

WILD NEWS

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

Number 98-04

July-August, 1998

July Meeting

The next general membership meeting on Monday, July 20, 1998 at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas will feature a program by PWW Program Chair Charles Smith on *"Creating Habitat for Birds in Your Backyard - From a Bird's Perspective."* Charles is Assistant Park Manager for Eleanor C. Lawrence Park in Centreville and oversees interpretive programs, publications, and natural resources project management. The business meeting will follow the program. For further information call President Helen Walter at 703-330-9614.

Nominating Committee News

The Nominating Committee will be meeting soon to develop a slate of officers. If you are interested in serving on the Board as an officer or would like to nominate someone for a position, please contact Nancy Arrington at 703-368-8431 or one of the following other members of the committee: Kathy Ehrenberger, Jeanne Endrikat, Helen Rawls, or Gina Yurkonis. Officers serve a two-year term, November 1998-October 2000 with the formal election to be held at the annual picnic meeting on September 27.

Nancy Herwig to be Honored

Former PWWS Education Chair Nancy Herwig will be honored by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on Monday, July 13 for her 18 years of service as a naturalist, camp administrator and environmental education manager on the Reston Association staff. As Supervisor Bob Dix stated at a recent Board meeting, Nancy Herwig, dubbed "Nature Nancy" by her appreciative campers, has an "infectious enthusiasm for life" and her "great appreciation of nature [has] influenced the lives of thousands of Restonians."

Come to the meeting at the Fairfax County Government Center at 9:30 a.m. on the 13th to see the presentation. Call Nancy Vehrs at 324-2351 for more info.



From the President - Helen Walter

OK people, here's your food tip for the summer. The Audubon Society's magazine had a "Guide to Seafood" chart, which ranks seafood by population status plus catch and habitat concerns. Worst choices are shark, swordfish, orange roughie, grouper, cod, haddock, pollack, monkfish, scallops, and shrimp. SHRIMP!! My favorite! But 95% of the shrimp in our stores and restaurants come from fish farms in third world countries that raise shrimp in ponds until those ponds become too degraded to support life. Then the ponds are abandoned and they start another. Best choices are striped bass, crabs, squid (what Rob calls "chitlins of the sea"), mackerel, bluefish, and farm raised fish like catfish, trout, and tilapia. Or you can become a vegetarian. Manassas has a wonderful farmers' market on Thursday and Saturday mornings, and white eggplant grilled on applewood chips is as good as it gets. Meanwhile, I hope at least a few of you have given up Colombian coffee and are seeking out Mexican.

Closer to home, we have a multitude of issues confronting our county. Probably the most important is the rural crescent plan, which might give us a chance to catch up on building the schools and infrastructure made necessary by uncontrolled development, while preserving some of the most beautiful country anywhere. Tied to this issue is the Western Transportation Corridor, AKA Road for Developers, AKA Road to Nowhere, which seems to have been shot down for now, but still bears watching. Then there's the proposed

riverfront parkway, which would link the peninsulas along the Potomac with what would have to be an extremely expensive set of bridges. How can a county that balks at passing school bonds justify that?

Now for some brighter news. We have secured the new headquarters of the Friends of Bull Run for our annual meeting and picnic at 1:00 on Sunday, September 27. This is located on the road to Beverly Mill at the base of Bull Run Mountain. With help from an army of boy scouts, they have transformed the abandoned logging roads into a beautiful network of trails that we can explore after we feed ourselves and conduct our business. Details to follow.

Helen

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Education Chair: Kim Hosen

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Membership Chair: Nancy Vehrs

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Editor: Nancy Vehrs, 703-368-2898

Artwork by Nicky Staunton.

Deadline for the Sept-Oct issue is Sept. 1, 1998. Mail information to Nancy Vehrs at 8318 Highland St., Manassas, VA 20110-3671 or e-mail to nvehrs@ibm.net.

Welcome New Members

PWWS extends a warm welcome to the following members who joined in 1998:

Kathleen Allen, Manassas
Marcy Bartlett, Centreville
Peggy Busick, Lake Ridge
Barbara Cook, Columbia, MD
Jill Crispino, Manassas
Karen Fitzgerald, Manassas
Gary Forehand, Manassas Park
Linda Ganela, Woodbridge
Margaret Holbrook, Nokesville
Renee Holiday, Manassas
Edward Jenkins, Springfield
David Johnson, Fredericksburg
Paul Kovenock, Arlington
Blythe Merritt, Manassas
June Najjum, Woodbridge
Mary Ann Nead, Manassas
Nancy Protheroe, Woodbridge
John C. Smith, Spotsylvania
Mary Stokely, Manassas
Kathy Taber, Manassas
Helen Thornton, Mason Neck
Linda Walker, Bristow
Karen Waltman, Centreville



Battlefield Walk

PWWS Vice-President Martha Slover will lead a free wildflower walk on Saturday, July 18 at 9 a.m. at the Manassas National Battlefield Park. Meet at the Deep Cut Parking Lot. For directions, call Martha at 703-331-0302.

Native Plant Seminar in August

The Irvine Natural Science Center's 7th Annual Native Plant Seminar and Native Plant Sale will take place on Saturday, August 29, 1998 in Stevenson, Maryland near Baltimore. The seminar is designed for the amateur and professional gardener, landscape designer, forester, horticulturalist, nurseryman, and others interested in native vegetation, sustainable practices, water conservation, and minimizing the use of chemical.

Speakers and topics are FM Mooberry, founder of Millersville University Native Plant Conference, on *Little Known and Seldom Grown Native Plants*; Kim Hawks, owner of Niche Gardens in Chapel Hill, NC, on *Finding a Niche for Natives in Extremes . . . From Bogs to Bone-Dry*; and Claire Sawyers, director of the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College, PA, on *Native Groundcovers and Mosses in Landscaping*.

Registration is \$50. For further information ask Nancy Vehrs for a copy of the brochure or call 410-484-2413, <http://www.bcpl.net/~irvine/irvine.html>.

Plant Sale Thank You

Thanks go to all the volunteers who contributed to the success of the Plant Sale in May. We raised nearly \$2000.

September Picnic Meeting

The annual PWWS meeting, election of officers, and picnic will be held on Sunday, September 27 at 1:00 p.m. at Bull Run Mountain. Further information, including directions, will be announced in a special mailing 30 days prior to the meeting. Watch your mailbox.

August Board Meeting

The PWWS Board will meet on Monday, August 17, 1998 at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas. Plans for the annual meeting will be a main topic. All members are welcome. Call President Helen Walter at 703-330-9614 for more information.

Calling All Photographers

The VNPS 1998 Photo Contest entries may be submitted now. Slides or prints (up to 8 x 10") may be submitted of your favorite native plants - especially Twinleaf, the 1999 Wildflower of the Year. Questions? Call Nicky Staunton at 703-368-9803.

Wildflower Memories

Summertime in Virginia! Those, hot, muggy days and that dusty red clay just beg for a passing thunderstorm. Somehow as children we didn't mind the heat and humidity so much and natural areas like the tree-lined dirt path along Flat Branch offered a respite from the hot summer sun. But beware the pervasive poison ivy!

The nearby fields that were later to become part of Ben Lomond Park had alternate dusty or muddy paths that turned our white sneakers orange from the Virginia clay. Somehow that inhospitable soil managed to support some lovely wildflowers, some native and some alien. We didn't know natives from aliens; they were all just wildflowers to us! As children we'd make lovely bouquets for our mothers, complete with such favorites as Queen Anne's Lace, chicory, black-eyed Susans, viper's bugloss, ox-eye daisies, tickseed sunflowers, and goldenrod. Did we think of those bouquets as peace offerings to atone for our dirty shoes after our hours of freedom out in nature's garden?

-Nancy Vehrs

VNPS Annual Meeting

The Potowmack Chapter will host this year's VNPS Annual Meeting the weekend of September 18-20. Lots of great field trips and speakers will be featured. Look for the new *Bulletin* for more information.

Last Call - Summer Nearby Nature

Nearby Nature continues with excellent participation from a wide diversity of nature lovers! Sign up early for our exciting Summer Workshops and watch for info on a fall series.

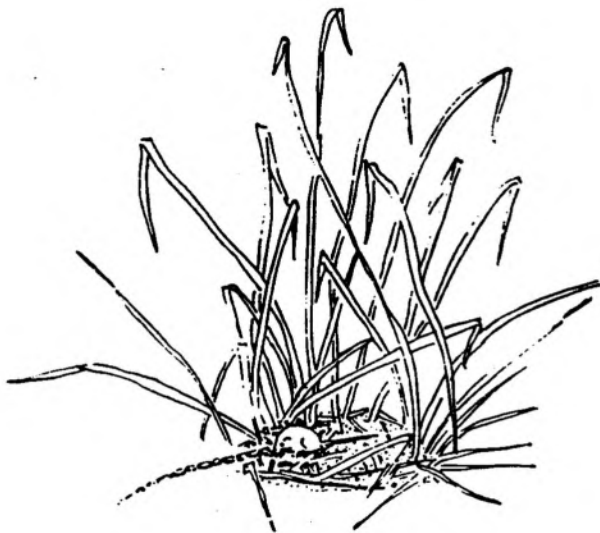
Mushrooms and Other Fungi - July 11, 8 a.m. - Noon, Leesylvania State Park, Dr. David Farr, Instructor. Fungi field guides become more "user friendly" when you know some of the Family characteristics. This workshop introduces these characteristics and provides participants with practice in the field. The diversity of fungi should be very high this year considering the amount of rainfall. This is a wonderful opportunity to discover more about this fascinating and important part of our ecosystem!

Ecological Succession - July 18, 8 a.m. - Noon, Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Dr. Larry Underwood, Instructor. Natural succession is a regular, predictable progression of natural communities. Dr. Underwood will focus on the relationships between changing vegetation and mammal communities. There is more here than meets the eye! We will be able to experience different stages of succession and factors that control this fascinating phenomenon first-hand as we hike through the secluded Occoquan Bay Wildlife Refuge, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's newest refuge.

Grasses of Northern Virginia - July 25, 8 a.m. - Noon, Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Dr. Paul McCawley, Instructor. Grasses are the most economically important and ubiquitous of all flowering plants. You will find that learning to identify grasses is a surprisingly straightforward skill. This workshop will help participants learn to distinguish the six most common tribes of grasses. Join us in a search for different grasses and practice your identification skills!

To register: The fee for PWWS members is \$25/workshop (non-members, \$30). Mail your name, address, phone number and workshop selection(s) to Nature's Wonder World, 2560 Paxton Street, Woodbridge, VA 22192. For further information, call 703-490-0455.

- Kim Hosen
Education Chair



Green Spring Gardens Park Workshops

Fairfax County's Green Spring Gardens Park in Alexandria offers *free* workshops this summer. The following may be of interest to PWWS members:

Tuesday, July 28, 7-8 p.m., "Outstanding Sun-Loving Perennials of Mid-Summer";

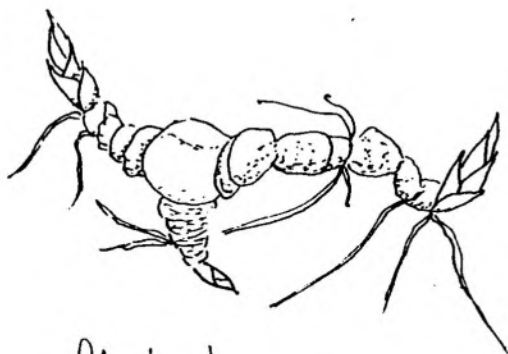
Saturday, August 15, 11-12 noon, "Butterfly Gardening"; and

Tuesday, August 18, 7-8 p.m., "Soothing Shade Loving Perennials for Late Summer."

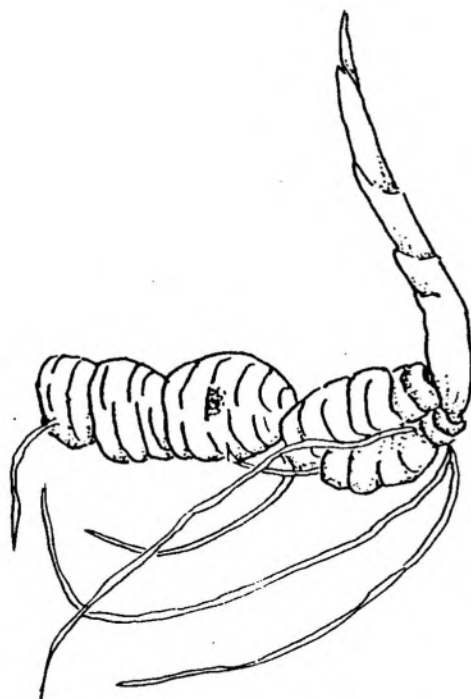
Reservations are required. For more information call 703-642-5173.

Blandy News

As part of its Apprentice Gardener Workshop series, the State Arboretum, Blandy Experimental Farm, is sponsoring a workshop entitled "Shady Woodland Gardens" on Sunday, August 16 from 2-4 p.m. in the Parkfield Learning Center. Cost is \$10 and reservations are recommended. For further information, call 540-837-1758, ext. 21, 10-2 p.m., M-F.



Bloodroot



Trillium grandiflorum

Spring Wildflowers - Underground Storage Structures

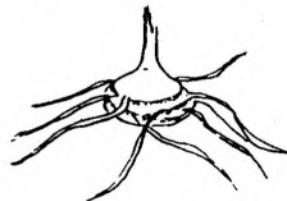
Marion Lobstein
Associate Professor of Biology,
Northern Virginia Community
College, Manassas Campus

The importance of underground storage structures (such as rhizomes, corms, bulbs, and tubers) to the life cycles of the spring wildflowers program cannot be overstated. These structures are all modified underground stems: rhizomes thickened horizontal underground stems, corms swollen underground stems, bulbs underground stems with fleshy leaves, and tubers swollen tips of rhizomes. These specialized underground stems may not be attractive but they play two important roles: (1) storage of energy for next spring's rapid development and (2) asexual reproduction of next year's individual plants.

Most spring-blooming deciduous forest perennials have a low frequency of flowering and seedling establishment compared to annual or biennial species of disturbed ground or meadow areas. In most of these spring perennial species there is a strong dependence on vegetative (asexual) reproduction. Mayapple is an excellent example: 40 percent of the energy of a mayapple colony is invested into underground storage structures compared to

eight percent investment in sexual reproduction. Such asexual reproduction allows the parent plant that is well adapted to its environment to invest most of its resources to continue at that site.

Sexual reproduction allows for genetic variation as well as provides a possible way to colonize new sites away from parent populations. The success of sexual reproduction may be slow and even risky: in many instances germination rates are low for seeds and the seeds may lie dormant for several years, the seedlings may have strict microhabitat requirements for development, and/or it may be many years before a young plant becomes reproductively mature. Vegetative reproduction, however, allows for continued development of an already established population -- a genetically conservative but safe reproductive strategy. Even though the deciduous forest has variations of temperature, light intensity, moisture, and nutrient-availability from season to season, this ecosystem still has predictable cycles on which established populations can rely compared to the greater variability of disturbed habitats where plants rely on sexual reproduction.



Jack-in-the-pulpit

New Occoquan Bay Wildlife Refuge

The Occoquan Bay Wildlife Refuge, the former Harry Diamond Research Laboratory, was officially transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services from the U.S. Army on Friday, June 26 at 4:15 p.m. There will be limited access until further studies are completed and more staff is hired.

The new staff biologist, Joe Witt, has come on board from Oregon where he was responsible for resources management in an area which included the Spotted Owl territory. He is anxious to work with everyone to develop the Refuge into an even greater experience for those who visit.

The unique upland meadows are to be enhanced emphasizing their historic eastern prairie habitat. Part of the goal is to enhance a favorable habitat for Henslow sparrow, boblink, quail and other grassland birds. The upland meadows are one of the unique features of the new Refuge.

Joe has been working with Elaine and Nicky to learn what is there in the way of plants. He is doing the same with all the other groups who have other interests on the property.

Elaine and Nicky will lead a walk at the new Refuge in September at the VNPS Annual Meeting. Sign up early if you want to see the new Refuge and all its fall flowers and warm weather grass meadows.

-Elaine Haug and Nicky Staunton

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Please send address changes/corrections to PWWS, Attn. Membership Chair.

July Meeting: Monday, July 20, 1998, Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas