

WILD NEWS

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

MAY MEETING

Wetlands, Wetland Plants and Aquatic Gardens

Monday, May 17, 1993, 7:30 p.m.

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

Our speaker for the May membership meeting, Ralph McDowell, will present a program on the importance of wetlands, wetland plants, and aquatic gardens. Ralph operates McDowell Associates near Nokesville, and grows wetland plants and works on wetland restorations. This program will be interesting to all who enjoy native wetland plants in the wild and those who want to grow wetland plants in their gardens.

Thanks to Tour Volunteers

Thanks to people who opened their gardens for our tour: Alcina Davis, Jeanne Fowler and Jeanne Endrikat. Thanks to Marie Davis and Bonnie Fulford who worked to get the Davis garden ready and for serving as hostesses there.

A special thanks to Nancy Vehrs who mailed out the brochures and coordinated volunteers. Thanks to Nancy Arrington for preparing the brochure and to Nicky Staunton for her drawings. We also wish to thank Inc Printing for printing the brochures at no cost. Thanks to Marie Davis, Nancy Herwig and Nancy Vehrs for providing refreshments.

And thanks to the following who served as volunteers at the gardens during the tour: Paul Davis, Kathy Ehrenberger, Frances Louer, Janet Melton, Pat Portier, Helen Rawl, Claudia Thompson-Deahl, Nancy Vehrs, Kelly Wilson, Lenore Winfield.

Summer Wildflowers

Marion Lobstein is offering a wildflower class at NVCC Manassas Campus this summer. BIO 295-02M Special Topics in Summer Wildflowers (one credit) will give students an overview of the common groups of summer blooming plants, with an emphasis on identification. Class dates and times are: Monday-Thursday, July 26-29 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Call (703) 323-3000, ext. 6605 for further information.

Thanks to Sale Volunteers

Thanks to chairman Nancy Vehrs who organized another great plant sale and did much of the work herself. Thanks to everyone who donated, potted, transported, loaded and unloaded plants. Thanks to ticket writers and cashiers and to Mary Sigl who ordered books and sold them during the sale. Thanks to all who helped: Nancy Arrington, Ken Bass, Tiana Camford, Marie & Paul Davis, Kathy & Jennifer Ehrenberger, Bill Hendrickson, Nancy Herwig, Dawn Lewis, Frances & Phil Louer, Janet Melton, Pat Portier, Martha Slover, Nicky Staunton and Lenore & Scott Winfield.

June Board Meeting

The June Board of Directors meeting will be Monday the 21st, 7:30 p.m., at Bethel Lutheran Church. Meetings are open to all members.

NEXT MEETING

The July membership meeting will be on the third Monday, July 19, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. John Hummer will present a program on bog plants. Details in the next newsletter.

Native Plant Landscaping

"Using Native Plants in the Landscape" is a walking evaluation of a shady woodland area and a sunny site at Blandy, Saturday, June 26, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Native plant grower Mary Painter will discuss site evaluation and preparation, design considerations, native plant choices and maintenance. Fee is \$10.00. For registration information call (703) 837-1458. Raindate is June 27, 1-3:30 p.m.

Fascinating Ferns

Discover the alluring world of ferns as you walk a woodland trail in search of fiddleheads and unfolding fronds at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Centreville. Reservations required, 631-0013.

Meadow Hike

Join a naturalist for a walk through a meadow to discover spring wildflowers and wildlife, Sunday, May 23, 2-3 p.m., Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Centreville. Reservations required, 631-0013.

BayScapes

An attractive and informative package on BayScapes, environmentally sound landscaping that emphasizes the use of native plants, is available free from Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, P.O. Box 1981, Richmond, Va. 23216, or call (804) 775-0951.

Biology-Forest Ecology Course

BIO 295-01M Special Topics in Biology-Forest Ecology course (one credit) will give students basic information on principles of ecology relating to the forest ecosystem. Class meets Monday-Thursday, July 26-29 8:00 a.m. to noon, at NVCC Manassas Campus. For information call Marion Lobstein, instructor, (703)-323-3000, ext. 6605.

WILD NEWS

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Deadline for the July-August issue is July 1, 1993.



From the President NANCY VEHRs

After such a cool and rainy March and early April, Spring is in high gear now. I had the pleasure of experiencing the glorious display of trilliums and other wildflowers at the G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area in Linden at Claudia Thompson-Deahl's walk on May 2nd. Some sharp-eyed members of our party even discovered some showy orchids (*Orchis spectabilis*) just beginning to bloom. We also saw some interesting birds including redstarts and the striking scarlet tanager. If you've never been to Linden, don't miss it next year! The experience truly refreshes the spirit.

I was sorry that we had to cancel our March membership program and meeting, but prudence dictated that it was the best decision given the icy conditions on the roads and in the church parking lot. We will try to reschedule our speaker, Yvonne Schultz from Mason Neck Park, for a future meeting.

Once again the annual garden tours were a great success and even the weather cooperated. I hope that many of you were able to visit. The Chapter extends a big "THANK YOU" to Alcina Davis, Jeanne Fowler, and Jeanne Endrikat for sharing their gardens all weekend, and to all the volunteers who helped at the gardens or baked treats.

Plans for the state annual meeting in September are heating up and we need *YOUR* help with activities ranging from baking treats or providing child care to handling registration or securing auction items. Please call co-chairs Nancy Herwig (754-2328) or Martha Slover (818-9517) for more information on what is needed and to volunteer.

Our meeting this month promises to be an interesting one and I guarantee no snow! See you there!

Wildflower Walks

Marion Lobstein will lead wildflower walks at Great Falls Park, Va. at 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the following dates during the spring and summer months: May 16, June 20, July 18 and August 15. Call Marion at (703) 536-7150 for reservations for any of these walks.

SAXIFRAGE

Saxifraga virginensis

MARION LOBSTEIN
Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

In the fall or winter of the year, there are few green leaves on the forest floor. Some of the evergreen leaves you do find, may be the handsome basal leaves of alumroot, *Heuchera americana*, which help add color and interest to the forest floor or a rock ledge this time of year. Another member of the saxifrage family (Saxifragaceae) with green leaves in late winter and very early spring is the early saxifrage (*Saxifraga virginensis*). This species blooms from March into May. Its habitat is dry, rocky woods or rocky ledges and its range is from New Brunswick to Georgia to Tennessee and Missouri. The genus name of *Saxifraga* is derived from "saxum" meaning rock, and "frago" meaning "I break," referring to the belief that this group of plants could break rock. The species name *virginensis* means "of Virginia."

The small numerous flowers of early saxifrage are only 1/4 inch or so in diameter but are attractive in mass. The flowering stem or scape is from 4-12 inches tall, is covered with sticky hairs, and bears numerous white flowers in a loose panicle. The five-parted, bell-

shaped calyx forms a cup-like structure known as a hypanthium which has five petals and 10 stamens inserted on it. The pistil has two styles. The fruit that develops from the insect-pollinated flowers is a 1/8-1/4 inch long purple-brown capsule that has two distinct beaked sections with numerous very small seeds. Seed dispersal is mechanical when the capsule opens at maturity.

The single gray-green flowering stem or scape is leafless. The basal rosette of new leaves appears in late winter or very early spring. A "nub" of green tissue develops that will form the scape and flowers. The gray-green woolly basal leaves that develop from the fibrous root system are somewhat fleshy and have scalloped edges.

There have been few herbal uses and no edible uses of early saxifrage. One herbal use of the plant was to treat kidney stones. This was based on the "doctrine of signatures" belief that if the roots of the plant could break rocks, they could break up kidney stones.

This spring keep your eye out for this small, pretty species. The NVCC-Manassas Campus Nature Trail is an excellent place to see early saxifrage growing with the rue anemone (*Anemonella thalictroides*), plantain-leaved pussytoes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*), and rattlesnake-weed (*Hieracium venosum*). Early saxifrage may not be one of our showiest spring-blooming plants but in mass it is quite attractive and adds color to our spring woods.

Faculty Awards for Lobstein

Marion Lobstein has been selected to receive two outstanding faculty awards for her teaching and community service for the current academic year. She is one of three faculty at NVCC chosen to receive an Outstanding Faculty Award sponsored by the NVCC Educational Foundation. At the state level, she is one of eleven faculty in higher education in Virginia chosen to receive the SCHEV (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia) Outstanding Faculty Award for 1992-93. She is the first NVCC faculty to be a recipient of this award.

Wetland Plant Identification

A two-day course on tidal and non-tidal wetland plant identification will be held Friday and Saturday, June 11 & 12, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., NVCC Woodbridge Campus. Fee is \$120.00 Call 878-5756 for registration information.

Environmental Literacy Conference

The Fourth Annual Conference for Environmental Literacy will be held June 23-25 at the Cascades Conference Center in Colonial Williamsburg. The conference features workshops, presentations on current environmental issues, and a wealth of materials, exhibits, curricula, and resources for teachers and anyone who is involved in environmental education. For registration information contact Ann Regn, Council on the Environment, 202 N. Ninth St., Suite 900, Richmond, VA 23219 or telephone (804) 786-4500.

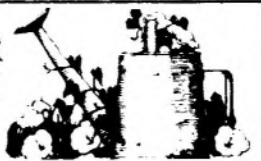
Wildlife Habitat Program

Jeff Curtis of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will present a backyard habitat program, Friday, May 21, 1:30 p.m., at Blandy. A walking tour of the arboretum will follow the slide-lecture. Call for reservations, (703) 837-1758.

We can send two complimentary issues of *Wild News* to prospective members. Send your request to Editor, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 22110.

NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON
Propagation Chairman



Foamflower

Foamflower's showy white flowers in April and May above low-growing almost evergreen foliage make this perennial member of the Saxifrage family a superb groundcover. The genus name *Tiarella* comes from tiara, a small crown, and refers to the fruit; *cordifolia* means "heart-shaped leaves." The common name refers to the numerous foamy stamens sticking out of each tiny flower.

Foamflower grows naturally in rich woods from Canada south, mainly in the mountains, to Georgia. It is not recorded for Prince William County in the *Atlas of the Virginia Flora* but grows in surrounding counties and most mountain and piedmont counties.

In April 6-12" tall flowering spikes, composed of many tiny individual blossoms, rise from foliage that is just 2-3" tall. Flowers are usually white but may have a pinkish tinge. Plants in my garden have sharply lobed

maple-like leaves that are about 3" across, but leaf shape varies and may be rounded, bluntly or deeply lobed. It sends out sparsely leaved runners with new plants forming every few inches.

Give foamflower a humus-rich soil that stays moist but is never soggy. It needs shade after the trees leaf out. Keep plants watered until they're well established and mulch to conserve moisture.

Because it is shallow rooted and forms a loose rather than tight groundcover, foamflower is a wonderful filler among taller growing clump forming ferns and wildflowers such as true and false Solomon's seal and later blooming cardinal flower. It fills in spots left when spring ephemerals such as bluebells go dormant. Ferny leaved plants like bleeding heart and Jacob's ladder are nice contrasts for foamflower's solid leaves. It is an especially good foliage contrast and color companion for the red and yellow flowers of columbine.

Many named varieties of foamflower including "Oakleaf," "Montrose" and "Slick Rock" are available. There is also a form, usually known as *T. wherryi*, that is not stoloniferous but forms large clumps.

Foamflower propagates itself by runners and clumpers are easily divided. Abundant seed is produced and can be collected and started in flats in early summer or stored in the refrigerator and started indoors in late winter.

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Foamflower

Tiarella cordifolia

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