

WILD NEWS

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY, A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

JANUARY MEETING:

Wildflower Seed Propagation

Monday, January 16, 7:30 p.m.

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



In January many gardeners begin to think about starting seeds and our program will focus on growing wildflowers from seed. Propagation chairman Nancy Arrington will discuss seed collection and storage tips along with basic indoor and outdoor propagation procedures. Seeds of approximately 30 species of wildflowers suitable for cultivation in local gardens will be available.

This will be a good time for members to bring any seed they have collected to share with others. Plan to join us for this program and learn how easy it is to grow wildflowers from seed.

Library Books Missing

Librarian Jenifer Bradford reports the following books missing from our chapter library:

Crockett, Time-Life Wildflower Gardening
Courtney & Zimmerman, Wildflowers & Weeds
Mooberry & Scott, Grow Native Shrubs in Your Garden

Mohlenbrock, Wildflowers a Quick ID Guide
Williams, Field Guide to Orchids
Tekulsky, The Butterfly Garden
Tenenbaum, Gardening with Wildflowers

All PWWS library books are identified on the inside front cover. Please search your book shelves and if you locate one of the above, return it at the next meeting.

Regional Flora

Prospective students are reminded to sign up for Marion Blois Lobstein's popular wildflower class at NVCC Manassas Campus. Classes begin in mid-February. For more information, call Marion at the college, 368-0184, ext. 262.

Native Plant Symposium

If you're interested in attending "Native Plants: Glory in the Garden and the Wild", described in the enclosed brochure, call Nancy Arrington, 368-8431 or 368-9711 if you'd like to carpool.

● Renewal Reminder

A red dot on your mailing label means you haven't yet renewed your dues for the current year and this is the last newsletter you will receive. We hope you'll renew immediately (form enclosed) because we don't want to lose you.

PWWS Board Meeting

PWWS's February Board of Directors meeting will be Monday the 20th, 7:30 p.m. at the home of Jenifer and Brad Bradford. Board meetings are open to all members.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, March 20, 7:30 p.m.

Bethel Lutheran Church

Program: Wildflowers Through Art

VNPS Winter Workshop

VNPS's annual Winter Workshop is scheduled for Saturday, March 11, at the Gottwald Science Center, University of Richmond. Education Chair Cris Fleming who is also Education Director and a field trip leader for the Audubon Naturalist Society is organizing the workshop. Several experienced trip leaders from chapters throughout the state will assist with practice walks to be held on campus or at Pony Pasture at the James River Park.

This year's workshop, for the first time, is open to all VNPS members. Though it's purpose is to instruct field trip leaders everyone who enjoys wildflower or nature walks will benefit by learning tips and tricks from the pros.

Mark the date on your calendar; more details will follow in a mailing from VNPS. We're hoping for a good turnout from our chapter and plan to organize carpools. Call President Brad Bradford, 594-3422, if you'd like to go.

"Winter Greens" Hike

Discover splashes of green in the winter landscape on a hike Saturday, February 4, at 2 p.m., Potomac Overlook Regional Park. This free hike is suitable for adults and children ages 10 and older. Call 528-5406 for reservations. Potomac Overlook Regional Park is located at the end of Marcey Rd., off Military Rd. in north Arlington, Virginia.

Geology for the Novice

A free geology program will be held at Potomac Overlook Regional Park Nature Center on Sunday, February 12, at 2 p.m.

Learn to interpret landforms and natural features of Northern Virginia and understand basics of rock and mineral identification. Call 528-5406 for reservations for adults and children over the age of 10.

Potomac Overlook Park is located at the end of Marcey Rd., off Military Rd., in north Arlington, Va.

WILD NEWS

is published six times a year by Prince William Wildflower Society, a Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 22110. Permission is given to use material with credit to source.

President, Alden B. Bradford, 594-3422

Editor, Nancy Arrington, 368-8431

Artist, Nicky Staunton, 368-9803

Deadline for the March-April issue is March 6, 1989.

FROM THE 

PRESIDENT

ALDEN B. BRADFORD

Now that we have completed that ever accelerating bob-sled ride of activity from Thanksgiving to New Years (and I hope you enjoyed it), we find ourselves back at our normal pace contemplating the new year. What now?

In the immediate future is, of course, our membership meeting on January 16th with Nancy Arrington describing the propagation of wildflowers from seed. As she mentioned in the last newsletter she will have an extensive collection of seeds available.

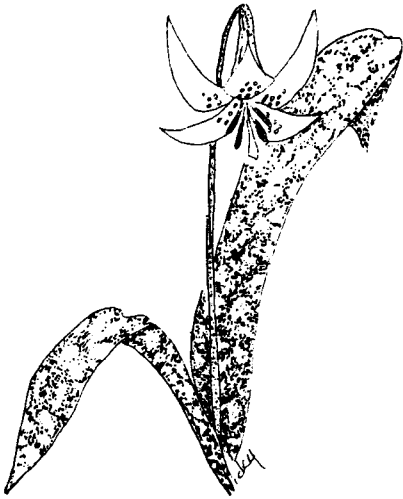
In March, on the 11th, Cris Fleming, VNPS Education Chair, will be chairing the Winter Workshop on how to lead a wildflower walk. The workshop will use the grounds of the University of Richmond and a nearby park. Even though most of us do not intend to act as walk leaders, this workshop will teach us how to look for what you look for on a wildflower walk. Further information will be coming from the VNPS through the mail. I urge you to attend.

While we were in England visiting Jenifer's parents, I was again impressed by the large areas of "green space" which are large areas just left "green". They may be farm land or wood land. You can look at them, walk on foot paths through them, but no one, not even the owners, can build a house or cut a tree on them without special permission from the local governing authority. In this way they are actively preserving the habitat of both plants and animals.

I am looking forward to seeing you all again on the 16th.

Winter Hike at Fountainhead

This hike on Sunday, February 5 at 1 p.m. will cover about 3 miles through deciduous and hemlock forests and along the Occoquan Reservoir. Hikers, 10 years of age and older, should wear warm clothes and good walking shoes. To reach the park take Rt. 123 10 mi. south of the City of Fairfax, turn right on Hampton Rd. and continue 3 mi. to the park turn-off on the left. Meet at the picnic shelter parking area. Call 528-5406 for reservations.



TROUTLILY

Erythronium americanum

MARION BLOIS LOBSTEIN

Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

The bright yellow flowers and purple mottled leaves of yellow troutlily (*Erythronium americanum*) is one of the loveliest and surest signs of early spring. The leaves of this member of the Lilaceae or lily family appear by mid to late March and all signs of the plant are gone by early June — a true spring ephemeral. It grows and often forms large colonies in the rich, moist soil of woodlands, floodplains, and stream bottomland of its natural range from Nova Scotia to Florida and west to Mississippi and Arkansas.

The genus name *Erythronium* is Greek for red referring to the red-flowered species *E. dens canis* and the species name *Americanum*, of course, refers to America. Two other species, *E. albidum*, the white troutlily and *E. umbilicatum*, the unbilicated yellow troutlily, are also found in Northern Virginia but are much less common. The white species is found along the Potomac River in Fairfax and Loudoun Counties.

Solitary flowers develop at the top of a 6-9" scape or peduncle only in plants that have two leaves. Flowers are made up of a perianth of three outer yellow sepals and three inner yellow petals which may be tinged purple on the outside. The petal tips are recurved when the flower opens which is only on sunny days. On cloudy days or in the evening flowers remain closed. The six prominent stamens have yellow-orange to purplish anthers. The style of the pistil is

club-shaped when flower buds first open and anthers cover the stigma, but within a day or so these split apart and shrivel back to expose the stigma.

Troutlily flowers are good nectar producers pollinated primarily by bees and syrphid flies. The fruit is a ½-1" capsule with a rounded top surface (the fruit of the unbilicated troutlily is indented on the top surface). The three-celled capsule matures in six to eight weeks and will contain 3-7 crescent-shaped seeds approximately 1/8" long. As the fruit matures the scape falls to the ground and the capsule splits open at maturity to release the seeds. On the surface of these russet-colored seeds is an elaiosome (a fleshy, fat-filled appendage) which attracts ants to disperse the seeds.

The attractive light to dark green fleshy leaves are mottled with purple and whitish-green spots resembling the spots of a trout or those of a fawn (the two leaves also stand up like the ears of a fawn) thus the common names troutlily and fawn lily. Yellow adder's tongue is another common name referring to these spots. There may be one or two 3-8" oblong lance-shaped leaves per individual plant. All one-leaved and some two-leaved plants are sterile (no flower is produced). In some colonies up to 99% of all plants will be sterile. The factors that control flowering are still not well understood. The maturity of the plant, the relative amount of energy stored in the underground corm, depth of the corm, or crowding of individual corms may all be factors. By the time the overhead leaf canopy is complete by late May or early June the leaves die back.

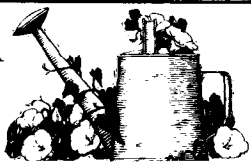
The well developed corm (underground storage stem) is whitish, smooth, and somewhat egg-shaped (thus the name "dogtooth violet") with papery scales on the outside. These corms often give rise to smaller cormlets as well as rhizomes (horizontal underground stem) by which a colony of troutlilies can spread asexually over a large area. Energy generated during the brief photosynthetic life of troutlily is stored in these underground structures and will be used to form new tissue for the next spring's rapid development. Buds for next spring's flowers are formed in the corm during the summer.

American Indians used troutlily extract as an emetic to induce vomiting, as a root tea to break fevers, and as a poultice of crushed leaves to treat wounds. The Cherokees also chewed up underground parts and spit them into streams to attract fish.

Once you see the leaves of this lovely ephemeral, you know spring is almost here. Soon the bright sunny yellow flowers will add much joy to the spring days of April.

NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON
Propagation Chairman



Wood Poppy

(*Stylophorum diphyllum*)

Though not native to Prince William County wood poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*) is extremely easy to grow and long-lived in gardens here. Often called celandine poppy, it should not be confused with the less-attractive European celandine (*Chelidonium majus*).

Wood poppy grows naturally in shade and rich neutral lealmold in the northeastern and central U.S. including a few southwestern Virginia counties. Similar growing conditions should be provided in the garden; however, it will grow in sun as long as soil is moist and fertile.

In early to mid-April bright yellow 2" poppy-like flowers appear above gray-green lobed foliage and plants continue to bloom for several weeks. Attractive drooping seed pods have a rough outer cover which, characteristic of members of the poppy fam-

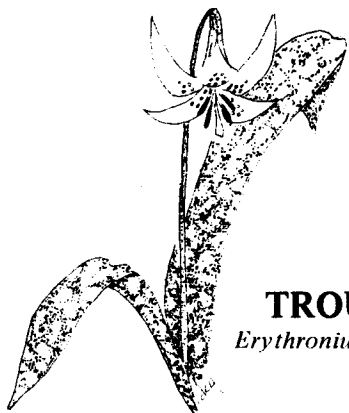
ily, contains a dark yellow juice as do other parts of the 1-1½" tall plant.

The foliage is such an asset that it is well worth a little extra effort to keep it looking good. Shade after the trees leaf out and a humus-rich, constantly moist yet well-drained soil seems to be what it needs. A 2-3" mulch will help keep the soil moist and cool and supplemental watering will be needed during our dry summers. Leaves that become-ratty-looking can be clipped off and new ones will appear. Late summer rains often produce a fresh crop of leaves, attractive until frost. In less than ideal conditions this very adaptable plant copes by going dormant only to appear just as vigorous and beautiful as ever the next spring.

Wood poppy shares the same growing conditions and looks good with many favorite spring wildflowers such as bleeding heart, clumping foamflower, crested iris and ferns, especially the lacy maidenhair. One of the prettiest combinations is with wild blue phlox.

Wood poppy self-sows in spots where it's growing well and the gardener can propagate by seed or division. Seeds have an elaiosome (white appendage) and should be sowed before it dries out or stored in damp paper towels in the refrigerator until sowing time. Nursery propagated plants are available from several mail-order sources and at our spring plant sale in May.

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY
A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. BOX 83, MANASSAS, VA 22110



TROUTLILY

Erythronium americanum

January Meeting: Monday, January 16, 7:30 p.m.
Bethel Lutheran Church, Sudley Rd. & Plantation Ln., Manassas