

# WILD NEWS

A Special Program and  
A Special Guest at our....

## JULY MEETING

MONDAY, JULY 19 • 7:30 P.M. • BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Bloodroot, Mayapple, Dutchman's-breeches. All lovely spring wildflowers, but did you know they are considered poisonous plants? The poisonous properties of many wild plants will be explained by Ms. Antonio Rosaida Cripps at our July meeting.

Toni's interest in native plants goes back some 60 years. Childhood walks with her mother took them to fields and woods in search of wildflowers, edible and medical plants. One of her earliest memories is of her mother pointing out Poison Ivy and then showing her Jewel Weed and explaining that it's Poison Ivy's natural antidote.

Before moving to Manassas five years ago Toni lived near Queens Botanical Garden in New York. Known as the Garden's "Green Witche" her articles on wild plants appeared in its quarterly magazine for several years. Her formal education is in the fields of engineering and journalism; she is employed as a senior technical writer.

Mary Painter, Director of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society, will be at our July meeting to discuss the benefits and responsibilities of charter membership. Mary will visit with us for a short time, **the meeting will begin promptly at 7:30** at which time Mary will answer any questions we have. Please try to arrive early for visiting, book buying, etc. so we can all get started on time. Bethel Church is at Sudley Rd. & Plantation Ln.



Bloodroot

## SURVEY SCHEDULED

ELAINE HAUG  
Chairman, Survey Committee

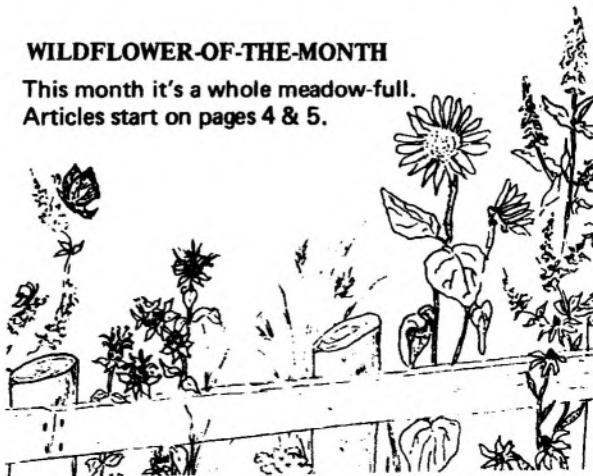
A Wildflower Survey is scheduled for Saturday, July 24, 10:00 a.m., at Battlefield Builders' Fern Brook subdivision.

The main purpose of this trip is to identify and mark plants to be rescued. This will be a good opportunity to learn more about woodland plant identification. We may find some species that can be rescued now.

Fern Brook is located on Rt. 234 about 1 mi. so. of the Lake Jackson bridge and 2.3 mi. no. of Coles Firehouse. Meet at the pond, a short distance down the entrance road, on the left.

## WILDFLOWER-OF-THE-MONTH

This month it's a whole meadow-full.  
Articles start on pages 4 & 5.





## EDUCATION

THALIA ROLAND  
Chairman, Education Committee

Some wildflower education projects are beginning to sprout at last.

### EXHIBIT

Thanks to detective work by Ed Milhous and Elaine Haug we have obtained space for an educational exhibit in the flower section of the Prince William County Fair.

Sharon Jones is photographing wildflower gardens, people on wildflower walks, volunteers in the wildflower rescue program, and, with the help of Jean Chitren, our trail development efforts at Conway Robinson Memorial Forest.

If you have a garden consisting partially or entirely of wildflowers for Sharon to photograph, please call her at 754-4691.

To help control exhibit costs, we're looking for a volunteer to print the color photographs we'll need. We'll provide paper, chemicals, credit, and lots of thanks. If you can help, let Sharon know.

### SCHOOLS

Gene Fox, Math and Science Coordinator for Prince William County Schools, has welcomed our efforts to provide instruction guides for wildflower related projects wherever appropriate in the science curriculum, grades K-12. Graham Park Middle School Vice Principal, Sharon Blackwell, will serve as our liaison with the school system.

Blair Christolon, with the help of Maggie Deola, is working on ideas for preschool through elementary grades. Nancy Arrington has junior high through 12th grades. If you have ideas or can help, call Blair at 369-3535 or Nancy, 368-8431. With feedback from students and teachers in the pilot programs this year, we hope to develop more comprehensive guides for the 1983-84 year.

Jackie Ralya will serve as horticultural consultant and Marion Blois, botanical advisor, for the projects.

### SCOUTS

Girl Scout coordinator, Flo Suslowicz, has agreed to introduce some wildflower programs to area Girl Scout troops, perhaps on a pilot basis, this year. Edith

# Coming Events

Every Sunday, "Wildflower Walk", 10 a.m., Great Falls Park, Visitor's Center. 759-2925.

July 17, "Meadow Meander", 10 a.m., Rock Creek Park Nature Center. The diversity of plant and animal life in the Park is increasing due to its meadow program. Join a naturalist for a 1½ hr. excursion to explore the ecology of a meadow. 426-6829.

July 17, "Neat to Eat", 9-10:30 a.m., Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Centreville. Search for wild edible plants. 631-0013

July 18, "Wildflower Discovery Walk", 10-11 a.m., Braddock Park, Clifton. Naturalist-led exploration of Braddock Park wildflowers. 451-9588.

July 19, Prince William Wildflower Society meeting, 7:30 p.m., Bethel Lutheran Church, Sudley Rd. & Plantation Ln., Manassas. 368-8431

July 24, P.W.W.S. Survey & Plant Rescue, 10 a.m. SAT. Fern Brook Subdivision, Manassas. 670-2347.

July 25, "Pond Life", Prince William Forest Park Nature Center, 2 p.m. Join a Ranger for a trip to a nearby pond to examine the variety of its plant and animal life. 221-2104.

July 26, "Native Ferns for Washington Gardens", 1:30 p.m., Adm. Bldg. classroom, National Arboretum. Dr. Peter Mazzeo will present a slide program and discuss the best ferns to grow in Washington area gardens. (202) 472-9279.

July 27, "Fern Walk", 1:30 p.m., Fern Valley Ent., National Arboretum (weather permitting). Learn to identify some of the many ferns in Fern Valley. You'll also see many wildflowers. Tour Leader, Dr. Mazzeo. (202) 472-9279.

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Lohman, with youth advisor Paul Killmer will be working on wildflower projects to help scouts earn appropriate badges. Eventually they will expand their efforts to other youth groups.

### PUBLICATIONS

Blair Christolon, with input from Nancy Snyder, is developing a "Wildflower Lovers' Guide to the Prince William County Libraries." The guide will be complete in time for distribution at the County Fair.

germination and growth. I would appreciate knowing the results — successes and failures. Failure is as important as success — at least we'll know what not to do. There is plenty of room for research in the field of native plant propagation.

#### A SMALL MEADOW PLAN

As you collect seeds this summer and fall, observe nature's wonderful meadow plan. Note the height and apparent spread of plants and plan accordingly.

We've all heard that there are no color clashes in nature and Butterfly-Weed and Wild Sweet Pea may look fine side-by-side in nature's huge meadow, but in a small area you'll want to give careful consideration to color combinations. Possible clashes can be separated by more neutral colors.

Native meadow plants will look better planted in masses, but plan for a few accent plants: one tall yellow Common Mullein is a striking addition to a meadow garden. Plan for gentle curves — nature does not plant in straight lines.

#### SITE PREPARATION & MAINTENANCE

Though the plants we've been talking about grow quite well beside the road and in abandoned fields, some site preparation will assure faster establishment of the plants in your small meadow. The work can be done this fall in preparation for next spring's planting.

Sod should be completely removed and the soil tilled or spaded as you would for a cultivated garden. Soil test results may recommend addition of lime. Compost or rotted manure worked into the soil will improve drainage.

Though I won't go into complete planting details here, I will suggest a method that works well for me. Whether your plan is in your head or on paper, as you set out plants you may find yourself using the "hand-directed" method for achieving the natural look you want. Your mind or your piece of paper tells you to put a plant in a specific spot, but suddenly your hand directs it to a better spot. Trust your hand, it's being directed by instinct rather than intellect at this point.

Maintenance until plants are established includes the same watering, mulching, and weeding required in any cultivated garden. The meadow should pretty much take care of itself after the first year. You may want to interrupt nature's propagation process by

## MORE SEED-SOWING ADVICE

The following information from "The Prince William Gardener", will be helpful to anyone planning to start wildflower seed this summer.

"Perennials seeded in the garden frequently fail to germinate properly because the surface of the soil cakes and prevents entry of water. To avoid this, sow the seed in vermiculite filled furrows.

Make the furrows in the soil about one-half inch deep. After filling with fine vermiculite, sprinkle with water. Then make another furrow in the vermiculite and sow seed as recommended. Cover seed with vermiculite and water with fine mist.

To retard evaporation shield with newspaper or plastic, supported two inches above the bed.

When the plants develop two true leaves, thin so that plants have the required space, and transplant excess seedlings to another prepared bed."

Perennials that can be started through the end of August are Columbine, Butterfly-Weed, Cardinal Flower, Great Lobelia, and Black-eyed Susan. Sow in a shady area.

Seeds that can be sown in late autumn for spring germination include Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Bleeding Heart, Wild Phlox, Azalea, Trillium, Wild Geranium, Bluebells and Violet.

"The Prince William Gardener", the County Extension Service's newsletter, is mailed free to county residents. Call 369-9262 to be added to the mailing list.

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removing the seed pods of some prolific spreaders such as Queen Anne's Lace to maintain your original variety of native plants. Encourage more difficult species by hand sowing some seed around the mother plant.

Good luck and happy growing!

An excellent source for small amounts of wildflower seed is:

Midwest Wildflowers  
Box 64  
Rockton, IL. 61072

Over 100 species, hand-collected and individually packaged, sell for .50 per packet. Catalog is .50.

# LARGE MEADOWS

RICK DORKEY

The simplest method for making a meadow is to just stop mowing except once during late fall or winter to discourage woody growth. Wildflowers will eventually fill in, a natural balance will establish and be maintained after three or four years. A faster and more aesthetically pleasing method involves using a wildflower mix and some of the same steps in establishing a lawn.

Most wildflower mixes contain 12 to 20 annual and perennial species assuring establishment of a wide variety. Some mixes contain a low-growing grass which takes hold quickly and is especially useful for banks. Although most seed sources are located in western states some carry mixes suitable for the east coast (see list).

Now for the bad news: wildflower seed is expensive. Most mixes cost between \$25 and \$35 per pound. Those containing grass seed are \$7 to \$10 per pound. Figure on 5 lbs. per acre in areas with trees and shrubs and 8 lbs. for open areas. An ounce will seed 150-200 sq. ft.

To save money, collect seed to supplement a commercial mix. And remember you will be saving money over the years with a low-maintenance meadow by eliminating the need for fertilizer, lime, electricity for pumping water, and gasoline for mowing.

## SITE PREPARATION AND SOWING

Spring rains provide moisture necessary for good germination and very early seeding gives the wildflowers a jump on weeds. With careful attention to watering, seeding can be done through early fall. Late fall seeding is not recommended, though the site can be prepared in fall and raked lightly before early spring seeding.

Existing sod can be stripped by hand in small areas; larger areas require a sod cutter or rototiller. With proper caution an herbicide can be used. Rake the soil smooth and clean of debris. If time permits let weed seed germinate and either rake or lightly till them back under for a headstart on weed control. Don't fertilize — it encourages weed growth.

Seed can be broadcast by hand in areas up to 1/3 acre. For larger areas use hopper seeders or pull-be-

# WILDFLOWER MEADOWS



More and more homeowners are turning to meadow sowing lawn. The advantages of a low-maintenance meadow for time of bloom, color, and texture, a meadow can be much more interesting than a monotonous lawn. Butterflies, meadow, and other species of wildlife will follow.

Meadow gardening is an excellent way to preserve flowers. Admittedly, most meadow species are not on hand. Ruellia, Turk's Cap Lily, and Butterfly-Weed are becoming scarce. These plants can be preserved in a meadow.

A meadow can be as large or as small as one wishes. Here, certainly the size of the area will determine to some extent which method will work best. At any rate, we hope you will be most interested in hearing about the results.

hind spreaders. Very large areas can be drilled or hydroseeded. Finely screened dirt or sand mixed with the seed assures more even distribution. Rake or disc lightly, or use a roller, to place seed in contact with the soil.

## WATERING AND MAINTENANCE

After an initial soaking keep the ground moist to insure good germination. This is the single most important factor in establishing a meadow. Once germination begins, the lack of moisture for even one day can cause crop failure. During the first summer continue to water in periods of less than an inch of rainfall per week.

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# SMALL MEADOWS

JACKIE RALYA



Any well-drained, sunny area, even on a small lot can become a wildflower meadow. Consider a wide strip along a fence, islands of wildflowers surrounded by lawn areas, or a central lawn that blends into a natural meadow at the property lines. This allows some grass areas to be turned into meadow, but gives the appearance of a well-cared for landscape.

Begin by collecting seed for your meadow. You can't find a cheaper source, and you know exactly what you're getting. Commercial mixes, in addition to being very expensive, are often machine collected and may contain weed seed as filler.

Follow collecting guidelines given in last month's newsletter. Carry a supply of plastic bags or envelopes, labels, and pencil; keep species separate and be sure to label with species name, date and place collected. An unlabeled bag of seed is most frustrating. Collecting can continue into the fall as plants set seed, usually about a month after blooming.

Most species need a period of dormancy before germination. Winter is nature's solution, the refrigerator is ours. Collected seed can be stored in paper envelopes inside a sealed jar in the refrigerator or a dry cellar. Don't use plastic bags for storage as they collect and hold moisture.

## SOWING: 3 CHOICES

Seed can be sown directly into the soil. The only advantage is to save labor and time. The disadvantages far outweigh the advantages. Only a small percent of the seed will germinate — 1% according to some sources. The rest will be washed out by rain, or carried off by insects, mice, and birds. If you choose this method be sure to sow thickly.

Chance of germination and survival are greatly improved when seed is sown outdoors in weed-free beds or flats. A good basic mix for starting seeds is equal parts sand, garden soil, and peat moss. Seed can be sown in late fall for spring germination.

My own preference is for indoor sowing and then transplanting seedlings to their permanent location in the meadow. Percentage of germination using this method is 90-100% for many species. Pot-grown plants are easily transplanted, and the plants can be placed to achieve the desired effect.

low gardening as an alternative to an expensive, time-consuming meadow go beyond simple economics. With some planning me as aesthetically pleasing as any cultivated garden and ties will immediately add more color and interest to the

and propagate our dwindling supply of native wild- anybody's list of plants to be protected, but a few inclu- As open fields continue to be bulldozed more species individual meadows.

Two methods for establishing a meadow are presented some extent the best method to use. Perhaps a combina- you will be inspired to try meadow gardening, and we

Since most seeds need a cold period early spring is the best time for indoor sowing. This procedure and suggestions for transplanting will be covered in a later newsletter.

However, it would be interesting to experiment with the seed collected this summer. Immediately after collecting sow a few seed into a container of moist soil, provided with adequate drainage holes. Cover large seed 2.5 times its size and leave fine seed uncovered. Mist the surface and keep moist and shaded. When and if germination occurs, gradually move to brighter light.

Keep careful records of the sowing procedure and

Continued on page 3

Some weeding will be necessary as the plants are becoming established. They can be pulled by hand or cut with a swinging hand-held cutter to prevent their setting seed. The trick, of course, is to allow the wildflowers to re-seed, but not the weeds.

After the wildflowers set seed the meadow should be mowed in late fall to prevent growth of shrub and tree seedlings. Some people prefer to mow in very early spring in order to leave a cover for wildlife through the winter. Once the aggressive weeds have been eliminated and you have learned to live with the few inevitable ones, this once-a-year mowing and watering during droughts are the only maintenance needed — a vast improvement over the constant attention a lawn requires.

*I would strongly recommend a soil test before investing in a wildflower seed mix for a large area.*

*The presence of soil nutrients as well as pH will be shown on the test results. Since most meadow species require a slightly acid to neutral soil, lime may be needed.*

— Ed Milhous, County Extension Agent



#### WILDFLOWER MEADOW MIX SOURCES

Abundant Life Seed Foundation  
P. O. Box 772

Port Townsend, WA. 98368

(\$2 for 1-yr. subscription, includes seed catalog and 4 newsletters)

Applewood Seed Co.

P. O. Box 10761, Edgemont Sta.  
Golden, CO. 80401

(Free catalog)

Clyde Robbin Seed Co, Inc.

P. O. Box 2855

Castro Valley, CA. 94546

(East Coast Mix, Catalog \$2)

ESP Wildflowers

P. O. Box 5125

El Monte, CA. 91734-1125

East Coast Mix, Free Catalog)

#### A TREE GROWS IN PRINCE WILLIAM



Prince William County has only one tree on the American Forestry Association's list of Big Trees released in April.

The tree, a Cockspur Hawthorne (*Crataegus crus-galli*) is located on Mountain Rd. near Evergreen Country Club in western Prince William.

The Forestry Association encourages groups or individuals to adopt the Nation's Big Trees to insure their preservation. If you're interested or would like more information, call Pat Dunlop, 754-7019.

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Green Horizons  
500 Thompson Dr.  
Kerville, TX. 78028

(Specializes in Texas wildflowers. Upon request will put you on mailing list for 4-6 mailings for one year without order. Also Texas Wildflower Newsletter available for \$7.50 per year.)

Natural Habitat Nursery  
4818 Terminal Rd.  
McFarland, WI. 53558  
(Free Catalog)

Sharp Bros. Seed Co.  
Healy, KS. 67850  
(Free Catalog)

Vaughan's Wildflower Seed  
5300 Katnee Ave.  
Downers Grove, IL. 60515  
(East Coast Mix, Catalog ?)

Spruce Brook Nursery  
Rt. 118, P. O. Box 925  
East Litchfield, CT. 06749

(Offers one of the best wildflower seed mixes for the East, according to Organic Gardening Magazine. Free Catalog.

Burpee and Parks carry East coast wildflower mixes available by the ounce.



*"We will most certainly give the Forest every consideration in selecting areas for our "Watchable Wildlife" program . . ."*

The above is from a letter we have received from Mr. R. H. Cross, Jr., Executive Director, Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries in response to our request for funding for Conway Robinson.

Since the area has been protected as a wildflower and wildlife sanctuary for over 40 years, I am sure most all species common to this area exists there. We have observed deer, raccoon, squirrel, rabbit, chipmunk, fox, possum, skunk, turtles, and snakes.

On just two birding trips to Conway Robinson, Bobbe Krueger, a member of the Audubon Naturalist Society and a local Audubon chapter, sighted: Red-Bellied, Downey, Hairy & Piliated Woodpecker, Towhee, Purple Finch, Cardinal, Blue Jay, Yellow & Yellow rumped Warbler, Turkey Vulture, Crow, and Broad-winged & Sharp-shinned Hawk.

So far we have found no endangered species, but plenty of "watchable wildlife" at C.R.M.F.

## MAIL-ORDER WILDFLOWER SOURCES

Several members have inquired about mail-order sources for wildflower plants. We are researching sources and next month's newsletter will carry a list of conservation-conscious nurseries.

Since our primary objective is the preservation of native plants we should patronize those dealers who sell propagated or rescued wildflowers rather than ones collected from the wild. In areas of New England and North Carolina, collectors have wiped out stands of Lady's-slippers, Trailing Arbutus, and other rare native plants. (see Horticulture magazine, May 1981).

You'll pay more for plants from dealers who have invested the time and other resources involved in propagating and rescue, but the satisfaction of knowing you aren't contributing to the depletion of our native plants is worth the few extra dollars.

The list will include some indication of the plants offered by each dealer plus the price of each catalog.

Meadow drawings by Nicky Staunton



**IF YOU HAVEN'T JOINED THE WILDFLOWER SOCIETY FOR LACK OF AN APPLICATION, HERE'S YOUR CHANCE! OR GIVE THIS ONE TO A FRIEND OR CONSIDER A GIFT MEMBERSHIP FOR A FELLOW WILDFLOWER ENTHUSIAST.**

Enroll me/us as Charter Member(s) of the Prince William Chapter, Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society.

Annual Membership Dues:

5.00 Student/Senior Citizen

7.50 Individual

10.00 Family

20.00 or more

Patron

25.00 per group or club

Associate

(Ask for details)

Unable to join now, but keep me/us on your mailing list:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to learn more about:

I/We plan to participate in the following:

### Conservation

Contact - Contact local gov't agencies, developers, etc. to obtain permission to rescue plants

Rescue - Participate in plant salvage operations

Relocation - Provide temporary "holding" area on own property for rescued plants until preserves are ready

Development of nature trails, preserves at:

Locust Shade  Conway Robinson

Education - Develop programs, displays, literature, etc.

Native Plant Promotion - Wildflower cultivation & propagation, natural landscaping, beautification projects

Public Relations - Member newsletter, publicity

Typing  Telephoning Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Experience & affiliations related to Society efforts:

Make check payable to Pr. Wm. Chapter, V.W.P.S. and mail to Pr. Wm. Wildflower Society, P.O. Box 462, Manassas, Va. 22110

## NEW MEMBERS

Cousins, Anna D.  
13365 Marie Dr.  
Manassas, Va. 22111  
791-6541

Cripps, Antonio R.  
142 Evans St.  
Manassas, Va. 22111  
369-6334

Eccles, Margaret  
8412 Yorkshire Ln.  
Manassas, Va. 22111  
368-2099

Johnson, Alice  
9350 Clover Hill Rd.  
Manassas, Va. 22110  
368-4167

Swaby, Madge & John  
13953 Mathews Dr.  
Woodbridge, Va. 22191  
491-1855

Weand, Diana C.  
8908 Fort Dr.  
Manassas, Va. 22110  
368-8674 361-1710 (O)

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Barbara Mauler indicates the National Battlefield Park could offer wildflower walks this summer if someone would volunteer to conduct them as part of the Volunteers In The Park program. If you're willing to give it a try, call Elaine Haug at 670-2347.

Barbara, who knows all the "good spots" in the Park, would advise and help structure the program.

If you can't volunteer, guide yourself out to the Park for a walk through some of their beautiful natural wildflower meadows.

## LATE NEWS

Harry Phillips, a wildflower propagation and cultivation authority, from the North Carolina Botanical Garden, will present a program at the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society's Annual Meeting, Saturday, Oct. 16. Anyone interested in attending can sign up at our July 19th meeting. If you can't come to the meeting, but are interested in this program call Nancy Arrington, 368-8431, by July 30.

Prince William Wildflower Society  
P. O. Box 462  
Manassas, Virginia 22110

