

POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 22, No 1

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Jan/Feb 2004

"FROM RAINBOWS TO RAIN GARDENS--GROWING 1,000,000 RAINGARDENS FOR CHESAPEAKE BAY." – JANUARY 8; 7:30 PM

Carole Ann Barth has been a guest on National Public Radio discussing local efforts to recycle rain water, attract frogs, and make backyards wildlife friendly and good for the environment. She will be speaking to the Potowmack Chapter on January 8 at 7:30 pm at Green Spring Gardens Park. Ms. Barth's talk will focus on five types of rain gardens that homeowners can easily install. She will also explain what rain gardens are and how they fit into low impact development and conservation landscaping .

Carole Ann Barth is an Environmental Planner with the Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources, who works in the field of Low Impact Development. Ms. Barth co-authored the BayScapes program and she teaches BayScapes at the USDA Graduate School. Ms. Barth holds a degree in Environmental Science (Paleoecology) from the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay.

For information, call Shirley Gay (703-920-1913)

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



CONTROLLING INVASIVES FEBRUARY 12

Arlington County, Virginia, is the only local jurisdiction to have a full-time invasives coordinator. Jan Ferrigan, the Coordinator for the Arlington Invasive Plants Program has been in that position since April 2002. She organized a volunteer group called RiP (Remove Invasive Plants) that works with Arlington County staff to clear invasive plants from areas in local parks. On Thursday, February 12, at 7:30 pm at Green Spring Gardens Park Ms. Ferrigan will discuss common invasives in our area and control techniques used in Arlington. She will also discuss ways to search for local solutions to our problems with invasive exotic plants.

Jan is a board member of the Mid-Atlantic Exotic Pest Plant Council. Before moving to Arlington, she worked for the Regional Parks Department in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Directions to Green Spring Gardens Park: See above.

SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 6: VIRGINIA'S BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: The VNPS annual workshop in Richmond at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. You'll be receiving more information.

E. O. Wilson in his book, The Future of Life: "Cease all logging of old-growth forests everywhere. For every bit of this habitat lost or degraded, Earth pays a price in biodiversity."

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

Happy New Year to all our chapter members. It's the time of year for resolutions so I offer you a simple one: resolve to come to at least one chapter program this winter. Shirley Gay, our program chair, does a great job booking interesting speakers on a variety of topics from gardening to wildflowers to lichens. This year, in addition to Carol Ann Barth, we'll have Marian Lobstein, Jan Ferrigan and Gary Fleming. Shirley is also in charge of speakers for the VNPS Annual Workshop and has planned a great line-up for that event, scheduled for March 6. Mark your calendars for the second Thursday of the month for our programs at Green Spring. I hope to see you there. **Marianne Mooney**



Potowmack Chapter Board. Back row from left, Rod Simmons, Roberta Day, Marianne Mooney (President), Shirley Gay, Rob Aldrich. Front row from left: Mary Ann Lawler, Dusty Dukes, Lee Ann Kinzer, Beth Smith, Lisa Palmer, and Sylvia Orli. Not in photo: Laura Beaty, Liz Nall, Cris Fleming.

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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.

HONORING BILL KREITZ

We regret to announce the death of William E. Kreitz of Fairfax, Virginia, on October 31, 2003. Bill was a charter member of the Virginia Native Plant Society and actively contributed his time and talents to the organization. As the Treasurer of the Potowmack Chapter from 1997 to 2001, he was a familiar face at our Green Spring plant sales, collecting money for plants and for new members. Our sympathy goes out to his wife, Ruth, and to all his family.

PARTNERING WITH EARTH SANGHA FOR NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS

Many of you may remember that at our annual meeting the Potowmack Chapter gave away door prizes of native trees and shrubs, donated by one of our members, Lisa Bright, a director of the Earth Sangha. We are delighted to announce a partnership with that group to provide our propagation beds with a source of locally native trees and shrubs.

The Earth Sangha is a Buddhist organization whose mission is to "help people become better stewards of the planet, and to do the practical environmental work that good stewardship demands." The group has a great love for the native plants in our local forests and has been concerned about the growing number of invasive plants taking over our natural areas. To promote the preservation of our native flora the Earth Sangha leased space in a community garden in Franconia Park in Springfield, where they now have a nursery. They have collected seeds and cuttings from local forests within the Potomac watershed and propagated them in the nursery. Lisa Bright has collected most of the seeds herself. She is a master gardener with Fairfax County and volunteers at Green Spring to learn propagation techniques.

The Earth Sangha is making a broad range of native trees and shrubs available to other organizations involved in reforestation efforts. The following are just a few of the species they have:

<i>Asimina triloba</i> , pawpaw	<i>Q. michauxii</i> , swamp white oak
<i>Carya cordiformis</i> , bitternut hickory	<i>Q. palustris</i> , pin oak
<i>Carya tomentosa</i> , mockernut hickory	<i>Q. prinus</i> , chestnut oak
<i>Castanea dentata</i> , American chestnut	<i>Q. rubra</i> , northern red oak
<i>Cornus florida</i> , eastern dogwood	<i>Q. stellata</i> , post oak
<i>Euonymus americanus</i> , strawberry bush	<i>Q. velutina</i> , black oak
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> , black gum	<i>Tilia americana</i> , American basswood
<i>Quercus alba</i> , white oak	<i>Ulmus americana</i> , American elm
<i>Q. coccinea</i> , scarlet oak	<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i> , mapleleaf viburnum
<i>Q. falcata</i> , southern red oak	

Response to the Earth Sangha program has been so enthusiastic that most of the shrub species are no longer available this year. But if you have a public project requiring native trees, please call Lisa at 703-764-4830 to see what they do have and to make arrangements for picking them up.

The Earth Sangha is planning a reforestation effort at Riverbend Park in April to plant over 1,000 *Quercus rubra* (Northern red oak) trees. They'll need many volunteers. Stay tuned for an announcement on this effort; it's a great way to show your commitment to conservation.

NITROGEN FIXERS (From Arbor Day, the newsletter of the National Arbor Day Foundation) Contributed by Margaret Chatham

Where does the fixed nitrogen come from to feed mature forests? Jon Luoma (*The Hidden Forest*, Owl Books, 1999--a good read otherwise) raises this question for western forests, pointing out that most recognized nitrogen fixers are early-succession plants. For western old-growth forests, he finds a solution in a lichen that grows on old trees and rains its nitrogen-filled pieces down on the forest floor below. But he is very dismissive of eastern forests, seeing no old growth left east of the Mississippi, and little of value to be learned from what's left of our ecosystem.

Now from James R. Fazio writing in the Nov/Dec 2003 *Arbor Day* comes a part of the answer. "Botany professor John Klironomos discovered that the mycorrhizal fungus attached to white pine roots he was studying were actually attacking tiny soil insects called springtails. The University of Guelph scientist believes that the fungus releases a toxin that paralyzes the insects, then grows inside them and eats them alive. Nitrogen derived from the insects is passed along by the fungus to the tree roots in return for carbon from the trees manufactured food. A pretty neat arrangement, except for the hapless springtails."

CONFESSIONS OF A LEAF THIEF by Paul Kovenock

OK - it's time for my confession. Whether it's a felony or a misdemeanor in Arlington, I don't know. I have poached my neighbors leaves off the street that were destined for County leaf recycling. No, this was not an over-zealous private composting effort. I have no composting equipment.

I stole neighbors' leaves in an effort to smother the quarter acre of English ivy that had invaded my backyard. Experts advised that a foot or so of leaves over ivy will eventually smother the ivy. And, despite a couple dozen trees on my property, the neighbors' bagged leaves were a convenient temptation.

That was four years ago. I hope the statute of limitations will save me from prosecution. Anyway, now I've turned over a new leaf. No more massive leaf theft for me. The ivy is gone, replaced by a variety of native plants (some emerging naturally, others purchased at twice-yearly sales of native plants propagated by the Virginia Native Plant Society at Green Spring GardenPark.)

My wildflower garden is now certified as wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. And, oh yes - I don't do any fall raking. There's not a blade of grass (last time I looked) on my wooded property. No noisy lawnmower, no blower - I'm much too lazy to fiddle with grass. The leaves remain where they fall, covering the mature native plants until early spring. They hold moisture and help maintain a somewhat stable ground temperature, preventing thawing and heaving. Decomposing, they add nature's nutrients to the rocky soil. In early spring I belatedly attack what remains of the leaves. I pile them in an inconspicuous spot where they continue to decompose. I'm very careful in removing those leaves at the end of winter. They've served as a blanket. Spring wildflowers are emerging. Raking -in spring- has extraordinary rewards.

ARLINGTON'S RiP PROJECT

Thurs. Jan 15th - Invasive Species Working at the National Level Invasive plants, animals and microorganisms are causing serious problems across the globe. Lori Williams, Executive Director of the **National Invasive Species Council** will shed light on what is being done by federal agencies to combat the impacts of invasive species on the environment and the economy. What are the connections between invasive plant problems in local Northern Virginia parks and national efforts to address invasive species concerns? Come to this lecture to find out. **Location:** Key Elementary School, 2300 Key Blvd., a couple of blocks N of Courthouse Metro Station. **Time:** 7 - 9 pm **For More Info:** contact Jan Ferrigan at 703-228-7636, jferriga@vt.edu

Sat, Feb 21 – Walter Reed Park Volunteer Work Day Come help neighbors beautify Walter Reed Park. Volunteers will help remove invasive vines from the forested area behind the Walter Reed Community Center, 2909 16th St S. at the corner of 16th St S and Walter Reed Dr. Meet behind the old Community Center. **10 am - noon**

Sat. Feb. 28 Invasives removal Lubber Run. 10 am to noon Lubber Run Park. Volunteers will continue building on past years efforts at this beautiful stream valley park. Meet at Lubber Run Amphitheatre, N. Columbus St. at N. 2nd St., Arlington. Please bring clippers and other hand tools. Gloves will be provided. Help out for an hour or two. For more information contact Paul Kovenock (703) 525-5221

Note: Some tools provided. If you have your own gloves, clippers, loppers or dull flat screwdrivers, please bring them along to removal events. Long pants and long sleeves recommended. For information about any of these events, please contact Jan Ferrigan, Invasive Species Program Coordinator at (703) 228 7636 or jferriga@vt.edu or Kasey Spriggs at (703) 228 6401

LOCAL EVENTS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

Sat. Jan 3. First Nature Walk of the New Year. Hidden Pond Nature Center 10:30am to noon. 703-451-9588. Make a New Year's resolution for 2004 to explore Hidden Pond Park and the Pohick Stream Valley. Our

park is more than the pond, nature center and playground. It is connected with over 600 acres of stream valley forest. Join naturalist Jon Engle to explore the park's "outback." Program canceled in case of severe weather conditions. FREE

Sat. Jan 20. Winter Berries and Seeds. Riverbend Park. (Adults), 9-11am, Riverbend Nature Center, 703-759-9018. Ever wonder how the birds and mammals survive the long winter months? Take a hike through Riverbend's winter landscape and look for the berries and seeds that sustain them. Reservations and advanced payment required. \$5

Wed. Jan 14 Planting the Seeds of Biodiversity with Human Diversity Room 3111, Ripley Center, Smithsonian Institution, Dr. Mamie Parker, Assistant Director for Fisheries and Habitat Conservation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Drawing from her wide experience in endangered species, habitat conservation, and environmental policy, Dr. Parker will explore various ways in which diverse plants, people, and partnerships can achieve biodiversity.

Wed. Jan 14-Mar 10 Winter Woody Plant Identification (10 classes and 3 field trips). USDA Graduate School; Woodend Sanctuary, Chevy Chase Wednesdays 7 – 9pm. Classes plus 3 field trips: \$295 Instructor, Cris Fleming. Call 202-314-3320 or register on line at www.grad.usda.gov

Mon. Jan 19. Invasive removal/Trash Collection Dyke Marsh, Alexandria, 10am to noon. Dyke Marsh and the Belle Haven Park area. We will meet at the same location by the Mount Vernon Trail bathrooms next to the benches and the water fountain. The National Park Service will provide hand-tools and trash bags. All ages are welcome (volunteers under the age of 18 must have a parental approval form signed prior to the cleanup). Call Brooke Andrews of the Northern Virginia Senior Environment Corps at 703 -549-1607 Ext. 141 for information.

Thurs. Jan 22 7:30-9:30pm and Sat. Jan 24 10am-2:00pm. Introduction to the Natural History of Lichens. Leader: Dr. Paula DePriest Audubon Naturalist Society. \$42 for non-members. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

Jan 25 Historic Treasures: The Horticultural Potential of Lewis & Clark's Plants. Green Spring Gardens Park 1:30-3pm \$7 Call 703-642-5173 to register.

Sat. Jan 31 and Sat. Feb 28 Introduction to Natural/Wildlife Gardening City of Falls Church Recreation and Parks Winter Class. Novice and experienced gardeners will learn the basics of how to have a beautiful yard that is healthy for the watershed and the environment and that supports local wildlife. Topics include the natural history of Falls Church's landscape, the benefits of a more natural approach to our yards today, components of a natural garden, and how to get started in your own yard. Guest presenters will provide expert information on specific topics. Participants are encouraged to bring 1-2 photos of their own yard. Instructor: Mia Mussolino, National Wildlife Federation Habitat Steward; Guest presenters: Liz Nalle, Virginia Native Plant Society (Potowmack Chapter) and Dave Eckert, Falls Church natural historian. You must register for this class before attending. Register at the Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls St., Falls Church Virginia, or by mail. Call 703.248.5077 for registration information. Registration for City of Falls Church residents starts January 5; registration for non-City residents starts January 12.

March 6 Creating Backyard Habitat 9am-noon Fairfax High School. Instructor Carol Hadlock. Sponsored by the Fairfax Audubon Society. \$36 for non-members. Call 703-256-6895 for information/registration.

April (TBD) Tree planting at Riverbend Park with Earth Sangha. We will announce the specifics in the next newsletter. Please consider volunteering.

The U.S. Forest Service publishes an occasional newsletter, *Lingua Botanica*, for agency botanists and plant ecologists. It provides good articles with facts and figures that are also of interest to those of us outside the federal government, as well. You can find a listing of past issues at the following website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/resources/pubs/plants/index.html>

GARDENERS WANTED

Are you an avid native plant gardener whose gardens flourished this year. Are you ready to share them with Potomack Chapter members and the general public? We're thinking about this Spring's garden tours and are looking for more great places to show off. If you would like to be on an upcoming

tour, please call Liz Nalle at 703-698-7606. If you think you're not quite ready, hosting a tour can be a powerful motivator, and you'll be pleased with the results. Consider calling today.

ON LINE INFORMATION ON NATIVE PLANT LANDSCAPING

Don't forget that the VNPS brochures on Native Plants for Conservation, Restoration, and Landscaping can be found on line at <http://www.dcr.state.va.us/dnh/native.htm>. They include not only plants for Coastal Plain, Piedmont Plateau, and Mountain areas, but also special brochures on Riparian Forest Buffers and Grasslands. They contain a wealth of information including the light and moisture requirements and potential uses of herbaceous plants as well as vines, shrubs, and trees.

The Native Plant Conservation Alliance has put the Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping in Maryland on its website:

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/pubs/nativesMD/index.htm>. These brochures similarly feature the physiographic provinces of the Maryland region and the light and moisture requirements, but have the added benefit of listing the flower color, bloom time, and height.

WANT TO JOIN THE CHAPTER LISTSERV? Send an e-mail to Mary Ann Lawler at malawler@aol.com 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>



Chapter Events Calendar

Jan	8	Board meeting 6:45pm <u>Raingardens</u> 7:30pm Green Spring
Feb	12	Board meeting 6:45pm <u>Controlling</u> <u>Invasives</u> 7:30pm Green Spring
Mar	6	VNPS Annual Workshop Lewis Ginter Gardens Richmond

**Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
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