

POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 18, No 5

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Sep/Oct 2000

FALL PLANT SALE COMING UP SOON!!!

This year our fall plant sale is scheduled for **Saturday, Sept. 23, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.** It is part of Green Spring's Fall Garden Day and is always lots of fun, with many specialty vendors in attendance in addition to our native plant sales tables.

Since fall is really an ideal time for planting, we encourage you to come out to the sale and find the right native plant for your garden. Our knowledgeable volunteers will assist you in selecting appropriate plants for your sunny/shady/wet/dry spots. We will be offering many native perennial and woody plants with an emphasis on fall blooming species. Several varieties of ferns will also be offered. We sold over 1,100 plants during our spring sale, with proceeds benefiting the work of the Potowmack Chapter.

Last summer's drought has turned into this year's tropical rain forest. Unless the deer are pruning your plants, this summer's rainfall has required more weeding and pruning of almost everything. Perhaps you also have some excess native plants to remove from your garden. Remember that you can donate them to our plant sale. Just bring them by our propagation beds at Green Spring Park prior to the sale and leave your name with the plants so we can thank you. If you have plants but are unable to pot them yourself or need more information, please call Laura Beaty (703 534-8746) or Beth Smith (703 644-1760). Small woody natives are always in demand and, since we can't propagate them in our beds, we rely on donations.

If you are interested in helping with the sale, please call either of us. It's a fun way to get involved in chapter activities.

Hope to see you there!

Laura and Beth

2000 CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 15th

This year's Potowmack Chapter Annual Meeting will be held at **Hidden Oaks Nature Center**, from 2-5 p.m. on Sunday, October 15. All members are encouraged to attend our annual get-together. Hidden Oaks is located at 4020 Hummer Road in Annandale and may be reached by leaving the Beltway at Exit 6 and taking Little River Turnpike (Route 236) east to the first traffic light at Hummer Road. Turn left on Hummer Road, proceed for less than a quarter-mile, and then turn left at Royce St. to the entrance.

Following an introduction to the park, participants will enjoy a short talk by **Dr. James (Jim) Comiskey, Assistant Director for Research, Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program, Smithsonian Institution**. Jim is responsible for developing and maintaining scientific standards and protocols for the worldwide network of biodiversity monitoring sites. His interests include tropical forest dynamics; implementation of biodiversity assessment and monitoring projects to aid conservation; linking socio-economic needs and conservation through development projects; and capacity building through regional courses to ensure the sustainability of conservation in tropical countries. His field research experience includes sites in Bolivia, Venezuela, Guyana, Paraguay, Panama, Guatemala, Belize, Puerto Rico, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, and China.

After a short business meeting, including election of officers, we will go outside and tour the grounds--weather permitting. Trail guides and wildflower lists will be provided. If you can't make it, please mark the ballot provided on p. 5 inside and send it to the address given.

Hidden Oaks Nature Center offers natural and cultural history exhibits, a library, and an auditorium. The surrounding park features a nature trail, a playground, picnic shelter, ball fields, and the Fred M. Packard Center. **For more information** about Hidden Oaks Nature Center call 703-941-1065.

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

In recent months, long-time chapter member **Barbara Farron** has been organizing plant surveys and rescues of areas slated for development. Barbara has put in a lot of hard, hot work digging up plants and relocating fauna to a safe location. We'd like to thank Barbara for her dedication and service (with the particular help of her daughter **Laura**), despite the odds of briars, the weather, yellow jackets, and sometimes few helpers.

The Chapter has been called upon in recent months to rescue native plants by developers fulfilling proffers required by Fairfax County prior to construction approval. The proffer in question states that the developer will contact native plant societies in order to allow native plants that would otherwise be destroyed to be rescued and relocated before work begins on the site. We commend the county for recognizing the importance of native plants and appreciate the opportunity offered to us. However, we are a small volunteer organization with limited resources. The site Barbara is working on now is 44 acres! Asking our organization to rescue plants does very little for the conservation of native plants and requires the developer to do no more than send us a letter. Some environmental groups would call that a "greenwash."

Therefore, we have sent a letter to the director of the Fairfax Urban Forestry Division suggesting some alternatives to plant rescues. We asked that developers be required to incorporate existing plant communities in their plans, to leave as many trees in place as possible, and to use native plants from the site in landscaped areas. We hope in this way to encourage the preservation by developers of the natural site rather than the wholesale bulldozing of the landscape. The mission of the Virginia Native Plant Society is conservation of and education about native plants, and rescuing a small amount of plants does not ultimately meet that goal.

Marianne Mooney

INVASIVES BROCHURE

Early this spring Marianne Mooney and Mary Ann Lawler met with Tom Tyler, the Extension Agent for Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, and Rebecca Feldberg, the Natural Resources Program Coordinator for Arlington County Parks. The purpose of the meeting was to review a draft of a brochure, developed with VNPS assistance, highlighting the problem of invasive vines in Arlington County parks. The brochure, entitled "Invasives in our Backyards" points out the problem with invasive plant species generally, and provides specific information on control and eradication for vines such as English ivy, porcelain berry, Japanese honeysuckle, kudzu, oriental bittersweet, and periwinkle. Arlington County has just published the brochure. VNPS will help distribute copies.

BOARD OFFICERS		
President	Marianne Mooney	534-8179
Vice President	John C. Magee	478-9428
Secretary	Mary Ann Lawler	684-8622
Treasurer	Bill Kreitz	620-4415
COMMITTEE CHAIRS		
Botany	Cris Fleming	301-657-9289
Conservation	-open-	
Green Spring Liaison	Gerry Pratt	323-1094
Awards/Recognition	Anne Crocker	437-0355
Membership	Linda Haller	938-8504
Newsletter	Sally Sieracki	978-5865
Labeling/Mailing	Markoff family	573-7121
Programs	Shirley Gay	920-1913
Propagation/Plant Sales	Laura Beaty	534-8746
	Beth Smith	644-1760
Publications	Roberta Day	560-5528
Publicity	Sylvia Orli	528-5618
Site Registry	Rod Simmons	256-7671
Garden Tours	Billie Trump	960-1476
Immediate Past President	Norma Vermillion	451-0572

All numbers should include the 703 area code unless otherwise noted.

WE HAVE A NEW ADDRESS FOR CHAPTER MAIL

For reasons of convenience, the chapter mailing address has been changed. The new address is Potowmack Chapter, VNPS, PO Box 5311, Arlington, Virginia, 22205

REMEMBERING A FRIEND

What was it that Jack Nicholson had to say about the evening star? The same would apply to Edward Brooks Ballard: "he shines first, he shines brightest, and he shines longest."

I write to honor a dear colleague and to connect, in sorrow, with all Potowmack Chapter members who knew Ed. And for those who did not have the pleasure of his company, you might learn a little about one of the distinguished founding fathers of your chapter.

I can imagine him jutting out his chin, straightening his tall, lean frame and raising his eyebrows before offering a discreet suggestion as to the content of this writing. Ed would look for accuracy and some historical perspective since he maintained a remarkable sense of time and place and people---right up to the end of his 94 years.

He was every bit a gentleman, one so obviously happy in the company of his beloved wife Mina, whom he lost in 1994. Along with his kindly deportment came also the mettle to strongly defend that which he believed to be fair and right. We were glad to have him in our corner.

As a charter VNPS member, Ed had already enjoyed a distinguished career and an unwavering commitment to public service/volunteerism. He held high-level positions with *Horticulture* magazine, the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service, the ASLA, and a Washington, D.C. architectural firm, to recall just a few aspects of his busy life. He returned in 1997 to Harvard to attend his 70th class reunion. Just following his death, Ed's 20+-year writing project was submitted to his German publisher. When printed, his *Glossary of Landscape and Urban Planning* (in five languages) will be used internationally by design professionals to protect the environment as future communities are developed.

Within our own ranks, he energetically took on many leadership roles, including the Potowmack Chapter presidency in 1985. As Landscape Chair, Ed directed the early development of permanent wildflower displays and interpretive trails at Green Spring Gardens Park.

In his write-up for *Who's Who*, Ed shared his philosophy of life: "To make the Planet Earth livable for all people, in harmony with nature, is to me the highest, though never completely attainable goal of human experience...."

Ed Ballard did not "retire" from life until he took his last breath on this past August 11th. And while we all know that stars are ultimately subject to burnout, it's the flame that counts. Perhaps Ed's many contributions might inspire his fellow chapter members to also remain curious, to keep learning, to get involved....and to shine on. *Mary Painter*

His son, Robert C. Ballard and family (of Asheville, NC) bid goodbye to their father and grandfather at National Memorial Park. Contributions in his name may be made to VNPS-Potowmack Chapter, P.O. Box 5311, Arlington, VA 22205; Appalachian Trail Conference, P.O. Box 807, Harper's Ferry, WV 25425; or Cancer Research Institute, 681 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

ALIENS AMONG US

Need fast information about invasive alien plant species? Try the "Weeds Gone Wild: Alien Plant Invaders of Natural Areas" web site at www.nps.gov/plants/alien/. There you will find fact sheets on 40 of the worst. The non-technical fact sheets include photos, plant descriptions, habitat and background information, methods of reproduction and spread, ecological threats posed by the species, current management practices, alternative native species, and references. The site also offers a compiled list of exotic invasive plants for the entire country.

IN PRAISE OF THE OAK by Mary Ann Lawler

Are you fortunate enough to have an oak tree in your yard? If so, you possess a remnant of the ancient oak/hickory forests that have dominated the eastern part of the United States for over 8,000 years. These eastern forests are among the richest on earth in plant diversity. The plants were able to disperse north and south along the Appalachian valleys as the climate changed over the eons with no major barriers to stop them. The lord of these forests is *Quercus alba*, the white oak. It can live over 500 years and attain a height and spread of over 100 feet. Last year the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society honored the white oak with its annual gold medal, because it is "longer-lived, harder-wooded, and more broadly tolerant of soil types and moisture levels than any other shade tree."

You probably have noticed that your oaks attract birds and other wildlife. The wildlife and insects living in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain have evolved along with the oaks, hickories, pines, and other native trees as well as the diverse shrubs and plants that thrive under them. That is where they find food and shelter and where they reproduce. Resident birds depend for their food on the numerous insects living in the crevices of the oak's rough bark. Migrating birds also seek out oak trees as they pass through in spring and fall, feeding on caterpillars and insects as well as the berries of the under-story. You won't see much wildlife around a trendy Zelkova or a sterile Leland cypress.

One of the best ways we can improve the environment is to plant trees. Trees are able to absorb carbon dioxide and airborne pollutants. They are better than grass or any other plant in filtering toxic runoff and preventing it from entering our streams. They cool our homes. Yet, the next time you fly somewhere take a look at how dramatically agriculture and development have cleared the old forest cover. But notice that in many older residential areas, trees are maturing and beginning to replicate the old forest canopies. To continue that trend, we all should promote the planting of native trees in our communities.

Wherever you live, if you don't have an oak, consider planting one or two this fall. Besides white oak, choose red oak, willow oak, pin oak, or chestnut oak. One inexpensive way is to get acorns or seedlings from friends. Strew your own oak acorns in woodland. If you already have oaks, plant a black gum, a beech, an ash, a tulip poplar, or other tree native to the eastern forests. Let some tree seedlings grow. As your older trees reach the end of their life spans, have younger trees maturing around them. Think long term about your conservation efforts. A white oak you plant today could still be here in 2500. What a wonderful legacy!

THANKS

Heartfelt thanks and admiration to **Kathleen Kust** who organized and carried out an extraordinarily successful purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) pull over the past several months along Four-Mile Run.

Kathleen is going to Los Angeles until next spring. She has been an inspiring leader. And many thanks to all the VNPS volunteers who helped out and will continue to help out in this very worthwhile endeavor.

- ❖ WANT TO JOIN VNPS? Call Linda Haller, Membership Chair, at 703 938-8504, and she will send you an application.
- ❖ WANT TO JOIN THE CHAPTER LISTSERV? Send an e-mail to Sylvia Orli at stone.sylvia@nrmh.si.edu and in the message section write subscribe to vnps-pot, your e-mail address, and your full name. Or visit www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/vnps-pot.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The 1999-2000 Nominating Committee, consisting of Anne Crocker and Nancy Luria, is pleased to present the following slate of candidates for offices in the Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society for 2000-2001.

OFFICERS

President - Marianne Mooney: Marianne is a former chef whose work has included 5 years as a volunteer chef at DC Central Kitchen. She has been president of Potowmack Chapter since 1998-99, was secretary in 1997-98, and has been an active propagation committee member since 1995. She was named 1998 Volunteer of the Year at Huntley Meadows Park and currently serves on the Arlington Urban Forestry Commission.

Vice President - John Magee: John is current vice president and served as education chair last year. He is a landscape designer and founder of the Charles Darwin Foundation and Gardening for Galapagos campaign, which collects money to support the native plants of the Galapagos Islands.

Secretary - Liz Nalle: Liz holds a degree in Environmental Science and worked in various phases of the landscaping industry for 15 years doing a little bit of everything. For the last 10 years she has been an at-home mom and says she will be very happy to hold a non-kid-related volunteer position.

Treasurer - open

AT LARGE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Brenda Skarphol - Brenda is a horticulturist at Green Spring and has been instrumental in creating and maintaining its native plant trail.

Liz Smith - Liz has been active at both the chapter and state level since 1986, holding numerous board positions.

IF YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE CHAPTER ANNUAL MEEING ON OCTOBER 15, PLEASE CUT AND MAIL THE FOLLOWING BALLOT BY OCTOBER 13 TO:

Mary Ann Lawler, Secretary
1019 South 27th St., Arlington, VA 22202

-----Cut here-----

2001 Potowmack Chapter Ballot

(For use of spouse in family membership)

_____ I approve of the slate of nominees

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Signature _____

Signature _____

