

WILD NEWS

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

JULY MEETING

Wildflowers for Rock Gardens

Monday, July 20, 1992, 7:30 P.M.

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

Karen Rexrode will present a slide program on native plants suitable for rock gardens at our July membership meeting. She will talk about plants that are native to shale barrens and other naturally rocky areas and discuss how they can be cultivated in our gardens. Karen is a member of the Piedmont Chapter of the VNPS and the Potomac Chapter of the American Rock Garden Society. She owns Windy Hill Plant Farm near Aldie, Virginia.

Wetland Plants for Fair

Ken Bass is in charge of our display at this year's Prince William County Fair, August 14-22. He is planning to install a small pond as part of the exhibit on wetland plants. Jeanne Hendrikat is in charge of scheduling volunteers to host the display. Please call Claudia Deahl, 754-9235, if you can help in any way with the exhibit.

Auction Items Needed

PWWS members are asked to contribute items for the VNPS auction held in conjunction with the state annual meeting, September 11-13 in Roanoke. Items should be native plant related and suggestions include paintings, ceramics, dried flower wreaths, books, live plants and seeds. Call Claudia Deahl, 754-9235, if you have auction items to contribute or bring them to our July 20th membership meeting.

Nominating Committee Will Meet

This year's nominating committee, chaired by Nancy Vehrs, will be meeting to compile a slate of officers to be elected at the annual meeting. Call Nancy, 368-2898, to volunteer yourself for a job or to recommend another member. Other committee members are Marie Davis, Sandra Sheriff, Martha Slover and Lenore Winfield.



Summer Wildflower Walks

Sunday, July 19, 2:00 p.m., Manassas Battlefield Park. Marion Lobstein will lead a walk for Piedmont and Prince William Chapter members to see meadow wildflowers. Meet at the Headquarters/Visitors Center. The park charges a \$1 fee per person.

Saturday, August 1, 10:00 a.m., Vernon J. Walker Nature Center, Reston. Walk through a naturescaping garden, meadow and woodland. Call for reservations, 437-9580.

NEXT MEETING

Our chapter annual meeting will be held with Potowmack Chapter as part of our 10th anniversary celebration on Sunday, September 27 at Hemlock Overlook Park. We'll have our usual potluck lunch and PWWS conservation chair Martha Slover will lead a walk. Details will be sent to members in August.

Chapter Lending Library

Members can borrow books from our chapter library by calling our librarian, Mary Sigl at 369-5145. Mary will bring the book to the next membership meeting or make other arrangements to get it to you. The library currently contains the following:

Art, Henry, A Garden of Wildflowers
Brown, Lauren, Grasses, An Identification Guide
Birdseye, Clarence & Eleanor, Growing Woodland Plants
Cliburn & Klomps, A Key to Missouri Trees in Winter
Courtenay & Zimmerman, Wildflowers & Weeds
Dennison, Edgar, Missouri Wildflowers
Grimm, William, How to Recognize Trees
Grimm, William, How to Recognize Wild Plants
Gupton & Swope, Trees & Shrubs of Virginia
Heywood, Flowering Plants of the World
Hull, Helen, Wildflowers for Your Garden
Key, James, Field Guide to Missouri Ferns
Korling-Petty, Eastern Deciduous Forest
Martin, Laura C., The Wildflower Meadow Book
Mickel & Fiore, The Home Gardeners Book of Ferns
Miller, Dorcas S., Berry Finder
Mohlenbrock, Robert, Where Have All the Wildflowers Gone?
National Wildflower Research Center's Handbook
National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc.,
Resources on Wildflower Propagation
Phillips, Jan, Wild Edibles of Missouri
Phillips, Harry, Growing & Propagating Wildflowers
Radford, Ahles & Bell, Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas
Rickett, Wildflowers of the U.S., The Northeastern States, Vol. I & II and the Southeastern States, Vol. I & II
Steffek, Edwin, Wildflowers and How to Grow Them
Sperka, Marie, Growing Wildflowers, a Gardeners' Guide
von Miklos, Josephine, Wildflowers in Your House

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.

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Deadline for the Sept.-Oct. issue is Sept. 1, 1992.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

CLAUDIA THOMPSON-DEAHL

We seem to be lucky this year with our cooler than normal summer – it makes looking for our beautiful summer wildflowers even more enjoyable. The meadows and roadsides are filled with rudbeckias, chickory, butterfly weed, Queen Anne's lace and ox-eye daisies. Unfortunately, we also seem to have an over abundance of honeysuckle – much to my children's delight – but I'm concerned about the possibility of our natives being choked out by this tenacious vine.

I have also been noticing a lot more wildflowers in cut flower arrangements lately so appreciation for wildflowers is apparently growing. I hope they aren't being "loved to death" and that flowers are left to reseed natural areas if the flowers aren't coming from cultivated sources.

Mark your calendar now if you haven't already for our two annual meetings. Our chapter meeting will be held on Sunday, September 27 jointly with the Potowmack Chapter to celebrate our ten year anniversary. Our state annual meeting, September 11-13, will be hosted by the Blue Ridge Chapter in Roanoke, a beautiful part of the state. Please think of any nature related auction items that you can donate for this annual fundraiser.

Please sign up for a turn at this year's display on wetlands at the county fair. This is a nice opportunity to reach out to the community and inform people on wildflowers. This year's display will call attention to our declining wetland sites.

Bring your friends for our program on rock garden natives with Karen Rexrode – it will be a good one.

Photograph Summer Wildflowers

We'd like to boost the sale of summer blooming wildflowers at next spring's plant sale by showing our customers what summer phlox, New England aster, butterfly weed, and others look like in July, August and September. Nancy Vehrs, plant sale chair, hopes members will help out by photographing summer wildflowers and giving her snapshots or lending slides or negatives. Call her, 368-2898, if you can help or if you'd like a list of plants to photograph.



Indian Pipe

Monotropa uniflora

MARION BLOIS LOBSTEIN
Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

Monotropa uniflora, commonly called Indian pipe is a perennial member of the Ericaceae (heath family) but may sometimes be placed in the Pyrolaceae (pyrola family). This very unusual waxy appearing plant is icy white to light pink and looks more like a fungus than a flowering plant. This species which usually appears in clusters of individual plants blooms by pushing up through leaf litter in June and clumps may continue to appear until early autumn. The habitat of Indian pipe is in rich damp woods or in sandy woods in the coastal plain. The range is throughout much of the continental United States north into Canada and Alaska and even in Asia.

The genus name of *Monotropa* is derived from two Greek words, "monos" for one and "tropos" for turn, referring to the single flower on each stem that turns down while blooming; the species name *uniflora* means a single flower. Other common names are corpse plant and death plant referring to the tendency of the delicate tissue to turn black once it is handled. Ice plant refers to its color and convulsion or fit root refers to one of its medicinal uses.

The individual flower of each Indian pipe is up to an inch long with two or four small sepals that are shed soon after the flower opens, four to five petals that form an elongated bell, ten stamens, and a pistil with a disk-like stigma. The flowers are odorless but pollination is still most probably by insects. The fruit that develops from each fertilized flower is a capsule up to one-half inch long with many seeds in it. After the release of pollen, the position of the flower becomes upright and that is the position in which the fruit develops.

Each plant has a number of slender waxy flower-bearing stems that are four to ten inches tall with only small scale-like leaves. The roots are just a mass of fibrous projections. No part of this plant contains

chlorophyll and no photosynthesis occurs. Instead, this species along with other relatives in our area such as *M. hypopithys* or pine sap are saprophytes ("sapros" is Greek for death). Fungi are associated with roots of these plants in a symbiotic relationship in which fungus digests nutrients from dead plant material in the soil and the roots of the Indian pipe or pine sap obtain nutrients from these fungi. Other plants such as beechdrops (*Epifagus virginiana*) or cancerroot (*Conopholus americana*) are true parasites living off the roots of other living plants.

There were many medicinal uses of this plant by American Indian tribes as well as in folk or herbal medicine. Medicinal uses ranged from treating epilepsy, nervous conditions, female problems (especially those involving giving birth), gonorrhoea, bladder ulcerations, stomach problems, cholera, nose bleeds, and hemorrhages. It was also widely used externally as an eyewash as well as a replacement for opium to deal with pain. Extracts from all parts of the plant purportedly have antiseptic and astringent qualities.

This summer keep your eyes open for this ghostly plant; both its unusual icy beauty and its lifestyle are well worth efforts to locate stands of Indian pipe.

Collect Wildflower Seed

As the flowers fade in your wildflower garden, remember to collect seed to share with other members. If you collect seed from the wild, be sure to follow these guidelines from VNPS's Conservation Guidelines:

"... collect a few seeds from each of many plants and only from common species that are locally abundant. Collect only the seeds or fruits without harming the rest of the plant, and always leave sufficient seed numbers for the plant population to reseed itself."

Call propagation chair, Nancy Arrington, 368-8431, if you will have seed to share, if you need seed envelopes, or if you want more information. We will have a seed exchange either at the annual meeting or at our November membership meeting if there is sufficient interest.

August Board Meeting

The August Board of Directors meeting will be held Monday, August 17, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. Board meetings are open to all members.

NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON
Propagation Chairman



Fire Pink *Silene virginica*

The lovely crimson red flowers of fire pink (*Silene virginica*) can be used to brighten sunny or partially shaded spots in gardens in early summer. It grows naturally in rocky well-drained thin woodlands and along shady roadsides from Ontario to Minnesota, south to Georgia, Alabama and Oklahoma. According to the *Atlas of the Virginia Flora* it grows in most of our western and central counties.

The common name, fire pink, refers to its membership in the Pink or Carnation family though Bebe Miles in *Wildflower Perennials for Your Garden* says it refers to the notched petals which appear to be trimmed with pinking shears. *Silenes* are also called catch-flies because a sticky substance on their flowers and stems supposedly traps small insects.

Fire pink's loosely branched one- to two-foot tall stems grow from a clump of elongated leaves that are

often evergreen. Flowers consist of five one-inch long notched petals that flare out from a tubular base that is also about an inch long. They are borne sparsely giving a light airy effect in the garden.

Though it usually grows in shady locations in the wild, fire pink flowers better with four to five hours of direct sunlight. Give it neutral to slightly acid well-drained soil of average fertility. Avoid humus-rich soils that may cause the stems to be weak and floppy. Good garden companions include green and gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*), sundrops (*Oenothera sp.*) and ox-eye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*). Fire pink's intense color makes it an effective accent plant to use alone beside a rock or tree trunk. It also grows well in containers.

Silenes are usually short-lived, but most, including fire pink, are easy to propagate by division, stem cuttings or seed. Only about half the flowers form seed capsules. Watch the developing capsules carefully and collect them as they turn a light tan.

To obtain the moist, cold stratification it needs for good germination, sow seed immediately in an outdoor seed bed and it will germinate in the spring. Or sow seed in a small flat of moist soil, cover and refrigerate for four weeks, and then place in a warm spot for germination. Plants will usually bloom the first year from seed.

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P.O. BOX 83, MANASSAS, VA 22110



Fire Pink *Silene virginica*

David & Nancy Arrington
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