

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

## JANUARY MEETING

### Member's Slide Program

Monday, Jan. 16, 1995, 7:30 p.m.

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

Our January membership meeting will again feature members showing slides of their trips, projects, and activities over the past year. Members who don't have slides can talk about their wildflower-related activities illustrated with or without snapshots.

### Conservation Through Propagation

Save the first weekend of April for this year's VNPS Winter Workshop which will focus on propagation. Speakers will discuss genetic diversity, fern propagation from spores, and aftercare of seedlings. Education Chair Tim Williams is hoping to get Norman Deno, an expert on seed propagation, to participate. The one-day seminar will be held Saturday or Sunday, April 1 or 2, in the Charlottesville area. Watch for information from VNPS.

### February Board Meeting

The February board of directors meeting will be on the third Monday, February 20, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. Board meetings are open to all members.

### Auction to Benefit Woodbridge Refuge

The Friends of the Woodbridge Refuge (Harry Diamond site) are sponsoring an invitational auction, April 1 at the National Wildlife Federation's Laurel Ridge facility near Tyson's Corner, to raise funds to help the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with start-up activities for this latest addition to the national refuge system.

If you are interested in attending or contributing (fully tax deductible) items, call Nicky Staunton, 368-9803.

### Native Plants:

#### Exploring Nature's Palette

The National Arboretum's 9th Annual Lahr Symposium will be held Saturday, March 25, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Topics will include new ethics and aesthetics in America's front and backyards, how the Federal Government is turning toward wider use of native plants, conservation issues threatening our native flora, and methods for putting together landscapes that highlight our beautiful natural heritage. Call the Arboretum for a brochure, 202-245-2726. Fee is \$60; pre-registration is required.

### Great Falls Walks

Marion Lobstein leads wildflower walks at Great Falls Park, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the third Sunday of each month. Early spring walks are on January 15, February 19, and March 19. Call Marion, 536-7150, for information.

### Next Meeting

Our March membership meeting will be Monday, March 20, 1995, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. Details in the next newsletter.

## New Officers

Chapter officers elected at our September annual meeting for the next two years are: President – Helen Walter, Vice president – Martha Slover, Secretary – Jeanne Endrikat, and Treasurer – Marie Davis.

## Rare & Endangered Plants of Northern Virginia

Conservation chair Martha Slover has prepared a brochure to go along with the slide program she presented at the November membership meeting. Call Martha, 818-9517, if you couldn't make it to the meeting and would like a copy, or write a note to PWWS, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 22110.

## VNPS T-Shirts for Sale

Joann Krumviude still has a few of the wildflower T-Shirts for sale. Call her, 938-4378, for size and style availability. She can mail your shirt or bring it to a meeting for you. We will probably reorder for spring if your size isn't available.

## Wildlife Art & Photography Show

The 20th Annual Wildlife Art & Photography Show sponsored by the Fairfax County Park Authority will be held Saturday and Sunday, March 11 and 12, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the R. E. Lee RECenter, 6600 Telegraph Rd., Alexandria. In addition to wildlife-theme works of art offered for sale, representatives of a wide variety of environmental organization will be present, and various artists will demonstrate their crafts during both days. For information call Hidden Oaks Nature Center, 941-1065.

## WILD NEWS

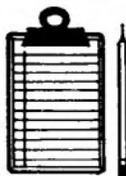
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Deadline for the Mar.-April issue is Mar. 1, 1995.



## From the President HELEN WALTER

Happy New Year, everybody! It's 1995 already and we're rapidly closing in on the millennium. Has it been that long since I was in high school? Compared to last year, this Christmas seemed tame. A lot of us must have some war stories about trying to get home in the Christmas Idiot of '93. This winter has been mild so far, but it was 16 degrees when we got up this morning, and the man on the radio is talking about snow after midnight. We have plenty of kitty litter and birdseed, so let it snow. No, I'm not fattening up the birds for the cats. These cats are too old and too lazy to go out and chase birds, this the kitty litter.

Besides, I have a good project if I'm snowbound. I've started organizing all those boxes of files and other stuff that we've been accumulating since the early eighties. Most interesting discovery so far has been a desiccated cricket found in a file marked 1989. I'm tackling the files alphabetically and I've worked my way up to an intimidating one generically marked "Pr Wm Wildflower Society" that's as thick as Hillary's Health Care Plan. One of the boxes had back issues of *Wild News* and since I joined in 1988, I got a real sense of the history of the origins of our group. We should be proud. We've accomplished a lot since 1982.

January '94 was probably the first time that we had to cancel a meeting because of weather, or did the March '93 blizzard wipe out that meeting? Anyway, let's hope we can get together on Jan. 16 for our members' slide show, a great way to get psyched up for spring and thinking about the garden tour, plant sale and maybe even our own gardens. Before we know it, it will be time to go out looking for skunk cabbage.

On the months between the program meetings, we have our board meetings, also 7:30 p.m. at the Church on the third Monday, making the next one Feb 20. You don't have to be an officer to attend. All members are welcome and it's a good forum to bring up suggestions, ideas, issues or concerns, as well as to catch up with what's happening between meetings.

## Bruce Peninsula Trip

Ted Scott and Donna Ware will lead this year's VNPS trip to the Bruce Peninsula June 17-24. Tentative cost is \$450 with a \$50 deposit required. Call Nicky Staunton, 368-9803, for more information or to sign up. Don't delay – the trip fills quickly.



## Serviceberry

(*Amelanchier* species)

MARION LOBSTEIN

Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

The delicate white to pink apple blossom-like flowers of common serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*) appear in forest understories in late March into April. The genus name *Amelanchier* is from an old French name while the species *arborea* means "tree-like." The range of this large shrub or small tree is from Nova Scotia and Ontario in Canada to Florida west to Oklahoma and Minnesota. As an understory tree serviceberry develops a spreading shape and averages 10-12 feet but can reach heights of 50 feet or more with optimum growth conditions. Other common names for the serviceberry are Juneberry (fruits ripen by June or later in summer), shadbush (blooming occurs at time the shad "run" up rivers), sarvis berry (a corruption of serviceberry referring to the time of year the circuit-riding preachers would travel to remote areas in early spring to hold religious services often for those who had died over the winter), and shadblow (blow referring to the shedding of the petals). Other species found in our area include *A. canadensis* (Canadian or swamp serviceberry), *A. spicata* (low serviceberry), *A. laevis* (smooth serviceberry), and *A. sanguinea* (roundleaf serviceberry). *A. arborea* is found in dry upland woods, thickets and sometimes in more open areas.

The delicate white to pink blossom borne in clusters (racemes) appear before or as the new leaves are appearing. Three-quarter inch diameter flowers are composed of a calyx of five green sepals that fuse to form a cup-like structure (hypanthium) around the inferior ovary, five elongated petals, 20 stamens that are attached to the top of the calyx tube, and an inferior ovary with five stigmas. Pollination is by a variety of insects active in early spring. Each half-inch fruit is a small, spherical pome (the base or receptacle of the flower swells around an inferior ovary to form most of the fruit as in apples and pears) containing an average of 10 seeds. They ripen in early

summer with a sweet taste somewhat like pears and are eaten by at least 22 species of birds and many species of mammals that disperse them in their scats. Other species of mammals browse the leaves and twigs.

The alternate, elliptical to somewhat oval leaves of serviceberry have serrate margins and may be up to two to three inches long and one to one-and-a-half inches wide. Leaves are hairy when young and smoother when older. The bark of the slender trunk is smooth and gray in color in younger trees. Twigs are reddish-brown in color and hairy when young with elongated buds resembling those of beech.

The fruits of a number of species of serviceberry were highly favored by many tribes of American Indians and there is evidence that some tribes even spread the range of these species. Fruits were eaten fresh, dried, and even pounded along with other dried berries and meat to make pemmican cakes. European settlers and their descendants also enjoyed these fruits which were once sold commercially. Several of our native species were taken to Europe as cultivars and are listed in European floras.

Serviceberry branches were used by Indians to make arrow shafts and pipestems. In the past when mature trees were more common, the dense wood of serviceberry was used by early European settlers and their descendants to make mine props, handles for tools, and charcoal. Medicinal uses of serviceberry by Indians and European settlers included extracts, decoctions, and teas to prevent miscarriages, to ease pain after childbirth, to treat diarrhea and dysentery, to eliminate intestinal worms (the Chinese use their own species of serviceberry for this purpose), and as a spring tonic.

This early spring plan to enjoy the delicate beauty of serviceberry species in bloom in our local woods. This summer try some of the fruits and see what you think of the flavor. If you can find enough fruits, try them in muffins, jam, pies or cobblers. Hopefully you will beat the birds and small mammals to finding fruit at just the right stage of ripeness!

## Annual Seedling Sale

The Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District is offering two native dogwood species and Eastern red bud seedlings this year in addition to the evergreens they always have. Call 361-1710 for an order form or more information. Orders must be placed by March 24.

## Purple Loosetrife Video

A Virginia Wildlife Educational Television Series video showing the invasiveness of purple loosetrife is available to our members. The video was produced by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries in cooperation with other state agencies and VNPS. Call Nicky Staunton, 368-9803, if you'd like to rent it (no charge!).

## NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON  
Propagation Chairman



# Serviceberries

(*Amelanchier* species)

Native plant gardeners tend to be more concerned than other gardeners are about the parentage of their plants. However, when it comes to *Amelanchiers* William R. van Dersal's observation that "...the attempt to distinguish between the various serviceberries would be productive of little more than a headache" is as true today as it was when he wrote it in *Ornamental American Shrubs* in 1942. Fortunately the confusing taxonomy hasn't stopped nurserymen who have recognized serviceberries' many good qualities and offer cultivars selected for larger flowers, better branching, more compact growth and colorful fall foliage.

Several Eastern serviceberry species grow from Ontario south to Georgia and Louisiana, including all areas of Virginia, in soils that range from wet to dry in a variety of locations including woods, clearings, streambanks, thickets and roadsides.

Flowering begins as early as the end of March or as

late as the third week of April. Clusters of straplike five-petaled blossoms open at the tips of bare reddish-brown twigs creating a delicate, airy picture that may last only two or three days in hot, windy or stormy weather, but up to two weeks when days are cool and calm. Two-inch long oval leaves unfurl completely a month or so after flowering, and fruit appears in June to be quickly devoured by birds. Fall color ranges from yellow to red.

Because they're adaptable to many habitats and come in sizes from six-foot tall shrubs to 25-foot trees, there's a serviceberry for almost every landscaping need. They're perfect choices for the slightly moist, acid soil of a naturalistic woodland garden or in wet soil near a stream or pond. They will add year-round interest in the ordinary soil of mixed borders and can be used near patios or in any location where a small tree is needed. They may need extra moisture for optimum performance in full sun. In our area serviceberries aren't bothered by the pests and diseases that afflict these members of the Rose family in southern states, and most hybrids are pest- and disease-free.

Gardeners can propagate serviceberries by seed (stratify for 90-120 days at 41 degrees) and by cuttings taken as current growth matures. Nurserymen have found tissue culture to be successful and offer cultivars of *A. arborea*, *A. laevis* and *A. canadensis*. Sometimes a cultivar of unknown parentage will be listed as *A. grandiflora*.

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PO Box 83, Manassas, VA 22110



**Serviceberry**  
*Amelanchier arborea*

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