

POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 20, No 3

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

May/June 2002

APRIL 28: ANNUAL POTOWMACK CHAPTER SPRING GARDEN TOUR

Come out between 11 am and 3 pm and visit wonderful native plant gardens in Arlington and Falls Church. (See insert for details and directions)

SATURDAY, MAY 4: A TOUR OF THE CONSERVATION COLLECTION AT MEADOWLARK BOTANICAL GARDENS

Keith Tomlinson, Administrator of Meadowlark Botanical Gardens in Vienna, will lead a tour of the park's collection of native plants of the Potomac River Valley on **Saturday, May 4** from **2 to 4 pm**. We will start in the Atrium building to introduce the new Potomac Valley floristics map and collection brochure. Then we'll walk through the collection and to the Azalea Woods Gazebo for refreshments. Please call Marianne Mooney (703-534-8179) to make reservations for this event.

Meadowlark Botanical Gardens is operated by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. It initiated a native plant conservation program in order to foster conservation of native plants and their habitats through public education and display. The collection features plants of the Potomac River valley, including the unique plant communities in the five physiographic provinces of the Potomac watershed: Appalachian Highlands, Ridge and Valley, Shenandoah Valley, Piedmont, and Coastal Plain.

The gardens are located off of Beulah Road, between Route 7 and Route 123, south of the Dulles Access Road. To reach Meadowlark Botanical Gardens from the Beltway, take Route 7 toward Tysons Corner. Drive 3 miles west on 7, turn left onto Beulah Road and drive two miles to garden entrance on the right.

SATURDAY, MAY 18: THE GREEN SPRING GARDENS PARK PLANT SALE

Hamamelis virginiana, the Virginia Native Plant Society Flower of the Year, will be available. (See page 4)

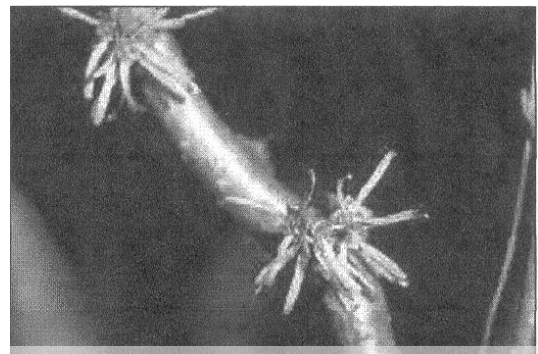
Directions to Green Spring Gardens Park: From Interstate 395, exit at Route 236 West (Little River Turnpike) in Alexandria, turn right at Green Spring Road and proceed 1 block north to the park entrance.

TUESDAY, MAY 28: THE FLORA OF THE GREATER WASHINGTON DC AREA

Dr. Stanwyn Shetler, Botanist Emeritus, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, and author of *Annotated Checklist of the Vascular Plants of the Washington - Baltimore Area*, will give a presentation on the botanical work in the greater Washington, D.C. area at **7:00 pm in the Visitors Center Auditorium of the National Zoo in Washington**. He will cover the early botanists and floras up to and including the current flora checklist. Changes in species diversity and change in spring flowering times will also be discussed.

This regular monthly meeting of the Maryland Native Plant Society is cosponsored by the Virginia Native Plant Society and the National Zoo. Refreshments and door prizes. Free after-hours parking available in Parking Lot A.

Directions: The National Zoo is located at 3001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. Park in Parking Lot A. Follow signs to the Visitors Center/Auditorium. See the Zoo website: www.nat.zoo.si.edu for more details.



© *Hamamelis virginiana* (Witch Hazel)
from the NRCS Plants database

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

Spring is the time of year when our native wildflowers are most apparent, not to mention exuberant and glorious. The woods are carpeted with wildflowers and native trees and shrubs are blossoming. VNPS has several registry sites where a

profusion of blooms can be seen. Scott's Run and Riverbend Park along the Potomac are bedecked with bluebells and other ephemerals in April. The trillium display at Thompson WMA in early May is one of the premiere wildflower events on the east coast. Runnymede in Herndon is great almost anytime. Huntley Meadows Park is at it's best in early June, with lizard's tail, buttonbush and swamp rose in bloom. I urge all our members visit these and other sites this spring and see what it is we're trying to protect from habitat destruction and invasives. I guarantee you a wonderful time. **Marianne Mooney**

THE VNPS ANNUAL WORKSHOP by Marianne Mooney

The VNPS Annual Workshop was a fascinating exploration into landscape restoration. Covering complex issues regarding how we renew our disturbed areas, one came away convinced that it's not a simple task. Thought provoking and informative, it was an excellent workshop.

John Townsend of the Department of Natural Heritage covered the practicalities of land restoration and different techniques used to restore land. Having participated in many restoration efforts, John had a first hand knowledge of the issues: how much should the land be tampered with, the success of replanting versus using the available seedbank, passive versus active restoration. Many factors and people are involved in these decisions.

Dr. W. Lee Daniels, an agronomist from Virginia Tech, gave an engrossing talk from the ground up: restoring disturbed soils. Having worked with surface mining restorations, Dr. Daniels has seen the worst of soils. Subsurface compaction is the major limitation to revegetation of disturbed soils, with changes in soil ph from subsoil also severely limiting plantings. But what Dr. Daniels has accomplished with thousands of tons of compost is inspiring.

Dr. Daniels was followed by his VA Tech colleague, Jody Booze-Daniels, whose specialty is highway planting research for VDOT. Doing much experimentation with various native grasses and wildflowers, Jody has brought natives to the forefront of highway re-vegetation plans. Her battle is with extremely disturbed and compacted soils that are found along highways.

The day's most engrossing speaker was Dr. Stanwyn Shetler, botanist emeritus of the Smithsonian Institution. Looking at the issue of restoration from a scientist's viewpoint, Dr. Shetler reminded us that "if it's planted, it's not native". It is a planted landscape, which leads one to intelligently question many restoration efforts. All the phytogeographic forces that result in plant distribution cannot be mimicked by a created landscape. Each area is uniquely its own, with its own particular floristic elements. Thought provoking and engaging, Dr. Shetler braved the tide of opinion with a deep concern for our native habitats.

The day ended with a trip to the suburban front lawn meadow of Deanne Eversmeyer, VNPS Horticulture Chair. Her planting experiences and resulting neighborhood interactions made for a charming story. All who attended owe thanks to Nicky Staunton, VNPS President, for putting together such a stimulating workshop. Kudos!

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(All numbers should include the 703 area code, unless otherwise noted.) <i>Potowmack News</i> 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.		

LIFE ITSELF—THE IMPORTANCE OF BIODIVERSITY by Mary Ann Lawler

Our beautiful and abundant earth is suffering huge losses in biological diversity because of human activity. Scientists are greatly concerned about these losses. We have previously quoted Dr. Jay Stipes, Professor of Plant Pathology at Virginia Tech, but his message is worth repeating: “We’re living on a dying planet; humans are killing it.” And Dr. Edward O. Wilson, winner of two Pulitzer prizes and numerous science and conservation awards, includes some disturbing data in his new book: The Future of Life. In it he states that extinction is occurring at a rate that is “catastrophically high, somewhere between one thousand and ten thousand times the rate before humans began to exert a significant pressure on the environment, or between 1,000 and 10,000 species per million per year.... Humans already appropriate 40 percent of the planet’s organic matter produced by green plants.”

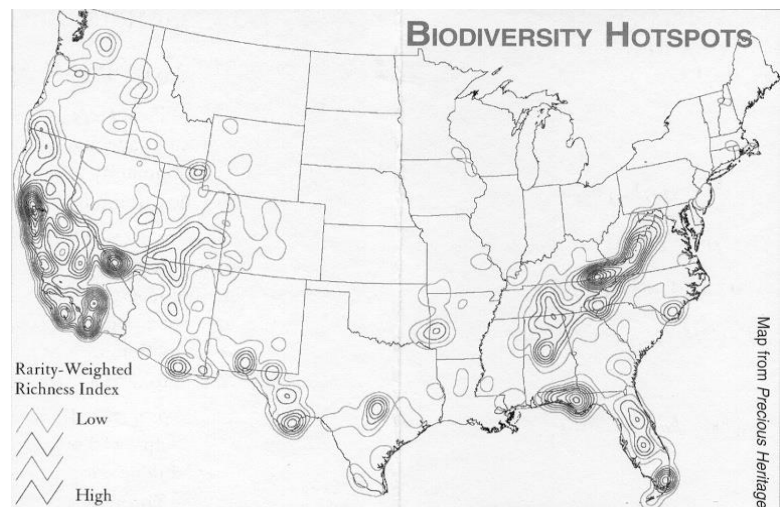
Our planet Earth has had five catastrophic extinction events in the last 500 million years, and it took the planet tens of millions of years to recover its biodiversity from each of them. The last great extinction occurred 66 million years ago at the end of the Cretaceous period when the dinosaurs were among those species that disappeared. Scientists are saying that we are now undergoing the sixth great extinction and it is caused by human activity. As Pogo said: “We have met the enemy and he is us.”

Dr. Wilson projects that if we froze “all conservation efforts at their current level while allowing the same rates of deforestation and other forms of environmental destruction to continue, it is safe to say that at least one fifth of the species of plants and animals would be gone or committed to early extinction by 2030 and half by the end of the century....”

Losing biological diversity doesn’t merely mean fewer types of insects and plants and birds and other creatures. Living things are interdependent in ways we are only beginning to understand. As Dr. Wilson says, the biosphere is a “stupendously complex layer of living creatures whose activities are locked together in precise, but tenuous global cycles of energy and transformed organic matter... When we alter the biosphere in any direction, we move the environment away from the delicate dance of biology. When we destroy ecosystems and extinguish species, we degrade the greatest heritage this planet has to offer and thereby threaten our own existence.”

We need to do all we can internationally, nationally, and locally to study and monitor ecological relationships, to protect and restore habitats, and to educate humanity about the importance of biological diversity.

Where can we start? The Nature Conservancy and the Association for Biodiversity Information have provided a comprehensive overview of the biological diversity of the United States in the book Precious Heritage. The Southern Appalachians are one of the major biodiversity hotspots in the United States, as can be seen on the map from that book shown on the right. The richness and rarity of plant and animal species in the Commonwealth of Virginia are evident. For example, Virginia has over 2,500 vascular plant species, the 10th highest number in the country. Over 600 of those species are rare, over 150 threatened, and 15 federally listed as endangered or threatened. Let us vow not to let a single plant species in Virginia be lost forever. And let us redouble all our conservation efforts.



THE PLANT SALE!

The Chapter's Spring plant sale will be on **May 18**, a perfect time to plant some native beauties. We will have plenty of ferns, Virginia Blue Bells and the native shrub, witch-hazel, *Hamamelis virginiana*, the Society's wildflower of the year. The seed of this plant is a preferred food for cardinals.

If you are planning to donate plants to the sale please get them to us **by May 4**, to ensure that they have time to recover from the trauma of potting and are in good shape for the sale. If you would like to donate plants, but are unable to bring them to our beds behind the Green Spring visitor center, please call us and we will make arrangements to pick them up.

Any one interested in helping out at the sale should also give us a call. The sale is from 10 am to 3 pm on Saturday. Your assistance then or on the day before, Friday from noon to 3, would be very helpful. Friday is the day when we move the plants into the sale tents. Even if you don't want to work, do come and enjoy the day. There are always plenty of vendors to tempt you. Hope to see you there.

Laura Beaty 703 534-8746 and Beth Smith 703 644-1760

VIRGINIA WILDFLOWER LICENSE PLANTS

Time is running out for you to get the Virginia Department of Transportation to issue special



wildflower license plates. VDOT is must have 350 paid applications before they can do so, and they have only 185 thus far. If they cannot get a sufficient number, they have to drop the idea. The special plates feature Virginia wildflowers and cost \$25 or \$35 depending on whether you would like a random number or special letters. For information you can access the VDOT

website at www.virginiadot.org/infoservice/prog-wflowr-faq.asp and obtain an application form or call, write, or e-mail: Ken Oristaglio, Environmental Program Planner, Virginia Department of Transportation, 1401 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219; (804) 371-6825; koris@vdot.va.us; and he will send as many as anyone wants. The application form has a color picture of the license plate. Please make out your check or money order to the Treasurer of Virginia. You would only have to sponsor the plate for one year. After that, you can opt out of the program if you do not want to support it, and get a regular or other specialized plate from the DMV.

THE BRYOPHYTES

What plant is found in the inter-tidal zone, desert soils, Antarctica and can live from 50 to 100 years? A clue is that this non-vascular plant is composed of fungus, algae and occasionally cyanobacteria. If you attended the chapter program March 7, you'd know the answer is lichen.

Mosses, liverworts and hornworts were also featured by our speaker, Leah Oliver of NatureServe, the science branch of the Nature Conservancy. Ms. Oliver is a biologist whose area of expertise is in bryophyte conservation. A group of organisms often overlooked by native plant enthusiasts, bryophytes are important indicators of landscape health. They contribute to the global carbon cycle and at times are used as indicators for areas of high conservation priority. The biodiversity of these organisms is staggering with 3,800 species of lichens in the U.S., 400 mosses and 700 liverworts. The nexus of bryophytes in the many ecosystems they are found is not completely understood. This alone is reason for conservation efforts for this often unseen group of plants.

VNPS OPPORTUNITY AT THE SUSTAINABILITY FAIR ON THE NATIONAL MALL

Come check out the Sustainability Fair: "Sustaining America's Special Places- Your Parks, Your Communities" on **Friday and Saturday May 3 and 4th from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm** on the National Mall in D.C. This fair is co-sponsored by the National Park Service and EPA. The Virginia Native Plant Society, Fairfax County Urban Forestry Division, Fairfax County Tree Commission and Fairfax Releaf will co-share a booth/exhibit. Numerous environmental organizations from around the region and country will be represented. Hear national level speakers from around the country. Enjoy music, children's activities, exhibits, and food. VNPS members interested in helping out at our exhibit/booth or just stopping by, can contact Jessie Strother at 703-323-5278 or e-mail: sylvatica9@juno.com

THREE CHEERS FOR ARLINGTON COUNTY!!

On April 15, 2002, Ms. Jan Ferrigan of Silver Spring, MD, will join the staff of the Arlington County Office of Virginia Cooperative Extension in the role of Invasive Plant Control Program Coordinator, funded by the Arlington County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources - Natural Resources Division through the Virginia Cooperative Extension system. She is a wildlife biologist with comprehensive understanding of invasive plant species issues and a passion for working towards local solutions. Ms. Ferrigan believes that conservation goals are best achieved through education and public involvement. Please join us in welcoming Jan Ferrigan to Arlington County.

Jan will lead volunteers in her first **invasive eradication effort on Saturday April 20 from 9 to noon in Haley Park, adjacent to Earth Day festivities at Gunston Middle School in Arlington.**

TREE STEWARDS INVASIVES REMOVAL

The City of Alexandria is planning to hold an **invasives removal event in the Four Mile Run area as part of its Earth Day celebration on April 27th.** The event will begin at 9:30 AM. Anyone who is interested can contact Deana for further information at DeanaR@RHODESIDE-HARWELL.com

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE REMOVAL IN FOUR MILE RUN

VNPS member **Kathleen Kust** will be back digging out purple loosestrife in Four Mile Run this year. We will post notices on our listserv, but call Kathleen in May for more information: 703-836-7488.

TAKE A TRIP TO THE DELMARVA AND BUY NATIVE PLANTS

Bask in the brilliance of spring blooms--fragrant azaleas and fringe trees, blue and pink phlox, crimson beebalm, yellow coreopsis, whirling green ferns, blue baptisias and irises. Charm hummingbirds with wild columbine and coral honeysuckle. Thwart drought with lavender salvia, orange coneflower, airy grasses, blueberries, viburnums, pines, and oaks. Adorn wetter spots with joe-pye weed, hibiscus, sweetspire, river birch, pawpaw, or blackgum. Come visit the **Atkins Arboretum in Caroline County, Maryland, May 11 from 9 am to 1 pm.** Get answers to gardening questions from Arboretum staff and volunteers, find gardening books and gifts in the Visitor's Center, or enjoy a woodland walk.

Atkins Arboretum is located at 12610 Eveland Road, Ridgely, Caroline County, Maryland. Take Rt. 50 east across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Continue on Rt. 50 to Rt. 404. Go east on 404 till it intersects Eveland Road. Turn left (north) and proceed 2 miles to the Arboretum entrance. For more information call 410-634-2847 or visit www.adkinsarboretum.org.

DATES TO KEEP IN MIND:

April 20: **Arlington Earth Day** at Gunston Middle School, including invasive plant removal in Hadley Park at 9 am

April 27: **Alexandria Earth Day** with invasives removal along Four Mile Run, Alexandria. 9:30 am

May 3: **Spring Wildflowers of the Potomac River Valley (Great Falls)**

Audubon Naturalist Society; Leader Cris Fleming. \$18 ea for non-members. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

THE ST. LOUIS DECLARATION ON INVASIVE SPECIES

In December 2001, experts from across the globe met in St. Louis, Missouri, to explore and develop workable voluntary approaches for reducing the introduction and spread of non-native invasive plants, which are serious threats to protecting biodiversity and ecosystems in the United States and other countries. This group of botanical garden representatives, nursery professionals, landscape architects, garden clubbers and government experts gathered at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis.

Invasive species pose a significant environmental threat,” said Dr. Peter Raven, Director of the Missouri garden, “and a huge economic problem to agriculture, nurseries and homeowners. We can work together to solve the problem, or by omission or commission exotics will defeat us.”

As a follow-up to the December conference, the group has released the St. Louis Declaration on Invasive Plant Species along with a set of guidelines for all types of growers referred to as Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct. To get the word out, the group has created a website, www.mobot.org/iss, where gardeners, botanists, landscape architects and nursery operators – anyone who grows plants – can learn more about how to stop the spread of invasives.

The Missouri Botanical Garden and the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew, England, convened the St. Louis workshop. Other participants include the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta, the American Nursery and Landscape Association, the American Society of Landscape Architects, The Nature Conservancy, the Garden Club of America and others.

A second meeting to further refine the Draft Voluntary Codes of Conduct and discuss how to turn plans into action is scheduled for this fall at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

WANT TO JOIN THE CHAPTER LISTSERV? Send an e-mail to Sylvia Orli at stone.sylvia@nsmh.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>

<p><u>Chapter Events Calendar</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; padding: 2px;">Apr.</td> <td style="width: 10%; padding: 2px;">28</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">VNPS Garden Tour</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">May</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Conservation Collection 2 – 4 at Meadowlark Gardens</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">May</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">9</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Board Meeting 7:30pm Green Spring</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">May</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">18</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Green Spring Plant Sale</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">May</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">28</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Stan Shetler National Zoo</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">June</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">13</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Board Meeting 7:30pm Green Spring</td> </tr> </table>	Apr.	28	VNPS Garden Tour	May	4	Conservation Collection 2 – 4 at Meadowlark Gardens	May	9	Board Meeting 7:30pm Green Spring	May	18	Green Spring Plant Sale	May	28	Stan Shetler National Zoo	June	13	Board Meeting 7:30pm Green Spring	<p>Potowmack Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society P.O. Box 5311 Arlington, VA 22205</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Please verify your address information and your renewal date on the mailing label.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Printed on recycled paper</i></p>
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