

# POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 15, No 5

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Nov./Dec. 1997

## President's Message

**VNPS's new State president, Marie Minor, has just called me, asking if Potowmack Chapter could host the State Society's Annual Meeting in September 1998. Alonso has already booked the National Wildlife Federation auditorium on Route 7 for September 18, 19, and 20. We'll need an overall chairman to coordinate and oversee those who volunteer to handle members' reservations, hotels, box lunches and catering, speakers, and field trips. If you can help in any way, please call me, Norma Vermillion, at 451-0572; Liz Smith at 768-1697, or Sally Sieracki at 978-5865, as soon as possible.**

In February we're going to be asking for your input on projects, programs, and field trips. What can we do for you and what can you do for the Chapter? With 450 members, it could be a very exciting year for POTOWMACK...it all depends on our members. We currently need chairmen for Education, Plant Trail, Publicity, and Site Registry. Please call to volunteer for something!

More than 60 members and guests attended our 1997 Annual Meeting on October 5 at Woodlawn Plantation. We met in a huge white tent left there from a wedding held the day before which could have accommodated 400 people, so we had lots of room on a very hot 86 degree day. Our Hospitality Chair, Joan Van Ryzin, furnished a spectacular display of goodies and beverages. Thank you, Joan--you did a fantastic job!

Due to a false fire alarm in the mansion and fire trucks around, our meeting was quite late getting started but our speakers did a great job. Our own member Marion Lobstein discussed native plants of colonial times and their special medicinal uses for that time period. Congressman Jim Moran said he learned a lot from her talk. Both Moran and State Senator Joe Gartlan gave impressive talks on their concerns for the environment, and we are most appreciative that they took time from their busy schedules to come and talk to us.

Joe Gartlan spoke of the importance of maintaining current environmental standards and of the importance of the Chesapeake Bay to Virginia, emphasizing the need to work with Maryland and other states feeding the Bay. Of local importance, he discussed the ongoing problems of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, stressing the need to maintain a balance between needed improvements and protection of the nearby wetlands. Jim Moran's talk is reported on elsewhere in this issue.

Many members brought plants for the Pope Leighey gardens at Woodlawn. The donated plants included Lobelia, New York ironweed, Helianthus, Ruella, Aster patens, joe-pye-weed, Iris cristata, Aclepias incarnate, Mitchella repens, Chrysogonum, Phlox stolonifera, Tovar, ferns, violets, and Solomon's-seal. Thanks to all who brought the plants. Everyone seemed to enjoy the tours through the Woodlawn mansion and the Pope Leighey house.

Norma Vermillion, President

## Welcome

The Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society welcomes the following new members who have joined since June:

Leslie Aylsworth  
 Jean Bradley  
 Herb Briick  
 Anne Carroll  
 Denise Chauvette  
 Cathy Christovich  
 Judith W. Clarke  
 Elizabeth Crowley  
 Susan Crump  
 Blaine & Aurora D'Amico  
 Ineke Dickman  
 Kate Donohue  
 Vivian M. Dukes  
 Gene Durman  
 Kathryn L. Earnest  
 Judy English  
 Genny Fulmer  
 Cynthia Gimbel  
 Joan Gottlieb  
 Linda Hamerschlag  
 Kathy Heslep  
 Rick and Elenor Hodges  
 Joyce Hylfon  
 Janis Jeffers  
 Carol & Ken Klein  
 Lois Korzendorfer  
 Paul R. Kulp  
 Alice M. Lowenthal  
 Mr. & Mrs. L.L. Mackallor  
 Pat F. Myracle  
 Elizabeth Nalle  
 Gail O'Donnell  
 Mary Presta  
 Robin O. Rentsch  
 Cheryl S. Roesel  
 Carol Rutherford  
 Carol D. Shuh  
 Carol A. Singer  
 Mary Staley  
 Sarah Strickler

Rick S. Thomas  
 Kathleen G. Vagt  
 Douglas Wheeler  
 Mary & Tom Wise

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

### Board Officers

President	Norma Vermillion	451-0572
Vice President	Beth Smith	644-1760
Secretary	Marianne Mooney	534-8179
Treasurer	Bill Kreitz	620-4415

### Committee Chairs

Botany	Cris Fleming	301-657-9289
Conservation	Kathleen Kust	836-5868
Education		
Hospitality	Joan Van Ryzin	799-4520
Membership	Anne Crocker	437-0355
Native Plant Trail		
Newletter	Sally Sieracki	978-5865
Programs	Liz Smith	768-1697
Propagation & Sales	Gerry Pratt	323-1094
Pulications	Roberta Day	560-5528
Publicity		
Site Registry		
Past President	Alonso Abugattas	528-8808

Articles for the newsletter, or proposals for articles, may be sent to Sally Sieracki, 4125 Elizabeth Lane, Fairfax, VA 22032. Send e-mail to [Sieracki@erols.com](mailto:Sieracki@erols.com) or call 978-5865. The deadline for submission for the Jan/Feb newsletter is Jan 8. Your ideas are most welcome!



The following article was contributed by Congressman Jim Moran's office.

## Moran Speaks to Native Plant Society

October 5--Eighth District Congressman Jim Moran joined State Senator Joe Gartlan and more than 60 members of the Virginia Native Plant Society on October 5th to report on his activities in Congress concerning environmental issues and other matters of interest to the Native Plant Society.

Moran said one of the most important issues facing Congress this year is reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act.

"The Endangered Species Act has come under tremendous fire in recent years because private property owners complain that the law prohibits them from developing and using their property," Moran told the group. "Many of these claims have been resolved through the use of habitat conservation plans, which provide certainty to landowners about how they can use their property without violating the Act."

"In reality, the ESA is a very important tool for protecting endangered plants and animals. The ESA, which passed in 1973, has helped to halt the potential extinction of dozens of animals and plant species over the past 24 years," he continued. "Yet, for all of the ESA's success, many species are slipping through the loopholes of the current Act."

Moran noted that preserving different plant species is crucial to global biodiversity as well as everyday, practical issues, such as the development of new drugs.

"The scientific community is constantly making new discoveries about how plants can

be used in the development of new and more effective drugs," he said. "A variety of periwinkle found in Madagascar, for example, was recently found to have properties that could help treat leukemia."

A second priority identified by Moran was the Children's Environmental Protection Act, which he introduced earlier this year to require that health and safety standards for all environmental pollutants be set at levels that protect children's health with an adequate margin of safety."

"Every day, about 50,000 kids are exposed to pesticides in excess of the levels EPA deems acceptable," he said. "In view of statistics like these, we need an extra margin of safety when setting standards and developing an acceptable margin of safety."

Earlier this year, Moran was appointed to the House Interior Appropriations Committee, which has jurisdiction over funding for the National Park Service and many of the nation's public lands. He said he has worked during his first year on the subcommittee to protect public lands from excessive logging and development.

Moran concluded by praising the Virginia Native Plant Society and its members for their long record of work on behalf of plant protection and public education.



## Summer Drought Fails to Dampen Enthusiasm for Fall Sale

by Gerry Pratt, Propagation Chair

In spite of a record drought this summer, we had the most successful fall sale in the history of the Potowmack Chapter. Over 1,500 plants were offered for sale. Of these, almost 500 were donated by members and friends of VNPS.

Nature cooperated by providing a beautiful sunny day which attracted many visitors to Green Spring. Our shade tent was almost completely sold out. Every woody plant and vine we offered was sold. Our emphasis this fall was on summer and autumn blooming plants.

The members of our Propagation and Sales committee were dedicated to the care of plants being prepared for the sale. Sometimes, it meant watering three times a week! Without the dependable work of this cadre of hard-working volunteers, it would be impossible to realize the successful sales we have had.

In addition to selling native plants, we offered native plant seeds. Native seeds are difficult to find locally and we do our clients a real service by providing a wide variety. The seeds are gathered from our propagation beds at the proper time, cleaned, stored, and packaged for sale the following year. Although very labor intensive, the growing popularity of the program makes it well worth the effort. A word of thanks to Ginny McNair, who, although very busy with her new business (One Good Tern), packaged seeds for the sale.

At the end of October, the propagation beds were put to sleep for the winter. In mid-April we will activate them again. If you care to join us in spring 1998 please call Gerry Pratt at 703-323-1094. We work hard, but enjoy sharing our enthusiasm for native plants. Active participation in the propagation beds and plant sales is a wonderful way to meet other members and learn more about the care and cultivation of native plants. These sales are also an important tool in educating the public in the use of native plants in their gardens.

### Committee members who worked in the beds and the sale:

Nancy Adamson  
Vivian Attermeyer  
Laura Beaty  
Helen Biggs  
Margaret Chatham  
Shirley Gay  
Carol Jori  
Lori Markoff  
Marianne Mooney  
Dust Pratt  
Sally Sieracki  
Beth Smith  
Elaine Squieri

### Members who worked at the sale:

Alonso Abugattas  
Tiana Camfiord  
Anne Crocker  
Pat Murphy  
Gladys Quintero  
Gabriel Markoff  
Liz Smith  
Billy Trump

### Persons who donated plants for the sale:

Laura Beaty  
Helen Biggs  
Tiana Camfiord  
Margaret Chatham  
Don Humphrey

Frankie Hull  
 Joanne Krumvide  
 Lori Markoff  
 Marianne Mooney  
 Dust and Gerry Pratt  
 Sally Sieracki  
 Beth Smith  
 Billy Trump  
 Peyton Walker



Members who helped in preparation for the sale:

Frances Chandler  
 Frankie Hull  
 Norma Vermillion  
 Ginny McNair

## Update on Conservation

by Kathleen Kust  
 Conservation Chair

If you like wandering in the woods and fields, identifying plants, and increasing your knowledge, please contact me to participate in one of several plant surveys in the coming year. These are also called flora inventories. We also have park clean-up days, where we remove (and learn about) invasives. The atmosphere is always filled with a sense of accomplishment and camaraderie. We accomplish what no agency or lone person can, and in a few hours! In the future, I want to involve VNPS members in the restoration phase of at least one site we have been cleaning up; the Marie Leven Butler Preserve. This will involve composing and planting associations of plants appropriate to the spots where they will grow.

Please call me at (703) 836-5868, or e-mail me, Kathleen Kust, at [KDKust@aol.com](mailto:KDKust@aol.com) to indicate your interest in any of these activities. It has been especially helpful to be able to notify people of events in a timely way using e-mail, so provide your address if you

are on-line. You can specify if you want to be called or e-mailed notices for a single project, or be on a general conservation-minded people's list.

Lorton Prison Natural Resources Survey Update:

The status of this 3,000-acre site was described in the September newsletter. We are negotiating with our new contacts at Lorton, with the goal of obtaining permission to conduct frequent flora surveys during spring and fall. It seems important to have more of a workable schedule next year, because Fairfax County needs to know what's out there to make intelligent decisions about land use. And without a schedule, custom-made for our convenience and effectiveness, we cannot deliver a useful inventory.

The first-draft request is as follows: weekly surveys, alternating Saturdays and Sundays, from the beginning of the spring ephemeral season to the end of spring or mid-June. Then less often in the summer, monthly or every other week. During early to mid-fall, the weekly surveys would resume. Then every 2 weeks until November.

We need to know when the spring ephemeral season reliably begins in Manassas, what your thoughts are about frequency, and other scheduling comments. If you have suggestions, please call or e-mail me at the address above.

And we *would* like to have you join us! All you have to do is contact me to join the survey. Our numbers must be limited to around 12 people per day, because the group is escorted through gates to the survey sites.



### Marie B. Leven Preserve Clean-Up

The clean-up day on October 25th was a great success. The potentially rainy weather really was not an issue as around 25 people tugged and cut through a lot of porcelain-berry vines. It was T-shirt weather by around 2 o'clock. Most of the participants were from St. Matthew's United Methodist Church on Rt.236.

Barbara Farron, of the Potowmack VNPS, and her daughter, Laura, were there to free up several southern magnolias near the old house. Don Heine and John Zuiker, of the Fairfax County Park Authority, headed the effort, and provided lunch. The St. Matthew's group also provided lunch, so we had quite a spread.

After a couple of hours, it was really satisfying to look around, seeing the difference we had made. Before, the edges of the woods looked like the set of a horror movie, with lurching forms barring even a view into the woods. One vine, whose dramatic removal was captured on film, was around 100 feet long. When we were done, several of the Preserve's edges were clear, with an inviting view to archetypal Virginia woods. There is now a definite sense of progress toward the goals held by the Park Authority and others who want to conserve our natural heritage. Actively following the process of Preserve management, from invasives removal and control, to restoring lost diversity of flora, is something we can look forward to.

If you want to take part it will be greatly appreciated by the people who use the preserve as a park, and by Don and John, who have been paddling upstream in their efforts to manage this land. And you will appreciate your own contribution to conservation. There will be future clean-up dates. And there will

be flora inventory dates as well. To be notified of these dates, contact me at the phone number or e-mail address above.

## **WILDFLOWER CLIPPINGS**

By Alonso Abugattas

New York City is trying to reintroduce 10 species of once-native flora and fauna to its five boroughs. Although the likes of woodchucks, Eastern chipmunks, Eastern box turtles, wood frogs, and Fowler's toads are the ones most people talk about, the native bulrushes and other plants they are attempting to return to New York City are just as important. With some luck and careful planning, New Yorkers may soon be able to enjoy some wildlife many other folks in the East take for granted.

*Audubon* magazine reports that, by the year 2,000, disease-resistant clones of American elm will be offered for sale at retail nurseries. Dutch elm disease, a fungus that was spread by certain species of bark beetles, was introduced into Ohio in 1931 from France and quickly killed off almost all of the American elms by clogging the trees' arteries. Research at the USDA's Glenn Dale, Maryland, facility has produced several clones that are resistant (but not completely immune) to the disease. The first two to be offered will be the New Harmony and Valley Forge clones. Another seven are in the works, with some bred from European and Asian species. These new varieties will join the American Liberty elm that has been offered by the nonprofit Elm Research Institute since 1984. The American Liberty may actually be less resistant to the disease due to being a series of clones rather than a single clone type and, therefore, may vary in resistance from tree to tree. All of these different types together will offer a

diversity that will hopefully allow this once classic American tree to return to the Main streets it once graced.

*Sports Afield* magazine reports that there are growing problems in parts of Canada from tree poachers. Hundreds of sugar maples have been slashed by rustlers hoping to find a bird's-eye maple that can sell in the United States for as much as \$4,500 where it is used to make dashboards in luxury cars. Bird's-eyes only make up about 1 percent of the sugar maple population and the only way to identify one is to cut the bark until the characteristic inner wood is discovered.

## Certificates of Appreciation Awarded

by Anne Crocker, Membership Chair

Certificates of appreciation were again awarded at the annual meeting held October 5 at Woodlawn Plantation. Honored were members, who for the past year, have served the Potowmack Chapter with outstanding dedication and skill. The pale lavender matted certificates have a hand painted chapter logo (wood violet and spleenwort) in the left corner and the VNPS logo in the lower right corner. Since 1993, 28 have been awarded. The chapter is fortunate to have members such as these.

**Alonso Abugattas** (President) Alonso has served on the board since 1994 as program chairman and for the past year as president of the Potowmack Chapter. Under his leadership the chapter has thrived and grown significantly.

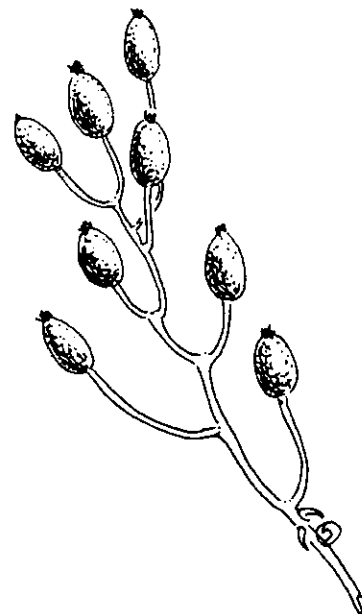
**Dustinn Pratt** (Treasurer) Dust has been an outstanding treasurer and a hardworking and dependable member of the chapter board and of the society for over 14 years.

**Ginny McNair and Marianne Mooney** (159 and 111 volunteer hours, respectively in the Propagation Beds at Greenspring) Both Marianne and Ginny weeded, watered, and potted faithfully to help Gerry Pratt and the other members of her committee produce the thousands of native plants eagerly sought by gardeners each spring and fall at our plant sales.

**Sally Sieracki** (Secretary) Sally has served as an outstanding secretary for 2 years. She now takes on the editorship of the *Potowmack News*.

**Pam Newitt** (Newsletter Editor) Pam has deftly juggled editing the chapter's newsletter for the past year with working at the Long Branch Nature Center and producing a baby boy, Dillon Christopher.

**Joan Van Ryzin** (Hospitality) Joan provides the delicious refreshments served at general meetings, a job she has faithfully performed since March 1994. Her beautifully painted wildflower note paper and gifts are available at meetings.



## Potowmack Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society

**New Membership****Membership Renewal**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone(Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Individual \$15      \_\_\_\_ Family \$25      \_\_\_\_ Student \$10

\_\_\_\_ Patron \$50      \_\_\_\_ Sustaining \$100      \_\_\_\_ Life \$400

\_\_\_\_ Associate(group) \$ 40: Delegate Name \_\_\_\_\_

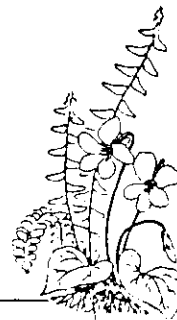
To give a gift membership: Enclose dues, name, and address. ( Non-voting memberships in any other than your primary chapter are \$5).

I wish to make an additional contribution to the 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 the chapter directory.

Make checks payable to VNPS and mail to:  
 VNPS Membership Chair, P.O. Box 844, Annandale, VA 22003

**Calendar**

- **Dec.** No meetings.
- **Jan. 8** Board meeting.  
Deadline for Jan./Feb.  
newsletter.
- **Feb. 12** Board and general  
membership meeting.

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



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