



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

MARCH MEETING

BLUEBIRDS

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

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

Thanks to efforts of many individuals and groups the Eastern bluebird is making a comeback. Monday night's program, an audio-visual presentation prepared by the American Bluebird Society, will show us how we can attract this beautiful bird to our own backyards. (If you can't come to the meeting but would like a copy of a nesting box instruction sheet we'll be handing out, send a SASE to PWWS, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 22110.)

Jump right into spring and join us Monday night — we'll be making plans for our upcoming walks, garden tour, plant sale, and other events.

Virginia Wildflower Celebration 88

This year's wildflower celebration has been expanded to include the months of April and May to accommodate peak blooming periods throughout the state.

The enclosed folder describes several local events sponsored by the three Northern Virginia chapters and are not covered in this newsletter. Please participate in as many as you can. Nicky Staunton is serving as coordinator for carpooling to events outside Prince William Co., 368-9803.

Additional events sponsored by our chapter are featured throughout the newsletter.

Corporate Member

Our chapter is very proud of our corporate member, White Oak Pest Management, Inc. represented by Ed Milhous. This is the only corporate member in the entire VWPS.

Preserving Native Habitats in Urbanizing Areas

This program will be of interest to many of our members as Northern Virginia and especially Prince William County continue to grow. Attend the seminar on Saturday, March 26, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the National Wildlife Federation's Laurel Ridge Center, Vienna, to learn what is being done and what can be done to preserve natural habitats amid all the development. See the enclosed folder for more information.

— COMING —

Mark your calendar for our next two meetings:

Mon. May 16 — Native Bog Plants

Mon. July 18 — Mushrooms

Meetings are 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas

New Checklists

It's time for your spring walks are two checklists compiled by Marion Blois. **Spring Wildflowers of Northern Virginia** has been updated and **Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines of Northern Virginia** is new. Checklists are based on the second edition of the **Atlas of the Virginia Flora**. Checklists will be available in early April at \$2.00 each and can be ordered from PWWS, P. O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 22110.

P.W. Forest Park Walks

Rangers at Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, lead wildflower walks on most spring weekends. Call 221-2104 and ask to be put on the mailing list for "Turkey Caller" their monthly calendar of walks and programs.

Nominees Needed

Our chapter nominating committee composed of chairman Tom Carrig (791-3378) and members Brad Bradford, Elaine Haug, Jeanne Fowler and Jocile Johnson will be preparing a slate of nominees for this fall's election. Several positions will be open and committee members would welcome volunteers and/or your suggestions for persons you think are qualified to serve.

The same invitation comes from the VWPS nominating committee chaired by PWWS member Nancy Arrington (368-8431 or 368-9711). Currently our chapter has only one state board member (plus our president) and more representation would be healthy for the state and our chapter. Let us hear from you!

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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368-9803

CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Secretary: Frances Louer 754-2824 Treasurer: Marie Davis 361-1626

FROM THE 

PRESIDENT

Nicky Staunton

Bluebells . . . bluebirds . . . blue skies! And, these blue eyes see them and love 'em!

Where do bluebells live? What do they need to just survive? Much less flourish. And, bluebirds. After taking their habitats from them, we learn how to house them and help them survive in Prince William.

How much better to treat the ecosystem kindly. To leave 30-50-year old trees, so that we will have their benefits as mature trees in the near future rather than putting in all new small trees which some of us will never see anywhere near mature. Trees to shade the bluebells as they get ready for summer's heat and disappearing; to shelter the bluebirds and nourish them with insects.

Dealing with what we have, though, in Prince William and Stafford Counties, DEVELOPMENT, we must do our best. Development is necessary to support us, our families, and to offer homes and jobs. What to do? Continue to express our concerns to our representatives in our counties. Read the papers. Follow zoning, planning, hearings.

That is our first step. LEARN. Then, we can be the stewards of our part of the world, caring for both human needs and those of the bluebells and bluebirds. That blue sky covers us all -- live or dead. Every truck passing with the stumps of huge old trees reminds us to be careful.

Note: Your PWWS Board has voted to send a letter to the Save the Battlefield Coalition expressing our support of their efforts to curtail the negative effects of the William Mall project. A small step to keep in perspective the possible overuse of a beautiful area in which vast numbers of beautiful wildflowers live with other native plants.

REFERENCE BOOKS DONATED TO MASTER GARDENERS

As part of our community education program our chapter has donated **A Field Guide to Wildflowers** by Peterson & McKenney and **Growing and Propagating Wild Flowers** by Harry R. Phillips to the Prince William County Extension Service's Master Gardeners library.

SPRING CALENDAR



Information on some events listed is sketchy here; check newsletter or enclosed folder for more details. Also, it is very important to call ahead to be sure events are still scheduled as reported here.

March 19 (Sat.) Spring Photo Hike, 1-2:30 p.m., Pr. Wm. Forest Park Nature Center. Info 221-2104
March 20 (Sun.) Signs of Spring Walk, 1-2 p.m., Pr. Wm. Forest Park Nature Center. Info 221-2104
March 21 (Mon.) PWWS Membership Meeting: Bluebirds, 7:30 p.m., Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas
March 23 (Wed.) Spring Exploration, 10 a.m., Leesylvania Park. Info Jean Chitren, 221-4489
March 25 & 26 (Fri. & Sat.) Beekeepers Smart Course. Info 754-9587
March 26 (Sat.) Preserving Natural Habitats in Urbanizing Areas, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Info 703-534-2838

April 9 (Sat.) Brentsville Wildflower Walk, 1 p.m., Brentsville Park. Info Jean Chitren 221-4489
April 12 (Tues.) Naturescaping, 1 p.m., Nature Education Center, Reston. Info 437-9580
April 16 (Sat.) Discovery Hike, 1 p.m., Nature Education Center, Reston. Info 437-9580
April 16 & 17 (Sat. & Sun.) Bluebell Walk, 2 p.m. each day, Bull Run Regional Park. Info 352-5908.
April 17 (Sun.) Conway Robinson Wildflowers, 1 p.m., Conway Robinson Memorial Forest. Info 221-4489
April 18 (Mon.) PWWS Board of Directors, 7:30 p.m. Info Nicky Staunton, 368-9803
April 23 (Sat.) Fraser Preserve Wildflowers, 10 a.m. Info Nicky Staunton 368-9803
April 23 (Sat.) Trip to Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve, PA, 8 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Info 703-642-5174
April 24 (Sun.) Trout Lily Festival, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Airlie
April 24 (Sun.) Billy Goat Trail Walk, 2 p.m., Fairfax Co. Info Karen Sorensen 703-534-2838
April 29-May 1 (Fri.-Sun.) Roanoke Wildflower Pilgrimage
April 30 (Sat.) PWWS Wildflower Garden Tour, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
April 30 (Sat.) Wildflower Repository Walk, 10 a.m.-noon, Locust Shade Park, Triangle. Info 670-2347
April 30 (Sat.) Wetland Wildflowers, 1-3 p.m., Veterans Memorial Park. Info Elaine Haug 670-2347
April 30 (Sat.) Canoe Trip, Veterans Memorial Park, 4-6 p.m. Info Elaine Haug 670-2347

May 1 (Sun.) PWWS Wildflower Garden Tour, 1-5 p.m.
May 2 (Mon.) Whorled Pogonia Search, 1 p.m., Helwig Park, Independent Hill. Info Jean Chitren 221-4489
May 7 (Sat.) Canoe Trip, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Veterans Memorial Park. Info Elaine Haug 670-2347
May 6-8 (Fri.-Sun.) Wintergreen's Spring Wildflower Symposium. Info 804-325-2200
May 7 (Sat.) PWWS Plant Sale, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Bethel Lutheran Church parking lot, Manassas
May 8 (Sun.) Blue Mountain Wildflower Walk, Linden, VA. Info Nicky Staunton 368-9803
May 14 (Sat.) Spring Wildflower Walk, 1 p.m., Conway Robinson Memorial Forest. Info 221-4489
May 16 (Mon.) PWWS Membership Meeting: Native Bog Plants, 7:30 p.m., Bethel Lutheran Church

July 18 (Mon.) PWWS Membership Meeting: Mushrooms, 7:30 p.m., Bethel Lutheran Church
Sept. 16-18 (Fri.-Sun.) VWPS Annual Meeting, Massanutten, VA

Wanted: Wildflower Collectibles

Prince William Central Library will provide the use of their two glass display cases to us for six weeks this spring. If you have any wildflower related items that could be used please let Nicky Staunton know, 368-9803. She has in mind needlework, ash trays, paintings or other artwork, woodcuts, decorated boxes, old post cards, old books, and jewelry. We need lots of collectibles with a wildflower theme. Cases are locked, but use your own judgment about offering valuable items.

Wintergreen Wildflowers

Wintergreen's annual Spring Wildflower Symposium will be held May 6-8. In addition to numerous walks to discover wildflowers in a variety of habitats, programs on wildflower crafts, sketching, gardening and other subjects are planned.

For a brochure and application, call 804-325-2200 or write to Spring Wildflower Symposium, Wintergreen, VA 22958.

Countryside Plant Sale

Countryside Garden Club will have a plant sale Saturday, April 30, 10 a.m.—1 p.m. at the home of Linda Licht, 12251 Chinaberry Ct. in the mid-county area. Call Linda for info, 791-6613.

Volunteer Guides Needed

Our chapter has offered to help with the Bluebell Walk at Bull Run Saturday and Sunday, April 16 & 17, 2 p.m. each day. Nicky Staunton will be a volunteer guide and hopes other members will help out — let her know if you can.

Walk at Fraser Preserve

A spring wildflower walk at Fraser Preserve, a Nature Conservancy property, is scheduled for Saturday, April 23 at 10 a.m. Conservancy properties can be toured by special arrangement but are rarely open to the public so this is a good opportunity to visit a choice spot. Call Nicky Staunton, 368-9803, if you're interested in going.



Third Annual Wildflower Garden Tour

Three members will open their gardens for our third annual wildflower garden tour to be held (rain or shine) Saturday, April 30, 10 a.m.—5 p.m. and Sunday, May 1, 1—5 p.m.

Situated in open, rolling countryside near Nokesville, Jenifer and Brad Bradford's five acres contain large wildflower meadow areas and a cultivated wildflower border. Jenifer, a transplanted British gardener, has developed several perennial island beds and a well-landscaped garden pool.

Frances and Phil Louer also garden on five acres, but theirs is a mostly wooded site landscaped with hundreds of azaleas and rhododendrons. The property, located near Haymarket, contains several naturalized wildflower areas, perennial beds, and an outdoor living area composed of decks and a lily pool.

Just so you don't think five acres is necessary for a wildflower garden, our third garden is a quarter-acre lot in Sudley tended by Marie and Paul Davis. Here wildflowers and companion plants are grown in a variety of naturalistic settings including a wet garden, shade gardens, and a small roadside garden around the lamppost. Attracting wildlife has been a goal in the development of this garden.

The tour is free since it serves as a preview of our plant sale. We will mail folders with a map to area garden clubs and to visitors who signed up at last year's tour. You can request a folder by calling Nancy Arrington, 368-8431 or 368-9711, or writing to the Society at P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 22110.

Our gardeners need help in the form of workers to help get the gardens ready and hosts and hostesses during tour hours. Call Nancy at the above numbers if you can help or offer your time and energy to any of our three gardeners.

Park Hot Line

Prince William Park Authority's 24-hour "hot line" (494-PARK) provides up-to-date news and information on events, activities, and classes.

Beekeepers Smart Course

For the folks who came to our January meeting for Jean Chitren's program on bees and wildflowers and want to learn more about beekeeping, here's your chance! The Beekeepers' Association of Prince William Co. is co-sponsoring "Beekeepers Smart Course" March 25 & 26 at No. Va. Community College, Manassas Campus. Friday hours are 7-9:30 pm (registration 6 pm) and Saturday 9 am to 5 pm. Fee is \$17.50 in advance and \$20 at the door. For more info call PWWS members Bobbe Krueger, 754-9587 or Jean Chitren, 221-4489.

Canoe the Marshes

Elaine Haug will be leading canoe trips for Prince William Park Authority again this year. The first two trips are:

April 30, Veterans Memorial Park, Woodbridge, 4-6 p.m.

May 7, Veterans Memorial Park to Great Marsh at Mason Neck, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Call Elaine, 670-2347, for info and fees. Trips for May 21 and 30 and the rest of the summer will be detailed in the next newsletter.

Spring Wildflower Walk

On Monday, March 28, 1 p.m. Joan Feely, Acting Curator of Fern Valley and native plant collections at the National Arboretum, will conduct a spring walk through Fern Valley in which she will discuss some of the early spring wildflowers and native flowering shrubs and trees found in the valley's varied habitats. The tour will begin at the entrance to Fern Valley.

Native Plant Landscaping Conference

The Native Plant Landscaping Conference at Cullowhee, NC, will be held July 28-30. If you're interested in attending or would like more info, give your name and address to Nancy Arrington (368-8431, 368-9711 or P.O. Box 462, Manassas 22110) to be put on their mailing list.



PWWS Wildflower Walks

Prince William Wildflower Society has scheduled the following walks for this spring. Please call beforehand or check local newspapers to be sure walks will be held as listed here.

March 23 (Wednesday) 10 a.m. **Spring Exploration**, Leesylvania Park. Meet leader Jean Chitren at the end of Neabsco Rd. in the Pilot House parking lot. Info Nicky Staunton, 368-9803 or 368-3943.

April 9 (Saturday) 1 p.m. **Brentsville Wildflowers**, Brentsville County Park. Meet leader Jean Chitren in the parking lot of Brentsville Courthouse. Expect to see ferns, native azaleas, bloodroot and more. Info Jean 221-4489 or Nicky Staunton 368-9803 or 368-3943.

April 17 (Sunday) 1 p.m. **Conway Robinson Wildflowers**, Conway Robinson Memorial Forest, Gainesville. Lovely displays of spring beauty, toothwort, bluebells and others. Call leader Jean Chitren for info, 221-4489.

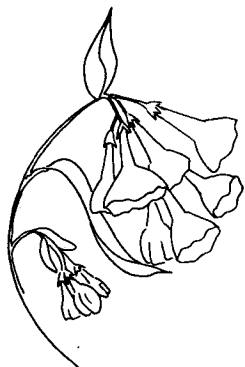
April 30 (Saturday) 10 a.m.-noon. **Wildflower Repository Walk**, Locust Shade Park, Triangle. Check on orchids, skunkcabbage, ferns and other plants of early PWWS rescues. Meet leader Elaine Haug at the fitness trail, and call her for info, 670-2347.

April 30 (Saturday) 1-3 p.m. **Wetland Wildflowers**, Veterans Memorial Park, Woodbridge. Led by Elaine Haug, 670-2347.

May 2 (Monday) 1 p.m. **Whorled Pogonia Search**, Helwig Park, Independent Hill. Large whorled pogonia and Indian cucumber, two relatives of the endangered small whorled pogonia, are here. Meet leader Jean Chitren at the fitness trail entrance. Info Jean, 221-4489 or Nicky Staunton, 368-9803 or 368-3943.

May 8 (Sunday) **Blue Mountain Walk**, Linden, Va. Beautiful areas of trillium and many other spring wildflowers. Call Nicky Staunton, 368-9803 or 368-3943, for time and carpooling.

May 14 (Saturday) 1 p.m. **Spring Wildflower Walk**, Conway Robinson Memorial Forest, Gainesville. Call leader Jean Chitren for info, 221-4489.



Virginia Bluebells

Mertensia virginica

MARION BLOIS

Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

The haze of blue and pink flowers and buds of Virginia Bluebells, *Mertensia virginica*, is one of the most beautiful experiences of spring. This perennial member of the Boraginaceae (Borage or Forget-me-not Family) is a true spring ephemeral. The vegetative parts appear, followed by flower buds, in early to mid-April. By the end of May no trace of the plant can be seen above ground. For the brief time one has to enjoy this lovely spring wildflower, the leaves and stems are photosynthesizing and energy is being stored underground in rhizomes for next spring's show.

Virginia bluebells are usually found on flood-plains or in rich damp woods. Their range is New York to Michigan, Ohio, Kansas, and south to Alabama and Missouri. The scientific name was assigned by Linnaeus: the genus *Mertensia* was named in honor of Franz Mertens a German botanist of the eighteenth century and species *virginica* for Virginia. Other common names are Virginia cowslip, lungwort, and Roanoke bells.

The trumpet-shaped flowers that are about an inch long vary in color from pink to bright blue to to white. The buds are usually pink with the most common color of the mature flower being blue with a return to pink following pollination. Color variation is probably due to genetic variation. Like most other members of the Borage family, the inflorescence of Virginia bluebells is that of a coiled raceme or a helicoid cyme with up to a dozen flowers gracefully arranged on one side of the pedicle or flowering stem.

The trumpet-shaped corolla is made up of five fused petals which form a longer tube with a shorter bell-shaped limb. Five sepals fuse together to form a green calyx. The five stamens are inserted on the end of the corolla tube. The fruit is a schizocarp which

splits to release four one-sided nutlets approximately 1/8-inch long with a roughened surface.

Virginia bluebells' alternate basal leaves are up to seven or eight inches long and are elliptic to ovate. Smaller leaves on the one- to two-foot stems are two to five inches long and are ovate to oblong. Leaves and stems are glabrous (smooth) but may be glaucous (having a thin coat of bluish-white waxy covering.) The underground storage structures of this spring ephemeral are russet-colored rhizomes which are underground stems where energy from the brief photosynthetic activity of April and May is stored for next spring.

Human uses of this beautiful plant have been limited compared to many other spring wildflowers. The Cherokee Indians used it to treat whooping cough and consumption.

The Virginia bluebell is the logo flower of our own Prince William Wildflower Society. Prince William County has many beautiful stands of bluebells such as the path below Stone Bridge along Bull Run in the Manassas National Battlefield Park. Bull Run Regional Park, Riverbend Park, and Great Falls Park, VA are other nearby parks with excellent displays of bluebells. Whether you enjoy Virginia bluebells this spring at one of these parks or at other sites this very special wildflower will bring you much visual pleasure. Its blue is very difficult to capture on film, but your eyes can feast on the "real thing".

Board of Directors Meet

The PWWS Board of Directors (officers and committee chairpersons) usually meets on the 3rd Monday during months we don't have a membership meeting. The next meeting is Monday, April 18, 7:30 p.m. at the home of president Nicky Staunton. Meetings are open to any chapter member who wants to attend.

Naturescaping & Discovery

A program on planning a garden to attract wildlife will be held Tues., April 12, 1 p.m., at the Vernon J. Walker Nature Education Center on Glade Dr., Reston. Participants can visit the Center's naturescaped garden and meadow.

Nancy Herwig who presented our program on edible plants will lead a Discovery Hike at the nature center on Sat., April 16 at 1 p.m. Both programs are free, but reservations are required, 437-9580.



Sixth Annual PWWS Plant Sale

Our sixth annual plant sale will be Saturday, May 7, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Bethel Lutheran Church's parking lot, Sudley Rd. & Plantation Ln., Manassas.

We can use your help in many large and small ways:

- Potting plants from your own garden
- Potting plants donated by other members
- Setting up tables and arranging plants for sale
- Assisting customers – serving as cashiers – helping with clean-up
- Buying plants and encouraging your friends to do same

In order to make this our best sale ever, please keep these guidelines in mind:

● If you have plants to share but no time to dig and pot, let us know as early as possible so committee members can get the work done.

● Pot up plants by April 23 so they won't wilt on sale day.

● We're arranging for a central collection spot a few days before the sale to help cut down on the craziness of sale day. We will help make arrangements to get your plants there. If plants are delivered to the Church the day of the sale, please get them there by 7:30 a.m.

● Please let Nancy Arrington, 368-8431 or 368-9711, know as soon as possible what plants you'll be donating so our cultivation sheet will be as complete as possible. We can't accept wild-collected plants, difficult or rare species such as lady's-slippers, or invasive species such as thistles.

Thanks to the generosity of our members the plant sale has been the major source of our income (aside from memberships) since our chapter was organized and we're counting on you again this year. Call if you can share plants or help in any other way and if you have questions or suggestions: Nancy Arrington (numbers above) or Nicky Staunton, 368-9803 or 368-3943.

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

A Chapter of The Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society

Membership Application

___NEW ___RENEWAL

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Address _____

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

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 _____

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Check
Membership
Category | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$15 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$50 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (60 or over) \$5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Family \$10 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5 | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (groups) \$25 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$250 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Sponsor \$125 | |

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.

I give ___ I do not give ___ permission for my (our name(s), address and telephone number to be published in a chapter directory or exchanged with other related organizations.

NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON
Propagation Chairman



Virginia Bluebells

Mertensia virginica

Virginia bluebells say spring in the garden like no other plant. Drooping clusters of pink buds are showing on 1-2' arching stems by early April and soon open into porcelain blue bells that last about three weeks.

Bluebells are among the easiest wildflowers to grow and have been a favorite of American and European gardeners since colonial days. They are often grown with bulbs and in partially shady perennial borders, but are at their best in clumps or drifts in a woodland garden. Here their cultivation requirements are best met: humus-rich soil, adequate moisture in spring, and sun before the trees leaf out. Soil that is moist to wet in spring but dry in summer suits bluebells fine since they go dormant soon after blooming. (Dying foliage should be left to mature naturally.) Their

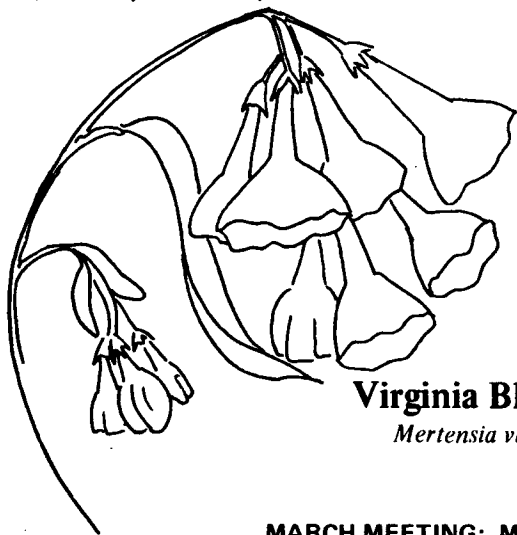
fleshy tuberous roots will rot in a poorly drained soil that stays boggy year-round.

The lovely soft blue of Virginia bluebells combines so well with the yellows, pinks, and whites of early spring that it is hard to come up with a bad combination. The gardener's main challenge is finding companions that share the bluebells growing conditions and whose foliage remains to take their place. In well-drained soil that stays moist during summer ferns, wild ginger, and fall blooming asters are good choices as are non-native astilbes and hostas. In soil that becomes somewhat dry in summer try alum-root, green and gold, and cream violets.

Bluebells self-sow in spots where they are happy and are easily propagated by division when the foliage is dying back. Seed sown in an outdoor bed after collection receives the moist cold period needed for spring germination. Seed can also be started in a flat of moist growing medium, covered with plastic, and kept in the refrigerator for six weeks. Remove to a warm room or outdoors for germination.

Bluebells are available at our plant sale and from mail-order wildflower nurseries. Be sure plants you buy have been propagated and not wild-collected.

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



Virginia Bluebells

Mertensia virginica

MARCH MEETING: Monday, March 21, 7:30 p.m.

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