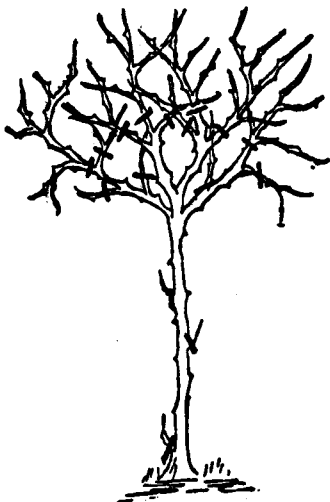


NOV.—DEC. 1985

WILD NEWS

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

NOVEMBER MEETING



MONDAY, NOV. 18, 7:30 p.m.

Bethel Lutheran Church
Sudley Rd. & Plantation Ln., Manassas

CARE OF NATIVE TREES & SHRUBS

Peter Deahl of Northern Virginia Arborists will present a program on Care of Native Shrubs and Trees at our November meeting.

Peter will cover all aspects of shrub and tree care in the home landscape including fall and winter pruning and fertilizing. Care of trees and shrubs in formal as well as naturalized settings will be discussed.

This program will be helpful to anyone who is responsible for the maintenance of trees and shrubs — invite your friends and neighbors.

FREE WILDFLOWER SEEDS

Prince William Wildflower Society members were busy through the summer and fall collecting wildflower seeds, and again this year we are offering free seeds to members. (29 species are listed elsewhere in the Newsletter)

All species are garden worthy: attractive, hardy, and easy to grow. All are perennial and native unless noted. Seed envelopes should be stored in an airtight container in a cool, dry place (refrigerator is ideal) until seed is sown. Seed propagation recommendations for each species are based on the experience of propagation committee members and information from the recently published Growing and Propagating Wild Flowers by Harry R. Phillips (available from VWPS, see recent Bulletin). However, you are encouraged to experiment with the seeds and find the method that works best for you. Any feedback you can give the propagation committee will be very helpful.

IDEAS NEEDED

Our Chapter board of directors is planning activities for the coming year, and they would very much like to hear from you. If you have ideas, comments, or suggestions for programs, activities, or special projects, please bring them to Monday night's meeting or call one of the officers listed below before Nov. 20.

President, Elaine Haug — 670-2347
Vice president, Nicky Staunton — 368-9803 (H)
— 368-3943 (W)

Secretary, Marie Davis — 361-1626
Treasurer, Jean Chitren — 221-4489

YOU'RE SPECIAL

A red dot beside your mailing label on this newsletter means you're a very special person — one we'd like to keep as a member! We've extended the deadline to Nov. 30 for you and sincerely hope you'll continue your membership (form on page 5).

The bright scarlet to orange leaves and the crimson fruit of our native sumacs make them favorites of fall hikers. This handsome group of shrubs or small trees (some species grow up to 30 feet) are members of the Anacardiaceae (the cashew family) and the genus Rhus. This genus was named for Diocorides, the famous Greek botanist. There are many "good" members of this genus in our area including staghorn sumac (Rhus typhina), winged sumac (R. copallina), smooth sumac (R. glabra), and fragrant sumac (R. aromatica). On the other hand, some of our most notorious native plants are in the same genus: poison ivy (R. radicans) and poison sumac (R. vernix).

The distribution of these six species of Rhus is essentially east coast into the midwest. Frank Lloyd Wright used the staghorn sumac as a symbol of the midwest in stained glass window designs.

Staghorn, winged, and poison sumac are shrubs or small trees up to 30 feet in height while smooth sumac may only reach 15 feet. Fragrant sumac (leaves and stems are fragrant when bruised or crushed) is a straggling shrub up to six feet while poison ivy can be a shrub or vine with numerous aerial roots. All these species, except poison sumac, are found in once disturbed areas such as old fields, thickets, and fencerows. Poison sumac is found only in bogs or swamps, the others in a drier habitat.

Sumac's flowering heads are quite showy though each tiny individual flower is small and inconspicuous. The five petals are greenish-white to yellowish with five stamens inserted on a flattened disc at their base. The fruit is a dry drupe with a hard center. In staghorn, smooth, winged, and fragrant sumac the berries are crimson red with short hairs. The upright, compact heads of staghorn are quite distinctive and persist from one fruiting season to the next. Smooth and winged sumac fruit heads are smaller and the arrangement looser; fragrant sumac fruits are in small clusters. The berries of poison sumac and poison ivy have a grayish to whitish waxy appearance similar to mistletoe. Berries of all these species, even poison ivy, are favorite foods for many birds.

The leaves of staghorn, smooth, winged, and poison sumac are pinnately compound with 11-31 leaflets. Staghorn sumac has densely hairy, velvety twigs that are reminiscent of the antlers of a deer; twigs of smooth sumac are smooth. The rachis between the leaflets of winged sumac leaves is winged. The leaflets of all three "good" sumacs are serrated. Poison sumac leaflets are slightly scalloped. Poison ivy and fragrant sumac have three leaflets with scalloped



SUMACS

RHUS SPECIES

MARION BLOIS
Ass't. Professor of Biology, NVCC

edges. Poison ivy leaflets are usually shinier than fragrant sumac leaflets, but be sure of your identification before touching.

Many of the nonpoisonous Rhus species have been used for many purposes since Indian and colonial times. The red berries have been used as a dye, and tannins were extracted from leaves and twigs. In Appalachia leaves of smooth sumac were rolled and smoked for asthma. Extracts from berries has been made into a lemonade-like drink (Ewell Gibbons gave a recipe for this drink in Stalking The Wild Asparagus), and also as a gargle for sore throat. The bark was boiled in milk to treat burns, and extracts have been used to treat skin ulcers, diarrhea, lymph node infections, and even gonorrhea.

Several species release exudates when stems and leaves are broken. The resin of poison sumac dries into a black lacquer-like material. Japanese lacquer is obtained from another Rhus species, R. vernicifera, which is also poisonous. Contact dermatitis is a serious problem for many people who are sensitive to poison ivy or poison sumac. The oil causing the reaction is present in all plant parts and can be present in smoke when the plants are burned. Jewel-weed extract (stems and leaves) is used by many people to treat poison ivy reactions, and a good wash-up with strong soap is also recommended. Avoidance, however, is the best defense against these poisonous plants.

Sumacs are a colorful group of plants this time of year and deserve to be enjoyed and appreciated. Color of the poisonous species should be viewed only at a distance.

FREE SEEDS

Send seed request to: PWS Seeds, P.O. Box 462, Manassas, VA 22110. Include a stamped (22c) self-addressed envelope for each group of 5 species requested. Send a list of alternates in case we're out of your first choices.

- Aquilegia canadensis**, Columbine. 1-3'; red and yellow bells in April and May; light shade in ordinary garden soil. Basal foliage makes a nice ground cover and is evergreen in mild winters. Attracts hummingbirds. **Seed propagation:** A or B (stratify for 3-4 weeks). Seed needs light to germinate and shouldn't be covered completely. **Self sows.**
- Asclepias incarnata**, Swamp Milkweed. 2-4'; pale to dark pink flowers June-Aug.; full sun in slightly moist to wet soil. Attracts butterflies. **Seed propagation:** A or B
- Asclepias tuberosa**, Butterfly-weed. 1-3'; bright gold to reddish-orange flowers in June and July; full sun in ordinary well-drained garden soil. A favorite of monarch butterflies. **Seed propagation:** A or B
- Aster novae-angliae**, New England Aster. 3-5'; lavender blue flowers with yellow centers in Sept.; full sun in average to moist garden soil. Our showiest native aster; beautiful with goldenrods. **Seed propagation:** B
- Aster patens**, Late Purple Aster. 1-3'; small bluish-purple flowers Aug.-Oct.; full sun in good garden soil. Similar to New England Aster, but smaller and longer-blooming. **Seed propagation:** B
- Belamcanda chinensis**, Blackberry Lily. 2-4'; orange flowers with dark spots in July and Aug.; full sun in good garden soil. Dry seed pods split open to reveal a cluster of black seeds resembling a blackberry – great for dried arrangements. European native which has naturalized here. **Seed propagation:** B
- Campanula americana**, Tall Bellflower (Annual). To 6'; lovely blue flowering spikes in July and Aug.; full sun in ordinary garden soil. Use in the rear of the border or as a vertical accent. Blooms for a long period and attracts many pollinating insects to the garden. **Seed propagation:** sow after danger of frost in spring in a well-prepared seed bed or in permanent location. **Self sows.**
- Chelone glabra**, White Turtlehead. 2-4'; white flowers in Sept. and Oct.; light shade in moist to wet rich garden soil. Dark green foliage makes this an attractive garden plant even when it isn't flowering. **Seed propagation:** B (stratify for 6 weeks)
- Dianthus armeria**, Deptford Pink (Biennial). 8-20"; small bright magenta-pink flowers May through July; full sun in ordinary garden soil. A pretty filler for the perennial border; nice companion for blue and yellow summer flowers. **Seed propagation:** A or C
- Digitalis purpurea**, Foxglove (Biennial). To 5'; showy spikes of pinkish-purple to cream tubular flowers in June; sun to shade in slightly moist soil. Especially valuable for the long period of color it adds to the shade garden. Plants cut back before setting seed will re-bloom. European native cultivated for many years in this country and naturalized in some areas. **Seed propagation:** A or C
- Echinacea purpurea**, Purple Coneflower. 2-4'; pink flowers in June and July; full sun to part shade in fertile well-drained soil. A very attractive and deservedly popular long-lived perennial. Goldfinches love the dried seed heads. **Seed propagation:** B (stratify for 4-6 weeks)
- Eupatorium coelestinum**, Mistflower. 2-3'; blue ageratum-like flowers in Sept. and Oct.; sun to part shade in average to slightly moist garden soil. Contrasts beautifully with the yellows and golds of autumn. Spreads by roots and may become invasive in rich soil. **Seed propagation:** B
- Eupatorium rugosum**, White Snakeroot. 1-3'; long lasting white flowers in Aug. and Sept.; part sun to shade in ordinary soil. Lovely with ferns in the shade garden. May become invasive; remove seed heads to prevent self-sowing. **Seed propagation:** B
- Eupatorium sp.**, Joe-Pye Weed. To 10'; pale pinkish-purple flowers July through Sept.; sun to part shade in moist to wet soil. A bold plant for the wet garden; attracts butterflies. **Seed propagation:** B
- Helenium flexuosum**, Purple-headed Sneezeweed. 1-3'; small golden-yellow daisy-like flowers June through Aug.; full sun in moist garden soil. Plants are literally covered with blossoms for several weeks. **Seed propagation:** B

Helianthus microcephalus, Small Wood Sunflower. 4-6'; small sunflowers July through Sept.; full sun to part shade in good garden soil. A good background plant for daylilies and other summer flowers. **Seed propagation: B** (Sunflower seed germinates best when sown outdoors in July or Aug. after a year of dry storage in the refrigerator.)

Iris pseudacorus, Yellow Iris. 2-4'; smaller and more delicate than garden iris; blooms in May; sun to part shade in average to very wet soil. Perfect pot plant for the garden pool. **Seed propagation: B**

Iris versicolor, Blue Iris. 2'; medium blue flowers with darker veining in May; sun to part shade in average to wet soil. A lovely native iris. **Seed propagation: B**

Lobelia cardinalis, Cardinal Flower. 2-5'; spikes of firey red in Aug. and Sept.; sun to part shade in moist to wet soil. One of our most beautiful natives and a hummingbird favorite. **Seed propagation: A or B** (Best germination occurs after 2 months dry cold storage.)

Lobelia puberula, Downey Lobelia. 2-5'; blue flower spikes in Sept. and Oct.; sun to part shade in Slightly moist garden soil. Similar to Giant Blue Lobelia but daintier and longer-blooming. **Seed propagation: B**

Lobelia siphilitica, Great Blue Lobelia. 2-3'; spikes of blue flowers in Aug. and Sept; sun to part shade in average to slightly moist garden soil. A good blue for the late summer and fall perennial border; a mature clump with numerous flowering spikes is impressive. **Seed propagation: A or B**

Mimulus ringens, Monkey-flower. 1-3'; lavender flowers June through Sept.; sun to part shade in moist to wet garden soil. A good companion for the lobelias. **Seed propagation: B**

Oenothera biennis, Common Evening Primrose (Biennial). 1-5'; bright yellow flowers in May and June; full sun in good garden soil. Colorful and easy to grow. **Seed propagation: B or C**

Penstemon digitalis, Smooth White Beardtongue. 3-4'; white tubular flowers in May; full sun in a moist, fairly rich soil. A massed planting is a beautiful background for native iris and other spring blooming perennials. Basal foliage is attractive year-round. **Seed propagation: B**

Penstemon smallii, Beardtongue. 1½-2½'; lavender flowers in May and June; full sun to part shade in a light well-darined soil. Showy and long-blooming. Considered a short-lived perennial and should be re-planted every year, but well worth the effort. **Seed propagation: B**

Rudbeckia hirta, Black-eyed Susan. 1-2'; familiar roadside flower which responds beautifully to cultivation; full sun in ordinary garden soil. Considered a biennial or short-lived perennial. **Seed propagation: B or C**

Rudbeckia laciniata, Green-headed coneflower. 3-9'; large light yellow daisy-like flowers July through Sept.; sun or part shade in rich moist garden soil. Especially handsome with Joe-Pye. **Seed propagation: B**

Solidago caesia, Blue-stemmed or Wreath Goldenrod. 1-3'; yellow flowers along arching stems Aug. through Oct.; shade or part sun in rich garden soil. A beautiful plant; valuable for the color it adds to the fall shade garden; lovely with ferns. **Seed propagation: B**

Vernonia noveboracensis, New York Ironweed. 3-7'; showy deep purple flowers Aug. through Oct.; full sun to part shade in rich moist soil. A striking addition to the garden; attractive with boneset, goldenrods, and New England aster. **Seed propagation: B**

SEED PROPAGATION

- A. No special treatment. Can be sown anytime, indoors or out.
- B. For maximum germination seed needs a moist cold period (stratification) to break dormancy. The easiest method is to sow seed outdoors in a well-prepared seed bed immediately after collection or in late Nov.-early Dec. for spring germination. Seed of some species sown early in the season will germinate during summer and can be moved to a permanent location in

the fall. An alternate method involves giving seed an artificial moist cold period by mixing with damp vermiculite and storing in the refrigerator for 4-6 weeks before sowing indoors or out.

- C. Seeds of biennials sown immediately after collection will germinate during the summer and can be moved to the garden in the fall for bloom the following summer.

Reference: *Growing and Propagating Wild Flowers*, Harry R. Phillips.

PROGRAMS AT THE PARK

A sampling of Prince William Forest Park's November programs:

Tree Hike, Sunday, Nov. 17, 3 p.m. Meet at the Nature Center and join a Ranger on this hike to become more familiar with the trees at the park.
Snake Talk, Sunday, Nov. 24, 1 p.m. Come to the Nature Center and learn the facts and current myths about the park's reptiles.

Prince William Forest Park is located at the intersection of Int. 95 & Rt. 619 at Triangle. Call the park, 221-2104, for more information.



HOLLY WALK

On Thursday, December 5 at 10 a.m. Mr. Gene Eisenbeiss, Research Horticulturist at the National Arboretum and a specialist on holly breeding, will conduct a walk through the extensive holly collection which numbers over 350 species and cultivars. The holly collection at the Arboretum is assembled in such a manner as to suggest possible landscape uses. Mr. Eisenbeiss will discuss the collection as well as cultural practices relating to hollies. The tour will begin from the Holly-Magnolia parking lot. The Arboretum is located at 3501 New York Ave., NE, Washington; 202-475-4815.

VWPS MEADOW PROJECT

VWPS's Regional Landscape Project at Great Meadow, The Plains, is progressing nicely thanks to members who planted during summer and fall sessions. A final planting date is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 16, 9:30 a.m. to mid-afternoon (rain date following Sunday).

Help is desperately needed at this session to get as many plants as possible into the ground before winter settles in. If you can donate a few hours call Deenya Greenland, 703-347-4010, or Mary Painter, 703-573-7747.

SUCCESSFUL ANNUAL MEETING

Members and guests attending our Chapter Annual Meeting enjoyed Faith Campbell's informative talk on native plant conservation. They received free seeds, bought plants, books, calendars, and T-shirts, and several won door prizes. Linda Dawes, Blythe Salamonowicz, and Roxetta Wyer were elected to the nominating committee.

Many thanks to Roxetta Wyer who organized the plant sale, to Francis Louer who handled refreshments, and to all members who contributed plants and refreshments, helped with set-up and clean-up, or in any other way contributed to the success of the Annual Meeting.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our next Chapter membership meeting will be on the 3rd Monday in January, the 20th, at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Church, Manassas.

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

A Chapter of The Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society

Membership Application

NEW RENEWAL

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Address _____

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

Membership Dues:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (60 or over) \$5.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (groups) \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Sponsor \$125.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$250.00 |

I wish to participate in the following:

- Promotion of legislation aimed at plant protection
- Development of programs, displays, literature
- Producing member publications Photography
- Stewardship of wildflower plantings/preserves
- Native plant landscaping Botanical surveys
- Public speaking Youth programs Art
- Plant rescue Typing Telephoning
- Other _____

Make check payable to V.W.P.S. and mail to :

Tom & Elaine Carrig, Membership Co-Chairmen
13305 Kahns Rd., Manassas, VA 22111

Membership and fiscal year is Nov. 1 through Oct. 31 and dues are renewable by Oct. 15 EACH YEAR.

GUIDEBOOK AVAILABLE

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority announces that "Happy Trails", the guidebook to its equestrian and hiking woodland trails, is now available for \$1.

The 48-page trail guide presents aerial photographs and detailed, to-scale maps of all of the trails in a dozen regional parks throughout Northern Virginia. The map of the 20-mile trail along the Bull Run-Occoquan shoreline in Fairfax County is especially useful as a guide to this close-to-home forest trail.

"Happy Trails" is available at all regional parks or by mail from NVRPA, 5400 Ox Rd., Fairfax Station, VA 22039 for \$1.50.

CHAPTER HAS EXHIBIT

Prince William Wildflower Society was represented at Prince William Forest Park's Family Fall Festival on Oct. 19. Nicky Staunton furnished photographs for the educational exhibit which Marie Davis set up. Marie and Sandi Mueller handed out educational materials and membership brochures throughout the day.

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY
A CHAPTER OF THE
Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society
P.O. BOX 83, MANASSAS, VA 22110



SUMAC

NOVEMBER MEETING: Monday, Nov. 18, 7:30 p.m., Bethel Church, Manassas

FALL WALKS — MIXED SUCCESS

Society members and leader Jean Chitren spent a pleasant afternoon amidst Leesylvania Park's colorful fall foliage. For the first time in four years our walk at Conway Robinson Memorial Forest was rained out. Better luck next year!



CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

The American Horticulture Society's headquarters, historic River Farm house, will be decorated for Christmas and open to the public on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free and visitors will be able to purchase Christmas plants and gardening-related gifts.

Plants, including poinsettias, kalanchoes, Christmas cactus, and Rieger begonias, can be pre-ordered and picked-up at the Open House. Call the Society at 703-768-5700 for a pre-order form before the Nov. 22 deadline. River Farm is located at 7931 East Boulevard Dr., Alexandria.