

POTOWMACK NEWS

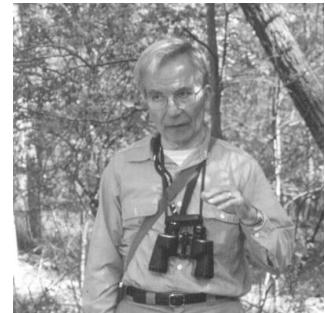
Volume 20, No 5

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Sept/Oct 2002

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20: VNPS 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

This year the Potowmack Chapter marks twenty years of championing Virginia's native plants. Join us at the Chapter's Annual Meeting for an afternoon of celebration on Sunday, October 20th, at 1:30 pm at Green Spring Gardens Park. Festivities begin with refreshments, socializing, and a chance to meet state and chapter board members. Our keynote speaker will be **Dr. Stanwyn Shetler, Botanist Emeritus of the Smithsonian's Natural History Museum**, and long-time VNPS state board member. Dr. Shetler's talk is titled "The Role of Native Plant Societies in Grassroots Conservation." There will also be door prizes and the opportunity for tours of the chapter's propagation beds and the Native Plant Trail. Please plan to come!



Dr. Stanwyn Shetler

Directions to Green Spring Gardens Park: From Interstate 395 exit at Route 236 West (Little River Turnpike) in Alexandria, turn right at Green Spring Road; go 1 block north to the park entrance.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24: ARLINGTON HOUSE WOODLANDS CELEBRATION

On August 24 a broad coalition of organizations will gather at one of Arlington's oldest forest remnants and potential VNPS Registry Site. Join VNPS, the Maryland Native Plant Society, the National Park Service, and others at the Arlington House Woodlands, the Robert E. Lee Memorial site. Originally a 600-acre forest, the Woodlands is a 12 acre site with trees dating back 200 years. The site is up for nomination to VNPS's Registry Program for its terrace gravel forest. As early as 7:30 a.m., volunteers are invited to help remove invasives and plant native trees in a restoration area. Tools will be provided. At 10:30 a.m., an exhibit on the Woodlands will be unveiled. Union re-enactors will be on hand to talk about the Civil War's effect on the environment. Arlington House will be open for free tours at 9:30 a.m.

Directions: Drive or metro to Arlington National Cemetery. Walk (15 minutes uphill) or take the Tourmobile to Arlington House on a hilltop overlooking the Potomac and D.C. The Woodlands are behind the house.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 8: GRASSES WALK WITH CRIS FLEMING AT GREAT FALLS PARK

Botany chair **Cris Fleming** will lead a chapter walk at Great Falls Park from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. This field trip will focus on identification and habitats of many of our local grasses and will build from the August 15 lecture by Paul Peterson. Great Falls Park contains several mini-prairie habitats, which harbor native prairie grasses such as Little bluestem, Big bluestem, and Switchgrass and the woodlands support eastern grasses such as Wild oats, Wild rye, and Bottlebrush grass. Wear rugged shoes, as there will be considerable walking over rocky terrain. We also recommend a hat and sunblock for the many open, sunny areas. Meet at the Visitor Center between the two buildings. The walk will be cancelled if there is heavy rain but not for drizzle. Limit: 20 people. To register, call Cris at 301-657-9289. If you leave a message, please include your telephone number and the number of people registering.

Directions: From the Beltway, take Route 193 (Georgetown Pike) west for about 4 miles to the intersection with Old Dominion Drive. Turn right at the park sign and proceed another mile to the park entrance. Remember to bring a national park pass or you will need to pay a \$4 entrance fee per car.

SEPTEMBER 21 GREEN SPRING PLANT SALE

(SEE PAGE 4)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Twenty years is a long time for a volunteer organization to thrive. Our chapter's only fixed address is a file cabinet at Green Spring and a P.O. Box. But it's always been the remarkable, involved people

who are the heart of our chapter. Their enduring spirit of concern for Virginia's flora has been passed on through the years, threading the chapter together. Meet some of these wonderful people at the Chapter Annual Meeting and help us celebrate our 20th anniversary. In early October, all members will receive a history of the chapter and invitation to the meeting. Hope to see you on October 20th.

Marianne Mooney

CHAPTER CONSERVATION AWARD

Congratulations to Steve Campbell of Arlington who will receive the Chapter's 2002 Conservation Award for his long-term efforts to remove English ivy along the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Steve took it upon himself to call the National Park Service (NPS) over four years ago to offer to clear ivy vines from trees. His early concerns were aesthetic, but he quickly learned how detrimental ivy is to older trees with furrowed bark, and how it spreads to become a monoculture in the under-story. He has cut and pulled vines every couple of weeks in all seasons of the year ever since. The Park Service placed a high priority on prolonging the lives of the trees and stabilizing the stream banks to prevent sedimentation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Therefore, most of Steve's efforts have been along the river itself from Memorial Bridge to Spout Run. He estimates that he freed over 400 trees just this year from English ivy and Japanese honeysuckle vines.

Steve's method is to use loppers or a band saw to cut the vines from the base of the trunk and let the upper vines die. He also tries to pull the remaining ivy a way from the tree without harming the bark. He is not yet certified to use chemicals, so, the vines do grow back. But, he doesn't plan to stop. Steve is a Master Gardener and an Arlington County Tree Steward. Congratulations, Steve, and heartfelt thanks from the Virginia Native Plant Society.

E.O. Wilson: "The clearing of tropical forests appears to be the same as it was ten years ago. If present rates continue, we will severely undercut the base of natural resources on which humanity depends. Put another way, we are ruining the natural economy on which the market economy depends. And, as an unintended consequence, we may extinguish half the species of plants and animals by the end of the 21st century. We are more aware of the mechanics of habitat destruction, so if these considerations don't make us change our ways, I'm afraid nothing will."

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@nmnh.si.edu and in the message section write subscribe to vnps-pot, your e-mail address, and your full name.

Or visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vnps-pot/join>

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(All numbers should include the 703 area code, unless otherwise noted.) *Potowmack News* is published 6 times per year, in Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov. 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.

"NATIVE" PLANTS DEFINED By Cole Burrell

Some people think all plants that grow without cultivation are native plants. But many familiar roadside flowers such as Queen Anne's lace, ox-eye daisy, and chicory arrived in North America along with European settlers. These plants are called exotics. They are not native, they are naturalized, and they grow without the benefit of cultivation. Native plants, on the other hand, grew here before the arrival of Europeans. It's not enough to say a plant is native if it grows in North America, however. Different plants are found in different regions of the country, and in different habitats, so geography and ecology must be considered together.

In the narrowest interpretation, a native plant is one that was growing and reproducing in a given region, within a particular habitat or ecological niche, prior to European settlement. The definition can apply to plants in a local, state, or regional context because many ecosystems cross political boundaries. The Eastern deciduous forest, for example, stretches from New England and Minnesota, south to Northern Georgia and Arkansas. A plant indigenous to Virginia is a native plant in Virginia. The same species may also be indigenous to Minnesota, so is a native there as well. A plant from Virginia that is not indigenous to Minnesota, but grows there by introduction, is exotic in Minnesota, even though it is native to North America.

In a horticultural context, the term "native" is subject to lax interpretation. To a gardener who grows plants from all over the world, "native" may be relative to the continent or county of origin. It is common practice to bestow a blanket designation of "native" to any plant indigenous to North America. However, few plants are indigenous throughout a country. Plants do not recognize political boundaries. Ecologically and horticulturally you may distinguish between a County native, a State native, a Regional native, and a North American native, but these designations do not take into account the soil, moisture, temperature, and exposure, which are all factors that limit the growth, reproduction and distribution of species.

It is often said that native plants are the best plants for a given area because they are better adapted than non-native plants. Not always so. The rationale for that statement is that they evolved on the site. Dozens of non-native species such as oriental bittersweet do quite well in our region, though they did not evolve here. The reason they succeed is that they evolved under similar conditions on another continent. Few plants are better adapted to our landscape than Japanese honeysuckle, kudzu, and tree of heaven, though none of these is native to North America.

When growing plants from outside their native range, whether they are North American or European, it is paramount to understand how they will behave in cultivation. While some exotic plants are innocuous, others collide head-on with local flora. The plight of wetlands reduced to monoculture by purple loosestrife is all too familiar. Exotic thugs such as porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*), Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), and Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), to name a few, are displacing native species and reducing habitat diversity throughout the Eastern and Central states.

In summary native plants are those found growing on a particular site under a given set of environmental conditions before European settlement. They give an area its regional identity. Their distribution is determined by physical and biological factors that influence or limit reproduction, growth, or dispersal. The term native plant includes trees, shrubs, herbaceous flowering plants, ferns, mosses and algae.



Mertensia virginica

SEPTEMBER 21 GREEN SPRING PLANT SALE

Fall is a great time to plant woody plants and perennials. We are offering a selection of small trees and late summer and fall blooming plants as well as spring flowers. They include oxeye sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*), New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*), and white beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*). While we normally don't sell cultivars, one of our members donated a large supply of swamp mallows (*Hibiscus moscheutos*)—pure white cultivars called 'Blue River.' They'll grow from 5 to 7 feet tall and love a moist, sunny location. The sale is September 21 from 10 to 3 with the usual shuttle service to Green Spring.

Call **Laura Beaty 703 534-8746 or Beth Smith 703 644-1760** for more information or to volunteer. Volunteers are needed to help move and set up the plants on Friday Sept. 20 and to work at the sale on Saturday. Plant donations are requested and should be delivered to the beds two weeks before the sale. If anyone needs assistance in getting plants to the beds, we can help by picking them up.

Directions to Green Spring Gardens Park: From Interstate 395, exit at Route 236 West (Little River Turnpike) in Alexandria, turn right at Green Spring Road and proceed 1 block north to the park entrance.



Photo by Laura Beaty

HOT ENOUGH FOR YOU? By Mary Ann Lawler

Global warming is cyclical, but it is happening faster than ever before in the life of the planet, with potentially disastrous ecological consequences. As reported in the New York Times, the first half of this year has been the warmest in the Northern Hemisphere in 143 years, according to Britain's Meteorological Office. The Natural Resources Defense Council says: "Global warming may be the most devastating environmental problem human beings have created and the toughest to solve."

Humans are indeed responsible for the increase in carbon dioxide that has accelerated the global warming phenomenon. The Union of Concerned Scientists (www.ucsusa.org) says that the burning of fossil fuel accounts for about 75 percent of the increase in carbon dioxide and that deforestation accounts for another 20 percent. Our forests store carbon and protect up to 90 percent of all terrestrial species. But National Geographic says: "Half of the forests that stood 8,000 years ago have been destroyed—much of them during the past 400 years." When forests are cut or degraded or when tropical rainforests are burned to create agricultural land, more carbon is released. And the remaining forests are affected by global warming. Forest concentrations decrease, the geographical range of forests change, and forest health is affected. Insects, such as the spruce bark beetle in Alaska, proliferate and devastate the landscape.

Global warming will cause more droughts and floods, and the temperature changes are particularly affecting our cities. NASA scientists have found that numerous urban metropolises like Tokyo, Mexico City, and Atlanta are far warmer than their surrounding landscapes by as much as 10 degrees. These urban heat islands change weather patterns causing more storms downwind of cities. Winters, too, have been milder. In botanical reserves near Tokyo, tropical plants are replacing temperate plants.

What can we do? On a personal level, we can ride our bikes and use public transportation; we can increase the energy efficiency of our homes; we can create rain gardens on building roofs, and we can plant more trees. Planting more trees can be effective, but at the same time, in the United States over 3 billion board feet of timber is harvested every year from U.S. National Forests alone. Solutions to global warming require governments, scientists, industry, commerce, and citizens to work together. We in VNPS can continue to speak up, educate, advocate, and try to affect public policy at all levels of government.

COLLECT NATIVE SEEDS ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

Soon, the leaves will change colors, the acorns will fall from the trees, and volunteers throughout the Chesapeake Bay region will scurry about collecting as many seeds as they can. On Saturday, October 12, the Potomac Watershed Partnership and the Potomac Conservancy will sponsor the second annual Growing Native, a volunteer-led effort to supply much-needed native hardwood tree seeds to state nurseries. There is a seedling shortage due to an increasing demand by state agencies for native species to be used in river and streamside reforestation efforts. Waterside vegetation is important because it filters pollutants from run-off, prevents erosion, keeps the water temperature cooler, and provides food and habitat for animals. Growing Native educates people about the important connection between land use and water quality. By improving the health of the land along its streams and rivers, Growing Native will improve the health of the air, water, and wildlife habitat of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Hardwood seeds collected by volunteers will be ready for reforestation efforts in about two years.

During last year's Growing Native, nearly 2,500 volunteers collected more than 11,000 pounds of native hardwood seeds throughout the Potomac River watershed. Black walnut, white oak, northern red oak were especially plentiful. This year, there will be collection sites in six states throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed and they want to double the number of citizens involved and the amount of seeds collected. The Potomac Watershed Partnership is seeking 250 collection site coordinators (they'll assist and support you from project start to finish), and 5,000 volunteer seed collectors for this year's event. Check out the new Growing Native website at www.growingnative.org to learn more about this exciting project and how you can 'Get Nuts for Clean Water'. If you have questions, contact Rob Carey, Growing Native Coordinator, at 703-276-2777 ext. 207 or coordinator@growingnative.org

ARLINGTON'S NEW RiP PROJECT

The following notice is from Jan Ferrigan, Arlington County's Invasive Species Program Coordinator:

Come on out and get dirty! Join Remove Invasive Plants (R.i.P.) project volunteers in their efforts to preserve trees and native plant diversity in Arlington by controlling invasive plants. The R.i.P. project is part of Arlington County's new Invasive Species Program. All the below events are open to anyone interested. Some tools and gloves will be provided but if you have your own clippers, loppers, small saws, dull flat screwdrivers and/or gloves please bring them along. Long pants and long sleeves are recommended because poison ivy plants are often found alongside invasive plants.

October 5 9 am – noon **Lacey Woods Park**, 1200 N. George Mason Dr. near the intersection of George Mason Dr. and Washington Blvd. Meet at the playground.

October 19 9 am – noon **Zachary Taylor Park**, 2900 Military Rd. near the intersection of Military Rd. and 27th Rd. Park on 30th St. and meet at the Military Rd. entrance to Zachary Taylor Park

October 24 7-8:30 pm **Gulf Branch Nature Center**, 3608 N. Military Rd. opposite 36th St. This event is an Invasive Plant Workshop. October 24 is a seminar evening. October 26 is a hands-on removal day. Come and learn more about the invasive plant issue. The workshop is free but **registration is required**. Please call Gulf Branch Nature Center at 703 228 3403 to register.

October 26 9 am - noon **Gulf Branch Nature Center**, 3608 N. Military Rd. opposite 36th St. (See above)

October 26 9 am – noon **GlenCarlyn Park**, 625 S Carlin Springs Rd. near Northern Virginia Community Hospital. Meet at the Long Branch Nature Center.

For information about any of these events, please contact Jan at 703-228-7636 or jferriga@vt.edu

ASSESS YOUR HABITAT

The National Wildlife Federation recently launched a new feature on its eNature website. It enables you to assess your yard (or balcony, or workplace, or a local park, etc.) for its wildlife habitat value, and then provides tools through which you can plan out improvements to the habitat area, upload your photographs, receive lists of wildlife and native plants local to your zip code, add entries of the wildlife and native plants that live in your yard, and much more. Check it out at www.enature.com.

OTHER EVENTS:

Aug 24 – Invasive Species Removal in Mason Neck. Meet at 10800 Harley Road from 9AM to 11:30 AM to join NVCT in improving Northern Virginia's local habitats by removing invasive species. Volunteers will be given a brief overview of invasive species in the area and the best methods for their removal. Volunteers are encouraged to bring gloves and tools if possible. For info visit www.NVCT.org or call 703-354-5093.

Aug 24 – Irvine Native Plant Seminar and Native Plant Sale. This is the largest gathering (near Baltimore) of native plant enthusiasts in Maryland. Seminar includes morning presentations and afternoon workshops. There is a concurrent plant sale featuring plants from 14 nurseries. Sale is open to the general public starting at 9AM. More info call (410) 484-2413 or www.explorenature.org

Sept 14 – Fall Wildflower Walk Riverbend park. 9-11am free. Meet at the visitor center for a walk in the rich bottomlands beside the river. Reservations required. 703-759-9018

Sept 14 – Little Hunting Creek Clean-up & Invasive Species Removal. Meet from 1 PM to 4 PM at 8707 Stockton Pkwy in Mt. Vernon to help NVCT improve one of Northern Virginia's local watersheds by removing litter and invasive species by canoe and on foot along the shoreline of Little Hunting Creek. Volunteers are encouraged to bring gloves and tools if possible. For info visit www.NVCT.org or call 703-354-5093.

Sept 21 – Nov 6—Fall Woody Plant Identification USDA Graduate School: South Agriculture. Classes plus three field trips: \$229 Instructor, Stanwyn Shetler. Call 202-314-3320 or register on line at www.grad.usda.gov

Sept 23 – Dec 2—Deciduous Forest Ecosystems USDA Graduate School; Capital Gallery. Classes plus three field trips: \$229 Instructor, Gary Evans. Call 202-314-3320 or register on line at www.grad.usda.gov

Sept 26—Fall Beauties: Viburnums, chokeberries, sumacs and more. Tour the gardens with Brenda Skarphol as she discusses the merits of these enchanting shrubs. 10-11am Green Spring Gardens Park \$7 Registration and prepayment required. Call 703-642-5173.

Oct 12 – Native Seed Collection – Help restore Virginia's native tree species from 9AM to 11:30AM by collecting seeds during a fun-filled day of learning about forest ecology at Olney Park in McLean. There will be prizes for the most seeds collected! Participants are encouraged to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy in the park after the event! In case of rain, the event will be held Sunday, October 13. For info. visit www.NVCT.org or call 703-354-5093.

Oct 26 – Autumn Tree Trek – Huntley Meadows 1-3:30 pm. Learn the basics of tree identification using leaves, bark and buds. Reservations required. Free. 703-768-2525.

<u>Chapter Events Calendar</u>			Potowmack Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society P.O. Box 5311 Arlington, VA 22205
Aug	24	Arlington House Woodlands Celebration	
Sept	8	Grasses walk Cris Fleming	
Sept	12	Board Meeting 6:45pm Green Spring	
Sept	21	Green Spring Plant Sale 10am – 3 pm	
Oct	10	Board Meeting 6:45pm Green Spring	<i>Please verify your address information and your renewal date on the mailing label.</i>
Oct	20	20 th Anniversary Celebration and Chapter Annual Meeting	<i>Printed on recycled paper</i>