

# WILD NEWS

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

Number 99-04

July-August, 1999

## MEETING MONDAY, JULY 19

"Gardening with Ferns" is the much-anticipated topic of the program for the July meeting. The speaker, Joan Feely, is curator for the native plant collection at the National Arboretum. She will discuss the natural history of native ferns and practical aspects of planning and installing ferns in gardens.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. on July 19, the third Monday of the month, at Bethel Lutheran Church at the intersection of Plantation Lane and Sudley Road in Manassas. For further information about the meeting, call President Gina Yurkonis at 540-347-1027 or Vice-President Nancy Arrington at 703-368-8431.

## NATIVE PLANT SEMINAR AND SALE

The eighth annual Irvine Natural Science Center's native plant seminar and plant sale will be held on Saturday, August 28 in Stevenson, Maryland, phone 410-484-2413, website: [explorenature.org](http://explorenature.org). Cost is \$50. Seminar registration and an early bird plant sale for registrants begins at 8 a.m. The plant sale is open to the public from 1-3 p.m.

Seminar speakers and topics are Richard E. Bir on "Growing and Propagating Showy Native Plants," Susan E. Salmons on "Eliminating Invasive Exotics from the Native Landscape," and Edgar David on "Woodland Gardens and Sustainable Landscapes."

Copies of the registration form will be available at the July meeting.

## THANKS TO PLANT SALE VOLUNTEERS

Chapter members furnished around 1100 plants for this year's sale, our seventeenth. We took in \$2885, which included \$280 for memberships.

The following members helped by furnishing plants, transporting plants to the sale, setting up, working during the sale, and in many other small and large ways: Ken & Fran Bass, Tiana & Bob Camfiord, Marie & Paul Davis, Kathy & Don Ehrenberger, Jeanne & Hans Endrikat, Volker Imschweiler, Tracy Johnson, Joann Krumviede, Mary Lekander, Dawn Lewis, Kim Lagen, Frances Louer, Wendy Pierce, Pat Portier, Martha Slover, Charles Smith, Linda & Leo Stoltz, Carol Thompson, Nancy Vehrs, Cathy Waterhouse, and Gina Yurkonis. It's really wonderful to have such a loyal group of volunteers to help every year - thanks to everyone!

If you have any ideas or suggestions for improving next year's sale, please call me at 703-368-8431.

*-Nancy Arrington  
Plant Sale Chairman*

## CALL FOR POTS

Before you discard those plastic pots left over from your spring plantings, bring them to any meeting or call Nancy Arrington at 703-368-8431. PWWS needs them for next year's plant sale. Small 4" pots are especially needed, but donations of pots one-gallon size or smaller are most welcome.



## From the President - Gina Yurkonis

I'm not going to write about the heat nor the drought because it doesn't do any good.

Here's a good thing: I went into Shemin's (wholesale nursery in Gainesville) last week for a few shrubs I knew my wonderful clients would water faithfully and wandered around to look at the perennials. Guess what I saw looking back at me - purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)! Yuck. Talk about your invasive aliens! VNPS has been educating people on the dangers of purple loosestrife for years and there it was - for sale to innocent landscapers to put in people's yards and let it sneak it's way into our beautiful wetlands. Well, fortunately, the people working there are very nice and when I went in to talk to them, calling them "Environment-destroying-wetlands-ruining-baby-duck-killers," they took it really well. (Seriously, they knew I was exaggerating but still making a point.) One of the salespeople said they had 75 pots of it from a cancelled job. After a little more info and less name-calling, they were deciding whether to spray them with Round-up or burn them. Yay Shemin's! They might suggest cardinal flower next time? I guess it just goes to show, most people are open to doing good for the environment and native plants; they just haven't heard yet.

A trip to visit family in Pennsylvania takes us past a huge and lovely nursery outside Harrisburg. Their roadside display this July was a sea of - you guessed it - purple loosestrife. A few miles north, we crossed the Susquehanna and there I saw it again - blooming in the river on the little islands exposed by the drought. No longer a pretty nursery plant, it had spread into the river and where does that river lead? The Chesapeake Bay.

Now, I won't say I'm taking the summer off to roam the country hollering at nurseries selling invasive aliens. I just wanted to tell you,

sometimes you can mention it to them and they really do want to hear.

-Gina

## Great Falls Walks

**August 8:** Cris Fleming, botany chair for the Potowmack Chapter, will lead a walk at Great Falls, Maryland from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Call Cris at 301-657-9289 or Shirley Gay at 703-920-1913 for reservations and directions.

**August 17 and September 19:** Marion Lobstein will resume her 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. walks on the third Sundays of the month at Great Falls, Virginia. Call her at 703-536-7150 for reservations.

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Deadline for the September-October issue is **September 1, 1999**. Mail information to Nancy Vehrs at 8318 Highland St., Manassas, VA 20110-3671 or e-mail to [mvehrs@ibm.net](mailto:mvehrs@ibm.net).

## Hedgerow Habitat Project

The Hedgerow Habitat Project is a public demonstration hedgerow enhancement and restoration project of the Community Lutheran Church's Earthkeeping Ministry located in Sterling. Building on an existing red cedar hedgerow, church members and many other Sterling area volunteers have established a vernal pond area, a meadow, and vegetated drainage swale. The hedgerow has been expanded with the addition of numerous species of native shrubs and small trees. Bird and bat houses invite these animals to the church property. Foxes, groundhogs, squirrels, and cottontails call the habitat home as do dozens of bird and butterfly species.

Kevin Noon, an Eagle Scout candidate, continues diversification of the hedgerow and its environs by wanting to add a great variety of native plants that will provide pollen and nectar for native bees, flies, wasps, butterflies and moths, and hummingbirds. Kevin and his team are fabricating native bee nest bundles from last year's monarda, aster, and goldenrod stems. He will also add bee houses for orchard bees. Kevin is collaborating with Craig Tufts of the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program in this effort. You can assist Kevin's project by donating examples of native meadow perennials. Solidago, aster, eupatorium, veronica, and many others would be welcomed. Some monarda, solidago, and aster have already found a home in the meadow. These new food supplies for the pollinators in the Hedgerow Habitat will not only assure their part in the habitat's community; they will also support the community food bank garden, the Giving Garden, which the church also maintains on the property.

Kevin would appreciate plant donations in the week prior to his scheduled workday of August 28; his family can arrange plant pickups if necessary. To donate plants for this project, call him at 703-435-5545, e-mail: [tvnoon@aol.com](mailto:tvnoon@aol.com).

## Crow's Nest Camp Out and Field Meeting July 16-18

Crow's Nest in Stafford County is the site for a unique Camp Out and Field Meeting scheduled for July 16, 17, and 18. Rod Simmons, VNPS Registry Chair for Potowmack Chapter (also president of the Maryland Native Plant Society), has been doing field work at Crow's Nest in Stafford County and has proposed a joint Native Plant Society field meeting at this unique 5,000 acre peninsula formed by the confluence of the Potomac Creek and Accokeek Creek, about a half mile upstream of the Potomac River. It has deep forested ravines and some of the largest trees in Virginia: old growth red oak, tulip poplar, white ash, hickory, and beech. Glade fern is found there, along with two active bald eagle nests and a 650-nest heron rookery. It is extremely important as nesting habitat for neo-tropical migratory birds known as interior forest dwelling species.

The Trust for Public Land is negotiating to purchase the land with the expectation that the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service will acquire it from them to add to the Potomac River National Wildlife Refuge Complex and to be known as Accokeek National Wildlife Refuge. Historically, it is believed to be the place where Pocahontas was kidnapped in the 1600s. The name "Crow's Nest" comes from the early 1800s after a black three-masted schooner kept there, called "Crow."

The weekend camp-out will include visits to areas of the peninsula and canoe trips. This is not yet public land, so special arrangements have been made for the two-day field trip by the Maryland and Virginia Native Plant Societies. If you would like to participate, please contact Rod Simmons (e-mail: [rod77@juno.com](mailto:rod77@juno.com)). If you have no e-mail, please call Nicky Staunton (703-368-9803) to obtain directions.

-Nicky Staunton

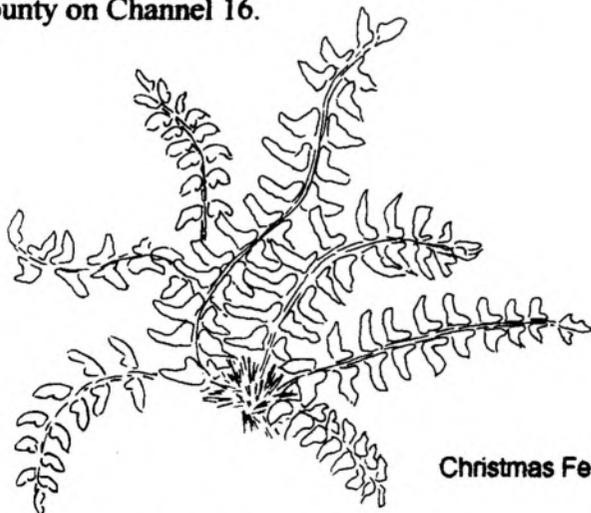


## New VNPS T-Shirts

New VNPS T-shirts are now available for ordering in both long (black) and short-sleeve (yellow) styles. View sample shirts at the July meeting and place your order then. Call Charles Smith at 703-361-5125 or e-mail [chrllsmith@juno.com](mailto:chrllsmith@juno.com) for further info.

## Lorton Prison Property Plans

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to decide the fate of the Lorton prison property at a public hearing scheduled for 4 p.m. on Monday, July 26 at the Government Center. The Board will be considering an amendment to the County's Comprehensive Plan. Copies of the staff report are available from the Planning Division at 703-324-1210. To sign up to speak at the hearing, call the Clerk's Office at 703-324-3151 and ask to sign up for Out-of-Turn Plan Amendment S99-CW-1CP - Laurel Hill. All Board meetings are cablecast live in Fairfax County on Channel 16.



Christmas Fern

## Fall Wildflower ID Course

Marion Lobstein will teach a fall wildflower identification course for the Fairfax Audubon Society in September. For information about this brief course, call Penny Ittner at 703-858-3818.

## New Wildflower Garden for Nature Conservancy Office

The Nature Conservancy has moved to a new home in the Ballston area of Arlington and integral to the building construction is a native plants garden planned by Conservancy botanist Larry Morse. Larry had to do a bit of convincing last fall with the landscaping people – yes, we do want to plant these sad looking perennials and not a bunch of evergreens and tulip and daffodil bulbs.

The Conservancy's native plant garden features about one hundred of the 16,000 species of flowering plants, ferns, and conifers that are native to the United States. While some of these plants are common in natural habitats in the Washington, D.C., area, dozens more have been chosen from other climatically similar parts of our country, particularly the southern Appalachians, the Midwestern prairies, and the Pacific Northwest.

The garden is progressing nicely, still not filled in, but that will come as years go by. The spring was lovely with Virginia bluebells, tall and short phlox, redbuds, mountain andromeda, and river birches. Then came the magnolia, azaleas, rhododendrons, Allegheny serviceberries, and leucothoe. Now the wildflower meadows are in full bloom. Black-eyed Susans, Maryland's state flower, is a featured species. Each season has its share of perennials, with a few annuals to fill in current blank spaces.

If you are in the Ballston area, set aside time to wander through this lovely garden. The Conservancy is at 4245 North Fairfax Drive, just off Rt. 66 and across from the Ballston Metro entrance. Be sure to check out the building lobby—lovely nature photographs and a life-size bronze sculpture of whooping cranes by Maryland sculptor Walt Matia. The Conservancy receptionist (past the elevators) has a guide for the garden.

-Diane Flaherty

## MONARDA - BEEBALM OR OSWEGO TEA

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

In our area there are four species in the genus *Monarda* in the Lamiaceae or mint family. Many aromatic perennial species of this genus have had a long and interesting history of medicinal and culinary uses. The four species in our area are *M. didymis* (beebalm, Oswego tea, Indian flaming flower, Indian's plume), *M. fistulosa* (wild bergamot), *M. clinopodium* (basil balm), and *M. punctata* (horsemint). These species bloom from late June through September and range from southern Canada or New England south to Georgia and west to Missouri. *M. didymis* is found in moister habitats than the other three species which can be found in drier woods, thickets, and along roadsides.

The genus name of *Monarda* is in honor of Nicolas Monardis, a Spanish botanist and physician who in the late 1500's published a book on Indian uses of American plants. The species names of *didyma* refers to the paired stamens of the flowers of this species, *fistulosa* means tubular referring to the shape of the flowers, *clinopodium* refers to the resemblance to the bracts of *clinopodium* (*Pycnanthemum incanum*), and *punctata* refers to dots on the corolla of the flower of this species. Common names of these four species vary and the name Oswego tea may apply to several of the species.

The tubular nature of both the 5-toothed calyx and the colorful corolla with a longer upper lip and a shorter 3-lobed lower lip is common to the genus. The size of the flowers vary from 1-1½ for *M. fistulosa*, *M. clinopodium*, and *M. punctata* to 1½-2 inches for *M. didymis*. The color of the flowers that are found in terminal or axillary

clusters subtended by a whorl of colored bract (modified leaves) in species varies from white-yellowish pink for *M. clinopodium* to yellowish with purple spots for *M. punctata* to magenta-purple for *M. fistulosa* to red for *M. didyma*. All species have only two functional stamens. Pollination is by bees, butterflies, hawk moths, and ruby-throated hummingbirds (especially for *M. didymis*). Bees seem to really be attracted to members of this genus, thus the name bee balm. (I have seen bees that appear intoxicated from visiting flowers of *M. clinopodium*. I have not been able to find an explanation for this phenomenon.) The fruit that forms is from the dried tubular calyx each of which contain four brown nutlets or seeds which are 1/16 inch large.

The square stems of all these species vary from 2-6 feet tall and from smooth to hairy. All have opposite, ovate scalloped leaves that vary in texture and color. Most have horizontal stems by which new plants may form asexually.

These and other species of *Monarda* are a source of the drug thymol, which has antibacterial, antifungal, and anthelmintic (antiparasitic worm) properties. American Indians used preparations of species of this genus to treat bronchial and pulmonary problems, digestive system disorders, skin problems, headaches, fevers, colds, sore throats, heart trouble, measles, nosebleeds, and intestinal worms. Many of these preparations were in the form of a very aromatic tea often called "Oswego tea," which is from an Indian term for flaming flower referring to the red color of *M. didyma*, although other species were used to make the tea and other preparations. In addition, various tribes used this group of plants to flavor meat and beans. American colonists used this species primarily as a pleasant-tasting tea that was especially popular after the Boston Tea Party. This genus was also used by herbalist to treat skin problems, headaches, and digestive problems. Leaves and flowers of this genus have also been used to

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 flavor jellies and salads. In addition to American uses of the genus, *M. didyma* was introduced into England in 1744 for its herbal properties. That species and *M. fistulosa* were grown in many old fashioned gardens.

This summer enjoy the beauty and aromatic properties of members of this very handsome genus. None of these species are that common in our area, but it is time well spent to find them.

*(Editor's note: Monarda grows well in garden settings and is always available at the chapter's plant sale in May.)*

## VNPS 1999 Raffle

The Illustrated Companion to Gleason & Cronquist's Manual of the Vascular Plants of Northeastern U. S. and Adjacent Canada (value of \$200) will be given to the winner of the winning raffle ticket at the VNPS Annual Meeting in September in Norfolk, Virginia. A donation of \$2/ticket or \$10 for 12 tickets, gives you a chance to win this definitive set of botanical books.

Contact a member of your chapter's Board of Directors to make your donation and receive your raffle ticket. Tickets will also be available at the July meeting.

## Member Honored

PWWS member Jim Waggener was recently recognized at a luncheon by Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources John Paul Woodley, Jr. One of eight recipients of the 1999 Virginia Environmental Stewardship Awards, Jim won in the adult division for his efforts toward the preservation of the U.S. Army Harry Diamond Laboratory Facility in Woodbridge as a natural area. This biologically rich and diverse former army facility has since been incorporated into the Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Congratulations, Jim!

## Picnic Meeting

The PWWS Board has not yet set the date for the chapter's annual picnic meeting. Watch for a separate notification to be sent to all members.

## August 16 Board Meeting

The PWWS Board will meet on August 16; all members are welcome. Call President Gina Yurkonis at 540-347-1027 or Vice-President Nancy Arrington at 703-368-8431 for further information.

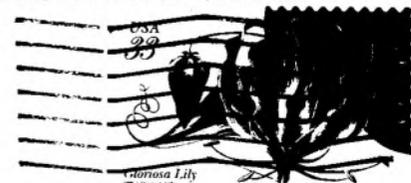
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Maidenhair Fern



exp. 10/99



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**July Meeting: 7:30 p.m., Monday, July 19, Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas**  
**"Gardening with Ferns"**