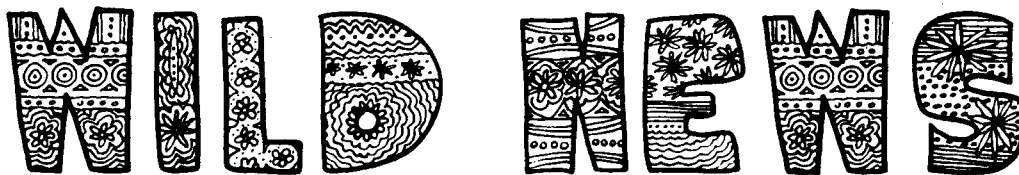


JULY-AUGUST 1991



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

JULY MEETING

WILDFLOWERS FOR BUTTERFLY GARDENS

Monday, July 15, 7:30 p.m.

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

Just like wildflowers, butterflies are being threatened by habitat destruction. The widespread use of chemical pesticides in recent years has also reduced the butterfly population. Fortunately, for gardeners and nature lovers, it is easy to provide a suitable habitat for butterflies in our own backyards. Monday night's program will feature wildflowers that provide nectar for adult butterflies and the plants their caterpillars need. Other tips for attracting these beautiful insects will be discussed. This program will be presented by PWWS members Nancy Arrington and Nicky Staunton.

Registry Exhibit at Fair

Our exhibit at this year's Prince William County Fair, August 9-17, will feature the Registry Program. The purpose of this state-wide VNPS program is to recognize special wildflower habitats (not necessarily rare or endangered species) on private or public property. Neighboring Piedmont Chapter has registered the Thompson Wildlife Management Area, site of the spectacular trillium display.

Members will be asked to host the display during peak visitor hours. Call President Claudia Thompson-Deahl, 754-9235, and volunteer yourself.

Board Meeting

The August PWWS Board of Directors meeting is Monday, August 20, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. Meetings are open to all members.

NEXT MEETING

This year's PWWS annual meeting will be held on September 28th at 11:00 a.m. Our tentative site is the Isaac Walton League's property just over the Fairfax County line off Rt. 28 on Compton Rd. We will have our usual potluck luncheon and great door prizes. Please be thinking about any wildflower-related items you can donate for our door prizes. Members will receive written notice 30 days in advance of the annual meeting.

● DUES ARE DUE

A red dot on your address label means your membership has expired or will expire before the next issue of our newsletter. Please use the enclosed form to renew — we want you to stay with us. Call Marie Davis, Membership Chair, 361-1626, if you have any questions about your membership.

Wildlife Publications

Two new publications are available free from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. "Wildlife Watcher's Guide" includes information on game and nongame species and gives wildlife-watching tips. "Plants for Wildlife", published in conjunction with the Commission's new Virginia Wildlife Habitat Program, lists plants that will provide food and cover for birds and small mammals.

Both are available by writing to VDGIF, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104, or calling 804-367-1000.

Birds & Wildflowers

Volunteer birders lead a walk each Sunday at 8:00 a.m. at Great Falls Park, VA, to discover resident and migratory birds. At 10:00 a.m. each Sunday a volunteer botanist leads a walk in search of flowering plants. PWWS Botany chair Marion Lobstein leads the third Sunday wildflower walks. Walks are free and don't require reservations. Call 703-285-2966 for more information.

VNPS Annual Meeting

The VNPS annual meeting will be held Columbus Day weekend, October 11-13, in Virginia Beach. Plans include trips to natural areas and tours of wildflower gardens. Members will receive details in a mailing from VNPS. Plan to attend — several PWWS members will be going and carpools can be arranged.

Cardinal Flower Brochure

Cardinal flower, our 1991 Virginia Wildflower of the Year, will begin blooming in damp spots in the wild and in gardens during July and August. Copies of the brochure which describe this lovely native and gives gardening tips are available at membership meetings or can be requested from Nancy Arrington, 368-8431.

WILD NEWS

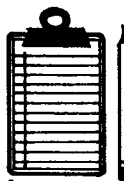
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President, Claudia Thompson-Deahl, 754-9235

Editor, Nancy Arrington, 368-8431

Artist, Nicky Staunton, 368-9803

Deadline for the July-August issue is July 1, 1991



FROM THE PRESIDENT

CLAUDIA THOMPSON-DEAHL

In spite of this summer's drought, we have a beautiful display of sun-loving wildflowers in our meadows and along the roadsides. Butterfly-weed, black-eyed Susans and purple coneflower are spectacular, and the rattlesnake plantain is blooming in the woodlands. Hopefully, all the plants many of you bought at our annual plant sale are thriving and blooming.

Remember to look for sites of unusual species or large displays of one plant that may be recommended for our registry program. For more information on this topic, come to the county fair to see this year's display.

Mark your calendars for this year's chapter annual meeting on September 28th, at 11:00 a.m., and again October 11-13 for the state annual meeting at Virginia Beach. Both events will be lots of fun for everyone, so do plan to attend.

If you are looking for a worthwhile project to "sink your teeth into" this summer, we are looking for volunteers to upgrade the nature trail at the Manassas Campus of Northern Virginia Community College. Tasks include clean-up, installing additional signs, rewriting the printed materials, and encouraging the use of the trail. If this sounds like something you would like to participate in, call Marion Lobstein at 536-7150.

Come to our membership meeting Monday night to learn more about attracting butterflies to your yard. It's important to help out these "flying wildflowers" since so much of their native habitat is rapidly disappearing. See you then.

Gardening for the Environment

Environmentally sound gardening is a topic that should be of interest to all gardeners. The subject will be discussed on Thursday, July 18, 10:30 a.m. in the National Arboretum's administration building classroom. Learn new ways to plant and water, safer disease and pest management, and better maintenance practices. The best trees and shrubs for this area will also be discussed. The class is free. For more information, call the Arboretum, 202-475-4857.



Bugbane

Cimicifuga racemosa

MARION BLOIS LOBSTEIN
Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

Cimicifuga racemosa, commonly called bugbane or black cohosh, is a perennial member of the Ranunculaceae or buttercup family. This handsome plant (with a less than pleasant fragrance) is more common in the mountains of Virginia but certainly can be found in rich woods in the Northern Virginia area. The stems and leaves that appear in spring may be confused with blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), a member of the Berberidaceae or barberry family. The long (up to 12") slender wand-like inflorescence of small white flowers appear by June and plants may bloom into August. This species is found in rich open woods and shaded woodland borders and roadsides from Massachusetts south into Georgia and west into Ohio and Tennessee.

The genus name of *Cimicifuga* is from the Latin "cimex" for bug and "fugare" meaning to drive away referring to the pungent odor that may drive away some insects. The species name of *racemosa* refers to the raceme type of inflorescence typical of this species. Other common names are black cohosh (cohosh refers to the dark, rough rhizome of the plant), black snakeroot, and squawroot (the last two alluding to Indian uses to treat snakebites and female problems, respectively.)

Bugbane's small flowers (1/4" or less long) have 4-5 sepals that are shed soon after the flowers open, no petals but 1-8 white petaloid stamens, numerous showy white stamens, and one to two carpels with short styles and broad stigmas. Flowers lack nectar but present a good pollen reward to insect pollinators which are usually flies but may be bees and bumblebees. The pungent fragrance is thought to attract flies but repel many other types of insects. The fruit that develops from each fertilized flower is a 1/4 to

1/3" long follicle containing two rows of small reddish-brown seeds. Dried fruits may remain unopened on the plant until early winter and seeds may rattle within the fruit when shaken by wind or passing animals. This characteristic has given rise to less well known common names of rattletop, rattleweed and rattle snakeroot.

Each plant has a slender stem that may be up to six or more feet tall with alternate thrice-compounded leaves with 2-5 coarsely toothed leaflets that are up to 6" long and with up to 7 subdivisions. Mature plants have a well developed dark-colored and rough-textured rhizome with short fibrous roots. The rough and gnarled appearance of the rhizome is due to scars of leaf stems from previous years of growth. By the end of the growing season, pinkish buds for next season's growth can be seen on the rhizome.

Medicinal uses of bugbane by American Indian tribes and in folk or herbal medicine are numerous. These medicinal uses (mainly of the rhizome) ranged from treating sore throats, bronchitis, coughs, colds, whopping cough, malaria, yellow fever, smallpox, measles, chorlea, headaches, fatigue, hysteria, hives, itching, kidney problems, arthritis, rheumatism, snakebite (as a poultice), high blood pressure, and female problems such as menstrual cramps and the pain of childbirth. Extracts are thought to have antiinflammatory (salicylates, the active ingredient of aspirin, is found in the plant), antispasmodic, sedative (even slightly narcotic), diuretic, and expectorant properties. It was not only important in American Indian medicine but also was listed in the U.S. Pharmacopeia from 1820-1936 and in the National Formulary from 1936-1950. Bugbane was also introduced in Europe in the 1860's where it was grown for its medicinal and ornamental properties.

Despite the less than pleasant odor of this attractive summer wildflower species, enjoy its beauty in rich woods of various parks in our area or on Skyline Drive. The delicate wand-like inflorescence add interest and beauty to local woods for your summertime enjoyment.

Free Groundwater Publication

The "1990 Supplement to Virginia's Groundwater Protection Strategy" reviews the legislative, regulatory and administrative efforts to protect the state's groundwater and focuses on 14 recommendations for groundwater protection needs from 1990-1995. Free copies are available from the State Water Control Board, P.O. Box 11143, Richmond, VA 23230; 804-367-6685.

NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON
Propagation Chairman



Bugbane

Cimicifuga racemosa

With 6-8' spires of white flowers rising from a leafy mound of foliage, bugbane (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) is a handsome plant for the summer shade garden. Also called black cohosh and black snake-root, it occurs naturally in rich woods over most of the eastern U.S. including all Virginia counties except a few on the coastal plain.

The latin name comes from *cimex* (a bug) and *fugo* (to repel) although flowers in my garden attract a variety of insects in impressive numbers. The species name *racemosa* refers to the raceme arrangement of the flowers. A smaller and later blooming species, *C. americana*, grows in Virginia's mountains and is cultivated in gardens. Probably the most often cultivated species is *C. simplex*, a Russian native sometimes listed as *C. foetida* var. *intermedia*. Its October blossoms are slightly unpleasant and are often damaged by early frosts though it is spectacular in good years.

A mature clump of bugbane can easily be 3' across and 3-4' tall. In late June and into July, ra-

cemes composed of numerous small white flowers rise another 3-4' above the attractive compound foliage.

In the garden bugbane needs a deeply-prepared fertile moderately-acid soil. Add humus in the form of leaf mold, compost or rotted manure to the planting site so soil will hold moisture yet drain well. Mulch plants to retain moisture through the summer and to add humus to the soil.

This statuesque native is often used in sunny northern perennial borders, but it grows better in our area with shade during the hot mid-day hours. In a summer perennial border it will be just one of many flowering plants, and so is much more valuable in a shade or woodland garden where it may well be the only flowering plant in late June and July.

Several plants can be used as a background for a large woodland garden or a single plant makes a dramatic accent. Native woodland companions that can be used in the garden include Solomon's seal, spiderwort, foamflower and ferns. Bugbane's divided foliage is an interesting contrast for solid-leaved shade plants such as senecios, hostas and bergenias.

This handsome easy-care perennial can be left undisturbed for many years, but plants can be divided in spring or fall if extra plants are needed. Seed germinates better after stratification (cold moist period) and can be sown in an outdoor bed after collection in the fall. Seedlings develop slowly and may take 5-7 years to bloom.

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