

WILD NEWS

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

Number 00-03

May-June 2000

MAY 15 MEETING

Artist, botanist, photographer, and VNPS Conservation Chair Nicky Staunton will present "Wildflowers of Prince William County, from Bull Run Mountain to the Potomac River" at the May 15 meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas. The talk will feature slides, many of them new, shot in Prince William of local flora. Come acquaint yourself with the diversity and wealth of our local wildflowers.

For further information about the meeting, call President Gina Yurkonis at 540-347-1027 or Vice-President Nancy Arrington at 703-368-8431.

SHOP PLANT SALE MAY 13

Come join the annual plant sale on Saturday, May 13, 9 a.m. to noon, on the grounds of Bethel Lutheran Church located at the corner of Plantation Lane and Sudley Road (Rt. 234) in Manassas. Be sure to arrive early for the best selection!

Thanks to Karen Rexrode, owner of Windy Hill Plant Farm, who let us use her equipment, and Joann Krumviede, who did the typing, many of the plants will sport professional labels complete with cultivation instructions.

As usual, volunteers are still needed. Call Nancy Arrington at 703-368-8431 to volunteer or just show up at 7:30 a.m. and we'll find a job for you. Anyone providing plants should advise Nancy prior to the sale so she will know what will be offered. Please plan to bring your plants to the church by 7:30 a.m. the day of the sale.

GARDEN TOURS

Beautiful blooms coupled with delightful spring weather greeted participants of this year's garden tours. "I'm enjoying this so much. It's great to have all these people that are really interested," declared Carol Thompson, one of the three gardeners on tour, about her experience. Asked about her garden, Bonnie Fulford replied, "I enjoy it so much; I can't really say I'm working. I'm just playing when I garden. You're not ever really finished and that's okay."

Many thanks to Gail Reynolds, Bonnie, and Carol for sharing their gardens. Thanks also to volunteers Nancy Arrington, Tiana Camford, Marie Davis, Kathy Ehrenberger, Volker Imschweiler, Joann Krumviede, Charles Smith and daughter, Nicky Staunton, Robyn Thoreson, and Gina Yurkonis who all provided support from producing the brochure to baking treats to serving as hosts.

EXTRA GARDEN TOUR

Hospitality Chair Joann Krumviede cordially invites PWWS members to tour her Vienna garden on Sunday, May 9 from noon to 5 p.m. Joann's garden, a certified backyard habitat with the National Wildlife Federation, is set on a large town lot with mature trees. Take Route 66 east to the exit to Nutley Street, following the signs to Vienna. Turn right at the light onto Marshall Road. Follow this 0.6 miles to a left on **Frederick St.** Continue for one and 3/4 blocks to **#910** on the left.



From the President - Gina Yurkonis

I don't know about you, but I could use another April and about a May and a half. Like the spring ephemerals, we gardeners have to wake up early and quickly to get the job done for fear of going dormant in the hot summer months.

We had a major victory in early April when Gov. Gilmore signed the bill officially making purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and its cultivars "noxious weeds." That includes Morden's Pink" and all the falsely named "sterile" cultivars. Nicky Staunton and others fought hard to win this one for the wetlands of Virginia.

I'd like to thank everyone in advance who donated or purchased plants at the plant sale. Also, a welcome to all the new members we gain this time of year. I hope you all find education, inspiration, and long friendships in the group.

We had a lovely spring day for the garden tours and Marie's designs and the homeowners' care showed nicely despite the earlier-than-expected bloom.

I hope everyone can fit the May meeting into their schedules. Nicky is a Native Plant Diva and past president of our chapter. What better time of year to learn about the beauty in the heights and hollers of Prince William County? Come ready to take notes for next years' hikes.

I also hope many members will attend the state annual meeting in Roanoke June 2-4. The field trips and speakers should be terrific.

Well, enjoy the spring flurry of activity and we'll see you at the plant sale.

- Gina

June Board Meeting

The PWWS Board will next meet on June 19 at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. For more info, call Gina Yurkonis at 540-347-1027.

Foray/Field Trip at Crow's Nest

If you're not interesting in attending the plant sale because you're not a gardener, here's another idea. Join field trip leaders Hal Wiggins, Environmental Scientist, and Jessica Strother, VNPS Director-At-Large, on Saturday, May 13, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a trip to Crow's Nest in the Fredericksburg area. Revel in this outstanding example of a pristine, mature mesic forest, portions of which border the Potomac River and associated wetlands and creeks. The property is privately owned and contains old-growth hardwoods and chinquapin oaks endemic to calcareous soils, and an extensive variety of spring ephemerals and mushrooms, many of which are still to be discovered on this property.

Moderately strenuous hiking is involved. Registration/reservations are required; first come, first served. To register, call Jessica Strother at 703-323-5278 or e-mail: sylvatica9@juno.com.

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Deadline for the July-Aug issue is July 1, 2000. Mail information to Nancy Vehrs at 8318 Highland St., Manassas, VA 20110-3671 or e-mail to nvehrs@attglobal.net.

Get ready for Garden Fair!

Visit the State Arboretum at Blandy on Mother's Day weekend, May 13 and 14, 2000, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. both days, to join in the festivities of Garden Fair, one of the largest plant and garden-supply sales on the East Coast. It's two full days of plant sales, exhibits, guided tours, educational events, games for kids, music, and much more.

More than 50 vendors will offer an incredible selection of plants, including herbs, perennials, woody shrubs, berry plants, small trees, water garden plants, and a few surprises! The Foundation of the State Arboretum will also offer an excellent selection of high-quality plants.

Never been to the Arboretum? Take advantage of one of the free guided tours led by Arboretum Curator Dave Carr twice each day during Garden Fair. Love bluebirds? There's a bluebird lecture and tour of the Blandy Bluebird Trail, maintained by the Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society. Water gardening workshops and displays are planned for both days, and garden author and VNPS Board Member Nancy Hugo will offer information on growing plants native to Virginia. On Saturday, a stonemason will demonstrate the art of building a dry-stack stone wall, and the Virginia Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your questions. There's something for everyone!

Organizers have even planned plenty of free children's activities to keep the youngest gardeners entertained, including free seedlings to take home!

Garden Fair is the largest annual fund-raising event sponsored by the Foundation of the State Arboretum. A \$3 per car parking donation is requested.

The State Arboretum is open 365 days a year, dawn to dusk. The Arboretum is on Route 50 in Clarke County, about 10 miles east of Winchester and 20 miles west of Middleburg, in the Northern Shenandoah Valley. For more information, call 540-837-1758, ext. 21.

Plant Sale at Green Spring Gardens Park May 20

Green Spring Gardens Park, a Fairfax County Park in the Alexandria/Annandale area, will hold its annual Spring Plant Sale from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. on Saturday, May 20.

The Friends of Green Spring (FROGS) offer rare and unusual plants suitable for Northern Virginia gardens. Vendors of native plants, perennials, and shrubs join them, providing tempting choices for both the beginner and advanced gardener. The Potowmack Chapter of VNPS will have a large sales booth. Gift shops at the Manor House and Horticulture Center offer practical gardening tools, autographed books, and beautiful gifts. Admission is free. For further information or directions, call the park at 703-642-5173.

In Search Of

In spite of some research, I can't locate the following plants growing naturally in Prince William County or its surroundings:

- *Stipa avenacea*
- *Sedum telephoides*
- *Veratrum viride*
- *Arnica acaulis*
- *Krigia dandelion*

In addition, I'd like to find out if there are naturalized spots of the biennial *Digitalis purpurea* in Virginia. In case you have any information on this, please send snail mail to me at 5654 Neddleton Avenue, Woodbridge, VA 22193. Your postage will be reimbursed.

- Volker Imschweiler

March 20 Meeting Minutes

Expecting a large attendance because of this month's program, the meeting was held in Bull Run Regional Library's community room. As stand-in for President Gina Yurkonis, Charles Smith brought the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Short announcements were given. The annual garden tour will be held only one day this year, Sunday, April 30, and includes three gardens. Brochures will be sent to members in early April or call Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898 to be put on the mailing list.

Preparations are beginning for the plant sale May 13. Empty flowerpots can be given to Nancy Vehrs. Nancy also indicated that plant labels will be used more extensively this year.

The program for the May membership meeting will be either Hal Wiggins from the Army Corps of Engineers speaking on the Crow's Nest property in Stafford or a talk on the construction and maintenance of a bog garden.

Charles introduced C. Colston Burrell, a leading landscape designer and wildflower enthusiast. Burrell is a native Virginian and has recently returned to the state after living for a time in Minnesota. Burrell's presentation included some of the gardens he has developed for clients, but it centered on the garden he created at his Minnesota home. Using two slide projectors simultaneously, Burrell showed before, during, and after shots of his successful efforts turning a barren yard into an award-winning garden. He noted that after a few years, his garden attracted over 170 species of birds, including a long-eared owl, every warbler except the Kentucky warbler, a woodcock, and 23 varieties of butterflies.

Some of the tidbits gleaned from Burrell's talk include:

- Decide if you want a quick garden by shoe-horning plants which requires lots of transplanting or thinning later, or siting plants to give them the opportunity to grow to their full potential.

- Your garden is another room of your house, so plan it to get the most out of it whether as a place to relax, a beautiful backdrop, a source of cut flowers, to screen out nearby houses or noise, or to support the animals that might live there.
- Use cultural objects such as pots, urns, or old farm equipment to create focal points.
- Work compost or leaf mulch into the top layer to give your plants a good start; he does not double-dig. Raised beds are a good way to deal with poor soil.

After the program, refreshments were served. Virginia Native Plant Society T-shirts were on sale as well as books authored by Burrell.

Attendees:

Nancy Vehrs	Warren Ryder	Tom Attanaro
Kathy Ehrenberger	Jennifer Shepard	Denna Brown
Robyn Thoresen	John Fry	Connie Fry
Carrie Blair	Volker Imschweiler	Marie Davis
Sandra Sheriff	Helen Walter	Diane Flaherty
Nancy Conner	Bill Hendrickson	Val Neitzey
Nancy Herwig	Regina Yurkonis	Kyle & Aaron Herwig
Sharon Sepkowski	Karen Waltman	Gerald Waltman
Paul Kovenack	Joann Krumviede	Bob Silaghi
Margaret Silaghi	Wendy O. Pierce	Catherine B. Waterhouse
Kelly Jimenez	Leo Stoltz	Linda Stoltz
Sr. Pat Hagarty	Margaret Mann	Carol Thompson
June Najjum	Martha Slover	Jeanne Fowler
Jeanne Endrikat	Charlotte Cochard	Renee Holiday
Nicky Staunton	Amy Hamilton	Sally Underwood
Charles Smith		

-Diane Flaherty, Secretary

Wildflower Walks & Classes

Marion Lobstein will continue to conduct her third Sunday of the month walks at Great Falls Park in Virginia from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Call Marion at 703-536-7150 for reservations.

She also will offer an all day bus trip to Skyline Drive on Saturday, June 24 for the Smithsonian Associates. Call 202-357-3030 for additional information.

Marion will teach a three-credit-hour field botany course at Blandy, June 26-July 13. Call 540-837-1758, ext. 22 for information or visit www.virginia.edu/~blandy/.

WILD GERANIUM

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

Wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) is a perennial member of the Geraniaceae or geranium family. The rosy pink-purple to white flowers of this plant appear in late April to early May and may bloom into early June. The characteristic palmately notched leaves appear earlier in April. This species of geranium is found in virtually every county of Virginia in woods, along paths and road clearings, in meadows, and in thickets, usually in light shade. The range of this plant is from New England south into Georgia and Tennessee and west into Missouri and Kansas. The genus name of *Geranium* is from the Greek term *geranos* for crane, referring to the beaked appearance of the fruit and *maculatum* refers to the mottled appearance of the leaves. Other common names are alumroot, astringent root, storkbill, cranebill, mountain alum, crowfoot, old man's nightcap, and chocolate flower. Most of these names describe the appearance of the fruit or allude to medicinal uses.

The loose clusters of three or more buds open to reveal colorful flowers of one to one-and-



a-half-inch in diameter. The flowers are made up of five sepals, five petals, ten stamens in two rows, and a pistil with a five-lobed ovary and an elongated style that ends in a five-parted stigma. Bees are the primary pollinators of the scentless flowers. After pollination and fertilization, a fruit with a prominent beak develops with the five parts (carpels) of the ovary separating and curling upward at maturity, snapping seeds up to several feet away.

There are several long-petioled basal leaves that are one to one-and-one-half feet long and a pair of shorter stem leaves. The soft white-haired leaves are deep green with lighter spots. They are deeply clefted or notched in five to seven segments and may be up to five to six inches across. The stem is hairy with the pairs of loose clusters of flowers forming at the top of the stem. Each cluster of buds has a set of leafy bracts at the base. Underground is a prominent rhizome that is orange-brown and knobby and has numerous shallow roots.

There are numerous medicinal uses of wild geranium by American Indians as well as herbalists. As late as the early 1950s this species was listed as a medicinal plant in pharmacognosy (pharmaceutical botany) texts. Many of the uses of this plant were primarily for its stiptic, astringent, and antiseptic qualities due to high levels of tannins in the tissue. The crushed leaves and rhizomes were used as poultices for wounds, piles, and toothache. Extracts also were used to treat canker sores, ulcerated gums, irritated eyes, cholera, dysentery, and diarrhea. Women of some Indian tribes used this species for birth control and it was also used to treat gonorrhea and urinary tract problems. The green leaves were used by some Indians for food.

This spring when you are walking in the woods or driving down country roads, look for this lovely plant. It adds much color to the landscape of late spring.

(Ed. Note: Wild geranium is a wonderful garden plant and is always available at the annual plant sale.)

Ben Lomond Old Rose Garden Festival May 27

Come to the annual Old Rose Garden Festival at Ben Lomond Manor House on Sudley Manor Drive in Manassas on Saturday, May 27. Many natives serve as companion plants to the antique roses in this public garden. PWWS has adopted a bed in the garden, as have many local garden clubs. In addition to being the peak bloom time for the roses, the festival will feature craft sale booths, garden exhibits and plant sales, and food and drink.

In preparation for the festival, work sessions are held every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. If you can volunteer to assist with weeding or would like more information about the festival, please call Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898 or e-mail nvehrs@attglobal.net.

July Membership Meeting

Mark your calendar now for the July 17 meeting, program and location to be announced in the next edition of *Wild News*.

Thompson Threatened

Our G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area (GRT) first Registry site is experiencing more urbanization threats.

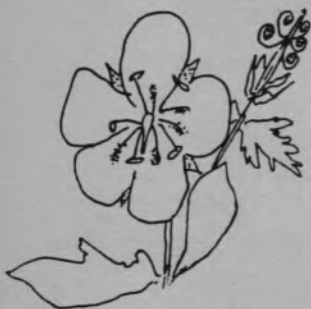
One that is firmly underway is the widening of Route 638 from Parking Lot 6 to Parking Lot 7. We are planning a rescue/relocation of the trillium and 25 other special native plant species in the right of way. This should take place in mid May. If you are interested in participating, please contact me (staunton@erols.com or 703-368-9803).

Also, the owner of the property that was an orchard back when we registered the GRT is up for sale. Roscoe Group representatives are asking the Warren County Planning Commission to approve their development proposal. They want to build an 18-hole golf course, a convention center, plus 60 homes on the 700 acres. There is a good chance it will be denied. One part is requesting damming Goose Creek. If denied, the property will probably be for sale and we would rather see Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries purchase it, expanding the WMA acreage and, thus, protecting the only stand of *Trillium grandiflorum* in Northern Virginia. To be advised of the progress of this situation and to learn what you can do, contact me.

- Nicky Staunton

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


Geranium maculatum

Nancy Arrington
8388 Briarmont Lane
Manassas, VA 20111

exp. 10/00



 **May Meeting: 7:30 p.m., Monday, May 15, Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas**
"Wildflowers of Prince William County, from Bull Run Mountain to the Potomac River"