



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

## NOVEMBER MEETING

### Creating Sanctuary

7:30 p.m., Monday, November 18, 1996  
Bethel Lutheran Church

Sherry Mitchell, an avid naturalist and author of *Creating Sanctuary, A New Approach to Gardening in the Washington Metropolitan Area*, is our November speaker. She will use slides to explain that creating a garden sanctuary is about working with nature rather than against it. It's about growing plants that are adapted to our unique climate, conserving water in the landscape, eliminating the reliance on chemicals and pesticides, organically enriching the soil, and designing garden environments that provide refuge for birds, bunnies, box turtles and, most of all, ourselves. Sherry writes a column for a Fairfax County newspaper and teaches adult education classes that focus on designing backyard habitats, native plants, chemical-free lawns and other timely topics of the gardener's turf. She will be happy to sign copies of her book that will be available for purchase during the meeting.

### Craft Sale at November Meeting

In addition to the regular program and business meeting, the November membership meeting is our annual craft sale. Members are invited to sell their wildflower and nature related wares at this meeting. Come early and get your table set up by 7 p.m.; sales will take place before the meeting and during the social hour at the break. For more information, call Helen Walter, 330-9614.

### No December Board Meeting

The next chapter board meeting will be the third Monday in February, the 17th, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church.

### Louer Will be Greeter

Frances Louer has agreed to be our unofficial greeter at membership meetings. She'll see that everyone wears a name tag so we can get to know each other. We always have visitors and new members and want to be sure everyone feels welcome.

### Thanks to The Walters

Thanks to Helen and Rob Walter for arranging our annual meeting at the Occoquan Forest community park. The picnic pavilion and trail along the river provided a perfect spot for our gathering. Thanks also to Ed Milhous who donated a very nice pair of Felco pruners to be raffled. Jim Price won the pruners.

### Next Meeting

Our January membership meeting will be Monday, Jan. 20, 1997, at 7:30 p.m., Bethel Lutheran Church. This is our member slide program and everyone is invited to show slides or photos of trips, activities, etc. from the past year. Details in the next newsletter.

## Woodbridge Refuge Walks

A regular morning wildlife survey of the Woodbridge Refuge is usually held the last Wednesday of each month starting at 7:30 a.m. For a unique look at the refuge, join Jim Waggener for this three to four hour tour which, so far, has noted, among other things, 213 bird species. Upcoming surveys are Nov. 27, Dec. 18 and Jan. 29. Call Jim, 497-0506, for reservations and directions.

## PWWS Officers & Board Members

President - Helen Walter, 703-330-9614  
Vice president - Martha Slover, 703-331-0302  
Secretary - Diane Flaherty, 703-330-9862  
Treasurer - Marie Davis, 703-361-1626  
Botany - Marion Lobstein, 703-536-7150  
Conservation - Regina Yurkonis, 540-347-1027  
Education - Kim Hosen, 703-491-8406  
Historian - Helen Walter  
Hospitality - Joann Krumviede, 703-938-4378  
Landscape & Garden Tour - Marie Davis  
Librarian - Helen Winn, 703-369-6514  
Membership - Nancy Vehrs, 703-368-2898  
Newsletter & Plant Sale - Nancy Arrington  
703-368-8431  
Programs - Vacant  
Registry - Elaine Haug, 703-670-2347

## Gardens Wanted

The PWWS board of directors is looking for local wildflower gardens for the annual garden tour. To suggest a garden for a future date or for advice about how to get your own garden ready for the tour, call Marie Davis, 361-1626.

## WILD NEWS

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

Deadline for the Jan.-Feb. issue is Jan. 1, 1997.



## From the President HELEN WALTER

I can't believe Nancy Herwig managed to line up Sherry Mitchell for our program this month! What a coup! Sherry's book should be a wonderful Christmas present for all those people on your list you never know what to get, and I plan to stockpile a few for emergency hostess gifts and birthday presents. This is also our annual members' craft sale, and yours truly will be there with turtlenecks, sweatshirts and dresses to brighten up the winter.

This is the beginning of my second term as your president and Martha Slover's as vice president. Marie Davis will continue as treasurer, and we have a new face in the secretary's position, new member Diane Flaherty, replacing Jeanne Endrikat. Jeanne has done a fantastic job with her laptop these past four years preparing the minutes and mailing them out, and getting the notices for the annual meeting and elections out on schedule, behind the scene stuff we tend to take for granted will somehow magically get done. Thanks, Jeanne.

We had a wonderful day for our annual meeting and picnic on the Occoquan last month. As usual, the eats were fantastic, and we walked off some calories exploring along the river afterwards. Those of you who came could see why I'm so excited about living on the river. Now the leaves are falling fast, opening up the view from the house.

Let's talk about the garden tour and plant sale. Before everything goes into hiding for the winter, if it hasn't already, think about what you have in enough abundance to pot up and bring to the plant sale. A few plants from a lot of people will make the sale a big success. Whether or not you have plants to donate, plan to come help out at the sale or host at one of the gardens. The tour will be at the western end of the county next spring.

## A Tour of *WHAT??!*

To environmentalists the term "golf course" usually conjures up images of chemicals, pollution and grass-wastelands, but oh, you should see . . .

During October two small groups of members of the Piedmont and Prince William Chapters were treated to a tour of the prestigious Robert Trent Jones Golf Course near Gainesville, Virginia. Treat is indeed the word to describe this innovative course which has skillfully combined beauty and sound ecological practices to produce a world-class golf course.

Our tour leaders were Glenn Smickley, course superintendent and Cathy Waterhouse, environmental coordinator at RTJ. Glenn sounded like a proud papa when he spoke about the health of the soil. Walking out onto the greens was a surprise for us non-golfers. We stood on grass that looked like green felt and invited touching. Effie Fox spoke for all of us when she asked, "Is it REAL?" as she bent down to pet it. With a pocket knife, Glenn sliced out a plug that showed dense, healthy root systems growing at least six inches down – under grass kept mowed to an incredible 1/8 inch.

Explaining that healthy soil equals healthy plants, Glen touted his special soil-feeding mixture of fish meal and kelp and described how cane sugarwater is used to feed those precious soil microbes. Other soil amendments include greensand, calcium-based (not dolomitic) limestone and a poultry manure product. The increasingly healthy soil, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), aeration, and proper water management have allowed RTJ to use fewer pesticides each year since its inception in 1989. In fact, RTJ's pesticide use is now the lowest of any cool-season golf course in the Mid-Atlantic by a very broad margin.

Hand in hand with IPM is habitat management. Judicious planning resulted in saving a great number of mature hardwoods on the 220-acre course. Understory has been preserved or replaced with native species wherever possible, and snags are left standing for primary and secondary cavity nesters. Even brush and rock piles can be found by the trained eye. Acres of out-of-play turf are being returned to naturalized areas. Annuals like cosmos and zinnias are helping to stabilize the soil while newly planted meadows of *Echinacea*, *Solidago*, *Eupatorium*, *Liatris*, *Coreopsis* and others are becoming established.

Cathy Waterhouse consults with the staff horticulturist to assure that all species added to the grounds are native or substantially beneficial. Cathy, with a Master's in science education, joined the staff in 1994. She continued our tour by electric golf cart and discussed her monitoring and inventory systems. Forty bluebird, eleven wren, eight purple Martin and three wood duck nest boxes are checked weekly during the breeding period. Osprey platforms should go up next year.

A total of one hundred and eighteen species of birds have been seen so far with thirty-three species confirmed nesting. She and other staff members, and even club members, add to the extensive inventories whenever they see a new species. Cathy records sightings of feeding and breeding birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Inventories of shrubs, herbaceous plants and fungi are constantly being updated. She was excited to recently discover devil's walking stick (*Aralia spinosa*) along a path she often travels, and the bicolored variety of birdfoot violet (*Viola pedata*) was found this past spring.

Inventories are passed on as part of the course's association with Audubon International. Aside from being the first golf course in Virginia to be designated an official Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, RTJ has just signed a contract to become the second Audubon Research Center.

Since the course borders Lake Manassas, a drinking water reservoir, water quality of the ponds is monitored twice weekly. Dry ponds, wet ponds and other features collect 92% of the water falling on the course. The other 8% is filtered through 50- to 100-foot-wide buffer zones allowed to grow along the water's edge.

Club members are also happy the buffer zones deter resident Canada geese from invading in large numbers – a common problem on many golf courses.

With a staff of concerned, accessible, well-educated individuals Robert Trent Jones Golf Club has reason to be proud. Educational displays in the Clubhouse and scheduled presentations help members and their guests learn how the organic practices, native plantings and wildlife management come together to create a healthy environment for plants, wildlife and people. Glenn Smickley and Cathy Waterhouse share their management philosophies at the course and with the public and other golf courses. They are encouraged that the professional golf community seems to be changing for the better.

Regina Yurkonis, Conservation Chair

## Lycopodium Flyer Available

Several years ago our chapter prepared a flyer advising people to avoid using *Lycopodiums* (ground cedar, running pine, etc.) for Christmas decorations.

All these plants offered for sale have been collected from wild populations because they are not currently being propagated and grown commercially. In some areas over-collection has led to serious depletion of wild stands.

When used indoors they dry out quickly and become a fire hazard. Tiny, dust-like spores ignite so easily that they were once used in fireworks and for photographic flashes in the early days of photography.

If you'd like a copy of the flyer for yourself or to give to nurseries or garden centers that are selling wreaths and roping made from *Lycopodiums*, write to PWWS at P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 22110, or call Nancy Arrington, 368-8431.

## New Board Members

Kim Hosen is our new education chair, taking over from Claudia Thompson-Deahl. Since Nicky Staunton has been elected state conservation chair, Gina Yurkonis is our new chapter conservation chair. Nancy Herwig has resigned as program chair and that position is still open. Call Helen Walter, 330-9614, if you'd like the job or if you can suggest another member.

## Great Falls Wildflower Walks

Marion Lobstein will lead walks at Great Falls Park on the third Sunday of each month. Future dates are: November 17 and December 15. Meet at the Virginia side visitors center at 10:00 a.m. Call Marion, 703-536-7150, for more information.

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PO Box 83, Manassas, VA 22110



*November Meeting*

*7:30 p.m.*

*Monday, Nov. 18, 1996*

*Bethel Lutheran Church*

*Plantation Ln. & Sudley Rd.*

*Manassas, Va.*

exp. 10/97

Nancy Arrington

P. O. Box 462

Manassas, VA 20108-0462