



THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

December, 2017



**Chapter Holiday Party,
Sunday, December 10, 2017
at the home of Leslie Allanson
6194 Hines Road, Henrico VA 23231
2:00 PM 4:00 PM**

Please join us for a potluck meal at Leslie's home. Bring a dish to share. Leslie will provide tea and punch, and feel free to bring your favorite "holiday spirit" if so inclined. If you have any questions, call Leslie at 804-335-5866.

RSVP to leleorr4@gmail.com is preferred

NOTE: We will not meet at Lewis Ginter in December

Upcoming Chapter Meetings:

Jan. 11, 2018 Zach Bradford, Chesapeake Bay Region Steward: Longleaf pine and associated fire-loving plants of Southeastern Virginia". Zach Bradford is the Chesapeake Bay Region Steward for the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Natural Heritage Program. A lifelong native plant enthusiast, he spends most of his free time in pursuit of native orchids and other botanical rarities. He resides in Goochland County, Virginia.

Note: We will meet at Lewis Ginter one week later than usual due to the Garden's Festival of Lights in December and the first week of January.

Feb 1, 2018 John Hayden

President's Message:

Hello all,

I hope this finds you well and that everyone had a lovely Thanksgiving. Can you believe Christmas is right around the corner and then it will be 2018!!!

I am happy to say that the volunteer position of "webmaster" has been filled by Caitlin Cyrus, whom you may recall from the November meeting and her talk on W&M College Woods. I want to thank Beth Farmer for serving in the capacity the last few years. And I am delighted of course that Catharine, Richard, Suzanne, Dabney, and Ashley are staying on in their roles. Hope to see you at the Christmas party...

Christmas Party of Pocahontas Chapter of VNPS

All are welcomed young and old,

Bring a dish to share, hot or cold.

something new if you are bold

Spirits are welcomed, if truth be told

We will chat about the plants we hold so dear,

Places we went throughout the year.

Up the mountains and in the creek,

Botany treasures we did seek,

Mark your calendars, don't delay,
Just let me know, come what may,
If you can Join us on this special day,
To celebrate the holidays.

December 10, 2:00 PM to 5:00PM
Leslie's Home
6194 Hines Road
Henrico VA 23231
RSVP to leleorr4@gmail.com is preferred
804-335-5866

Plant Donation:

From the Randolph Macon website, we got mentioned for our donation of native plants.

Collaboration

Biology Professor Nicholas Ruppel, Religious Studies Professor Tim Brown, along with student volunteers from Theta Chi and the Student Virginia Education Association, worked together in the R-MC Brian Wesley Moores Native Plant Garden. The group expanded existing garden beds, and added mulch and new plants. The plants were donated by the Virginia Native Plant Society – Pocahontas Chapter in conjunction with a grant that Ruppel received in spring 2017.

The new plants will expand and diversify the garden's bloom time throughout the year and draw in additional pollinators, which is important for Ruppel's research. Additionally, they will make the garden an even nicer place for R-MC and community members to visit.



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.

Chapter Officers

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Chapter Website

pocahontaschapter-vnps.org

"We get student volunteers every year for the Big Event, and their help is essential for tackling the large projects that Tim and I can't do alone," says Ruppel. "In addition, I've always viewed The Big Event as that last essential step before the garden takes a much-needed rest over the winter!"
See: <https://www.rmc.edu/news-and-calendar/current-news/2015/04/28/native-plant-garden-honors-chemistry-professor-emeritus> for the complete web page



Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS, meeting on November 2, 2017 at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

Our speaker, Caitie Cyrus told us about the flora in College Woods at the College of William and Mary. The college wood vegetation represents a unique disjunction between the Mountain coastal plain such as doll's-eyes (*Actaea pachypoda*) and Small Whorled Pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*). The college woods include 960 acres and parts have plants that are 160 years old and represent 6 habitat types all within the southeastern coastal plain forest. Previous floristic analysis started here in the 1968 and continued again 1989. Her study kicked off in 2013 through 2015. There has been some abiotic and biotic changes at the site including from storm damage from hurricane Isabel, increased disturbance from trail use as well as stream erosion, deer browsing pressure. She looked to see how has floristic diversity changed over time? From 40 years and 25 years ago. She started with finding the old herbarium, typed up all the labels, and then going out into the field to see what she could find. Previous assessments found 619 species. She was able to find 549 species, and of which 126 were not previously reported, 196 could not be found. She found a total of 423 that were previously reported, but in total her work has brought up the total number of species found at the site to 745 species. She attributes this to the fact that disturbance gives rise to high species turn over, specifically by deer. What was interesting is that she found that deer were browsing on American Beech and American Holly inside of permanent plots which is unique, with 74% of all trees monitored, were browsed. She also set deer enclosures.

Up-coming events:

Next VNPS Meeting 1-11-18.

2-17-18 - Workday at Lewis Ginter.

Holiday party – Sunday afternoon the 10th at 2pm at Leslie's house.

Ashley Moulton, Secretary

Observations From Robert Wright

I captured the below image on Halloween 2017 along a fence in a wet, open ditch in Chester, VA.

At times, in good habitat, one may be astounded to observe the nodding ladies tress orchid (*Spiranthes cernua*) in profusion, such as this site.

Here, the grassy habitat is kept irregularly mowed, thus open, and the ground is saturated much of the year due to lower topography and a ditch network that tends to accumulate surface runoff that disperses to surrounding ground.

One so fortunate to count the 93 separate plants as at this site has had a visual treat indeed !

Robert Wright



Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS, meeting on October 5, 2017 at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

(These Minutes were inadvertently left out of the November Newsletter)

Our speakers, chapter members Don and Peg Mohar, described their adventures in "Hunting Mushrooms." Chester, PA commercially grows half of the U.S. mushroom production of 950 million pounds. Only China and Italy grow more.

Don started with a framing where the fungi kingdom fits in the world of living organisms, and an explanation of some of the most dangerous ones and their effects on humans, such as the deadly galerino. He also touched on different morphological features including the hyphae that enable mushrooms to digest nutrients in the environment and types of mushroom classification such as saprophytes, which feed on dead organic matter.

Peg then jumped in with the tasty edibles, in order of most tasty. First was the yellow morel, *Morchella Americana* which arrives when may apple is in tight fruit in May. If you cut it in half, it will have a hollow stem. Chanterelles (*Cantharellus cibarius*) have bright colors, yellow, orange and bright red. Look alike is jack o lantern, which grows on wood (not the ground) causes great gastro distress, and also is bioluminescent. Another near the top of the list is the oyster mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*) grows year round (in winter in warm pockets) grows in the caespitose manner on dead wood. Can come in pure white, brown and grey. Another is Sheepshead (*Griffolia frondosa*), hen of the woods, Japanese name is maitake which means dancing for joy, can grow up to 40 lbs, on the base of oaks, including black and red oak. Another is meadow mushroom, pinkbottom, *Agaricus campestris*, can be easily mistaken for other stuff. Called pink bottom for a reason. Quickly turns brown after harvesting and has a brown spore print, rather than green or white.

Chicken of woods – a polypor found on dead or injured wood. good when it is fresh which has a Orange top and sulfur bottom, but will turn white after harvesting.

Bears head tooth – and Lion's mane. Both in the *Hericium* genus. No pores or gills, have teeth and are a tooth mushroom.

REMEMBER – all mushrooms are edible, but not all of them are survivable.

Ashley Moulton, Secretary

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