

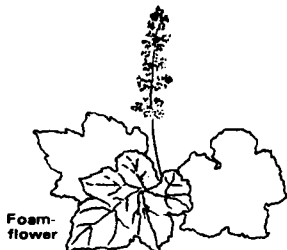
# WILD NEWS

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

## MAY MEETING

## Spring Wildflowers

MONDAY, MAY 12, 7:30 p.m., BETHEL CHURCH



Foamflower

Paul Engman, District Naturalist, for the Fairfax County Park Authority will present a slide program on Spring Wildflowers at our May membership meeting. Paul is a native of Pennsylvania and has been in the Northern Virginia area for several years. He is a naturalist at River Bend Park where he has taken many of the slides he will be showing Monday night.

## Fern Day

A Fern Propagation Workshop and Tour will be held Saturday, June 28, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the National Arboretum's Administration Building Auditorium. This informative demonstration will investigate the fascinating topic of fern spore germination. Join Charlotte Jones-Roe, Curator of Ferns at North Carolina Botanical Garden and contributing author to *Growing and Propagating Wildflowers*, for an indepth look at collecting, storing, and sowing fern spores. You will learn about the unusual fern life cycle, spore germination, and handling and establishing young "sporelings". A tour of the Arboretum's native fern collection in Fern Valley will follow the demonstration.

Advance registration is required; call the Arboretum at (202) 475-4857. Fee is \$8.00 for FONA (Friends of the National Arboretum) members and \$10.00 for non-members.

## Libraries Celebrate

Prince William Libraries celebrated Wildflower Week with a special display of books and educational materials at both Central and Potomac.

Nancy Snyder and Blair Christolon, library employees and Wildflower Society members, coordinated setting up the displays with education chairman Nicky Staunton.

## Plant Sale

SATURDAY, MAY 10

9:00 — 1:00

BETHEL CHURCH



Our Chapter's main fund-raiser promises to be a super event again this year. Plant Sale Chairman Roxetta Wyer says there will be new plants offered this year, including wild yellow iris, dame's rocket, forget-me-not, New England aster, white turtlehead, and blue star.

Old favorites such as Virginia bluebells, wild bleeding heart, cardinal flower, blackberry lily, yellow violet, and many others will be available. Free cultivation information will be available. Wildflower gardening books will be available for purchase. Members receive a 10% discount on plant purchases.

## NEXT MEETING

Monday, July 21, 7:30 p.m.

Program: Seasonal Interest with Native Plants  
Cole Burrell, Curator, Fern Valley



## Flowering Dogwood

*Cornus florida*

**MARION BLOIS**  
Assistant Professor, Biology, NVCC

Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) is one of the most recognizable signs of spring when it blooms in our area from mid-April to mid-May. The trees were favorites of both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson who planted them at Mt. Vernon and Monticello respectively. It is the state flower of Virginia and North Carolina.

Flowering dogwood's natural range is from southern Maine and Ontario west to Michigan and south to central Florida and eastern Texas and even into the mountains of northern Mexico. Dogwood can be found as an understory species in a hardwood forest or growing in an open field or along a fencerow. It grows in a variety of soil and moisture conditions and quickly recovers after a fire. This adaptability accounts for its widespread distribution.

The genus name *cornus* comes from the Latin "cornu" meaning "horn" referring to the hardness of the wood. The common name is derived from "dagge", Old English for "dagger", again referring to the hardness of the wood. In Europe skewers for roasting meat were made from dogwood.

If you examine the "flowers" of flowering dogwood you will discover that the "petals" are not petals; they are bracts or modified leaves. Four of these green veined white or pink bracts with a colored notch at the outer

Continued on page 3

FROM THE 

## PRESIDENT

Elaine Haug

I want to thank all our members who worked so hard to make Wildflower Week a great success:

Marie Davis for working many hours getting the garden at Prince William Forest Park and her own garden ready for tours.

Nicky Staunton for publicity photos for Wildflower Week events and for providing educational materials for the displays at the libraries.

Nancy Arrington for publicity in local papers and preparation of Wildflower Week calendar.

Jean Chitren for cleaning up at Conway Robinson Memorial Forest and leading two walks.

Marion Blois for leading a walk at NVCC's Manassas Campus.

Duane York and Janine Chrysler for hosting "open garden" and leading a walk at Prince William Forest Park.

Marie Davis and Nancy Arrington for a special showing of the Woodland Gardens slide program.

Jeanne Endrikat, Jeanne Fowler, Bill Edens, Jean Morgan, Sandi Mueller, and Nancy Arrington for serving as hosts at Marie's open garden. And to Roxetta Wyer who baked about six dozen cookies for the garden tour before she left for California.

And thanks to all members who participated in Wildflower Week events and brought their friends and neighbors. It was a great week!

## Bluebirds Return

Bluebirds, declining in numbers for 40 years, have begun to return in many parts of the U.S. and Canada because of the efforts of gardeners and conservationists to provide nesting boxes and establish "bluebird trails"; for helpful information, write for the brochure of the North American Bluebird Society, Box 6295, Silver Spring, MD 20906. (Reprinted from *The Avant Gardener*, May 1986.)

## Blois Presents Program

Marion Blois is scheduled to present a slide program and lecture on Spring Wildflowers at Fort Hunt Park in Alexandria at 7:30 p.m., Monday, May 12.

## WILD NEWS

is published six times a year by Prince William Wildflower Society, a Chapter of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 22110

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edge form a cup or "involucre" in which the actual flowers are clustered. These bracts attract pollinators such as bees, flies, and butterflies. The actual flowers are four-merous (all parts in fours) flowers with four sepals, four greenish-yellow petals, four stamens, and one pistil with an inferior ovary. Each flower secretes a generous amount of nectar into a disk around the pistil. The entire flowering structure is correctly called an "inflorescence" and is 3-5" in diameter. The attractive bright red oval fruits are drupes (a fleshy outer covering around a two-sided core). These fruits are favorites of many bird and animal species. Birds are the primary seed dispersers voiding the seeds through their digestive tracts.

Flowering dogwood is a small tree that can reach heights of 40' with a trunk diameter of 12-18". The brownish-red to black bark in a mature tree has been described as "alligator" bark because of its checkered pattern of small square plates. The trunk is usually short with the wide-spreading limbs forming a low dense crown.

The leaves of flowering dogwood emerge after flowering begins. The opposite leaves have several prominent veins that curve to run parallel to the smooth leaf margin. The shape of the leaf is elliptical with a pointed tip and a tapered base. The slender twigs have biscuit shaped flower buds that form during late summer and overwinter to open the following spring. The unexpanded bracts tuck over each other to form this characteristic bud adding extra color and interest to the tree in winter.

Because the wood of dogwood is hard with good resistance to sudden shock it has been used to make golf club heads, chisel handles, mauls, wedges, mallet heads,

knitting needles, sled runners, and a host of other implements. Its greatest use in the late 1800's on into the early 1900's was for shuttles in the textile industry. The aromatic bark, especially the "bark" of the roots, has a bitter and astringent alkaloid known as "cornic acid". An extract of this alkaloid was used by the Indians to treat malaria. During the Civil War, the blockade of southern ports caused a shortage of quinine leading to the use of this extract in the Confederacy. Indians also extracted a scarlet dye from the roots.

In Addition to *C. florida*, there are six other species of this genus in our area, all of which are shrubs except for *C. alternifolia*, the alternate-leaf dogwood, which may grow up to 25' tall. The shrub species are *C. amomum*, the silky dogwood, *C. foemina*, swamp dogwood, *C. obliqua*, pale dogwood, *C. racemosa*, panicle dogwood, and *C. stolonifera*, red osier dogwood. Bracts are not present in any of these species but the individual flowers are similar to those of *C. florida*. The "clusters" may be heads or cymes. Silky dogwood bark was mixed with tobacco and smoked by some eastern Indian tribes.

Even though flowering dogwood is the most easily recognized member of *Cornus*, the other species are interesting and attractive plants. This spring, take a close look at the flowering dogwood's true flowers and look for other members of this genus.

American Horticultural Society's Spring Open House is Sunday, May 11, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Activities include tours of gardens and meadow, book and plant sales, arts and crafts, plant experts to answer your gardening questions. Call 768-5700 for info.

## 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.

## NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON  
Propagation Chairman



### Wild Blue Phlox

Wild blue phlox (*P. divaricata*) is a beautiful native perennial for the spring garden. It blooms for at least three weeks in late April and early May in shades of true blue, lavender-blue, and magenta-blue. The 10-18" flowering stems, arising from low, evergreen foliage, are very fragrant and a favorite of butterflies.

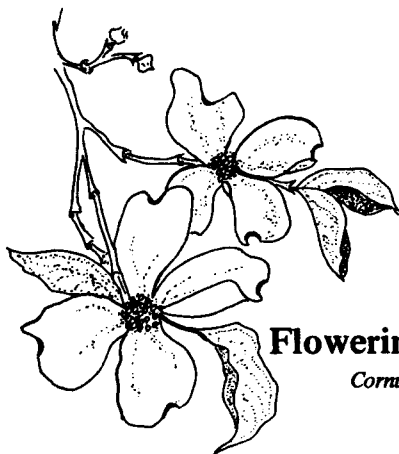
Also called wild sweet William, blue phlox is a versatile plant with many uses in the garden. It gives the same colorful massed effect in the late spring garden that bluebells give to the early garden. It is especially useful in toning down the bright pinks and reds of azaleas. The misty blue color will tie together a planting of tulips and the foliage will remain as an evergreen groundcover. A few clumps will add early color to the perennial border. In the woodland garden it combines beautifully with columbine, wood

poppy, trilliums, and most anything that happens to be blooming at the same time.

Blue phlox will adapt to a variety of conditions in the garden. It will grow and bloom in almost complete shade, but will flower better with 2-4 hours of sun. The dappled shade of a deciduous woodland suits it perfectly. Like many forest natives it prefers a humus-rich, well-drained soil. Extra moisture (usually present naturally) in the spring is necessary for healthy plants but it will adapt to a slightly dry summer soil. Plants are shallow-rooted and a 2-4" mulch will keep them from drying out during the summer.

Plants spaced about 1' apart will spread by runners and self-sown seedlings to give a massed effect in two to three years. Cut off flowering stalks after blooming (leave some for seed) for a neat appearance of the basal foliage. Collect seed as it ripens (flowering heads dry out and turn brown) and sow in a well-prepared seed bed. Clumps can be divided at almost any time, but this is best done in very early spring or in fall. Plants are long-lived, pest- and disease-free, and very easy to cultivate. Wild blue phlox will be one of the many desirable perennials for sale at Saturday's plant sale.

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



### Flowering Dogwood

*Cornus florida*

PLANT SALE: SAT., MAY 10, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM, BETHEL CHURCH, MANASSAS  
MAY MEETING: MON., MAY 12, 7:30 PM, BETHEL CHURCH, MANASSAS