caroline Meehan, Pat Brodie, Ashley Moulton, Dick Wills, and Daune Poklis.

Two items of new business were considered. Suzanne Jenkins called attention to the need to support funding for the Virginia Natural Heritage Program. Inadequate funding over the last few years has resulted in loss of monitoring and protection for areas in the Natural Area Preserve system. Increased poaching, plant thefts, trash dumping, drug use, and damage from unauthorized vehicles have occurred. Members were urged to contact Senator John Watkins, Chair of the Subcommittee on Economic Development and Natural Resources and urge him to vote for Budget Amendment Item 357#2s (Patrons: Senators Colgan and Vogel). Other members of the Virginia General Assembly who are serving on this budget subcommittee are Senators Howell, Hanger, Huff, Marsh and Deeds. It was noted that letters or phone calls to them are appropriate as well.

Richard Moss presented the need to renew our payment for the chapter domain name, listing the costs for 1-, 2- and 5-year renewals. It was moved, seconded & approved by voice vote to pay \$120 for 5 years. Richard will follow up to make this payment*.

Following the business meeting, Daune Poklis presented a delightfully informative program on her trip to the Smokies last April. She used maps and beautiful photographs of habitats, animals and plants, especially wildflowers, that she saw. Her enthusiasm was contagious.

***Addition to the Minutes:**
 On further inspection, your treasurer determined the statement for renewal of the chapter's internet domain name was not from the company that hosts our website, and automatically renews our domain name registration. The statement was from another company attempting to transfer the domain registration and to receive the registration fee for itself. Although the company would indeed renew the registration, there is no reason to use this company, and their registration cost is higher than what we are paying now. Therefore the \$120 for 5 years renewal did not need to be, and was not paid.
 Richard Moss, Treasurer

The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 6 at 6:30 at the Garden. Emily Gianfortoni will present Challenges of Replacing Exotic Plants with Natives in a Suburban Yard.

Message from Catharine Tucker the President (for now, not for life)

Well, I thought I saw signs of spring! A few clusters jonquils are still poking up through the leaf cover.

They survived and didn't get their noses frosted this week, but hunkered down, waiting. Two buds on the Heartleaf ginger are now nubbins about the size of a big kernel of corn. I'm watching one plant carefully, hoping to catch the blooms at a stage when I can key it out in the new Flora. What I learned many years ago was one species of *Hexastylis* may be quite another. We'll see.

I'm still learning the new taxonomic changes and current distributions of species. That learning process, regardless of the level at which you begin, is what keeps me interested and participating in the Virginia Native Plant Society activities. I hope you share that interest and that will lead you to join other Pocahontas Chapter members in our activities. Maybe you might like to help with some of the tasks that keep the chapter going.

Chapter members are presenting the next two programs: Emily Gianfortoni on March 6 and John Hayden on April 3. These are bound to be interesting. Another work day at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is scheduled and announced in our calendar. The hours we spend removing invasive vines and privet from the creek bank in the northeast corner of the Garden are one way we support the Garden for use of our meeting room. There are more changes coming to the Garden this spring that will increase the number of native shrubs and reduce the amount of turf.

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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If you have ideas for field trips, projects or programs to carry forward into next fall, please speak up. If you find you have time to serve in one of the positions that remain filled by folks who would like to retire, please mention that to one of us.

A new invasive plant threat - Wavyleaf Grass (*Oplismenus hirtellus* ssp. *undulatifolius*)

Wavyleaf grass has the potential to become a widespread and aggressive invasive species in Virginia. It is adapted to forest under-story, where it creates dense continuous carpets, out-competes other ground-layer species, and suppresses shrub and tree seedlings. See the web site http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/vaisc/

Thanks to all who helped! The VNPS Winter Workshop held at University of Richmond on March 1 was well attended. Our Chapter arranged for the refreshments. Many thanks to RubyJane Robertson, who led this effort, and volunteers Pat Brodie, Suzanne Jenkins, Caroline Meehan, Daune Poklis, and Dick Wills who helped with set-up and take-down. And special thanks to John Hayden who secured the lecture hall and helped with the arrangements. I also received a thank you message from Nancy Vehrs, VNPS state president thanking us for providing food and setup for our annual workshop.

I look forward to seeing you next Thursday, Catharine White Tucker

Other Events of Interest

Waterflower Walk to Hunt for Swamp Pink

On Saturday, April 19, Mike Smith, member of the VNPS Shenandoah Chapter, will lead a walk in the Big Levels area in search of the Swamp Pink. He says, "We will be exploring previously known sites for Swamp pink in the Big Levels area of Augusta County. Mo Stevens discovered these plants during the 1980's." Mike says Pocahontas members are welcome to join this excursion. Meet at the McDonald's parking lot at the entrance to the Town Center Mall. This is just south of the Stuart's Draft exit off I-64 (at Rt. 340) at 9:00 am. Bring a light lunch and water. Old shoes or boots are suggested. Easy walking of several miles are expected.

Let Mike know that you will be there. For further information, contact: Mike Smith at foresmiths@comcast.net or 540-298-1913 home or 540-742-3451.

VNPS West Virginia field trip

Wild and wonderful West Virginia is calling you to visit some special places June 22-28, when we hope to see *Rhododendron maximum*, the state flower of West Virginia, making quite a show.

We'll meet after dinner Sunday evening at Elk River Inn in Slatyfork, West Virginia, where we'll spend two nights. While in the area, among the destinations we'll visit are the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area, the largest expanse of bogs in the state, and the Highland Scenic Highway with its diverse roadside habitats and beautiful vistas of the surrounding mountains and valleys.

On Tuesday, we'll travel north to Blackwater Falls State Park, where the lodge will be our home for the next four nights. Scenic wonders abound in the area. Although our itinerary is not yet final, we'll certainly spend time in Canaan Valley, famous for its limestone flora, northern-affiliated flora and huge wetland complex. Also not to be missed is Dolly Sods, the highest plateau of its type east of the Mississippi River. Heath barrens, grass balds, sphagnum glades and rocky hardwood and spruce forests are all a part of what makes this area one of enduring interest to botanists.

Please reserve your space on this field trip no later than March 15 as deposits are required to reserve rooms. Included with your payment will be six nights' lodging, double occupancy, six breakfasts and five lunches. VNPS members will pay \$700, \$300 of which is due March 15. Please note that \$25 to \$75 may be nonrefundable after that date depending on when you cancel and whether we can fill your space.

Send your deposit and reservation information to: VNPS, "West Virginia Field Trip", 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2, Boyce, VA 22620.

Questions? Contact: Shirley Gay shirleywg@me.com or Sally Anderson rccsca@comcast.net

New VNPS Web Site Launched

From the state coordinator of the web site comes this welcome announcement: "Your web team is thrilled announce that we have successfully launched the new VNPS.org website! We have already had our first online join! "We are still working on a few final pieces of content coming over. "Chapters will be able to customize their sites next week."

Budget Amendment Fails

John Townsend, member of Natural Heritage staff, reported to the state board meeting that Extensive VNPS efforts to obtain funding and staff additions for Natural Heritage (the Virginia Natural Heritage Program Budget Amendment) were detailed by Marcia Mabee Bell in her Conservation Chair report. As part of this effort, Marcia, Nancy Vehrs, and Sally Anderson came to Richmond to meet with members of the General assembly and members of VNPS contacted their senators and delegates with messages of support. The staff at Natural Heritage wish to express their gratitude for this and many other efforts VNPS has made on their behalf over the years.

Poor Mountain Natural Area Expands

On December 12, 2013 DCR closed on the purchase of an 11-acre addition to the Poor Mountain Natural Area Preserve in Roanoke County. This acquisition strengthens protection for the state and globally rare piratebush (*Buckleya distichophylla*) which occurs on the property and increases the protected acreage in the natural area preserve system to 54,363 acres. In total, Virginia's 61 state natural area preserves protect over 600 occurrences of 386 rare plants and animals and significant natural communities.

“Wren Song” Newsletter

Have you seen this newsletter? I continue to find interesting and useful information about plants, plus books and web sites about plants. Sometimes I just enjoy the lovely photographs! Visit the web site for Ecosystem Gardening [<http://www.ecosystemgardening.com/wren-song/>] to sign up to receive it or just read the current issue.

The editor says: “This week we have 2 articles looking at the definition of native plants, and why that's so important for the health of our gardens and environment. And also an informative article about how to evaluate native shrubs as alternatives to over-used exotics in our landscapes. “We look at tree cavities for wildlife, milkweed for Monarchs in schoolyard habitats, hopeful signs of spring, gardening for the birds, and how chemicals used to treat roads during snow storms may be harming frogs and toads. Check to see if you find interesting and useful information here.”

Catharine Tucker

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