

# POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 19, No 2

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Mar/Apr 2001

## **MARCH 8 PROGRAM TO DISCUSS STREAMSIDE RESTORATION USING NATIVE PLANTS**

One of the major ways to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay is the creation of streamside buffers throughout the watershed. At Potowmack Chapter's March meeting, **Judy Okay** from the Virginia Department of Forestry will give a slide show presentation on the value of streamside buffers in urban landscapes. She will present ideas on restoration and the use of native vegetation as well as other stream bank stabilization techniques. Ms. Okay is a Riparian Specialist for the State Department of Forestry. She works on stream stabilization projects and recommendations for restoration, protection, and management of riparian forests. **Chris Strand**, Director of Green Spring Gardens Park, will also discuss streamside restoration work being done at Green Spring.

The meeting will be held at **7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 8, 2001, at Green Spring Gardens Park**. The public is invited, and admission is free. Green Spring is located in Alexandria, a block off Little River Turnpike (Rt.236). Turn onto Green Spring Road between Jerry's Ford and the Salvation Army, and continue north into the parking lot. For additional information, call 703-684-8622 or 703-534-8179.

## **CRIS FLEMING WILL LEAD APRIL 8 CHAPTER WALK AT SCOTT'S RUN**

Mark your calendars for **Sunday April 8 from 1:00 to 4:00** when Botany Chair **Cris Fleming** will lead a chapter walk at **Scott's Run Nature Preserve**. As we walk the woodland trails down to the river, we'll look for dwarf ginseng, Dutchman's breeches, sessile trillium, twinleaf, false rue anemone, and other early spring wildflowers.

Meet at the lower parking lot on Georgetown Pike (Rt. 193), which is 6/10 mile west of the Beltway. The parking lot is next to the creek and across from Swink's Mill Road. Participation is limited to 16 people and registration is required. To register, call Cris at (301) 657-9289. You may leave a message but be sure to include your phone number. The trip will be cancelled in case of heavy rain but not for light drizzle.

## **LADY SLIPPER WALK AND LECTURE ON APRIL 26**

**Dr. Douglas E. Gill** of the University of Maryland's Biology Department will give a slide show presentation on native orchids, preceded by a short walk to view pink lady's slippers. The walk is scheduled for **Thursday, April 26 and will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the program following at 7:00**. Dr. Gill has been studying native orchids for 25 years and will share with us some of the results of those studies.

Please note that the meeting will be held at **Hidden Oaks Nature Center**, located on Hummer Road off Rt. 236, just inside the Capital Beltway in Annandale. Hidden Oaks may be reached by taking Beltway Exit 52B, Little River Turnpike/Rt. 236, east to the first traffic light at Hummer Road. Turn left on Hummer Road and then left at the park entrance. Please park at the Fred M. Packard Center and walk down to Hidden Oaks as parking there is very limited.

**PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:**

Balanced here on the cusp between winter and spring, I feel with a little more wishing we'll make it to spring. As usual, we have a great assortment of talks and walks to help you enjoy the season's botanical beauty. The walks will be led by some of the area's most esteemed and knowledgeable botanists. And for gardeners, the popular Garden Tour will feature two charter members' gardens and the garden of a new board member.

As the places to see spring's beauties in our area dwindle, please do your best to support those places that are left. Visit them, give donations, and lobby for conservation dollars and protection for our remaining and threatened natural areas.

**Marianne Mooney**

**BAYSCAPING--NATURAL LANDSCAPING IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED** by

Mary Ann Lawler

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB), the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and others are promoting the use of native plants for landscaping in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. They know that native plants are environmentally sound and beneficial to birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. Using these plants in landscapes is also a small way to combat the loss of natural habitat. As public interest in landscaping for wildlife grows, a market niche is being created.

And the nursery industry is beginning to pay attention. For example, ACB has been working with Behnke Nurseries in Maryland (Beltsville, Largo, and Potomac) to make more native plants available to the public. A logo denoting native varieties will appear on native plant stock at the nursery. Behnke will provide informational brochures and workshops on native plant gardening beginning this spring. And Behnke's free newsletter will devote space in every issue to begin educating readers about the benefits of "BayScaping." (Call 301-937-1100 to be put on their mailing list.)

In the meantime, much information can be obtained from the following websites. The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay has a comprehensive Bayscapes homeowners guide with landscaping ideas and plant lists at <http://www.acb-online.org/>. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Chesapeake Bay Field Office has information on the BayScapes program with native plant lists at <http://www.fws.gov/r5cbfo/index.html>. Let your friends and neighbors know about these resources for protecting our Bay watershed.

**BOARD OFFICERS**

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**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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

*Potowmack News* is published 6 times per year, in January, March, May, July, September, and November. The deadline for submissions is the 15th day of the month prior to publication. Call Sally Sieracki for information on how to submit.

**WANT TO JOIN VNPS?** Call Linda Haller, Membership Chair, at 703-938-8504, and she will send you an application. Already a member, but want to know when your membership expires? Check the expiration date on your mailing label.

**TWO SPECIAL EVENTS ORGANIZED FOR APRIL 29****❖ SPRING WILDFLOWERS AT BANSHEE REEKS**

On Sunday afternoon, April 29, from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m., Dr. Stanwyn Shetler will lead a spring wildflower walk at Banshee Reeks, Loudoun County's newest park and first nature preserve. This 695-acre tract has a 2-mile frontage on Goose Creek and includes a variety of habitats and plants and animals.

**❖ POTOWMACK CHAPTER GARDEN TOURS**

Also on Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., a spring garden tour of three gardens, two in Fairfax and one in Clifton, is planned.

Mark your calendars now; further details for both events will be included in the next issue of *Potowmack News*.

**PLANS FOR THE 2001 SPRING PLANT SALE PROCEEDING**

The Potowmack Chapter will be participating once again in the Green Spring Garden Day. The spring plant sale is scheduled for **May 19** with hours from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Unlike last year, when continual spring rains kept us from working in the propagation beds, this year we're hoping for a few nice days to pot up some perennial favorites. This is the sale where we offer those spring ephemerals that die back by summer. Get 'em while you see 'em! Also, with constant high demand for ferns, we have gathered a good supply of cinnamon, ostrich, and royal ferns. Thanks to Arlington benefactor Jeff Herndon, we will also have many beautiful bloodroots to offer.

The chapter relies on the generosity of our membership in donating many of the plants we offer. Remember that the two sales we offer each year, spring and fall, provide our chapter with the resources necessary to pursue our goal of education. For example, a number of schools in our area are planning to develop backyard habitats. The students will play a large role in the planning and planting of these wildlife beneficial gardens. We can and will assist them in providing information they need and some of the plants they require. You can contribute to this worthy effort by your donations, both herbaceous and woody. Small native woody seedlings are perfect as starters. Please check around your native gardens this spring for those seedlings in need of a new home.

If you need some excitement in your life, volunteer to help us at the sale. Don't worry if you're not a plant expert, this is how experts are made. Need remedial work on your knowledge of native plants? You can volunteer to work at our propagation beds either Wednesday mornings or Saturday mornings from early spring through October. It's a great time to work with and learn about our native plants!

If you have plants to donate, please drop them at our propagation beds at Green Spring Park. Please leave your name with the plants so that we may thank you. If you want to make other arrangements just call either of us. It's important, however, that plants get to us 2 weeks before the sale to ensure that they are healthy. Please give us a call regarding any of the information above. We look forward to seeing you. **Laura Beaty** (703-534-8746) and **Beth Smith** (703-644-1760)

**STAN SHETLER MOVED JANUARY AUDIENCE WITH ELOQUENT TALK ON SPRING IN THE POTOWMAC VALLEY**

Stanwyn Shetler, Curator of Botany Emeritus for the Smithsonian Institution, and State Botany Chair of the Virginia Native Plant Society, enchanted a large audience with a January 11 program on Spring Birds and Wildflowers. He presented beautiful slides from the Potomac Valley, which begins in the mountains and spreads to the Chesapeake Bay with a wonderful diversity of plant and bird life.

We learned about the timing of blooming plants and the appearance of their pollinators, and insect dependent bird life. For example, in the early spring skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) appears, containing certain chemicals in the spadix of the plant that generate heat, attracting insects to its shelter. About the same time, the woodcock arrives when the ground is soft enough for it to probe for worms and when it does its swooping aerial mating dance. We learned that about the time the bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) are blooming, one can hear the buzz, buzzing of the northern parula warbler. And when the

sugar maples (*Acer saccharum*) are in bloom the scarlet tanager can be found feeding among the blossoms.

We also heard Stan's concern about threats to this wondrous natural beauty. In the mountains the spruces and firs are dying from budworms and acid rain. The white-eyed vireos and thrushes are declining as the bottomland habitat is lost. Ground nesters are declining because of loss of wild meadows. The breathtaking displays of woodland wildflowers continue to lose out to golf courses and other development. Thousands of prairie warblers and thrushes are dying each year from collisions with light towers. Over 100 species of birds are known to feed on the berries of the dying dogwoods. And all neo-tropical migrating birds are declining as the green corridors along streams they need to move through are fragmented or lost.

As we watch spring unfold in the Potomac watershed, let us do all we can to foster an appreciation for our native flora and fauna and affirm our commitment to their conservation and restoration.

### **UPCOMING NATIVE PLANT-RELATED EVENTS IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA AND VICINITY**

- ❖ Wednesday, March 21. 7:30-9 p.m. Wildflower Slides. Adults only. Join outdoor photographer David "Grizzly" Lambert at Huntley Meadows Park Visitors Center for a slide show highlighting spring's bounty of Eastern native wildflowers. Reservations required; call 703-768-2525. \$3.
- ❖ Saturday, March 31. Native Plants: A Growing Partnership with Nature. Fifteenth Annual Lahr Symposium, U.S. National Arboretum. Registration deadline 3/23; call 202-245-4521 or register online at [www.ars-grin.gov/na/events.html](http://www.ars-grin.gov/na/events.html). \$65. There will also be a native plant sale from 10-2; you don't need to attend the symposium to go to the plant sale.
- ❖ Fridays, April 6 and 20 and May 4. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. The Audubon Naturalist Society is sponsoring a series of spring wildflower walks led by Cris Fleming, Potowmack Chapter Botany Chair, on three Friday mornings. For more information, call ANS at 301-652-9188 or visit the ANS web site at [www.audubonnaturalist.org](http://www.audubonnaturalist.org).
- ❖ Saturday, April 7. 9-11 a.m. Wildflower Walk-Bluets and Buttercups. Scotts Run Nature Preserve. Adults. Hike the rocky trails of this peaceful park to see and identify native plants. Meet in the west parking lot. Reservations required; call 703-759-9018 (Riverbend Park) for information. Canceled if rain. Free.
- ❖ Sunday, April 8. 1:30-2:30 p.m. Spring Wildflower Walk. Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Walney. Ages 10 and up. A trail walk to observe and identify wildflowers will follow a short slide show. Bring field guides. Reservations required; call 703-631-0013. Free.
- ❖ Wednesday, April 11. 10-11:30 a.m. Wildflowers at Roundtree Park. Ages 12 and up. Search the stream, forests, and fields of Roundtree Park for spring wildflowers. Meet at the sheltered picnic area. Reservations required by 4/7; call Hidden Oaks Nature Center at 703-941-1065 for information. Canceled if rain. Free.
- ❖ Friday, April 13. 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Wildflower Wander. Adults. Enjoy a midmorning stroll along Bull Run and Cub Run Creeks in Centerville to view bluebells, spring beauties, trout lilies, and other wildflowers. Bring a bag lunch and dress for muddy trails. A van will leave from Lubber Run Recreation Center, 300 N. Park Drive, Arlington. Reservations required; call Long Branch Nature Center at 703-228-6535. \$10.

- ❖ Tuesday, April 17. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Bluebell Bonanza. 12 years and up. Stroll along the Bull Run River Valley to revel in spring wildflowers. Bring a bag lunch and wear sturdy walking shoes. Reservations required by 4/14; call Hidden Oaks Nature Center at 703-941-1065. Canceled if heavy rain. \$6.
- ❖ Saturday, April 21. 10-11:30 a.m. Lake Accotink Wildflower Walk. Join naturalist Clara Ailes for a walk in search of trout lilies, hepatica, wild ginger, and other wildflowers in bloom. Dress for the weather. Meet in the parking lot by the railroad bridge. Reservations required; call Hidden Pond Nature Center at 703-451-9588 for information. Free.
- ❖ Saturday, April 28. 10:30 a.m.-12 noon. Pohick Wildflower Walk. Naturalist Jim Pomeroy will point out wildflowers and trees that are in bloom along with other natural happenings during this leisurely walk. Dress for the weather. Reservations required; call Hidden Pond Nature Center at 703-451-9588. Canceled if rain. Free.
- ❖ Sunday, April 29. 1:30-3 p.m. Folklore of Wildflowers at Fort C.F. Smith. Adults and teens. Take a stroll through one of Arlington's newest parks while learning about the folklore of wildflowers and trees. Reservations required; call Long Branch Nature Center at 703-228-6535. Free.

### **EAST COAST NATIVE AZALEAS STARRED IN FEBRUARY PROGRAM**

Fifteen native azaleas with orange, carmine, crimson, yellow, and splendid combinations of hues and tints were the stars in **Don Hyatt's** presentation at our February 8 program. Not only were the slides colorful, but so was Don's entertaining and informative narrative. Don is the President of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society and a VNPS member. Azaleas are members of the heath family (*Ericaceae*) and have been around in some form for 50 million years. Unlike the familiar Asian garden species, those native to the East Coast are deciduous and prefer sun to part shade. Hence in the wild they grow well in meadows and mountain "balds." Don's slides took us from the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area in

Canaan Valley, West Virginia, down the Appalachian chain through Blacksburg, Virginia; Asheville, North Carolina; and Gatlinburg, Tennessee. For our landscapes Don recommended several species including the moisture loving *Rhododendron arborescens* with extremely fragrant white to blush flowers; the orangey *Rhododendron austrinum*, which is heat tolerant; *Rhododendron prunifolium*, which is also heat tolerant; and our own *Rhododendron periclymenoides* (formerly *R. nudiflorum*), which is common to the Middle Atlantic Region.

For more information visit Don's websites: [www.tjhsst.edu/~dhyatt/gardencenter.html/](http://www.tjhsst.edu/~dhyatt/gardencenter.html/), [www.rhododendron.org](http://www.rhododendron.org), or [www.azaleas.org](http://www.azaleas.org).

**WANT TO JOIN THE CHAPTER LISTSERV?** Send an e-mail to Sylvia Orli at [stone.sylvia@nrmnh.si.edu](mailto: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](http://www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/vnps-pot).

**THREE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**❖ **Bluebell Walk**

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority is looking for a few wildflower enthusiasts to be volunteer leaders at the Bull Run Bluebell Walk on Sunday, April 15 (Easter Sunday) at 2 p.m. This wildflower walk is very popular, with between 80 and 200 people attending (mostly depending on weather). There is a huge stand of Virginia bluebells (about 150 acres), even more spring beauties (perhaps 300 or more acres), and a number of other wildflowers as well.

There will be a walk-through on Saturday, April 7 at 2 p.m. to enable volunteer leaders to learn the route and brush up on wildflower ID.

If you are interested in being a volunteer leader, please call **Martin Ogle**, Chief Naturalist Northern Virginia Regional Park, 703-528-5406.

❖ **Meadowlark Botanical Gardens**

Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, located in Vienna, Virginia, is in the process of creating a substantial native plant collection. Begun 2 years ago (See *Potowmack News* for May 99), the collection is focused on the diverse native flora of the Potomac River Valley for purposes of education, display, and conservation. The collection is located on a 5-acre woodlot that is in excellent ecological condition with very few weeds. Due to a recent fencing project, the entire garden is now deer free. Grant money will be used to purchase plants this spring. Park personnel are also very interested in local rescue activities.

Volunteers are being sought for help in developing the Potomac Valley Collection. If you are interested in working on this exciting conservation project, please contact Keith Tomlinson, Administrator/ Staff Botanist, at 703-255-3631, ext. 302, or e-mail him at meadowlark@starpower.net.

❖ **Invasives Removal**

Keri Putonen, outdoor biology teacher at Kent Gardens Elementary School in McLean, is organizing an invasive plant removal from 9 a.m. to noon on April 21. She is targeting an area of Pimmit Run Stream Valley Park that is directly behind the school. This will be a hands-on educational event for students and their parents. Volunteers will help with plant I.D. and distribute VNPS literature. To help, please call Keri at the school, 703-394-5600, or call Marianne Mooney at 703-534-8179.

**Chapter Events**  
**Calendar**

Mar	8	Board mtg 6:45pm; pgm mtg w/Judy Okay, 7:30.
Apr	8	Cris Fleming walk Scott's Run 1pm
Apr	12	Board mtg. 7:30
Apr	26	Douglas Gill walk and lecture, 6:30pm, Hidden Oaks Nature Center
Apr	29	Stan Shetler walk Banshee Reeks, 2:30 pm
Apr	29	Garden Tour, 11am-4pm
May	10	Board mtg. 7:30
May	19	Plant Sale, Green Spring Park, 10am- 3pm

**Potowmack Chapter**  
**Virginia Native Plant Society**  
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