

POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 21, No 4

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

July/Aug 2003

INVASIVE PLANTS CONFERENCE IN PHILADELPHIA, AUGUST 6 & 7, 2003

Invasive plants are serious threats to biological diversity and the health of our natural resources. This conference brings together experts from the front lines of research, the green industry, policy, funding, education, and on-the-ground management who are working together to solve this problem.

Speakers and Topics include: Emile DiVito "Impacts of Invasives"; Cole Burrell "More than a Pretty Face: Native Alternatives to Invasive Species"; Rick Darke "Roadside Restoration with Native Plants"; panel discussions on herbicide use as a control measure and the St. Louis Declaration; and new research regarding stiltgrass and mile-a-minute.

Presented by: The Mid-Atlantic Exotic Pest Plant Council, Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, The Nature Conservancy, Penn State Extension, and in partnership with regional businesses and organizations, including the Virginia Native Plant Society. For a complete brochure contact: Morris Arboretum, 100 Northwestern Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118 Phone: 215-247-5777 ext 159 or email: mabxeduc@pobox.upenn.edu

THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS AND POTOMAC VALLEY IN MARYLAND, VIRGINIA, & WEST VIRGINIA: Native Plants and Geology of the Blue Ridge Province Sat., October 4 – Sun., October 5, 2003 **A joint conference of the Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia Native Plant Societies and the National Park Service.**

Location: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, WV

Theme: Native plant populations and natural communities don't conform to political boundaries. This conference will focus on how the Potomac River connects three states, rather than divides them. Speakers will discuss flora, natural communities, and geology common to all three states as well as conservation issues within each.

General Info: The 2003 multi-state fall conference will feature lectures, Saturday and Sunday field trips, workshops, poster sessions, a Saturday evening social, and time to network with people who have similar interests and concerns. Registration includes Saturday breakfast and lunch. Conference brochures including more information will be distributed at a later date.

Directions: Directions to the conference site and campus maps are available upon request. They will be provided to early registering attendees and will be made generally available at a later date.

Lodging: To reserve a room at the conference site, please contact the conference chair and try to register early. Rooms at the National Conservation Training Center are \$84.00 per night. (The native plant societies are responsible for reserving rooms at this site.) A list of local motels is available at the NCTC website (<http://training.fws.gov/hotel.html>). *Room rental and payment is the responsibility of attendees.*

Saturday Evening Social: Hilltop House in Harpers Ferry, WV (\$16.50 per person). Cost includes a 4-entree buffet (including a vegetarian selection), salad bar, bread, coffee, tea, other non-alcoholic beverages, and dessert. *Alcoholic beverages will be available and are an additional, personal expense.* Harpers Ferry is 12 miles from Shepherdstown. This historic hotel is very lovely and has beautiful scenic views of the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers. Some may wish to reserve rooms there. Phone 304-535-2132.

Registration and Fee Info: *Register by July 1st to receive a special early bird registration discount!* Early Bird Fee: \$35.00 per person (+\$16.50 per person for Saturday Social reservations); Members Fee (Members of MNPS, VNPS, WV/EPNPS, PATC, BSW, and DOI employees registering after July 1): \$45.00 per person (+\$16.50 per person for Saturday Social reservations); Non-member Fee: \$55.00 per person (+\$16.50 per person for Saturday Social reservations)

Contact Info: To register early, please send a check (payable to Maryland Native Plant Society) to: Meghan Tice, P.O. Box 25, Bowie, MD 20719 For more information, please contact: Meghan Tice, 2003 Regional Conference Chair, cecropia13@msn.com or 301-809-0139

"In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous." Aristotle

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

A fulfilling way to mark the seasons is with the changing array of blooming native plants, from spring ephemerals through the summer plants adorned with butterflies to the late autumn bloomers and ending, or beginning with, skunk cabbage. There's a continuum that is matched by the Chapter board, meeting every month, deciding how best to serve chapter members, and doing what we can for native plants. We have our more active seasons as well, primarily spring and fall, but we're always planning. This fall, there will be many exciting happenings, the State Annual meeting in September, a tri-state native plant conference in early October and our own annual meeting in late October. I hope all our chapter members will be able to attend at least one of these events. We'd love to meet more of you and have your support for what we're doing. Thanks, **Marianne Mooney**

SAVE HIDDEN OAKS NATURE CENTER

Fairfax County citizens, stunned by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Park Authority decision to close Hidden Oaks Nature Center without notice or input from the public, have mobilized to form Friends of Hidden Oaks Nature Center (FOHONC) to help save public access to this 33 year old jewel of Annandale that has taught generations about being good stewards of nature. FOHONC maintains that closing Hidden Oaks is contrary to the public will, exemplifies poor long-term planning, is devastating for the community -- particularly the children, and shows bad environmental ethics.

The stream valley ecosystem behind the nature center is extraordinarily diverse, a mixed hardwood forest of huge White and Red Oaks, Tulip Poplars, Beech, and Hickories; an understory of dogwoods, laurel, native azaleas, highbush blueberries, and even pink lady slipper orchids. The wildlife includes, to name only a few: foxes, box turtles, hawks, spotted salamanders, toads, frogs, deer, and pileated woodpeckers.

Please write or call your elected representative, or Mike Kane, head of the Park Authority and ask that this great little park remain open to the public. For more information contact: Z. Scott Birdwell, President, Friends of Hidden Oaks Nature Center, 7701 Royce Street, Annandale, VA 22003 (703) 941-1065 sbirdwell@cox.net

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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.

POTOWMACK CHAPTER CONSERVATION AWARDS NOMINATIONS 2003

The annual conservation award will be given to individuals who have distinguished themselves in professional or public service that advances our knowledge, conservation, or appreciation of native plants and their values. To nominate a deserving candidate, please complete the information below (or on a separate piece of paper) and mail to VNPS Conservation Award, P.O. Box 5311, Arlington, VA 22205.

Your Name: _____	Nominee's Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
E-mail _____	E-mail _____
Phone number _____	Phone number: _____

On a separate sheet of paper, please describe the contributions of the individual and why they deserve the award.

INVASIVE PLANTS AND THE NURSERY INDUSTRY

Over 100 people came to hear “The Right Plants in the Right Place” from John Peter Thompson of Behnke Nurseries Company, who is a national leader in the landscaping and nursery industry in promoting environmentally appropriate plants and discouraging invasives.

Mr. Thompson’s presentation explained why humans seem hard-wired to tame nature and simplify the seemingly chaotic diversity around them by planting only a few species that nothing eats, survive floods or droughts, and are cheap, which means easy to propagate—a perfect recipe for exotic invasive plants. He amused the audience with slides of the “American suburban English country estate” which require endless hours of mowing and of the “new Victorians” who are enamored with ostentatious displays and novelty.

He showed slides graphically depicting the environmental degradation and loss of biological diversity that result from invasive exotic plants—plants out of place. He talked about how parts of Rock Creek Park in the District became a biological wasteland, when porcelain berry, English ivy and bittersweet took over. He believes that there is a place for every plant on earth, but choosing where to plant and choosing wisely what to plant requires a major public education effort.

To avoid introductions that lead to environmental degradation, he said that testing imported plants before releasing them to the public is crucial. He showed the example of the Bradford Pear, which was released by USDA as self-sterile, but became “the rabbit of the tree kingdom,” when other cultivars were introduced which crossed with the Bradfords and now these hybrids are reproducing up and down the road edges in Maryland.

He pointed out that when regulation or law is applied to address the invasives issue, questions arise about the restraint of domestic and international trade and the individual rights of gardeners. But he also pointed out that some state landscape and nursery associations have adopted the principles of the St. Louis Declaration on invasive plants. The Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association has not yet done so. But he believes that more state organizations will, particularly as many states have begun to establish Invasive Species Councils.

Mr. Thompson prefers education to regulation. Larry Hurley of his staff has produced a brochure with an “Environmental Alert” to show the public that certain popular landscape plants are invasive and to offer alternatives including numerous native plants. Mr. Thompson believes that native plant species provide an important niche in gardening. He has worked with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to promote “BaySafe” plants in his nursery along with the usual ornamentals. Thus he relies on the goodwill factor so that customers will support nurseries with programs like his.

Several organizations sponsored and promoted his talk, including the Arlington County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, the Virginia Cooperative Extension’s Remove Invasive Plants (RiP) and Tree Stewards Programs, Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment, the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, the Potomac Conservancy, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, Arlington County’s Urban Forestry Commission, and the Virginia Native Plant Society.

These partnerships are very important to public education on invasive species issues, because as Mr. Thompson pointed out, until the public demand decreases for invasive exotic plants, nurseries will continue to supply them. The economics and thin profit margins will not allow them to stop selling them voluntarily. But nurseries are beginning to educate the public and to recommend alternatives, and Behnke Nurseries is on the forefront of that effort. Behnke Nurseries has three sites in Maryland, the closest one to the Potomac Chapter is on River Road in Potomac, Maryland, which is a mere 18 minutes from downtown Arlington. [Go visit.](#)

Special thanks go to Lyndell Core of Arlington County’s Urban Forestry Commission and Paul Kovenock, who is an Urban Forestry Commissioner, a RiP volunteer, and a member of the Virginia Native Plant Society for all their efforts in producing the program, having it filmed, and getting sponsors. Thanks also to Steve Temmermand and the Arlington County Parks Division for their coordination efforts.

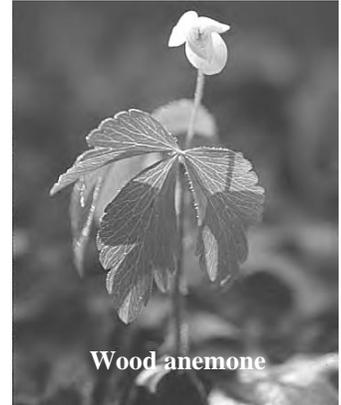


Lyndell Core, John Peter Thompson, and Paul Kovenock

JOINT VNPS-MNPS BIOBLITZ A SUCCESS

Twenty-five or more field trip participants from both the Virginia Native Plant Society and the Maryland Native Plant Society braved the rain (which ended shortly after the walk began) on April 26 to attend the bioblitz at Glen Carlyn Park in Arlington, Virginia. An equal number of people joined field trip leaders Lou Aronica and Mary Pat Rowan at Fort Dupont Park in Washington, D.C. on May 4 for the second part of the bioblitz. This year's focus was on Terrace Gravel Forest communities in the D.C. metro area. Both parks contain diverse flora, dramatic ravines and stream valleys, high terraces, and are among the best remaining examples of this natural community type in the region.

Many of the typical Terrace Gravel Forest plants, like Pinxter Azalea (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*), Trailing Arbutus (*Epigaea repens*), Downy Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*), Wild Sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), and many others were seen along the upland trails at Glen Carlyn Park. A 50-60' tall, apparently healthy American Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) that had set fruit last fall was a surprise discovery. A fairly large stand of Wood Anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*), an Arlington County record, and Spring Avens (*Geum vernum*) were also discovered growing in a wooded seep above Four Mile Run. Along the way, we stopped to see the results of the excellent work local resident and Arlington County "weed warrior" Steve Young has accomplished to date in removing extensive carpets of English Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Bush Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sp.*), and Burning Bush (*Euonymus alata*) from the forest near Long Branch Nature Center. Later in the day, we visited the remnant Magnolia Bog downstream from the park along Four Mile Run. This pristine site hosts many wetland plants and at least four county records: Sweetbay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*), Poison Sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*), Swamp-haw (*Viburnum nudum*), and Slender Wood Oats (*Chasmanthium laxum*). The gravelly soils of the surrounding mature, upland oak-hickory-heath forest (Allie S. Freed Park) also contain many plants not commonly seen in Arlington anymore, such as Bowman's Root (*Gillenia trifoliata*), Wild Indigo (*Baptisia tinctoria*), Balsam Ragwort (*Senecio pauperculus*), and Whorled Tickseed (*Coreopsis verticillata*).



We gathered the following week on a beautiful spring day at Fort Dupont, a 350 acre mostly forested national park in Washington, D.C., and started out along an upland trail through dense thickets of Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), Black Huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), Pinxter Azalea, and other heaths that flourished under the canopy of large, old oaks and hickories. Many Pink Ladyslipper Orchids (*Cypripedium acaule*) were in bloom, along with Lowbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium pallidum*). We saw several American Chestnuts and Chinquapins (*Castanea pumila*) along the north-facing slope that led down into a large stream valley. An enormous patch of Sessile Bellwort (*Uvularia sessilifolia*) grew above the banks of the stream, with an equally large colony of Indian Cucumber Root (*Medeola virginiana*), along with various other wildflowers. The flora along the stream valley occupied our attention for quite some time, and along the way we discovered an interesting seepage wetland carpeted with large colonies of Ground Pine (*Lycopodium obscurum*), New York Fern (*Thelypteris noveboracensis*), Cinnamon Fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), Fowl Manna Grass (*Glyceria striata*), and White Turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*). Poison Sumac and Primrose-leaved Violet (*Viola primulifolia*) were also seen in this wetland, along with many other plants. We had lunch back in the upland oak-hickory-heath forest and continued along through upland forest for much of the afternoon, observing many plants and wildlife, including a gigantic Downy Shadbush (*Amelanchier arborea*).

Information gathered on wildlife observed in the parks will be given to Arlington County Naturalists, Greg Zell and Alonso Abugattas at Long Branch Nature Center, who oversee stewardship of Glen Carlyn Park, and Natural Resource Managers at National Capital Parks East, who manage Fort Dupont.

ARLINGTON'S RIP PROJECT

Sun., July 6th- Ballston Beaver Pond Workday 9 AM - Noon. The Ballston Beaver Pond is a wetland, which has been home to beavers, wood ducks, and herons. This wonderful natural area is located at the corner of Fairfax Drive and I-66. Join us in cleaning up trash, removing non-native, invasive plants, and planting some native wildflowers. Drop in anytime to look for wildlife; stay to help out if you can. Free parking in the Marymount University parking lot, at the corner of Fairfax Drive and Glebe Road. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Some tools provided. If you have your own gloves, clippers, or loppers, please bring them. Long pants, hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses recommended. For more information call Gulf Branch Nature Center 703-228-3403.

Sat. July 12 Second Saturdays at Bluemont Park 9am-noon Neighbors and RiP volunteers will continue to meet at Bluemont Junction Park on second Saturdays through the summer. Come help out for an hour or two. Park near bike trail at the bottom of Illinois St. Enter Illinois St. from Wilson Blvd. Meet at "the rocks" next to the bike trail. Contact John Huennekens at 524-3853, or jhuenn@gwu.edu,

Sat. August 9 Second Saturdays at Bluemont Park 9am-noon (See above for details)

Thurs. August 14 - RiP Volunteers and Arlington Invasive Species Program General Meeting - 7 - 9PM. Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. Interested in learning more about invasive plant control in Arlington? Come out to this presentation to hear a summary of work-to-date, participate in a discussion about future plans, and find out how you can become involved with fall volunteer efforts. Join the RiP Arlington listserv (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RiP_Arlington/) or send an email to jferriga@vt.edu to receive a copy of Arlington Invasive Species Program's new draft plan a week before the meeting. Copies also available at the meeting.

August 21 - 24. Arlington County Fair - Arlington Invasive Species Program and RiP volunteers will be the feature exhibit at Arlington's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Resources indoor booth. The exhibit will feature a continuously running video, plant samples and info about our top invaders, friendly advice, and promotion for fall activities. Drop by to check it out and show your support, or volunteer to staff the booth for a couple hours and have a chance to win some cool volunteer draw prizes. Training provided. For more info about volunteering, contact Jan Ferrigan at 703 228 7636 or jferriga@vt.edu.

For information about any of these events, please contact Jan Ferrigan, Invasive Species Program Coordinator at 703 228 7636 or jferriga@vt.edu

OTHER LOCAL EVENTS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

July 1- Sept 2—Ferns and Fern Allies USDA Graduate School; Woodend Sanctuary, Chevy Chase. 7 – 9pm. Classes plus field trips: \$255 Instructor, Jeannette Salom Lellinger. Call 202-314-3320 or register on line at www.grad.usda.gov

July 9- Aug 13—Summer Wildflower Identification USDA Graduate School; Woodend Sanctuary, Chevy Chase 7 – 9pm. Classes plus field trips: \$195 Instructor, Cristol Fleming. Call 202-314-3320 or register on line at www.grad.usda.gov

July 10 Summer Wildflowers of Great Falls Park, VA 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Leader Cris Fleming Audubon Naturalist Society \$28 for non-members. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

July 12 Four Mile Run invasive plant removal 9am to 11 am Join the Northern Virginia Senior Environmental Corps in Four Mile Run Park in Alexandria. The group meets at the end of Edison St. off Reed Avenue. Bring gloves, pruners, and water. Rain or shine. For more information call Lindsey Schuh, 703-549-1607, Ext. 342.

Aug 2 Summer Wildflowers of Clark's Crossing Park, VA along the W&OD Bike Trail near Vienna. 8:30 am to noon Leader Stanwyn Shetler Audubon Naturalist Society \$25 for non-members. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

Aug 2 Summer Wildflower Walk Riverbend 9-11am, Riverbend Visitor Cent. \$2 Reservations required 703-759-9018

Aug 7 & 9 Ferns and Fern Allies (class and field trip). Thurs. 7:30-9:30pm; Sat. full day field trip. Field trip to Turkey Run Park with over 25 species of ferns and fern allies. Leader Cris Fleming Audubon Naturalist Society \$42 for non-members. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

Aug 9 Rise and Shine Huntley Meadows 5:30 – 7:30 am Huntley Meadows Visitor Center Look and listen as animals and plants react to the sunrise then have a bite to eat. \$5 Reservations required. 703-768-2525.

Aug 24 Meadow Wildflower Walk 10am – 1pm Ellanor C. Lawrence Park \$5 Reservations required. 703-631-0013.

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>

POTOWMACK CHAPTER PLANT SALE
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 6
10 am to 3 pm
GREEN SPRING GARDENS PARK

AN OPPORTUNITY TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts in Vienna, Virginia, is looking for volunteers to assist with identifying native plants within the park. Wolf Trap, best known for the performances at the Filene Center, also has more than 60 acres of undeveloped woodlands and wetlands--but has never had a comprehensive list of native species within the park. In addition to an inventory, they are looking for advice on how they might increase the native plant species within the park. If you think you might be interested in helping out, please contact Betsy Chittenden at Wolf Trap at 703-255-1925, or at betsy_chittenden@nps.gov. There are no set hours and they can work with your schedule.



Chapter Events Calendar

- Aug 6&7 Invasive Plant Seminar, Philadelphia, PA
- Sept 6 Plant Sale 10-3 Green Spring
- Sept 12-14 VNPS annual meeting, Manassas
- Oct 4&5 VA, MD, WV Native Plant Conference Shepherdstown, WV

Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 5311
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