

# POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 25, No.3

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

July/Aug 2007

## SAVE THE DATE: SEPTEMBER 15 AT GREEN SPRING POTOWMACK CHAPTER PLANT SALE

### ARLINGTON WOODS VNPS REGISTRY SITE DEDICATION AUGUST 25, 10AM TO 2PM

Celebrate National Parks Day at the newest VNPS Registry Site for the Potowmack Chapter at Arlington Woods near Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial, at Arlington National Cemetery, Saturday, August 25 from 10am to 2pm. Arlington Woods contains a remnant of the original old growth oak/hickory forest of the area with champion trees. Events will include the site dedication and a walk with Rod Simmons, noted regional field ecologist and VNPS Registry Chair. Parking will be available at Arlington House on the day of the event.

Watch the listserve for further details, or contact Shirley Gay: shirleywg@comcast.net or 703-920-1913 or Bob Yacovissi: ryacovissi@earthlink.net 703- 641-8914.

Note: At other times Arlington House can be reached by a 10-minute walk from the cemetery Visitor Center/parking area. For a small fee you can ride a shuttle bus and hear a narrated tour of Arlington Cemetery. The shuttle bus stops at the President Kennedy gravesite, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington House, and then returns to the visitor center. You can get off and re-board the shuttle at any of the stops.



Members tour the U.S. Botanic Garden's native plants with Bill McLaughlin in May



*Ceoanthus americanus* (New Jersey tea) at the Botanic Garden

**BZZZZZ** “If we didn't have pollinators, the diversity of plants, including many crops on which human life depends, would disappear. All the animals that depend on the flowering plants for food and shelter would also disappear. There would be a general collapse of life on land. E.O. Wilson in Science World 2005”

**BZZZZZ** “Hundreds of species of native bees are available for crop pollination. These free, unmanaged bees provide a valuable service, recently estimated by scientists from the Xerces Society and Cornell University at \$3 billion annually in the U.S. Why are native bees so helpful? Some species, such as mason and bumble bees, are active when conditions are too cold and wet for honeybees. Collectively, native bees are more versatile than honey bees.

From the Xerces Society -

[www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org)

**A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

An important meeting on managing rare plant communities on rock outcrops in Shenandoah National Park (SNP) was held on June 7th at the REI store in Falls Church. The meeting announcement was posted on our chapter listserv on June 4th. The good news is that 50% of the audience was comprised of VNPS members; the bad news is that only six people attended the meeting. Two staff members from SNP presented an overview of management issues related to rock outcrop sites. Rock outcrops support significant vegetation communities with rare plant and animal populations. Rock outcrops also attract rock climbers, day hikers and sightseers looking for views. Balancing the need to preserve rare vegetation communities with the recreation demands of the public will be difficult. The park staff is seeking public input in making rock outcrop management decisions, some of which are likely to be unpopular with both conservationists and rock climbers.

Gary Fleming, along with other Division of Natural Heritage staff members, surveyed 50 of the rock outcrop sites in SNP and found 11 natural community types among the rocky habitats. Nine of the 11 communities are globally rare and two are entirely endemic to the park as far as is known. Rock outcrop communities are incredibly diverse but are in serious danger of being destroyed through trampling.

SNP staff is calling for public input on managing these areas. There will be another set of meetings and a public comment period in September. Giving our support to preserving these fragile sites should be a high priority mission for VNPS members. If we don't speak out for plant preservation, who will????

An in-depth article on this issue will appear in the September state VNPS newsletter. Meanwhile, if you haven't joined our chapter listserv, please do so. It's the only way we can keep our members informed of important issues occurring between our bi-monthly newsletters. To join the listserv, visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vnps-pot/join>. Or you can send an e-mail to [orlis@si.edu](mailto:orlis@si.edu). In the message section write subscribe to vnps-pot and type in your e-mail address and full name.

**Marianne Mooney**

**SUCCESSFUL PLANT SALE**

The Potowmack Chapter plant sale on May 19 was successful not only in raising funds to support the chapter's educational goals, but also in helping folks find native alternatives to invasive ground covers that offer no support of our bio-diversity. As we learn more and more about the consequences to our environment of growing so many invasive non-native plants, we are grateful for the opportunity to provide wonderful native plants for "habitat gardens".

We have a special thank you for Earth Sangha, a Buddhist environmental nonprofit organization, that collects native seed locally and propagates trees and shrubs for many projects in Northern Virginia. Their donation of many trees and shrubs for our sale gave us the opportunity to offer locally found species to our buyers.

Many thanks also for those who donated plants for the sale, including, William Feldman, Mary Ann Lawler, Beth Johnson, Vicki Hook and many others who left plants for us, but no names. We appreciate your generosity.

Another big thank you for those volunteers who prepared the plants for sale and those who helped out on the day of the sale. There would be no sale without their help; Margaret Chatham, Roberta Day, Eleanor Kask, Mary Ann Lawler, Marianne Mooney, BJ Opfer, Mary Pockman, Laura Reichenbaugh, Lesa and Paul Schmidt, Sally Sieracki, Elaine Squeri, Bob and Ginny Yacovissi, Alan Ford, Shirley Gay, Dusty Dukes, Nancy Christmus, and Dan Elmer.

Thanks for your support, and keep us in mind should you want to help us at our propagation beds or

**BOARD OFFICERS**

|                |                 |          |
|----------------|-----------------|----------|
| President      | Marianne Mooney | 534-8179 |
| Vice President | Bob Yacovissi   | 641-8914 |
| Secretary      | Lee Ann Kinzer  | 768-4048 |
| Treasurer      | Leigh Pickering | 532-4182 |

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Botany                  | Cris Fleming    | 301-657-9289 |
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| Education               | Cindy Gustafson | 532-4182     |
| Membership              | Geoff Seymour   | 658-2289     |
| Newsletter              | Mary Ann Lawler | 684-8622     |
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| Publications            | Roberta Day     | 560-5528     |
| Publicity               | Vacant          |              |
| Site Registry           | Rod Simmons     |              |
| Garden Tours            | Vacant          |              |

(All numbers should include the 703 area code, unless otherwise noted.) *Potowmack News* is published 6 times per year, in January, March, May, July, September, and November. The deadline for submissions is the 15th day of the month prior to publication. Call Mary Ann Lawler for more information or e-mail her at [malawler@aol.com](mailto:malawler@aol.com).

donate plants for our September 15th sale. We work at our propagation area, which is located at Green Spring Gardens, on Wednesday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Please call us with any questions.

**Laura Beaty, Propagation Chair 703 534-8746**

**POLLINATORS IN PERIL--NATIVE BEES CAN PROVIDE A SAFETY NET TO FARMERS**

*(from the Xerces Society)*

The recent widespread loss of honey bee colonies from Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has received a lot of media coverage. Major media outlets across the US have covered this story including the NY Times, the CBS Nightly News, and the Christian Science Monitor. At this time the cause of CCD remains a mystery. It may be one or more factors, such as parasitic mites, disease, pesticides or diet. No matter what the cause of these declines, many scientists feel that native pollinators – specifically, native bees – can be an insurance policy when honey bees are scarce.

The European honey bee is the most important single crop pollinator in the United States. However, with the decline in the number of managed honey bee colonies from diseases, parasitic mites, and Africanized bees - as well as from Colony Collapse Disorder - it is important to increase the use of native bees in our agricultural system.

Hundreds of species of native bees are available for crop pollination. Research from across the country demonstrates that a wide range of native bees help with crop pollination, in some cases providing all of the pollination required. These free, unmanaged bees provide a valuable service, estimated recently by scientists from the Xerces Society and Cornell University to be worth \$3 billion annually in the U.S.

**Pollinators and the 2007 Farm Bill** Conserving America's pollinators will require economic incentives for private landowners. On October 18, 2006, the National Academy of Sciences released the report Status of Pollinators in North America, which called attention to the decline of pollinators. Prepared by a National Research Council (NRC) committee, the report made several recommendations including urging the federal government to fund pollinator conservation through Farm Bill conservation and research programs.

The 2002 Farm Bill includes several financial aid programs to help fund conservation on private agricultural lands. Language on native pollinator conservation in the 2007 Farm Bill (due to be voted on this summer) would create incentives for farmers to protect, restore and enhance pollinator habitat on and around farms. Through the Farm Bill, the federal government has an opportunity to encourage state-level Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices to promote scientifically tested and approved pollinator-friendly practices for farmers participating in Farm Bill conservation programs.



Fully integrating native pollinators into Farm Bill programs can have a wide impact. For example, the

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) allocated over \$1 billion in financial and technical assistance to farmers in 2006, and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) retired over 36 million acres of farmland, 4.5 million of which was specifically for wildlife habitat that could be tailored to provide the greatest benefit for pollinators.

**Pollinator Research in the 2007 Farm Bill** To improve the long-term sustainability of crop pollination, the 2007 Farm Bill should fund field surveys to identify potential new crop pollinators and their habitat and management needs. These studies would expand the ongoing research of the USDA Agriculture Research Service (ARS), U.S. Geological Survey, and other agencies responsible for crop pollination research or natural resource protection. The USDA ARS also should be provided with increased funding in order to be able to expand their current research programs into native bee taxonomy and ecology.

**Importance of Protecting Native Pollinators**

Pollinators are essential to our environment. The ecological service they provide is important for the reproduction of nearly 75 percent of the world's flowering plants.



This includes more than two thirds of the world's crop species, and one in three mouthfuls of the food that we eat. The United States alone grows more than one hundred crops that either require or benefit from pollinators.

Beyond agriculture, native pollinators are keystone species in most terrestrial ecosystems. Fruits and seeds derived from insect pollination are a major part of the diet of approximately 25 percent of birds, and of mammals ranging from deer mice to grizzly bears.

Why are native bees so helpful? Collectively, native bees are more versatile than honey bees. Some species, such as mason bees, are active when conditions are too cold or wet for honey bees. Many species also are simply more efficient at moving pollen between flowers. Bumble bees and several other native species can buzz pollinate flowers - vibrating the flower to release pollen from deep inside the pollen-bearing anthers - which honey bees cannot do. Crops such as tomatoes, cranberries, and blueberries produce larger, more abundant fruit when buzz pollinated.

**The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation** The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation is an international non-profit organization that protects the diversity of life through the conservation of invertebrates. The Society advocates for invertebrates and their habitats by working with scientists, land managers, educators, and citizens on conservation and education projects. Its core

programs focus on endangered species, native pollinators, and watershed health.

For additional information on the Farm Bill and its conservation programs or research into the effectiveness of native bees for crop pollination please contact Scott Hoffman Black: 503- 449-3792 sblack@xerces.org or Mace Vaughan: 503-753-6000 mace@xerces.org

For more information on pollinator conservation go to:  
[http://www.xerces.org/Pollinator\\_Insect\\_Conservation/index.htm](http://www.xerces.org/Pollinator_Insect_Conservation/index.htm)

**DOGWOODS: CAN EASTERN FORESTS FUNCTION WITHOUT THEM?** *Reprinted from Conservation Currents, Northern Virginia Soil & Water Conservation District*

It's spring again and the flowers are blooming. But one important harbinger of spring is increasingly absent from our Virginia woodlands – the flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*). These beautiful native trees are succumbing to the dogwood anthracnose fungus (*Discula destructiva*), a non-native fungus that has killed over 95 percent of the dogwoods in some areas. While the loss of the dogwood's delicate spring blooms and deep purple fall foliage is upsetting, the loss of ecological function is cause for serious concern. Dogwoods are an important food source for wildlife and a significant component of the calcium cycle in eastern forests.

Dogwood seeds, fruit, flowers, twigs, bark, and leaves are used as food by various animals. The USDA Forest Service reports that at least 36 species of birds eat the dogwood's high fat-content berries. They are also enjoyed by mammals from chipmunks to bear. Deer and rabbits browse on the twigs, leaves and bark. In the fall, the rapidly decomposing leaves are food to many detritivores (organisms that process decomposing organic matter) from bacteria to land snails. In addition to being a source of food for many animals, dogwoods also play a key role in the calcium cycle of the forest. Calcium is an essential nutrient for both plants and animals, and dogwood leaves are 2 to 3.5 percent calcium by weight. Dogwoods, unlike most other trees and plants, have the ability to 'mine' calcium from soil and rocks. The trees concentrate the mineral in their leaves and wood; when the leaves fall in autumn, that calcium becomes available to the rest of the plants and animals in the forest.

The relationship between dogwood trees, land snails and perching bird populations provides just one example of the dogwood's invaluable role in the forest nutrient cycle, and the larger forest ecosystem. Land snails, attracted by the calcium in the leaf litter, are more prevalent under dogwood trees than under other trees in the forest. Scientists studying forest dynamics have been able to link decreases in the population of these land snails to similar decreases in perching bird populations. As dogwoods have become fewer due to anthracnose, scientists believe that perching birds have begun suffering from calcium deficiency, which is limiting their ability to produce eggshells. Thus, the loss of these beautiful trees can have wide-ranging implications for our eastern forest ecosystems.

Dogwood anthracnose first appeared in New York and Connecticut in 1978 and has since spread up and down the east coast. Anthracnose infection appears as splotches with tan centers and purple edges on the upper leaf surface, with black spots on the underside. Infection usually proceeds from the leaves to the twigs and branches, but can start in new shoots. Infected branches have tan cankers with black spots. Diseased trees lose branches from the bottom of the tree up. Sick trees may try to compensate by producing sprouts along the trunk, which are easily infected and introduce the fungus to the trunk.

The best way to protect your dogwoods from anthracnose is to keep them healthy. In the wild, drought stressed trees and those growing in moist, shady woods seem especially at risk. During dry periods, water your trees at ground level with a soaker hose (wetting the leaves and branches may encourage the fungus). Give your dogwood a little sun and a 2- to 3-inch mulch bed extending at least to the drip line of the tree. Lightly fertilize as necessary with a low-nitrogen fertilizer to avoid rapid growth of susceptible shoots. Remove water sprouts from the trunk, and monitor and prune out infected leaves and branches. Finally, plant anthracnose resistant trees like the 'Appalachian Spring' cultivar developed from survivors of an anthracnose outbreak in Maryland.

You can also help restore calcium to the forest. Instead of throwing out your egg shells, sterilize them by toasting in the oven or zapping in the microwave. Then crush them up and mix them with the seed in your bird feeder or scatter them in your yard or garden. The snails, birds and squirrels will do the rest.



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**LOCAL EVENTS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:**

**Tues. Jul 3 to Aug 14 Butterflies** 7pm 9:30 pm with 3 field trips, Instructor: Pat Durkin; Audubon Naturalist Society, Woodend Sanctuary, DC \$335. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16 To register online: <http://www.grad.usda.gov/>

**Thurs. Jul 12 to Aug 2 Summer Wildflower Identification** 7pm 9 pm with 2 field trips, Instructor: Cris Fleming; Audubon Naturalist Society, Woodend Sanctuary, DC \$235. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16 To register online: <http://www.grad.usda.gov/>

**Sun. Jul 22 Butterflies and Wildflowers of Harpers's Ferry** 9 am - 3pm Leader: Stephanie Mason and Pat Durkin. See the meadows, riverfront, wetlands, woodlands, and open mountain summers. \$36 for nonmembers Registration required. Call 301-652-9188 x 16 or [info@asn.v.org](mailto:info@asn.v.org).

**Sat. July 28 The Summer Meadow** 8:30 am - noon Leader: Stephanie Mason and Cathy Stragar. Look at the summer web of life in both wet and dry meadows at Clark's Crossing, along the W7OD bike trail in Vienna, VA. \$29 for nonmembers Registration required. Call 301-652-9188 x 16 or [info@asn.v.org](mailto:info@asn.v.org).

**Sat. July 28 Gaia Theory-Model and Metaphor for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Long Branch Nature** Center 2-3pm with Martin Ogle, Chief Naturalists of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. Free. Registration required. Program #644503E. Call 703-228-4747

**Fri. Aug. 3 Using Native Plants in Your Landscape Design. Green Spring Gardens.** 1:30-3pm Brenda Skarpohl, staff horticulturist introduces species suitable for wet, dry, sunny and shady habitats. Dress appropriately for a walk through the native plant garden and other gardens. \$11. 703-642-5173

**Sat. Aug. 4 Introduction to Summer Wildflowers** 8:30 am - 12:30 pm Leader: Cris Fleming We will explore the varied habitats of of Great Falls Virginia—floodplain, upland forest, and high, bedrock terrace. Free but registration required. Call 301-652-9188 x 16 or [info@asn.v.org](mailto:info@asn.v.org).

**Thurs. Aug. 9 Make your backyard a wildlife habitat Hidden Oaks Nature Center.** 7-8pm. Discover how you can make your backyard or apartment balcony a habitat that provides food, shelter, water and a place to raise young for area wildlife. Information provided on using native plants to support native species. Free. Reservations required. 703-941-1065.

**Thurs. Aug. 16. Endangered in Virginia Gulf Branch Nature Center** 7-8pm Adults. Virginia Sneezeweed in peril! Learn about some truly fascinating plants and animals struggling to survive right nearby. Free. Registration required Program #643203F 703-228-4747

**Sun. Aug. 19 Meadow Wildflower Walk, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Walney** 8:30-11:30am Walk with a naturalist in the Hunter-Hacor tract. Dry and wet meadows harbor milkweeds, bush clovers, goldenrods, hawkweeds and other plants, plus butterflies, dragonflies, and other beautiful insects. Wear long pants and hiking shoes. Uneven terrain. \$5 Reservations required. 703-631-0013

**Sat. Aug. 25. Summer Wildflower Walk Hidden Pond Nature Center.** 10-11:30am Leisurely walk to discover the parks' abundant summer wildflowers. Learn to identify them, the history of their uses, and how they got their names. Reservations required. Free. 703-451-9588

**Sat. Sept 7 Late Summer Wings and Wildflowers** 9am to 2 pm Leader: **Dr. Stan Shetler** and Joe Coleman The Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Studies in Loudon County has a mix of habitats, including meadow, forest, and wetlands. Non-members \$32. Registration required. Call 301-652-9188 x 16 or [info@asn.v.org](mailto:info@asn.v.org).

### **FALLS CHURCH INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL TASK FORCE Upcoming 2007 Events:**

We are taking July and August off, so check for our September schedule in the next issue. **Save the date: September 15 for our fall festival.** For more information, contact Jeremy Edwards, City of Falls Church Senior Urban Forester, 703-248-5016 or email: [jedwards@fallschurchva.gov](mailto:jedwards@fallschurchva.gov). To learn more about our plant sales contact Melissa Teates at [melanite@verizon.net](mailto:melanite@verizon.net) or 703-538-6961

### **FAIRFAX COUNTY'S INVASIVE MANAGEMENT AREA (IMA) PROGRAM**

These are the work days scheduled so far. Please check the latest schedule of events, and activities at:

**[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/nrp-ima.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/nrp-ima.htm)**

**Wed. July 4 Lake Accotink 9am-2pm**  
**Wed. July 11 Lake Accotink 9am-2pm**  
**Sat. July 14 Nottoway Park Workday 8am to 11am**  
**Wed. July 18 Lake Accotink 9am-2pm**  
**Wed. July 18 Woodglen Workday 9:00 am - 11:00 am.**  
**Wed. July 25 Lake Accotink 9am-2pm**  
**Sat. July 28 Ellanor C Lawrence 9am to noon**  
**Sat. Aug 4 Nottoway Park Workday 8am to 11am**  
**Sat. Aug 18 Ellanor C. Lawrence 9am to noon**  
**Sat. Aug 18 Woodglen Workday 9:00 am - 11:00 am.**  
**Sat. Aug. 25 Nottoway Park Workday 8am to 11am**

For more information: [Katherine.Frederick@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Katherine.Frederick@fairfaxcounty.gov) or call 703 324 8681.

### **ARLINGTON'S RiP PROJECT**

**Fri July 13th Gardening at Central Library** 9:00am - 11:00am. Join us to help maintain some English ivy alternative and native plant demonstration gardens at Central library. Volunteers will help weed, water and clear trash from the gardens. A fun way to get outside

on a Friday morning and after you are done, you can relax with a book in Central library. We will meet outside beside the gardens behind the auditorium near the tennis courts. Some tools and training provided. If you have your own gloves and/or weeding tools, please bring them along. Wear sunscreen and bring drinking water. For more information please call (703) 228-7636.

**Fri Aug 3rd Gardening at Central Library** 9:00am - 11:00am (See above for information)

**Sat. July 14- Second Saturdays at Bluemont Park** 9 am to noon. Neighbors and RiP volunteers will continue to meet at Bluemont Junction Park on second Saturdays. Come help out for an hour or two. Park near bike trail at the bottom of Illinois St. Enter Illinois St. from Wilson Blvd. Meet at "the rocks" next to the bike trail. Contact John Huennekens at 524-3853, or [jhuenn@gwu.edu](mailto:jhuenn@gwu.edu).

**Sat Aug- 11 Second Saturdays at Bluemont Park** 9 am to noon (See above for details)

*NOTE: Some training and tools provided. Long pants and long sleeves recommended. If you have your own clippers, loppers and/or gloves, please bring them along. For more information, please contact Jan Ferrigan at (703) 228-7636 or [jferriga@vt.edu](mailto:jferriga@vt.edu).*

**INVASIVES CONTROL WORK PARTIES AT TURKEY RUN PARK ALONG THE POTOMAC!**

Help work with The Nature Conservancy to help control invasive plant species on National Park Service lands in the Potomac Gorge at Turkey Run Park off the GW Memorial Parkway. Wear work gloves and boots or sturdy shoes, and bring water, snacks, and hand saws or loppers if you have them.. Our schedule for July and August is: Thurs, July 12, Sat. July 21 Thurs. Aug. 9, and Sat. Aug. 18. Check on meeting location with Alan Ford; cell: 202-213-6196; email: [amford@acm.org](mailto:amford@acm.org)

**Mid-Atlantic Exotic Pest Plant Council Conference**

**Invasive Plants: Research, Removal and Renewal**

**August 15 and 16, 2007 at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA**

Certain plants that have been introduced to ecosystems cause a great deal of harm and have become a threat to biological diversity. These invasive plants reduce populations of other plants and the animals that depend upon them. This is a problem we all face and we can all contribute to the solutions. Our quality of life ultimately depends on the health of our natural resources.

In this seminar you will learn about: the extent of the invasive plant problem in the mid-Atlantic region; the latest invasive plant control technologies; native plants that are good alternatives for invasive garden plants; Federal invasive plant efforts; how deer contribute to the spread of invasive plants; new technologies to measure and monitor invasive plant populations; and how native plant recovery prevents the spread of invasive plants. **VNPS is one of the sponsors of this event**

For a complete brochure, contact the Morris Arboretum at 215-247-5777, ext. 156 or 125 or [jlm@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:jlm@pobox.upenn.edu)  
Sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Exotic Pest Plant Council and the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania.



**Potowmack Chapter  
Virginia Native Plant Society  
P.O. Box 5311  
Arlington, VA 22205**

**Chapter Events Calendar**

|     |    |   |
|-----|----|---|
| Aug | 9  | Board Meeting<br>7:30 to 9:00pm<br>Green Spring       |
| Aug | 25 | Arlington Woods<br>dedication and walk<br>10am to 2pm |

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