Wild News

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Prince William Wildflower Society
A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2021 - 06 **November - December 2021**

Thursday, November 4, via Zoom,
7:30 pm, social time, 7:00
William Laws presents: "The American Chestnut: The Tree That Made America"

Warren Laws, Virginia Chapter President of the American Chestnut Foundation, graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1969 with a major in Soviet Studies. After pilot training he flew B-52s and FB-111s. He also worked in intelligence and flight operations. Retiring in 1990, he flew five different aircraft for American Airlines. He retired again in 2003.

Warren's grandfather had sparked an interest in the American chestnut tree so he joined The American Chestnut Foundation in 2008. Since then, he has helped with plantings, orchard maintenance, inoculations, pollinations, harvesting, culling and education programs.
Warren and his wife have travelled extensively in Europe and made trips to Russia and Uzbekistan. Their most interesting adventure was taking the Trans-Siberian Express from Vladivostok to Moscow.

Engraving: Gathering Chestnuts by J.W. Lauderbach, Art Journal, 1878. American Chestnut Foundation

President's Column

Happy Autumn! As I write this, very few trees in our area are showing their fall colors, but they should be in full splendor by the time you receive this newsletter. My streetside Mockernut Hickory is always in golden glory in October, and its companion White Oak peaks in November with its burgundy leaves.

Did you tune in for Rod Walker's program in September on invasive plants? If not, or if you would like to review it, you can find it posted on the VNPS website, www.vnps.org. Click on Video Gallery under the resources tab. There you will find a host of programs and videos, including the seven educational modules for the Flora of Virginia. *(Continued on next page)*

Despite a beautiful, warm fall afternoon, only a dozen of us (plus Robbie the dog!) came to our picnic at the Manassas Battlefield on October 3. Those who attended were treated to a viewing of Marion Lobstein's lovely artwork and a plethora of free plants to take home or use in public gardens. Those taking the short nature walk came upon the blooms of Asters, Boneset, Blue Mistflower, Helenium, Goldenrod, and Brown-eyed Susans. Indian grass, Purpletop Grass, Switchgrass, and Little Bluestem were some of the grasses on display.

Fall is a great time for planting trees—and for removing invasive vines. As I mentioned in the last issue, the Plant NOVA Natives campaign kicked off its five-year ***Plant NOVA Trees*** (www.plantnovatrees.org) campaign this fall. Trees can be planted until the ground freezes. In fact, the White Oak at the Historic Manassas Courthouse was planted last December. While everyone likes to plant anew, there is great value in rescuing mature trees from strangling invasives. The Blue Ridge Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management has lots of information on combatting invasives. See www.blueridgeprism.org for more information.

I hope you will join us on Zoom for our November meeting. Our guest speaker is Warren Laws, the president of the Virginia Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation, who will present the American Chestnut story. Can the American Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) make a comeback after the devastating effects of the Chestnut Blight? American Chestnut trees do still exist, but usually they succumb to the blight by the time they reach ten feet. Our own Prince William Forest Park has at least one American Chestnut tree in the wild, and The American Chestnut Foundation planted some in a demonstration site. Only one remains alive there. TACF maintains seedling orchards at both the State Arboretum at Blandy and Sky Meadows State Park in Delaplane. Register for our Zoom in advance for this meeting at https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwkfuqsrT0pGd0PbCGnrMS9idlu4CGc96he.

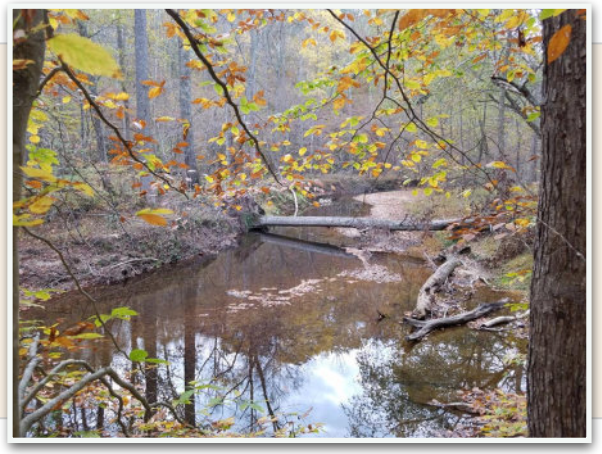
See you on Zoom!

Nancy

Lots of door prizes! Jim Gallagher, left, went home a winner with a beautiful bouquet of fall-blooming native plants; above, we enjoyed seeing Marion's vibrant watercolors, this one of sunflowers.

Formation of a Friends Of Prince William Forest Park Group

PWWS Member Steve Bodolay is seeking interested parties to form a friends group for Prince William Forest Park, one of our two national parks here in Prince William County. PWFP needs our support. Contact Steve at sbodolay@gmail.com to indicate your interest. Once enough people respond, Steve will set up an organizational meeting.



Prince William Wildflower Society Membership Meeting Minutes Thursday, September 2, 2021 7:30 p.m. On Zoom

President Nancy Vehrs opened the Annual Meeting at 7:30 p.m. She welcomed all and introduced the PWWS officers: President - Nancy Vehrs; Vice-President - Valerie Neitzey; Treasurer - Valerie Kenyon Gaffney; Secretary - Karen Waltman.

The Proposed 2022 Budget had been emailed to the membership for review. Janet Martinet moved to adopt the budget for 2022, and Jocelyn Meloy seconded the motion. Harry Glasgow moved that we budget $2000 in funds from the Chapter reserves to purchase a bench at Deep Cut in Manassas National Battlefield Park. The amendment was accepted, and the Proposed Budget was amended to include the purchase of a bench. The Proposed 2022 Budget, as amended, then passed unanimously.

Nancy Vehrs gave a brief review of the PWWS year. During the year, the building of data centers close to National Parks was a concern. Members attended public meetings, spoke at meetings and wrote letters to county officials sharing how the centers could negatively affect Prince William Forest Park and Manassas National Battlefield Park.

January - Annual Slide Show.
March - Lois Montgomery spoke on Evolution.
May - Sam Droege gave us information and beautiful photographs of Native Bees.
July - Marion Lobstein told us of updates to the Flora App.
September - Rod Walker spoke on Invasives.
[November - We'll have a talk on Chestnut Trees.]

On Arbor Day, April 30 (last Friday in April in U.S.), PWWS hosted a ceremony for our donation of a white oak tree, planted in front of the Old Courthouse in Manassas. In May we held a successful Plant Sale, with timed purchases and social distancing. Jocelyn Meloy (Conservation Chair) scheduled plant pulls for invasives, and a couple of 'Weeding Parties' were held at the I-95 Rest Area. At the well-attended Manassas Bee Festival on June 26, we had a table and sold many plants. October 3 - PWWS plans to hold a picnic at Manassas National Battlefield Park with a popular plant swap.

Program: Invasive Plants with Rod Walker

Nancy introduced Rod Walker, President of Blue Ridge "Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM)." Rod began with a question, 'What is the problem with invasives?' His answer was that native plants get slowly replaced by invasive plants. Nothing stops the invasives, and our insects, birds and mammals don't eat them, resulting in less diversity and fewer animals. PRISM was organized to educate people, and to help landowners recognize invasives and learn how to control them.

If you have an unknown plant, email a photograph to: info@blueridgeprism.org. They will help identify it and provide methods on how to eliminate it. A drone project with University of Virginia involves a sophisticated camera flying over a landowner's property to identify invasives. PRISM works with landowners/farmers to identify and eradicate invasives, and they would also like to see laws written that would require nurseries to stop the sale of invasives.

Rod discussed some ways to get rid of invasives: For small trees - cut and paint (or hack and squirt), using specific herbicides immediately after cutting; weed-whack Stiltgrass BEFORE it has gone to seed, and pull Garlic Mustard and Chickweed in the fall.

If you have any of the following in your area, please try to get rid of them: Kudzu, Oriental Bittersweet, Bamboo, Japanese Honeysucle, English Ivy, Porcelain Berry, Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven), Bradford Pear, Garlic Mustard, and Japanese Stiltgrass. The following book has been reprinted, a good resource for identification: *Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas*. Also, contact your County Extension Office for help with identification and eradication of invasives.

Want more information? Go to the Blue Ridge PRISM website: www.blueridgeprism.org.

This was a very interesting presentation; a sincere Thank You to Rod Walker and the members of PRISM.
Karen Waltman, Secretary

Prince William Wildflower Society

Approved Budget, Fiscal Year 2022

Income:

1000	Plant sale		5,000
1001	Books/misc sales		2,500
1002	Membership fees		1,000
1003	Donations		200
1004	Support from co-sponsors annual author event		500
1005	Transfer from certificate of deposit		2,800
		TOTAL	12,000

Expense:

2000	Newsletter expenses		1,800
2001	Annual author event		2,000
2002	Meeting expenses		1,000
2003	Flora of Virginia donation		1,000
2004	Grants/donations to school groups, non-profit orgs		1,000
2005	Garden tour		100
2006	Plant sale		500
2007	Annual meeting		0
2008	Books for resale		500
2009	Brochure printing		500
2010	PO Box rental		150
2011	State sales tax		300
2012	Miscellaneous supplies/other (inc $2000 for MNBP benches)		2,650
2013	Tabletop Display Board		500
		TOTAL	12,000

Recent Invasive Plant Removal Event at the Manassas Battlefields

by Jocelyn Meloy
Conservation Chair

On Thursday October 7th, a group of PWWS members, along with park biologist Allison Hay, helped remove invasive Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) from Manassas National Battlefield Park. This was part of an ongoing effort of PWWS partnering with the Battlefield over the past year to help protect native habitat.

Many of us have heard that removing and avoiding planting invasive plants is an important component of protecting our state's beautiful native plants, but why is that? Invasive plants are non-native plants that have become aggressive in their new environment and often have special characteristics that help them survive and thrive. This makes it hard for native plants to compete with them, and over time can lead to loss in biodiversity and support for native wildlife. Plants and animals have coevolved with each other in their ecosystems for tens of thousands of years. When invasive plants take over, it upsets the balance and many insects and animals don't recognize these new plants as food, are not equipped to eat them, or don't receive as much benefit from eating them as they would their native food sources. Additionally, it reduces the populations of the native plants that we enjoy so much.

Our wildlife relies greatly upon native plants. For example, Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) and Viburnums are two native shrubs that produce fruit that is ripe in the fall. This fruit has high fat content, which birds rely upon for energy during their fall migration. Autumn Olive, along with other invasive shrubs such as Amur Honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*), are sadly outcompeting these and many other native shrubs in the Eastern US. While these invasive shrubs do provide fall fruit, the content of that fruit is mostly sugar, not fat, which doesn't provide the energy our migrating birds need to fuel their long journeys. Autumn Olive thrives almost anywhere due to its nitrogen-fixing abilities, and you'll often see it growing along roadsides in monoculture thickets. Deep shade is a limiting factor but with such high deer browse in our area (and therefore a lack of forest regeneration), our open woodlands are prime spots for Autumn Olive to thrive, and the deer seem to leave them alone for the most part. In addition, one large shrub can produce between 60,000 and 200,000 seeds, which have high germination rates. Another way these shrubs can spread is by suckering. Simply cutting one down will invigorate its growth and encourage it to sucker. When our group helped at the park in early October, we used loppers to cut shrubs, and park biologist Allison treated the stumps with herbicide to prevent their regrowth.

While removing plant invaders is very important, one of the easiest things you can do to help native plants and wildlife is to make sure you aren't planting invasive plants on your property. Unfortunately many invasive plants are still sold in nurseries, so be sure to research what you are purchasing before you do so, and always feel free to contact me with questions if you're unsure. And keep an eye out for announcements on future invasive removal plants at Manassas Battlefield. We can always use more volunteers!

(photo #1 courtesy of Nancy Vehrs, #2 and #3, photos of Autumn Olive leaves and blooms, thanks to Jocelyn Meloy)

Witch Hazel
Hamamelis virginiana

by Marion Lobstein, PWWS Botany Chair,
Prince William Wildflower Society

Edited by Deanna High, Former Editor *Wild News*:
Reprinted from *Wild News* November-December 2013 and November-December 2018

While walking through the autumn woods you may have noticed small yellow flowers borne on the ends of twigs of a small tree. Or, you may have heard a popping noise as you walked past the same trees. What you are seeing and hearing are the flowers and "exploding" fruits of Witch Hazel. This is the only tree (or large shrub) in our area that blooms from September through December. Also, it is the only tree that bears both flowers and fruits (from last year's flowers) at the same time.

Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) is widely distributed, ranging from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to central Georgia and southern Arkansas. It is commonly found along streams and on the banks of ponds, lakes, and swamps or in moist upland forests. It is considered an understory species in our deciduous forests.

The scientific name for Witch Hazel was assigned to this handsome plant by the famous Swedish taxonomist Linnaeus. *Hamamelis* is derived from the ancient Greek terms *hama*, meaning "at the same time," and melon, meaning "fruit" based on Witch Hazel blooming as the same time it bears fruit, and *virginiana* means it was first collected in the colony of Virginia. This species was included in the John Clayton and Johan Gronovius *Flora Virginica* from 1762. [To view a specimen of this species collected by John Clayton and is preserved in the John Clayton Herbarium at the British Natural History Museum can be viewed at https://data.nhm.ac.uk/dataset/clayton-herbarium/resource/51e7a60c-cbda-4e88-8a68-ef93442643e6/record/1366.] Other common names are American Witch Hazel, Snapping Hazel, Snapping Hazelnut, Tobacco Wood, White Hazel, and Winter Bloom.

The "witch" part of its common names comes from the use of its branches as divining rods which bent to find water and even buried treasure containing precious metal ores such as gold. Witch is derived from Old English "wych"meaning to bend. Native Americans often used Witch Hazel branches to make bows.

Witch Hazel is not a true Hazel (*Corylus* species in the Betulaceae or Birch Family) but is a member of the Witch Hazel Family or Hamamelidaceae. In the past, Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) was classified as a member of this family. However, in the *Flora of Virginia* Manual and Flora of Virginia App, Sweetgum has been moved to the Altingiaceae (Sweetgum Family).

The small yellow flowers develop in clusters of three or four on the tips of mature branches. The four strap-like petals are attached on the margin of a cup-shaped receptacle. Eight stamens are arranged in two rows of four with the outer row usually sterile. With showy flowers, it is insect pollinated by insects still active in cooler autumn temperatures. Two shining black seeds form in a two-celled wooden capsule that has a prominent beak. These fruits ripen over the year after flowering. The small half-inch seeds are forcibly expelled from the ripened capsule creating a popping noise.

The leaves, twigs, and bark of Witch-Hazel are distinctive. The alternate simple leaves are about four inches long and up to three inches wide. The leaf is ovate and variably lobed with an uneven base. Mature leaves have a waxy surface. Witch Hazel twigs have a unique zigzag appearance. The thin smooth outer bark is light brown with purple inner bark. Individual tree can be as tall as 30 feet and can attain a diameter of 12-14 inches.

In addition to American Indian tribes using Witch Hazel to make bows, their uses of Witch Hazel were primarily medicinal. Poultices, washes, and extracts were made from the inner bark; twigs and leaves were used to treat inflamed eyes, skin irritation, tumors, sore muscles, varicose veins, and even hemorrhoids. Extracts of bark and leaves were rubbed on the legs of Indian athletes to keep the muscles limber. Teas or washes made from the leaves and/or bark were used to treat a variety of ailment from colds, sore throats, and asthma to tuberculosis and other lung ailments, menstrual cramps, cholera, and dysentery. (continued on following page)

Pictured: leaves, blooms and seeds

Extracts were also used to stop excessive menstrual flow and a variety of problems involving internal bleeding. Heated and steamed branches were used in a "sauna" to ease sore muscles, while powdered dried leaves were used to stop external bleeding. Also, twigs were chewed to freshen the mouth as well as to heal and soothe bleeding gums and other mouth or throat problems. Early colonists soon discovered the value of Witch Hazel. Alcohol extracts, as well as lotions and salves made from twigs, leaves, and bark, have long been used and are still used to treat sore muscles and minor skin irritations, as an astringent, or as a shaving lotion. The astringent and other associated properties are due to tannins in the bark and leaves. Most Witch Hazel preparations are now synthetically produced, but one small company in New England still prepares "real" Witch Hazel extract.

As you walk in the late autumn woods and the wildflowers have disappeared until spring, keep your eyes and ears open for the sight and sound of the unusual witch-hazel. Look for its delicate yellow flowers, and listen for its fruits exploding.

Changes in Woody Plant Species Taxonomy

Please View Chart Here:

https://vnps.org/woody-taxonomic-changes

This article was first posted in the November-December 2013 issue of *Wild News*. This article focused on taxonomic changes for families of woody species in the *Flora of Virginia* or Manual published in 2012 and reprinted in 2013 with corrections relative to taxonomy used in the mid-1900s (such as in the *Flora of West Virginia*, *Gray's Manual of Botany* 8th ed., and *Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas*). There is a number of families or genera of woody plants that underwent significant changes in the Manual, and now there are other changes in the 2020 update of the Flora of Virginia App. Most of these changes are based on DNA evidence, obtained since the 1990s, proposed by the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group (APG).

It is hard to believe that it has on been nearly 70 years since 1953 when the structure of DNA was proposed by James Watson and Francis Crick. The world has not been the same since, such as changes in medicine, in genetically-engineered organisms, and in a changing understanding of phylogenetic (evolutionary) relationships of organisms—including plants. By the 1990s, there was such an explosion of genetic research based on sequencing DNA of plants, it became clear that plant taxonomy needed to be revised. In the mid-1990s, the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group (APG), an international group of botanists, started working together to interpret this new information. The APG I revision of plant classification was published in 1998 with further revisions released in 2003 (APG II), 2009 (APG III), and the latest in 2016 (APG IV). The "home base" for this international group is the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri. Even though this is an "informal" group, plant taxonomy has been influenced by this work. Any new flora or reference articles on plant classification will reflect the work of this group. In addition, other research was used by the Flora App authors to make taxonomic changes.

There will continue to be changes in plant taxonomy as new DNA and other evidence becomes available. These changes are currently reflected in the 2020 updates to the Flora App. Interestingly, in many instances these taxonomic changes reflect scientific names proposed in the late 1700s and 1800s. In the changes in "woody" plant taxonomy, in the Manual in 2012 there are only 11 families with major changes (and only 4 to 5 of those are "dramatic" changes), while there are 37 families with woody species that have no or minimal changes.

In the 2020 App, there are three families added: Viburnaceae (Viburnums and Elderberries), Aceraceae (Maples), and Hippocastanaceae (Horse Chestnuts and Buckeyes) and one family deleted Adoxaceae (Moschatel Family). Adoxaceae is no longer included in the App as a result of *Sambucus* (Elderberries) and *Viburnum* (Viburnums) being moved to Viburnaceae. Also in the App, the Sapindaceae (Soapberry Family) now has only one woody species *Koelreuteria paniculata* (Golden Raintree), a nonnative considered a waif in the Manual, now considered established and now included in the App. *Acer* (Maple) are back in Aceraceae, and *Aesculus* (Horse Chestnuts and Buckeyes) is reinstated Hippocastanaceae (Horse Chestnut Family). The following are some additional App changes: one new species was added to Grossulariaceae, *Ribes missouriense* (Missouri Gooseberry) (a nonnative considered a waif in the Manual), Hydrangeaceae added *Deutzia scabra* (Deutzia) (in Waif section of Manual) and *Philadelphus pubescens* (Hoary Mock-orange and in Waif section of Manual), and Climbing Hydrangea, a nonnative, was *Decinaruan barbarais* is now *Hydrangea arborescens*. In the Manual, *Liquidambar* (Sweetgum) was moved from Hamamelidaceae (Witch Hazel Family to Altingiaceae (Sweetgum Family) and (*Fothergilla gardenia*) (Witch alder) was listed under "Unverified Taxa" but this species is not included in the App. No changes in the App were made in Altingiaceae (Sweetgum Family), Cannabaceae (Hops Family), Iteaceae (Sweetspire Family), Lamiaceae (Mint Family), and Paulowniaceae (Princess Tree Family). *End*

Upcoming EVENTS

For events not scheduled at the time this issue went to press, please continue to visit:

PWWS events page: https://vnps.org/princewilliamwildflowersociety/events/

PWWS FaceBook page: https://www.facebook.com/Prince-William-Wildflower-Society-a-Virginia-Native-Plant-Society-Chapter-142292732540373/

October

Saturday, October 30, 2 to 5 pm. Fall Colors Walk at Dyke Marsh. Join Alan Ford and Margaret Chatham in a leisurely exploration of what's bright along the Haul Road at Dyke Marsh. Limit 20; register by emailing info@fodm.org with "Fall Colors Walk" in the subject line. Meet at Haul Road entrance.

Last-Sunday-of-the-Month Merrimac Bird and Nature Walk, October 31 and November 28, 8 am, every month (except December when we sponsor the Nokesville Christmas Bird Count) at Merrimac Farm, Stone House, 15014 Deepwood Lane, Nokesville, directions. We'll look for birds as we travel through the uplands to the edge of the floodplain, covering a variety of habitats, including open fields and woodland edges. Everyone is welcome.
Dress for the weather, bring binoculars and cameras.
More info and RSVP to PWCA , 703.499.4954 or alliance@pwconserve.org. View the bird list for Merrimac Farm HERE. http://www.pwconserve.org/wildlife/birds/lists/merrimacfarm.htm

November

Wednesday, November 10, 5 pm, at Sunshine Ridge Farm, 15850 Sunshine Ridge Lane, Gainesville: "Smarter Growth and Sauvignon: A Conversation About Industrial Development in Rural Prince William".
Register here for this in-person event**:**
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/smarter-growth-and-sauvignon-a-conversation-about-development-in-pwc-tickets-198462204797 This event is hosted by Prince William Conservation Alliance, Piedmont Environmental Council, American Battlefield Trust, National Parks Conservation Association, Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association, Sierra Club Great Falls Group, Virginia Native Plant Society, and Coalition to Protect Prince William.

Saturday, November 13, 1 pm. Walk at Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, Fauquier County.
Identifying plants in winter. For more information and to register, contact piedmontvnps@gmail.com

Sunday, November 14, 1:30 pm
Potowmack Chapter Annual Meeting and Program with Max Ferlauto presenting "My Year of Playing with Litter: Exploring the Effects of Leaf Litter Removal on Insect Communities"

Monday, November 15 at 7 pm, online. "How to Green Up Our Transportation Network" with Charlie Grymes.
Online event, register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0od-CvpzMvHtDBliQZlS0yz_aWPW0T8S5F

Green Breakfast Events
NVSWCD facilitates a bi-monthly gathering to discuss environmental topics in a casual setting on a Saturday morning. Attendees include agency representatives, interested citizens and community members, students, lawmakers, members of the business community and representatives of local non-profits. Six green breakfasts are held each year.
To receive updates about Green Breakfast speakers, please register for the Green Breakfast newsletter. Please direct questions to NVSWCD.

December

Thursday, December 9, at 7 pm. Online event.
"Discover a New Invasive Insect That May Be In a Backyard Near You!" Register here:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qcO6opjouHtF9me5ZUjbtRxhQL18Q3mFv
Join **Valerie Huelsman**, Environmental Analyst for Prince William County Mosquito and Forest Pest Management Branch for an introduction to the **spotted lanternfly**, a recent threat to our trees, vineyards and hops farms.

Saturday, December 11, 1 pm. Appalachian Trail Walk, Loudoun County. Walk on the AT at Ashby Hollow.
Register at piedmontvnps@gmail.com

Newsletter

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.*

Next submission deadline: December 12

Prince William Wildflower Society

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

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 4, 7:30 pm, Via Zoom
ACF Virginia Chapter President Warren Laws:
"The American Chestnut: The Tree That Made America"

Celebrating People Who Make a Difference!

On October 24 Prince William Conservation Alliance friends gathered at La Grange Winery to celebrate four People Who Make a Difference. Our own Marion Lobstein, as well as Frank Washington, Jim Klakowicz, and Carlos Castro were honored for their contributions to Prince William County. *(photos #2 & 3 courtesy of Valerie Kenyon Gaffney)*

PRINCE WILLIAM CONSERVATION ALLIANCE