



Wild News

The Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Prince William Wildflower Society, A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society
2019-03

May-June 2019

May 2 Meeting

"Container Gardening with Natives"

7:30 p.m., Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church
8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas



Nancy Berlin, the Natural Resources Specialist and Master Gardener Coordinator for Virginia Cooperative Extension-Prince William, is our May speaker. She coordinates about 180 active volunteer environmental educators. She will talk about "Container Gardening with Natives," a subject that can apply to people from apartment dwellers to estate owners. She holds a graduate certificate in Natural Resources Management and Policy from Virginia Tech and has been with the Cooperative Extension Office since 2007. PWWS meetings are free and open to the general public. Refreshments served and door prizes awarded.

From the President – Nancy Vehrs

PWWS has been very busy this spring. Bluebell Festival, garden tours, school events, Earth Day events – we've been a presence at all of them! And it wouldn't be possible without our volunteers.

The Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm was perfect this year with peak blooms combining with fabulous weather. Sponsored by our friends at the Prince William Conservation Alliance, the festival drew about 1000 participants. PWWS members Judy Gallagher, Charlie Grymes, Charles Smith, Janis Stone, and I all led tours that were well attended. My group included a number of children and one little girl became so attached to me that she held my hand. I was touched. Rubber boots were the footwear of the day as the boardwalks did not cover all of the wet and muddy areas from recent rains. The visitors didn't seem to mind as the Virginia Bluebells cast their spell on all who viewed them. Back at our PWWS table, we sold 56 bluebells that Nancy Arrington and I shared from our gardens. We also engaged children with our butterfly and host plant matching display that utilized our *Wildflowers for Butterfly Gardens* brochure for the answers. Many thanks to our table volunteers, Joyce Andrew, Dee Brown, Barbara Deegan, Theresa DeFluri, Marion Lobstein, Brian and Owen McDougal, Carol Thompson, and Karen Waltman.

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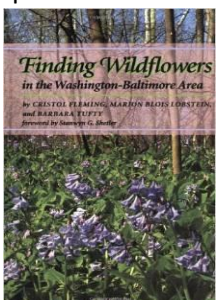
Pictured: Carol Thompson helps two children match butterflies with host plants at the Bluebell Festival as Harry Glasgow and others look on. Photo by Nancy Vehrs
Left: Photo of Nancy Berlin by Carroll Schneider

(From the President, continued from page one)
Our spring wildflower garden tour, our 32nd, was back after a one year hiatus. Once again, we were fortunate to have favorable weather and picture-perfect gardens. We thank our gracious gardeners, Janice Beaverson,



Jeanne Endrikat (above) and Janet Wheatcraft, our “J” team, for sharing their gardens with the public. We had as many as 114 people visit one garden. Karen Waltman rounded up a complete set of volunteer hosts whom we thank for their service: Joyce Andrew, Nancy Arrington, Barbara Deegan, Jan Doble, Bonnie Fulford, Valerie Kenyon Gaffney, Brenda Hallam, Deanna High, Beverly Houston, and Carol Thompson.

I had the pleasure of presenting programs to several different groups these last couple of months. After having presented two programs at the Woodbridge Senior Center earlier, I was invited back again in March, and this time I presented my “Attracting Butterflies to Your Yard with Native Plants” program. Many of the residents attend these programs as entertainment, but a few people took copious notes and asked a lot of engaging questions. Earlier this month I presented the same butterfly program to the Garden Club at Regency, an over 55 golf club community in Haymarket. This group is into “traditional” neat and tidy gardening so I’m not sure that they will heed my advice, but at least I planted a seed about the value of native plants.



Both the Lifelong Learning Institute and the Prince William Conservation Alliance engaged me to talk about places to find wildflowers in the local area. I managed to keep my talk short for LLI, but for the recent PWCA event, I had a co-presenter in

Janis Stone and we found it difficult to limit ourselves. As some of you may know, Janis takes exquisite wildflower photos and her pictures captivated the audience. Despite our region’s urbanization, there are so many places to visit in the local area. We recommended the book *Finding Wildflowers in the Washington-Baltimore Area* co-written by Cris Fleming and our own Marion Lobstein back in 1995. Since that time Merrimac Farm Wildlife Management Area in Nokesville and Doves Landing Park in Manassas have opened and offer even more options.

For the third year in a row, I participated in the T. Clay Wood Elementary School’s STEAM event. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Math. The school’s multipurpose room becomes a noisy learning center as students and their parents visit stations and participate in the different activities. While



my butterflies and their larval host species matching exercise, as well as “parts of a plant,” were not as popular as the fingerprinting table next to me, many kids did stop by. The coordinating teacher provided me with some gift cards to use as prizes to encourage participation. Once the students began the butterfly game, they were hooked and some even worked on it as a team.

Our chapter may not offer as many guided botanical walks as some others, but Marion Lobstein led her annual spring walk at the Battlefield’s Stone Bridge on April 17 while the Virginia Bluebells were still in peak bloom. Attendance was excellent. Some years ago we scheduled this walk for a weekend, and no one showed up. We dropped it for a couple of years, then brought it back as a weekday walk. Instant success! Thank you, Marion, for lending your expertise to our members and the public.

Given a favorable weather forecast and a break in my schedule, I will occasionally advertise on Facebook a nature walk to a local park or natural area on short notice. These walks are not as technically oriented because I do not possess the botanical skills of professionals, but those of us who participate have fun and share our knowledge. If you have a place you would like to visit with fellow members, please let me know and I'll try to arrange a group visit.

Last fall we had a PWWS field trip to the Quarry Gardens at Schuyler in Nelson County, and those who went all expressed interest in visiting again in the spring. This is a native garden that was created in the last few years. Learn more about it at <http://quarrygardensatschuyler.org/>. I'll try to arrange a group visit later in May. Let me know if you are interested, nvehrs1@yahoo.com.

At the end of March, I had the distinct pleasure of traveling to the Texas Hill Country to view the famous Texas Bluebonnets for myself as part of a VNPS-sponsored field trip. Our group of 20 visited Austin, Fredericksburg, and San Antonio to see natural areas and botanical gardens. It was a memorable trip with so *many* lovely flowers. I'll plan to show some of my photographs of them at next year's member slide show in January.



(In the Bluebonnets. Photo by Sherry Parker)

This month we're privileged to have Nancy Berlin as our speaker. She is well-known for her work with meadows, but this time she will present something that touches even apartment dwellers: container gardening with native plants. I hope to see many of you there.

- Nancy Vehrs, President

**Prince William Wildflower Society
Membership Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 7, 2019, 7:30 p.m.
Bethel Lutheran Evangelical Church, Manassas**

President Nancy Vehrs called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Announcements:

Carol Thompson has been providing a ride to our meetings for charter member Jeanne Fowler, and Carol announced that Jeanne was celebrating her 93rd



birthday. Jeanne stood and accepted applause and Happy Birthday wishes from those present.

Jeanne Fowler with Carol Thompson

Dee Brown was thanked for bringing deviled eggs and other contributions for refreshments.

Nancy V., chair of the PWWS Garden Tour, reported that Janet Wheatcraft and Jeanne Endrikat agreed to have their gardens on the Sat., April 20 Garden Tour. Nancy V. is looking for a third member's garden to be on the tour. [Later Janice Beaverson agreed to host her garden on the tour.]

Nancy Arrington, charter member and founder of PWWS, is chair of the annual PWWS Plant Sale, and she announced it will be held on Sat., May 11, the day before Mothers' Day, from 9 a.m. to noon. She asked all to start potting extra native plants for PWWS's only fundraiser, and pots are available at Nancy Vehrs's home [8318 Highland St., Manassas, 20110]. Nancy A. has compiled a list of deer resistant plants, and the list will be available at the Plant Sale to help those shopping for deer-resistant plants.

The Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm in Nokesville will be Sun., March 14, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Volunteers to work the PWWS booth are needed.

Virginia Native Plant Society announcement - Nancy Vehrs, also president of VNPS, reported on the Sat., March 9 Workshop, "Our Changing Forests: Forest Health, Management and Restoration." The venue is in Charlottesville, and it is larger than the one used in Richmond, so there should be room for all who want to register.

Other announcements of events, field trips, and volunteer opportunities are listed in *Wild News*.

Program: Propagation: Tips and Techniques to Make More Plants

Nancy V. introduced the speaker, Paige Thacker, Horticulture Agent and Unit Coordinator for Virginia Cooperative Extension-Prince William. On all the chairs, Paige placed a handout from the Virginia Cooperative Extension, and we could follow the handout and her Power Point program as she discussed ways to successfully 'make more plants.'

At the top of the handout it states, "Plant Propagation is the art and science of multiplication of plants-the controlled increase in plant numbers." Paige



discussed steps for dividing perennials, as well as *when* to divide. For example, spring and summer blooming plants should be divided September through October, and one should allow 4 to 6

weeks before the ground freezes. Fall bloomers should be divided in spring when new growth tips emerge, but before hot weather sets in. As we prepare to divide plants for our May 11 plant sale, the guidelines were timely as well. The information on collecting, harvesting, and storing seeds, as well as sowing seeds was very thorough but easy to follow, but of course a more time consuming method of making more plants. Thank you to Paige for a very interesting program.

Door prizes included the following: a children's book, *Mason Meets a Mason Bee* (with photography by Heather Holm, the speaker at the Feb. author event); two copies of *The Flora of Prince William County* checklist; a copy of *Native Plants for Northern Virginia*; and a small glass vase and a 'logo pack' prepared by Val

Neitzey using a laser engraver from Shane's Signs. The items in the pack have the Virginia Native Plant Society logo engraved on them and include a cork trivet and a resin paperweight.

In attendance: Leslie Paulson, Marlies Smith, Margaret Fisher, Janet Wheatcraft, Rita Romano, Glen Macdonald, Dee Brown, Jim Gallagher, Judy Gallagher, Karen Waltman, Ellen Miles, Jeanne Endrikat, Beverly Houston, Janice Beaverson, Valerie Kenyon Gaffney, Nancy Arrington, Janis Stone, Tom Attanaro, Mike Larson, Leslie Larson, Val Neitzey, Carol Thompson, Jeanne Fowler, Sonia Monson, Sue Cleary, Julie Sarr, David Sarr, Brigitte Hartke, Bonnie Fulford, Nancy Vehrs, Harry Glasgow, and speaker Paige Thacker.

Karen Waltman, Secretary

Deer Resistant Native Plants

During our plant sale, we often get questions about whether the deer will eat a certain plant. For this year's sale (Saturday May 11), I want to have a list of deer resistant natives that we can hand out to our customers. As a start, I have compiled a list gleaned from years of battling deer in my own garden. I hope other PWWS members can add to the list, which will include natives that we don't have in our sale. I can email a copy to anyone who is interested. I also brought copies of the list to our March meeting.

Nancy Arrington, Plant Sale Chairman

narrington1@verizon.net

703-408-7446

SAVE THE DATES!

Saturday, May 11, Annual Wildflower and Native Plant Sale, grounds of Bethel Lutheran Church, Plantation Lane, Manassas, 9 a.m. - noon

July 11 Meeting (rescheduled because of July 4 holiday), 7:30 p.m., Bethel Lutheran Church

September 5 Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Bethel Lutheran Church, Alonso Abugattus, Capital Naturalist, *Wildflower Folklore and Ethnobotany*

September 27-29, Virginia Native Plant Society Annual Meeting, Front Royal



**Jack-in-the-Pulpit
(*Arisaema triphyllum*)
Marion Lobstein
PWS Botany Chair**

Unlike many wildflowers that make a beautiful but brief spring appearance, the perennial Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*) appears later in April and continues to add interest to

moist woodlands until late fall. The hooded inflorescence which resembles a pulpit (a spathe) has a "Jack" (a spadix) standing in the center as if delivering a sermon. Perhaps he's preaching preservation--advising all visitors to protect our wildflowers, and not to pick, dig, step on, or otherwise disturb nature's beauty.

Jack-in-the-pulpit is found in the eastern half of the lower 48 states (except southern-most Florida) and into southern parts of the southeast Canadian provinces. This species is a member of the Arum Family (*Araceae*). In fact, Linnaeus assigned the binomium *Arum triphyllum* to this species in 1753. The current genus name is *Arisaema* which was assigned by the German botanist Carl Martius in 1831. The name is derived from the Greek *aris* for arum and *haima* for blood (some species have blood-red spots on vegetative parts or the blistering effects from handling the corm or berries). World-wide, there are 170-200 species in this genus, but only two species are native to the lower 48 states and to Virginia: *A. triphyllum* (referring to the three leaflets of the compound leaf) (Jack-in-the-pulpit) and *A. dracontium* (referring to the dragon's tongue extended spadix tip)(Green Dragon). In the *Flora of Virginia* manual and mobile App, three subspecies of *A. triphyllum* are listed. These subspecies are separated by morphological and chromosome differences. The common subspecies *triphyllum* is found in most counties of Virginia. A second subspecies *pusillum* (meaning small) is found in seven counties, but only in Fairfax County in Northern Virginia. A third subspecies, *stewarsonii*, is documented only for three counties in southwestern Virginia. *A. dracontium* is documented for most counties in Virginia. Other common names for Jack-in-the-pulpit are based on either the use of the corm as a "turnip" type vegetable and/or the intense burning produced by raw parts. These names include

Indian turnip, marsh turnip, swamp turnip, wild turnip, dragon turnip, pepper root, wild pepper, and devil's ear.

Jack-in-the-pulpits are perennials that develop from an underground storage stem or corm. The compound leaves with three leaflets (sometimes only one when young or up to five) on long petioles and the flower stalk or peduncle emerge from the corm. There are fibrous roots on the corm. Height can vary from 9-10" up to 30" or more. The actual flowers of the Jack-in-the-pulpit are nowhere to be seen by a casual viewer or even a potential pollinator. The minute yellow-green to purplish flowers are in the chamber formed by the spathe on the lower spadix. The hooded spathe is typically either maroon or green with white stripes. If you examine a Jack spathe closely, you will notice an oily film on its surface. It will squeak when rubbed between your fingers. This oily surface will quickly send potential pollinators, such as mushroom gnats or thrips, sliding into the interior chamber. Once inside the chamber, if there are mature male flowers on the spadix, the surprised intruder will be dusted with pollen



as it attempts to escape. There are four stamens for male flower but not sepals or petals. In the male inflorescence, there is a gap at the base of the spathe that does allow the pollinator to escape. Once the not-too-bright insect does escape, it is likely it will visit

another Jack and experience another slippery trip into a chamber perhaps with mature female flowers, and hopefully pollination will be accomplished as it once again attempts to escape. The small female flowers each have a rounded ovary with a short style and a prominent stigma. In the female inflorescence, there is not a gap at the base of the spathe and therefore no escape! If a Jack has both male and female flowers, as a small percentage do, the male flowers will be located on the spadix above the female flowers and will mature before the female flowers, usually preventing self-pollination. Typically the plants do not set viable seed. The result of the pollinator's elaborate ordeal is a tight cluster of showy green berries maturing to red berries by late summer. Birds, rodents, and other animals disperse the fruits with seeds.



Top: Male or staminate flowers at the base of the spadix of a Jack inflorescence

Bottom: Female or pistillate flowers at the base of the spadix of a Jack inflorescence

An interesting characteristic of *Arisaema* species including *A. triphyllum* and *A. dracontium* is that individual plants change sex depending on age or nutrients stored in the corm. Plants typically start out life as males and, when enough energy is stored in the corm, the plant will produce female flowers.

The berries of Jack-in-the-pulpit appear very tempting to a wild-food enthusiast, but BEWARE! All vegetative parts of the plant, including the well-developed

underground stem called a corm as well as the berries, contain crystals of calcium oxalate. These crystals will



cause a deep burning sensation if one nibbles on a raw corm or berry. The unwary "victim" will not soon forget the experience. Another

common name for this plant is "memory root" based on the now less common practice of school boys (and probably girls too!) tricking each other into a bite of a corm which resembles a turnip. With boiling or drying, both the starchy corm and berries can be eaten. Both were popular with various Indian tribes.

In addition to edible uses of Jacks, there are a number of medicinal uses. The corms have been grated and boiled in milk and used to treat coughs and tuberculosis. Other uses of the corm are supposed remedies for stomach gas, asthma, and rheumatism. Other plant parts have been used as an expectorant, and to increase urine, as well as a skin irritant to cause blistering.



Mature fruit at the end of summer, photo courtesy National Museum of Natural History

This spring enjoy the enchanting beauty of Jack-in-the-Pulpit and Green Dragon. Jacks are more common than Green Dragons that typically grow in wetter habitats and bloom later in the spring. The three leaflets of Jacks may be mistaken for Poison Ivy, but are on an elongated petiole. Green Dragon has a whorl of 5-15 leaflets. Both species are well worth finding and photographing.

Calendar of Events:

Information about area Native Plant Sales can be found at <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/local-native-plant-sales>.

Friday, May 3, 12:30 - 4 pm. Marion Lobstein will lead a Trillium Field Trip to Thompson Wildlife Management Area to explore a spectacular wildflower display featuring a sea of trilliums. Participants will meet at the Blandy library to carpool to the trillium site. The cost of this field trip is: FOSA members, \$10; nonmembers, \$15. Reservations are required and space is limited. 540-837-1758 Ext 224

Thursday, May 9, 7:30-9 pm, Potowmack Chapter meeting. Betsy Martin & Alda Krinsman present about Audubon at Home, Green Spring Gardens Horticulture Center, Alexandria

Sundays, May 26 & June 30, 8 a.m., Last Sunday of the Month Bird and Nature Walks with Nancy Vehrs and Harry Glasgow, Merrimac Farm in Nokesville, sponsored by the Prince William Conservation Alliance. alliance@pwconserve.org.

Sunday, June 16, 1-3 p.m., Piedmont Chapter field trip to Thompson Wildlife Management Area with Sally Anderson to see Canada Lilies and other late spring flowers. Limit 20. Register at piedmontvnps@gmail.com.

Thursday, July 11, 7:30 p.m. PWWS meeting, Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Manassas



Prince William Wildflower Society

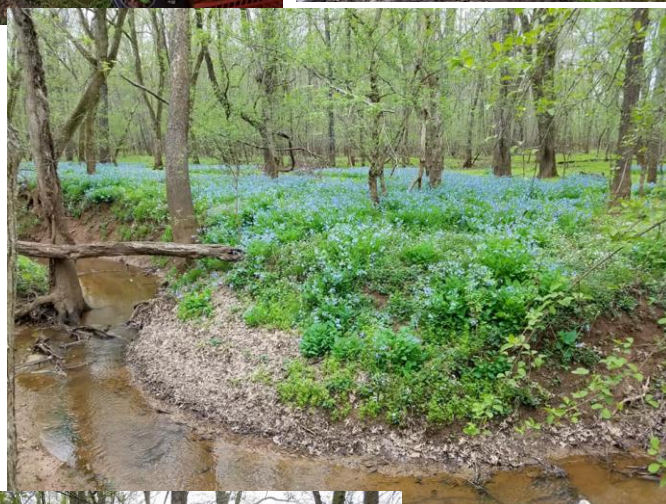
Wild News is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Prince William Wildflower Society, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, Virginia 20108. View color version at vnps.org/princewilliamwildflowersociety.

Nancy Vehrs, President; Brigitte Hartke, Editor.
(Note: This issue was produced by Nancy Vehrs.)

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.

Next submission deadline: June 12, 2019

Scenes from the Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm, April 11



Top left: Karen Waltman and Brigitte Hartke with 56 Bluebells for sale; top right: Brigitte slogging through the mud; above: Bluebells; left: participants on Nancy Vehrs's walk; below:

PWWS table staffed by Theresa DeFluri, Brian & Owen McDougal, & Barbara Deegan





Prince William Wildflower Society
A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society
PO Box 83
Manassas, Virginia 20108-0083



*Great Spangled Fritillary
on Purple Milkweed*

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Plant Sale, Saturday, May 11, 9 a.m. – Noon
Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Plantation Lane, Manassas

Garden Tour Snapshots, April 20

