



WILD NEWS

Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2018-05

September - October 2018

Thursday, September 6, 2018,
7:30 p.m.

PWWS Membership Meeting
Bethel Lutheran Church,
Manassas, VA

An evening with Dr. Emily
Southgate who will discuss
“Vanished Landscapes
of Northern Virginia”

Dr. Southgate will explain how historical ecologists reconstruct past landscapes, using fossil pollen and historical documents. She will relate this to the history of northern Virginia, for the last 18,000 years, with an emphasis on the last 3-400 years. She will end with a discussion of how understanding this history can contribute to conservation in this area.

Dr. Southgate is an historical ecologist, with graduate degrees in both botany and history. She studies the lasting impacts of past human activities on current landscapes, also attempting to reconstruct past landscape patterns and processes,

especially as these relate to conservation. She is currently finishing revision of her book “People and the Land Through Time: Linking Ecology and History,” originally published in 1996, under contract with Yale University Press. She is also



active in the Virginia Native Plant Society, leading field trips and giving lectures for them and for other conservation organizations in the area. She is retired from Rutgers University, and currently teaches part-time at Hood College.

From the President

The summer is waning, and it's time for our PWWS annual meeting where we elect officers to two-year terms. I'm proud to serve as your president and am pleased to appear with an excellent slate of candidates. William Carromero, our speaker last month who is employed as

National Botanist for the USDA Forest Service, has agreed to continue as Vice President. We are so fortunate to have someone of his professional stature. We appreciate our faithful secretary Karen Waltman who is willing to continue her service to the chapter. New on the ballot this year is Valerie Kenyon-Gaffney who has recently taken over treasurer duties by appointment of the board of directors. This election will formalize her term as treasurer. She had been serving as our publicity chair, but retired this year from her career with *The Washington Post* and agreed to take on the duties of treasurer. Thank you all for serving in leadership roles for PWWS!

I'm pleased that Emily Southgate agreed to be our speaker for our September meeting. When I last saw Emily she and I participated in an invasive plant pull by the Piedmont Chapter at the G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area on March 31. She is an accomplished ecologist and did graduate research in the New Jersey Pine Barrens.



Stalwart volunteers from our chapter and some Master Gardeners of Prince William have been working at the I-95 northbound rest area at Dale City. After three years, the site is stunning. Sure, it has weeds, but the volunteers have kept the worst of them at bay. Our weeding parties always include refreshments and “decorations” consisting of colorful blooms and butterflies. I thank this year’s volunteers Suzanne Conway, Valerie Kenyon Gaffney, Brigitte Hartke, Andrea Kinder, Sharon McCracken, Karen O’Leary, Marlies Smith, Carol Thompson, and Karen Waltman.

Recently Marion Lobstein had a full house at the training room of the Manassas Battlefield Park’s headquarters. Nearly 20 people participated in her workshop on the use of the app for the Flora of Virginia. She introduced us to the various menu options and took us through the graphic key to

identify some of our local species. We looked briefly at the dichotomous key, but most of us would have to look up all of the terminology as we went along. Unfortunately, there is no toggle between the glossary and the key. The graphic key is much easier for amateurs. We discovered some other quirks of the system, but the “plant nerd” participants had a lot of fun both inside the classroom and for our brief time outside identifying trees. As scientists discover more information about the Virginia Flora, the app will undergo updates to keep current. Marion was generous of her time in presenting this workshop at no charge and even provided refreshments for the group. She will be leading a botanical walk at the Battlefield’s Deep Cut later in August, as this issue goes to press. Thank you, Marion, for all you do!

There are TWO annual meetings in September: our chapter’s is September 6, and the state-wide meeting is a weekend affair in Williamsburg, September 14-16. I would like to see a good showing from PWWS; join us for a fun and educational time at the College of William & Mary.

~ Nancy



To order App for iOS and android phones and tablets, visit www.floraofvirginia.org (\$19.99).



**Prince William Wildflower
Society Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 5, 2018,
7:30 p.m.
Bethel Lutheran Church**

Announcements:

President Nancy Vehrs thanked Nancy Arrington and the many volunteers for a successful plant sale on Saturday, May 12. PWWS made about \$3,100 at the event, our only fund raiser.

Marion Lobstein, PWWS Botany Chair, announced that the app for the *Flora of Virginia* is now active.

Marion will hold her annual walk at Deep Cut in the Manassas National Battlefield Park on Thursday, Aug. 23. Look in Wild News for details on walks, events and volunteer opportunities.

Brenda Hallam and Marion Lobstein provided refreshments. PWWS is in need of a membership chair and a webmaster. If interested in volunteering please call Nancy Vehrs, 703-368-2898.

September's Annual Meeting will be Thursday, September 6 at 7:30 p.m. Emily Southgate will present a program on *Vanishing Landscapes*, and election for PWWS officers will be held.

Program: Gardening with Pollinators

Nancy introduced our PWWS vice-president, Dr. William Carronero as our guest speaker. William is the National Botanist for the USDA Forest Service, and part of his work includes revegetation and restoration work with native plants to improve ecosystem diversity and support pollinators. William reviewed the types of plant pollination and told us that 15% of crop species require animal pollination. The animal pollinators? Bats, hummingbirds, and insects-butterflies, beetles, moths, bees. Pollinators are in decline, so what can we do? In our gardens, William suggested we provide native plants that produce nectar, a water source, shelter and nesting sites. It is also important to provide plants that are food sources for moth and butterfly caterpillars. Provide diversity, different heights and colors, and stay away from cultivars as they usually don't produce as much nectar as natives. Some beautiful pictures of plants and pollinators were shown; looking out on butterfly and bees in a pollinator garden on a sunny day would make it all worthwhile, and we would be

helping the pollinators. Thank you, William.

Check out these websites for more information:
<https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers>, Celebrating Wildflowers, Monarch Joint Venture, National Pollinator Garden Network, and the Xerces Society.

Doorprizes: Brigitte Hartke – Witch hazel shrub; Brenda Hallam – carex plant; Will Shaw – *NoVA Native Guide*; Val Nietzey – *Plant Invaders of the North Atlantic Region*; Katie Brainerd – *NoVA Native Guide*.

In attendance: Cathy Hindman, Dee Brown, Glen Macdonald, Brenda Hallam, Jeanne Fowler, Nancy Arrington, Virginia Vaglia, Sarah Vaglia, Carol Thompson, Jeanne Endrikat, Rose Breece, David Singman, Muriel Devine, Val Neitzey, Deanna High, Jack High, Tom Attanaro, Toni Woods, Peggy M. Martin, Eileen Miles, Brian McDougal, Brigitte Hartke, Rich Verjinski, Louise Edsall, Ann Coakley, Will Shaw, Carrie Blair, Mary Ann Tarbell, Janet Wheatcraft, Charlie Grymes, Katie Brainerd, Maria Stapleton, Harry Glasgow, Nancy Vehrs, Karen Waltman, William Carronero-speaker.

Karen Waltman, Secretary

SAVE the DATES

Virginia Native Plant Society Annual Meeting, Williamsburg, September 14-16, 2018 —
See the complete schedule of walks and talks at vnps.org

November 1, 2018 PWWS General Meeting, Charles Smith will present the program.

Events

For events not scheduled at the time this issue went to press, please continue to visit the [Prince William Wildflower Society Facebook page](#).

September

Sunday Afternoon, September 9, 1 pm
Fauquier County. Second Sunday Walk, Autumn fields at Clifton Institute, by invitation of Environmental Studies on the Piedmont. Easy hike through fields at the ES field station near Warrenton. Identify grasses, native trees and shrubs, and late wildflowers. For more information, contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com

Tuesday Evening, September 11, 6-7:30 pm
"Pollinator Habitats" with Marie Majorov, VA Master Naturalist. Learn how to landscape to attract and support native pollinators at all stages of their life cycles. After, there will be a walk to Blandy's revitalized pollination garden. FOSA and SM members \$5; others, \$10. Reservations recommended.

Wednesday Evening, September 12, 7:30-9 pm
Dr. Desiree Narango: How Native Plants Support Wildlife, Huntley Meadows Visitor Center. Desiree Narango studied with Doug Tallamy and Peter Marra. She'll present results of her research on how well various trees and shrubs support insectivorous Carolina chickadees and other songbirds. Co-sponsored by Friends of Dyke Marsh, Plant NOVA Natives, the Northern Virginia Bird Club, and the Potowmack Chapter. Free and open to public



(pictured, pond at Merrimac Farm)

Don't Miss It!!

Friday-Sunday, September 14-16, 2018
VNPS Annual Meeting & Conference, All Day, William & Mary School of Education. John Clayton Chapter members are excited to host this year's annual meeting, "Sustaining Nature, Sustaining Ourselves". Information and registration:

<https://vnps.org/vnps-annual-meeting-2018/> A dozen options for field trips and plant walks, excellent food and speakers. Visit <https://vnps.org/vnps-annual-meeting-2018/> for links to the Conference brochure and schedule.

Tuesday Afternoon, September 18, 4-6 pm, Richmond Area. Join guide Bill Shanabruch and the Pocahontas Chapter of the [Virginia Native Plant Society](#) to explore a local native plant hotbed, on private land that is a favorite seed collection site, ethically of course, of [Reedy Creek Environmental](#), an organization created in 2016 to address the scarcity of native plants of local ecotype for use in the metropolitan Richmond area. Contact visit coordinator Leslie Allanson at leleorr4@gmail.com or 804-335-5866 to register and obtain the address.

Sunday Morning, September 30, 8 am, Bird & Nature Walk at Merrimac Farm, last Sunday of every month. Join us as we look for birds, some getting ready for their southern migrations! We meet at Merrimac Farm, Stone House, 15014 Deepwood Lane, Nokesville. Dress for the weather, bring binoculars and cameras. Info and RSVP, 703-499-4954 or alliance@pwconserve.org

October

Thursday Evening, October 11, 7:30-9 pm

Megan Whatton: Habitat Network

Green Spring Gardens Horticulture Center

Habitat Network Project Manager for the Nature Conservancy introduces this free online platform to explore how our collective efforts to transform yards and urban landscapes into more diverse habitat can support wildlife and connect people to nature.

Sunday Morning, October 28, 8 am, Bird & Nature

Walk at Merrimac Farm, last Sunday of every month. We meet at Merrimac Farm, Stone House, 15014 Deepwood Lane, Nokesville. Dress for the weather, bring binoculars and cameras. Info and RSVP, 703-499-4954 or alliance@pwconserve.org



“Counting Crows and other birds . . .”

At a recent Merrimac Farm Bird Walk, the group does a tally of birds seen and heard along the walk. Phil Silas, ‘Susie, Marlies Smith, Nancy Vehrs, Harry Glasgow and Brian Smith.



Looking Ahead

Many glorious days of late summer and early fall still lie ahead of us, days of harvesting produce and observing the fall bird migrations. There will come a day in the fall when thoughtful eyes will turn toward gardens beginning to show their age. Plants get leggy and begin to sprawl; ragged, speckled leaves turn brown; spent flowers set their seeds.



Birds depend upon the seeds to give them sustenance through the winter months and into the spring. An abundance of seeds often means the difference between life and death for birds.

Heed the call for ‘a gentle plea for chaos’ and resist the urge to do a clean up, to restore order. Those who are successful at letting gardens age naturally by leaving the plants to go to seed into the cold, snowy months, are rewarded with views of a landscape transformed by the first frosts and snows. The forms and shapes of plants take on a beauty all their own, some might say rivaling their beauty at other times of year.



CARDINAL FLOWER

(*Lobelia cardinalis*)

Marion Lobstein, PWS Botany Chair

The most outstanding feature of Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) is its vibrant scarlet red color. The stunning sight of even a single Cardinal Flower in August and September is something you won't soon forget. In Virginia, the Cardinal Flower is the only red member of the genus *Lobelia* in the Bluebell Family (Campanulaceae). Rarely, flowers may be white or pink. The scientific name *Lobelia cardinalis* was assigned by Linnaeus in his 1753 *Species Plantarum*. The genus *Lobelia* was named in honor of Matthias de l'Obel, a 17th century Flemish herbalist, and the species epithet *cardinalis* refers to the red hat or biretta and robes worn by cardinals in the Roman Catholic Church. Cardinal Flower grows in a wide geographic range of the eastern US and eastern Canada and, less commonly, even west into California. This spectacular plant is found in every county of Virginia. Other common *Lobelias* in our area include the Great Blue Lobelia (*L. siphilitica*), Pale-Spike Lobelia (*L. spicata*, with 3 varieties), Indian Tobacco (*L. inflata*), and the Downy Lobelia (*Lobelia puberula*). Three other species are found in other parts of Virginia. With the exception of Cardinal Flower, all of Virginia's *Lobelia* species are the various shades of blue characteristic of the Campanulaceae or Bluebell Family.

Cardinal Flower is a short-lived perennial with a fibrous root system that produces basal offshoots. Usually Cardinal Flower grows fifteen inches to three feet tall with unbranched leafy stems, but occasionally the stem is branched and the plant can grow up to six feet tall. The two six-inch-long

alternate leaves are tooth-edged, oblong to lance shaped, and pointed at both ends. They are a darker green on the rougher upper surface and paler green and may have fine hairs on the lower surface. The shorter (several inches) to several feet longer flowering racemes consist of numerous slender blossoms (up to 50 flowers) about one-and-a-half to two inches long. The sequence of blooming over up to a six-week period is from the bottom to top of the raceme. At the base of each flower there is typically 1-2 small bract(s). Each flower has a calyx of five linear green sepals at the base of the tubular red corolla formed by five petals fused at their base but split in two arching upper

lobes and three lower lobes that point downward. There are five stamens that are fused into a red ring around the style and stigma of the pistil. The pistil has an inferior ovary with nectary glands at the top of the ovary. There are two phases of development in the blooming period. The first stage is the typically five-day long male phase where the tips of the anthers ready to release pollen protrude from the top of the upper two fused petals. A row of white hairs is on the outside of the anthers and resembles a white mustache. These act as a pollen comb to dust the heads of the primary pollinators, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, its only pollinator. Hummingbirds are attracted to the red color of the flowers, and the beak of this hummingbird is the correct length to sip nectar from the base of the approximately one-and-a-half-inches-long corolla tube. During this phase, there is copious release of nectar on which the Hummingbird feeds. The female phase

follows where the top of the style with the stigma pushes through the anthers, and when a hummingbird visits for nectar, its head that has been dusted with pollen will transfer pollen to the stigma. The flowers of a plant can be pollinated with pollen from the same plant, or cross-pollination between two different plants can occur. The fruit that forms is a two-celled capsule with numerous small seeds that can be dispersed by wind.



Due to copious nectar production, insects such as butterflies (Spicebush Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail, and Pipevine Swallowtail) as well as bumblebees visit Cardinal Flowers. The Spicebush Swallowtail has a proboscis long enough to reach the nectar but does not transfer pollen. Bumblebees can pilfer nectar through slits in the corolla tube.

When cut or bruised, parts of the Cardinal Flower exude a milky sap that is toxic with up to fourteen alkaloids being present. It has no edible uses to humans and may be a deer-resistant species. Some moth species can eat the leaves. However, the medicinal uses are numerous. Many Native American tribes used this *Lobelia* species as well as others such as the Great Blue Lobelia (*L. siphilitica*) and Indian Tobacco (*L. inflata*) to treat venereal diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea. Early French fur trappers in Canada used these plants to treat syphilis, especially Great Blue Lobelia, and these *Lobelia* species were introduced into Europe by the 1700s, and Linnaeus assigned the Great Blue the name *Lobelia siphilitica*. Extracts from Cardinal Flower used as a body wash were supposedly a love charm. Another popular use was as an anthelmintic as well as to induce vomiting and treat other digestive system problems. Its use as an antispasmodic was used to treat respiratory system problems such as asthma, croup, colds and whooping cough. Poultices were used to treat sores and wounds. Other uses included treating fevers, headaches, cramps, and nervous system problems such as nervousness, epilepsy, spasms, and convulsions.

Locally, Cardinal Flower can be seen in moist to wet areas including ditches, moist to wet meadows, and edges of streams. It prefers some to full shade and fairly rich but neutral pH soils. With its eye-catching

flower color, Cardinal Flower adds color and interest to the late summer and early fall Virginia landscape and native plant gardens. The hummingbird is Cardinal Flower's only pollinator; it provides an opportunity to observe Ruby-throated hummingbirds as well as butterflies and other insects that will visit it.



A good website to see the details of Cardinal Flower structure and Hummingbird pollination:

Eye on Nature website: Cardinal Flowers and Hummingbirds–Pollination Perfection <https://eyeonature.wordpress.com/2013/01/12/cardinal-flowers-and-hummingbirds-pollination-perfection/>

Explore your Talents, Hone Your Skills, and Join Our Board



PWWS is in need of a **webmaster** and is still seeking a **membership chair**. If you would like to learn more about either of these two volunteer positions, please contact Nancy Vehrs at nvehrs1@yahoo.com or 703-368-2898.

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 83, Manassas, Virginia 20108-0083



* Helianthus *

Next Meeting:

Thursday, November 1, 2018, with Charles Smith
Bethel Lutheran Church, Plantation Lane, Manassas, Virginia 20110

Marion Lobstein's recent PWWS Meadow Walk, held August 23, 2018. Many eager participants met to identify late-summer flowering native plants. Butterflies, finally, were in abundance.



Prince William Wildflower Society

Wild News is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Prince William Wildflower Society, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, Virginia 20108, vnps.org/princewilliamwildflowersociety/ Nancy Vehrs, President; Brigitte Hartke, Editor. Original Material in *Wild News* may be reprinted if credit is given to PWWS, to *Wild News* and to the author of the material, if named. Submissions of events and other information of interest to our chapter are welcome. Feel free to submit them to: brigittehartke@gmail.com with "Newsletter Editor in the subject line. Next submission deadline: October 15, 2018