

WILD NEWS

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

MAY MEETING

American Hedgerows

Monday, May 16, 1994, 7:30 p.m.

Bethel Lutheran Church, Plantation Lane & Sudley Road, Manassas, Va.

Our speaker for the May membership meeting will be Jocelyn Sladen, a member of the Piedmont Chapter. She will present a slide program on American Hedgerows and discuss plants typically found in hedgerows and their benefit to wildlife. The Piedmont Chapter has made hedgerows a special project and has published a brochure on hedgerows that will be mailed with the *May Bulletin*.

Summer Classes

BIO 295-03M Special Topics in Wetland Plants (2 credits). Lectures July 18, 20, 25, 27, 6-8:50 p.m.; local fieldtrips July 23 & 24, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.; weekend trip to Chincoteague July 30 & 31.

BIO 295-02M Special Topics in Summer Wildflowers (2 credits). Combined lectures and fieldtrips August 2-5, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

Instructor for both classes which will be held at NVCC Manassas Campus is Marion Lobstein. Call her for further info, 257-6643 (Pr. Wm. Co.) or 323-3000, Man. Ext. 6643 (Metro area).

Wetlands in Bloom

A walk through Huntley Meadow's wetlands is scheduled for 9:30 - 11:00 a.m., Saturday June 25. Expect to see swamp rose, buttonbush and lizard's tail along with the butterflies and other nectar-seeking insects they attract. Cancelled in case of rain. Reservations are required: 768-2525. The park is located at 3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria.

June Board of Directors Meeting

The June board of directors meeting will be the third Monday, June 20, 7:30 p.m., at the home of President Nancy Vehrs, 8318 Highland St., Manassas.

Mountain Laurel Walk

PWWS Conservation Chair Martha Slover will lead a walk to see the mountain laurel at Hemlock Overlook Park on Thursday, May 26, 7:00 p.m. Call Martha, 818-9517, for directions and more information.

Next Meeting

The July membership meeting will be on the third Monday, July 18, 7:30 p.m., at Bethel Lutheran Church. Keith Hawkins will present a program on Prince William County's champion trees. Details in next newsletter.

Natural Resources Council Meets

The Prince William Natural Resources Council will meet June 28, 7:30 p.m. at the Chinn Regional Library. The Council's first annual meeting will be held Wednesday, August 24, 7:30 p.m. at the McCoart Building. For further information call Chairman Jim Waggener, 497-0506.

Auction Items Needed

The Jefferson Chapter is hosting the VNPS Annual Meeting the 4th weekend of September in Charlottesville and is soliciting items for the auction. Items valued \$25 and over are needed for the live auction, and items valued less than \$25 will be used in the silent auction. Please support this major fundraiser for the VNPS by contacting Nancy Vehrs at 368-2898 about any items you can contribute.

Thanks to Tour Volunteers

Thanks to those who opened their gardens for our tour: Ken and Fran Bass, Marie and Paul Davis, and Roberta Whitmore. Special thanks to Nancy Vehrs for publicity and for lining up hostesses, and to Nancy Arrington for preparing and mailing the brochure. Thanks to members Marie Davis, Jeanne Fowler, Joann Krumviede, Nicky Staunton and Nancy Vehrs for providing refreshments. And thanks to our tour hostesses: Nancy Arrington, Kathy Ehrenberger, Jeanne Endrikat, Bonnie Fulford, Pat Portier, Jane Sweeney, Nancy Vehrs, Helen Walter and Helen Winn.

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President, Nancy Vehrs, 368-2898

Editor, Nancy Arrington, 368-8431

Artist, Nicky Staunton, 368-9803

Deadline for the July-August issue is July 1, 1994.



From the President NANCY VEHRS

Whew! I'm so glad that the plant sale is behind us for another year! It was quite successful because our faithful customers and volunteers didn't let a little bad weather deter them. The T-shirts were a popular addition to the wide assortment of plants this year. Not surprisingly, the cold, rainy weather helped sell a number of the long-sleeved variety. If anyone would like to buy a shirt, please see the announcement elsewhere in this issue.

Once again the annual garden tours were a great success and the weather cooperated with showers Sunday morning before the tours. THANK YOU to Marie and Paul Davis, Roberta Whitmore, and Ken and Fran Bass for sharing their gardens all weekend, and to all the volunteers who helped at the gardens or baked treats.

I was pleased to see many of you at our recent meeting featuring Jocelyn Sladen's slide show on Hedgerows. Her lecture reinforced for us the relationship between our beloved wildflowers and wild creatures and how natural hedgerows serve as oases of ecological diversity. Maybe I'll leave those wild grape vines and mulberry trees by my chain link fence alone.... Look for the hedgrow brochure to be included in the upcoming issue of the VNPS *Bulletin*.

It's mountain laurel time. To celebrate Virginia's Wildflower of the Year, PWWS Conservation Chair Martha Slover will lead an after work hike on Thursday, May 26th at Hemlock Overlook Park in nearby Clifton. Martha, a former employee at Hemlock, attests to the abundance of lovely mountain laurel in the Park. Call her at 818-9517 if you'd like to participate. Regardless, enjoy the laurel blooms wherever you find them, be that in the mountains or in your own back yard.

Editor's Note:

Because of an unusually busy spring schedule this edition of *Wild News* is being mailed later than usual making some events history rather than news.



Golden Alexanders

(*Zizia aurea*)

MARION LOBSTEIN
Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

Golden Alexanders, *Zizia aurea*, is a perennial member of the Apiaceae or carrot family. This bright yellow flowered plant is found in moist woods, along stream edges, and wet meadows in Virginia. Its range is from eastern Canada to Georgia and west to Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. The genus name of *Zizia* is in honor of Johann Ziz, a late 18th-early 19th century European botanist and "aurea" refers to the golden color of the flowers. The blooming period is from April into June. A less common species known as heart-leaved meadow parsnip (*Z. aptera*) can be found in our area but is more common in the mountains to our west.

The deep yellow flowers of golden Alexanders are small (around 1/16" or less wide) and are arranged in compound umbels. Each tiny flower in each umbellet lacks a peduncle (flowering stem). Each tiny flower has five small sepals, five petals, five stamens, and a pistil with two styles and an inferior ovary. The flowers lack any fragrance but attract a variety of insect pollinators. The fruit that develops from each fertilized flower is a schizocarp that is up to 3/16" long. The two parts of the fruit split lengthwise at functional maturity.

Each plant is between one to two and a half feet tall. The alternate compound leaves are divided two to three times and leaflets are sharp toothed. The stem may have a reddish tinge. The root system is a taproot up to 4" long.

There was limited medicinal use of this plant by American Indian tribes as well as folk or herbal medicine. These medicinal uses ranged from treating fevers to inducing sleep, treating wounds and even purportedly to cure syphilis. It can cause violent vomiting at higher doses.

This handsome member of the carrot family adds a splash of bright yellow color to our natural landscape. Enjoy this beautiful species from late April into early June.

Another Successful Plant Sale

Many thanks to chairman Nancy Vehrs who organized another great plant sale and did much of the work herself including publicity and potting more than 400 plants. Thanks to everyone who donated, potted, transported, loaded and unloaded plants, to ticket writers and cashiers, and to Nancy Herwig who provided a much appreciated tarp. Thanks also to all our customers who made our sale financially successful despite the rainy weather.

The following members helped:

Nancy Arrington, Ken Bass, Tiana Camfiord, Marie Davis, Paul Davis, Kathy Ehrenberger, Jeanne Endrikat, Bill Hendrickson, Joann Krumvielde, Frances Louer, Mary Raphael, Martha Slover, Nancy Vehrs, Helen Winn, Lenore Winfield.

Fern ID at National Arboretum

Botanist Peter Mazzeo will discuss techniques for the identification of ferns and fern allies using all aspects of fern identification. The program will be on July 12 & 14 from 10 a.m. to noon, and July 19 from 9 a.m. to noon. The program will begin in the Administration Building Classroom. The \$10 fee includes a text on ferns. Each student should bring a 10x hand lens. Call for reservations: 202-544-8733.

Bird Walks at Meadowlark Gardens

A new series of summertime bird walks will begin at Meadowlark Gardens Regional Park near Vienna on Wednesday, June 8, at 8 a.m.

Bluebirds, spotted sandpipers and various woodpeckers may greet strollers on the walks each Wednesday at 8 a.m. and Saturday at 10 a.m. through August 20. Ecologists and naturalist Stephen C. Edwards will lead the free birding adventures for new and experienced bird watchers at the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority's 95-acre garden park.

Hikers will learn to identify local summer birds and visiting migrants and should bring binoculars and field guides. Reservations are recommended. For reservations and more information, call 703-255-3631.

The landscaped and natural garden complex is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Meadowlark Gardens Regional Park is located at 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Ct., off of Beulah Rd., south of Rt. 7 and the Dulles Access Road.

NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON
Propagation Chairman



Golden Alexanders

(*Zizia aurea*)

Golden alexanders is a long flowering, attractive and adaptable perennial for garden uses ranging from naturalistic meadows to perennial borders. It grows naturally in meadows, wet thickets and swamps from Quebec and Maine to Saskatchewan south to Florida and Texas. It's found in all northern and most western Virginia counties and in several other counties throughout the commonwealth.

The dark green divided foliage of golden alexanders, similar to that of astilbes, forms a mound about 12" to 18" tall and across. In early May loose airy umbels of greenish-yellow flowers rise a foot or so above the foliage. They are pretty for four to six weeks and are followed by seed pods that are attractive for several more weeks. Foliage will remain fresh and attractive until frost.

Golden alexanders is a great plant for sunny wet spots

— meadows, beside streams or ponds, or in low-lying areas that stay wet most of the year. Constant moisture will keep the foliage looking good through the summer. However, it will grow and bloom well in drier sites and in part shade. I've found it to be an excellent companion to spiderworts (*Tradescantia*) serving as a prop and mask for their floppy and sometimes unattractive foliage. It's also a good filler in areas where Virginia bluebells and spring bulbs have gone dormant.

The rounded shape of golden alexanders is an effective contrast for spiky iris, especially ones that like a wet spot such as *I. pseudacorus* and *I. versicolor*. Finely dissected foliage makes it an attractive contrast for solid leaved plants such as hostas. Its greenish-yellow flowers combine nicely with most spring colors including pinks and lavenders that might not look good with a more golden yellow.

This adaptable native has only one drawback: it smells bad! Flowers and foliage have an unpleasant odor that's noticeable only up close outdoors but keeps it from being a good cut flower.

Golden alexanders usually propagates itself sufficiently by self-sowing. Clip off faded blossoms to prevent too many seedlings. This desirable native is carried by only a few native plant nurseries but is always available at our chapter plant sale.

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Golden Alexanders

(*Zizia aurea*)

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