



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

JANUARY MEETING

Members' Slide Program

Monday, January 20, 1992, 7:30 pm

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

Our January program will be the traditional members' slide program in which members are invited to show slides of native plant related activities such as trips, meetings, or projects of the past year. This year Marion Lobstein will show slides of western wildflowers from her trip to Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. Nancy Arrington will show natives in gardens from our chapter garden tour, Potowmack's tour and other garden trips. As always, Nicky Staunton has so many good slides she's having trouble deciding, so it will be the life cycle of the Monarch butterfly, or slides of her trip to the North Carolina Botanical Garden or slides of Seashore State Park or some combination of all! This is always an informal, fun program so come and enjoy moments and memories from warmer days.

Mt. Cuba Trip Planned

A trip to Mt. Cuba is planned for Friday, May 1 for 12-15 people. Plans include carpooling up Friday morning for the 2 pm guided tour of Mt. Cuba with the option of staying over for a Delaware area garden tour on Saturday.

Mt. Cuba, located near Greenville, DE, is a duPont family estate that is being developed as the Mt. Cuba Center for the Study of Piedmont Flora. In addition to preserving a fine example of a 20th Century estate the Center's goal is to encourage the appreciation of native Piedmont flora and its use in man-made landscapes. The gardens contain native trees, shrubs, wildflowers and ferns planted in woodlands, wet areas, meadows, rock gardens and perennial borders.

The tour is free and expenses will include meals, lodging and tour ticket (usually \$10-20) if you stay over Friday night, and help with expenses of carpool drivers. The reservation must be confirmed very early so please let Tiana Camfiord, 830-3783, or Nancy Arrington, 368-8431, know by FEBRUARY 15 if you'd like to go or call if you'd like more info. The tour is limited to 15 but must have a minimum of 12.

NVCC Trail Work Sessions

Marion Lobstein will be scheduling work days for the nature trail at NVCC this winter. Call her if you can help, 536-7150.

Wildflower Photography Workshop

This year's VNPS winter workshop, Wildflower Photography, will be held Sat., March 21, 9:30 am to 2:00 pm in Richmond. Details will be sent to members in a special mailing. Call PWWS chapter president Claudia Deahl, 754-9235, for carpooling.

February Board Meeting

The February board meeting will be held the usual third Monday, the 17th, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas. Meetings are open to all chapter members.

NEXT MEETING

Our March meeting will be on the third Monday, March 16, 7:30 pm, Bethel Lutheran Church.

Winter Wildflower Walks

PWWS Botany Chair Marion Lobstein leads walks every third Sunday at Great Falls Park, Virginia. Expect to see skunk cabbage on the Feb. 16 walk and other early arrivals on the March 15 walk. Meet at the visitors center at 10 am. Info: Marion, 536-7150.

Trip to Canada

The annual trip to the Bruce Peninsular, Ontario, is scheduled for June 14-21. We should have more information about the trip and a list of species that will be seen at our January meeting. Or contact Ted Scott, 12493 Spicewood Rd., Orange, VA 22960, or call him at (703) 672-3814.

Nursery Source List

Just in time for your spring buying, VNPS has an updated list of mail order sources of natives. Copies will be available at our January meeting or you can request a copy from Nancy Arrington, 368-8431.

Seedlings Available

Pine and spruce seedlings are available from the Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District at 20c each in minimum quantities of 25 of each species. To pre-order or for more info, 361-1710.

IPM Booklet

An excellent 46-page publication, "Integrated Pest Management for the Home and Garden", is available for \$2.00 from Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Illinois, 408 South Godwin Ave., Urbana, IL 61801. The booklet suggests ecologically safe controls for pests on ornamental plants, lawns, and fruits and vegetables, and for household pests such as ants, flies and fleas.

WILD NEWS

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Editor, Nancy Arrington, 368-8431

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Deadline for the March-April issue is March 1, 1992.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

CLAUDIA THOMPSON-DEAHL

I hope everyone has had a wonderful holiday season, and I would like to take this opportunity to extend my wishes to you for a Happy New Year. I was trying to think of a New Year's resolution at the end of December, and as I drove out of my neighborhood after Christmas and saw the amount of trash to be collected, it hit me! I will resolve to become a more responsible consumer and recycle all that I can. Now is a good time to reflect on the idea that consumption of natural resources equals less open space. At home, I've made a game out of recycling. With my kindergarten, we try to think of a way to use everything twice. For instance, after we make coffee we use the grounds to make compost; when the toilet paper roll is empty we take it to school for the gerbils. What ways can you and your family think of to "use it twice"?

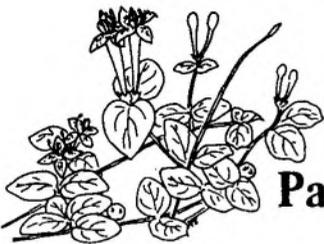
As a conservation minded organization, I know that our members are concerned about our natural areas and want to make a difference. Perhaps one way to have a positive effect on the environment is to write our elected representatives on conservation issues, especially at the State level. There are many first time delegates this year in the Virginia General Assembly and right now is a good time to let them know that Virginians care about recycling and the environment.

We are into the season of interesting seed pods and, hopefully, we will get some snow soon and have a chance for an early morning walk to find animal tracks in fresh snow. Winter is a much longer season for those who don't get out and enjoy it, so grab your field guide to winter seeds and see what you can find.

I hope to see you at our January meeting for our annual member slide show. If you have some interesting slides that you would like to share, please bring them along. See you then!

New Book for Library

A new book, *Gardening with Native Wild Flowers* by Jones and Fouts, has been added to our chapter library. The book covers over 1,000 native species and includes a couple of Nicky Staunton's pictures of Nancy Arrington's garden.



Partridgeberry

Mitchella repens

MARION BLOIS LOBSTEIN
Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

Mitchella repens, commonly called partridgeberry or squawberry, is a perennial member of the Rubiaceae or madder family. This showy plant with evergreen leaves and bright red berries that may remain through the winter adds color to a winter walk. It is found in virtually every county in Virginia in dry to moist woods where it may become a groundcover. Its natural range is from eastern Canada south into Florida and Texas and as far west as Minnesota. The only other species of this genus is found in Japan.

The genus name *Mitchella* was assigned by Linneaus to honor John Mitchell, an early Virginia botanist who developed a treatment for yellow fever victims. The species name *repens* refers to the creeping nature of the growth form. Other common names, squawberry, twinberry, two-eyed berry, refer to the Indian uses of this species and the characteristics of the berry.

Partridgeberry's attractive, creamy white to delicate pink flowers are borne in pairs and bloom from May into early July. They have a four-parted calyx, a four-parted funnel-shaped corolla, four stamens, and a pistil with an inferior ovary and a four-parted stigma. The ovaries of each pair of flowers are fused. There are two types of flowers—in one form the stamens are longer than the stigma and in the other, the stamens are shorter. These differences ensure cross-pollination. The half-inch long flowers that have a sweet lilac-like fragrance are pollinated by larger bees with long tongues and by butterflies. The single oval-shaped fruit that develops from the fertilized ovaries of each pair of flowers is a bright red berry about one-third inch long and containing eight small seeds. The remains of the two pistils on the upper surface of the berry resemble two small eyes. The fruit is eaten by quails, partridges, other birds and mammals and the seeds are then dispersed in their feces.

Partridgeberry is a creeping or trailing evergreen plant with individual leaf and flower or fruit bearing stems rising only several inches off the ground. Opposite oval dark-green leaves are shiny and smooth with a width of up to three-quarters of an inch. The shal-

low fibrous root system that forms at nodes on the stem enables the plant to spread asexually. An individual plant may be up to a foot or more long.

The berries can be eaten by humans but are rather tasteless and a bit seedy; more likely they will be eaten by wildlife. Medicinal uses by American Indians are numerous. Tea made from the leaves and stems or extracts of the berries were used to treat female disorders, to ease the end of pregnancy and birth, to treat dysentery, to reduce fevers, to deal with insomnia, to treat hives and to treat disorders of the urinary, nervous and digestive systems including hemorrhoids and diarrhea. Extracts purportedly have diuretic, astringent, uterine relaxing, and other general tonic properties. A paste of the berries was used by Indian women to ease sore nipples during nursing. In herbal medicine and even until recently, partridgeberry has been used in pharmacognosy (the use of plants in pharmacy).

When you are enjoying winter walks in the woods, look for the cheerful red berries of this handsome plant. In late spring and summer come back to see the delicate flower pairs that will form a single berry. Partridgeberry is indeed a plant to enjoy in all seasons.

Wildflower Symposiums

Wildflower Cultivation: A Partnership With Nature, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm, Thursday, Jan. 30, National Wildlife Federation, Vienna. Speakers are Edith Eddleman, Michael Hollins, Dr. Arthur O. Tucker, Kim Hawks and Roger B. Swain. Also scheduled are following workshops: "Wildflower Propagation" by Jan Midgley, Wed., Jan. 29, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm; "Basic Techniques for Wildflower Cultivation" by Mary Painter, Fri., Jan 31, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm; and "Native Plants and Wildflowers: From Antique to Contemporary" by Diane Lewis, Fri., Jan. 31, 10:00 am – 2:30 pm. For a brochure contact New York Botanical Garden, Education Dept., Bronx, NY 10458-5126 or call 212-220-8720.

Native Plants at the Heart of the Garden, Sat., March 7th, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, National Arboretum, Washington. Speakers are Dr. Henry Art, Allen Bush, Kim Hawks and Darrell Morrison. Concurrent hands-on workshops will be conducted by Doug Coleman, Dale Hendricks and Brenda Skarphol. For a brochure, call 202-475-4857.

Native Plants in the Landscape, June 25 – 27, Millersville University, Millersville, PA. To be put on mailing list write to: FM Mooberry, Conference Director, 106 Spottswood Ln., Kennett Square, PA 19348 by Jan. 30.

NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON
Propagation Chairman



Partridgeberry

Mitchella repens

Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*) might be overlooked in spring and summer, but it is very much appreciated during winter for its evergreen foliage and bright red berries. Native to moist woodlands from Nova Scotia to Minnesota and south to Florida, it grows throughout Virginia and is wide-spread in woods in our area.

This low, creeping groundcover has rounded one-half- to three-quarters-inch dark green, leathery leaves with prominent paler colored veins. Trailing stems root at leaf nodes making a tightly matted groundcover. Fragrant white to pale pinkish white tubular flowers that are about half an inch long appear to be lined inside with velvet. They bloom in pairs in late spring and early summer, and produce a single somewhat flattened berry that stays attractive through the winter. It is not unusual to see flowering plants still adorned with last season's berries.

Partridgeberry's daintiness suggests use with other

small-scale natives such as bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), hepatica (*H. Americana*), twinleaf (*Jeffersonia diphylla*) and the ebony spleenwort fern (*Asplenium platyneuron*). Use it as a groundcover to fill in after the spring ephemerals like dutchman's-breeches (*Dicentra cucullari*) and toothwort (*Dentaria spp.*) disappear. It is a wonderful edging plant to use near a path where it will trail over rocks and log edgings, rooting as it goes, and giving a naturalistic effect in the most suburban setting. Put it near entryways and walkways that are used during winter so the dark green leaves and cheerful red berries can be enjoyed during this season's cold, bleak days.

In cultivation, partridgeberry needs conditions similar to those of its native habitat: full to partial shade, moisture and a slightly-acid to acid humus-rich soil. Add organic matter such as compost, leaf mold or rotted wood chips to the planting site and be sure plants have moisture until they're well established. After a year or two they will be fairly drought-tolerant.

This native is extremely easy to propagate from cuttings taken in spring or summer since they will root at almost every leaf node. Seed can be started in the fall in an outdoor bed or stratified (moist, cold storage) for six weeks and started indoors in late winter. Propagated plants can be purchased from several native plant nurseries and will be available at our spring plant sale.

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PARTRIDGEBERRY

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