

MARCH-APRIL, 1983

WILD NEWS

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY, A Chapter of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society

MARCH MEETING

GROWING AND USING HERBS

Monday, March 21 7:30 pm. Bethel Church, Plantation Ln. & Sudley Rd., Manassas

Herbalists were the first people to identify and name many of the plants we know as wildflowers today. Numerous native American plants were used medicinally by the Indians and early settlers.

The medicinal and culinary uses of herbs will be discussed by Herbalist Claude Clemen at our March meeting. Three basic types of herb gardens will be covered: culinary, aromatic, and companion planting.

Clemen originally became interested in the medicinal

properties of herbs, but over a period of six years his interest and knowledge have expanded to include culinary uses, herb gardening, and "the legend and lore" of herbs.

If you can't make it to the meeting to hear Clemen's program, you can visit his shop on Fitzwater Drive in Nokesville. He stocks dried herbs, extracts, seed, and many herb products. He will have perennial plants for sale in the spring.

WE'RE OFFICIAL!

Our chapter application, signed by 25 members and accompanied by the names of 68 additional members, was accepted by the VWPS Board of Directors on January 27. We're officially known as "Prince William Wildflower Society, a Chapter of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society."

SLIDE LIBRARY

Nicky Staunton is collecting slides for the Society's permanent library. If you have native plant slides you can donate or lend for copying please call Nicky at 368-9803 (H) or 368-3943 (W).

The slides will be available for members of the Society to use in programs, seminars, workshops and other projects.

WILDFLOWER-OF-THE-MONTH

Watch for March's wildflower, No. 1 in the hearts of wildflower gardeners, on wooded slopes in late March and early April. Article page 4.



SOCIETY SPONSORS

HERBARIUM WORKSHOP

The Prince William Wildflower Society is sponsoring a Herbarium Workshop at George Mason University on Saturday, April 2 at 1 p.m. and/or Wednesday April 6 at 7:30 p.m. Dr. Ted Bradley, Associate Professor of Biology, will discuss the importance of field notes for plant identification, and demonstrate how plants are prepared for storage in a herbarium. Drying, pressing, and mounting plants will be discussed. The techniques apply to pressing flowers for fun projects as well as herbarium storage.

Dr. Bradley is co-author of Atlas of the Virginia Flora, Part II, a listing of plants by counties. Our Chapter's Botanical Committee Chairman, Elaine Haug, has helped Dr. Bradley up-date Prince William County's list by verifying and pressing six additional species including Blood-root.

Please register for the Herbarium Workshop by calling Elaine Haug, 670-2347, or Nancy Arrington, 368-8431, by March 25. Number of participants is limited so reserve your space early. Carpools will be set up after registration.

ANNOUNCING



Drawings from Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society Newsletter

Prince William Wildflower Society's WILDFLOWER & NATIVE PLANT SALE

April 29, 30 & May 1 - Manassas Mall
During regular Mall hours

May 7 - Hillendale Fire House
9:00 am - 3:00 pm



Committee Chairman Marie Davis and members Joyce Andrew and Kay Smallwood need a lot of help to make our first plant sale a huge success:

- 1) An immediate commitment from you as to the number of each plant species you will supply for the sale. In order to plan for space and a hand-out describing cultivation requirements we have to know exactly what we'll have. Call Marie at 361-1626 ASAP and let her know what she can count on from you.
- 2) Plastic or clay pots, flats, shallow cardboard cartons (beer flats), and grocery bags. Bring to the March meeting or call Marie for pick-up.
- 3) Helpers - a committee person to help with publicity, people to help pot up plants, sales people for the four sale days.
- 4) Colored pictures or photographs of the species we'll be selling for display during the sale.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

We need wildflowers, native ferns, shrubs and small trees. Be sure all plants are native species - no hybrids.

Be sure plants look good - no wilted, drooping, sickly, or pest-infested plants.

No rare, uncommon or difficult to grow plants. Call Marie if you need direction in this area.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM EVERYONE OUR FIRST PLANT SALE WILL BE WILDLY SUCCESSFUL!!!

FAVORITE BOOKS

The Society is compiling a Bibliography and needs your help. We'd like a list of your favorite native plant books - subjects including wildflower identification, propagation & cultivation, medicinal & edible plants, wildflower photography, landscaping with native plants, and wildflower books for children. Send your list to Blair Christolon, PWS Librarian, 8396 Briarmont Ln., Manassas, Va. 22111, or call Blair at 369-3535.

The Education Committee will donate a book to each Prince William Co. Library during Library Week. If you have a favorite book that the Library doesn't have, call Blair with your suggestions.

A WORD ABOUT SEEDS

- 1) Waste no time if you haven't started your seed - do it now! Some species will germinate in a week or so, others take a month or more. If your seedlings are too small for sale this year, save them for next year.
- 2) When seedlings develop the second set of true leaves transplant to 2-3" pots. Ideally this should be at least a month before the sale. Call Marie if you need pots or potting soil.
- 3) Around mid-April gradually harden off plants by acclimating them to the outdoors. Water and fertilize as needed.

SHARE FROM YOUR OWN GARDEN

Obviously we won't have enough seedlings for the sale and must depend on you to generously share from your own wildflower garden. Pot up plants by April 10 to assure development of a good root system in the pot before the sale. Call Marie if you need pots or potting soil. Again water and fertilize as needed.

SUPPORT THE SALE

Please come to one or both of the plant sales and buy plants for your garden. Society members will receive a 10% discount. The Publicity Committee will print an advertising flyer and will contact the garden clubs, but we need you to help spread the word among your friends, neighbors, co-corkers, etc.

VOLUNTEER QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire is included with this newsletter. Many of you are already involved in committee projects and most of you have already filled out at least one form - but, could you please do it again and we promise this will be the last time! We are making a renewed effort to get all members involved in our activities. A little time from each member can accomplish big things for the Society as a whole. However, if you don't have the time or energy to be really involved, don't worry, your financial support in the form of a membership is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete the form. Bring it to the March meeting or mail it.

SPRING CALENDAR



- March 21 – Prince William Chapter Meeting, 7:30 pm, Bethel Lutheran Church, Sudley Rd. & Plantation Ln., Manassas. Contact Nancy Arrington 368-8431, or Elaine Haug 670-2347.
- March 26 – Work Day, Conway Robinson Memorial Forest, Gainesville, 9 am - 3 pm. Contact Jean Chitren 221-4489, or Nancy Arrington 368-8431.
- April 2 & 6 – Herbarium Workshop, George Mason University, 1 pm on 2nd & 7:30 pm on 6th. Register by contacting Elaine Haug 670-2347 or Nancy Arrington 368-8431 by March 25th.
- April 9 – Wildflower Walk, 9 am - 12 noon, Conway Robinson Memorial Forest, Gainesville. Contact Jean Chitren 221-4489, or Nancy Arrington 368-8431.
- April 16 – “Bluebells and Bluebirds”, 8 am, Bull Run Regional Park. Sponsored by VWPS and No.Va. Chapter, Va. Soc. of Orinthologists. \$3.25 /car entrance fee, suggest car pooling. Contact Nancy Arrington 368-8431.
- April 17 – Wildflower Survey & Walk, 1 - 4 pm. Fern Brook, Rt. 234 S., Manassas. Contact Elaine 670-2347.
- April 17 – 15th Annual Bluebell Stroll, 2 pm, Bull Run Regional Park. Contact Dorothy Warner 278-8880
- April 18 – Wildflower Slide Show by Elaine Haug, 7:30 pm, Bethel Lutheran Church, Sudley Rd. & Plantation Ln., Manassas. Contact Elaine 670-2347.
- April 19 – Wildflower Slide Show by Elaine Haug, 7:30 pm, Potomac Library, Opitz Blvd., Woodbridge. Contact Elaine 670-2347.
- April 21 – Wildflower Walk with Field Guide Instruction led by Marion Blois, Asst. Prof. of Biology, NVCC, 10 am - 12 noon, Manassas Campus Nature Trail, Rt. 234 N. Contact Marion 368-0184, ext. 211.
- April 23 – Plant Rescue, 9 am, Fern Brook, Rt. 234 S., Manassas. Contact Elaine Haug 670-2347.
- April 23 - Work Day, C.R.M.F., 9 am - 3 pm. Contact Jean Chitren 221-4489 or Nancy Arrington 368-8431.
- April 23 – Wildflower Walk, 12 noon, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle. Meet at Headquarters. 221-2104.
- April 24 – Wildflower Walk, C.R.M.F., Gainesville, 1 pm - Field Guide Instruction by Elaine Haug, 2 pm - Walk led by Joe Kemper, retired Forest Warden. Contact Jean Chitren 221-4489 or Elaine Haug 670-2347.
- April 29, 30 & May 1 – Wildflower & Native Plant Sale, Manassas Mall. Contact Marie Davis 361-1626.
- April 30 – Wildflower Walk, 12 noon, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle. Meet at Headquarters. 221-2104.
- May 7 – Wildflower & Native Plant Sale, 10 am - 3 pm, Hillendale Fire Dept., Dale Blvd. & Hillendale Rd., Dale City. Contact Elaine Haug 670-2347 or Marie Davis 361-1626.
- May 7 – Wildflower Walk, 1 pm, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle. Meet at Headquarters. 221-2104.
- May 8 - Potowmack Chapter's Wildflower & Native Plant Sale, Green Spring Farm Park. Nancy 368-8431.
- May 14 – Wildflower Walk, 9 am - 12 noon, C.R.M.F., Gainesville. Contact Jean Chitren 221-4489.
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Activities of groups other than our own are included in the calendar. All dates are firm at press time, but call ahead of time to be sure an activity is still as originally scheduled. All members are urged to participate in as many activities this spring as possible – it's a good way to get to know other members and to keep our organization strong and active. All activities are free and open to the public.

BLOODROOT

Sanguinaria canadensis

MARION BLOIS

Ass't. Professor of Biology, NVCC



The glistening white petals and the deep yellow of numerous stamens of bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) provide one of the earliest and loveliest touches of color on rocky slopes of rich deciduous woods. Bloodroot begins blooming in late March and continues into late April. It grows naturally from Nova Scotia to Florida and westward to Nebraska.

This perennial, a member of the poppy family, derives its genus name *Sanguinaria* (bleeding) from the red juice that is released when the stems, leaves, or rhizomes are broken or bruised. This exudate, a powerful stimulant and narcotic, has been used by American Indians to color their faces, weapons, and basketry. Other common names reflect these uses: red Indian paint, redroot, sweet slumber, snakebite, and puccoon (an Indian word for dye).

The striking solitary flower of bloodroot is 1-1½ across and has 8-12 fragile petals and two green sepals. The 24 showy stamens are deep yellow. The pistil forms a capsule 1½-2½" long as a fruit. This capsule is pointed on each end and contains numerous black-russet seeds. The seeds have a crested fleshy structure called an elaiosome. Seeds initially are dispersed by the opening of the capsule. Secondarily, ants, attracted to the elaiosome, may drag the seeds to other sites.

To watch bloodroot emerge from the damp spring soil is a breath-taking experience. The single kidney-shaped leaf is wrapped around the flower bud. Both leaf and bud are enveloped in a papery bract that protects the emerging new leaf and flower. Bloodroot's unusual leaf is 5-9 lobed, kidney-shaped, and prominently veined. The upper surface is yellow-green and the underside is a lighter silvery green. After unfurling from around the flower bud it may reach several inches across and a height of 4-12 inches. A total of two to three leaves may later develop and the leaves remain until early summer or late fall depending on moisture.

The thick rhizome may be several inches long. Numerous fibrous roots develop off these rhizomes. As do many spring wildflower perennials native to deciduous woods, bloodroot stores energy in the rhizome during the relatively brief period the plant has to photosynthesize before the trees leaf out. The root is usually the part of the plant collected for the red-orange juice since it is most concentrated there. However, in most areas this plant is not common enough to be collected at all. Furthermore, the juice can be quite dangerous.

Many Indian tribes developed a variety of uses for bloodroot as recorded in the writings of Capt. John Smith and Col. William Byrd. The Cherokees still use the juice to dye basket splints. The juice can be used as a vegetable dye for wool and other fabrics.

Medicinal uses of bloodroot's juice have included cough expectorant, fever reducer, vomiting inducer, rheumatism and poison ivy treatment, and a remedy for digestive organ and liver ailments. In powdered form it has been used to treat ringworm, warts, and other fungal infections. As a snuff it has been used to treat nasal polyps. The bloodroot dried rhizome was officially listed in the U.S. Pharmacopeia from 1820 until 1926. Now the alkaloid is recognized as a stimulant or strong narcotic which can be quite harmful if taken in any but the smallest doses.

Bloodroot can be found at many sites in Prince William County including Conway Robinson and Prince William Forest Parks. It occurs in virtually every Virginia county. Just watch your step on the steep, rocky slopes it prefers. At some sites you need a bit of mountain goat in you to enjoy a lovely clump of bloodroot!

PROPAGATION & CULTIVATION

Nancy Arrington

In her book, *Wild Flowers for Your Garden*, Helen S. Hull writes about the 12 favorite plants for a wildflower garden resulting from a poll of wildflower gardeners throughout the U.S. Bloodroot was mentioned most often as a favorite for durability, ease of cultivation and beauty and appears in more wildflower gardens than any other flower except violets.

Bloodroot is a long lived perennial useful in the shady garden not only for its early sparkling white blossoms, but for the leaves which form a lovely ground cover until late summer or early fall. The leaves will remain until frost in a moist, shady area.

The ideal spot for bloodroot as well as its natural companions, white trillium and maidenhair and Christmas fern, is one that is well-drained but won't dry out during even the driest periods of summer. However, a shady area under deciduous trees will do, but plan to water during droughts. Enrich the soil with compost, spagnum moss, or well-rotted horse manure and bone meal. Mulch with chips or shredded leaves to retain moisture. Don't plant aggressive species such as ivy near bloodroot—it is vigorous but needs protection from especially hardy plants.

Bloodroot is found naturally in moderately acid soil, but in the home garden a humus-rich soil and ad-

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equate moisture are more important than pH. No fertilization is necessary, but bloodroot along with most perennial wildflowers will appreciate an application of bonemeal after blooming or whenever you get to it.

Bloodroot is rare in Prince William County and should never be dug from the wild. Collect the seed. Watch for the elongated seed capsule to develop a month or so after blooming. Collect the pods after they begin to turn brown and dry out, but before they split open. Fill a small pot with with potting soil or rich woodsy soil, cover the seed slightly, water well, sink the pot into the ground in a moist shade area. Cover with shredded leaves, and be sure the soil stays moist. Seedlings will emerge the following spring and can be transplanted to the garden. Expect blossoms in 2-3 years. It self-sows readily and can also be propagated by dividing the thick rootstock in fall after the leaves dry up. Let the cut pieces scab overnight before replanting.

MARIE DAVIS – TARGET CHAIRMAN

Marie Davis is Chairman of our Target Committee. She will be getting touch with builders and developers and arrange for plant rescues in the months ahead.

If you know of areas that will be developed, call Marie at 361-1626.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee present officers (President - Nancy Arrington, Vice President - Elaine Haug, Secretary - Roxetta Wyer, Treasurer - Nicky Staunton) were re-elected at the January meeting to serve through 1983.

Other recommendations presented by Chairman Nancy Gray and members Marion Blois and Jean Chitren, for consideration by the By-Laws Committee include:

- (1). That elections be held biennially in the fall of odd-numbered years.
 - (a). As this time frame follows Spring/Summer active periods, members will have had time to get acquainted during projects, and to demonstrate interest in accepting official responsibilities.
 - (b). Since elections are held in alternate months, two years of office will provide a better opportunity of see programs established/completed and provide an experience level during the second year in office.
- (2). That officers move to Board of Director positions for two years following term of office.
 - (a). This will provide official guidance/direction source for newly elected officers.
 - (b.) It will preclude re-election of prior officers for an additional term, thus permitting opportunity for new people to move into leadership positions.
- (3). That we continue to be aware, and take advantage of the breadth of county-wide membership in elections.



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A CHAPTER OF THE
Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society
P. O. BOX 462, MANASSAS, VA 22110



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Sanguinaria canadensis

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