

POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 12, No.4

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Fall 1994

FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

February 23, 1995
Green Spring Gardens Park
7:30 pm

NATIVE AMERICAN USES OF PLANTS

A Slide Lecture By Ruth Smith

PLANTS WERE AN INTIMATE PART OF THE CULTURAL, economic, and religious life of Native Americans. Respected and revered, they furnished food, medicine, building materials, charms to lure and repel, and much more. With anecdotes, visual aids, and slides Ruth Smith will explore interesting tribal uses of plants — a connection which reveals a wealth of fascinating detail about Native American beliefs and practices and furthers understanding and appreciation of the importance of plants in the everyday life of the Native American.

Ruth Smith has been involved with the study of historical uses of plants for twenty years. She was tapped to teach her first class in plant uses for the USDA Graduate School. At that point she says, she really got busy digging into the literature while she literally dug plants to determine their "virtues" as described by the chroniclers of Native American practitioners.

Ruth taught for many years always including a field trip to the 100-acre farm she and her husband have in the foothills of the Blue Ridge so that students could experience the gathering of plants first-hand.

Ruth has also taught courses on herbs for the U.S. National Arboretum and Smithsonian Resident Associate Program, has led field trips for the Audubon Naturalist Society, Smithsonian, and Washington Botanical Society. She is a member of the Potomac Unit of the Herb Society of America and of the Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society. ■



November Membership Meeting A Great Success!

PIEDMONT CHAPTER MEMBER JOCELYN SLADEN DROVE all the way from Warrenton to educate and entertain us in Green Spring's new auditorium with her slide show and talk on hedgerows. One of our best attended programs, Jocelyn's beautifully presented lecture covered the history of hedgerows, their current status, and the benefits of creating new ones. Hedgerows, besides providing a haven for many increasingly rare native plants, add diversity to the landscape. Visual appeal and animal habitat are both enhanced. Certainly after seeing Jocelyn's gorgeous slides, one could never question the need to include hedgerow species wherever possible in our own yards.

If you would like a copy of Piedmont Chapter's Hedgerow brochure, please send a SASE to Liz Smith, 7731 Tauxemont Road, Alexandria, Va 22308. ■

1994 ANNUAL MEETING

THE CHAPTER'S ANNUAL MEETING WAS HELD AT Riverbend Park in Great Falls on a balmy afternoon in October. Ten percent of our membership attended and with proxies we had the quorum required to elect the new slate of officers. [A sincere thank you to those of you who took the time to mail a proxy. Technically, our elections aren't valid without 15% of the members voting. This is the first year any of us can remember that we had ample votes. What a nice feeling!]

A second purpose for the annual meeting this year was to cheer about the addition of three sites located within the chapter's domain to the state society's registry list. Riverbend, Scott's Run, and Huntley Meadows, all Fairfax County parks, got official designation at the society's annual meeting in September. We echoed the congratulations to the managers of these precious preserves and gloried in being the only chapter to propose and have approved three sites as a first effort. This achievement was due to the efforts of two members, Mary Pockman and Jane Collins. Mary initiated the process and Jane continued and completed it by visiting each site (several times), researching the parks

continued on page 4

FROM THE CONSERVATION CHAIR

Dear members,

The Potowmack Chapter of VNPS is gearing up for an educational mailing to various community officials about avoiding invasive alien plants and promoting natives as landscape alternatives to nasties like purple loosestrife, etc.

If you know of particular community leaders in a position of influence who should receive this mailing, contact Abbie Duchon at (703)522-0963.

This spring we will be launching an attack on *Polygonum perfoliatum*, the dreaded mile-a-minute vine, at Potomac Overlook Park in Arlington. These pesky vines may be controlled when yanked mercilessly in their (still spineless) infancy. We will meet in the Nature Center Auditorium Saturday, April 29 at

continued on page 5

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	Aileen Smith	(703)266-3822
Treasurer	Ben Fitzgerald	(703)280-4918

Committee Chairs

Botany	Cris Fleming	(301)657-9289
Conservation	Abbie Duchon	(703)522-0963
Hospitality	Joan Van Ryzin	(703)799-4520
Membership	Anne Crocker	(703)437-0355
Native Plant Trail	Edith Bradbury	(703)971-8878
Newsletter	Mark Etheridge	(703)503-5975
Programs	Alonzo Abugattas	(703)243-1961
Propagation and Sales	Gerry Pratt	(703)323-1094
Publications	Liz Smith	(703)768-1697
Publicity	Norma Vermillion	(703)451-0572
Site Registry	Jane Collins	(703)525-1304

Mail or fax articles for the newsletter to:
Mark Etheridge
9422 Fairleigh Court
Burke, VA 22015
Fax: (301)595-1000

Deadline for next issue is: **January 26**

President's Message

by Nancy Luria

Perhaps I needed something gray and brown
And did not know it,—something spent and bare,
That morning on the back-road, in November.
I may have stood in need of something bedded
Like the ledge beside me barnacled with lichen,
With a great wave of juniper breaking on it;
Or darkly needed something straight like cedars,
Black on the traveling cloud-fringe,—something
steady,
Like slate-gray mountains in behind bare birches.

Perhaps I needed something bright and scarlet,
Like winter berries on the stone-gray bush
Beside the rock-pile,—something sweet and singing,
Like water in the gutter running down
From springs up in the pasture out of sight.

But if I needed these, I did not know it.
If you had told me that I wanted fullness,
Or life, or God, I should have nodded "Yes";
But not a bush of berries,—not a mountain!
—Yet so it was: fantastic needs like these,
Blind bottom hungers like the urge in roots,
Elbowed their way out, jostling me aside;
A need of steadiness, that caught at mountains,
A need of straightness, satisfied with cedars,
A need of brightness, cozened with a bush.

—Whatever it was I needed, know I found it!
The oak-tree standing with its feet in water
Behind me, with the wind hoarse in its top
Of paper, or the thousand-penciled bushes
Across the road, or alders black with catkins,
Fed no more deeply on the earth than I,—
Nor half so passionately, I must think,
As I, who, rooted in my tracks, appeased
Undreamed-of hungers with unlikeliest food,
The first at hand; amazed to find what sweetness
Can be wrung out of clay and flint,—amazed
Like a starving man in a swamp, to find what relish
Is hid in grass, and bark, and roots, and acorns.

— Abbie Huston Evans (from *Outcrop*, 1928)

*** Wishing you satisfying natural feasts. ***

The Board and members of the Potowmack Chapter extend their deepest sympathy to Ed Ballard, former chapter president, on the loss of his wife.

OUR LOCAL LYCOPODIUMS

Cris Fleming - Botany Chair,
Potowmack Chapter

LYCOPODIUMS ARE LOW, CREEPING, evergreen plants with very small or scale-like leaves. Reproduction is by spores found in terminal stroboli or in the axils of leaves. *Lycopodium* is one of only two genera in the Lycopodiaceae family (the other genus is found in Australia!). Related to ferns, lycopodiums, as well as horsetails, quillworts, and spikemosses, are often called "fern allies."

The common names of various lycopodiums can be very confusing. Some are given the common name of clubmoss because the low, dense growth pattern resembles that of moss. Another common name is ground-pine as some upright species look like young pine trees. Of course the likeness is only superficial since lycopodiums are not related to either mosses or pines.

Once widely collected to make Christmas wreaths and other holiday decorations, lycopodiums have become rarer in recent years. VNPS discourages the picking of lycopodiums and the purchase of decorations made of these attractive native plants.

Thirteen species of lycopodiums grow in Virginia; however, only seven are found in Fairfax and/or Arlington County. Several kinds of clubmoss occur in mature deciduous woodlands, but some rare species have unique habitats, such as *Lycopodium inundatum* which is found in cold northern or mountain bogs or *L. porophyllum* which may grow on rocky cliffs or ledges.

Despite the small number of

species, lycopodiums are not always easy to identify. Some species are similar in appearance at first glance, and close observation is often needed to make a definite identification. As in other families, the nomenclature of Lycopodiaceae has recently been revised, with some authorities splitting the *Lycopodium* genus into other genera such as *Huperzia*, *Diphasium*, and *Lycopodiella*.

Following are brief descriptions of the more common lycopodiums in our area. *Lycopodium digitatum*, (formerly *L. flabelliforme*), called crow's foot or ground-cedar, is the most plentiful and widespread clubmoss in Virginia. The scale-like, appressed leaves tightly hug the flat, drooping branches that are arranged like fingers on a hand. The stroboli occur on long, almost leafless stalks. *L. digitatum* occurs in dry upland woods, sometimes covering several acres.

Lycopodium tristachyum, slender ground-cedar, is much like *L. digitatum* but with slender, upright branches and a thin, wiry stalk. The leaves are even more tightly appressed. This clubmoss is found mainly in the mountains but also in other regions along major rivers, such as the Potomac, York, and James.

Lycopodium obscurum var. *dendroideum* (var. *isophyllum* of some authors), or tree clubmoss, does resemble a small spruce or fir tree. The short needle-like leaves occur all around the upright branches, giving them a bottlebrush appearance. The stroboli rise above the leafy branches. This clubmoss grows in somewhat acidic soil in moist deciduous woods.

Shining clubmoss, *Lycopodium lucidulum* or *Huperzia lucidula*, looks quite different than the other clubmosses. The upright stalks are

unbranched and the soft leaves of different lengths have a silky sheen. This species does not have terminal stroboli; the sporangia occur in the leaf axils. Shining clubmoss is found in cool, shady, moist woods.

Lycopodium appressum, southern bog clubmoss, is a tall, slender clubmoss with very small, tightly appressed leaves and a small, narrow terminal stroboli on each stalk. Leafy sterile branches creep along the ground surface. As its common name suggests, *L. appressum* is found in acid soil of bogs and shores, mostly on the Coastal Plain.

Similar in appearance is *Lycopodium alopecuroides* or foxtail clubmoss. In this species, the leaves of the stalk are more open, not appressed to the stalk, and the leaves of the terminal stroboli are widely spreading and somewhat bushy. Habitat for foxtail clubmoss is wet, sandy bogs. In Virginia, it occurs mostly in the southeastern counties but has been reported for Arlington County.

Winter is an excellent time to look at lycopodiums as there are few distractions on the forest floor. Local parks have a good variety of clubmosses. Walk the swamp trail at Great Falls Park or the upland trails at Turkey Run Park to find *Lycopodium digitatum*, *L. obscurum* var. *dendroideum*, and *L. lucidulum*. *Lycopodium appressum* can be seen at Suitland Bog near Suitland, Maryland and is recorded for both Fairfax and Arlington Counties. ■

Books useful for identifying clubmosses include Brown and Brown, Herbaceous Plants of Maryland, Strausbaugh and Core, Flora of West Virginia, Mickel, How to Know the Ferns and Fern-allies, and Cobb, A Field Guide to the Ferns and Their Related Families.

ANNUAL MEETING

from page 1

histories, verifying plant lists, and filling out and submitting numerous required forms. Both women can take great pride in their work to ensure greater appreciation for Virginia's native plants. We were pleased that the volunteer who dedicated countless hours compiling Huntley Meadows' plant list could attend our meeting. She modestly declined praise, but we proudly record that she is one of our own, Potowmack member Karen Goodlatte.

Who keeps saying that plant people don't take walks, they just meet in a group and wander? Well, they're right. Honestly, you get a leader the caliber of Cris Fleming and you can spend an hour in one spot! To her credit, Cris kept us moving through the fascinating vegetation of Riverbend's new meadow, pointing out the invasives and the natives with equal interest. Marty Smith, Riverbend's resource manager, explained that he is managing the meadow for songbirds and attempting to maintain the area in the multiple successional stages typical of an old field. This allows for a wonderful variety of plants that, once established, should provide shelter and food for an increasingly diverse animal population. We thank both Cris and Marty for sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm.

Except for the late afternoon thunderstorm (which, come to think of it, really was the best way to get us all rounded up and out of there), the meeting was flawlessly planned by Vice President Anne Van Ryzin. Anne took time off work to visit the nature center ahead of time to ensure that she made enough signs, had enough chairs, and provided enough food. With the potluck goodies that everyone brought we had quite a pleasant "tea" and, as far as I know, no one got lost. Many thanks to Marty Smith, Alonso Abugattas, and the desk staff for all their help. ■

The Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Alonso Abugattas as the new Program Chair. Call him with your suggestions, please.

PROFILE OF A VNPS MEMBER

EDITH BRADBURY CAME TO THE Washington area from St. Louis, Missouri in 1989. In Missouri, she was an active member of the Missouri Native Plant Society so it was only natural that she would join the Virginia Society when she arrived here. From the beginning, Edith was active in the propagation beds, often devoting her precious Saturday mornings to them after working in the office all week.

Since then, she has continued to be an active member of the Propagation and Sales Committee. As a member of the Potowmack chapter, she attended Board meetings where her talents were soon put to work. She assumed responsibility for the chapter's Spring Garden tour, and last year took on the additional task of liaison to the Green Spring Gardens Park Nature Trail. In the tradition of always asking a busy person to do more, she was selected as a member of the chapter's nominating committee for 1995.

A talented nature photographer, she won an award in the Potowmack chapter's photo competition in 1992. She enthusiastically participates in many facets of the chapter's activities, as well as constantly expanding her knowledge of native plants through taking courses and field trips.

In addition to VNPS, Edith is a member of FROGS (Friends of Green Spring), the Sierra Club, the Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society. ■

REPORT FROM THE PROPAGATION AND SALES COMMITTEE

THE FALL 1994 PLANT SALE continued a successful string of plant sales for the Chapter. In addition to the great work on the part of members of the Committee and other member volunteers, the staff of Green Spring Gardens Park facilitated our efforts by providing wonderful support services, as well as providing refreshments for our workers throughout the day.

A true-blue cadre of chapter volunteers shared their expertise with our clients. Our membership chairperson, Anne Crocker, attracted both new and renewing members with an eye-catching poster, while Liz Smith presented an attractive area of pamphlets for sale, as well as free literature to our customers.

Aileen Smith, our newly elected secretary, experienced a baptism by fire by agreeing to act as cashier in the absence of our treasurer. With some help from more seasoned members, she did an outstanding job.

We offered over 1,100 plants, of which 346 were donated by the following members:

Laura Beaty, Margaret Chatham, Walker Newman, Edith Bradbury, Beth Smith, Anne Crocker, Billie Trump, Sally Sieraki, Dust and Gerry Pratt, and Trish Hendershot.

Please plan to join this honor list with your own donations for the Spring 1995 sale, tentatively scheduled for May 20th from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm.

Our seed sales, started two years ago under the direction of Edith Bradbury, are gaining in popularity and the sales this fall doubled in number over our spring sale. V

continued on page 5

WE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING new members who have joined the Potowmack Chapter since January, 1994:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Priscilla Adams | McLean |
| Nancy Adamson | Washington |
| Vivian Attermeyer | Falls Church |
| Cynthia Barr | Alexandria |
| Nathalie Billmyer | Alexandria |
| Sharon Boots | Reston |
| Carol & Robert Bruce | Arlington |
| Carolyn Cain | Temple Hills |
| Martha Chang | Fairfax |
| Stephen R. Coffee | Falls Church |
| A. B. Compher | Falls Church |
| Donna Comman | Arlington |
| Michael Davenport | Arlington |
| Julian Fiechter | Falls Church |
| Iva Futrell | Arlington |
| Anke & Asel Goetz | McLean |
| John Guyette | Fairfax |
| James Gwaldis | Falls Church |
| Hope H. Hale | Great Falls |
| Kathy Hamblett | Arlington |
| Gerald Hart | Greenbelt |
| Mandy Holt | Falls Church |
| Frankalee R. Hull | Annandale |
| Ruth Ikara | Leesburg |
| Eleanor Kask | Alexandria |
| Ann Kelleran | Arlington |
| Jim Kerr | Arlington |
| Pat Kunard | Alexandria |
| Kathleen Kust | Alexandria |
| Michele Leslie | Falls Church |
| Jean, Alec & Laura McBride | Annandale |
| Beverly J. Meeker | Washington |
| Lee J. Miller | Washington |
| Susan Moore | Falls Church |
| Sherry Morgan | Falls Church |
| Casey Neperud | Springfield |
| Gloria T. Nisselson | Falls Church |
| Robert Pickett | Silver Spring |
| Laura Pyle | Burke |
| Don & Susan Schupp | Herndon |
| Mary Seith | Alexandria |

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Mrs. Ruth H. Shields | Fairfax |
| Heather Shockey-Barrett | Vienna |
| Roderick & Teresa Simmons | Falls Church |
| Jim & Trish Skaptason | Herndon |
| Gerald Sleph | Annandale |
| Ann Stat | Alexandria |
| Marian Stover | Arlington |
| Penelope Strand | Falls Church |
| Page D. Styles | Fairfax |
| Peggy Trimble | Annandale |
| Rita Tyrrell | Vienna |
| Maggie Wilson | Burke |
| L. Lamar Yates | Arlington |
| Steve Young | Arlington |



CONSERVATION
from page 2

9:00 am , - looking for vengeance. Bring a bag lunch for socializing after the pull. Drinks will be provided. Call Nancy Luria at (703)528-3612 for more information.

Also, if any one is interested in helping to control porcelainberry at Potomac Overlook this winter contact Naturalist Martin Ogle at (703) 528-5406. ■

Propagation
from page 4

are planning to offer a good supply of New York Ironweed seed this spring, since it is the VNPS flower of the year for 1995.

This year, in addition to conducting two successful plant sales, the propagation committee donated native plants from the beds to the following non-profit projects:

- CIA Memorial Project
- VNPS State Annual Meeting Auction
- Two Eagle Scout projects promoting native plants at Pohick Regional Library
- Mason Neck Park Native Plant entry garden
- The Meadow Garden at Riverbend Park
- Green Spring's Native Trail

The propagation committee is in the process of hatching some "new and improved" methods of disseminating cultural information at our sales to make them a truly educational event. If you want to join us next spring, please call Gerry Pratt at (703)323-1094. We are always looking for a few good men and women! ■

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN OUR CHAPTER? Why not volunteer as Treasurer? Work with Ben Fitzgerald this year with an eye toward becoming Treasurer in 1996. Interested members should contact Nancy Luria at (703)528-3612. ■

Calendar	
DECEMBER	No membership meeting
JANUARY	
26 Thursday	Potowmack Chapter Board Meeting, 7:00 pm, Green Spring Gardens Park
FEBRUARY	
23 Thursday	General Membership and Board Meeting, 7:30 pm, Green Spring Gardens Park. Slide presentation, "Native American Uses of Plants" by Ruth Smith.

Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
Membership/Renewal Form

Name (s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____

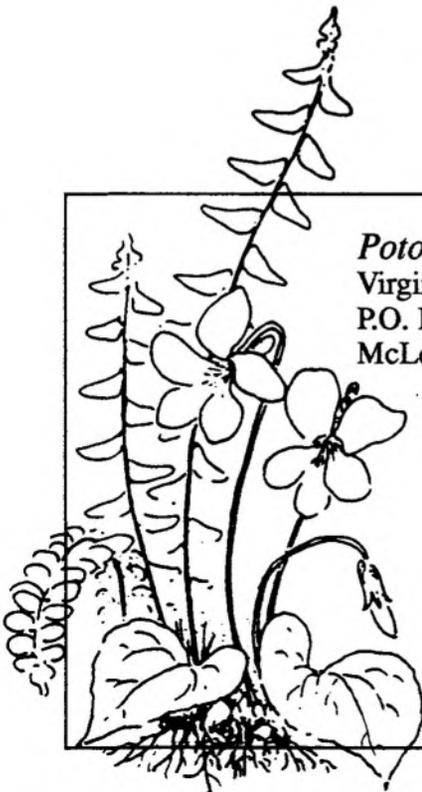
Individual \$15 Family \$25 Student \$10
 Patron \$50 Sustaining \$100 Life \$400
 Associate (group) \$40: delegate _____

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
P.O. Box 161
McLean, Virginia 22101



*Please verify your address
information and your renewal
date on the mailing label!*