

POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 26. No.3

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

May/June 2008

CHAPTER PLANT SALE, SATURDAY MAY 17, GREEN SPRING GARDENS, 9AM TO 3PM

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 17 and plan to attend the Potowmack Chapter's Native Plant Sale on Spring Garden Day at Green Spring Gardens from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Potowmack Chapter will be selling native plants from our propagation beds, located behind the horticulture building. We will have a wide selection of native perennials for sun and shade, ferns, and woody plants as well as native seed packets. Expert gardeners will be available to assist you in selecting the right plants for your garden. This is an excellent opportunity to achieve those resolutions to include more native plants in your yard. Think about planting a canopy or understory tree that will give you shade and beauty and provide shelter, housing and food for wildlife. Your yard is a prime place to provide habitat for our native insects, birds and mammals. **VNPS members will receive a discount on plants. Plant sale proceeds support the Potowmack Chapter's educational mission.**

Plant donations of regionally native species from our members' gardens that we can pot up for the sale will be gratefully accepted at the chapter's propagation beds until May 7th. We welcome native tree seedlings, shrubs, perennials and ferns. Drop plants off on Wednesdays or at other times when the park is open. Be sure to include your name with your plants so we can thank you in our newsletter.

We are looking for new volunteers to help out at our propagation beds. We work from 9:30 to 12:30 on Wednesday mornings. Please consider helping us on as many Wednesdays as you can spare. Knowledge of natives plants is not necessary; you will learn about the plants as you work with them. It is an enjoyable and stress-reducing activity and benefits include *meeting nice people, noshing on delicious snacks and taking home the occasional extra plant.* Help out your chapter and join us. For more information, please call propagation chair **Laura Beaty: 703 534-8746.**

Directions to Green Spring Gardens: From Interstate 395, exit at Route 236 West (Little River Turnpike); turn right at Braddock Road and go one block north to park entrance: 4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria.



SUMMER SOLSTICE WALK, ELKLICK NATURAL AREA, SUNDAY JUNE 22

Leaders: Rod Simmons, Charles Smith, and Tom Raque Please join us as we celebrate the summer solstice on a joint field trip with VNPS Potowmack Chapter, Prince William Wildflower Society, and Maryland Native Plant Society at the Ellick Natural Area in Fairfax County on Sunday, June 22, from 10:00am -3:00pm.

The Triassic Basin comprises a significant portion of the northern Virginia piedmont, including extensive diabase communities. Ellick Natural Area is one of the region's largest and most diverse natural areas. This recently preserved area includes large expanses of high quality forest, old field communities, diabase outcrop barrens, scenic streams, and wetlands. We will see a diversity of native oaks, including Shumard Oak, Hickories, White Ash, Dwarf Hackberry, and other hardwoods; the **state-rare Prickly Ash**; expanses of native grass meadows with an abundance of wildflowers, many uncommon to rare, like Heath Aster, Torrey's Mountain Mint, Hoary Mountain Mint, Purple Milkweed, and many others; outcrop barrens with Fameflower, Slim Knotweed (*Polygonum tenue*), False Pennyroyal, Blue Curls, Hairy Forked Nailwort, and others; and wetlands with Quillwort, Veined Skullcap, and others. The purple milkweed should still be in bloom, we may catch the tway-blade orchid and some of the plants at the two globally rare plant communities we will visit: Diabase Glade Forest/Basic Oak-Hickory Forest and Basic Bald.

In addition to the unique plant communities, the field complex we will visit has breeding populations of prairie warbler, yellow-breasted chat, field sparrow, several hawk species, eastern meadowlark and grasshopper sparrow (the latter is very uncommon in our region).

This is an easy to moderate walk on mostly flat to gently rolling ground--the morning part of the walk to one side of the property and the afternoon to another. Bring water, snacks, insect repellent for ticks, and lunch.

Directions: Take Rt. 50 west from Fairfax and 66 to Pleasant Valley Road. Turn left on Pleasant Valley Road and proceed SW for several miles. Take note at intersection of Pleasant Valley Road and Braddock Road (Cox Farms on right) and proceed a short distance past intersection on Pleasant Valley Road and look for parked cars along road edge on right. Park along road edge and fenced field.

ALSO SEE HUNTLEY MEADOWS WALK (PAGE 2)

"Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you."

Frank Lloyd Wright

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It's early April, one of the most inspiring times of year for native plant lovers. Spring is an "ephemeral" season so one has to be diligent not to miss the fleeting blooms of harbinger of spring, bloodroot, trout lily and other spring wildflowers. We love to guide people to the best places to see wildflowers and at the best time. Wildflower walks define one of the main tenets of the Virginia Native Plant Society, appreciation of native plants. Appreciation leads to motivation for conservation, our other main tenet. The more people we can get out to the woods to see wildflowers, the more people we will have working for their preservation. So come on a native plant walk or, if you're knowledgeable, offer to lead one. We can always use help so just give me a call (703 534 8179) or email (m.mooney@comcast.net) if you're willing. Our chapter is a totally volunteer organization; if you've got a skill, please, please share it. Thanks.

Marianne Mooney

TREE HUGGERS TAKE HEED

Our chapter's April 10th program on trees attracted over fifty "tree huggers", defined as people who are awed by the majesty of trees and who are ardent about protecting them. Joan Maloof, professor of environmental sciences at Salisbury University and a major tree lover, inspired the audience with her passion for trees and her work to protect them. She cited the dramatic loss of America's old growth forests from the 1600's to the present day. To sum up, in Virginia we have about 5% of our original forest left. Much of our remaining forest lands are loblolly pine plantations, planted after more diverse forests have been logged. Her message to us was "get involved". The U.S. Forest Service is managing our forests. Let them know what you think, often and clearly, during public comment periods, <http://www.fs.fed.us/>. "The Forest Service now has its 2008 Planning Rule and will soon restart forest planning processes around the country and encourages the public to join in this effort," (from their website).

Joan has a new book coming out soon that chronicles her visits to remaining old-growth forests in eastern states. We sold out of her current book, **Teaching the Trees: Lessons from the Forest**, but it is available from Amazon. It is a collection of essays on old growth forest and some of our native trees, their wonders and beauties, and the uses people, insects and birds make of them. From "Old-Growth Air" (the Japanese use "wood air bathing" as therapy) to a plea that homeowners weigh the fall colors and the possibility of giving luna moths a larval host against the bother of sweet gum balls, and let the sweet gums stand. Doing what we can to save mixed hardwood forest, the old growth of the future, is a worthwhile joy.

VNPS member, Margaret Chatham

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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 Mary Ann Lawler for more information or e-mail her at malawler@aol.com.

WETLAND IN BLOOM PLANT WALK SATURDAY, JUNE 14

Take a plant ecology walk along the boardwalk at **Huntley Meadows Park** during peak bloom of swamp rose, lizard's tail and buttonbush, Saturday, June 14th, **9 to 11 a.m.**. Learn about wetland plant and animal interactions and view state-rare purple milkweed in bloom. Bring binoculars if you wish. \$6 fee for the walk. Led by **VNPS Potowmack Chapter President, Marianne Mooney**. Call the park for reservations at 703 768 2525

THE MAYAPPLE (*PODOPHYLLUM PELTATUM*)

Growing on the forest floor like umbrellas for little wood nymphs are the mayapples, *Podophyllum peltatum*, common to every county of Virginia. They are known as mayapples, because they bloom in May with a single white six-petaled flower. Plants with only a single leaf will not bloom. Plants with two leaves have a blossom between the two leaves. The “apple” forms in late summer, if the plant has been pollinated, primarily by bumble bees. This greenish yellow fruit is eaten and dispersed by box turtles. Otherwise it spreads by rhizomes, forming colonies.

The plant is in the same family (*Berberidaceae*—barberry) as *Caulophyllum thalictroides* (Blue cohosh) to which it bears no resemblance and *Jeffersonia diphylla* (twinleaf) to which it does bear some resemblance.

Interestingly, the entire plant except the fruit is very poisonous. The rhizome is the most poisonous, but it is also the most useful to humans because it contains high concentrations of podophyllotoxin and alpha and beta peltatin, all of which are used in chemotherapy with other drugs to fight various cancers, including lymphoma, testicular cancer, lung cancer, and ovarian cancer.

Long before modern medicine discovered these properties, native North American tribes used the rhizomes of the plant. They would dry them, grind them into a powder, and administer them as laxatives or to get rid of intestinal worms. It was also used to get rid of warts and skin tumors. But don't try this yourself, the University of North Carolina Horticultural Science Department advises: “HIGHLY TOXIC, MAY BE FATAL IF EATEN!”



A WORD (OR TWO) ON THE USE OF GLYPHOSATE

(Note: Slightly edited from a VNPS list serve discussion on the use and risks of the chemical glyphosate to eradicate invasives)

I love new scientific data. It makes what I do more effective and meaningful...When talking about herbicides, people need to be referencing the chemicals specifically, including what surfactants are used or other additives when telling us things can be harmful to our brethren above and in the soil or water. There are dozens of glyphosate products mixed with other products, or released with directions for mixing with other products....

The safest thing is for people to use chemicals according to the LABELED use, also read the [Material Safety Data Sheets] MSDS sheets, and when referring to data that is newer than what the EPA label has time to catch up with, they need to know what INERT and ACTIVE ingredients are being tested and in what combination for these scientific tests. And always use an IPM approach (integrated pest management) so that chemicals end up not being abused or overused. Add in a little common sense and time to plan, plan, plan, and take time to carefully apply when using chemicals and you should avoid harm. And don't forget to read, and read again, and read once more, to understand what you are reading. If you don't have them, labels and MSDS sheets can be downloaded from the internet, direct from the manufacturer's website.

If you ever need more detail than what is on the LABEL and MSDS sheet, call the chemical manufacturer. I have done this before to get more information, and they may just bore you to tears, but you will have more than you might want to know about what else may be in your bottle, what it does in the soil, and the testing they do on unwilling furry or slimy subjects and what happens to them. But don't expect they will give away trade secrets.

We should always treat all synthetic chemicals with caution for our own health as well--many are cancerous or cause other health problems. It's the reason why we keep them away from children and pets, keep the cap on them, vent our rooms or use gloves while using them, shower after using the pool, etc. So oddly, there is a reason why some chemicals, like glyphosate, are so readily on the market--they are not as bad as some others--but a chemical is still a chemical.

If your ethical standards tell you not to use a chemical, don't use it. If your instincts really have your ears pinned back, don't use it. If you still don't like your chemical after everything you've read about it, then find another you do like, or don't use them if they cannot meet your needs. Same with your herbicide applicator..... But you may find the impacts to the environment from thousands of volunteer trips in their car back and forth to help cut and recut and recut again to control invasive plants may just be more than the judicious and safe use of an herbicide.

Mary Travaglini
Potomac Gorge Habitat Restoration Manager
The Nature Conservancy of MD/DC

WOW! LOOK AT THE AMERICAN PLUMS WE FREED LAST YEAR!

These are recent photos of two of the largest American plums (*Prunus Americana*) in Virginia, which were cleared of Japanese honeysuckle and mulberry last fall. Thanks to Greg Zell, the Yaccovissi's and everyone else who helped.



U.S. PLANTS NEED ADDITIONAL PROTECTION, FEW STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLANS ADDRESS NEEDS OF THREATENED FLORA

(From a NatureServe press release) Arlington, Virginia -- A thorough study of how plants are treated in state wildlife action plans finds that, while the plans represent a major step forward for conservation planning, most of the action plans did not attempt to address the conservation needs of plants.

The analysis, contained in a new report titled *Hidden in Plain Sight: the Role of Plants in State Wildlife Action Plans*, was carried out by NatureServe, a non-profit conservation group that provides science to inform effective conservation action.

Completed in 2005 by all U.S. states and territories, wildlife action plans are designed to guide wildlife conservation efforts and prevent wildlife from becoming endangered. Developed based on the best available scientific information and with broad public engagement, these plans are increasingly important in a wide variety of conservation and planning efforts.

Because the federal guidelines governing development of these plans specifically excluded plants from the definition of "wildlife" and did not provide funding to study them, few states were able to consider rare or endangered plants in their planning process. However, plants are essential to the functioning of healthy ecosystems, and represent more than half (56%) of species federally listed as threatened or endangered.

"State wildlife action plans represent a tremendous opportunity for strategically advancing conservation in America," said Bruce Stein, chief scientist for NatureServe and a co-author of the study. "Now is the time to complement the attention they have brought to wild animals with additional focus on the needs of our nation's imperiled plants."

The study found that only a modest number of wildlife action plans explicitly considered plant species of conservation concern. Just eight of 56 plans (14%) took the most direct approach of including plants on their list of "species of greatest conservation need," while only six plans (11%) considered plant species of concern in their methods for setting habitat priorities. Twelve plans (21%) included plant species of concern in their approaches for defining geographic focal areas, generally relying on plant data maintained by state natural heritage programs. The study found that wildlife action plans for Georgia, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oregon were especially effective at addressing the needs of wild plant species.

The study makes several recommendations for better conserving the nation's plant life:

- Promote wildlife action plan implementation strategies that would also benefit plant species of concern.
- Avoid implementation actions that could be detrimental to sensitive plant species.
- Add plant-specific components to existing wildlife action plans where possible.
- Develop state-level plant conservation strategies to complement wildlife action plans where necessary.
- Ensure that plants are fully represented in major new conservation funding opportunities, including those related to climate change adaptation.

Hidden in Plain Sight was authored by Dr. Bruce A. Stein and NatureServe botanist Kelly Gravuer, and was supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The report can be accessed at <http://www.natureserve.org/publications/library.jsp#nspubs>.

A TELLING STORY ABOUT GROWING CULTIVARS OF NATIVES.

(Editor's note: this came from a listserv discussion of the use of nursery cultivars of native plants.)

Here's my experience with a cultivar of Phlox divaricata: I was out weeding in the midst of two patches of the phlox, one the native and the other a cultivar, I think Sherwood Purple or some such name. An unusual looking insect, maybe a Sphinx moth, but I don't quite remember, was nectaring among the native phlox, and I started watching it. After a bit, it flew past me over to the cultivar patch, seemed to "sample" a couple of flowers, then sped back to the native patch and continued working it for a while. It repeated this 1 or 2 more times while I was out there. Seemed pretty clear it just didn't get what it wanted from the cultivar, though both patches looked to me equally flourishing. After that, I started ripping out the cultivar. **Patricia**

LOCAL EVENTS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

Sat. May 3. Walk with a Naturalist to the Cross County Trail. 10am-11:30 **Hidden Oaks Nature Center**, Annandale. Free. Reservations required. 703-941-1065.

Sat. May 3 Go Native in Your Landscape Meadowlark Botanical Gardens 9am-3pm Instructor: **Claudia Thompson Deahl** (charter member of the Virginia Native Plant Society) Sponsored by the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia (\$20 for non-members). To register call 703-256-6895 or visit www.audubonva.org.

Sun. May 4 Trillium Trek to Linden VA. 8:30am to 4pm Adults. See one of the largest displays of Great White Trillium in the world. A certified registry site of the Virginia Native Plant Society. Dress for hiking and bring water and a bag lunch. \$20 fee. Registration required. Van leaves from Lubber Run Center parking lot, 300 N Park Dr., Arlington, or will pick up from Ballston Metro with advance request: 703-228-6535. Program #632550E

Tues. May 6. Trillium Trek to Linden VA. 9am-4pm by van. Bring lunch; wear hiking shoes. **Hidden Oaks Nature Center**, Annandale. \$12. Reservations required by 4/20. 703-941-1065.

Fri. May 9 Spring Wildflowers of the Potomac Gorge—Carderock Recreation Area Leader **Cris Fleming**. 10am to 12:30pm One of the best ways to learn our local wildflowers and their progression of bloom. Audubon Naturalist Society. Non-members \$22. For information or to register call: 301-652-9188 x16 or visit: <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/> for a registration form.

Sat. May 10 Plant Sale by Friends of Riverbend Park beginning 8am at the Great Falls Grange pavilion in "downtown" Great Falls. 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. For more information: <http://forb.org/>

Sat. May. 10 Pink Lady Slipper Walk 1:00pm-1:45pm Roundtree Park **Hidden Oaks Nature Center**, Annandale. Free. Reservations required by May 7. 703-941-1065.

Sat. May 10 Walk with a Naturalist 10:30am to noon. **Hidden Pond Nature Center**, 8155 Greeley Blvd. Springfield, VA. Free. Canceled if rain. Reservations required. 703-451-9588.

Sun. May 11 Celebrate National Flower Month 1-2pm Stroll with a naturalist who highlights the native wildflowers. **Hidden Oaks Nature Center**, Annandale. \$3. Prepayment and reservations required. Call: 703-941-1065.

Thurs. May 15 How to use a Wildflower Guide Age 14 and up Have you ever wondered 'What are those beautiful flowers?' This class will introduce participants to the Newcomb's Wildflower Guide by Lawrence Newcomb and how to "key out" unknown plants. Participants are encouraged to bring a copy of guide to the class. Cancelled if raining heavily. Instructor: Jeremy Edwards, City of Falls Church Senior Urban Forester Location: meet in front of the Falls Church Community Center 11111-A Time: 7:30-9pm Fees: No fee

Sat. May. 17 Pink Lady Slipper Walk #2 1:00pm-1:45pm Roundtree Park **Hidden Oaks Nature Center**, Annandale. Free. Reservations required by May 7. 703-941-1065.

Sat. Jun. 14 Wetland in Bloom Plant Walk Huntley Meadows. 9am to 11am Take a plant ecology walk along the boardwalk at Huntley Meadows Park during peak bloom of swamp rose, lizard's tail and buttonbush. Learn about wetland plant and animal interactions and view state-rare purple milkweed in bloom. Bring binoculars if you wish. \$6 fee for the walk. Led by VNPS Potowmack Chapter President, **Marianne Mooney**. Call the park for reservations at 703 768 2525

INVASIVES CONTROL WORK PARTIES AT MARIE BUTLER LEVIN PRESERVE IN MCLEAN

Sunday, May 11, 10:00am to 12:30pm **Sunday, June 8, 10:00am to 12:30pm** **Sunday, June 22, 10:00am to 12:30pm**
For more information, contact Alan Ford: 703.732.5291; email: amford@acm.org

FAIRFAX COUNTY'S INVASIVE MANAGEMENT AREA (IMA) PROGRAM

The IMA (Invasive Management Area) program is a volunteer based project that is working towards habitat restoration. Help us remove invasive plants, learn new species of invasive plants, and work outside in spring!

May 3, 9:00 - 12:00 pm, Nottoway workday	May 31, 10:00 – 12:00 pm, Pohick Stream Valley workday
May 3, 10:00 – 12:00 pm, Accotink Creek (Kay Ct) workday	June 7 9am to 12 pm, Nottoway Park Workday
May 10, 10:00 – 12:00 pm, Accotink Creek (Kay Ct) workday	June 7 9:30am to 12:30 pm, Huntley Meadows Workday
May 15, 4:30- 5:30 pm, Cub Run workday	June 10 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, Woodglen Lake Park Workday
May 20, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, Woodglen Lake Park Workday	June 21 10am to 12 pm, Pohick Stream Valley Workday
May 24, 9:00 - 12:00 pm, Nottoway workday	

For more information: Katherine.Frederick@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703 324 8681. Check out the IMA schedule of events and activities at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/nrp-ima.htm.

FALLS CHURCH INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL TASK FORCE Upcoming 2008 Events:

May 3	Isaac Crossman Park 10am-Noon	May 31	Cherry Hill Park 10am-Noon
May 26	Memorial Day Fair and Parade 9am-5pm	May 31	Perennial Sale* - presale only 10am-Noon

For more information, contact Jeremy Edwards, City of Falls Church,

ARLINGTON'S RiP PROJECT

Sat. May 10- Second Saturdays at Bluemont Park 9 am to noon. For the Second Saturday of May, neighbors and RiP volunteers will throw their considerable support behind the Bluemont Civic Association's Neighborhood Day project to remove invasives from the "Revolutionary War Connector Trail", located adjacent to the historic Southern-Shreve family cemetery by Saint Ann's school. The site is located off of North Harrison St in Arlington, on the north side of I-66. Any questions contact John Huennekens at 524-3853, or jhuenn@gwu.edu.

Sat. June 7 National Trails Clean-up Project Thrifton Hills Park 3-5pm Meet in Thrifton Hill Park to remove trash and invasive plants along the Custis Bike Trail. Long pants, long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, gloves, hats, and water bottles are highly recommended. Sponsored by Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (ACE) and the Remove Invasive Plants (RiP) team. Biking and walking to the site is encourage in honor of Trails Day but parking is available in the side lot of the Giant grocery store closest to the trail. For more info or to register email volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org or call 703-228-6406.

Sat. June 14- Second Saturdays at Bluemont Park 9 am to noon. Neighbors and RiP volunteers will return to their usual Second Saturday site beside the Bluemont bike trail near N Jefferson and Fifth Streets in Arlington. Come help out for an hour or two. Parking available along Illinois or Jefferson streets - enter from Wilson Blvd. Contact John Huennekens at 524-3853, or jhuenn@gwu.edu.

Thurs. June 19 Summer Solstice Celebration Barcroft Park 7-9pm An evening to enjoy our long day-light hours with service projects and light refreshments. Projects include invasive removal with the Remove Invasive Plants (RiP) team, trash pick-up, and storm drain marking. Meet at the Barcroft Park parking garage (4200 S. Four Mile Run Dr.). For more info or to register email volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org or call 703-228-6406.

NOTE: Some training and tools provided. Long pants and long sleeves recommended. If you have clippers, loppers and/or gloves, please bring them. For more information contact JennTruong at jtruong@vt.edu or 703-228-7636.

INVASIVES CONTROL WORK PARTIES AT TURKEY RUN PARK ALONG THE POTOMAC

Help work with The Nature Conservancy to help control invasive plant species on National Park Service lands in the Potomac Gorge at Turkey Run Park off the GW Memorial Parkway. Wear work gloves and boots or sturdy shoes, and bring water, snacks, and hand saws or loppers if you have them. Our schedule for May and June is: 10:00 am to 1:00pm, **May 8, May 17, June 12**. Check on meeting location with Alan Ford: 703.732.5291; email: amford@acm.org



Chapter Events Calendar

- May 8 Board Meeting
Green Spring Gardens
7:30 pm
- May 17 **Chapter Plant Sale**
Green Spring Gardens
9am to 3pm
- June 12 Board Meeting
Green Spring Gardens
7:30 pm
- June 22 **Summer Solstice Walk**
Elklick Natural Area
10am to 3pm

**Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
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