

MAY-JUNE 1985

WILD NEWS

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

MAY MEETING

EARLY SUMMER WILDFLOWERS

MONDAY, MAY 20 7:30 PM

BETHEL CHURCH, MANASSAS

Don't go through another summer wondering what that yellow (or blue or white or orange or pink) flower blooming on the roadside is. Come to the May meeting for Jim Pomeroy's slide program on Early Summer Wildflowers. Jim is a naturalist at Fairfax County Park Authority's Hidden Pond Nature Center. He will discuss the common and not-so-common native plants that are

blooming in our area now and ones that will be blooming in June.

Claudia Thompson-De'ahl, our Program Chairman, has arranged for this month's program and for the excellent programs at the past two meetings. Claudia also serves as first vice-president of the VWPS. If you have ideas or suggestions for programs for future meetings please let Claudia know, 754-9235 (H), 437-7658 (W).



WILDFLOWER-OF-THE-MONTH

Indian children enjoyed the tasty corm of this delightful spring wildflower. See page 2.

WILDFLOWER WALK

Our last spring wildflower walk will be at Conway Robin Memorial Forest on Sunday, June 2, at 1:30 p.m.

Chapter members Jean Chitren and Elaine Haug will lead the walk. You will see many ferns and some native shrubs in addition to late flowers such as the orchids in woodland areas. Early summer wildflowers will be blooming in the open areas.

C.R.M.F. is located one mile east of Gainesville on Rts. 29-211. Meet at the covered picnic shelter. For more information call Jean Chitren, 221-4489.

"A weed is but an unloved flower."

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

JULY MEETING

Monday, July 15, 7:30 p.m.

Bethel Church, Manassas

Tentative Program: Species Iris

Details next newsletter

A GREAT PLANT SALE

Plant sale co-chairmen Roxetta Wyer and Nancy Arrington report a highly successful sale netting over \$700. Thanks to members who generously shared plants from their gardens: Ton Carrig, Marie Davis, Jeanne Fowler, Jeannette Garrison, Mary LeKander, Francis Louer, Sandi Mueller, and Thalia Roland.

And thanks to members who contributed by working at the sale: Tom Carrig, Jean Chitren, Marie Davis, Bill Edens, Sandi Mueller, and Nicky Staunton.

MARSH ECOLOGY

Marion Blois will be teaching Marsh Ecology (Biol 299), June 18 through July 9. The course consists of four lectures on Tuesday evenings with weekend field-trips to local marshes and a final trip to the marshes of Assateague Island. For further information, call Marion at NVCC, Manassas, 368-0184, ext. 262.



WILDFLOWER-OF-THE-MONTH

SPRING BEAUTY

Claytonia virginica

MARION BLOIS

Ass't. Professor of Biology, NVCC

Spring beauty is one of the loveliest and most easily recognizable of our early spring wildflowers. Its scientific name, *Claytonia virginica*, was assigned by Linneaus himself to honor one of Virginia's earliest and best known naturalists, John Clayton, and "virginica" to honor the site of specimen collection.

Spring Beauty is in the Portulacaceae (portulaca or purslane family). Like the garden portulacas, the stem and leaves are succulent and both groups close their flowers at night and on overcast days. The distribution of this species is from Georgia to Nova Scotia and west into Texas. Its blooming period in our area runs from late February to early May. It often competes with hepatica as one of the earliest spring wildflowers (except of course for skunk cabbage and harbinger-of-spring). It grows in moist woods as well as open meadows and even lawns.

The six to ten-inch tall plant with its pair of long slender leaves resembles grass at first glance. The stem is a slender delicate structure that will droop with the weight of the developing fruit. The underground storage stem is a small corm that is quite tasty and was a popular treat for Indian children. Squirrels and other forest wildlife eat the corms.

The corm sends up only one leaf if there are no flowers formed for a growing season. Two leaves form on mature flowering size plants.

The inflorescence is a racemose cyme bearing 5 to 25 flowers, approximately one inch across. There are two green sepals forming the calyx. The five white to white with pink stripes to pink petals are slightly joined at their bases to form a saucer-shaped corolla. The pink stripes which may serve as nectar lines for pollinators remind one of peppermint candy striping. There are five stamens with pink anthers and pink filaments. The filaments reflect U-V radiation which insect pollinators can see. The pistil has a superior ovary and a three-cleft style. The first day a flower opens its stamens are functional, releasing pollen. The

next day and up to as long as eight days the pistil is receptive to pollen. Furthermore, during this period the stamens bend the anthers back against the petals. The U-V reflecting filaments that are also bent back may be acting as nectar lines to guide the insect pollinators down to the nectary glands at the base of each petal. The nectar production of spring beauty is very generous. At least 23 different species of native bees, bumblebees, the honeybee, and surphid flies have been observed visiting spring beauty flowers. Some other spring wildflowers such as some of the ruees that are not generous nectar producers may attract pollinators by "mimicing" the shape and size of spring beauty.

The fruit is a triangular shaped capsule containing up to 25-30 or more shiny black seeds with small appendages known as elaiosomes. The fruit matures about ten days following pollination and fertilization. The seeds are forcibly ejected from the capsule at maturity and then may be further dispersed by ants attracted to the elaiosomes (see last newsletter's article on Myrmecochory).

Spring beauty may be one of our most common spring wildflowers. Even so, it brings us much joy and beauty each spring on walks through woods or even in our own lawns.

VOLUNTEER HONORED

Marie Davis was chosen as one of 20 local area residents to receive the Volunteer Activist Award of the Washington Metropolitan Area.

Marie and husband, Paul, were guests at a ceremony and reception at the Departmental Auditorium on Constitution Ave. and will be honored again at a local ceremony.

Marie was nominated by Prince William Forest Park for her work as a "plant artist" at the Park's Wildflower Garden. (Not many wildflower gardeners become distinguished "plant artists"!) She was the Park's Volunteer of the Year in 1984.

WILDFLOWERS & AZALEAS

The Potowmack Chapter is sponsoring a slide program on Wildflowers and Azaleas of the Smokies on Thursday, May 23, 7:30 p.m. Kent Minichiello will present the program at the Arlington County Central Library, 1015 North Quincy St. The library's phone number for more information is 527-4777.

'A weed is no more than a flower in disguise.'

James Russell Lowell

COUNTING BLOSSOMS

All plants in our garden at Prince William Forest Park are labeled and easily viewed from the walkway. The garden is an important educational feature at the Park.

Plants that are in bloom now and/or will be in bloom during the next month to six weeks include green and gold, wild columbine, lyre-leaf sage, rattlesnake weed, yarrow, deptford pink, viper's bugloss, golden ragwort, false solomon's seal, solomon's seal, ox-eye daisy, star grass, blue-eyed grass, wild yellow indigo, and fringed and whorled loosestrife. Shrubs include mountain laurel and maple-leaf viburnum.

The early shade garden has finished blooming, but is beautiful with the foliage of ferns, jack-in-the-pulpit, bloodroot, ginger, and yellow violets.

WILDFLOWER PILGRIMAGE

Members from our chapter attending the recent Wildflower Pilgrimage in Roanoke were Marion Blois, Marie Davis, Elaine Haug and Nicky Staunton.

Elaine served as a guide for one of the walks and has been asked to be a walk leader next year.

"May all your weeds be wildflowers."

A refrigerator magnet from a recent craft show

MEADOW GARDENING

The American Horticulture Society will have a program on meadow flowers on May 22 at 10:30 a.m. The lecture will be held at the Society's headquarters, River Farm, 4 mi. south of Alexandria off the George Washington Parkway. Cost is \$6 for AHS members and \$7 for non-members.

For information call Robin Williams at AHS, (703) 768-5700.

ARBORETUM PROGRAMS

Up-coming programs at the National Arboretum which may be of interest to our members:

Monday, May 20, 10:00 a.m. — Tour of Fern Valley with emphasis on native shrubs

Thursday, May 30, 10:30 a.m. — Tour of Iris & Peony Collections

Sunday, June 2 & Wednesday, June 5, 1:30 p.m. — Discussions, tours, and demonstrations on plants from Grandmother's garden

Tuesday, June 4, 10:30 a.m. — Asian Valley Tour
Tuesdays, June 11, 18, 25, & July 2, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. — Herb classes

Thursday, June 13, 10:30 a.m. — Growing Azaleas and Their Companion Plants

For further information about these programs, call the Arboretum at (202) 475-4815.



Prince William Wildflower Society
A CHAPTER OF THE
Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

☐ New membership ☐ Renewal

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Address _____

Phone(s): Home (____) _____ Work (____) _____

Membership and fiscal year is Nov. 1 — Oct. 31 and dues are renewable by Oct. 15 each year. Dues submitted during September and October will apply toward membership for the coming full membership & fiscal year.

Please check membership category:

___ Student/Senior \$5.00 ___ Individual \$10.00 ___ Family \$15.00 ___ Patron \$25.00 ___ Associate (groups) \$25.00

___ Supporting \$50.00 ___ Sustaining \$100.00 ___ Corporate Sponsor \$125.00 ___ Life \$250.00

Gift Membership. Your Name: _____

Make check payable to V.W.P.S. and mail to: Roxetta Wyer, Membership Chairman,
9125 Peabody St., Manassas, Va. 22110

MAY MEETING
Monday, May 20, 7:30 PM
Bethel Lutheran Church
Sudley Rd. & Plantation Ln., Manassas

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P.O. BOX 83, MANASSAS, VA 22110



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