

POTOWMACK NEWS

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

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Thank You, Laura Beaty

By Donna Murphy



PHOTOS BY MARGARET CHATHAM

Laura Beaty is a very special and remarkable person. She has been a prominent member of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Potowmack Chapter, for 31 years. We wish to thank Laura and express our chapter's deep appreciation for her many years of distinguished and thoughtful service as she steps down as Propagation Chair.

Laura has worked in the great outdoors since she was old enough to hold a rake. Along the way, she earned a degree in history followed by a degree in horticulture. She worked nearly 20 years for the US Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and later, the National Parks Conservation Association.

Laura had a close relationship with her journalist father, Orren Beaty, who began his career reporting on sports and politics for a local newspaper in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Later on, he joined migrant workers in the field to observe

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Upcoming

Walk: Fall at Fraser Preserve with Margaret Chatham

Saturday, Nov 2, 1 pm

The main focus of this walk will be the turning trees, but we may catch a late-blooming orchid. Space limited, no restrooms on site. Watch for registration announcement.

Potowmack Chapter Annual Meeting

Sunday, Nov 17, 12:30-3 pm

Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Center

12:30: Social Time

1 pm: Business Meeting and Elections

1:30 pm: **Sara Tangren, Environmental Program Coordinator, National Capital PRISM, "Preventing the Next Catastrophic Invasion"**

Annual Solstice Walk with Rod Simmons

Sunday, Dec 22, 10 am-2 pm

Chapman State Park (Chapman Forest), Chapmans Landing Road, Indian Head, MD.

Bring your lunch for a walk in the winter woods. Carpooling recommended, but no limit on how many people may come. Co-sponsored by Maryland Native Plant Society, Virginia Native Plant Society, and the Botanic Society of Washington on a site registered with the Old Growth Forest Network.

Charles Smith: Using Species Range Maps to Plan for a Changing Climate

Thursday, Jan 9, 7 pm

Zoom: watch for registration announcement

All events are free and open to the public. Walks require preregistration. To receive email notices about upcoming events, subscribe to our mailing list at <https://vnps.groups.io/g/potowmack> You can also send a blank email to potowmack+subscribe@vnps.groups.io.

Manage your VNPS Membership Online

1. Go to <https://vnps.app.neoncrm.com/login>
2. If you don't know or have forgotten your password, click on "Having trouble logging in?" To receive a password reset email.
3. Once logged in, you can update your name, address, email, renew your membership, make a donation, etc.



Subscribe to our Potowmack Chapter email discussion group to receive and send email about native plants in our area including questions, answers, and discussions. You don't have to be a VNPS member and there are no ads. Over 350 members strong! Just send a blank email to potowmack+subscribe@vnps.groups.io. Visit <https://vnps.groups.io/g/potowmack> to look around.



Check out the Potowmack Chapter Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/vnpspot>.

Addressing the Invasives Crisis: FIRA & LIRA By Margaret Fisher

Are you fed up with the ever-worsening problem of invasive plants? There is power in numbers! Residents of Fairfax and Loudoun counties are banding together to work towards solutions on a county-wide scale. Your neighborhood can join them – check out their websites to learn how.

The idea of forming alliances of community associations to combat invasive plants was conceived by Ashburn resident Mike Littman. He convinced 26 HOA presidents last year to sign on to a letter to the Loudoun Board of Supervisors, successfully urging the elected officials to provide funding to help HOAs deal with the problem on their properties. The [Loudoun Invasive Removal Alliance \(LIRA\)](#) continues to grow, working with residents and the County to find solutions to this pressing problem.

This year, three Fairfax residents – Ines Nedelcovic, Wendy Cohen, and Rekha Dolas – followed suit by creating the [Fairfax Invasive Removal Alliance \(FIRA\)](#), signing up community associations and other organizations (including VNPS-Potowmack) as supporters. Their goal is to work with Fairfax County to develop a comprehensive strategy to address invasives across the county, on all land types, including our parks and other government land, residential and commercial properties, HOA common land, utility rights of way, *etc.* Such a strategy will require coming up with creative solutions for funding needs, workforce development, public awareness, and effective use of volunteers. They will also be advocating for needed legislation in the General Assembly.

Fairfax Supervisor Walkinshaw has already orchestrated a presentation to the Fairfax Board of Supervisors by Urban Forestry and Fairfax County Park Authority about invasive plants. The next step is to seek approval for funding for a consultant to work on the strategy. Meanwhile, concerned constituents across Virginia are working to educate their state legislators in advance of the next session of the General Assembly, an effort that is being spearheaded by the recently formed [Virginia Invasive Plant Coalition](#).

If we are to have any hope of saving our trees and natural areas before they are completely swallowed up by invasive plants, a huge mobilization of the entire community will be needed. If you are ready to put some serious leadership into this effort, contact Margaret Fisher lmargaret.e.fisher@gmail.com, who can connect you to others who are beginning this large-scale organizational work.

Potowmack Chapter Board Officers

President

Alan Ford 703-732-5291

Vice President

Mark Murphy

Secretary

Jennifer Brown

Treasurer

Kit Sheffield

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Rod Simmons

Grass Bunch Coordinator

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Membership

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Margaret Fisher

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Vacant:

Education

Programs

Propagation/Plant Sales

Publicity

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Submissions to *Potowmack News* may be sent to The Editor at vnps.pot@gmail.com

Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
P. O. Box 5311
Arlington, VA 22205

<http://www.vnps.org/potowmack>

Potowmack Chapter Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, Nov. 17, 2024 at 1:00 PM, in the Horticulture Center at Green Spring Gardens Park. If you cannot attend to vote then, please send in this ballot by Nov. 7 to Potowmack Chapter VNPS, PO Box 5311, Arlington, VA 22205, or email your vote to vnps.pot@gmail.com

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2025

The Board of the Potowmack Chapter VNPS presents the following slate of officers for the 2025 year, with terms beginning January 1. Contact Alan Ford for further information at amford@acm.org

SLATE OF OFFICERS

President:	___Alan Ford	Write-in _____
Vice President:	___Mark Murphy	Write-in _____
Secretary:	___Jennifer Brown	Write-in _____
Treasurer:	___Kit Sheffield	Write-in _____

Proposed 2025 Budget

	2024	2025
Income		
Regular donations	700	1,000
Member dues	8,900	8,900
Plant sales	22,000	22,000
Total income	31,600	31,900
Operating Expenses		
Administrative	1,500	- (listed in new lines as various fees)
Green Spring room fees	2,000	1,000
Membership development	200	-
Programs: talks	1,500	1,200
Programs: walks	900	900
Newsletter printing & mailing	3,000	2,750
Green Spring internship	4,000	5,015
Huntley Meadows internship	3,700	5,015
Commissions to Green Spring	3,520	3,520
Printing & publications	500	250
Propagation committee	2,500	1,500
Event planner	2,500	2,500
Supplies & miscellaneous	1,000	200
Donations to others	-	1,500
Merchant service fees	-	800
Postal & shipping fees	-	300
Computer & internet fees	-	400
Special Board actions	3,760	-
Total Operating Expenses	31,600	28,170
Board approved expenses against savings		
New scholarships	6,000	-
Third internship (TBD)	4,000	-
Total Expenses against savings	10,000	-
Total Expenses	41,600	28,170
Funding from assets	10,000	-
Net income (loss)	-	3,730

Check one: **I approve**_____ **I do not approve**_____ **the proposed FY 2025 Budget.**

LAURA BEATY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

first-hand what their lives were like. He turned this experience into an award-winning series of columns for *The Arizona Republic*, the state's largest newspaper. He aspired to run for political office, but when his writings caught the eye of Stuart Udall, Secretary of the Interior, he accepted Mr. Udall's job offer to serve as his administrative assistant in Washington, D.C.

Laura was in third grade when her family arrived in Arlington. Later they purchased a house in Vienna, where Laura attended Vienna Elementary for two years, then Thoreau Intermediate, and finally James Madison High. In elementary school she was admired as a charismatic and exotic person from out west. She was tall and athletic and could outrun even the boys.

Laura earned a history degree from George Mason University. Influenced by her father's focus on preservation and conservation at the Department of the Interior, she worked at the U.S. Capitol for the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, later renamed the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, first as documents clerk, then on the staff of the Parks and Recreation Subcommittee.

As a lobbyist for the National Parks Conservation Association on both Prehistoric and Historic sites, Laura worked on the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, which prohibits the digging of Native American artifacts on Public Lands.

By then she was working part-time while earning a degree in horticulture at Northern Virginia Community College. Laura retired from her work in Washington with the arrival of her baby daughter Mason.

At an annual Lahr Symposium at the National Arboretum, Laura saw a brochure for the Virginia Native Plant Society. A photo of Partridgeberry, *Mitchella repens*, captivated her, because it was one of many plants she could not identify in her own backyard. She was hooked!

Laura has been the longest-serving Chair of the VNPS Potowmack Chapter's Propagation Beds at Green Spring Gardens. She and Beth Smith jointly took over from Gerry Pratt in late 1999. Laura supervised the Wednesday work sessions while Beth managed the Saturday crew until she moved to North Carolina in 2004. After that, the Saturday work sessions were dropped and Laura became the sole Propagation Chair until stepping down this summer: 25 years!

As chair of the propagation beds, Laura has taught and led volunteers to maintain the beds (how to identify weeds!), pot plants for sale and prepare pots so that plants survive the winter, and has demonstrated rooting cuttings, and started acres of native plants from seed. She continues to share her vast store of knowledge about the ways of native plants with customers and volunteers alike. This ability makes her a popular speaker about native plants for local garden clubs and at libraries and events. She provided the "native plants" portion of the Master Gardeners curriculum at Green Spring Gardens for 10 years or more. She still serves as Horticulture Chair at the state VNPS organization.

Laura has participated in several plant rescues, digging up native plants from designated Fairfax County sites that are slated for development, and donating them to local parks. Her current project is Blake Lane Park, where she has led many non-native

invasive removal events before replanting. You can also see her work in the native "Rescue Garden" at the Providence Community Center (now renamed Jim Scott Community Center). Laura did it all, from getting approval from the Board of Supervisors, through designing the garden, digging up rescue plants, and assembling a crew of volunteers including Marilyn Drucker from our Propagation beds to do the planting.

Laura is a dynamic leader in our community, who gives presentations to all ages focused on the value of using local native plants for providing diversity, food and wildlife habitat in our area. Her presentations feature her own photos of interactions between native plants and native bees, butterflies and other insects. She was pleased that her most recent presentation, "Welcoming Insects to Our Garden," at the first annual Fredericksburg Native Plant Festival at Mary Washington University, enabled her to appear on the same stage as Doug Tallamy. Dr. Tallamy has been one of her heroes ever since he published his first book, *Bringing Nature Home* in 2007.

She is generous with her time and serves as an inspirational role model in numerous ways, not the least of which is her kindness. After selling her house in McLean, Laura converted her new property to a "modified meadow," which includes trees, shrubs, vines, ferns and a riot of perennials—all native plants. She hopes that her natural habitat installations will soon become easy maintenance. But as all gardeners know, a garden is a life-long labor of love.

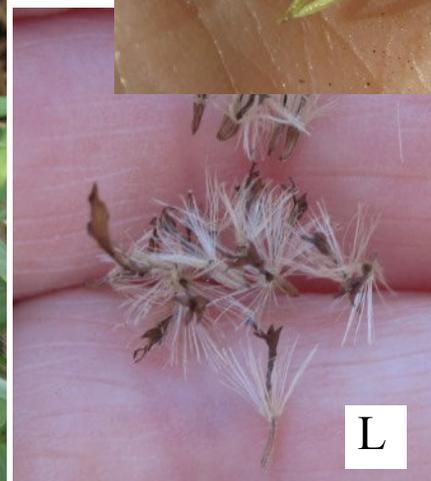
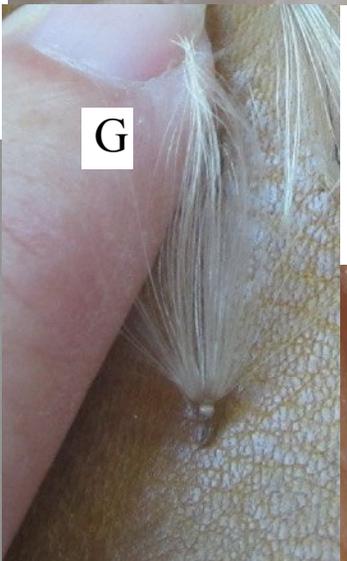
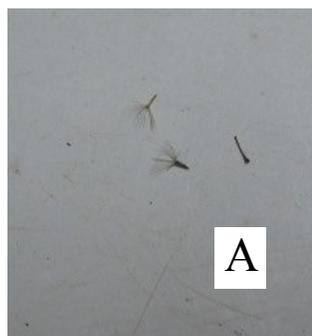


After the last plant sale of the year, Marilyn Drucker, Joan Gottlieb, & Laura Beaty prepare plants for the winter in the VNPS propagation beds at Green Spring Gardens Park, Oct. 2019.

Fly-Away Seeds

Lots of little parachutes carry seeds to new homes. It was a challenge to keep them from taking off before their portraits were taken. I apologize for not getting something into more of these photos to give you a hint at the size of the seeds: some of these are truly tiny. Photos by Margaret Chatham. Answers on page 6.

- 1 *Anemone virginiana*, Thimbleweed
- 2 *Asclepias syriaca*, Common Milkweed
- 3 *Asclepias tuberosa*, Butterflyweed
- 4 **Cirsium arvense*, Canada Thistle
- 5 *Conoclinium coelestinum*, Mistflower
- 6 *Doelingeria umbellata*, Flat-topped White Aster
- 7 *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, Boneset
- 8 *Eutrochium fistulosum*, Hollow Joe-Pye
- 9 *Hieracium gronovii*, Hairy Hawkweed
- 10 **Taraxacum officinale*, Dandelion
- 11 *Typha latifolia*, Cattail
- 12 *Vernonia noveboracensis*, New York Ironweed



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P.O. Box 5311, Arlington, VA 22205



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Word of the Month: Pith



Spongy central tissue in some stems. Split stems shown left to right: New York Ironweed, *Vernonia noveboracensis*; Halberd-leaved Rosemallow, *Hibiscus laevis*; and young branch of Black Walnut, *Juglans nigra*, with chambered pith. The white pith of Porcelainberry, *Ampelopsis brevipedunculatus*, distinguishes it from Grapes, *Vitis spp.* which have brown pith.
PHOTO BY MARGARET CHATHAM

Answers to the puzzle on page 5: 1-I; 2-J (rounder seed than *A. tuberosa*, which must fit into a narrower pod); 3-E; 4-G; 5-A (the smallest seeds & parachutes here); 6-L; 7-C; 8-K; 9-H; 10-F (easier to see the shadow than the parachute itself); 11-D; 12-B.