

# POTOWMACK NEWS

*Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society*

VOLUME 30, No. 3, JULY-SEPTEMBER 2012

## May Plant Sale Wrap Up



BY LAURA BEATY

The May 19 plant sale at Green Spring Gardens was an unexpectedly beautiful day for all the volunteers. We've battled cold and rainy weather for the last few sales, and this day was a gift. We had a good turnout and enjoyed talking and working with folks looking for the exact plant needed for their home and others for their churches, community centers, libraries and schools. There are many good reasons to select native plants to grow in your landscape, not the least being to support our native pollinators. Many buyers were interested in extending the blooming season with early blooming and late blooming natives to assist these pollinators, and I'm happy to report, based on our sales, that this fall the pollinators will find a larger floral buffet in this region. Many thanks to all of you who donated plants for this sale; your generosity is very much appreciated.

Looking forward to our fall sale, we hope to provide some beautiful and beneficial fall blooming plants and those natives that will give you a welcome surprise in the spring. Thanks for all your support of our chapter's propagation efforts.



## Upcoming Events

### July

July 10  
Riverbend Park Botanical Walk:  
Natural History, Folklore and  
Ethnobotany with Alonso Abugattas

July 12  
Fern Identification Workshop with  
Cris Fleming

### August

August 25  
Summer Plants of Clark's Crossing  
with Marty Nielsen and Diana Carter

### September

September 20  
TBD

September 22  
Fall Plant Sale



See Page 4 for complete program  
and walk details.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The summer brings many things; with the longer days and the warm weather, the plant community seems to fairly leap from the ground. The temperature always gets a bad knock, but I happen to enjoy the days, especially under the canopy of the forest. Do you notice how it is several degrees cooler and the relative humidity is slightly higher as well? The trees are transpiring hundreds and thousands of gallons of water each day into the air and moderating the heat of the sun with both shade and moisture. A mature forest has its own sounds and smells as well. Moving away from the road, the relative quiet fills with bird song and the rustle of branches and leaves moving in the breeze. The fragrance of the soil rises and mingles with the smell of the trees themselves.



To protect and expand our forests we need to communicate the incredible value in large and small ways of these trees; in carbon sequestration and oxygen creation, in shelter and succor of the myriad species that depend on them, in the peaceful value of just walking among them.

I want to commend the hard work of our local Tree Stewards. Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax all have active and engaged programs. <http://treestewards.org/> and <http://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountytrestewards/>. These folks provide education and guidance to homeowners and the community on protecting the forest canopy in our urbanized region. A recent program has been launched to target the destructive and invasive English Ivy, *Hedera helix*, and encourage landowners to cut it out of the canopy. No small feat this; we have been advocating for removal of English Ivy for years. For this and all their efforts they deserve our thanks.

Another group deserving of recognition is Fairfax ReLeaf, <http://fairfaxreleaf.org/>. This group of dedicated individuals has been working tirelessly since 1992 providing tree stock and volunteers to plant trees wherever they can across the county. A recent addition in this effort is Reforest Fairfax <http://www.fcrrp3.org/reforestfairfax/>, which provides a novel approach to encouraging people to participate in adding to the tree cover. Through this effort you may purchase a gift of trees and help provide support for this worthy cause. Fairfax Releaf will plant them during the next planting season, and the gift recipient will receive notification of the planting of trees in their honor plus the location of gifted trees, which can be tracked on their website. All of these groups support and encourage the appropriate use of native species in planting and restoration.

*Continued page 5*

## Potowmack Chapter Board Officers

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**Vice President**  
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Marty Nielson

### **Technology**

Vacant

Submissions to *Potowmack News* should be sent to  
Becky Super at  
hrsUPER@gmail.com

**Potowmack Chapter  
Virginia Native Plant Society**  
P.O. Box 5311  
Arlington, VA 22205  
[www.vnps-pot.org](http://www.vnps-pot.org)

## SUMMER IS THE BEES KNEES (reprinted from the July Xerces Society newsletter -- [www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org))

Summer is a season when we spend a lot of time outdoors, often in a neighborhood greenspace or our own backyard. Gardens play many roles in our lives -- a place to entertain friends, somewhere for children to play, or a serene getaway from a busy work routine. They are also excellent places for wildlife, especially for smaller animals like bees, butterflies, and beetles. Given the right combination of food and shelter, dozens of species of insects can be found in even a small plot. For example, Xerces' senior conservation associate Matthew Shepherd has found more than 100 different insects in his own suburban garden in Beaverton, Oregon.



This diversity is not unusual. Across the country surveys have discovered that wildlife exists in surprising places. More than 100 species of bees were recorded in suburban gardens of New York City, over 70 species in gardens of Berkeley, California, and 60 plus species in Tucson, Arizona. Even inner city community gardens in the Bronx and Harlem, hardly our image of wildlife habitat, are home to 54 species of bees and 24 species of butterflies.

There is a growing body of research into the connection between native plants and native insects. Over several years, Gordon Frankie and the Urban Bee Project of the University of California at Berkeley have conducted bee surveys in California. Gordon's team

identifies plants growing in gardens and the bees that are attracted to them. This work has produced some eye-opening findings: native plants were at least four times as likely to attract native bees as exotic plants, and that a diversity of plants (eight or more species) significantly increases both the abundance and diversity of native bees.

On the other side of the country, Douglas Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, and his coworkers at the University of Delaware have been researching the relationship between native plants and herbivorous insects such as caterpillars. In an exhaustive review of plants that moth and butterfly caterpillars eat, Douglas' team found a remarkable difference in the numbers of species that will eat native versus nonnative plants. On average, nonnative plants supported less than five species of caterpillar, while native plants supported 74 species -- more than 15 times as many! You can read more about these findings in the article "Aliens" in the latest issue of *Wings*.

Clearly, native plants are better than nonnative plants for native insects. Sunflowers, coneflowers, aster, goldenrod, prairie clover, and phacelia will be alive with flower-visitors. This is not to say that there is never a place in your garden for nonnative plants. Species from other regions can be successful garden plants, and if



chosen carefully, they can offer good sources of nectar or pollen for bees and other flower visitors. Lavender, cosmos, oregano, rosemary, and sage are all garden favorites and will help bees and butterflies. However, a garden full of nonnative plants will not benefit local insects as much as one with native plants. Here are some helpful hints and resources to help you build habitat for native insects in your own backyard.

- Grow a diverse range of flowering plants
- Use native species wherever possible
- Provide blooms from late winter to late fall
- Include host plants for caterpillars in your flower borders
- Provide nesting sites for bees such as bee blocks and bare ground
- Avoid using pesticides

# Potowmack Chapter

ALL CHAPTER PROGRAMS AND WALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. PLEASE CHECK OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AND YAHOO LIST SERVE FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ABOUT ALL PROGRAMS.



## **July 10 Riverbend Park Botanical Walk: Natural History, Folklore and Ethnobotany with Alonso Abugattas**

6-8 pm

Ethnobotany (the study of the relationships that exist between people and plants) is a special interest for Alonso Abugattas. Learn about the history, folklore and ethnobotany of the plants of Riverbend Park. Alonso is a well-known local naturalist and storyteller who has been a professional naturalist for over 20 years. He is a Virginia Master Naturalist and Master Gardener, as well as an instructor for both and is currently the acting director of Long Branch Nature Center and the new Natural Resources Manager for Arlington County, Va. He has held several offices for the Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, including president, is the co-chair for the Beltway Chapter of the National Association for Interpretation, and a co-founder of the Washington Area Butterfly Club. Space is limited. RSVP required: Diana Carter [dcarter1776@yahoo.com](mailto:dcarter1776@yahoo.com)

Walk location: Riverbend Park, Great Falls, Va.

## **July 12 Fern Identification Workshop with Cris Fleming**

6:15 to 8:15 pm

In the wild and in the garden, ferns are a beautiful part of natural landscapes. Learn how to identify many of our native ferns with botany chair Cris Fleming. During the first hour, Cris will discuss the terminology used to identify ferns and will demonstrate these terms using specimens of different fern species. Then she will lead a short walk along the Native Plant Trail at Green Spring Gardens, where participants will get a chance to recognize or key out many ferns in the large and varied collection.

Space is limited to 20 people. RSVP required: Diana Carter [dcarter1776@yahoo.com](mailto:dcarter1776@yahoo.com)  
Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria, Va.

## **August 11 Summer Trees of Park Fairfax with Scott Knudsen**

9-10:30 am

Join us for a summer morning walk at amongst the trees at Park Fairfax. Education chair Scott Knudsen will review the keys to summer tree identification techniques. He will discuss the native habitat of each tree and good uses for the tree in the landscape.

RSVP required: Scott Knudsen  
[sknudsen@earthlink.net](mailto:sknudsen@earthlink.net)  
Park Fairfax, Alexandria, Va.

## **August 25 Summer Plants of Clark's Crossing with Marty Nielsen and Diana Carter**

9-11 am

The old railroad right-of-way and powerlines at Clark's Crossing Park have provided conditions favorable to late summer meadow wildflowers. Both wet and dry meadow species should be in show for this walk. Space is limited. RSVP required: Diana Carter [dcarter1776@yahoo.com](mailto:dcarter1776@yahoo.com).  
Clark's Crossing Park, Vienna, Va.

## **September 20 Topic: TBD**

7:30 pm

Please check our Facebook page and Yahoo List Serve for updates on this lecture.  
Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria, Va.

## **September 22 Fall Plant Sale**

9am-3pm

The Potowmack Chapter will be offering a variety of small trees, shrubs, perennials and ferns. Get advice on the best plants for your garden. See a demonstration on how to plant your new trees and shrubs. Learn how to attract butterflies, birds and other beneficial wildlife to your garden with native plants. Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria, Va.



### **The Potowmack Chapter Needs Your Help!**

Do you want to get more involved with native plants and your community?

Join our board. We have several openings.

Do you have ideas for future programs, walks or workshops?

Contact Alan Ford if you would like to help at [amford@acm.org](mailto:amford@acm.org)

### *Presidents Message from page 2*

A recent change by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to charge a fee to access the wildlife management areas under their supervision is notable. This fee helps support the protection of these forests. A daily permit is required before you visit and may be purchased on line. If you visit any of these tremendous wilderness areas more than once, I encourage you to purchase a yearly permit. You may purchase a fishing permit which allows the state to qualify for some federal matching funds, or a general access permit. However, the fishing permit does not represent our interests, and I would recommend the access permit. You may want to pay a few dollars extra to cover the difference. <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/licenses/> Regardless of this change, we are committed to keeping our walks open and free to the public and will provide a daily use access permit to cover any participant in a chapter-sponsored walk in a wilderness area.

So many ways to enjoy and appreciate the stately and graceful trees which provide shade, shelter, and beauty. Spend a day in the woods, help to plant and protect our trees, talk to your neighbors and spread the word; our forests are a treasure.

*Alan Ford*

President Potowmack Chapter

## **Help Us Reach Our 200 Friends Goal!**

**Find us on Facebook at  
Potowmack Chapter - Virginia Native Plant Society**

**Facebook is one of the best ways to get the most up-to-date information on our programs. Plus, you can connect with other native plant enthusiasts.**

## **How You Can Help?**

### **Falls Church Habitat Restoration Team**

Join the Falls Church Habitat Restoration Team in restoring the local ecosystem in city parks. Remove invasives and plant natives that will then benefit local birds and butterflies.

For more information contact Melissa Teates, 703-538-6961 or [melanite@verizon.net](mailto:melanite@verizon.net)

### **Arlington County RiP Program**

Help rescue Arlington parks from alien plant invaders! Bring your own tools.

For more information contact [sarcher@arlingtonva.us](mailto:sarcher@arlingtonva.us) or 703-228-1862. [www.arlingtonva.us/invasiveplants](http://www.arlingtonva.us/invasiveplants)

### **Fairfax County's Invasive Management Area (IMA) Program**

Remove invasive plants and learn about new species.

For more information contact [erin.stockschlaeder@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:erin.stockschlaeder@fairfaxcounty.gov) or call 703-324-8681



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## FALL PLANT SALE

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Saturday, September 22

9 am - 3 pm

Fall is the perfect time to plant!

### Green Spring Gardens

4603 Green Spring Road

Alexandria, Virginia

703-642-5173

[www.vnps.org](http://www.vnps.org)

The Potowmack Chapter will be offering a variety of small trees, shrubs, perennials and ferns. Get advice on the best plants for your garden. See a demonstration on how to plant your new trees and shrubs. Learn how to attract butterflies, birds and other beneficial wildlife to your garden with native plants.

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