

POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 12, No.3

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Summer 1994

Preparation for Fall 1994 Sale

NO SOONER IS ONE SALE OVER THAN WE MUST BEGIN preparing for the next. Although many of the varieties of plants offered are the same as the ones offered in the spring, the emphasis is on late summer and fall blooming plants.

We want to urge you to pot up some donations for the sale when you divide the native plants in your garden. Each sale, the list of donors seems to contain the same familiar names. It would be so nice to see more of you participate in offering the public the opportunity to become familiar with the native plants we all love. Especially needed are:

- New York Ironweed
- Joe Pye Weed
- Butterfly Weed
- Ferns of all kinds (we always sell out!)
- Native Woody Plants (azaleas, American euonymous, redbud, etc.)
- Native lilies (Canada, Turk's Cap)
- Partridgeberry
- Maryland Asters
- Swamp Milkweed

All native plant donations are appreciated. They should be potted up no later than the Labor Day Weekend, and delivered to the propagation beds not later than September 12th. We can also use your old plastic pots (3, 4, and 5 inch sizes). We have lots of the very large plastic pots so those might best be donated elsewhere. Clay pots are not appropriate for this use.

In the meantime, if you would like to join us in the beds on Wednesday mornings and/or Saturday mornings, please contact Gerry Pratt (703)323-1094. The birds and chipmunks visit us, as well as butterflies and bees....Green Springs is a beautiful place to spend a few hours and at the same time serve a very useful purpose.

PROGRAM CHAIR NEEDED

THE CHAPTER IS LOOKING FOR SOME ONE TO ACT AS Program Chair. Responsibilities include arranging programs for and attending meetings. This is a great way to become more active in the Society! Any one interested should contact Nancy Luria (703)528-3612.

Fall Annual Meeting October 9th

THE VNPS FALL CHAPTER meeting is planned for Sunday, October 9 from 2:00-4:30 pm at Riverbend Park, 8814 Jeffrey Rd., Great Falls, Virginia. Jane Collins will update us on the progress of our local nominations of Riverbend, Scott's Run Nature Preserve and Huntley Meadows Park to the Virginia Native Plant Society Registry. Cris Fleming will lead a walking tour of Riverbend from 3:30-4:30. (For directions to Riverbend Park, see Cris' article on page 3). Please bring finger food and snacks to share with the group. **Mark your calendar now!**

Announcement

THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE Federation is looking for a volunteer coordinator to help organize the implementation of a new planting plan for their Backyard Wildlife Habitat garden at their Laurel Ridge (Vienna, Virginia) Conservation Center. Patience, perseverance and a sense of humor are required. Time commitment varies, but should not be more than about 10 hours per month. Please call Abbie at (703)522-0963 for more information.

President's Message

by Nancy Luria

THE TIMING OF THIS NEWSLETTER IS IMPORTANT — it must arrive at your home at least 30 days before the date of the chapter annual meeting so that you have time to consider the slate of nominees for board positions. This requirement is so stated in the chapter bylaws, the rules by which we run the organization. We are, by the way, asking that you modify portions of those governing statements; the proposed bylaw changes are printed in this newsletter along with the names of the nominated officers.

As a chapter member your duty is to vote. You may ask why you should bother when there is only one candidate for each board position. How does your vote make a difference? Consider:

1) You have the right to propose alternative candidates. You also have the right to simply vote against the slate and the bylaw changes (to ease your mind if you are suffering any doubts about the legitimacy of either, the nominating committee thoughtfully chose the nominees and an ad hoc committee worked on the bylaw changes which the board then voted to approve).

2) We have to have a quorum to make this election official! According to the bylaws, we must have 15% of the current membership vote in order to have a quorum. Fifteen percent equals 51 of you.

The most important reason to vote, though, is:

3) To give us your moral support. It's a wonderful feeling knowing that there are hundreds of you out there reading the newsletter, thinking and learning about natives, nodding approval at our activities, and, hopefully, deciding to come on a walk, donate a plant, or just to mail in your proxy. Let us hear from you! I'm betting that we can do better than a quorum. Could we possibly hear from 100 (a third) of you? We'll tell you in the next newsletter. (Please write a quick note on your proxy to tell us your ideas for chapter activities or just to say hello).

If you can come to the Annual Meeting on October 9th to vote in person, you'll be treated to a slide show featuring the native plants of Scott's Run and Huntley Meadows and to a walk that will introduce you to Marty's Meadow. Marty Smith is the delightful and knowledgeable new resource manager at Riverbend Park and he'll be on hand to explain how he got his meadow started. He'll also share some of the problems that continue to plague the meadow. Chapter botany chair, Cris Fleming, will lead us on a walk through Riverbend that will take us past the park's best fall wildflower spots. We always have fun at the annual meeting... come and get to know other members of both the plant and animal kingdoms!.

Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 161
McLean, VA 22101

Board Officers

President	Nancy Luria	(703)528-3612
Vice President	Anne Van Ryzin	(703)938-3227
Secretary	Laura Beaty	(703)534-8746
Treasurer	Dan Sealy	(703)549-9782

Committee Chairs

Botany	Cris Fleming	(301)657-9289
Programs	Liz Smith	(703)768-1697
Hospitality	Joan Van Ryzin	(703)799-4520
Membership	Anne Crocker	(703)437-0355
Propagation and Sales	Gerry Pratt	(703)323-1094
Publications	Liz Smith	(703)768-1697
Newsletter	Mark Etheridge	(703)503-5975
Site Registry	Jane Collins	(703)525-1304
Native Trail Coordinator	Edith Bradbury	(703)971-8878
Conservation	Abbie Duchon	(703)522-0963

Mail articles for the newsletter to:

Mark Etheridge
9422 Fairleigh Court
Burke, VA 22015
Fax #: (301)595-0089

Deadline for next issue is: **SEPT. 22**

CAMPANULA* BOUQUETS TO:

Liz Smith for persevering with the bylaws.
Anne Crocker for accessing information with the speed of a mile-a-minute vine.
Gerry Pratt for running yet another successful plant sale.
Abbie Duchon for jumping into conservation with inspiring enthusiasm.
Mark Etheridge for producing such a professional newsletter.
Mary Pockman for getting the chapter registry program started.
Jane Collins for countless hours of research and writing to submit three registry sites for approval.
Ed Ballard for sending the president such interesting memos.
Brenda Skarphol for continuing to nurture the Native Plant Trail.
Alonso Abugattas for helping us to make meaningful connections.
Anne Van Ryzin for her wisdom.

*in the language of flowers, gratitude

FINDING WILD- FLOWERS: RIVER- BEND PARK

by Cris Fleming

RIVERBEND PARK, a woodland oasis of over 400 acres, is located off Georgetown Pike just north of Great Falls. The river is wide and tranquil here above the falls, and gentle, rolling hills meander down to the riverside trail. The moderate slopes allow the build-up of rich soil and a mature forest in the uplands and a broad floodplain in the bottomlands. In the upland woods, oaks, beech, and tuliptree are dominant with American holly and mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) in the understory. In the bottomlands, huge old sycamore and silver maple trees grow with pawpaw and spicebush below them. Riverbend has fine examples of both bottomland and upland forests typical of the Piedmont region. Because of the high quality of its forests and the great diversity of species, Riverbend Park is being proposed as a VNPS registry site by the Potowmack Chapter.

The moist alluvial soil and undisturbed woodland at Riverbend create an excellent habitat for early spring wildflowers. At the end of March, the little harbinger-of-spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*) pokes up in low areas along the floodplain. Round-lobed hepatica (*Hepatica americana*) flowers on south-facing rocks in the open woods. Early April bloomers include spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), cut-leaved toothwort (*Dentaria laciniata*), bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), twinleaf (*Jeffersonia*

diphylla), Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), squirrel corn (*Dicentra canadensis*), and early saxifrage (*Saxifraga virginensis*).

By mid April, the bottomlands are covered with Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), including several plants with white flowers. Trout-lily (*Erythronium americanum*) and its rarer cousin, white trout-lily (*Erythronium albidum*), bloom together among the bluebells. Clusters of sessile trillium (*Trillium sessile*) and wild ginger

Because of the high quality of its forests and the great diversity of species, Riverbend Park is being proposed as a VNPS Registry Site by the Potowmack Chapter.

(*Asarum canadense*) flower along the riverside trail, and leaves of the strong-tasting ramps (*Allium tricoccum*) are scattered in the woods.

In May, upland plants in bloom include Indian cucumber-root (*Medeola virginiana*), perfoliate bellwort (*Uvularia perfoliata*), showy orchis (*Orchis spectabilis*), puttyroot orchid (*Aplectrum hyemale*), large whorled pogonia (*Isotria verticillata*), wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), and one-flowered cancer-root (*Orobancha uniflora*). The bottomlands are filled with dwarf ginseng (*Panax trifolius*), wild blue phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), golden ragwort (*Senecio aureus*), and few-flowered valerian (*Valeriana pauciflora*), a rare species found on both sides of the Potomac River in our area.

In summer, the open sunny fields come into flower with Deptford pink (*Dianthus armeria*), butter-flyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), ox-eye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*) and black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*). A meadow habitat being developed at Riverbend should add many summer-flowering species to the park.

In the shaded woodlands, a few species bloom in summer, including Indian pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*), spotted wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*), and beechdrops (*Epifagus virginiana*). Late summer flowers on the floodplain are fringed loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata*), American germander (*Teucrium canadense*), and sweet-scented Indian plantain (*Cacalia suaveolens*), a rare species known from only a few locations in the state.

Riverbend Park is managed by the Fairfax County Park Authority and is located at 8814 Jeffery Road, Great Falls, VA 22066; telephone (703)759-3211. A rustic log cabin serves as an attractive nature center and knowledgeable staff naturalists are usually available. Be sure to check the journals for wildflower sightings by the naturalists over the last few years. Wildflower walks are offered each spring at Riverbend and other Fairfax County parks. Call the park for more information.

Directions: From the Capital Beltway (I-495), take Georgetown Pike (VA-193) west for almost five miles, going past the entrance to Great Falls Park. Turn right on

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Message From The Conservation Chair

AS I MENTIONED IN OUR LAST NEWSLETTER, THE CHAPTER IS DIRECTING EFFORTS THIS year toward affecting change in our backyards and communities. One way to do this is to urge our neighborhood nurseries to stop selling invasive alien plants and to educate nursery professionals and local government authorities about native plant alternatives for residential and municipal plantings.

Please contact me about visiting a nearby nursery and making the article on purple loostrife (*See page 7 of this newsletter*) available to them. (You'll be surprised how open they are to listening to a paying customer). I will keep a master list (so we don't inundate a particular establishment) and provide educational materials. A native plant alternatives list is in the works.

If you have any ideas or information on native plants that can be used in place of invasive exotics, please call me or mail it to me.

Thank you - Abbie Duchon, Conservation Chair
(703)522-0963

REVISION OF CHAPTER BY-LAWS

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE POTOWMACK CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE Plant Society presents the following amendments and changes to the Chapter's By-Laws. The membership will vote to accept or reject these changes at the Potowmack Chapter Annual Meeting, October 9, 1994

Article 7.1 The actions and policies of the Chapter shall be determined by a Board of Directors consisting of all officers of the Chapter and chairmen of standing committees. **THE BOARD SHALL CONSIST OF NO MORE THAN FIFTEEN (15) MEMBERS.** Recommend deleting the sentence shown in caps.

Article 8.2 The fiscal year of the Chapter shall be concurrent with the fiscal year of the Society, NOVEMBER 1 THROUGH OCTOBER 31. Recommend adding the dates shown in caps for clarity.

Article 8.4 The Board shall authorize the Treasurer and the President to sign withdrawals from Chapter accounts in accordance with the budget. The Board shall approve in advance any expenditures **FOR A SINGLE ITEM** in excess of **AN AMOUNT DESIGNATED IN A STANDING RULE.** Recommend deleting phrases in caps and adding the phrase THE BUDGETED AMOUNT after "in excess of".

Article 10.1 The Nominating Committee shall consist of **TWO (2) BOARD MEMBERS AND THREE (3) MEMBERS-AT-LARGE WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.** The former shall be elected by the Board; the latter shall be elected by the Chapter membership. Members of the Nominating Committee shall serve from one annual meeting until the next. Recommend changing to read ONE (1) NON-ELECTED BOARD MEMBER AND TWO (2) MEMBERS-AT-LARGE WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE BOARD.

Article 10.4 Three (3) members of the Nominating Committee shall constitute a quorum. When a quorum is present, a majority vote shall prevail. Recommend deleting this article.

Article 10.5 (Upon deletion of the previous article, this article will be renumbered 10.4.) The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of one or more candidates for each office or standing committee chairmanship and six (6) candidates for the **THREE** at-large memberships of the Nominating Committee and shall transmit it to the Secretary for submission to the membership as provided in section 9.1. Recommend changing THREE at-large memberships to TWO to conform with changes in Article 10.1.

In addition, certain phrases and/or sentences in Articles 4.1, 7.3, 9.1, 9.3 and 10.5 will be changed so that they conform with amendments passed at the September 1992 Annual Meeting. A complete copy of the By-laws, with these portions highlighted, will be available at the Annual Meeting for members to study before voting.

If you wish to discuss these changes before the meeting, please contact Liz Smith, (703) 768-1697.

Purple Plague

by Stephen Capel

ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO our family was about halfway between Syracuse and Rochester, New York on the homeward leg of a long vacation. The scenery was enjoyably rural, but no one was paying a whole lot of attention by that time. We came to a flat, marshy area and one of my daughters exclaimed, "Wow, that sure is a pretty, purple field!" I explained that it looked like a large marsh, but I didn't know what the purple-flowered plant was that dominated the view.

Several years later while reading some wetlands management literature, I was reminded of that day. The article described the terrific problem that wetland managers were having in coping with a plant called purple loosestrife. That beautiful purple plant we had seen on the road had been introduced into the U.S. from Eurasia and been used widely across the country in landscaping and in the bee industry as a pollen producer. The paper described a good, kind "Dr. Jekyll" type of plant that, given the right conditions, could turn into an aggressive, invasive purple plant version of "Mr. Hyde." In other words, it was indeed a purple plague!

Loosestrife, it seems, will replace darn near every desirable plant in a marsh, including virtually all waterfowl and muskrat foods, livestock forages, and a host of rare and endangered plants. The annual North American economic loss due to purple loosestrife has been calculated at almost \$230,000,000.

It seems that none of the normal enemies of purple loosestrife found in its native habitat exist in North America. Thus, when the plant achieves a foothold, it has shown a tremendous ability to invade wet meadows, shallow, seasonally flooded wetlands, low spots in

fields and similar situations.

A typical 4-foot loosestrife plant can produce as many as 300,000 seeds, and some plants will grow to 10 feet tall with proportionately larger flowering stalks! The history of the plant in places like Minnesota indicates that it was present for perhaps 40-60 years before the fight climatic conditions occurred—and then, "Katy, bar the door!" In one season they saw it move from a nice, purple fringe around a few lakes in Minneapolis to a dominating purple fringe all along the Mississippi River.

As I recalled that drive 10 years ago, and that broad expanse of purple, I remember thinking, "Boy, am I glad that stuff likes more northern climates." At that time loosestrife had confined its invasive energies to marshes from Massachusetts to Illinois to Oregon and north. This was an early warning, however. It alerted me to the potential dangers our marshes might face. Over the next few years, I read the occasional paper describing a yet another failed control technique or a new range expansion into Missouri or Pennsylvania. Some states are spending as much as \$300,000 a year in control efforts, and are still losing ground.

In 1990, while discussing the problem in the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) was having controlling phragmites or reed grass in our marshes, a biologist with the Division of Natural Heritage asked if we had been seeing any purple loosestrife. She indicated that there were more than 17 counties in the Commonwealth with naturalized stands, including an extensive stand near Coeburn in far Southwest Virginia. It was obviously time to take a second look. AS of 1992, the list has grown to 25 counties, and the stand near Coeburn now occupies about 20 acres along the Powell River.

A check with surrounding states found a 45-acre stand of purple loosestrife along a powerline in

North Carolina, and increasing our concerns, we also discovered a number of nurseries in Virginia were selling loosestrife, typically as potted cuttings.

It turns out that a lot of nurseries have been selling loosestrife for a long time, and, for the most part, the plant had not proved to be invasive in Virginia. Most of these plants have been taken home to nice flower beds, well away from any wet meadows, and probably have posed few problems. However, closer examination of the few Virginia loosestrife stands has indicated that they were "escapes" and not transported by wildlife or from washing downstream from a headwaters source.

It appears that Virginia has perhaps as much as 100,000 acres that could be claimed by loosestrife if the right conditions prevail. At a time when waterfowl habitat is declining, this is certainly not welcome news. Many of our threatened and endangered plants also stand to face even more serious threats by loosestrife invasion.

Are we sitting on a time bomb in Virginia? No one really knows the full answer to that questions. Based on extremely limited surveys, we have seen the invasion almost double in the past decade. However, very few sites where it could have spread to have been invaded-yet.

The Virginia Joint Venture Board, a group of 30 federal, state and private organizations concerned with wetlands, approached the Virginia Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services about placing purple loosestrife on the Noxious Weed List and the Seed Law. This would have removed it from commerce in Virginia. The board indicated they would consider such a move if Virginians can't be convinced to voluntarily quit selling and using loosestrife in their gardens.

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1994 Spring Sale a Success

GOOD PUBLICITY AND BEAUTIFUL WEATHER COMBINED TO GIVE VNPS A VERY SUCCESS-ful Spring sale. Of course, it would not have been possible except for the tireless work of many of our members. Working at the propagation beds, preparing and working at the sale and donating plants are some of the ways our members contribute to our success.

Members of the Sales and Propagation Committee spent several months potting, labeling and pricing plants. A number of our members again donated generously of their own native plants to increase the diversity of plants we can offer to the public, which each year seems to grow more eager for native plants.

This year, instead of arranging plants in the shade and sun tents by botanical name, we arranged each tent by time of bloom (i.e. Spring, Summer, Fall). This arrangement seems to make it easier for our clients as well as our sales volunteers. If you have any suggestions to improve our sales, we would love to hear from you.

Below is our "honor list" of volunteers:

1. Work in the beds at the sale

Laura Beaty
Edith Bradbury
Robynne DeYoung
Sherri Finley
Bill Frailey
Eva Giercuskiewicz
Margaret James
Gail Minnich-Blewis
Dust Pratt
Margaret Shutler
Sally Sieracki
Beth Smith
Billie Trump

3. Donated Plants:

Laura Beaty
Kay Bachman
Edith Bradbury
Anne Crocker
Robynne DeYoung
Bill Frailey
Margaret James
Myana Moses
Dust & Gerry Pratt
Margaret Shutler
Sally Sieracki
Beth Smith
Liz Smith

2. Volunteer at the sale:

Ann Crocker (membership)
Trish Hendershot
Dan Sealy (cashier)
Liz Smith #1 (publications)
Liz Smith #2
Sharon Terrango
Anne Van Ryzin
Norma Vermillion (publicity)

Thanks to all of you for a great effort. We totaled close to \$3,500 in sales!

Gerry Pratt

Calendar

SEPTEMBER

- 17 of Saturday Fall Plant Sale, Green Spring Gardens Park. See page one of this newsletter for more information.
- 22 Thursday Potowmack Chapter Board Meeting, 7:00 pm. Green Spring Gardens Park.
- 23-25 Friday - Sunday Virginia Native Plant Society Annual Meeting, Charlottesville, Virginia.

OCTOBER

- 9 Sunday Potowmack Chapter Fall Annual Meeting, Riverbend Park, 2:00-4:30 pm. See page one of this newsletter for more information.

RIVERBEND

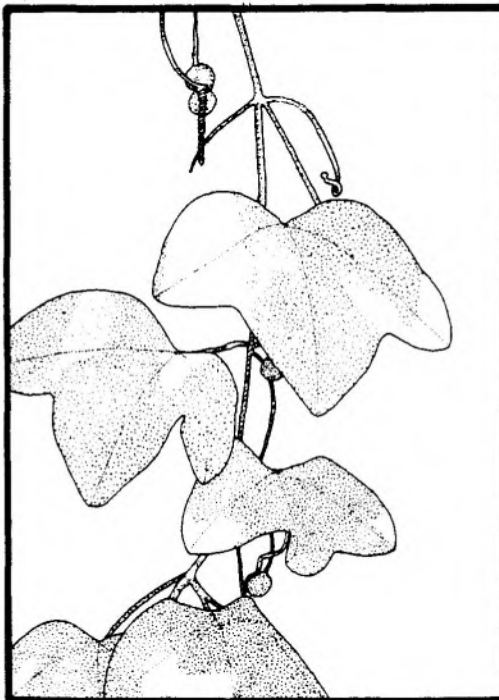
from page 3

Riverbend Road for almost one mile, then right on Jeffery Road for three miles to the parking area for the nature center. Follow the signs to the nature center. Do not turn on Potomac Hills Street; this leads to the boat ramp.

This article is adapted from the book, Finding Wildflowers in the Washington-Baltimore Area by Cris Fleming, Marion Lobstein, and Barbara Tufty, publication date February 1995. Copyright Johns Hopkins University Press.

Note: Cris Fleming will lead a walk at Riverbend Park at the Annual Meeting of Potowmack Chapter of VNPS on Sunday, October 9.

IS ANY ONE INTERESTED IN developing an propagation area for woody plants? If you are, please contact Nancy Luria, (703)528-3612.



Passiflora lutea

Loosestrife

from page 7

To date, we have been working with the Virginia Nurserymen's Association to reduce the marking of loosestrife in Virginia. Ten years ago no one envisioned that the plant had the potential to affect our wetland resources. What little was known about the plant in Virginia at the time was that it seemed to make a nice, perennial plant with a colorful, magenta flower spike in the summer. Today, we know better.

The question is: What should be done in Virginia? Certainly, anyone living near wetlands should avoid the use of purple loosestrife, no matter how pretty it is! Nurseries would best serve Virginia and its native wildlife and plants by seeking and offering to their customers alternative plants that are not invasive. But this is not easy. Loosestrife travels under a variety of horticultural aliases, like morden pink, rose queen, purple spire, columbia pink, fire candle, the rocket, morden rose, dropmore purple, the beacon, and roseum superbum. Thus, loosestrife is very much the wolf in sheep's clothing! Pay close attention to any purple-colored perennial and ask questions to satisfy yourself that you are not bringing loosestrife, or *Lythrum salicaria*, home to your garden!

Once Virginians realize that purple loosestrife is not just a pretty plant, but a "purple plague," those of us who hold marshes, ducks, wet meadows, rails, herons, and singing sedge wrens close to our hearts will breathe a sigh of relief. This is one threat to our wildlife we can control-if we all work together.

Stephen Capel is a farm and wetlands biologist supervisor with the Wildlife Division of VDGIF.

Reprinted with the permission of Virginia Wildlife, July 1993, p 13.

Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
Membership/Renewal Form

Name (s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____

☐ Individual \$15 ☐ Family \$25 ☐ Student \$10
☐ Patron \$50 ☐ Sustaining \$100 ☐ Life \$400
☐ Associate (group) \$40: delegate _____

To give a gift membership: Enclose dues, name and address.

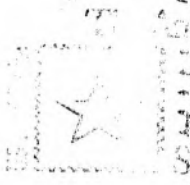
I wish to make an additional contribution to Potowmack Chapter

in the amount of \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ _____

☐ Check here if you do not wish your name
to be exchanged with similar organizations.

☐ Check here if you do not wish
to be listed in a chapter directory

Make check payable to VNPS and mail to:
 VNPS Membership Chair, Route 1, Box 381, Delaplane, VA 22025



Potowmack Chapter
 Virginia Native Plant Society
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