

# POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 27. No.4

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

July/August 2009

**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND: PROPAGATING NATIVE PLANTS** On Saturday, August 8, from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm, the Potowmack Chapter is offering another opportunity to learn various methods of increasing the number of native plants in your landscape. Our propagation chair will demonstrate techniques for propagating plants. The session will take place at the chapter's propagation beds behind the Horticulture Center at Green Spring Gardens. A fee of \$5 will be charged for materials. Reservations are required 2:30 PM. A fee of \$5 will be charged for materials. RSVP to Laura Beaty at [laurabeaty@mac.com](mailto:laurabeaty@mac.com) or call 703 534-8746  
*Directions to Green Spring Gardens: From Interstate 395, exit at Route 236 West (Little River Turnpike); turn right at Braddock Road and go one block north to park entrance: 4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria.*

## **CHAPTER WALK AT DYKE MARSH WILDLIFE PRESERVE Saturday, August 15, 10 to Noon**

To date, more than 360 species of plants have been recorded in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve on the Potomac River. The dominant species in the marsh itself is the narrow-leaved cattail, which typically develops its characteristic flower spike by June. Other species associated with the tidal marsh include: arrowhead, arrow arum, pickerelweed, sweetflag, spatter dock, and northern wild rice. **Rain Date:** Sunday, Aug. 16th, 2:00pm

Our walk will be led by **Dr. Elizabeth Wells**, Associate Professor of Botany at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., who has studied the plants at the Dyke Marsh Preserve with Field Botany and Plant Ecology students for 30 years. *Directions: On the George Washington Memorial Parkway go about 2 miles south of the beltway overpass and turn right on Tulane Drive. Meet at the Tulane Drive parking lot across the parkway (holds 3 cars but there is space across the parkway for unlimited parking).*



*Lilium superbum* Turk's cap lily

Photo by Ed Eder from Friends of Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve

## **THE FLORA PROJECT: A Survey of over 800 native plant species found in Alexandria Virginia:**

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities' Horticulture and Natural Resources Section surveyed the vascular flora of Alexandria from 2002 - 2009. In addition, the team searched herbaria for historical collections that reflected taxa native to the City. These surveys and collections yielded more than 800 native vascular plants representing 366 genera and 128 families. Currently available is the Flora Project in pdf form, a graphic presentation called "Vanishing Flora of Washington and Vicinity" which introduces the Flora Project, and a map of Alexandria's surficial geology. Look for it online:

<http://alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=22560>

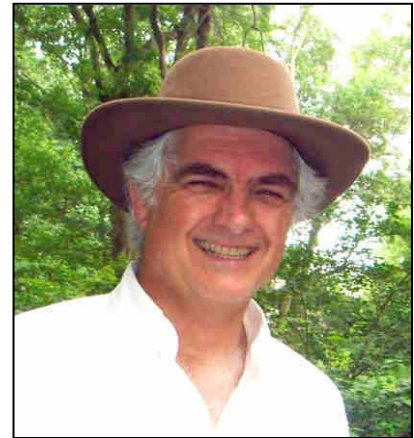
The author of the Flora project is the eminent regional field ecologist and VNPS member Rod Simmons.

"We can no longer hope to coexist with other animals if we continue to wage war on their homes and food supplies. This simple tenet provides an imperative, particularly for the bird and butterfly lovers among us, to fight invasive aliens as if it really matters and to reevaluate our centuries-old love affair with alien ornamentals. ... Gardening with natives is no longer just a peripheral option favored by vegetarians and erstwhile hippies. It is an important part of a paradigm shift in our shaky relationship with the planet that sustains us—one that mainstream gardeners can no longer afford to ignore."

Doug Tallamy in Bringing Nature Home

**A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

Involvement in an organization such as ours is a fascinating thing. Each of us has time and effort to commit and our availability changes along with our life. New family, new job, new interests; our life is always changing as we grow. Organizations also grow and change as the membership and the interests of those members change, and we find new areas in which to expand, new directions and concerns to be addressed. As science teaches us new things and changes our understanding of things we thought we knew, we find ourselves challenged anew. We have done our best to provide speakers and leaders who can help us learn and experience the wonder of nature and the incredible diversity and interconnectedness of life. I would like to thank Shirley Gay for her incomparable efforts in this regard. For many years she has served us exceptionally well in finding great teachers and handling the logistics so ably.



What is it that we want the Potowmack Chapter to be in the coming years? What do you want from this organization? What do you expect this group to represent? I would like to learn from you and challenge you to get involved, to the extent you are able and willing, in the process of defining the direction of our chapter and doing the work to accomplish those goals. Our Board is a great collection of dedicated naturalists and yet we have more tasks than hands sometimes. If you can join us you would be most welcome.

Please let me know what you think. Please come to a board meeting and meet your Board and participate in our work. Our Annual Meeting in October will be an opportunity to see some of the things our members have done during the past year. Look for more information in our next bulletin and on the listserv. We hope to have short presentations of plants, projects or pictures from a dozen or so members and I invite your contributions.

**Alan Ford**

**NATIVE PLANTINGS ALONG THE NEW BICYCLE BYPASS**

Kudos to Arlington County's Forestry Division and Environmental Landscape Supervisor, **Patrick Wegeng**, for continuing to



emphasize native species in county landscape plantings. Patrick is shown in the photo above at the grand opening of the new bicycle bypass under Interstate 395. Alas, Dominion Power transmission lines prevent the planting of canopy trees, but Patrick and his crew put in:

- Rhus aromatica* fragrant sumac
- Schizachyrium scoparium* little bluestem grass
- Panicum virgatum* Switch grass
- Viburnum dentatum* Arrowwood viburnum

- Physocarpus opulifolius* (L.) common ninebark

**DEEP GRATITUDE TO LONG TIME PROGRAM CHAIR SHIRLEY GAY**

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Probably the single most important way that people experience VNPS is through our chapter programs. In this respect, we've been extremely fortunate in having Shirley Gay as our program chair for the past ten years. She has raised the level of the entire chapter with her commitment to superb programming. Shirley's devotion to education and her respect for our native flora has ensured that chapter members would always experience an exceptional program. Over the years, Shirley carefully chose a variety of speakers, finding topics to appeal to every member whether their interest lay in lichens or trees, in conservation or gardening. She ensured that native plant lovers in our area were enlightened, educated and entertained. And in giving the speakers an audience, Shirley made sure their efforts on behalf of our native flora were recognized and supported.

Shirley coordinated all aspects of program development and implementation. Whether she was finding speakers, soliciting their bio's, arranging for AV equipment, managing publicity or setting up the room, she got it all done with good cheer and nary a cross word. And she did it over and over again! With an average of six programs and four walks a year, that's over 100 chapter events in ten years time. What a remarkable effort!

In addition to her chapter program work, Shirley serves as Education Chair for the state VNPS board. She has coordinated the programs and speakers for the VNPS State Workshop for the past several years. Obviously, Shirley did too good of a job there as the workshops were standing room only!

A person with Shirley's great spirit and dedication doesn't come along too often. We are so grateful that she came our way. Now it's time to let her relax and just be a part of the audience. Thank you, Shirley!

**Marianne Mooney**

**NATURE IS CALLING: NEW "HABITAT AT HOME©" DVD (FEATURING VNPS'S OWN PAUL KOVENOCK!)**

Do you enjoy seeing birds and other wildlife around your home? A new "Habitat at Home©" DVD has just been produced by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The 40 minute program contains four segments which showcase different types of beautiful habitat gardens, with tips for improving wildlife habitat on your own property.

The first segment on the DVD is a butterfly garden in Virginia Beach, where you'll learn what the butterflies look for when they seek out nectar sources and places to lay their eggs. The second segment on a rural property in Rappahannock county features water gardens that provide a natural home for salamanders, frogs and other amphibians, as well as the aquatic insects that support them.

A shrub and woodland garden in Shenandoah county in the third segment illustrates hedgerows, bird houses and brush piles, while the final segment is a wonderful, low maintenance native plant garden in the heart of suburban Arlington. (Paul Kovenock's property).

Throughout the DVD, homeowners are encouraged to identify, remove and replace invasive exotic species with native ones that will be much more beneficial to wildlife. The DVD is \$12 and comes with an informational brochure and plant list, available through the Department's online store, at [www.dgif.virginia.gov](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov). Or, call (804) 367-2569 to place a phone order.



**Monarch Way Stations By Alonso Abugattas**

More and more people are becoming aware of the plight of the monarch butterfly. This large orange, migratory butterfly may have gotten its name in honor of King William III of Orange and because it was said to rule over a vast domain. Now however it faces many threats, including habitat destruction (both here and on its wintering grounds). What may be a weed to us is often an important food source for an animal. In this case, the sole food for monarch caterpillars (called the host plants) is milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp). Since the caterpillars can feed on nothing else, this is one 'weed' that needs to be conserved and indeed encouraged.

Thus came about the notion of planting Monarch Way Stations. The idea was put forth by one of the leading monarch conservation organizations, Monarch Watch. By having individuals and communities plant both larval food sources (milkweeds) for the young and nectar sources for the adults, the loss of habitat could be offset and real conservations gains could be made. This plan is now getting a lot of support from many butterfly clubs (including our own Washington Area Butterfly Club), schools, and other organizations. So what do you need to make your own positive impact for monarchs? In addition to restricting pesticide use, why not plant a garden specifically for monarchs and get it certified as a Monarch Way Station? It is not as difficult as you might think as long as you keep certain principles in mind. The first principle is to make sure you have a good location. Since butterflies are "cold blooded," an area that receives six or more hours of sun is better than a shady area. This also helps since many of the blooms adult monarchs prefer are sun-loving. Next try and group your plants together and plan for flowers that will bloom throughout the season. It is easier for butterflies to see masses of blooms and, of course, a longer blooming period will provide more nectar food sources. For certification, at least four nectar sources are required, but the more the merrier. Natives are recommended with some of the best being the goldenrods, joepeyes, ironweeds, asters, composites, and coneflowers. Avoid cultivars such as double-flowered varieties.



Most important, provide milkweeds (*Asclepias* spp.) as a host plants. For certification, at least ten plants of two different species are required. Luckily for us, milkweeds are an adaptable group and there are probably some that will do very well despite your growing conditions.

The monarch favorite is the common milkweed (*A. syriaca*), but this may not be the best for a formal setting since they spread by stolons and so will not "stay" where they are planted. They are certainly quite useful in less formal and school settings and are the favorite because they have the most toxic compounds the caterpillars need to make themselves distasteful to predators.

A better option for most might be swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*), which despite its name does fine in regular garden soil and doesn't spread by runners. It will do well in clay also (as does the common milkweed). If you have wet soil, then you can also try purple milkweed (*A. purpurascens*) or red milkweed (*A. rubra*) in addition to the swamp milkweed. Another species that does well in just ordinary soil is the whorled or horsetail milkweed (*A. verticellata*) and it tends to stay short. White or redring milkweed (*A. variegata*) is also easy to grow but much harder to find.

If you have hot, dry conditions, then try utterfly weed (*A. tuberosa*). Once established, the plant can take droughts and even some cutting. It is the least favored by monarch caterpillars though because it has very little toxin in its leaves, but other butterflies and adult monarchs love it as a nectar source. Why do you think its called butterfly weed?

Do you have dry, sandy soil? Then try blunt-leaf or sand milkweed (*A. amplexicaulis*). There are also milkweed (*A. quadrifolia*), and poke milkweed (*A. exaltata*). The latter two are native just west of here. There are plenty of native alternatives. If you have to use some exotics then go for tropical milkweed or bloodflower (*A. curassavica*). Another interesting option is puffyball or balloonplant milkweed (*A. physocarpa*). As you can see there are lots of attractive options, not just for monarchs but for other butterflies to use and especially for people to enjoy.

So go ahead and do your part. Set up a Monarch Way Station. For more information, go to the Monarch Watch homepage and check Way Stations: [www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/](http://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/) Or check out the Washington Area Butterfly Club website: <http://users.sitestar.net/butterfly/>.

*Many thanks to the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, from whose newsletter this article was taken.*

**POLLINATOR GUIDES: <http://www.pollinator.org/guides.htm>**

(excerpt from from the National Wildlife Federation magazine June/July 2009 issue)  
**THE BUZZ ON NATIVE POLLINATORS By Laura Tangley**

“...Pollinators comprise a diversity of wild creatures, from birds and bats to butterflies, moths, beetles, flies and even the odd land mammal or reptile. But “there’s no question that bees are the most important in most ecosystems,” says Winfree, who calls the insects “the 800-pound gorillas” of the pollinator world. Unlike social honeybees, imported to North America in the 1600s, the majority of the continent’s native bees are solitary, nesting in burrows on the ground or small holes in wood rather than building hives. Worldwide, there are some 20,000 bee species, 4,000 of them found in North America.

“Bees and other pollinators are essential to human survival. “Without them, you’d lose most of your plants, and ultimately everything else,” says Winfree. To produce seeds and reproduce, three-quarters of the world’s flowering plant species rely on animal pollinators. (The others use the less precise methods of wind or water to transfer pollen between male and female flower parts.) Animal-dependent plants include more than two-thirds of the world’s crop species, whose fruits and seeds provide more than 30 percent of the foods and beverages we consume. Scientists estimate that in the United States alone, native bees perform up to \$3 billion worth of pollination services annually.

“Natural ecosystems and their inhabitants also rely on pollinators. Many North American songbirds, for instance, feed on the fruits, seeds and berries of plants pollinated by animals. Pollinating insects themselves, especially their plump larvae, provide protein for adult songbirds and their fast-growing fledglings. Even the notoriously carnivorous grizzly bear depends more directly on pollinators than one might expect. According to wildlife ecologist Kimberly Winter, NWF’s habitat programs manager, in some places between 80 and 90 percent of the bear’s diet is made up of fruits, nuts, bulbs and roots of animal-pollinated plants. On an ecosystem level, “losing a pollinator can have a domino effect on countless other species,” she says.”

**To read the entire article go to:**

**<http://www.nwf.org/nationalwildlife/article.cfm?issueID=129&articleID=1735>**

**Planting for pollinators: Here are a few suggestions to get started:**

- To provide pollinators with the best sources of food—and to prevent the spread of invasive species—choose as many plants native to your region as possible. For specific recommendations, consult the Pollinator Partnership’s free ecoregional planting guide for your area ([www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org)); all you need is a zip code.
- Select plants that provide a lot of nectar and pollen. Many ornamentals have been specifically bred to produce little or none of these essential foods.
- Plant a diversity of species so your yard will provide bees, butterflies and other animals with nectar and pollen from spring through fall. To attract bats and nocturnal moths, consider night-blooming plants in addition to day-bloomers.
- Be a “messy” gardener: Leave some patches of unmulched soil and brush piles that bees, birds and other animals can use to construct nests. Consider building or purchasing a bee house for wood-nesting wasps and bees.
- During hot, dry periods, provide water in shallow birdbaths or pools where pollinators can easily alight. Some wasps and bees need mud to build their nests, and butterflies like to gather in muddy puddles.
- Do not use pesticides, and encourage your neighbors to reduce their reliance on these chemicals. According to Winter, more pesticides are used in urban areas today than in agricultural regions of the United States.

For more tips, check out these sites: [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org) and [www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org)



*Toxomerus marginatus* (a syrphid fly) on *Sisyrinchium angustifolium* (blue-eyed grass) photograph by Kathy Bilton, Botanical Society of Washington. She identified the insect on BugGuide.net which is an online community of naturalists who enjoy learning about and sharing observations of insects, spiders, and other related creatures. “We enjoy the opportunity to instill in others the fascination and appreciation that we share for the intricate lives of these oft-maligned creatures.” Try out the website: <http://bugguide.net/>

**INVASIVES REMOVAL DAY AT FRASER PRESERVE** by Susan Wexelblat

On May 2, the first-ever Virginia-wide Invasive Plant Removal Day, twelve people gathered at Fraser Preserve. Over the next few hours, volunteers dug three deep holes for a new gate at the preserve entrance and cemented in the support poles; chopped up and removed a large tree blocking one of the trails; and pulled nine 6-bushel bags of garlic mustard! Volunteers concentrated on garlic mustard growing near the preserve entrance

around a seasonal creek. This one day of pulling will substantially reduce the number of garlic mustard seeds that wash into the creek and spread into the Potomac River.

In addition, approximately 100 Boy Scouts camped out at the preserve for the weekend. They performed a much-needed service by rebuilding the road connecting the end of Springvale Road to the Calvary Baptist Church and Camp within Fraser Preserve.



Fraser Preserve was given to The Nature Conservancy in 1975 by Mrs. Bernice Fraser. The land was part of a tract granted in 1649 by King Charles I to several friends; this area was eventually owned by Thomas Lee, the first of famous Virginia Lees. Prior to European colonization, the area was home to members of the Anacostan, Piscataway and Tauxenent tribes. Some of the bottomlands area of Fraser has been excavated by American University and artifacts found there are displayed in the university museum.

Unusually for a Nature Conservancy Preserve, Mrs. Fraser also donated a small holding within the preserve to Calvary Baptist Church which maintains the church, a camp, and a house for a live-in caretaker within the preserve. No boundaries separate the church holdings from the rest of the preserve. Both the Nature Conservancy and the church are dedicated to keeping the preserve intact.

The preserve covers 220 acres bordering on the Potomac River and has slightly over 2 miles of walking trails, including loop walks, which cover forest, streams, marsh, and ponds on the way to the Potomac River. The trails also connect with parkland along the Potomac River owned by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. Visitors with lots of energy can use the connecting trails for longer hikes. Within Fraser Preserve there are about 110 species of birds, at least 300 identified wildflower species and many amphibians. The state protected wood turtle has been found here. Fraser preserve provides a refuge for all these plants and animals in this increasingly urban area.

Fraser Preserve is open to the public from dawn to dusk. Please tread lightly. To organize a group visit to the property, please contact the Virginia Nature Conservancy office through [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org).

For additional information on the preserve and detailed directions see <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/virginia/preserves/art1235.html>.

### **FALLS CHURCH HABITAT RESTORATION TEAM Upcoming Events:**

Please join the Falls Church Habitat Restoration Team in restoring the local ecosystem in city parks. We will be removing damaging invasive plants as well as planting natives that benefit our local birds and butterflies.

**July 4 Crossman Park 10am-Noon**

**August 1 Cherry Hill Park 10am-Noon**

**Crossman Park** – From the intersection of rt. 7 and rt. 29, head north on rt. 29. Turn right on to East Columbia Street then take a left onto Van Buren Street. Enter park from Van Buren Street near the playground.

**Cherry Hill Park** – From West Street head east on Broad Street/Rt. 7. Turn left onto Little Falls Street. Turn left into the Community Center entrance then park in the rear. Walk behind the basketball courts towards the wooded area of the park.

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). For Native Plant sale information: contact Melissa Teates, 703-538-6961 or [melanite@verizon.net](mailto:melanite@verizon.net). The City of Falls Church is committed to the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request a reasonable accommodation for any type of disability call 703-248-5016 (TTY 711).

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

The IMA (Invasive Management Area) program is a volunteer based project that is working towards habitat restoration. Help us remove invasive plants, learn new species of invasive plants, and work outdoors!

July 11, 10:00 – 12:00, Ellanor C. Lawrence workday

July 11, 10:00 – 12:00, Holmes Run SV workday

July 25, 10:00 – 12:00, Pohick SV workday

Aug. 1, 10:00 – 12:00, Ellanor C. Lawrence workday

Aug. 15, 10:00 – 12:00, Holmes Run SV workday

Aug. 22, 10:00–12:00, Ellanor C. Lawrence workday

Aug. 29, 10:00–12:00, Pohick SV workday

For more information: [Katherine.Frederick@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Katherine.Frederick@fairfaxcounty.gov) or call 703 324 8681. Check out the IMA schedule of events and activities at: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/nrp-ima.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/nrp-ima.htm).

**ARLINGTON COUNTY RiP PROGRAM**

Free. For ages 9 to adult. Not all plants are good for the environment. Invasive plants crowd native ones out for space and light and some can even grow a "mile-a-minute"! Come learn what these troublesome beasts look like and help rescue our parks from these alien invaders! We meet monthly at the locations listed below. If you have your own garden gloves and tools, please bring them along. Some supplies will be provided. Be sure to come dressed for work, wear sturdy shoes, long pants, long sleeves, and perhaps a hat. You may also want to bring along a reusable water bottle. Register at [jtruong@vt.edu](mailto:jtruong@vt.edu) or 703-228-7636.

Second Saturdays @ Lacey Woods  
1200 N. George Mason Dr., Arlington, VA  
**July 11, Aug 8, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**  
Meet at the N. Frederick St. & 11th St. N. entrance.  
Site leader: **Nora Palmatier**

Third Saturdays @ Tuckahoe Park  
2400 N. Sycamore St., Arlington, VA  
**July 18, Aug 15, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**  
Meet in front of Tuckahoe Elementary  
Site leader: **Mary Mclean**

Second Sundays @ Gulf Branch Nature Center  
3608 Military Road, Arlington, VA 22205  
**July 12, Aug 9 12:00 PM – 2:30 PM**  
Site leaders: **Jen Soles, Lorne Peterson**

Third Sundays @ Long Branch Nature Center  
625 S. Carlin Springs Road, Arlington, VA 22204  
**July 19, Aug 16, 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM**  
Site leaders: **Matt Neff, Steve Young**

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

Join 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. **July 09, July 18, Aug 13, Aug 15**  
Check on meeting location with Alan Ford: 703.732.5291; email: [amford@acm.org](mailto:amford@acm.org)

**LOCAL EVENTS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:**

**Weds, July 1 to September 2. Insect Life** 7-9 pm classes at Woodend Sanctuary. (two NATH credits). Instructor: Don Messersmith. Learn to identify insets and discover their roles in the balance of nature. Study their histories, the ecologies of important insect forms, the necessity of insects in biotic communities and principal insect families of the Central Atlantic region.. Field Trip Dates: July 18, Aug. 8 and Aug. 29. Audubon Naturalist Society and USDA Graduate School. \$355 tuition. For information call: 301-652-9188 x16 or visit: <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/> for a registration form. Or go to: <http://grad.usda.gov>.



**LOCAL EVENTS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES (continued from page 7)**

**Weds, July 8 to Jul 29. Summer Wildflower Identification** 7-9 pm classes at Woodend Sanctuary. (one NATH credits). Instructor: Melanie Choukas-Bradley. From milkweeds and morning glories to orchids and asters, summer presents a diverse array of wildflowers for study of plant family characteristics and ways to identify different species. Field Trip Dates: July 18, July 25. Audubon Naturalist Society and USDA Graduate School. \$259 tuition. For information call: 301-652-9188 x16 or to register visit: <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/> for a registration form. Or go to: <http://grad.usda.gov>

**Sun.. Jul 12, Wildflowers** 3:30 PM - 04:30 AM Nature for Beginners: Adults. This program is for adults like you who enjoy the outdoors and want to know more about the natural world but are just beginners. Every second Sunday of the month we'll master the ten most common items in a different nature category. You'll learn not only names but enough natural history to make you feel like a naturalist superstar. Don't let your kids or grandkids show you up - or have all the fun! Join us to enhance your enjoyment and knowledge of the world around you. For more information: 703-228-3403. Meet at Gulf Branch

Nature Center, 3608 Military Rd, Arlington, VA 22207. Free. Registration required, register on-line <https://registration.arlingtonva.us/> or call 703-228-4747. Program #643641E

**Thurs. Jul. 16 (class) & Sat. July 18 (full day field trip) Introduction to Ferns and Fern Allies** Class:7:30 to 9:30 pm at Woodend Sanctuary. Leader: **Cris Fleming**. Many ferns and fern relatives such as clubmosses, horsetails, and quillwort occur in eastern woodlands. Identification of the different species is easiest in summer when these non-flowering plants produce spores in unique patterns. Field trip to Turkey Run Park in McLean, VA where over 25 species of ferns and fern allies can be found. Steep slopes and rocky stream crossings. Audubon Naturalist Society Members: \$38; Nonmembers \$52.50. For information call: 301-652-9188 x16 or visit: <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/> for a registration form.

**Sun. July 19. Butterflies and Wildflowers of Harpers Ferry. 9am-3pm** Leaders: Stephanie Mason and Pat Durkin. Harpers Ferry fans out over 2,500 acres of diverse natural habitat. The meadows, riverfront, wetlands, woodlands and open mountain summits support a treasury of butterflies and wildflowers. Audubon Naturalist Society Members: \$28; Nonmembers \$39. For information call: 301-652-9188 x16 or visit: <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/> for a registration form.



Bee on *Rosa palustris* (Swamp rose)  
at Huntley Meadows

**Wed. Jul. 22. Summer in the Wetlands**, 8:30am – 11am. Leader Stephanie Mason. Wetlands come alive during the summer with abundant plant life and vibrant wildlife activity. The freshwater marsh and swamp of **Huntley Meadows Park**, hidden away in the middle of Alexandria, VA, will be the destination for our morning explorations. We'll look at birds, dragonflies, butterflies, as we admire wetland blooms such as Pickerel weed and Buttonbush. Members \$17; Nonmembers \$24. For information call: 301-652-9188 x16 or visit: <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/> for a registration form.

**Sat. July 25 The Summer Meadow** 8:30 – 11 am **Free**. Instructors: Stephanie Mason and Cathy Stragar. Join two naturalists for a closer look at the summer web of life in meadows at our Woodend Sanctuary in Chevy Chase, MD. Plenty of species of flowers will be in bloom, attracting butterflies and other

pollinators. Audubon Naturalist Society For information call: 301-652-9188 x16 or visit: <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/> for a registration form.

**Thurs. Aug. 6 (class) Sat. Aug 8 (fullday field trip) Introduction to the Identification of Grasses**. Class at Woodend Sanctuary 7:30pm – 9:30pm; field trip to Great Falls, VA. Grasses, the dominant plants of meadows and other open areas, often present a challenge to plant identification enthusiasts. In this program we will discuss the structure and terminology of grass flowers, observe the characteristics of the subgroups of the grass family and learn to identify some grass species. Members \$38; Nonmembers \$52.50. For information call: 301-652-9188 x16 or visit: <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/> for a registration form.

**Fri. Aug 7. How to get Moths to Land on Your Bedsheets at Night**, 7:30-11pm Instructor: Dr. David Adamski. Come discover why moths constitute about 90% of all the Lepidoptera on the planet: no bad for a group of animals that flew with some of our most well-known dinosaurs!. Join Dr. Adamski in reviewing the most common moth families found in the Capital Region. Members \$20; Nonmembers:\$28. Audubon Naturalist Society For information call: 301-652-9188 x16 or visit: <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/> for a registration form.

### **(SAMBUCUS CANADENSIS) “I AM NOT A WEED!”**

What if you were googling along and found your name on a Virginia Tech website listed as an aquatic weed?!

[http://www.ppws.vt.edu/scott/weed\\_id/aquatics.htm](http://www.ppws.vt.edu/scott/weed_id/aquatics.htm)

You would **not** be amused. In fact you might write a strong letter or at least an email to the offending organization.

“Dear Virginia Cooperative Extension Service:

I am writing to clear my good name. I was taken aback to find that I have been listed on your website as a weed. I want you to know that I am a native American, who was here long before Virginia was even a colony. I





occur in every single county in this Commonwealth and almost every state.

I have bountiful flowers and abundant fruits. My flowers are beloved of numerous pollinators in late spring. Please notice the red-spotted purple butterfly in the photo below. Native bees are also ardent feeders of my nectar and help me reproduce. Solitary bees also use my old hollow stems to nest in. And according to the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Service, my berries are eaten by 48 species of birds.

Even humans love me. In fact my genus name comes from the Greek sambuce, an ancient musical instrument, and refers to my soft pith, which is easily removed so people can make flutes and whistles from the stems. Southern tribes also used the stems to make blowguns. Humans use my berries to make jellies, jams, fritters, catsup, pie, vinegar, syrup, juice, and even soup. Plus, they can make wine. Here is a recipe:



**Red spotted purple on elderberry**  
*Photo by Marianne Mooney*

**Easy Elderberry Wine Recipe**

- 5 lbs elderberries, stripped from their stems
- 1 gallon boiling water
- 3 lbs granulated sugar
- 1 wine yeast packet
- 1 cup chopped raisins
- ½ cup lemon juice
- ½ cup orange juice
- 1 teaspoon yeast nutrient

Place elderberries into a large plastic fermentation container. Add raisins, lemon and orange juices, and 1 teaspoon yeast nutrient. Pour boiling water into container and stir. When cool, squeeze mixture to release juices. Let sit for 24 hours. Add 2 lbs sugar and the wine yeast packet. Stir and cover. Let sit for 3 to 5 days. Strain liquid into a glass fermentation container and add remaining 1 lb of sugar. Stir. Let ferment in dark, warm location for

1 week. Strain into another glass container and let sit for another 6 weeks. Pour into wine bottles and seal. Wine will be ready for consumption in 6 months.

Prolific I am; but a weed, I am certainly not. I know you are an agricultural and technical university, and want to provide information for farmers, but they need to know about the benefits of native plants, too. Your motto is “Knowledge for the Commonwealth;” so I am pleased to hear that Virginia Tech may be updating its information on weeds, natives, and other plants this year. I’ll be keeping an eye on it.

Sincerely,

**Sambucus Canadensis (the elderberry)**

**Complicating Factors in Invasive Plant Management: Circumstances Beyond Our Control?**

August 11 and 12, 2009

to be held at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, PA

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Old VNPS Potowmack Chapter newsletters can be found on line at <http://www.vnps.org/>. Click on Chapters and then scroll down and click on Potowmack Chapter.

WANT TO JOIN THE CHAPTER LISTSERV? Send an e-mail to [Orlis@si.edu](mailto:Orlis@si.edu) and in the message section write subscribe to vnps-pot, your e-mail address, and your full name. Or visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vnps-pot/join>

We are recruiting for a new program chair for the year beginning this October. Please contact Alan Ford ([amford@xxx.net](mailto:amford@xxx.net)) for more information.

Please note: If you renewed your membership earlier in the year, but this is your first newsletter, please email [mrtynlsn@gmail.com](mailto:mrtynlsn@gmail.com) or [malawler@aol.com](mailto:malawler@aol.com); our system has a glitch.

Chapter Events Calendar



Aug 8 **Learn Propagation**  
9:30am to 12:30 pm  
Green Spring VNPS beds

Aug 15 **Chapter Walk**  
**Dyke Marsh**  
10am to noon

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

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