

POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 20, No 4

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

July/Aug 2002

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15: GRASSES: MORPHOLOGY, ECOLOGY & TAXONOMY

Grasses cover nearly one-third of the earth and are the most important plant family (*Poaceae* or *Gramineae*) for food production since they include rice, wheat, and corn. The highly reduced floral structure and wind pollination in the grasses has enabled the family to be extremely successful at planet-wide radiation and colonization. The grass family is the fourth largest flowering plant family and contains about 11,000 species in 800 genera worldwide. **Paul M. Peterson, Curator of Grasses at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution**, will present a program on Grasses on **August 15 at 7:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens Park.**

Dr. Peterson is responsible for one of the world's best collection of grasses in the United States National Herbarium. The Herbarium has a long and distinguished history of grass research. In collaboration with other agrostologists around the globe, they are engaged in a number of projects, including a Catalogue of New World Grasses (<http://mobot.mobot.org/W3T/Search/nwgc.html>). Dr. Peterson's specialty is biosystematic studies of the grasses using a multitude of techniques ranging from in depth morphological, anatomical, molecular, cladistic, and population based genetic studies. He has completed revisionary studies in large grass genera, such as: *Eragrostis*, *Muhlenbergia*, and *Sporobolus*, all important forage grasses.

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.

SAVING NATURE IN OUR COMMUNITIES by Rob Aldrich

The best way to enjoy and learn about native plants is to see them where they grow naturally. To paraphrase Dr. Stan Shetler when he spoke at the annual VNPS meeting in Richmond, a native plant is only native if it is growing where it is without intervention by man. Gardening with natives is educational and beneficial at many levels; pulling invasive exotics out of urban parks is laudable; restoring roadsides, stream banks and other disturbed sites with native plant material can be cost effective and practical; and plant rescues make us feel good about saving native plants from the developer's bulldozer. But the best and surest way to ensure that our children, and their children's children experience the joy of native plants is to protect the places where they are found.

What's a native plant enthusiast to do? There are many community-based organizations working to conserve ecologically rich land right here in our back yards. Incorporated under the name land trust, land conservancy, foundation, or association, these 501 (c) (3) non-profit organizations are working on the front lines with communities to help them save America's land heritage.

A land trust is a private, nonprofit organization that actively works to conserve land by undertaking or assisting direct land transactions – primarily the purchase or acceptance of donations of land or conservation easements. Land trusts vary greatly in scope and scale, but all of them have the common mission of working cooperatively with landowners to protect and conserve land for its natural, recreational, scenic, historic, or productive value. Some land trusts focus on distinct areas, such as a single town, county, or region, and support grassroots efforts to conserve lands important to local communities. Others operate throughout an entire state or even several states. As thousands of acres of open space are lost to development annually, the public is turning more and more frequently to land trusts, which are filling a national need to protect and steward open lands in perpetuity.

(Continued on page 3)

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

A concern for the natural world and Virginia's imperiled flora is the tie that binds us all to VNPS. We are a relatively small organization with just over 1,500 members statewide. However, by pairing with groups like the Dept. of Natural Heritage, we have become an integral player in the effort to preserve habitat for native plants. This is all thanks to work done by caring members who are willing to donate a little time and expertise to keep us moving.

I know the last place to lobby for volunteers is in a mass request like this. But, faithful members, we need your help. The state board needs a fund- raiser, horticulture chair, treasurer and education chair. Our chapter has a few board openings as well. This could be the opportunity you've been waiting for. You'll meet great people and have the satisfaction of doing something worthwhile. Please contact me or Nicky Staunton, our state president (703-368-9803), for more details on how you can help. Thanks.
Marianne Mooney

GARLIC MUSTARD AND THE WEST VIRGINIA WHITES

The West Virginia White (*Pieris virginiensis*) is a small white woodland butterfly, which lays its eggs one at a time on the toothworts (*Dentaria diphylla* and *D. laciniata*), which are the host plants for its larvae. A large colony existed in the Thompson Wildlife Management Area in Linden, Virginia. On a recent trip to the Thompson noted butterfly expert, Harry Pavulaan, found only five. He attributes the decline to an invasion of garlic mustard, a non-native exotic plant, which has become the scourge of natural woodlands everywhere. According to Harry:

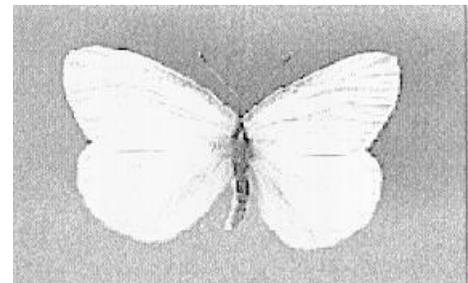
"The plant now appears to be the primary reason for the decline of the West Virginia White butterfly in our region. The butterfly normally uses Toothwort (Dentaria) as its natural host plant in this region. However, the Garlic Mustards give off some type of strong chemical cues for the West Virginia White females to lay their eggs on that plant. Thus, they prefer to lay eggs on Garlic Mustard rather than the native Toothworts. The big problem is that the Mustard is toxic to the caterpillars. Thus, the butterfly colony rapidly disappears after Garlic Mustard invades an area.

"I have seen this happen in one location near Sandy Hook in Maryland, along the Potomac River near Harper's Ferry, several years ago. The West Virginia Whites were common there at one time. There was plenty of Toothwort for them to feed on, and no Garlic Mustard. I had not visited the location for about two years when I returned and was shocked to see Garlic Mustard blanket the forest floor. Needless to say, the West Virginia Whites were gone and have not returned. If this trend continues, the fate of the West Virginia Whites will certainly become an issue but it may be too late, as the plant will likely become a permanent part of our flora. The only thing we can hope for is to control the plant in certain areas but this will likely require endless effort."

The Thompson Wildlife Management Area is located where VNPS's Piedmont Chapter is very active. It was the first Registry area. Jocelyn Sladen, who is co-President of the Piedmont Chapter, is personally undertaking an effort to get a serious management plan to combat the invasives underway in cooperation with the State of Virginia. We will notify our members of any dates when invasive pulls there are scheduled.

BOARD OFFICERS		
President	Marianne Mooney	534-8179
Vice President	John C. Magee	478-9428
Secretary	Liz Nalle	698-7606
Treasurer	Vivian "Dusty" Dukes	938-7912
COMMITTEE CHAIRS		
Botany	Cris Fleming	301-657-9289
Conservation	Lisa Palmer/Rob Aldrich	526-0535
Awards/Recognition	Anne Crocker	437-0355
Membership	Linda Haller	938-8504
Newsletter	Mary Ann Lawler	684-8622
Programs/Education	Shirley Gay	920-1913
Propagation/Plant Sales	Laura Beaty	534-8746
	Beth Smith	644-1760
Publications	Roberta Day	560-5528
Publicity	Sylvia Orli	528-5618
Site Registry	Rod Simmons	256-7671
Garden Tours	Billie Trump	960-1476

(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.



SAVING NATURE IN OUR COMMUNITIES (Continued from p.1)

How can you get involved? Native plant enthusiasts can assist land trusts in a number of ways.

Be an Advocate! Concerned citizens tell their representatives at the local, state and federal level how they want their tax dollars spent. VNPS members can tell their city councils, county boards, and state and federal representatives how important land conservation is to them and that they want them to fund programs that save land.

Be a Volunteer! Land trusts are responsible for monitoring and managing ecologically important land throughout our area. The knowledge, skills and abilities possessed by many VNPS members can be quite valuable to land trusts that are under-staffed and hard pressed to meet their obligations of stewarding the land.

Be a Member! Land trusts are community-based organizations that rely on new members. Join a local land trust; get your friends to join.

Be a Donor! Donate either land, a conservation easement*, or sell either at a bargain sale to a land trust. You may receive tax breaks in return and you will surely gain the satisfaction of conserving important land for generations to come. If you don't have land to donate, contribute to a special land acquisition fund that will help a land trust purchase a property they have identified as strategically important.

*A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust (or government entity) that permanently restricts certain aspects of land use in order to protect the conservation values of the land. Landowners may either donate or sell a conservation easement. When a landowner places a conservation easement on their land, they maintain ownership and use of their land and can sell it or pass it on to their heirs. The land is simply subject to certain restrictions agreed upon by the landowner and the land trust. For example, a landowner might agree to limit development on his or her property to one residence of a certain size. Future landowners are bound by these restrictions as well, and the land trust is responsible for monitoring the property and upholding the terms of the easement.

Potomac Conservancy
1730 North Lynn Street Suite 403
Arlington, VA 22209-2004
Phone: (703) 276-2777
Fax: (703) 276-1098
Email: webmaster@potomac.org
Web: www.potomac.org

Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
4022 Hummer Road
Annandale, VA 22003-2403
Phone: (703)-354-5093
Fax: (703)-354-5169
Email: paulgilbert@starpower.net
Web: www.nvct.org

For information on other land trusts in Virginia and other states, and for more information on what land trusts are doing nationwide, visit the **Land Trust Alliance** home page, www.LTA.org or contact them at:

1331 H Street, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 638-4725
Fax: (202) 638-4730
Email: info@LTA.org

PLANT RESCUE OPPORTUNITY

Rescue work is continuing at the Greg Roy site in Herndon. The wooded 35-acre Greg Roy subdivision is currently being redeveloped by KSI, Inc. Heavy equipment is working near the upper part of Fox Mill Road, but we have permission to rescue on other parts of the property. Cultivated plants (including hop vine and day lilies) are coming up in the areas surrounding former house locations. In the woods there are still Solomon's plume (false Solomon's seal), Solomon's seal, sassafras, spicebush, Christmas ferns, perfoliate bellwort, blueberries and more.

REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE: The developer requires that all participants sign a release-from-liability form; i.e., your participation is at your own risk. Once you have completed and turned in the liability release, you may access the property any day. Forms and additional information are available from: **Ann Csonka** (703-471-4337); jdenoyer@erols.com and from **Mona Miller** at monamiller@cox.net. Please wear appropriate clothing (long sleeves and long pants) to avoid possible poison ivy and insect bites. You may also want to use a hat, insect repellent, and sunscreen. Please bring your own garden gloves, trowel, shovel, and containers. Plastic grocery bags can be used to temporarily hold plants and soil. Water is useful both for the person digging and for the plants dug. Some sort of wheelbarrow or wagon can be useful for moving containers of plants from the woods to your vehicle.

Directions: Dulles Toll Road (#267) to Exit 10, onto Centreville Road, turn LEFT onto Centreville. Turn LEFT onto Fox Mill Road and get into the RIGHT lane. After the Village Center at Dulles shopping center on the right, the road becomes Sunrise Valley Drive, so turn RIGHT and follow Fox Mill Road for about one block. Take the FIRST LEFT onto Greg Roy Lane. After one block, turn LEFT again onto Fox Hunt Lane. Note that street signs for Greg Roy and Fox Hunt may be down; just follow above directions. It's usually possible to park in a driveway or on the shoulder of the street. Do not leave your car where it will block street or intersection traffic.

MAY 18, 2002 SPRING SALES REPORT

The May 18 native plant sale held by the Potowmack chapter at Garden Day at Green Spring Gardens Park was quite a day. Forget the early rains, the cold, and the strong winds that continued all day and almost pulled up our tent. You'd think it was a wasted day, but think again. It was an incredible day for us, in fact, one of our better spring sale days. Gardeners really don't mind bad weather, especially when there are plants to be had. Thanks go to the members of the propagation crew who potted up plants for our sale all spring.

We sold over 1,200 plants. Some of them were donated by the following special people: **Tiana Camfiord, Vivian Attermeyer, Beth Smith, Marianne Mooney, Kathy Cochrane, Ann Webb, Kathy Cochrane, Ann Webb, Shirley Gay, Carol and Dave Natella, Laura Beaty, Mary Ann Lawler, Margaret Chatham, Rod Simmons and Edith Bradbury.** The plants that are donated are always welcome because most of them are not in our propagation beds and therefore would not otherwise be available. Thanks everyone. Thanks also for the following people who put in extra hours on Friday to organize the sales tables on May 17 and to handle the sales tables on May 18: **Lois Moran, Patrick Shay, Susan Crawford, Liz Nalle, Linda Haller, Carol Flynt, Eleanor Kask, Mary Ann Lawler, Neal Sigmon, Marianne Mooney, Tiana Camfiord, Margaret Chatham, Roberta Day, Sally Sieracki, Dusty Dukes, Billy Trump, Louis Nichols and Laura Beaty.** Special thanks also to **Elaine Squeri** for preparing and producing the chapter's wildflower seed program.



Despite the less than perfect weather, we all had a great time and sold out of our "wildflower" of the year, common witch hazel. We hope to have more available at the fall sale.

It's not too early to think about putting some donations together for the chapter's September sale. Keep that in mind as you garden this summer, and remember your assistance is always welcome. Let us know if there are particular plants you are looking for; we might know where to locate them among our members' gardens. Have a great summer and thanks for supporting your Potowmack chapter.

Laura Beaty and Beth Smith, Co-chairs

REMEMBER TO SIGN UP FOR THE CHAPTER E-MAIL LIST SERVICE. Don't miss out on the latest native plant events and announcements. The listserv is the fastest and easiest way to keep informed. Over 100 members have joined up. It's a great way to communicate with chapter members in between newsletters. We report upcoming events, news, and information of interest to VNPS readers. We try not use the service as a "chat room." It's easy to join. 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>



ANOTHER GREAT NATIVE GARDEN TOUR

The native plant/habitat garden of Potowmack chapter member Tiana Camfiord will be open on **Sunday, July 21, 11-5** as part of the **Prince William Chapter's summer garden tour**. All tours are educational events designed to share knowledge and encourage the use of natives. They also promote the Spring and Fall plant sales for plants not easily available elsewhere. A few plants will be for sale only at this garden with proceeds going to the Flora of Virginia project.

Grass and mossy paths wind through the acre of vastly different gardens from the Spring '01 tour. The textures of ferns and companion plants add to the mixture of summer bloomers in the woodland areas. Natives that should be near their peak in sun and light shade, will include Cimicifugas, Filipendulas (meadowsweets), Monardas, Thalictrums, Phlox, Swamp Milkweed, Turtleheads, Cardinal flowers, Bleeding Heart, Cup Plant, many others. The natural bank of Hydrangea arborescens above the pond, Clethra, Oakleaf Hydrangeas, and summer blooming native Azaleas are some of the shrubs planted throughout. Tiarellas (Foamflowers) may still be making a show if it does not get too hot. Tiana writes that the gardens may still be reflective of their owner: "maturing, bulging in the middle, asking to be trimmed back, overflowing with good intentions, subject to compulsive purchases, and in need of a prescription for trying conditions...(i.e.mites)."

For serious gardeners Tiana will be available Saturday July 20 as well as Sunday at 9:30am to discuss soil, amendments, light conditions, planting and maintenance, fauna issues, design decisions and the nature and character of natives in your garden. For other times, call first, (703) 830-3783.

Directions: From Braddock and 7100 (Fairfax Co. Pkwy.) go West on Braddock to 1st light and turn L. onto Clifton Rd. Go 2.3 mi. and make a sharp R onto Compton Rd. (Rt. 645). Go one block and turn L. onto Clifton Forest Dr. and park on the right by the split rail fence. Enter by lower gate. Signs will be up. Light refreshments and directions to the other 2 gardens (Manassas) will be available.

Other members will be available to help answer questions at the gardens.

DRAFT VOLUNTARY CODES OF CONDUCT FOR THE GARDENING PUBLIC

Last month we reported on the St. Louis Declaration on Invasive Plant Species. The following are the Draft Voluntary Code Guidelines for Gardeners in case you didn't get them on line.

- Ask for only non-invasive species when you acquire plants. Plant only environmentally safe species in your gardens. Work towards and promote new landscape design that is friendly to regional ecosystems.
- Seek information on which species are invasive in your area. Sources could include botanical gardens, horticulturists, conservationists, and government agencies. Remove invasive species from your land and replace them with non-invasive species suited to your site and needs.
- Do not trade plants with other gardeners if you know they are species with invasive characteristics.
- Request that botanical gardens and nurseries promote, display and sell only non-invasive species.
- Help educate your community and other gardeners in your area through personal contact, and in such settings as garden clubs and other civic groups.
- Ask garden writers and other media to emphasize the problem of invasive species and provide information. Request that garden writers promote only non-invasive species.
- Invite speakers knowledgeable on the invasive species issue to speak to garden clubs, master gardeners, schools and other community groups.
- Seek the best information on control of invasive plant species and organize neighborhood work groups to remove invasive plant species under the guidance of knowledgeable professionals.
- Volunteer at botanical gardens and natural areas to assist ongoing efforts to diminish the threat of invasive plants.
- Participate in early warning systems by reporting invasive species you observe in your area. Determine which group or agency should be responsible for reports emanating from your area. If no 800 number exists for such reporting, request that one be established, citing the need for a clearinghouse with an 800 number and website links to information about invasive plant species.

DATES TO KEEP IN MIND:

June 29-Botany: Why is it called that? The principles behind botanical names, pronunciations, references, and techniques for understanding the names. Instructor, Chris Strand. 10 to 11:30 am \$7, Green Spring Gardens Park. Call 703-642-5173.

July 1-Sept 9- Natural History Field Study—Grasses. USDA Graduate School; Capital Gallery. 10 classes and three field trips: \$219 Instructor, Gary Evans. Call 202-314-3320 or register on line at www.grad.usda.gov

July 6- Help restore Northern Virginia’s valuable habitats. Participate in **an invasive plant species removal** from 9am to 11:30am at 1313 N. Powhatan Street in Arlington. For info. visit www.NVCT.org or call 703-354-5093.

July 21—Prince William Chapter Native Garden Tour; 11am to 5pm; see description on page 5.

July 11 and 13- Ferns and Fern Allies (evening class and full day field trip) Audubon Naturalist Society; Leader Cris Fleming \$28 for non-members. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

Aug 3-Summer Wildflowers of Clark’s Crossing Park,VA. 8:30 to 1:30 Audubon Naturalist Society; Leader Stan Shetler. \$28 for non-members. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

Aug 8 and 10 Introduction to the Identification of Grasses (evening class and full day field trip) Audubon Naturalist Society; Leader Cris Fleming \$42 for non-members. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

Aug 14-Sept 11- Summer Wildflower Identification. USDA Graduate School; Woodend Nature Center, Bethesda. Instructor, Cris Fleming. 10 classes and three field trips \$184. Call 202-314-3320 or register on line at www.grad.usda.gov

Aug 24- Meadow Wildflower Walk at Cabell’s Mill in Ellanor C. Lawrence Park in Fairfax County. Wear sturdy shoes and bring a field guide. Free reservations should be made by calling 703-631-0013



**Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 5311
Arlington, VA 22205**

Chapter Events Calendar

		No July Board Meeting
Aug	15	Chapter Board meeting 6:45 PM
		Program on Grasses 7:30 PM Green Spring
Sep	21	Green Spring Plant Sale 10am – 3 pm

Please verify your address information and your renewal date on the mailing label.

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