

EARLY FALL

POTOWMACK NEWS

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

VOLUME 37, NO. 4, SEPT-OCT, 2019

What's Eating My Milkweed?

By Margaret Chatham



MILKWEED TUSsock MOTH, *EUCHAETIAS EGLE*, TOTALLY DENUDING SWAMP MILKWEED, *ASCLEPIAS INCARNATA*. PHOTO BY MARGARET CHATHAM.

When I see damage to milkweed leaves, I immediately look for monarch caterpillars. If I find one or two, I rejoice. But monarchs are not the only insects able to eat milkweeds.

It's hard to miss Milkweed Tussock Moth (*Euchaetias egle*) caterpillars: their eggs are laid in groups of 50 or so and the young caterpillars feed all in a group, consuming milkweed leaves completely. As they grow bigger and more colorful, they become more independent. They overwinter in chrysalis stage, ready to emerge in the spring to find another milkweed for the next generation to chow down on.

Orange and black milkweed bugs are usually easy to spot. There are two. The Large Milkweed Bug (*Oncopeltis fasciatus*) has a black band across the middle of its folded wings. While it really likes milkweed seeds and seedpods, it will eat leaves while waiting for its preferred food to develop. It doesn't migrate as far as Monarchs, but may move to Texas for the winter.

The Small Milkweed Bug (*Lygaeus kalmii*) has an orange cross on its back. If it can't find enough milkweed seeds, it will eat its brothers, or Large Milkweed Bugs, or Monarch caterpillars instead.

Harder to spot is the Swamp Milkweed Leaf Beetle (*Labidomera clivicollis*). Its larvae look like Navy beans with black heads. The adults look like very fat Ladybugs with extra large black spots and curly black crosses in the middle of their backs. They seem to do most of their eating at night. They can sometimes be found on the undersides of milkweed leaves, but are very ready to drop to the ground and vanish. Certainly none of them have held still long enough for me to take a picture.

Then there are a couple of sap-sucking insects that use milkweed without making heat holes in the leaves. Planthoppers of the family Flatidae may live their lives on milkweed, along with Oleander Aphids (*Aphis nerii*).

Source: *Milkweed, Monarchs and More* by Ba Rea, Karen Oberhauser, and Michael A. Quinn. Bas Relief, 2011.

Upcoming

The Songs of Insects

Wil Hersberger

Wednesday, Sept 11, 7 pm

Norma Hoffman Visitor Center, Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd, Alexandria

VNPS is cosponsoring this talk arranged by the Friends of Dyke Marsh. See and hear singing insects presented by the co-author of *The Songs of Insects*. Then the first 20 people to send an email to info@fodm.org to register will go on a walk at 8 pm to listen.

Grasses at Riverbend

Led by the Grass Bunch

Saturday, Sept 14, 9 am-12 noon

Some grasses bloom early, but for some of them, you have to wait till fall.

2019 Statewide Annual Meeting and Conference

Hosted by VNPS Piedmont Chapter

Friday, Sept. 27-Sunday, Sept. 29

Holiday Inn Blue Ridge Shadows, Front Royal

Plants of the Forest Floor

Margaret Chatham

Thursday, Oct 10, 7:30-9 pm

Green Spring Gardens Horticulture Center

Strategies plants use to live under the tree canopy, with special attention to mycorrhizal associations.

Grasses at Wakefield Park

Led by the Grass Bunch

Saturday, Oct 19, 9 am-12 noon

Hold the date! Potowmack Chapter Annual Meeting

Sunday, Nov 17, 1-4 pm

Green Spring Gardens Horticulture Center

All local events are free and open to the public. Walks require preregistration. To receive email notices with walk registration links and other chapter news, send an email to vnps-pot-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

To manage your VNPS Membership online, including requesting a paper newsletter, follow these steps:

1. Go to <https://vnps.z2systems.com/>
2. Enter your VNPS member username. This is usually your email address.
3. If you don't know or have forgotten your password, click on "Forgot Password?"
4. Once logged in, you can manage your account and preferences by clicking on "What would you like to do?" in the upper right-hand corner.
5. Select "Update My Profile Information"
6. To request a paper newsletter, at the bottom of your Profile Information, set "Electronic Distribution" to "No."
7. Update any other profile information, then click "Submit."

Fall Native Plant Sales (an incomplete list)

Wednesdays, Sept 4 & Oct 2, 10 am-1 pm VNPS Propagation Beds, behind the Horticulture Center at Green Spring Gardens Park.

Sat, Sept 7, 9 am-noon Master Gardeners of Prince William (many, but not exclusively native plants) at the Teaching Garden, Benedictine Monastery, Linton Hall School, 9535 Linton Hall Rd, Bristow, VA

Sat, Sept 14, 9 am-3 pm Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy Fall Native Plant Sale 17263 Southern Planter Lane, Leesburg, VA <https://loudounwildlife.org/event/fall-native-plant-sale-3/>

Sat, Sept 21, 9 am-3 pm Green Spring Garden Day brings in native plant vendors among others. Be sure to visit the VNPS propagation beds for our offerings behind the Horticulture Center. 4603 Green Spring Rd, Alexandria, VA <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring/events>

Sun, Sept 22, 10 am-2 pm (tentative) Earth Sangha Spring Open House & Plant Sale north end of Cloud Dr, Springfield, VA earthsangha.org Plants may also be purchased at other times by appointment

Sat, Sept 28, 9 am-2 pm Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale, 1701 N Quaker Lane, Alexandria, VA <http://www.northernalexandrianativeplantsale.org>.

Sat, Sept 28 1-4 pm Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S Carlin Springs Rd, Arlington, VA parks.arlingtonva.us Some plants can be preordered at registration.arlingtonva.us Click on environment, then order plants.

Answers to Puzzle on Page 5

1 G (twice compound); 2 C; 3 F (twice compound & huge); 4 D (note opposite leaves); 5 B; 6 A (note wings on central vein); 7 E (Smooth Sumac, *Rhus laevis*, would be similar but with glabrous instead of hairy stems); 8 H

Photos by Margaret Chatham (surprise!)

Potowmack Chapter Board Officers

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Alan Ford 703-732-5291

Vice President

vacant

Secretary

Pat Salamone

Treasurer

Scott Knudsen

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Walks

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Submissions to *Potowmack News* may be sent to The Editor at vnps.pot@gmail.com

**Potowmack Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society**

P. O. Box 5311

Arlington, VA 22205

<http://www.vnps.org/potowmack>

Annual Meeting coming up on Sunday, Nov 17, 2019, at Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Center. If you cannot attend to vote then, please send in this ballot by Nov 4 to Potowmack Chapter VNPS, PO Box 5311, Arlington, VA 22205, or email your vote to vnps-pot@gmail.com

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2020

The board of the Potowmack Chapter VNPS presents the following slate of officers for the 2020 year, with terms beginning January 1.

Contact Alan Ford for further information at amford@acm.org

SLATE OF OFFICERS

President:	___Alan Ford	Write-in _____
Vice President:	___vacant	Write-in _____
Secretary:	___Pat Salamone	Write-in _____
Treasurer:	___Scott Knudsen	Write-in _____

FY2020 BUDGET APPROVAL

The Board of the Potowmack Chapter VNPS presents the following proposed budget for fiscal year 2020

INCOME

Donations	\$ 600
Member Dues	\$ 5,000
Sales	\$ 11,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 16,600

EXPENSES

Administrative	\$ 500	
Green Spring Room Fees	\$ 3,300	Room rental for program meetings
Membership	\$ 190	1-yr memberships for speakers, interns
Speakers' & Leaders' Honoraria	\$ 3,000	
Newsletter Printing & Mailing	\$ 3,200	
Partial Green Spring Internship	\$ 2,600	Remainder in board approved expenses against savings, below
Plant Sales (Fairfax Co. cut)	\$ 1,650	15% of sales
Sales Tax	\$ 660	Included in sales income above
Printing/Publications	\$ 200	
Miscellaneous	\$ 300	For small unplanned expenditures
Special Board Actions	\$ 1,000	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 16,600	

Board Approved Expenses Against Savings

Green Spring Internship	\$ 1,100	Completes full funding
Huntley Meadows Internship	\$. -	Paid using unspent 2019 funds
TOTAL from SAVINGS	\$ 1,100	

I approve_____ disapprove_____ the 2020 budget.



Remembering Robert Yacovissi

The Virginia Native Plant Society, both the Potowmack Chapter and the state organization, will miss Bob Yacovissi (June 15, 1944-May 18, 2019). He was our long-time Membership Chair, keeping membership lists up to date (our members do move and change their email addresses) and printing up attractive name tags for various functions. He was instrumental in designing and implementing the VNPS membership system now used by the state and local chapters for membership and fundraising. Bob was well known for his attention to detail and meticulous care of the records of the Society. He was also a patient and dedicated teacher to those new to "learning the system."

Away from his computer, Bob enjoyed walks locally at Great Falls and elsewhere, exploring

other parts of Virginia at VNPS Annual State Meetings, and the company of trees. Cheerful, kind, an all-around good guy, VNPS was fortunate to have him as a member. (Photo by Virginia Yacovissi)

VNPS-Sponsored Green Spring Summer Intern

By Casey Lockard

Over this summer, I had the opportunity to be the Virginia Native Plant Intern at Green Spring Gardens Park. While it was an excellent way to learn about how a public garden functions on a day to day basis, I also was able to get some valuable hands on experience working in different gardens, such as the beautiful Virginia Native Plant Garden. The variety of gardens that I worked in allowed me to experience native, non-native, and invasive plants. I have always been really interested in the dynamic between different plants and the impact that invasive and non-native plants have on an ecosystem, and this internship gave me the chance to see it up close. I feel as though I learned a whole lot about how to take care of different garden styles and what the public likes to see when visiting a park.

In addition to working in the different gardens I had the opportunity to work with the Virginia Native Plant Society. Their expertise, paired with their welcoming attitude, really made my time with them enjoyable and informative. It was really interesting to work with such a passionate and friendly group. They were always busy working whenever they got together and there was truly never a dull moment. I was able to learn the names of many plants that are native to Virginia, as well as techniques for potting and labeling. Between the VNPS group and the folks at Green Spring, I always felt welcome and like a useful part of the team. I enjoyed this summer even more than I had already expected to and would love to work more in these areas. I hadn't ever thought of working in a public garden as a possible career path for me before this summer, but I really enjoyed this experience and I could definitely see myself continuing with this in the future. (Photo by Margaret Chatham)



Compound Leaves: how many can you identify?

These are all local trees, but not necessarily natives. Can you match names with pictures? Answers on page 2.

1 Mimosa, *Albizzia julibrissin*

4 White Ash, *Fraxinus americana*

7 Staghorn Sumac, *Rhus typhina*

2 Tree-of-Heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*

5 Black Walnut, *Juglans nigra*

8 Black Locust, *Robinia pseudoacacia*

3 Hercules' Club, *Aralia spinosa*

6 Shining Sumac, *Rhus copallina*

There are plenty more, but no room here



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Words of the Month: Palmate/Pinnate



Palmate: compound leaves in which the leaflets all arise from a single point, arranged (sort of) like the fingers around the palm of your hand. See the Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) to the left.

Pinnate: compound leaves in which the leaflets are arranged on either side of a central vein, like a feather. See Trumpet Creeper (*Campsis radicans*) below. Photos by Margaret Chatham.

