SPRING

POTOWMACK NEWS

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

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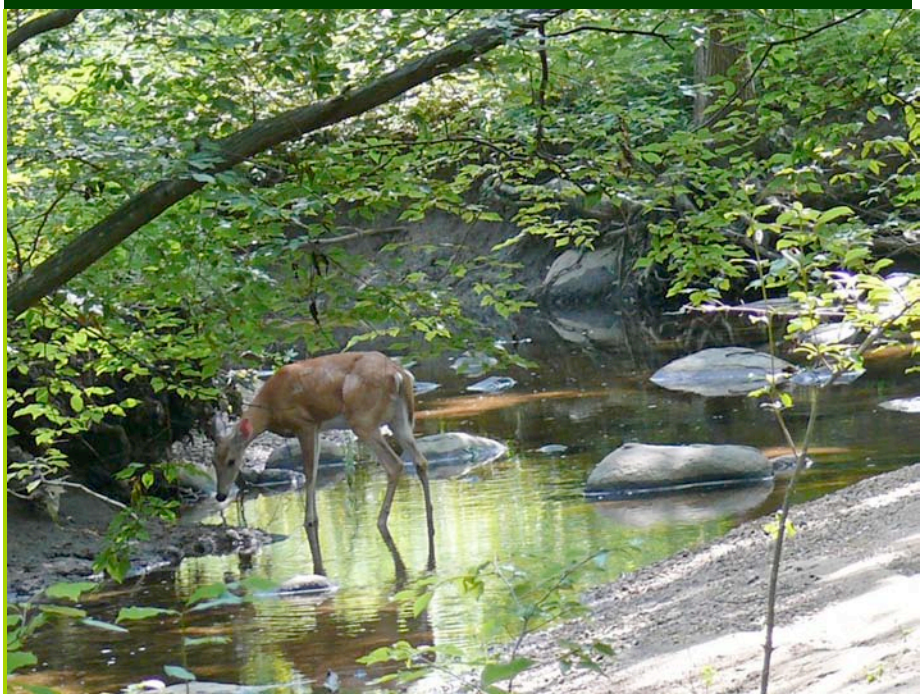
VNPS Registry Sites:
RUNNYMEDE PARK, HERNDON

BY MARGARET CHATHAM



SUGARLAND RUN RESIDENT (PHOTO BY JAN MEYER)

Runnymede Park in the Town of Herndon is a natural haven of forest, marsh and meadow with many trails, some paved, on Herndon Parkway north of Elden Street. It covers 58 acres along Sugarland Run, a Potomac River tributary named for sugar maple trees that were tapped by Dogue Indians and early settlers. It lies within the Triassic Basin, on diabase rocks that are exposed in places by the stream. The Town of Herndon purchased the land in 1973, 1987 & 1988 and named it for Herndon's sister city in England. Then it took three more years to settle what to do with the park, with VNPS's Ann Csonka (now deceased) and her husband John DeNoyer championing the ultimately successful "Keep Runnymede Natural" campaign. In March, 1993, a major diesel oil spill down Sugarland Run wiped out muskrats, beavers, and aquatic life, leading to permanent changes in the landscape. The stream has since recovered with excellent fish diversity found in the annual sampling done by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the reestablishment of beaver families in the park. Two picnic shelters and an expanded parking lot and interpretive garden were added in 2006 and a chimney swift tower was erected at the park entrance in 2013.

Many people have botanized at Runnymede, including (but not limited to!) Ann Csonka, John DeNoyer, Meghan T. First, Cris Fleming, Gary Fleming, Joe Metzger, Stan Shetler, Craig Tufts, and Rod Simmons. They have found a total of over 450 native species of vascular plants in the park.

The largest portion of Runnymede Park is wooded stream floodplain

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Upcoming Events

GIS Training Workshops
Sunday, March 22 OR 29, 1-4 pm

Alan Ford offers this class twice: basic concepts of spatial technology, use of GPS & field practice. Bring your own device: handheld GPS, smartphone or GPS-enabled tablet. Meet in the log cabin on Meadowlark Botanical Garden grounds ($5 admission). Eventbrite reservation required: https://20150322.eventbrite.com for 3/22 or https://20150329.eventbrite.com for 3/29.

What's in a Name? Botanic names explored
Thursday, April 9, 7:30-9 pm

They always told us to learn the botanic names of plants, and we always rolled our eyes at the idea of memorizing all that polysyllabic gobbledy-gook. But some of those names do have useful & memorable meanings. Margaret Chatham has a lifelong interest in words. She'll try to increase your knowledge and comfort level with botanic Latin (and Greek!) Green Spring Horticulture Center

Garden Tour in Arlington Forest
Sunday, April 19, Noon-4 pm

Paul Kovenack of 210 N. Evergreen St. and Susan Graham of 233 N. Galvaston St. in Arlington open their yards to show their lovely natives and the adjacent Lubber Run restoration. See page 7 for more history of the site.

The Role of Botanical Gardens in the Conservation of Plant Diversity Locally, Regionally, and Globally
Thursday, May 14, 7:30-9 pm

Keith Tomlinson of Meadowlark Botanical Garden. Green Spring Horticulture Center

All events are free and open to the public

Botanic Names: A Hairy Subject

By Margaret Chatham

How many ways can a botanist say a plant is hairy? Canescent, ciliate, hirsute, hispid, lanate, pillose, pubescent, tomentose, villose: this is not a complete list, and most of these can be modified… but to take these in alphabetical order:

Canescent indicates enough usually soft, short hairs to give the plant a gray or hoary color. So *Desmodium canescens* is Hoary Tick Trefoil, and *Scutellaria incana* is Hoary Skullcap.

Ciliate means with a fringe of hairs. In the case of fringed loosestrife, *Lysimachia ciliata*, that fringe is only found on the leaf petioles. *Blephila ciliata*, Downy Wood Mint, is described by *The Flora of Virginia* as having canescent stems, *while Desmodium canescens* has ciliate leaves. Oh, well.

Hirsute indicates a thick covering of stiff hairs. There are lots of plants with this name, of varying hairiness: *Hypoxis hirsute,* Yellow Star Grass, is pretty visibly hairy; *Cardamine hirsutes,* the non-native Hairy Bittercress, requires more careful observation to find the hairs.

Hispid is like hirsute, but with fewer, stiffer hairs. The invasive exotic grass *Arthraxon hispidus,* Joint Head Grass, has stiff enough hairs for anyone, while Bristly Greenbriar, *Smilax hispida,* pushes beyond merely hairy.

Lanate means wooly, as in Velvet Grass, *Holcus lanatus,* an invasive exotic that is nevertheless very pleasing to the fingers.

Pilose means covered with soft, straight hairs. This is sometimes the case with *Symphyotrichum pilosum* var. *pilosum*, which *The Flora of Virginia* describes as having stems that are "pubescent to pilose-hirsute or villous." Now all we need are definitions of pubescent and villous. Onward!

Pubescent means covered with short, soft hairs, as you can perhaps see in the accompanying photo of Rattlesnake Plantain, *Goodyera pubescens*. So if you feel the stem or leaves of the downy yellow violet, *Viola pubescens*, or examine them with a hand lens, you may detect the hairs there. If those hairs are lacking, you may have a smooth yellow violet, *Viola pensylvanica*, instead.

Tomentose describes densely matted wooly hairs, like those on the undersides of leaves of Princess Tree, *Paulownia tomentosa*, or Mockernut Hickory, *Carya tomentosa*.

Villous hairs are similarly long and may be shaggy but not matted, as on Hairy Alumroot, *Heuchera villosa* or Carolina bushpea, *Thermopsis villosa*.

Add in all the diminutives, like hirtellum, hirsutula, hispidulum, or puberulum, and the superlatives like villosissimum, and you have a topic that could be described as not just hairy, but tomentose!

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Runnymede Park Continued from page 1

in which a diverse canopy of northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), white oak (*Q. alba*), swamp white oak (*Q. bicolor*), black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), pignut hickory (*Carya glabra*), mockernut hickory (*C. tomentosa*), sweet pignut hickory (*C. ovalis*), red maple *(Acer rubrum*), black willow (*Salix nigra*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), green ash (*Fraxinus pensylvanica*), sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) and box elder (*Acer negundo*) shelters an understory of hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), blackhaw (*Viburnum prunifolium*), fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), hazelnut (*Corylus americanus*), pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), shadbush (*Amelanchier sp*.), American holly (*Ilex opaca*), and bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*). Shrubs include pasture rose (*Rosa carolina*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*), hearts-a-burstin' *(Euonymus americana*), and winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), along with invasive multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) and bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*). The herb layer boasts the common jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema trifolia*), partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*), wild ginger (*Asarum candense*), path rush (*Juncus tenuis*), sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), lady fern (*Athyrium asplenioides*) and the like, along with a wider than usual variety of sedges large (*Carex intumescens; C. squarrosa; C. lurida*) and small (*C. debilis, C. rosea, C. radiata*).

A small cattail marsh (*Typha latifolia*) edged with red-twig dogwood (*Corunus sericea*) and buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) invites a chorus of spring peepers. Bluebird boxes in the park maintained by volunteers house 10 to 20 new hatchlings each spring, and adults are often visible even in the winter.

Moving just a few feet higher in elevation changes the vegetation dramatically. Here one finds Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*), shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*), Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), bigtooth aspen (*Populus grandidentata*), post oak (*Quercus stellata*), black oak (*Q. velutina*), and shingle oak (*Q. imbricaria*); deerberry (*Vaccineum stamineum*), bluets both common (*Houstonia caerulea*) and summer *(H. purpurea*); and a lovely meadow full of Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), beaked panic grass (Coleatania anceps), mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*), smooth beardtongue (*Penstemon laevigatus*), lyreleaf sage (*Salvia lyrata*), spiked lobelia (*Lobelia spicata*), yellow star grass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*) and more. That's where Jan Meyer photographed this green fringed orchid (*Platanthera lacera*).

Invasive removal efforts have been waged to maintain habitat for the remarkable native plant diversity, but many remain in the park, including; multi-flora rose, Japanese honeysuckle, oriental bittersweet, garlic mustard, autumn olive, Russian olive, Bradford pear, Japanese barberry, mile-a-minute vine, and Java dropwort.

Sugarland Run on 2/26/2015 (photo by Margaret Chatham)

References:

Fleming, Gary P. and Karen D. Patterson. Natural Community Inventory of Selected Areas in the Northern Virginia Culpeper Basin: Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Fauquier, and Culpeper Counties. Natural Heritage Technical Report 04-07. April, 2004 (pdf available on VNPS website)

Runnymede Park Map. Friends of Runnymede, Sept. 2002

Simmons, R.H., M.D. Tice, A. Csonka, J. DeNoyer. Vascular Flora and Natural Communities of Runnymede Park, Herndon, Virginia. Unpublished Report. 2000. [This report is currently being revised after emerging from the cyber "twilight zone" due to computer crashes a decade ago and will be posted to the VNPS website once the nomenclature is updated and more recent findings are added.]

Website: www.friendsofrunnymedepark.org/index.html

Word of the Month: Peltate

Shield-shaped, like a leaf with the stem attached to the middle of the underside rather than an edge. Examples: Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), American Lotus (*Nelumbo luteum*) and Whorled Marsh-pennywort (*Hydrocotyle verticillata*).

A Word from our President: How Should We Get the Word Out?

Our chapter has been active in a wide array of projects to better communicate the value and importance of native plants, the preservation and restoration of open space, and educating ourselves and the public on the role of native plants in the landscape.

For some time our Board has been concerned we are not successfully reaching our members with timely information about our many events, walks, and volunteer opportunities. The newsletter, up to now our only communication which reaches all members, is published just five times a year and its calendar of events is quickly outdated.

The listserve, VNPS-POT@yahoogroups.com, only has about 300 participants and less than half of those are active members of the Potowmack Chapter. One of the advantages of the newsgroup is it is an opt-in service. You don't get it if you don't want it. But without better participation most of our members are missing current information.

We are considering several options for how better to reach you with timely and meaningful information about chapter activities. With the advent of the online membership renewal and greater engagement with email we now have an email address for most of our members, now about 500 in number.

We would like to begin by sending a monthly or bimonthly notice of events and opportunities to your email address. This will also allow us to respond more effectively to sudden changes, such as when a meeting is postponed due to weather.

We anticipate using some contact management system such as Emma and you will receive these messages from our current chapter email address: vnps.pot@gmail.com. We respect your privacy and intend to respond immediately to any requests to be removed from any distribution list.

As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions and hope to hear from you regarding this or any other issue you may have with regard to the Potowmack Chapter.

I look forward to seeing you in the field.

Alan Ford

ALL CHAPTER PROGRAMS AND WALKS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. JOIN OUR LISTSERVE AT HTTP://GROUPS.YAHOO.COM/GROUP/VNPS-POT TO RECEIVE NOTICES WITH WALK REGISTRATION LINKS.

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NEWS SHORTS

Invasive Plant Removal Day: May 2, 2015

http://invasiveplantremovalday.org is the place to go either to publicize your invasive removal event within a two week span of the target date of Saturday, May 2, 2015, or to find an event to fit your location, taste, and schedule. Let's see how many places we can clean of how many invasive species! Thanks to Jenn Truong (aka "invasive girl") for spearheading this effort once again for us and for the Mid Atlantic Invasive Plant Council (MAIPC).

New Space for Milkweed

Milkweed silks have the unusual property of shedding water while absorbing oil. François Simard of Granby, Quebec, is exploiting this property by harvesting milkweed silk to fill oil absorption kits for Parks Canada. The milkweed silk absorbs more than 4 times as much oil as the same amount of the polypropylene material currently in use. To supply the milkweed silk for this project, 20 farmers in Quebec planted 800 acres of milkweed in 2014, and the monarchs loved it!
More information:
http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/milkweed-touted-as-oil-spill-super-sucker-with-butterfly-benefits-1.2856029
http://www.gizmag.com/milkweed-natural-solution-oil-spills/35138/

National Arboretum "Grass Roots Initiative"

A four-year exhibit next to the USNA's herb garden touts the ecological advantages of turf grass (compared to artificial turf or blacktop: we won't argue), and includes *Danthonia spicata*, native Poverty Oat Grass as a grass for poor soil & part shade. One break-out session at the Lahr Symposium on 3/28 focuses on Poverty Oat Grass.

Fairfax County Revising its Master Plan for Green Spring Gardens Park

The County has added a new chunk of land to Green Spring Gardens Park, and this has called for a re-examination and revision of the Master Plan, last worked on in 1992. Alan Ford and Margaret Chatham spoke briefly at the public meeting on Jan. 29 to represent some of VNPS's perspectives. See a summary of the evening's comments at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/green-spring-gardens.htm. Especially if you are a Fairfax County resident, feel free to use one of the site's contact options to express your thoughts/dreams/wishes for Green Spring's future.

Emerald Ash Borers Found in Ohio Fringe Trees

Dr. Don Cipollini, Professor of biological sciences at Wright University, has found emerald ash borers in fringetree, Chionanthus virginicus, in Yellow Springs, Ohio. In Ohio, fringetree is a rare plant. There also exists a Chinese species of Chionanthus, which resists emerald ash borers.
http://wildlife.org/tree-killing-invasive-bugs-make-jump-to-new-tree-species/

Rescuing the Lubber Run Woodland – a legacy for future generations

By Paul Kovenock

In the late 1990s the trees in Lubber Run Park were overrun by a silent green invasion. English ivy (*Hedera helix*) is Arlington's kudzu. It snakes up trees, seeking the sun, encasing trunks and branches. It can turn a handsome oak or hickory into a grotesque broccoli shape. The ivy vines add weight to limbs and branches, causing mature trees to fall in storms and high winds. At the tree's base, the tight casing of ivy vines holds moisture against the bark year-round, causing rot and decay. On the ground, English ivy competes with tree roots for moisture and nutrients. Its matted vines form a monoculture, sheltering rats and mosquitoes, but impeding tree succession and the native plant diversity needed for a healthy ecosystem. The source of the Lubber Run ivy? Uncontrolled ivy in many of the 70-plus yards that abut the park. Over the years, the vines had crept under and over backyard fences until the park's slopes became a sea of green ivy. The Lubber Run woodland was on a downward spiral.

Throughout the 2000s, Arlington Forest neighbors organized to fight back and restore a healthy woodland for future generations to enjoy. Beginning in the winter of 2001, they cut the invasive vines off the trees by hand, one by one. Among the first volunteers were Scouts from Arlington Forest United Methodist Church, led by Scoutmaster Jeff Lund. Using hand pruners, small saws and prying screwdrivers, scouts and other volunteers severed vines around each tree, leaving the upper vine segments to wither and die. Some volunteers pulled ivy out of the ground around the base of each tree to create an ivy-free 2-foot "life-saver ring" in an effort to prevent further infestation.

In 2002-2004, Arlington Forest neighbors sought out additional volunteers to join in this labor intensive work. Volunteers came to Lubber Run from the county's Tree Stewards, Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (ACE), Arlington ReLeaf, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, the Virginia Native Plant Society, the Nature Conservancy, and the newly-formed Arlington Remove Invasive Plants (RIP) group. But English ivy still covered the ground, threatening to resume its climb into the trees.

In 2005, the Arlington Forest Citizens Association (AFCA) stepped in to seek money for professional management to complete the invasives removal work in the park. Several well-attended community meeting, discussions, and an email list resulted in a plan with budget proposal. Through Timothy O'Leary, AFCA's representative on the County's Neighborhood Conservation Committee, a $232,000 NCC grant was approved to finance a five-year project: the Lubber Run Park Invasive Plant Removal Project. In 2006, the County hired Invasive Plant Control, Inc. (IPC), a well respected firm which already held contracts from the National Park Service, the Smithsonian, US Forest Service, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

From 2006 to 20011, IPC's seasonal efforts completed removal of the residual English ivy. IPC attacked other invasive exotic plants as well: bamboo, porcelainberry, Japanese honeysuckle, multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle, tree-of-heaven, Asian mulberry, wineberry, and Japanese knotweed. Most conspicuous was the early-blooming lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*), the "buttercups" spreading down the steep slope from the N. 3rd Street watershed.

While the Lubber Run Invasive Plant Management Project was working within the park, neighbors worked with the 70-plus adjacent property owners to remove English ivy from their yards. Arlington Forest neighbors visited homeowners to encourage them to remove all English ivy from their yards, either by pulling it themselves or by hiring day laborers to remove it, supervised by neighborhood volunteers. Seeing that the ivy was being removed within the park, nearly all of these adjacent homeowners co-operated in managing the ivy in their yards, with the exception of some absentee landowners. Some adjacent homeowners hired IPC on a private basis to control the ivy in their yards. Two Arlington Forest neighbors, Jim Graham and David Mog, walked the park's boundaries and removed the encroaching ivy from adjoining neglected private properties.

Wildflowers have reappeared in Lubber Run Park as the invasive ivy has been removed. Particularly spectacular in early spring are the waves of bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) with its two-inch snow-white flowers massed along the steep ravine across the stream from the park's picnic shelter, south and west of the 4th Street park entrance. In 2012, field botanists hired by the County identified 181 different species of native flora thriving in our restored Lubber Run woodland, including pinxters (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*) and witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*). You can see this transformation for yourself on Sunday, April 19, when Paul Kovenock and Susan Graham open their yards from noon till 4 pm for the VNPS garden tour. Addresses on page one.

How you can help in the community

Falls Church Habitat Restoration Team

Help restore the local ecosystem in city parks. Remove invasives and plant natives that will benefit local birds and butterflies. For more information contact Melissa Teates at 703-538-6961 or melanite@verizon.net

Arlington County's Remove Invasive Plants (RiP) Program

Help Rescue Arlington parks from alien plant invaders! Please bring your own tools. For more information, contact Sarah Archer at 703-228-1862 or sarcher@arlingtonva.us

Reston Association's Habitat Heroes Program

Help restore local wildlife habitat through invasive plant removal and replanting with native plants For more information, contact Ha Brock at 703-435-7986 or ha@reston.org.

Fairfax County's Invasive Management Area (IMA) Program

Help remove invasive plants and plants and learn about new species. For more information, contact Erin Stockschlaeder at 703-324-8681 or erin.stockschlaeder@fairfaxcounty.gov

Spring Native Plant Sales (An Incomplete List)

Sat, March 28, 9:30 am-2 pm Friends of the National Arboretum Native Plant Sale, US National Arboretum, 3501 New York Ave., NE, Washington, DC (open to Lahr Symposium registrants at 8:30 am)

Sat, April 25, 9 am-2 pm Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale at The Church of St. Clement, 1701 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria (formerly Parkfairfax Native Plant Sale) brings in 14 or more vendors from 4 states. www.NorthernAlexandriaNativePlantSale.org

Sat, April 25, 1-4 pm (raindate Sun, April 26, 1-4 pm) Long Branch Nature Center Native Plant Sale, 625 Carlin Springs Road, Arlington

Sun, May 3, 10 am-2 pm Earth Sangha Open House and Plant Sale, Earth Sangha Native Plant Nursery, Cloud Drive entrance to Franconia Park, Springfield

Wed, May 6, 10 am-1 pm (and first Wed of each month through Oct) VNPS-Potowmack propagation beds behind the Horticulture Center at Green Spring Gardens are open for sales.

Sat, May 9, 9 am-noon Prince William Wildflower Society Native Plant Sale at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, 8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas. Nvehrs1@yahoo.com

Sat, May 16, 9 am-3 pm Green Spring Garden Day, includes VNPS-Potowmack propagation beds behind the Horticulture Center, and some native plant vendors mixed in with the non-natives.

If you would like to receive this newsletter (in full color!) electronically, contact Alan Ford at: amford@acm.org

Potowmack News
Virginia Native Plant Society
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VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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