



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

MAY MEETING

Champion Trees

Monday, May 18, 1992, 7:30 p.m.

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

Fairfax County Arborist Dick Hoff will present a program on champion trees at our May 18th meeting. He will explain how the American Forestry Association's champion tree program works and how it serves to promote tree preservation. Trees can be registered as county, state or national champions. If you know of big trees in our area that might qualify as champions, come to hear Mr. Hoff and find out how to suggest these special trees for registry. Guests are always welcome at our meetings.

Thanks to Tour Volunteers

Thanks to all those who worked so hard to make this year's garden tour a success despite the bleak weather. First and foremost, thank you to the people who opened their gardens: Billy and Phyllis Teels, Ed and Roberta Milhous and Roberta Whitmore. Thanks to Marie Davis for getting the Whitmore garden ready and serving as hostess there throughout the tour. Thanks also to Bonnie Fulford who helped get the Whitmore garden ready.

A special thanks to Helen Walter, Tour Chairman, for mailing out the brochures and coordinating hosts and hostesses for the gardens. Thanks to Nancy Arrington for preparing the brochure and to Nicky Staunton for her illustrations of the gardens.

Thanks to Pat Portier and other members who baked cookies and to these members who served as hosts and hostesses at the gardens: Nancy Arrington, Jenifer and Brad Bradford, Kathy Ehrenberger, Nancy Herwig, Helen Rawls, Claudia Thompson-Deahl, Nancy Vehrs, Lenore Winfield and Helen Winn.

Thanks to Sale Volunteers

This year's plant sale was successful despite the cold dreary weather. As usual chairman Nancy Vehrs had everything running smoothly: several drivers transported plants to the sale, helpers were at the church to unload and arrange plants, and several ticket writers and cashiers kept the checking out process moving quickly. Nancy also potted plants from several gardens and sent news releases to area papers.

A long list of people helped out this year and we hope no one is being overlooked when we say THANKS to: Nancy Arrington, Brad & Jenifer Bradford, Ken Bass, Tiana Camfiord, Marie & Paul Davis, Kathy & Jennifer Ehrenberger, Jeanne Endrikat & her daughter, Bonnie Fulford, Maggie Hart, Bill Hendrickson, Nancy Herwig, Jean Hubler, Tracy Johnson, Mary Lekander, Frances Louer, Pat Portier, Helen Walter, Lenore & Scott Winfield, and Helen Winn

NEXT MEETING

The July 20th membership meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas. Our program will be "Native Plants for Rock Gardens."

Wildflower Propagation Workshop

Potowmack Chapter is sponsoring a propagation workshop Saturday, May 23, 10 a.m., at Green Spring Gardens Park, Annandale. Propagation chair Tiana Camfiord will discuss propagating wildflowers by seed, division and cuttings. PWWS members are invited to attend and can register by calling Tiana at 830-3783.

Wildflower Course

BIO 295-O2M Special Topics in Summer Wildflowers, offered July 6-9, 1 to 5 p.m. at NVCC-Manassas Campus, will give students an overview of the common plant groups with emphasis on flowering characteristics and identification. Their relationships and uses to man will be stressed along with tips on identifying the plants commonly encountered in everyday life. For classroom teachers participating in this class, ideas on how to use plants in teaching younger students will be the focus of the required class projects.

For further information, contact Marion Lobstein, Associate Professor of Biology, NVCC-Manassas Campus (703) 257-6643 in Prince William County or call (703) 323-3000 Manassas extension 6643 (metro area).

Seed Distributed

Our offer of butterfly weed seed in the March VNPS *Bulletin* has brought 50 requests which have all been filled.

Butterfly Chart

A colorful 8-foot long chart depicting more than 200 North American butterflies is available for \$15.90 (postpaid) from Childcraft, 20 Kilmer Rd., Edison, NJ 08817. The chart which is folded into eight pages and bound into a hard cover can be used as a book or removed and displayed on a (long!) wall.

WILD NEWS

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Deadline for the July-August issue is July 1, 1992.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

CLAUDIA THOMPSON-DEAHL

It sure has been a busy spring for everyone. Kudos to all who helped at the plant sale, the garden tour and our spring hikes. It's these activities that are so important to our chapter and keep us going strong. Thanks for your valuable time.

Since a nice cool spring has led to a beautiful display of our spring wildflowers, I hope everyone has found some time to get out to enjoy some of these displays at Blue Mountain, Balls Bluff, Bull Run or even your own wildflower gardens. On a recent hike with Nicky and Loren Staunton and Elaine Haug we were treated to a display of about 200 pink lady's slippers on property owned by Mary Washington College. It's important to keep these areas protected so others can enjoy the same treasures.

A plant of concern that is new to me is *Polygonum perfoliatum*. Apparently this plant is more invasive than honeysuckle or kudzu and has been found in Reston, so unfortunately, will probably be found in Prince William soon. This vine has light green triangular leaves with small thorns and blue berries. Dr. Hortwig at Penn State is mapping this plant's progression and sightings can be reported to him at 814-865-1906. More information on this plant later.

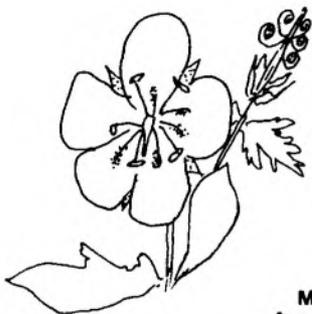
Our theme for this year's exhibit at the county fair will be on wetlands, thanks to Ken Bass. I hope to see you at our May meeting with our program on champion trees.

Members Give Programs

Marie Davis gave our "Wildflowers for Woodland Gardens" slide program at Eleanor Lawrence Park, Centreville, on April 4. Nancy Arrington has presented "Wildflowers for Butterfly Gardens" to three garden clubs this spring and she and Nicky Staunton are scheduled to do the program for Potowmack Chapter in June.

June Board Meeting

The June Board of Directors meeting will be held Monday, June 15, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. Board meetings are open to all members.



Wild Geranium

Geranium maculatum

MARION BLOIS LOBSTEIN
Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

Wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) is a perennial member of the Geraniaceae or geranium family. The typical rosy pink-purple (a rare white form exists) flowers appear in late April to early May and plants may bloom into early June. Characteristic pairs of palmately notched leaves appear in April. This species is found in virtually every county of Virginia in woods, along paths and road clearings, in meadows and thickets, usually in light shade. Its range is from New England south into Georgia and Tennessee and west into Missouri and Kansas. The genus name *Geranium* is from the Greek term *geranos* for crane referring to the beaked appearance of the fruit, and *maculatum* refers to the mottled appearance of the leaves. Other common names are alumroot, astringent root, storkbill, cranesbill, mountain alum, crow-foot, old man's nightcap and chocolate flower. Most of these names describe the appearance of the fruit or allude to medicinal uses.

Loose clusters of three or more buds open to reveal the one to one and a half inch flowers which are made up of five sepals, five petals, ten stamens in two rows, and a pistil with a five-lobed ovary and an elongated style that ends in a five-parted stigma. Bees are the primary pollinators of the scentless flowers. After pollination and fertilization, a fruit with a prominent beak develops with the five parts (carpels) of the ovary separating and curling upward at maturity snapping seeds up to several feet away.

There are several long-petioled basal leaves that are up to one and a half feet long and a pair of shorter stem leaves. The soft white-haired deep green leaves with lighter spots are deeply clefted or notched in five to seven segments and may be up to five to seven inches across. The stem is hairy with pairs of loose clusters of flowers forming at the top of the stem. Each cluster of buds has a set of leafy bracts. The underground rhizome is orange-brown and knobby with numerous shallow roots.

Wild geranium has been used in numerous ways by American Indians and herbalists. As late as the

1950's this species was listed as a medicinal plant in pharmacognosy (pharmaceutical botany) texts. Primary uses were for its septic, astringent and anti-septic qualities due to high levels of tannins in the tissue. Crushed leaves and rhizomes were used as poultices for wounds, piles and toothache. Extracts were used for canker sores, ulcerated gums, irritated eyes, cholera, dysentery and diarrhea. Some Indian women used this species for birth control and it was also used to treat gonorrhea and urinary tract problems. The green leaves were used by some Indians for food.

This spring when you are walking in the woods or driving down country roads look for this lovely plant that adds so much to the late spring landscape.

Looking Ahead

The VNPS annual meeting will be hosted by the Blue Ridge Chapter, September 11-13, in Roanoke. PWWS is planning a joint chapter annual meeting with Potowmack Chapter with tentative date Sunday September 27.

PWWS will host the 1993 state annual meeting. More details on all these events in a later newsletter.

Bat House Available

A sturdy well-built bat house called "The Jamestown, VA Mosquito Zapper" is available for \$18.95 (postpaid) from STEPS, Rt. 2, Box 292, Farmville, VA 23901. Houses are about a foot long and are constructed of western red cedar.

Chapter Joins Related Groups

Our chapter has joined the Virginia Conservation Council and the State Arboretum at Blandy Farm. Newsletters from both organizations will be kept in our chapter library and will be available to any PWWS member who'd like to borrow them.

Environmental Education

Since early last year I've been representing PWWS on the Prince William Environmental Education Committee. Originally, the group hoped to work on environmental programs with the local schools, but for now that seems too ambitious for time-strapped members and teachers, so we've become a networking group for area agencies and organizations with a shared concern for environmental issues. This group is still new and still defining its mission but shows a lot of promise. Meetings are held quarterly.

Helen Walter

NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON
Propagation Chairman



Wild Geranium

Geranium maculatum

Our native wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) is an excellent perennial that deserves wider use in gardens. A related annual or biennial species, Herb Robert (*G. robertianum*), is also a good garden plant. The annual window box and scented-leaved geraniums are known botanically as *Pelargoniums*. The genus name comes from the Greek word for crane, *geranos*, and refers to the beak-like fruit; the species name, *maculatum*, means spotted and refers to the mottled appearance of the leaves. Wild geranium grows naturally in woodlands and along lightly shaded roadsides from Maine south to Georgia, Missouri and Kansas including all areas of Virginia except the coastal plain.

Deeply lobed hairy basal leaves, three to six inches across, rise one to two feet from a sturdy rhizome. Five-petaled one-inch pale lavender to dark magenta flowers appear at leaf axils part way up the stem. Flowers rise above the foliage making the clumps very attractive and showy in the garden. They usually bloom most of the month of May in our area.

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Wild Geranium

Geranium maculatum

Wild geranium is hardy, long-lived and easy to grow in neutral to slightly acid soil. Plants need high open shade or a couple of hours of sun to bloom well. Enrich the planting area with plenty of organic matter such as compost, leaf mold or rotted manure. Plants will be more robust in soil that stays slightly moist but will adapt to fairly dry shade after they're well established. They can also take more sun if they have extra moisture.

I've used wild geranium in several locations in my garden. The dark magenta colored form grows with the strong yellow of golden ragwort in a low area that stays constantly moist and gets sun during the middle of the day. The pale lavender pink seems more suited to delicate flowered- and foliaged-companions such as foam flower, Jacob's ladder and ferns. Many small ground covers including wild ginger, creeping woodland phlox (*P. stolonifera*) and crested iris are good to use with scattered clumps of wild geranium. A solid mass makes a good ground cover in a moist, shaded area or use it among hostas for an interesting foliage combination.

Plants can be propagated by division in early spring or fall. Watch the seed pods closely and collect them as soon as they darken but before the seed is dispersed by the intriguing five-parted fruiting structure. Seed needs a cold moist period to break dormancy and may take two years to germinate

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