

# POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 13, No.3

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Summer 1995

## Chapter Annual Meeting

Saturday, October 14, 3:00 - 5:30 pm  
Winkler Botanical Preserve  
Alexandria, Virginia

THE WINKLER BOTANICAL PRESERVE STAFF HAS GRACIOUSLY agreed to host this year's annual meeting. We will meet at the Mark Center Club (see directions below) for a short business meeting and talk by Preserve manager, John Walsh. John will show "before and after" slides of some of the Preserve's projects and explain the Winkler's history and mission. After a half-hour social and "tea" we will travel to the entrance of the preserve in a van where John; Rod Simmons, president of the Maryland Native Plant Society and native plant ecologist for the Preserve; and other staff will lead us on group tours.

Consisting of 43 acres, the Winkler Botanical Preserve is one of the largest tracts of natural woodland left in Alexandria. It encompasses a variety of habitats, some of them recently created. Besides the indigenous oak, hickory, pine forest, there are new meadows and wetlands. The multi-acre pond system added in 1992 was carefully designed to fit into the natural landscape and is already supporting a variety of fish, amphibians, reptiles and aquatic birds.

In addition to providing a retreat for both wildlife and people, the Preserve is an active conservation, research and educational facility. Many of the specimens planted within the Preserve were rescued from development sites. The multi-disciplinary staff conducts studies in urban forest management, native horticulture, and animal behavior and works with universities, environmental organizations, government agencies, schools and other botanical gardens to foster common goals in conservation and education.

**Directions to the Mark Center Club (5708 Merton Court, Alexandria, 578-7850):** Take 395 to Seminary Road WEST. Left on Beaugard. Right on Reading, left on Merton Court to 5708.

Please bring a "tea" item to share (suggestions: cheese and crackers, dip and chips, veggies, cookies, etc.). The Chapter will provide drinks, plates, and utensils. ■

## Preparing For Our Fall 1995 Sale

OUR FALL 1995 PLANT SALE AT GREEN SPRING Gardens Park is scheduled for September 16th from 10 am to 3 pm. Please mark this date on your calendar! It should be a piece of cake after the obstacle course we've put up with for the last two years. Imagine finding a convenient place to park, unencumbered by construction equipment and other unsightly things!

I hope you all will continue the wonderful spirit of cooperation we experienced this Spring and call me with your offer of help and of plant donations. We also can use all the help we can get at the Propagation Beds. I promise you'll enjoy coming out to putter in out wildflower beds. No noise, no construction...only the sound of the birds and the chatter of our committee members.

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## September Membership Meeting Green Spring Gardens Park Thursday, September 28th 7:30 pm

"Native Plants: State of the Art Landscape Design"  
Carole Ottesen

AS AUTHOR OF THE HOT-OFF-THE-PRESS BOOK, *THE Native Plant Primer: Trees, Shrubs, and Wildflowers for Natural Gardens*, Carole Ottesen is intimately familiar with current uses of native plants in landscape design. She also gets close to her subject with a camera. The result is a fascinating and beautifully illustrated talk guaranteed to make you drool for her book. A very sought-after speaker (National Arboretum, Cullowhee, US Botanic Garden, and many others), Carole kindly agreed to speak to us as a fellow chapter member. Some of you may be familiar with Carole's earlier Garden Book Club selections, *Ornamental Grasses*, *The Amber Wave* and *The New American Garden* and realize what a treat it will be to hear her speak. Copies of *The Native Plant Primer* will be available for purchase; Carole will be happy to autograph them. Advance publicity for the book states: "*The Native Plant Primer* is one of a kind: a practical gardener's guidebook as well as a lavishly illustrated tribute to the plants of North America."

Call 351-9723 for reservations.

## June Pot Luck a Great Success

Our Pot Luck on June 25 was held at the newly renovated Horticultural Center at Green Spring Gardens Park and was attended by approximately sixty chapter members and guests, many of whom brought with them some wonderful dish to share with all. Many thanks go to Joan Van Ryzin for her help in organizing all the goodies, and to all those who pitched in to move tables and chairs. It was a special treat to have Cristol Fleming, Marion Blois Lobstein and Barbara Tufty there to sign copies of their book, *Finding Wildflowers in the Washington-Baltimore Area*.

After all the food was gone, Nancy Luria lead us on a walk around the gardens, including the Native Plant Trail, and handed out copies of Brenda Skarpols' top ten list of native shrubs for the landscape. If you were not able to attend this year, you should definitely plan to be there next year! ■

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

### Board Officers

President	Nancy Luria	(703)351-9723
Vice President	Dan Sealy	(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	(301)320-0358
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	Alonso Abugattas	(703)528-8529
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 articles for the newsletter to:

Mark Etheridge  
9422 Fairleigh Court  
Burke, VA 22015

Deadline for next issue is: **November 16**

## President's Message

by Nancy Luria

EMBARRASSED MY 11-YEAR-OLD IN JUNE WHEN I cried at his fifth grade graduation. He should know by now - transitions are hard for me. I guess it's because I realize that something will be gone forever (no more handmade Mother's Day cards). At the same time, however, I feel excited about the opportunities change will bring (sixth graders going to middle school are much humbler creatures, being lowest in the pecking order).

This paradox of emotions is beginning to stir inside me as I prepare to exit as president of the Chapter. I have thoroughly enjoyed the meetings, workshops, field trips, and phone calls that brought me into contact with like-minded nature lovers. I felt so nurtured by these activities, in fact, that I, the art historian, brazenly applied for a job as a seasonal naturalist at an Arlington park. After two years blissfully tripping through wildflowers and sharing my passion with visitors there, I began working full-time at Green Spring as assistant program coordinator. Wow! All of this because of VNPS! (Yes, pick your volunteer activities carefully!) Of course I'm feeling sentimental about such a journey. But I'm curious about a change, too, so I asked the nominating committee to find a new leader.

In choosing Mark Etheridge the committee has served us well. Mark has been an extraordinary newsletter editor for the Chapter, patiently waiting for late submissions and up-grading the graphics to a professional level. He is a devoted lepidopterist (and husband and father!) and is quite impressive with his binomial plant names. Even though he's working at a new job in Maryland, he lives in Fairfax where he keeps track of the butterfly population (he warns: be prepared for a particular slant on upcoming events!). It will be fun to work with Mark on new Chapter projects.

The voting in of new board members at the Annual Meeting is the Chapters' official way of preserving the "old" while welcoming the "new". Our mission to assure the conservation of Virginia's native plants continues on the platform established by many dedicated volunteers (chapter boards come and gone, members giving time to this or that effort or cause) into a future when new approaches and new ideas will be tried. The more creative we become and the broader-based our efforts are, the better chances for achieving our goal. Mark will need new committee members and all the chapter projects need more bodies and ideas. All of you have something to offer the chapter. I know your mothers expected great things from you after your elementary school graduations! See you on October 14. ■

## SOLDIERS DELIGHT NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AREA

by Cris Fleming, botany chair

**S**OLDIERS DELIGHT IS A TRULY delightful place, particularly in late September when the fringed gentian (*Gentianopsis crinita*) is in bloom. Located east of Baltimore in southwestern Baltimore County, Soldiers Delight is the best-known and most accessible serpentine barren in our region. It is said that the area got its unusual name from the fact that British soldiers liked to camp in the open meadows. Whatever the source of the name, the place is now delighting naturalists, botanists, and ecologists more than soldiers.

The 2,000 acre Soldiers Delight Natural Environment Area contains the largest serpentine barren in Maryland. Serpentine barrens run through the Piedmont province from Montgomery County, Maryland to Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania and support a flora quite unlike that of the typical Piedmont deciduous forests. With only a few stunted trees and shrubs, the serpentine barrens are open grasslands, resembling small patches of prairie.

Due to the heavy metal content of the underlying serpentine rock and the thin, dry, nutrient-poor soil, the serpentine barrens habitat is stressful to most plants. Although some scrubby tree species grow here, such as Virginia pine, blackjack oak and post oak, the barrens are natural openings dominated by grasses and other herbaceous plants. Because of the unusual habitat, serpentine barrens contain many uncommon and rare plants.

Soldiers Delight is interesting at all

times of the year, but a visit in late September gives the special pleasure of seeing fringed gentian in flower along the stream. The deep blue blooms of this robust gentian are worth a close look to study the intricate pattern of the white fringes on each of the four petals. Fringed gentian is a species of northeastern and midwestern wet meadows and is not often found in the mid-Atlantic states. Extreme care should be taken when observing or photographing the gentian, as Soldiers Delight is the only known site in Maryland for this beautiful species.

Other September flowering plants on the barrens include the prairie grasses, big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), and Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), as well as wild yellow flax (*Linum virginianum*), pineweed (*Hypericum gentianoides*), clammy cuphea (*Cuphea viscosissima*), slender gerardia (*Agalinis tenuifolia*), white heath aster (*Aster pilosus*), and gray goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*). A large population of the federally endangered sandplain gerardia (*Agalinis acuta*) was recently discovered at Soldiers Delight. Previously this species had been known only from a few occurrences on Long Island and Cape Cod.

In the open fields, you may still find a few rose pink (*Sabatia angularis*) and spiked blazing star (*Liatris spicata*) in flower. Near the stream where the fringed gentian grows are purple gerardia (*Agalinis purpurea*), New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*), and New York aster (*Aster novi-belgii*).

In another part of Soldiers Delight, a small wetland contains Canadian burnet (*Sanguisorba canadensis*), white turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*), great lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*),

and swamp thistle (*Cirsium muticum*).

Soldiers Delight is managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. A visitor center was built in 1990 to provide interpretive services for the site. It is located at 5100 Deer Park Road, Owings Mill, MD 21117; telephone (410)922-3044.

Soldiers Delight has been studied extensively by botanists and ecologists. Recently the Maryland Natural Heritage Program has been monitoring this unique Maryland site.

**Directions:** From the Baltimore Beltway (I-695), take Liberty Road (MD-26) west through Randallstown for about five miles. Turn right on Deer Park Road (at a big green water tower). Go two and one-third miles to the overlook and main parking lot on the left. The visitor center road is shortly before the overlook. From the overlook, walk down the hill and bear left to reach the stream where the gentians occur. The small wetland is reached by returning south along Deer Park Road for one mile and turning left on Dolfield Road for one-half mile. Parking here is very limited.

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Cris Fleming will be leading an all-day field trip to Soldiers Delight on Saturday, September 23 (with a lecture and slides on Thursday evening, September 21, at Woodend in Chevy Chase). For more information, call the Audubon Naturalist Society at (301) 652-9188, ext. 3006. If you become really fascinated with Soldiers Delight, you may enjoy reading the new book, Soldiers Delight Journal by Jack Wennnerstrom, published by the University of Pittsburgh Press and available at the Audubon Bookshop.

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## Calendar of Events:

### September:

Saturday, September 16, 10 am - 3 pm

Fall Garden Day, Green Spring Gardens Park. Fall Plant Sale.

Thursday, September 28, 7:30 pm

Potowmack Chapter Board Meeting at Green Spring Gardens Park. "Native Plants: State of the Art Landscape Design", by Carole Ottesen.

### October:

Saturday, October 14, 3:00 - 5:30 pm

Annual Meeting. Winkler Botanical Preserve.

Saturday, October 21, 10 am - 1 pm

Annual "Pull Party" at Theodore Roosevelt Island.

### November:

Thursday, November 16, 7-9 pm

Potowmack Chapter Board Meeting at Green Spring Gardens Park. Note that this is the third Thursday of the month, due to Thanksgiving.

### December:

No board meeting this month.

### January:

Thursday, January 25, 7 pm

Potowmack Chapter Board Meeting at Green Spring Gardens Park.

## Annual "Pull Party" at Theodore Roosevelt Island

**Saturday, October 21st**

Our annual "Pull Party" at Theodore Roosevelt Island in Washington, DC is part of an ongoing year-round effort by VNPS, scout groups, public school groups and others in cooperation with the National Park Service to control invasive alien plant species on the island. On Saturday, October 21, VNPS will sponsor its annual "Pull Party" from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. We will meet at the sign by the footbridge. Please bring a bag lunch (drinks will be provided), work gloves, and wear long sleeves as a precaution against poison ivy. After lunch we will have a tour of the Island. Please call Abbie (301)320-0358 by October 10 to register. Also let Abbie know if you will be able to offer hospitality to overnight guests from other chapters. ■

## FALL SALE

from page 1

We meet every Wednesday and Saturday morning from about 9:30 to noon. Those hours are approximate and we welcome you even if you have to fudge a little at either end.

For you wonderful people who are planning to donate plants, we are especially interested in late Summer and Fall plants. This year we will have a good supply of JoePye weed and New York ironweed. We need all the butterfly weed and swamp milkweed we can get. If you have any native woody plants to share, they would be most welcome. Actually, we're looking for shade plants and any plants you'd like to contribute. If you're not sure whether a plant is native, give me a call.

Again, I'm asking that you pot up your plants a few weeks in advance of the sale, probably by the Labor Day weekend. If you lack pots or potting soil, gather your contributions and give me a call. We invite you out to the beds to use our supplies.

In order that we can complete our inventory of plants without too much stress, we ask you to bring in your contributions no later than September 11th.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me. I have a machine that's pretty good at taking messages. ■

Gerry Pratt  
(703)323-1094

## PROPOSED SLATE 1995-1996

President:	Mark Etheridge	At Large Nominating Committee:
Vice President:	Abbie Duchon	Ben FitzGerald
Treasurer	Dustin Pratt	Bill Kreitz
Secretary:	Sally Sieracki	

### Report of the Nominating Committee

The nominating committee; Edith Bradbury, Bill Kreitz, and Ann Van Ryzin, respectfully presents the following slate of nominees for office in the Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society for 1995-1996. We feel fortunate to have people with such expertise, experience and commitment willing to lead the chapter in the forthcoming year. We hope each member of the chapter will offer his help to these officers in filling committee assignments, manning special events, or any other volunteer activity that can use your talent, whatever it might be. The more a person becomes involved, the more meaningful the experience of VNPS becomes - both in the satisfaction of helping our conservation activities and increasing personal knowledge.

### FOR    AGAINST

- \_\_\_    \_\_\_    President - Mark Etheridge: Mark has been a member of the Potowmack Chapter for five years, and for the past two he has done an outstanding job editing and publishing our newsletter. He also currently serves as regional editor for the North American Butterfly Association's annual butterfly census. He has a degree in anthropology from Southern Methodist University, and currently works as a Water Resource Analyst for the Montgomery County Dept. of Environmental Protection in Maryland.
- \_\_\_    \_\_\_    Vice President - Abbie Duchon: Abbie recently moved to Maryland but has agreed to continue to bring her enthusiasm and ideas to our board and executive committee. She serves as conservation chair last year. She developed her conservation ethic while earning a Masters Degree in Landscape Design in New England. As a site designer, she utilizes all her skills.
- \_\_\_    \_\_\_    Treasurer - Dustin Pratt: Dustin graduated from Stanford University and after a career in Electronic Systems Management he retired in 1991. He has been active in chapter activities since joining in 1983, first with plant rescue and later with the propagation beds.
- \_\_\_    \_\_\_    Secretary - Sally Sieracki: Sally learned her love of wildflowers in her native Minnesota. She joined VNPS in 1991 and has worked with the propagation beds and plant sales. She is a semi-retired copy editor and has a Masters Degree from George Mason University in Psychology (which may well be useful in this assignment!).

### AT LARGE MEMBERS OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE (Vote for two):

- \_\_\_    \_\_\_    Ben FitzGerald: Ben has been a valued member since 1985 and has served as chapter Treasurer for four of the last five years. A retired Army Colonel, he is interested in wildflower photography. His yoeman service at the plant sales over the years has been greatly appreciated, and he has put in many volunteer hours on the Native Plant Trail.
- \_\_\_    \_\_\_    Bill Kreitz: Bill is a chartered member of VNPS and is a member of the Nature Conservancy. He has landscaped his home with heavy emphasis on native plants.

8/24/95

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Spring Sale 1995 A Great Success

Once again the concerted efforts of many contributed to a successful Spring plant sale in spite of all the logistical problems we faced with Green Spring Gardens Park in the middle of the construction of a new parking lot. Kudos to our many clients who staggered under the weight of their purchases as they made their way across rocky paths to a make-shift parking area and boarded buses to satellite parking areas.

I was very gratified to receive calls from members offering plants and their help for the sale. It was the first time I didn't have to solicit help. With all the other obstacles we faced at this sale, it was a real bright spot to see our chapter members rally-round.

Below, I want to acknowledge the contributions of these members:

Workers at the Sale: (members of the propagation committee) Vivian Attermeyer, Laura Beaty, Edith Bradbury, Robynne De Young, Sherri Finley, Eva Giercuskiewicz, Ginny McNair, Gale Minnich-Blewis, Dust Pratt, Margaret Shutler, Sally Sieracki, Beth Smith, Billy Trump.

(Other members who volunteered) Margaret Chatham, Anne Crocker, Frankie Hall, Linda McClelland, Gladys Quintero, Dan Sealy, Aileen Smith, Liz Smith, Karen Sorensen, Ann Stat, Sharon Terango.

Plants donated by: Margaret Chatham, Walker Newman, Jean McBride, Laura Beaty, Frankie Hall, Trish Hendershot, Robynne De Young, Margaret Shutler, Liz Smith, Billy Trump, Edith Bradbury, Gerry and Dust Pratt, Sherri Finley, Beth Smith, Anne Crocker, Karen Sorensen, Linda Hollenberg (a non-member from Maryland!).

A total of 654 plants were donated from 17 people! We welcome more of you to join in this Fall.

Of the 1,436 plants offered for sale (which included those donated), 380 plants remained. Of these, donations were made to The Virginia Native Plant Trail at Green Spring Gardens Park, Riverbend Park, the CIA memorial garden at Langley, and Potomac Overlook Regional Park.

Many, many thanks to all of you. Love ya! ■

Gerry Pratt

### INVITATION

December 1st and 2nd, 3:00 - 7:00 pm.

Cocktails, plant and animal photographs

by Jessie Harris

4401 W. Street, NW

Washington, DC 20007

(Off Foxhall Road, near Key and Chain Bridges)

(202)338-9083

## Trish Hendershot Opens Her Garden To Friends and Neighbors

Trish opened her beautiful garden one weekend this May to VNPS members, her neighbors and other selected groups. Those who visited came away with a beautiful example of the incorporation of wildflowers in a shady neighborhood garden. Among those who took advantage of the invitation were the members of the Northern Virginia Master Gardeners Association. In appreciation, the group offered an honorarium to Trish, payable to the Potowmack Chapter of VNPS. Many thanks to Trish for the many ways she supports our chapter! ■

Thanks to Judy Okay and the staff at Potomac Overlook Park for making our "Pull Party" on April 29th such a success! ■

ETHEL DURHAM, CHARTER MEMBER of VNPS and the Potowmack Chapter, passed away May 14 at her home in Great Falls, age 90. Ethel started our Chapter slide collection with her original donation of 222 slides in 1982, and her home was featured on our Chapter's first Wildflower Garden Tour in 1986. Her early and continued support of VNPS is greatly appreciated, and she will be missed by all. ■

*Potowmack Chapter*  
**Virginia Native Plant Society**  
**Membership/Renewal Form**

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

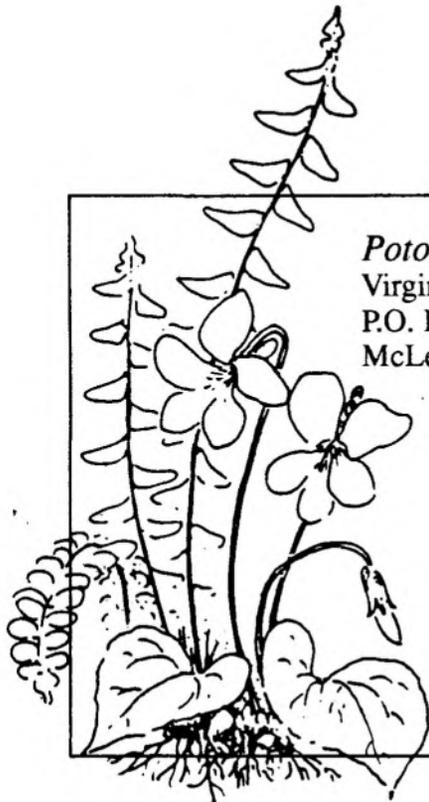
Individual \$15       Family \$25       Student \$10  
 Patron \$50       Sustaining \$100       Life \$400  
 Associate (group) \$40: delegate \_\_\_\_\_

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, 3924 Cobbler Mountain Road, Delaplane, VA 22025



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



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information and your renewal  
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