

# WILD NEWS

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

## MARCH MEETING

### Designing Wildlife Habitats

Monday, March 18, 1996

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

Gina Yurkonis, a PWWS member who designs and installs wildlife habitats, will present the program at our March membership meeting. She will show slides of various backyard habitats and give us ideas for creating homes for wildlife on our own property. During a short business meeting we'll discuss plans for our busy spring season.

### April Board Meeting

The April board of directors meeting will be on the third Monday (changed back from second Monday), April 15, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. Board meetings are open to all chapter members.

### PWWS Wildflower Walks

PWWS members are cordially invited to participate in these spring wildflower walks led by Marion Lobstein:

- Sun., March 17, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Great Falls Park
- Sun., April 21, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Great Falls Park
- Sun., April 21, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., Balls Bluff
- Sun., May 19, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Great Falls Park

Call Marion, 703-536-7150, for information or reservations for these free walks.

### Trillium T-Shirts

T-shirts featuring the large-flowered trillium, our 1996 Virginia wildflower of the year, will be available at the plant sale and the May membership meeting. Prices, including tax, are \$13.60 for short sleeve shirts and \$15.60 for long sleeves.

### Virginia Wildflower Celebration

Our Virginia Wildflower Celebration runs through the months of April and May. Events sponsored by all chapters will be listed in the Spring *Bulletin*. PWWS Chapter events are covered in this newsletter. Celebrate spring and wildflowers – participate in our walks, tours, programs and other activities.

### Wetlands Conference

VNPS is one of several organizations cosponsoring "Virginia Clean Water and Wetlands" conference, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., March 30 at Virginia Commonwealth University's Academic Bldg., Richmond. Speakers will discuss water quality and wetlands, and suggest ways participants can advocate effectively. Registration fee of \$10 includes lunch. Info: Rick Spencer, 202-797-6635, or write to The National Wildlife Federation, 1400 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

### Next Meeting

The May membership meeting will be on the third Monday, May 20, 7:30 p.m., at Bethel Lutheran Church. Details in the next newsletter.

## Horticulture for a Better Environment

Green Spring Gardens Park and the Northern Virginia Community College Horticulture Club are co-sponsoring "Horticulture for a Better Environment", Saturday, March 30, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Green Spring. Well-known speakers will discuss such topics as ethical and practical plant selection, ecology and landscape maintenance and integrating ecology into landscape designs. Tours of Green Springs gardens are scheduled for 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. (weather permitting). Fee is \$15 plus \$8.50 if you want a box lunch. Reservations are due by March 23; call 703-642-5173 for a brochure.

### Wildflower ID at Green Spring

Marion Lobstein will conduct a wildflower identification workshop at Green Spring Gardens Park near Annandale. Lectures will be held Wednesdays April 3 and 10, 7 to 9:30 p.m. An all-day field trip to Riverbend Park will follow on Saturday, April 13, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Call Green Spring, 703-642-5173, for additional information including fee.

### Tax Checkoff Reminder

Virginia taxpayers can donate part of their refund to two conservation organizations by checking the appropriate space on their Virginia Income Tax Form 760. By checking Line 27(b) you'll be contributing to the Virginia Non-game Wildlife Program, and your 27(f) donation goes to the Open Space Recreation and Conservation Fund. Donations can be taken as deductions on the following year's tax return.

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President, Helen Walter, 330-9614  
Editor, Nancy Arrington, 368-8431  
Artist, Nicky Staunton, 368-9803

Deadline for the March-April issue is March 1, 1996.



### From the President HELEN WALTER

Here's some good news for you! This winter VNPS demonstrated that it really is possible for ordinary citizens to have an impact on our government when we work together. Many of us participated in conservation chair Ted Scott's letter writing campaign to the state legislature regarding the proposed transfer of Natural Heritage to Game and Inland Fisheries. We made ourselves heard and the House tabled the bill in committee.

I also have sad news to report. One of our members, Marilyn Williams, died of cancer at the end of January. She was an extraordinary person, a fantastic role model whose presence in our community will be greatly missed. Anyone who knew Marilyn and would like to contribute to a memorial garden for her, please call me at 330-9614, or Claudia Deahl at 754-9235.

Speaking of Claudia, she's been working on a wetlands mitigation project that Rob and I had fun exploring last month. It's at the intersection of Sunrise Valley and Monroe and well worth a detour if you're ever in Reston.

Members Sally and Larry Underwood who did the butterfly program for us in November, have submitted the Natural Resources Council's grant proposal to VDOT for the Davis Ford Preserve. They should know later this month whether it made the first cut, and if so, final approval would come at the end of June. This would be a real asset to our community, so let's cross our collective fingers.

We're moving into our busiest time of year, with the garden tour and the plant sale as well as all the work to be done in our own yards. Please spare us a few hours on those weekends to help make them a success.

### Wildlife Garden Tour

A tour of gardens, wildlife habitats and bayscapes will be held in Herndon, Sunday, April 28, 12 noon to 5 p.m. (rain date May 5). The event is sponsored by Tree Action, 703-471-4337 or 481-3080. Tickets: \$4 adults and \$1 children 12 and under.

## PWWS Plant Sale

This year's plant sale will be held Saturday, May 11, 9 a.m. to noon, in the parking lot of Bethel Lutheran Church (same location as our meetings). Marie Davis will chair this important fund raising event for our chapter.

Call Marie, 361-1626, if you can donate plants or if you need help getting your plants potted. Call also if you need labels (plants should be labeled with botanical and common names). Marie can also advise you on prices to put on your plants. Be sure plants are potted up three weeks in advance so they will look good for the sale. Plan to get your plants to the sale site by 7:30 on the morning of the sale.

On the day of the sale we need many helping hands to unload and arrange plants, to serve as tellers during the sale, and to clean up afterwards. Call Marie and let her know how you can help. Encourage your friends to come and purchase plants, and remember members get a 10% discount on plants.

## Potowmack Chapter Plant Sale

Potowmack Chapter's spring plant sale will be Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Green Spring Gardens Park near Annandale. Call Gerry Pratt, 323-1094, for information.

## Group Wants to Preserve Champion Oak's Habitat

Larry and Sally Underwood are leading the Prince William Natural Resources Council's efforts to acquire a 2.2-acre tract of land at the intersection of Davis Ford and Yates Ford Roads that is home to a 350-year-old white oak. The property also contains an historic 1750's farmhouse. The group has applied for a federal grant through the Virginia Department of Transportation. If you're interested in helping with this project, call the Underwoods, 361-8479.

## Garden Fair & Plant Auction

The Friends of the National Arboretum are sponsoring the 5th Annual Garden Fair and Plant Auction on Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the arboretum. For more information, call the FONA office, 202-544-8733.

## Wintergreen Symposium

Wintergreen's annual wildflower symposium will be May 10-12. Wildflower walks, lectures and slide shows will keep participants busy through the weekend. Several VNPS members will be trip leaders. For a brochure, write to The Wintergreen Nature Foundation, P.O. Box 468, Wintergreen, VA 22958, or call Eva Lowe, 804-325-8169.

## Native Shrubs of High Spring

Join Joan Feely, Curator of the Native Plant Collection, for a walk through the National Arboretum's Fern Valley to discover the beauty and diversity of our native shrubs. Learn how these woodland shrubs can be used in your own landscape. Meet in the Fern Valley parking lot at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 27. Call Machel Henry at 202-245-4521 to register for this free program.

## PWNRC Schedules Wildflower Program

Nicky Staunton will present a program on Prince William County wildflowers at the Prince William Natural Resources Council's April 24 meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the McCoart Building. For information about the meeting or the PWNRC, call Jim Waggener, 497-0506, or Nicky at 368-9803. Nicky gave a similar program at the Lake Jackson Garden Club's January meeting.

## Extension Field Days

The Prince William Unit of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service has scheduled the following free lawn and garden field days at 9 to 11 a.m. at Montclair Property Owners Assn (MPOA), 3561 Waterway Dr., Montclair, and in the brown barn at Ben Lomond Community Center (BLCC), 10300 Sudley Manor Dr., Manassas:

Mowing & Pruning, March 30, BLCC

Backyard Composting & Landscape Design, April 20, MPOA, and April 27 BLCC

Integrated Pest Management (IPM), May 11, MPOA, and May 18, BLCC

Plant to Avoid Problems & Watering, June 22 MPOA, and June 29, BLCC

Call the extension office, 792-6285, for more information.

## Horticulture for a Better Environment

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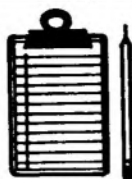
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## PWWS Garden Tour

This year's garden tour, our eleventh, will be held (rain or shine), Saturday, April 27, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, April 28, 1 to 5 p.m.. The following members are opening their gardens for our tour this year:

Tiana Camfiord, Compton Rd., Clifton

Nancy Vehrs & Warren Ryder, Highland St., Manassas

Nancy Arrington, Briarmont Ln., Manassas

The Arrington garden was on our tour in 1987 and in 1990; this is the first time for the other two. Also, this is the first time we've featured a member's garden outside Prince William County.

Refreshments will be served at the Vehrs/Ryder garden. We need members to furnish refreshments, help get the gardens ready, and serve as hosts/hostesses during the tour. Helen Walter is taking care of scheduling and she'd like to hear from you—call her at 330-9614 and offer to help.

As in past years, our tour is free since it serves as an educational project for our chapter and gives visitors a preview of plants offered at our sale two weeks later. A brochure with directions to the gardens will be mailed to members; call Nancy Arrington, 368-8431 or 368-9711, if you'd like extra copies.

## Potowmack Chapter Events at Green Spring

The VNPS Potowmack Chapter is sponsoring "Rare and Endangered Wildflowers of Maryland", a slide show by professional photographer Jessie Harris, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., Thursday, April 25, at Green Spring Gardens Park near Annandale.

A tour of the chapter's Virginia native plant trail at Green Spring is scheduled for Saturday, April 27, 10 to 11 a.m. Both events are free, but reservations are required, 703-642-5173.

## Lilies and Bells

See a lovely display of troutlilies, bluebells, trilliums and much more, Tuesday, April 9, 9 to 10:30 a.m., Riverbend Park. Reservations, 759-9018. Sponsored by Fairfax County Park Authority.

## Native Orchid Conference

The Maryland Native Plant Society is sponsoring "North American Native Terrestrial Orchid Conference: Propagation & Production", Saturday and Sunday, March 16 and 17 at the U.S. National Arboretum.

The MNPS meets on the last Tuesday of each month, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Maydale Nature Center, Silver Spring. For more information about the society or the orchid conference, call Carol Allen, 301-258-0313 (Home) or 301-490-4903 (Work).

## Landscaping Symposium at Arboretum

"Native Plants: Evolution of a Natural Trend", the 10th annual Lahr Landscape Symposium, will be held Saturday, March 23, at the U. S. National Arboretum, 3501 New York Ave., NE, Washington, DC. The day begins with registration and plant sales at 8 a.m., the first presentation is at 9 a.m., and the program ends at 4:45 p.m. Topics include restoring native plant habitats, meadow establishment, best new native cultivars, plant photography and others. Fee of \$60 includes lunch; call the arboretum for a brochure, 202-245-4523. Register by March 13 or pay a \$10 late fee.

## Bull Run Bluebell Walk

The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority's annual Bluebell Walk will be held on Sunday, April 21, 2 p.m., at Bull Run Regional Park, Centreville. PWWS members Nicky and Loren Staunton and Martha Slover and other naturalists and park rangers will lead visitors in small groups along the one-and-a-half-mile Bluebell Trail.

Guided walks can be scheduled for groups throughout "Bluebell Week", April 21 to Friday, April 26. Groups should make reservations at least two weeks in advance. Self-guiding pamphlets are available for those who want to walk on their own. For information, or to schedule a tour, call 703-528-5406.



# Bellworts

*Uvularia* spp.

MARION LOBSTEIN

Associate Professor, Biology, NVCC

In late April into early May, we can enjoy the lovely foliage and delicate yellow flowers of the perfoliate bellwort (*Uvularia perfoliata*) and the sessile-leaved bellwort (*U. sessilifolia*). The leaves of both these perennial members of the Lilaceae or lily family appear by mid-April and begin to bloom later in that month and into May. Unlike many other spring-blooming members of the lily family which are ephemerals, the foliage and fruits of the bellwort persist into late summer. Both species are found in deciduous woods, but the perfoliate bellwort prefers a moister and richer habitat than does the sessile species. Both species are found in eastern Canada into New England and down into Georgia and Alabama with the perfoliate species having a slightly more southern range into Florida.

The genus name *Uvularia* is from a Latin word for "uvula" for the palate referring to the way the flowers hang down like the uvula of the throat. The species name *perfoliata* refers to the manner in which the flowering stem or peduncle comes through, or pierces, the lower part of the leaf in comparison to *sessilifolia* where the leaves (*folia*) are attached directly (*sessile*) to the stem in the sessile-leaved species. Other common names for bellworts are wild oats and merry bells.

Both species of bellwort have solitary bell-shaped flowers that are terminal in perfoliate and along the stem in sessile. The flowers of both species are made up of a perianth of three outer light yellow sepals and three inner light yellow petals both approximately one inch long (flowers of perfoliate bellwort are usually slightly larger than the sessile-leaved species). The

inside surface of the flower petals may be rough (or mealy) with orange grains in perfoliate bellwort giving it another common name of mealy bellwort. There are six stamens and a pistil with a three-lobed ovary in both species. The stamens are shorter than the styles in perfoliate bellwort and the styles longer than the stamens in the sessile-leaved species.

Both species have a slight fragrance and are pollinated chiefly by bumblebees and other bee species. Following pollination and fertilization, the fruit that develops in both species is a three-angled capsule. This capsule is roughly a half-inch long in perfoliate bellwort and is more ovoid than the larger one inch long sharply-angled capsule of the sessile-leaved. The three-celled capsule of both species matures in the summer and will split open to release a number of one-eighth-inch long seeds that have an elaiosome (a fleshy, fat-filled appendage) that attracts ants which disperse the seeds. (The phenomenon of ant-dispersal, myrmecochory, has been discussed in previous articles).

The leaves of both species are lance-shaped and are up to three inches long with the leaves of perfoliate bellwort being slightly larger. Plants of both species may grow up to fifteen inches tall. The stem of sessile-leaved bellwort may be slightly angled. The fibrous root system of both species spreads underground as stolons producing new plants asexually.

Historically, the young shoots of bellwort species have been gathered, parboiled and eaten like asparagus, also in the lily family. (For conservation reasons, please do not dig up these plants). The medicinal uses of bellworts by American Indians and in folk medicine include treating snake bites; as a tonic, blood purifies, and nerve medicine; as a treatment for diarrhea, sore throats, sore gums, skin problems and wounds; and taken internally to speed healing of broken bones.

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## Woodland Wildflower Gardens

PWWS member and garden designer Marie Davis will present a slide program on gardening with native shade loving wildflowers at Ellanor Lawrence Park, Centreville, at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 23. The program is free, but reservations must be made by calling 631-0013.

## Garden Fair at Blandy

The Friends of the State Arboretum of Virginia at Blandy Experimental Farm will hold their Annual Garden Fair on Saturday and Sunday, May 11 and 12. A variety of plant-related programs and tours are scheduled. Exhibitors and vendors will be present. For more information, call 540-837-1758, 540-837-1458.

## NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN

NANCY ARRINGTON  
Propagation Chairman



### Large-flowered Bellwort

*Uvularia grandiflora*

The large-flowered bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*), native to rich woods of Virginia's western counties, is a lovely, long-lived perennial for shady gardens. Growing to almost two feet tall with two-inch-long bright lemon-yellow, terminal flowers, it's much showier than our local bellworts (*U. perfoliata* and *U. sessilifolia*). Its leaves are perfoliate, or completely surrounding the stem, rather than clasping the stem as stated in Peterson's wildflower field guide (Newcomb gets it right!). This species forms distinct, compact clumps while the other two spread into drifts of widely-spaced stems.

In the garden large-flowered bellwort needs conditions similar to those of its native habitat: humus-rich, slightly moist yet well-drained soil, and sun during the spring for good flowering. An area shaded by deciduous trees or a site on the north side of the house will receive the shade required to keep the foliage attractive through summer. Unlike our local species which

are native to acid soil, this species grows in neutral to slightly alkaline soil in the wild, but adapts to slightly acid soil in the garden.

Bellwort flowers from late April into the middle of May before the stems have reached their mature height. Leaves that haven't completely expanded and curiously twisted flower petals give the plants a slightly wilted appearance. Bluish-green foliage continues to expand after flowering to produce a soft-textured display that will look good until fall as long as the soil stays moist.

A single clump of large-flowered bellwort is a wonderful accent plant in the garden. Good companions that bloom at the same time include woodland phlox (*P. divaricata*), Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*) and dwarf crested iris (*I. cristata*), all in shades of blue and lavender. Low growing native groundcovers such as wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), native pachysandra (*P. procumbens*) and foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) will keep bellwort company through the summer.

Bellwort is easily propagated by division in early spring as growth is beginning or in fall when the foliage is dying back. Plants actually seen to appreciate the disturbance of division and small transplants will quickly grow into good-sized clumps. Because bellworts are difficult to propagate from seed, wild-collected plants may show up in nurseries—just be sure to purchase nursery-propagated plants.

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**Bellwort**  
*Uvularia perfoliata*

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