

THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

May, 2017



There will be no more chapter meetings until September. Our next meeting is tentatively set for September 7 at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens.

Upcoming Field Trips:

- May 20th Trip to Quarry Gardens at Skyler in Nelson County. See Presidents Message for more information.
- August 12 Field trip to Echo lake.
- September 9 Field trip to R. Garland Dodd Park.
- September 30 VNPS Annual Meeting.

President's Message:

Hello All,

Hope this finds you well and enjoying Virginia's ever fickle weather, writing this on May 8th and heard frost mentioned in the forecast....

This past weekend was our annual end of season picnic. This year we held it at Camp Hanover and while the sun played peek-a-boo with us, I think we all enjoyed it. Below are some of my pictures, there will be more shared on Facebook. Our next trip is fast approaching, Saturday May 20th, to the Quarry Gardens at Schuyler. You may recall the owners came and spoke at our March meeting. We are to be there at 10:00 am, 1643 Salem Road in Schuyler VA. The tour will last roughly an hour. You can bring a lunch if you wish to picnic after the tour. To register, please email me at leleorr4@gmail.com, or call me at 804-795-7191. We still owe LGBG volunteer hours, a date for June will be forthcoming via email and Facebook. We will be posting walks on our website and Facebook, from our chapters and others, so check them out over the summer.

See you in September,
Leslie

Tri-State Native Plant Conference 2017

Mark your calendar for September 29 – October 1, 2017. The Virginia Native Plant Society, the Maryland Native Plant Society, and the West Virginia Native Plant Society are joining together to host the 2017 Native Plant Conference at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV!

See: <https://mdflora.org/event-2323847/Registration> for more information.



Nature Knows No Boundaries
Shepherdstown, WV

Chapter member, Joey Thompson, shares his recent discoveries in the field.

Last week, early in the morning, we pulled up to a recently cleared tree farm on a hunt club to do a wetland delineation for a potential solar farm. We got out of the car, stretched, put on our boots and hooked up the GPS. My co-worker Mark then said with surprise "Is that a longleaf?!" I looked up and sure enough there was a longleaf pine, right on the edge of a cutover, narrowly saved from doom.

I immediately pulled up USGS (since we were in North Carolina and there is no accessible database like the Virginia Digital Atlas that I'm aware of), zoomed in on the *Pinus palustris* map, and found that this tree represented a slight extension of the known range. We were in Edgecombe County and the nearest it had been found up until then was the neighboring Nash County. And it wasn't just a dinky little longleaf, it was the tallest tree around and



almost 2 feet in diameter. It was however, the only one I could find, other than two saplings sprouting up right underneath it, not more than a foot tall each. Bittersweet to think it may be a relict of a long passed longleaf pine savannah. Perhaps this tree was once home to the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker! I still think USGS may be out of date, and that someone knows of other longleafs growing in Edgecombe. I failed in finding any known record of it after contacting a few NC Natural Heritage folks... Of course, it's no big discovery to have a single county range extension of almost anything, but still exciting to find a great plant like the longleaf pine on the edge of its historical range.

Another job site that same week in Middlesex County of Virginia was also recently logged. As we were driving through the cutover, I noticed stunted plants flowering throughout. Chokecherry, dogwood, blueberries, pinxter flower, azure bluets, violets, and even some lady slippers with pink and white flowers were blooming in the middle of an otherwise desolate graveyard of a forest.

We prepared for the day and headed into the forested area to map the wetlands. A whole new community was revealed with a rich herb layer at the edge of a wetland consisting of New York fern, indian cucumber-root, Virginia heartleaf, sensitive fern, netted-chain fern, cinnamon fern, many

Carices, wild yam, crane-fly orchid, rattlesnake-plantain, golden ragwort, trout lily, slender wood grass, hazelnut, the list goes on... But one plant confined to a relatively small area stuck out. At first I thought wild sarsparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*) but I knew that wasn't correct since there was only one umbel stemming from the center of three leaves instead of several umbels on a basal pedicel.

I pulled up our ever-helpful Virginia Digital Atlas and went to the Araliaceae page. My first selection, *Panax trifolius* or Dwarf Ginseng looked spot on, and to my delight, also represented a new record for the Rappahannock and York Rivers peninsula! It is considered rare in the coastal plain and with an irregular distribution

throughout Virginia. Still, it matched the habitat description of "mesic slope forests" and "base rich soils", which I deduced after finding a Yorktown formation outcrop just upstream later in the day.



The Pocahontas Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

serves the counties of Amelia, Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King William, New Kent, Powhatan, Prince George and the cities of Ashland, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, 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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It wasn't the last interesting species we found there.



Aside from the generally rich habitat consisting abundantly of species, there was also showy orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*) and large whorled pogonia (*Isotria verticillata*) upstream from the dwarf ginseng.



Showy orchis is not considered rare by any stretch, but always is a thrill to see its large pink and white flowers.

The large whorled pogonia is supposedly infrequent throughout Virginia, but this was my

first time ever seeing it. All in all, I counted well over 100 native species that day (even though my job does NOT technically include counting plants...).

The most recent find was early this week when I was assigned to put up barricade flagging on a small property near the James River in Chesterfield County. The flagging defines where loggers are not allowed to enter. The habitat was a gently sloping mixed pine-hardwood forest with a sizeable wetland running through the middle.



I didn't find anything of much interest for most of the day except for a large stand of maiden's hair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*) which resembled a surreal landscape out of the "Avatar" movie. But as we were unrolling our last bit of flagging in a part of the forest that was more pine than hardwood, I spotted the southern twayblade orchid (*Listera australis*).



Infrequent in the coastal plain, this population represented a slight westward expansion of the species in Virginia. It was also my first time finding the inconspicuous little plant, which added to the excitement. Luckily, most of the large population found itself on the safe side of the barricade.

Joey Thompson

Photos from the Chapter Picnic - Botanical Foray at Camp Hanover on May 6

We met at Camp Hanover in the pavillion, got instructions (1), then visited the meadow(2). Afterwards we split into two groups, one exploring the lake shore (3) and the other a ravine in the woods. The group at the lake saw virginia heartleaf with flowers (*Hexastylis virginica*)(4), Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) in flower (5), partridge berry with flower buds (*Mitchella repens*) (6), and striped wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*) (7)





The group exploring the ravine saw: (8) a Chinkapin bush (*Castanea pumila*) just starting to bloom, (9a, 9b) Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) in bloom, (10) Strawberry Bush (*Euonymus americanus*) in bloom and (11) several bunches of Shining clubmoss (*Hyperemia lucidula*) growing in a boggy area. Coming back near the lake there were several Solomons seal plants (*Polygonatum biflorum*) (12).



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