

POTOWMACK NEWS

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Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Nov/Dec 2000

PROGRAM MEETING NOVEMBER 9 WILL ADDRESS NATIVE PLANT CONSERVATION

Potowmack Chapter members and their guests are invited to attend a program meeting on **November 9th at 7:30 p.m.** at the Horticultural Center at Green Spring Gardens Park. The speaker will be **Peggy Olwell**, Senior Endangered Species Biologist for the Bureau of Land Management in Washington, DC. Peggy will discuss **Plants: The Invisible Kingdom?** The question mark at the end of her title refers to the invisibility of plants in various arenas and the need to educate and become advocates for plants. She will cover native plant conservation issues on the national as well as the regional level, with an emphasis on native endangered plants and non-native invasive species. Included in the discussion will be an overview of the Plant Conservation Alliance, which she was instrumental in developing. It is a public/private partnership of 15 Federal agencies and over 160 cooperating organizations working toward a better awareness of the importance of the native flora of the United States. (You may want to visit the Alliance's website at www.nps.gov/plants to see how extensive their work is.)

Peggy has worked on endangered species issues for almost 20 years, serving at various times as the Endangered Species Coordinator for the National Park Service; as co-chair (current) of the Federal Native Plant Committee; as Conservation Program Manager for the Center for Plant Conservation, where she developed policy and guidance for the National Collection of Endangered Plants; and as a Regional Botanist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Southwest Regional Office of Endangered Species.

Peggy is co-editor with Don Falk and Connie Millar of a 1996 publication by Island Press entitled, *Restoring Diversity: Strategies for Reintroduction of Endangered Plants*. She is a member of the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) Plant Committee and the Reintroduction Specialists Working Group.

Green Spring Gardens Park is located at 4603 Green Spring Road, off Rt. 236 in Alexandria. Turn at the Salvation Army/Jerry's Ford intersection. Reservations are not necessary.

A BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

The chapter's annual meeting was held at Hidden Oaks Nature Center on Sunday, October 15th. Our featured speaker was **Dr. James Comiskey**, who began with a brief aside about the relative nature of habitat and how in England, people are restoring native purple loosestrife to wetlands and removing troublesome non-native rhododendrons from natural areas. Dr. Comiskey, who works for the Smithsonian, gave a fascinating slide show/lecture on his work in tropical forests. We followed his work from Bolivia to Puerto Rico to St. John. His research focuses on how forest habitats adapt to natural disturbances such as hurricanes. For example, he and others have

found that native tree species in hurricane-prone areas have evolved a system of interlocking roots that protects them from toppling in high winds. Knowledge gained from this research will help in the recovery of forests after impacts from man-made disturbances.

During the brief business portion of the meeting, the 2000-2001 budget was passed, as was the slate of next year's officers. Awards and gifts were handed out to propagation bed volunteers and to **Barbara Farron** for her rescue work. **John Magee**, our vice-president, did a great job organizing the day, including providing delicious refreshments.

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

At our last meeting, the Potowmack Chapter board voted to make a donation to the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust. The Trust is a local non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing the natural resources of Northern Virginia. The organization achieves its goals by working with private landowners on conservation options such as easements and land donations. The Trust has received the support of both Arlington and Fairfax Counties, who have recognized the value of the Trust's conservation work. It has also benefited by being the first land trust to receive a matching grant from the Virginia Environmental Endowment. We pledged our support because it is a local organization working to protect natural areas, and therefore native plants, in our chapter's domain.

Our new year technically begins November 1st and I'll be with you one more year. I look forward to seeing many of you at our programs this winter, beginning with Peggy Olwell at our November 9th meeting. I heard Peggy speak this summer and she gave a dynamic presentation. Hope to see you there.

Marianne Mooney

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF CONSERVATION

Being active in our local communities can be an important way for us to educate the public about the benefits of native plants and the threats from invasive non-natives. The Potowmack Chapter continues to do just that.

Chapter President Marianne Mooney recently testified before the Arlington County Park and Recreation Commission to ask them to take a position that open space landscaping at the proposed Potomac Yards development include more native trees and plants and exclude English ivy (*Hedera helix*) and periwinkle (*Vinca minor*). In this case she planted a seed (so to speak) with Commission members, the developers, and the community organizations that were present to testify on other projects. Last year when Marianne testified before the County Board on the budget needs for eradication of invasives species, she was able to educate the Board, as well as to reach out indirectly to scores of citizens who were testifying on other matters.

Another public forum will occur next Spring when the Potowmack Chapter teams up with the Park and Recreation Department, Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment, the Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardeners, and other organizations on a public field day to remove invasives at Barcroft Park in Arlington. Marianne Mooney and Mary Ann Lawler have been working with the Cooperative Extension Agent and Arlington Parks' natural resource program coordinator to follow up on the publication of a brochure on invasive vines in Arlington parks. Barcroft has at least 10 invasive species, including kudzu.

Look for similar opportunities to promote native plants in your neighborhoods. Is there a public hearing on a park master plan or a redevelopment proposal coming up? If you can't testify maybe another VNPS member would. Is your civic association or church group looking for a project? Maybe you could suggest removing invasives in a local park area or planting natives along a streamside. Keep planting those conservation seeds.

BOARD OFFICERS		
President	Marianne Mooney	534-8179
Vice President	John C. Magee	478-9428
Secretary	Liz Nalle	698-7606
Treasurer	Bill Kreitz	620-4415
COMMITTEE CHAIRS		
Botany	Cris Fleming	301-657-9289
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Programs	Mary Ann Lawler	684-8622
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
All numbers should include the 703 area code unless otherwise noted.		

FALL PLANT SALE – 2000

A successful fall sale was made possible by scores of volunteers who donated plants and time. The morning was misty, but that only enhanced the beauty of the plants, and the afternoon was drier. Many gardeners came out seeking our wonderful wild flowers, ferns, and woodies.

We have many friends to thank for providing a great variety of plants, including **Gerry Pratt, Don Humphrey, Marianne Mooney, Beth Smith, Kathy Cochrane, Joanne Krumviede, Tiana Camfiord, Margaret Chatham, Ginny McNair, Jeff Herndon, Mary Ann Lawler, Walker Newman, and Laura Beaty.**

Green Spring staff members assisted the Potowmack Chapter sales crew with a convoy of Cushman's that brought our plants to the table from the propagation beds in record time. Thank you so much!

Chapter volunteers set up the sales tables Friday night and provided tremendous assistance to the public during the Saturday sale. Our sincere thanks to **Eleanor Kask, Beth Smith, Marianne Mooney, Gerry and Dust Pratt, Carol Flint, Debra Sabourin, Mary Ann Lawler, Roberta Day, Louis Nichols, Sally Sieracki, Dusty Dukes, Paul Kovenock, Shirley Gay, Gladys Quintero, Billie Trump, Bill Kreitz, Linda Haller, and Laura Beaty.** Special thanks to **Elaine Squeri** who cleaned and prepared the seeds for the sale.

Our successful fall sale was accomplished in spite of those who would work against our efforts, like Mr. Woodchuck, who lives under our shed, and the various bunnies and deer that found our buffet of potted vegetation irresistible. Turns out that we had enough for everyone.

It's not too late to divide some of your native perennials. Do it this fall and you can double or triple your holdings. Pot up any extras and donate them to the propagation beds this fall or next spring. See you at the next plant sale.

---Co-chairs Beth Smith and Laura Beaty

A PLANT RESCUE, A TREASURE HUNT by Barbara Farron

What an exhilarating adventure the latest plant rescue has been! The physical effort of digging and moving plants in all types of weather; the mental effort of organizing rescue dates and locating havens for plants; and the occasional unpleasant encounter with poison ivy, briars, or bees has been far outweighed by the fun, adventure, beneficial exercise with folks of similar interests, and on-the-job training in plant identification. Best of all is the knowledge that each plant relocated is one less that will die during construction of yet another mall, restaurant, or office building. (A native plant rescue is similar to a treasure hunt - both require effort without being certain of the end result.)

For this rescue on 44 acres of mature, deciduous woodland across from the Fairfax County Government Center, numerous official rescue dates were scheduled, with nearly all arrangements made on the chapter's listserv, the only efficient way to mete out ever changing information about the rescue.

Many thanks to those who participated including: **Sally Anderson, Jack Arthur, Laura Beaty, Garry Becht, Frank Bernett, Lou Cavanaugh, Susan Crawford, Barbara Farron, Laura Farron, Vicki Futscher, Shirley Gay, Jessie Harris, Michael Healy, Helen Hensgen, Linda Hollenberg, Beth Johnson, Helen Lane, Mary Ann Lawler, Pat Lockman, Marianne Mooney, Alice Nicolson, Eric Raun, Jean Shirhall, Elaine Squeri, Janet Stone, Keith Tomlinson, Anne Van Ryzin, Trish White, and Barbara Wollison.** Apologies to anyone who I've missed.

Three people merit commendations for performance "above and beyond" - **Laura Farron, Vicki Futscher, and Beth Johnson** - for continuing rescue efforts after being stung by yellow jackets!

A pleasant surprise was the small number of alien invasive plants and the variety of healthy native plants on the property. Plants rescued included: perfoliate bellwort (*Uvularia perfoliata*); bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*); nine fern species; Indian cucumber-root (*Medeola virginiana*); jack-in-the-

pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*); *Lycopodium* spp.; the following orchids: cranefly (*Tipularia iscolor*), lily-leaved twayblade (*Liparis lilifolia*), pink lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*), rattlesnake plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*), and showy (*Galearis spectabilis*); partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*); round-leaved pyrola (*Pyrola rotundifolia*); Solomon's-seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*); spotted wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*); and various tree and shrub seedlings and saplings.

Plants were relocated to repository sites including schoolyard habitat gardens, nature center gardens, Green Spring's native plant trail, Meadowlark Gardens, the Virginia State Arboretum, and Audubon Naturalist Society centers. Rescued plants are never sold to the public, and are only taken home by rescuers when donation sites have been exhausted. Please check the listserv for any future rescue dates. (See below for information on how to subscribe to the listserv.)

IN MEMORIAM

L. John Trott, naturalist and teacher and long-time member of VNPS who taught at Madeira School in McLean, died on Sept 6. While living on the Madeira campus, he gave VNPS members the opportunity to walk around the grounds and visit Black Pond, the only natural pond in Fairfax County. When the chapter hosted the State Annual Meeting in 1998, John was one of our featured speakers. His excellent slides and keen wit endeared him to audiences of all ages. He retired in 1993 and was living in Flint Hill, Virginia, at the time of his death.

- ❖ 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@nrmnh.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.

Chapter Events **Calendar**

Nov	9	Board meeting, 6:45 pm, Program meeting with Peggy Olwell as speaker 7:30 pm, Green Spring Park
Dec		Happy Holidays!
Jan	11	Board meeting 6:45; Program meeting with Stan Shetler as speaker 7:30 pm, Green Spring Park

Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
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