

WILD NEWS

JULY-AUGUST 1989

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

JULY MEETING

WILDLIFE RESCUE & REHABILITATION

Monday, July 17, 7:30 p.m.

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

Animal Rescue League member Jackie Freitag is scheduled to give a program on animal rescue and rehabilitation at our July meeting. She has worked with wildlife in the Northern Virginia area for several years and, in addition to numerous other activities, gives animal rehabilitation programs at Prince William Forest Park

Children are especially invited to this program as Mrs. Freitag plans to illustrate her talk with an owl and other small animals. Please join us for an informative and entertaining program

Fair Exhibit Features Butterflies

At the June Board meeting a small committee was formed to develop our exhibit at the Prince William County Fair (August 11-19).

This committee will meet July 10 to bring together materials and information on Gardens for Butterflies and Moths. It will develop a flyer for adults and a handout for children. Emphasis will be on native wildflowers, trees, and shrubs that butterflies and moths feed on, larval food sources, and a welcoming environment.

If you have photographs, pictures, articles, suitable plants that could be potted up to display at the Fair, please call the Bradfords at 594-3422,

A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the July meeting since we need volunteers to man the display evenings and weekends.

Our display will again be located in the Home Arts building, so be sure to stop by -- and tell all your friends about the exhibit. It will be a learning experience!

Door Prize Coordinator Needed

Will someone please volunteer to solicit and collect door prizes for our Annual Meeting/Picnic on September 16? The more door prizes we have, the more fun everyone has. Jenifer was the coordinator at last year's event. She found that members were very generous with donations since several are artists and many members contributed plants from their gardens. Any wildflower-related item is especially needed. A donor sheet will be passed around at the July meeting. Please be thinking about items that you can donate.

COMING

Mark your calendar for our next two meetings:

Sat., Sept. 16, 11:00 a.m., Annual Meeting
Home of Fran & Ken Bass (Details in Aug.)

Mon., Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m.
Bethel Church, Manassas

Highland County Anyone?

Are you interested in joining a group of PWWS members on a weekend field trip to Bear Mountain Outdoor School in Hightown, Virginia this coming March?

The Kincheloes (artists from Highland County) have recommended this 200-acre mountain retreat in Virginia's "Little Switzerland", located 60 miles west on U.S. 250 from 1-81 (Staunton). The School and Lodge are run by Tom and Laurie Brody who organize workshops and trips, reunions, and retreats. Bunkrooms sleep 14-20 people, and a fully equipped kitchen/pantry provides home-cooked meals of all natural foods.

The annual Maple Festival is held throughout the county the second and third weekends in March. The Brodys invite us down to enjoy the Festival and to look for early wildflowers. The Bradfords are spending a week at Bear Mountain this September and will be checking out the facilities and exploring the county.

We'll have materials (and hopefully handouts) at the July meeting and can answer many questions then. The Bradfords plan to attend the Festival and would like others to join them. We'll have to book early since the Festival attracts 50,000 visitors yearly, and accommodations are limited.

Marsh Ecology

Marion Blois Lobstein will be teaching "Special Topics In Marsh Ecology" at NVCC Manassas Campus this summer. The two-credit course will consist of a lecture on Sept. 9, and field trips on Sept. 16 & 30, Oct. 14, 28 & 29. Trip possibilities include Mason Neck Wildlife Refuge, Huntley Meadows, and Teddy Roosevelt Island in addition to the two-day trip to Chincoteague on the 28th & 29th of October. Call the college for more information, 368-0184, ext. 262.

WILD NEWS

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Deadline for the Sept.-Oct. issue is Sept. 1, 1989

FROM THE 

PRESIDENT

ALDEN B. BRADFORD

Suddenly it's Summer! The garden tour was very successful (with approximately 80 visitors per garden), and the plant sale was very well attended and raised approximately \$1,500 for our treasury.

Thanks to an abundance of rainfall, we are enjoying a multitude of Summer wildflowers. Our roadsides and meadows are filled with ox-eye daisies, chickory, butter and eggs, Deptford pink, daylilies, Queen Anne's lace, and rudbeckias.

We have much to look forward to this August and September. In August we'll have our display at the County Fair featuring wildflowers that attract butterflies and moths.

In September we have a triple feature. Marion Blois Lobstein offers a course in marsh ecology at the Manassas campus of NVCC. The class begins on Saturday, September 9, and ends on October 28-29 with a weekend field trip to Chincoteague.

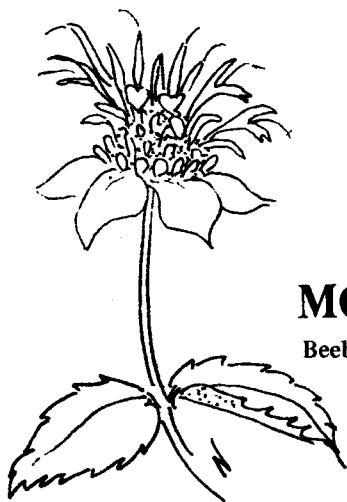
Our Annual Meeting on Saturday, September 16 takes the form of a family potluck picnic in the garden of Fran and Ken Bass. This will be a second opportunity to see their wildflowers, wildlife, and pond.

A week later, September 22-24, we are fortunate to have the VNPS Annual Meeting close to home in Reston. From the Friday night slide show to the Saturday morning field trips to the Saturday evening silent auction, banquet, and program to more field trips on Sunday, it will be a great chance to meet and mix with other wildflower enthusiasts from around the state.

Take advantage of these wonderful opportunities. They will provide a variety of experiences that will expand our horizons. See you there!

August Board Meeting

The August PWWS Board Meeting is the third Monday, August 21, 7:30 p.m. at the home of President Brad Bradford. Meetings are open to all members. Board members please let Brad know if you cannot attend.



MONARDA

Beebalm or Oswego Tea

MARION BLOIS LOBSTEIN
Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

Many aromatic perennial species of the genus *Monarda* of the Lamiaceae or Mint family have a long and interesting history of medicinal and culinary uses. In our area there are four species: *M. didyma* (beebalm, Oswego tea, Indian's plume), *M. fistulosa* (wild bergamot), *M. clinopodium* (basil balm), and *M. punctata* (horsemint or dotted horsemint). They bloom from late June through September and range from southern Canada or New England south to Georgia and west to Missouri. *M. didyma* is found in moister habitats than the other three species which can be found in dry woods, thickets and along roadsides.

The genus name of *Monarda* is in honor of Nicolas Monardes, a Spanish botanist and physician who published in the late 1500's a book on Indian uses of American plants. The species name *didyma* refers to the paired stamens of the flowers of this genus, *fistulosa* means tubular referring to the shape of the flowers, *clinopodium* refers to the resemblance of the bracts of this species to the bracts of *clinopodium* (*Pycnanthemum incanum*), and *punctata* refers to purple spots on the corolla tube.

The tubular nature of both the 5-toothed calyx and the colorful corolla with a longer upper lip and a shorter 3-lobed lower lip is common to the genus. Flower size varies from 1-1½" for *M. fistulosa*, *M. clinopodium*, and *M. punctata* to 1½-2" for *M. didyma*. The color of the flowers found in terminal or axillary clusters subtended by a whorl of colored bracts (modified leaves) varies from white to yellowish-pink for *M. clinopodium* to yellowish with

purple spots for *M. punctata* to lavender for *M. fistulosa* to bright red for *M. didyma*. All species have only two functional stamens. Pollination is by bees, butterflies, hawk moths, and ruby-throated hummingbirds (especially for *M. didyma*). Bees are attracted to members of this genus thus the name beebalm. (I have seen bees that appear intoxicated from visiting flowers but I have not been able to find an explanation for this phenomenon.) The fruit that forms in all four species is from the dried tubular calyx each of which contains four brown nutlets or seeds about 1/16" large.

The square stems of all these species varies from 2-6' tall and may be smooth or hairy. In all these species there are opposite, ovate scalloped leaves that vary in texture and color. Most have horizontal stems by which new plants may form asexually.

These and other species of *Monarda* are a source of the drug thymol which has antibacterial, antifungal, and antihelminthic (antiparasitic worm) properties. American Indians used preparations to treat bronchial and pulmonary problems, digestive system disorders, skin problems, headaches, fevers, colds, sore throats, heart trouble, nosebleed, to bring out measles, and to treat worms. Many of these preparations were in the form of a very aromatic tea often called "Oswego tea" which is from an Indian term for flaming flower referring to the red color of *M. didyma*, although other species were used to make tea and other preparations. In addition, various tribes used this group of plants to flavor meat and beans. American colonists used this species primarily as a pleasant tasting tea which was especially popular after the Boston Tea Party. This genus was also used by herbalists to treat skin problems, headaches, and digestive problems. Leaves and flowers have been used to flavor jellies and salads. In addition to American uses of the genus *M. didyma* was introduced into England in 1744 for its herbal properties, and it and *M. fistulosa* were grown in many gardens.

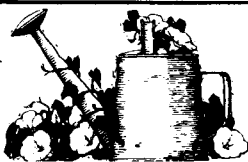
This summer enjoy the beauty and aromatic properties of members of this very colorful genus. None of these species are that common in our area, and the time spent to find them is time well spent.

Nominators Needed

Three members are needed to serve on the Nominating Committee for a two-year term beginning Nov. 1, 1989; two additional members will be appointed from the Board. Please let Brad Bradford, 594-3422, know if you can serve or if you can suggest a possible member.

NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON
Propagation Chairman



Beebalm

Monarda didyma

Native to rich moist stream banks and meadows throughout the northeastern U.S., beebalm, *Monarda didyma*, has been cultivated in American and European gardens since colonial times. The bright red 2-4" flowers are wonderful accents in the summer garden. Square stems and aromatic leaves identify beebalm as a member of the mint family.

Beebalm is at its best in a rich constantly moist to wet soil and full to filtered sun. In optimum conditions sturdy branched plants grow 4-6' tall and produce double- and occasionally triple-decker flowers for several weeks in mid-summer. An added bonus is the bees and butterflies and especially hummingbirds that it attracts.

Gardeners are often skeptical about introducing members of the mint family into their gardens because of their invasive tendencies. In the rich moist soil that it prefers beebalm will spread so quickly that clumps may lose their vigor and die out in a

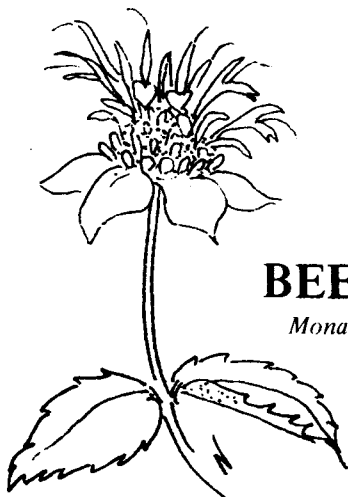
few years. In a drier soil plants won't spread as much. To prevent spreading and to keep plants healthy and blooming well lift and divide every 2-3 years. Discard older roots and replant only new vigorous roots. In a moist area in my garden, beebalm did not compete well and soon lost out to obedient plant and turtlehead.

Many moisture loving species can be planted with beebalm. Golden Alexanders (*Zizi aurea*), and the native *Iris versicolor*, and naturalized *Iris pseudacorus* provide good foreground foliage. American bellflower (*Campanula americana*) is a good blooming companion.

Beebalm is most easily propagated by division in the spring, and cuttings taken during the summer root easily. Seed started indoors will germinate in about two weeks, but seedlings are small and slow-growing and must be handled carefully.

Other monarda species that bloom at the same time as beebalm include the pale lavender *M. fistulosa* and dark magenta-purple *M. media*. Both prefer a drier, sunnier location in the garden than that required by *M. didyma*. *M. punctata*, a later-blooming species, is quite showy with creamy yellow flowers with purple spots and lavender bracts. Many named cultivars of *M. didyma* are available including bright red 'Cambridge Scarlet' and a soft pink 'Croftway Pink'.

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BEEBALM

Monarda didyma

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

7.25
4.19
7.36
7.44
5.00
3.90
5.19