

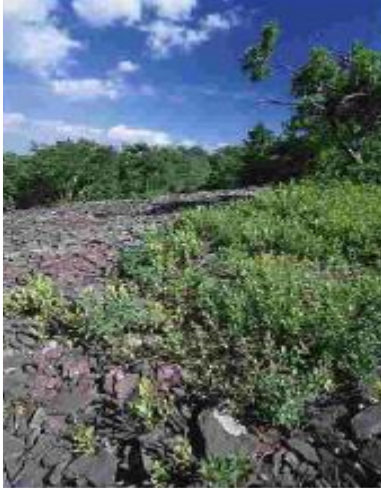
POTOWMACK NEWS

Volume 26, No.1

Potowmack Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Jan/Feb 2008

ROCK OUTCROPS OF SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK: RECENT FINDINGS **THURSDAY, JANUARY 10 AT 7:30 PM AT GREEN SPRING GARDENS**



Shenandoah National Park is known for its distinctive rocky cliffs and peaks. Recent discoveries by biologists of the Division of Natural Heritage in the Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation found that these scenic peaks harbor rare natural communities, some with flora and fauna endemic to the park. Join us for a presentation by **Gary Fleming**, DNH vegetation ecologist, as he shares the results of the biological inventory of rock outcrop sites. The National Park Service is currently writing a Rock Outcrop Management Plan to protect these fragile areas. Attend this talk, enjoy Gary's outstanding photography and learn why these natural communities are worth protecting. VNPS programs are free and open to the public. No reservations necessary.

Gary Fleming is the senior vegetation ecologist at the Virginia Natural Heritage Program. He has more than 30 years of experience in botanical and ecological inventory of the mid-Atlantic region. Since joining the Natural Heritage Program in 1992, he has been responsible for field inventory of natural communities in all regions of Virginia, the ongoing development of a state-wide vegetation classification, and landscape-level ecology studies for the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and other land managers.

Directions to Green Spring Gardens: From Interstate 395, exit at Route 236 West (Little River Turnpike); turn right at Braddock Road and go one block north to park entrance: 4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria.



A NATURAL HISTORY APPROACH TO PLANT CONSERVATION, **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 7:30 AT GREEN SPRING GARDENS**

Natural history has always been the foundation of conservation biology. For centuries, botanists collected specimens in the field to understand plant diversity. Now that many habitats are threatened, botanists have turned their focus to conservation and, increasingly, they look to the collections of herbaria and botanical gardens for insight on developing assessment and management programs. This talk will explore the value of natural history collections in light of contemporary biodiversity studies.

Gary A. Krupnick is the head of the Plant Conservation Unit in the Department of Botany, National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. At NMNH, Dr. Krupnick coordinates activities and research that focus on plant conservation, biodiversity hotspots, and endangered plant species. Dr. Krupnick is the co-editor of the book "Plant Conservation: A Natural History Approach" (University of Chicago Press; 2005), and the editor of two newsletters: the "Biological Conservation Newsletter" and the "Plant Press" (newsletter of the U.S. National Herbarium). We will try to have copies of the book available. *Directions to Green Spring (see above).*

Climate change will require interdisciplinary and thoughtful solutions, knowing that the vegetation changes caused by climate change will not fit our previous understanding of plant dynamics. Only change is certain at this point. We are pioneering, once again, on earth.

Bonnie Harper-Lore, Restoration Ecologist, U.S. Department of Transportation

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Happy New Year to all our dedicated VNPS members. I wish all of you the best for 2008. Our chapter has plans for a very exciting year. This winter we have a line-up of fascinating programs to help get us through the winter. Come spring, there will be field trips and our plant sale. But the big news is that our chapter will host the state VNPS annual meeting on the weekend of September 20th. The theme will be the flora of the Potomac River region with emphasis focused on parks along the river. With a variety of botanical excursions, kayak and canoe trips, dragonfly and butterfly walks scheduled, we plan to surprise members of other chapters with the beauty and diversity of our region. I hope you all will plan to attend. Remember that our programs are open to the public so invite a friend along, help to build our membership and to foster interest in our native flora. I ask you all to support our organization and enjoy the benefits of your membership by taking advantage of the events that we plan just for you!

Marianne Mooney

STATE CHAMPION AMERICAN PLUM

Thanks to the many volunteers who helped Arlington County's Greg Zell clear Japanese honeysuckle and white mulberry from the two largest American plums (*Prunus americana*) known in the State of Virginia. The plum trees are growing about one block off Little River Turnpike behind Ravensworth Automotive (Chevron Gas Station) 4321 Ravensworth Road in Annandale. They were first nominated and measured in the late 1980's.



BOARD OFFICERS

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(All numbers should include the 703 area code, unless otherwise noted.)
Potowmack News is published 6 times per year, in January, March, May, July, September, and November. 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.

2008 STATE VNPS WORKSHOP

Mark your calendars. The VNPS annual workshop is on **March 8, 2008** at the University of Richmond. The topic is **native orchids.**

Featured speakers are **Douglas Gill**, University of Maryland, **Dennis Whigham**, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, **Nancy VanAlstine** of Virginia's DCR-Division of Natural Heritage and **Hal Horwitz**, a VNPS member and acclaimed photographer of orchids.

PAWPAW (from Marion Lobstein, Associate Professor of Biology, Northern Virginia Community College)

"Pickin' up pawpaws, puttin' 'em in my pocket, way down yonder in the pawpaw patch" is a rhyme that many of us remember from childhood. Pawpaw, *Asimina triloba*, is one of our loveliest native fruit-bearing trees. It is the only genus in non-tropical North America of the Annonaceae or custard apple family which has 70 genera and more than 600 species that are mainly tropical (such as the cherimoya fruit of Peru and Equador).



Asimina is a genus name derived from a French name of "asimin" which was taken from a Native American name for the plant, while the species *triloba* refers to the arrangement of the six petals of the flower that are arranged in two whorls of three. One other species of this genus, *A. parviflora* is found in southern Virginia and south to Florida. *A. triloba* is found in moist, rich woods from Michigan and New York south to Florida and Texas and as far west as Nebraska. It is usually an understory tree averaging 8-12 feet, but can reach heights of 40-50 feet in optimum growth conditions. As an understory species, pawpaw develops a spreading shape, while if grown in the open, it takes on a pyramidal shape. Other common names for the pawpaw (or papaw) are false banana, Michigan banana, and custard apple, referring to the tropical smell and taste of the fruit and to the custard-like consistency of the fruit.

The handsome first green and later maroon or wine-colored flowers of pawpaw bloom in the Northern Virginia area from mid-April to early May. The one and one-half inch flowers are composed of a calyx of three green sepals, a corolla of six petals arranged in two layers (with the three inner smaller petals standing up to form a pointed



"crown"), numerous stamens arranged in a spiral, and 1-15 separate ovaries (carpels), each containing 7-18 ovules which will become seeds if each ovule is fertilized. The stigma of each carpel after 5-10 days becomes shiny, indicating that it is receptive to being pollinated and remains receptive from 4-6 days before turning brown. After the carpels are no longer receptive to pollen, the stamens then release their pollen. This prevents self-fertilization within the same flower. Pollinators are thought to be mainly beetles and flies. As the flower matures, the petals darken from green to pinkish to maroon in color as well as begin to emit an odor of fermenting grapes. One tree can produce up to 500 flowers, but often only about 15 percent of the trees develop fruit and less than 1-2 percent of the flowers develop fruit. One flower can produce 1-4 fruits that are the largest native North American fruits.

The kidney-shaped fruit can range from 3-5 inches in length and turns a brownish-yellow when it is ripe by late September. The fruits may ripen on the tree or after they fall to the forest floor (or one may take them home to ripen in a few days). Unlike the persimmon, the fruit does not require frost to ripen. The yellow flesh of the fruit has a custard-like consistency and a tropical banana-like flavor. The large, rich brown seeds of the fruit range in number from 5-7 and may be up to one inch in length. Small mammals such as raccoons, opossums, and gray squirrels are attracted to the mature fruits and will eat them, thus acting as seed dispersers.

The opposite, obovate leaves of pawpaw have entire margins and may be up to a foot long. The upper surface of the leaf is smooth and darker green, while the under surface is lighter in color and often covered with rust-colored down. The bark of the slender trunk (even if a tree is tall, its trunk seldom exceeds six inches in diameter) is dark brown with ashen blotches in shallow, irregular fissures. The buds of twigs are not covered by bud scales, but rather by rust-colored hairs. Stolens (underground horizontal stems) are sent out from older stems of pawpaws and form separate trees that are genetically identical (a type of cloning) and that are all interconnected underground.

The fruits of pawpaw are highly favored by many tribes of Native Americans and there is evidence that some tribes even planted seeds. They also used the fibrous inner bark of pawpaw to make rope, string, fish nets, even fiber cloth. Early pioneers used the bark to make fish stringers. Pioneers as well as modern day natural food enthusiasts also prized the fruit. Pioneers often stored pawpaw fruits in oats to extend their edibility range. The fruit can be eaten directly as is or made into custard, pudding, marmalade, pies, or even ice cream. Ripe pawpaws must be used in a short time or the odor may become permeating and overpowering if the fruit is stored indoors.

Check for ripening fruits early this fall. Hopefully, you will beat a squirrel or raccoon in finding the fruit at just the right stage of ripeness. The delightful flavor of the fruit will be well worth the effort!

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NEW ENGLAND WILDFLOWER SOCIETY POLICY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate “changes pose a threat to all forms of life and ecosystems and pose a direct challenge to the conservation of the flora of New England.... The Society will lead and join in activities that are designed to both adapt to climate change and mitigate further changes.” For a copy of the press release and entire document see: <http://www.newenglandwildflower.org/conserve/policy.htm#climate>

MOVING ON UP Conservationists have begun to broach a taboo *(From Economist.com; Nov 26th 2007)*

HUNDREDS of years ago, nobody worried about the deleterious effects of deliberately transplanting species. When Europeans migrated overseas, they brought wheat, barley, rye, cattle, pigs, sheep, and goats for food and horses for transport. An angling society brought European fish to Australia. A group of birdophiles introduced all the species of birds Shakespeare mentioned into the United States. They released 100 pairs of starlings in New York's Central Park; today it is one of America's most common birds.

These days people are more cautious about moving flora and fauna. The list of alien species that have upset ecosystems around the world is long and growing: the Japanese knotweed, Nile perch, Asian tiger-mosquito, brown tree-snake and even rabbits in Australia are just a few of the species that have turned from part of a balanced whole at home into invasive predators abroad. Roughly 40% of America's threatened native species can partly blame their decline on newcomers.

This phenomenon is called “ecological release”: native species freed from their usual predators, diseases and parasites sometimes become hyper-successful, and thus seriously upset the ecological balance of their new home. Nonetheless, some conservationists have proposed the radical notion of “human-assisted migration”: a species in danger of extinction, they say, should be relocated to a place where it has a better chance of surviving. Earlier this year, the magazine *Conservation* reported that a group of American eco-vigilantes called the *Torreya* Guardians were trying to save a species of Floridian yew tree called *Torreya taxifolia* by spreading its seeds up to 1,000 km north of its current geographic range. The tree's decline is blamed on global warming, which is why cooler, more northerly spots are being sought. This is not unique to Florida, either: around the world species are responding to climate change by moving either to higher (and therefore cooler) ground or northwards—sometimes up to 300km. But some species move too slowly, while others may find themselves hemmed in by towns, roads, geographic barriers or different habitats. So groups like the *Torreya* Guardians have started to lend a helping hand to species that look doomed to extinction.

This creates something of an ecological dilemma, pitting conservationists who want to prevent extinctions against those who want to preserve native ecosystems. But if current climate trends continue, the latter group may find their position increasingly untenable. It may not be possible to breed in captivity every species that gets into difficulty. Places will have to be found for them. More fundamentally, most ecosystems will probably change. Many plants and animals will be able to move without our help, and when they do, it will not be an orderly march northwards as one cohesive unit. New communities will form.

Past periods of climate change produced arrangements of species that are no longer extant. Plants and animals that today are strangers to each other may once have co-existed; species foreign to a particular area today may once have dominated it. They came about through unusual combinations of temperature, rain, seasonality, fire, floods, soil type and topograph—combinations that today do not exist.

Current climate trends might well produce climactic anomalies that allow new communities of species to form. They would be perfectly natural, yet entirely unlike any that we know. Who is to say that deliberately moved species do not belong in these new assemblages of species, and would not have made it there themselves had they not been trapped by human modification to the environment? Our concept of what is pristine—and therefore worth preserving—is informed by human experience, and therefore takes into account only a tiny fragment of evolutionary time.

Still, leaving native ecosystems alone provides an ecological baseline. Without this, deciding what is natural or right for a piece of land becomes more subjective and therefore more difficult. Witness, for instance, the British tendency to hold up the countryside as a great example of pristine nature, rather than as a deeply and extensively man-modified habitat. People come to like what they know.

As soon as conservationists start deliberately tinkering with ecosystems, might society not have more of a right to have an opinion about the aesthetics of what is produced? What if the majority of people want something that the scientific minority don't like? And might some say that if they can't keep something the way it is now—the way they like it—then why bother keeping it at all?

Once the tinkering has started, who takes responsibility for negative outcomes, like losses to agriculture or changes to the aesthetic value of an area? There are too few good answers to these questions, and we need them, as the trend toward deliberate ecological modification looks set to continue.

LOCAL EVENTS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

Fri. Jan. 18. Invasive Plants Green Spring 1:30-2:30pm. Find out which ornamental plants are classified as invasive, learn what to look for in your own backyard and discover alternatives to support wildlife. \$12 To register call 703-642-5173.

Sun. Jan 20. Survival In the National Garden Green Spring 1:30 – 3pm Holly Shimizu, Exec. Dir. Of the U.S. Botanic Garden looks at the mid atlantic plants included in the new National Garden and how they fared. \$10 To register call 703-642-5173.

Sun Jan 27. Invasive Plants: Identification, Impacts and Control of Common North American Species 1:30 – 3pm Sylvan Kaufman, curator of the Adkins Arboretum, discusses invasive plant id and control published in “Invasive Plants, Guide to Identification and Impacts and Control of Common North American Species. A book sale and signing follows: \$10 To register call 703-642-5173.

Thurs. Jan 31 7:30 -9:30pm and Sat. Feb. 2 10-2 pm Introduction to the Natural History of Lichens. Instructor **Dr. Paula DePriest.** Winter is the perfect season to search for varied hues and forms of lichens. Thursday is an illustrated lecture at Woodend. Saturday is a field trip to the Widewater area along the C&O Canal. Location: Woodend Sanctuary Tuition: \$49 for non-members. For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

Sat. Feb. 2 Green Grows the Roof 9:30 to 11:30 am Leader: Barbara Farron. Join Audubon Naturalist Society member Barbara Farron for a presentation on the green-roofed garden shed she and her husband designed and constructed in Fairfax County. (Free, but registration required.) For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

Sat. February 23 Winter Tree Identification 9am-3pm Leader Cris Fleming Using the clues of bark, fruit, buds, and twigs, practice identifying trees on the ground of Woodend Sanctuary, beginning inside and then moving out. (Free, but registration required.) For Information call: 301-652-9188 x16

Thurs. Feb. 28 Butterfly Gardening Long Branch Nature Center. 625 S. Carlin Springs Rd., Arlington 7:30 - 9:15 p.m. Join members of the Washington Area Butterfly Club for their yearly, much anticipated presentation on gardening for butterflies. Free. Registration required, register on-line <https://registration.arlingtonva.us/vsiwebtrac.html> or call 703-228-4747. Refer to Program #622540C For more information: 703-228-6535.

ARLINGTON’S RiP PROJECT

Sun. Jan 6 BARCROFT PARK, (1-3 pm) 4200 S. Four Mile Run Drive. Help protect Arlington's only bog! Steps away from the restaurants of Shirlington, Arlington's magnolia bog is a true relict. Join in to remove invasive plants that threaten it. **Sponsored by the Virginia Native Plant Society and Arlington County's RiP program.** Meet by the parking garage off Four Mile Run. Wear sturdy footwear and bring loppers, pruners, hand saws and heavy gloves, if you have them.

Sat. Jan. 12- Second Saturdays at Bluemont Park 9 am to noon. Neighbors and RiP volunteers will continue to meet at Bluemont Junction Park on second Saturdays. 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 alongside the Bluemont Bicycle Trail near N Jefferson and Fifth Streets Contact John Huennekens at 524-3853, or jhuenn@gwu.edu.

Sun. Feb. 3. Barcroft Park, 4200 S. Four Mile Run Drive. 1-3pm (See above for details)

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

NOTE: Some training and tools provided. Long pants and long sleeves recommended. If you have clippers, loppers and/or gloves, please bring them. For more information contact Kasey Spriggs at Kspriggs@arlingtonva.us or Jamie Bartalon at 703-228-7747.

FAIRFAX COUNTY’S INVASIVE MANAGEMENT AREA (IMA) PROGRAM

Winter is the best time to assess your home landscape to see what invasive species may have crept in over the year (and to get to the honeysuckle and English ivy that might be there). Check out the IMA schedule of events and activities at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/nrp-ima.htm.

Looking ahead: Spring time means training opportunities -- all are invited to our Infamous Invasive Species Walks - not for the faint of heart!

February 23: See the IMA display at the EcoSavvy Gardening Conference at Green Spring Gardens

April 12th is being designated the Remove an Invasive Plant Day by the IMA program. Come join us at one of our 40 IMA sites to remove invasive plants, learn new invasive plants, and to work outside in spring!

For more information: Katherine.Frederick@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703 324 8681.

FALLS CHURCH INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL TASK FORCE Upcoming 2007 Events:

Check with us in March. For more information, contact Jeremy Edwards, City of Falls Church Senior Urban Forester, 703-248-5016 or jedwards@fallschurchva.gov.

VNPS CO-SPONSORED INVASIVE REMOVAL EVENTS

INVASIVES CONTROL WORK PARTIES AT TURKEY RUN PARK ALONG THE POTOMAC

Help work with The Nature Conservancy to help control invasive plant species on National Park Service lands in the Potomac Gorge at Turkey Run Park off the GW Memorial Parkway. Wear work gloves and boots or sturdy shoes, and bring water, snacks, and hand saws or loppers if you have them. Our schedule for January and February

is: 10:00 am to 1:00pm **Jan 10, Jan 19, Feb 7, Feb 16.** Check on meeting location with Alan Ford: 703.732.5291; email: amford@acm.org


INVASIVES CONTROL WORK PARTIES AT BARCROFT BOG ALONG FOUR MILE RUN

Help protect Arlington's only bog! Steps away from the restaurants of Shirlington, Arlington's magnolia bog is a true relict and globally rare.. Join in to remove invasive plants that threaten it. **Sponsored by the Virginia Native Plant Society and Arlington County's RIP program.** Meet by the parking garage off Four Mile Run, 4200 S. Four Mile Run Drive. Wear sturdy footwear and bring loppers, pruners, hand saws and heavy gloves, if you have them. Some tools and training available. The schedule for January and February is **Sun Jan 6 and Sun. Feb. 3 (1-3 pm)**

Sat. Mar 1. Dream Plants found by the Jamestown Colonists in 1607 from 10 to noon at the State Arboretum of Virginia, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Boyce VA 22620 **Co-sponsored by the Potowmack Chapter, VNPS** Call: 540-837-1758 Ext. 0. *Directions: Take I-66 West to Rt. 17 North (Exit 23, sign says Delaplane/Paris). Follow Route 17 North to its junction with Route 50 West at a traffic light. Turn left onto Route 50/17, the Arboretum is approximately 7 miles on the left, about 3 miles past the Shenandoah River.*

Old VNPS Potowmack Chapter newsletters can be found on line at <http://www.vnps.org/>. Click on Chapters and then scroll down and click on Potowmack Chapter.

WANT TO JOIN THE CHAPTER LISTSERV? Send an e-mail to Orlis@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>

	<p>Potowmack Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society P.O. Box 5311 Arlington, VA 22205</p>
<p><u>Chapter Events Calendar</u></p>	
<p>Jan 10 Board Meeting 6:45pm Rock Outcrop Program 7:30pm Green Spring Gardens</p>	
<p>Feb 13 Board Meeting 6:45pm Plant Conservation Program 7:30pm Green Spring Gardens</p>	
<p>Mar 1 Dream Plants of 1607 10 to noon Blandy (Virginia Arboretum)</p>	<p><i>Please verify your address information and your renewal date on the mailing label.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Printed on recycled paper</i></p>