

# WILD NEWS

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

Number 00-02

March-April 2000

## MARCH 20 MEETING

PWWS is pleased to present garden designer, award-winning author, photographer, naturalist, and teacher **C. Colston Burrell** as the speaker for the meeting on Monday, March 20, at 7 p.m. at **Bull Run Regional Library in Manassas**. He will present a program entitled *Gardening with Native Plants*. Please note the early starting time and the change in location.

Burrell recently moved from Minnesota to the Blue Ridge Mountains near Charlottesville, Virginia. An avid and lifelong gardener, he is currently designing and planting a 10-acre garden of natives and the best plants of the global garden. He is principal of Native Landscape Design and Restoration, a design firm that specializes in blending nature and culture through artistic design. His latest book, *Perennials for Today's Gardens*, will be published by Meredith Books this month. He has authored other gardening books and is a frequent contributor to national garden magazines.

**Directions to meeting:** From Rt. 66: Exit 47A, onto Route 234 south (Sudley Road). Go one mile and turn right at the fourth traffic light onto Sudley Manor Drive (There is a huge lighted sign for Bull Run Plaza at this intersection across from Hollywood Video and Taco Bell). \*Turn right at the second traffic light onto Ashton Avenue; Bull Run Regional Library is .2 miles down Ashton on the right, 8051 Ashton Avenue.

**From City of Manassas:** Go north on Rt. 234 toward Rt. 66 and turn left onto Sudley Manor Drive (Bull Run Plaza with huge sign). Follow above \*directions. For further information about the meeting, call President Gina Yurkonis at 540-347-1027 or Vice-President Nancy Arrington at 703-368-8431.

## PLANT SALE MAY 13

This year's plant sale will be on the usual Saturday before Mother's Day, May 13, 9 a.m. to noon at Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas.

We've made some changes this year that will make our work easier! Gina Yurkonis has arranged with Karen Rexrode at Windy Hill Plant Farm to use her equipment to print out labels for species that we expect at least 10 of - we'll hand write labels for species of fewer than 10. Joann Krumviede has volunteered to type the labels. We're also going to a pricing system using colored plastic labels (i.e. \$2 will be a red label, \$3 blue, etc.) that will be collected at checkout and reused next year. We plan to have the labels ready at the March meeting.

Plants should be potted up two weeks before the sale and brought to the church by 7:30 a.m. on the day of the sale. We always need more ferns, shrubs, and shade plants for the sale.

If you need the blank white labels we've used in the past, call Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898. Call me at 703-368-8431 for the new labels, for horticulture or pricing guidance, for pots, or to help out before or during the sale.

- Nancy Arrington  
Plant Sale Chairman

## NEW GARDENS ON TOUR

Mark your calendar now for the April 30 garden tours. The Woodbridge woodland gardens of Gail Reynolds and Carol Thompson will be open, as will another *new* garden. Tour brochures with directions will be mailed to members next month.

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## From the President - Gina Yurkonis

I guess the groundhog was wrong. Looks like an early spring to me. Along with the warm sunshine comes the flurry of gardening activity. As anyone who has lived in Northern Virginia more than a year knows, the heat comes quickly and doesn't quit till October. But, oh, the joys in the meantime: finding the best source of manure, spreading rich, black compost, baby peas!, imagining what the yard will look like through the summer and into fall, browsing the nurseries, having dirty nails for weeks, the Garden Tours!

I hope we'll all be able to make the rounds of the PWWS gardens on tour. We're trying something new this year - only one day, Sunday, April 30 for the tours. It's been hard to get enough volunteers for two days, so if you want two days next year - volunteer. All you need is a welcoming smile and sometimes, an umbrella.

Two short weeks after the tours is our annual plant sale. Potting things up now, while they're small, is easier and gives a nicer plant in the pot. If you don't have plants to donate, you might consider helping with some of the many other fun jobs before or during the sale. Any board member will set you up.

I'm tickled pink to have Cole Burrell as our speaker for March. Cole is a true professional and inspired landscape designer. I learned more in a two-hour seminar from him than in some college courses I've had. If you have any friends you'd like to introduce to native plant landscaping, definitely bring them along. Just note the slight change in time and place for the meeting. We'll have t-shirts and mugs available to complete your spring "look." See you there!

- Gina

## New FHA Guidebook on Native Plants

The Federal Highway Administration is now providing a handbook on the use of native plants along highways in a continuing effort to protect the environment and help control the introduction of invasive species of plants. *Roadside Use of Native Plants* provides state-by-state references on the use of native plants and how they can be used to benefit highway projects by saving time and money.

This 655-page handbook includes vegetation maps as well as lists of native trees, shrubs, vines, grasses and other plants particular to each state. In addition, the handbook lists environmental, academic, scientific, and other organizations in each state.

Send requests for copies to Fred Bank, Federal Highway Administration HEPN-30, Room 3240, 400 7th Street S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590 or e-mail [Bonnie.Harper-Lore@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:Bonnie.Harper-Lore@fhwa.dot.gov).

Visit the DOT Public Affairs Web Site at <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/fhwa0500.htm>.

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**President:** Gina Yurkonis, 540-347-1027

e-mail: [perennium@tom-cc.com](mailto:perennium@tom-cc.com)

**Vice President:** Nancy Arrington, 703-368-8431

e-mail: [nancy\\_narrington@hotmail.com](mailto:nancy_narrington@hotmail.com)

**Secretary:** Diane Flaherty, 703-330-9862

**Treasurer:** Marie Davis, 703-361-1626

**Botany Chair:** Marion Lobstein, 703-56-7150

**Conservation Chair:** Helen Walter, 703-330-9614

**Education Chair:** Kim Hosen, 703-491-8406

**Hospitality Chair:** Joann Krumviede, 703-938-4378

**Membership Chair:** Nancy Vehrs, 703-368-2898

**Program Chair:** Charles Smith, 703-361-5125

**Propagation/Plant Sale Chair:** Nancy Arrington, 703-368-8431

**Registry Site Chair:** Elaine Haug, 703-670-2347

**Editor:** Nancy Vehrs, 703-368-2898

**Original Artwork** by Nicky Staunton, 703-368-9803

Deadline for the May-June issue is April 23, 2000. Mail information to Nancy Vehrs at 8318 Highland St., Manassas, VA 20110-3671 or e-mail to [nvehrs@attglobal.net](mailto:nvehrs@attglobal.net).

## Free Spring Walks

The Potowmack Chapter of the VNPS is sponsoring the following free walks this spring:

Sunday, April 2, 1 p.m.: Botanist Cris Fleming will lead a walk to search for early spring wildflowers at Turkey Run Park off the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Participation is limited to 16 and registration is required. Call Cris at 301-657-9289 to register.

Sunday, April 16, 2:30-4:30 p.m.: Dr. Stanwyn Shetler, VNPS State Botany Chair and botanist emeritus of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History will lead a walk at Balls Bluff Regional Park to see a variety of spring ephemerals. Space is limited. Call 703-920-1913 or 703-534-8179 to register.

Saturday, May 6: Join Rod Simmons for a walk at Hemlock Overlook Regional Park in nearby Clifton. Call him at 703-256-7671 for further information.

## Spring Wildflower Symposium at Wintergreen

Friday, May 12 - Sunday, May 14 marks a weekend of guided hikes, lectures, and workshops at the Trillium House at the Wintergreen resort in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The fee is \$95 and does not include accommodations. For further information, call Liz Salas at 804-325-8172, visit the website [www.twmf.org](http://www.twmf.org), or send e-mail to [wtgnf@aol.com](mailto:wtgnf@aol.com).

## Cure Spring Fever at Prince William Forest Park

Suffering from spring fever? Join a Prince William Forest Park naturalist on a hike on Sunday, March 19 from 2-4 p.m., to see the forest waking from its winter nap. Contact the Visitor Center at 703-221-7181 for program reservations.

## Volunteer at the Ben Lomond Rose Garden

As noted in a previous issue of *Wild News*, PWWS has adopted a bed at the Old Rose Garden at the Ben Lomond Manor House in Manassas. The garden officially opens Saturday, March 18, at 10 a.m. for a work session, with work days scheduled on Saturdays throughout the spring at 10 a.m. The very early season gardening duties consist mainly of pruning. Besides providing general maintenance of our bed, we would like to make this area a showcase of lovely native plants that are suitable companions for the roses. Please call Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898 or e-mail [nvehrs@attglobal.net](mailto:nvehrs@attglobal.net) to volunteer your services or ideas.

## New Plants Journal

Members without Internet access who would like to obtain the *Native Plants Journal* mentioned in the Jan-Feb edition of *Wild News* can write to:

Native Plants Journal  
Forest Research Nursery  
University of Idaho  
Moscow, ID 83844-1137

As announced in January, the website is <http://www.its.uidaho.edu/nativeplants/>.

## Marion Lobstein's Walks

Call Marion at 703-536-7150 for reservations for the following walks:

- Great Falls Park, Virginia on Sundays, March 19, April 16, and May 21.
- Balls Bluff, April 16, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- Scouting walk at G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area, tentatively on Thursday, May 4, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Visit her website at [www.mnsinc.com/mblobst](http://www.mnsinc.com/mblobst).



## January Meeting Minutes

President Gina Yurkonis brought the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. For the evening's program, members showed slides from their summer trips, including views of the local plants and flowers. The presenters included:

- Volker Imschweiler - chestnut tree growing project
- Gina Yurkonis - spring trip to Texas
- Helen Walter - NASA shuttle launch, Florida
- Nancy Vehrs and Warren Ryder - trip to Colorado and Wyoming
- Diane Flaherty - trips to Belize and Italy

After a refreshment break, Gina conducted a short business meeting. Nancy Vehrs reminded everyone that PWWS has adopted a bed at the Old Rose Garden on Sudley Manor Drive. The garden has old world, antique roses. Our bed is L-shaped with partial shade. The next work days for the garden will be in March and Nancy will let us know the dates at the next meeting.

Nicky Staunton relayed information on a number of issues and upcoming events:

Tree Count/Identification on January 29, 10-12 noon and February 26, same time. This activity is to establish a baseline for the Virginia Department of Forestry for monitoring the effects of development on the edge of the forest. Contact Nicky at 703-368-9803 or staunton@erols.com.

Visit to Crows Nest, Stafford County on February 12, 10:00 a.m. It is recommended that this property be added to the Mason Neck Wildlife Refuge. Funding needs to be obtained. The visit is to familiarize VNPS members with the unique mesic forest. Contact Nicky to attend.

State Senator John Watkins has introduced a bill (SB-162) to declare purple loosestrife a noxious weed. The bill has passed the Senate Agriculture Committee by unanimous vote and goes on to the House of Delegates.

The next meeting of the Prince William Natural Resources Council is January 26, 7:30 p.m. at Bull Run Unitarian Universalist

Church, corner of Church and Main Streets, Manassas. The program will be on Prince William Forests.

The VNPS annual workshop will be March 11, 9 a.m., University of Richmond Science Building. The program will center on Virginia's wetlands. Members will receive a special mailing the end of January.

VNPS Annual Meeting on June 2-4, Tanglewood Motel, near Roanoke. More information will appear in VNPS March Bulletin.

False Cape State Park Field Trip on March 18. The weekend will be spent exploring the dunes, scrub forest, bogs, and marshes looking for wild edible plants, gathering samples, and preparing them for dinner. Contact Nicky for more information.

Trip to Mt. Cuba, Delaware on May 10. Contact Nicky for more information.

Prince William County Department of Public Works is undertaking several riparian restoration projects. Training will take place March 16 and the project on March 25 and another late in April or early May. Call Susan Debolt, 703-792-6285.

Warren Ryder reported on a bill in Congress regarding transport of garbage for New York into Virginia. Anyone interested in expressing this thoughts on this issue should contact their congressional representative or Rep. Tom Bliley.

Gina stated that the annual garden tour would be in April and anyone interested in volunteering their garden should call Marie Davis at 703-361-1626.

The next membership meeting will be March 20, Manassas City Hall. Cole Burrell will be the speaker. *[Ed. Note: This was subsequently changed to Bull Run Regional Library.]*

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

### Attendees:

Marie Davis	Warren Ryder	Carol Thompson
Nancy Vehrs	Gina Yurkonis	Charlotte Cochard
Diane Flaherty	Rick Flaherty	Stan Fowler
Joann Krumviede	Helen Winn	Elaine Haug
Jeanne Endrikat	Wendy Pierce	Amy Hamilton
Helen Walter	Valerie Neitzey	Jeanne Fowler
Eve Fillon	Karen Wier	

*-Diane Flaherty, Secretary*

## Backyard Wildlife Habitat Tour

The National Wildlife Federation is sponsoring a tour of six certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat sites on June 10, 2000, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The self-guided tour includes yard and garden habitats with wildlife-friendly landscaping in Reston, Herndon, and Great Falls. The gardens were created with the assistance of area landscape designer John C. Magee, who is known for his ecologically friendly designs. These are among the 25,000 NWF certified habitats throughout the nation. To be certified, a yard must include the four basic habitat elements - food, water, shelter, and places to raise young. Many of the habitats included on the tour incorporate the use of native plants, which support more wildlife than non-natives and at the same time require less fertilizer, water, and pest control.

The cost of \$10 per person goes to support the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat program, designed to provide people with basic guidelines for making their landscapes more hospitable to wildlife. Habitat restoration is critical for wildlife in urban and suburban settings where commercial and residential development encroaches on natural areas.

Each habitat on the tour will be hosted by a NWF representative who will answer questions and help inspire participants to create their own Backyard Wildlife Habitat sites.

Space is limited, please register early. Call 703-790-4434 to register.

## Short Wildflower ID Course

Marion Lobstein will offer a two-part spring wildflower identification course for Green Spring Gardens Park in Alexandria. She will lecture on April 12 and follow up with a field trip to Balls Bluff on April 15. Call 703-642-5173 to register or for further information.

## Spring Nearby Nature Workshops

PWWS continues to support Nearby Nature workshops. Here's some for spring:

### Spring Ephemerals

Join Bill Sipple, wetland ecologist and author, on Sunday, March 26 from 12:30-5 p.m. at Scotts Run to learn more about the identification of vascular plants flowering in the spring. Several habitats will be visited with various species pointed out by the instructor based upon vegetative and flowering characteristics. Participants will key out some plants in small groups. Tips on recognizing major plant groups will be provided. A list of recommended resources is provided with registration confirmation.

### Mountain Stream Ecology

Remember playing in streams as a child, flipping rocks over to see what was hiding there? Join us and learn about the tiny but complex world hidden beneath a stream's rocks. Cliff Fairweather, Audubon Naturalist Society's Virginia Water Quality Programs Coordinator, will lead this exploration of mountain and Piedmont stream inhabitants and food webs at on Sunday, March 19 from noon to 5 p.m. Learn how leaves are turned into kingfishers. Explore the intriguing environment that makes this possible when we visit a pristine stream on Bull Run Mountain, host to a diverse population of aquatic organisms.

For more information, e-mail [kim@natureswonderworld.org](mailto:kim@natureswonderworld.org) or register by sending your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address (if applicable) with \$30 fee per workshop (checks payable to Nature's Wonder World) and mail to: Nature's Wonder World, PO Box 6029, Woodbridge, VA 22195. You will receive a confirmation, directions, and list of recommended supplies.

-Kim Hosen, Education Chair

## Winter Woody Plant ID

January 30th was a day to remember for many reasons . . . Some of us laid low and endured the sleet/snow and rain from another wintry storm; others chose to prepare for the big Superbowl 2000 game. And for a few hardy plant enthusiasts, Nearby Nature held the first section of a workshop on Winter Woody Plant Identification. This workshop with Mr. Bill Sipple, a nationally recognized ecologist with over 20 years experience in this field, offered the opportunity to learn how to recognize trees and shrubs during the winter when no deciduous leaves are present.

During the classroom section of the class, Bill described the many prominent "winter features" of the buds, leaf scars, scales, etc. that can be used to identify trees in the winter. Workshop attendees worked with live specimens Bill had brought along for the classroom and used various handouts, including helpful plant keys and pocket magnifiers (hand lens), to distinguish these new found features. We learned that winter buds of most deciduous trees and shrubs are already sufficiently formed by July or early August and, therefore, a prime feature for identifying winter woody plants. Delving into these rarely noticed features of buds, bundle scars, thorns, spines, pith, and lenticels, attendees were fascinated with how much they can detect on a simple twig. Being able to view these specimens helped prepare the students for the field section of the course.

Meeting at the main entrance to Accotink Bay Refuge at Fort Belvoir on February 13th, attendees for the field section were chilly, but ready to try out their new Winter Woody Plant ID skills. Bill Sipple once again led the class along trails bordering the wetland and associated upland habitats common at the refuge. Along the way the group stopped frequently to identify sycamore, beech, ironwood, northern red oak, and many other species encountered along the way. Shrubs such as highbush blueberry, swamp sweetbells, viburnum, etc. were also identified by their winter buds and characteristics.

It is fascinating to realize that a whole other world of tree and shrub identification exists just beneath the leaves. As we watch the trees and shrubs around us adorn themselves with spring greenery in the next few weeks, keep in mind that recognizing these old friends in their cold weather attire (without leaves) is as simple as taking time to really look at the twigs and buds.

- Patty Dietz

## Dogwood Symposium

The State Arboretum of Virginia will host a day-long symposium Saturday, April 29, 2000, exploring the causes and treatments of dogwood anthracnose, a deadly fungal disease that is threatening Virginia's state tree, the flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*).

The symposium will bring together some of the top researchers to discuss the natural history, culture, and management of *Cornus florida*. In addition, the symposium will investigate cultivars, pests, and diseases of the flowering dogwood.

Dogwood anthracnose has taken a deadly toll on native dogwood populations in Virginia and throughout the eastern part of the country. A recent survey of over 2,000 native dogwoods in the Virginia countryside found all of the sampled trees afflicted by the fungus. One year later, many of those trees had succumbed to the disease.

Invited speakers for the symposium include Dr. Mark Windham, who is involved in dogwood breeding programs at the U. of Tennessee; Dr. Margery Daughtrey, plant pathologist at Cornell University; Dr. Jay Stipes, professor of plant pathology at Virginia Tech; Dr. Scott Redlin, research pathologist with the U. S. Department of Agriculture; and Dr. John Knighten, U. S. Forest Service.

The cost for the symposium is \$75 and includes four lectures, lunch, and a guided walk of the State Arboretum of Virginia's Dogwood Lane. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 540-837-1758, ext. 21.



## HARBINGER-OF-SPRING

**Marion Lobstein**

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

One of the first signs of spring is the appearance of harbinger-of-spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*). This diminutive plant flowers as early as mid February, making it, along with hepatica (*Hepatica americana*) and skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), one of the earliest spring wildflowers to bloom. Its habitat is rich deciduous woods. This perennial member of the carrot family (*Apiaceae*) is not very common in Virginia. According to the third edition of *The Atlas of Virginia Flora*, this species is found only in Loudoun, Fairfax, and Arlington counties in Northern Virginia and the southwest counties of Virginia. These areas of Virginia are the southern-most range of this species, which ranges from New York state to southern Michigan and Minnesota down to Alabama and Arkansas. It is more common in West Virginia and is found in only two counties in Maryland.

Its scientific name *Erigenia*, Greek for early born, refers to the early appearance of this species in spring and *bulbosa*, meaning bulbous, refers to the prominent underground bulb-like storage structure, which is actually a tuber. The



other common name of harbinger-of-spring is "pepper-and-salt," referring to the contrast of the maroon to black stamens against the white petals.

The small flowers, borne in few-flowered umbels with leafy bracts, appear before the leaves in February or early March. The individual flowers, less than 3/8 inch in diameter, have no apparent sepals, five white petals, five maroon to black stamens, and an inferior ovary with a two-parted style. The peduncle or flowering stem is usually from two to four inches and at most nine inches tall. Pollination is probably by insects such as syrphid flies, solitary bees, and other insects that are active in early spring. The fruit, a schizocarp typical of the carrot family, is less than 1/8 inch long and about twice as wide with five prominent ribs on the surface and a two-parted style that persists.

The one to two leaves of each plant are two to three times divided into thirds. The finely-divided and smooth leaves resemble the leaves of sweet cicely (*Osmorhiza* sp.), but are not toothed and much shorter, reaching heights of under six to nine inches, whereas sweet cicely leaves may be up to three feet tall by late spring. As previously mentioned, the leaves of harbinger-of-spring appear after the flowers. The underground storage structure is a well-developed tuber with a fairly shallow root structure.

The only medicinal or other use of this plant this author can find in her reference sources is the practice of the Cherokee Indians' chewing this plant (probably the tuber) for toothache.

Harbinger-of-spring is rare in our Northern Virginia area and is not documented in Prince William County. It can be found in parks such as Great Falls Parks (Virginia and Maryland) and Balls Bluff along the Potomac River. Seeing this lovely plant emerging from underneath beech or other deciduous hardwood leaves in late February or early March is well worth a trip to one of the parks where it is found. It lives up to its name of harbinger-of-spring; once you see it, you know the spectacular diversity of other spring wildflowers will soon follow.

## Bluebell Walk April 16

Virginia bluebells will carpet acres of woods at Bull Run Regional Park in April, welcoming visitors to the annual *Bluebell Walk*, on Sunday, April 16, at 2 p.m. at the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority's 1500-acre park near Centreville, Virginia.

A team of NVRPA naturalists and park rangers will lead small groups along the one-and-a-half-mile Bluebell Trail, one of the area's longest established nature walks. Self-guiding pamphlets will be available that day and throughout *Bluebell Week*, April 16 through April 22.

Bull Run Regional Park claims the largest stand of bluebells on the East Coast. Billowing blossoms cover the low woodland for two weeks or more in mid-April. Bluebells are true symbols of spring. Light and warming, lengthening spring days trigger the plants' biological clocks. The blooms arrive just as the forest trees and shrubs begin to leaf out. The combination of light, new buds, and gentle blossoms attracts and challenges photographers and wildflower enthusiasts.

Adders tongue, rue anemone, toothwort, Dutchman's breeches, and wild violets bloom beside the Virginia bluebells and spring beauties, creating breathtaking views along the meandering stream banks of Bull Run and Cub Run. The

annual flooding and overflow of the streams help spread and nourish the profusion of wildflowers.

For information about the bluebells and walks, call 703-528-5406. Reservations are not required. A park admission fee applies to residents of non-participating counties.

## April Board Meeting

The PWWS Board will hold its important spring meeting on April 17 at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas. For more info, call Gina Yurkonis at 540-347-1027.

## May Membership Meeting

Mark your calendar now for the May 15 meeting, program to be announced in the next edition of *Wild News*.

## Purple Loosestrife Declared Noxious Weed

The Virginia General Assembly recently passed legislation to declare purple loosestrife a noxious weed. Learn more about the bill at the March meeting.

### PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society  
PO Box 83, Manassas, VA 20108-0083



**Nancy Arrington**  
**8388 Briarmont Lane**  
**Manassas, VA 20112**



**March Meeting: 7 p.m., Monday, Mar. 20, Bull Run Regional Library, Manassas**  
**"Gardening with Native Plants"**

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