

WINTER

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

POTOWMACK NEWS

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

VOLUME 30, No. 1, JANUARY/MARCH 2012



NEW YEAR
NEW LOOK

NEW DELIVERY METHOD?

BY BECKY SUPER

Upcoming Events

January

A Bee's Eye View of Native Plants

January 19, 7:30-9pm, FREE

Regionally, there are over 400 species of native bees, and many are found only on the flowers of specific plants. Why not just one kind of bee? The complexity of color, architecture, and phenology of native flowers are a clue to that relationship. Sam Droege, a biologist with the USGS, will explore the plant-pollinator relationship from the bee's point of view.

February

Plants and Pollinators: A Perfect Partnership

February 16, 7:30-9pm, FREE

Chapter propagation chair Laura Beaty will feature the bloom sequence of local natives as well as highlighting their importance to local pollinators. This colorful slide lecture will continue the years pollinator theme.

March

Landscape Design for Pollinator Diversity

March 15, 2012, 7:30-9pm, FREE

April

Pollen as a Window into the Past

April 19, 2012, 7:30 - 9pm, FREE

It's the new year. A time when we reflect upon the year past, look to what is coming and make resolutions. The Potowmack Chapter has done the same thing. If you are a long-time member you will notice a whole new look to your newsletter. After 10 years of tireless dedication, Mary Ann Lawler has put down her editor's pen for a long deserved rest.

I agreed to take on her duties. I have been doing publicity for the Chapter for a number of years. The newsletter will be a lot more work, but I am looking forward to the challenge. By the way, we also need a new publicity chair, so if you are interested please contact Alan Ford.

Like all good print media we will be trying on a new look for the website as well. There will be some tweaking as we go so stay tuned.

Did you make a resolution to be even more environmentally conscience this year? Sign up to receive the newsletter electronically. Send an e-mail to Alan Ford at amford@acm.org. Include your name in the body of the e-mail. Added bonus: you will get the new newsletter in full color!

Lastly, we will be switching to a quarterly publication schedule. You can also like us on Facebook for added information straight to your inbox.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



A new year, a new look, a new hope. I hope your holiday season was fruitful and restful, and I hope the snows of winter will shelter your plants. We had a productive and satisfying year with many engaging speakers and some great opportunities to get involved with our native flora, protecting preserves, propagating plants, and encouraging our fellow citizens to learn more about their wonders and value to us around our homes and in our parks and forests. Our chapter membership numbers remain stable and our financial position is strong. Our commissioned artwork is available on cards

and in prints and has been well received. We have committed another \$5000 to the *Flora of Virginia*, scheduled for publication in fall 2012.

The coming year will bring some new opportunities and some changes. I want to ask for your opinion and input on these. As you can see, the newsletter look has changed. We expect to publish four issues a year. We also expect to provide some other avenues to communicate events and volunteer opportunities. Our website www.vnps-pot.org and our newsgroup vnps-pot@yahoogroups.com provide timely updates on activities. We hope to use a simple periodic flyer for keeping you apprised on events. We have a Facebook page www.facebook.com/vnpspot as well. How do you get news from our chapter? How do you want to? All these resources won't be of much value unless you find them so. What can we do to improve them?

The theme for the coming year in our walks and talks will be on pollination: the role and dynamics; the plant-insect interactions; and importance of native flora to the charismatic fauna, bees, butterflies, and birds we love to see. I hope you will join us during the winter for talks and as spring approaches on walks as well to explore this fascinating and critical domain.

Please let me know what you think. I am eager to provide more effective and useful tools for you to learn more about our native flora and the important role they have in our lives, and the important roles we can have in ensuring their future. So drop me a line, give me a call, buttonhole any board member at one of our events and speak your mind.

Alan Ford
amford@acm.org
703.732.5291

Board Members Needed

Are you interested getting more involved with the Virginia Native Plant Society at the local level?

The Potowmack Chapter has openings on the board.

Please contact Alan Ford at amford@acm.org

Potowmack Chapter Board Officers

President

Alan Ford 703-732-5291

Vice President

Vacant

Secretary

Pat Salamone

Treasure

Jeremy Edwards

Committee Chairs

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Cris Fleming

Conservation

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Submissions to *Potowmack News* should be sent to
Becky Super at
hrrsuper@gmail.com

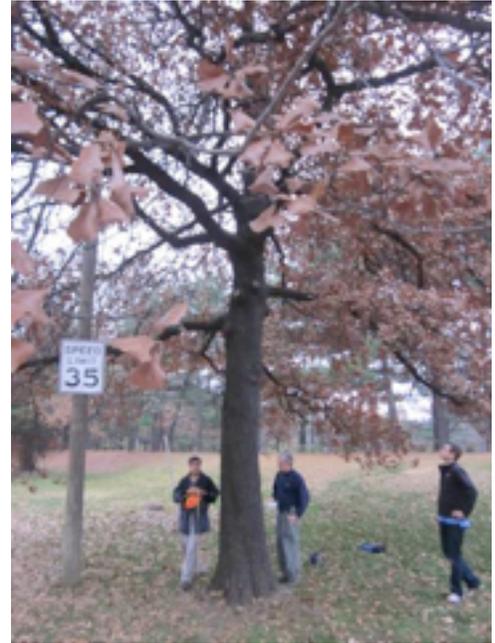
**Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 5311
Arlington, VA 22205
www.vnps-pot.org**

Blackjack Oaks

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ROD SIMMONS

Blackjack Oak is a relatively small, native oak of woodland edges of dry, acidic upland ridges, gravel terraces, and serpentine barrens. It was once more common throughout the region, flourishing in cut-over upland forests converted to grazing pastures in the past, but is increasingly rare today as a result of extensive fragmentation and urbanization. Most of Alexandria's specimens occur along Seminary Road, the old "ridge" road that ascends the high terraces from Bailey's Crossroads to the Episcopal Seminary (the highest point in the City). Another City co-champion Blackjack Oak grows nearby on the old, high gravel terrace at Ft. Ward Park, at the North edge of the main parking area. (For further descriptions of the terraces and local geology, see "Plate 5: Surficial Geology and Landforms—Expanded Explanation." by Tony Fleming, Geologist, at <http://alexandriava.gov/22560>.)

Bush's Oak (*Quercus x bushii*) - a fairly common natural hybrid between Blackjack Oak and the much larger Black Oak (*Quercus velutina*) - is perhaps more commonly seen today than pure Blackjack Oak. The hybrid has foliage similar to Blackjack Oak (though larger-leaved and less rounded), but is usually a much larger tree. (The City champion Bush's Oak grows in an old section of woodland at Stevenson Park.) Many champion-sized Blackjack Oaks on Big Tree lists are probably the hybrid. Black Oak and Southern Red Oak (*Quercus falcata*) saplings and young trees also often have foliage that resemble Blackjack Oak. (See "Native Vascular Flora of the City of Alexandria, Virginia" at the above site for more on native oaks and their natural hybrids in the City of Alexandria.) A database of these and other notable trees in Alexandria is maintained by the City Arborist Office.



Arlington County natural resource management staff Greg Zell and Alonso Abugattas assist Rod Simmons and Scott Grabam of the City of Alexandria Dept. RPCA, Horticulture and Natural Resources Section, measure a City co-champion Blackjack Oak (*Quercus marilandica*) at the south corner of the intersection of N. Howard St. and Seminary Rd.



Rounded-lobed form of Blackjack Oak leaves on tree at high gravel terrace at Turkeycock Run Stream, Valley Park in Annandale, VA.



Pointed-lobed form of Blackjack Oak leaves on tree at Travilah Serpentine Barrens, Montgomery County, MD.

Looking for Speakers?

The Potowmack Chapter can provide speakers for HOA's, Garden Clubs, Schools, etc.

Native Trees and Shrubs
Native Flowers
Pollinators
Invasive Plants
Native Plants for Birds and Butterflies

Contact Alan Ford for more information
at
amford@acm.org

Find us on Facebook at
Potowmack Chapter - Virginia Native Plant Society

Announcements

Falls Church Habitat Restoration Team

Join the Falls Church Habitat Restoration Team in restoring the local ecosystem in city parks. Remove invasives and plant natives that will then benefit local birds and butterflies.

For more information contact Melissa Teates, 703-538-6961 or melanite@verizon.net

Arlington County RiP Program

Help rescue Arlington parks from alien plant invaders! Bring your own tools.

For more information contact sarcher@arlingtonva.us or 703-228-1862. www.arlington.us/invasiveplants

Fairfax County's Invasive Management Area (IMA) Program

Remove invasive plants and learn about new species.

For more information contact erin.stockschlaeder@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-324-8681

VNPS Winter Workshop

Virginia's Ecosystems

University of Richmond

March 10

9:15 am - 3:15 pm

\$45 per person

Martin Ogle of NVRPA will be the keynote speaker.

Tom Dierauf, retired forester - Forest Ecology.

Mike Hayslett of Sweetbriar - Non-tidal Wetland Ecology

Ben Tracy of Va Tech - Grassland Ecology

Register early! By March 2, 2012

VNPS Annual Workshop
Blandy Experimental Farm
400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2
Boyce VA 22620
540-837-1600





A BEE'S EYE VIEW OF NATIVE PLANTS

Thursday, January 19

7:30 - 9 pm

FREE!

Regionally, there are over 400 species of native bees. Many are found only on the flowers of specific plants. Why not just one kind of bee? The complexity of color, architecture, and phenology of native flowers are a clue to that relationship. Sam Droege, a biologist with the USGS, will explore the plant-pollinator relationship from the bee's point of view.

Potowmack Chapter programs are free and open to the public.
No reservations necessary.

Green Spring Gardens

4603 Green Spring Road

Alexandria, Virginia

703-642-5173

www.vnps.org

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P.O. Box 5311, Arlington VA 22205

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