

WILD NEWS

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

Number 01-01

January-February 2001

JANUARY 15 MEMBER SLIDE SHOW MEETING

Chase away the winter chill by coming to the annual member slide show meeting to see enticing photos of plants and places in warmer times. Members are invited to bring slides of their nature-related travels to share with fellow members. Nicky Staunton plans to present slides from her trip to False Cape and Marion Lobstein has slides of the Florida Everglades. There's room on the program for you, too. Call Program Chair Charles Smith at 703-361-5125 if you can present slides so he may coordinate the entire evening's program.

Following the program there will be a short business meeting. Marion Lobstein will update the group on the *Flora of Virginia* project and we will discuss the proposed development at Cherry Hill (see next column). At the conclusion of the evening's events, we will conduct a drawing for door prizes.

The meeting will be held on the usual third Monday of the month, January 15, at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church, corner of Sudley Road/Rt. 234 and Plantation Lane in Manassas. For further information about the meeting, call President Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898.

NEXT MEETING

Mark your calendar for the March 19, 2001, membership meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. Details of the program will appear in the next newsletter.

CHERRY HILL PUBLIC HEARING JANUARY 16

Tuesday, January 16 at 7 p.m. in the McCoart Building, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors will hold a public hearing on development of Cherry Hill peninsula. Cherry Hill is the *last* parcel of land in Prince William County on the Potomac River that is not totally urban at this point. Legend Corporation has requested rezoning that will totally destroy this land. Deep ravines, marine clay, and sandy soils will be cut and filled after denuding the site of the 50 year old hardwoods. It will be covered with impervious surfaces and rooftops.

Prince William County has not established responsible stewardship of its watershed for the Chesapeake Bay. It has 22 miles of shoreline. Cherry Hill is the *only* natural parcel remaining as a natural watershed for the runoff from across our county - from the Bull Run Mountain eastward. If the rezoning is approved, this sole point of natural watershed will no longer exist. The runoff from impervious surfaces will hit the pristine Powells Creek.

There are many reasons not to approve this rezoning request: unreasonable increase in traffic, demands for new educational facilities when current ones are unmet, unneeded increases in commercial outlets. In the future, the citizens of Prince William County will be financially responsible for what Legend does to the land and the Chesapeake Bay. It will not be Legend, the Norwegian corporation that is behind the plans for Cherry Hill. Do they care about the Bay?

Your elected supervisor will appreciate your communication before the 16th.

-Nicky Staunton



From the President - - Nancy Vehrs

Happy New Year, everyone! What a cold, dry December we've had! Let's hope all that cold wind won't adversely affect our favorite plants too much. A nice blanket of snow would be just the remedy, but not everyone enjoys seeing that fluffy white stuff as much as I do. Maybe you can clip the boughs from your leftover Christmas tree and place them around your plants to offer some protection from winter's harsh weather if the snows don't materialize.

The birds have certainly been actively feeding to warm their bodies. Many species flock to our backyard feeders, which Warren faithfully refills to keep up with our feathered friends' hearty appetites. If no one is feeding, there's usually one of several species of hawks nearby.

I was pleased to see some chickadees feeding on some native helianthus and rudbeckia seedheads recently. We usually let our plants go to seed in the fall and always hope that some birds will take advantage of the food source. Rather than look at bare, or even mulched, soil all winter long, I like to leave the asters, coneflowers, goldenrods, and other assorted plants to linger in their dried state. The seedheads are lovely - some bristly, some fluffy. People will pay top dollar for dried flower arrangements; we just let Mother Nature take care of the arrangements and leave them in their natural state. Only in late winter do I enjoy cutting back all the spent foliage because I want to see each tiny new shoot as it appears.

The environmental community received some great news recently with the President's announcement that nearly 60 million acres of roadless public lands on our nation's national forests will be protected from road-building and logging under a new federal policy. Hooray! If you would like to be apprised of threats to the nation's wildlands on a timely basis, you can subscribe to the Wilderness Society's alerts at www.wilderness.org/forms/subscribe.htm.

On a local conservation note, this month the Prince William Board of County Supervisors is scheduled to vote on the proposed Southbridge development at Cherry Hill in the eastern end of the County. Nicky wrote about this proposal on the cover of this newsletter. You may also check out the County's full staff reports at: <http://www.co.prince-william.va.us/planning/daps.htm>. Let the Board know your opinion of the project by writing or attending the public hearing.

Marion Lobstein tells me that the *Flora of Virginia* project is progressing well. Please read her article on the subject in the next VNPS *Bulletin*. She'll also update us at our meeting on January 15.

'Looking forward to seeing you then.

- Nancy

WILD NEWS is published six times a year by the Prince William Wildflower Society, a Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 20108-0083. Permission is given to use material with credit to source.

VNPS home page: <http://www.vnps.org>

President: Nancy Vehrs, 703-368-2898,
nvehrs@attglobal.net

Vice President/Publicity: Leo Stoltz, 703-791-6175,
osamukato@aol.com

Secretary: June Najjum, 703-494-1891

Treasurer: Marie Davis, 703-361-1626

Botany: Marion Lobstein, 703-536-7150

Conservation: Wendy Pierce, 703-754-2932

Education: Kim Hosen, 703-491-8406

Historian: Robyn Thoreson, 703-335-1015

Hospitality: Warren Ryder, 703-368-2898

Imm. Past Pres/Flora Liaison: Gina Yurkonis, 540-347-1027

Membership: OPEN

Program: Charles Smith, 703-361-5125

Plant Sale: Nancy Arrington, 703-368-8431

Refreshments: Joann Krumviade, 703-938-4378

Registry Site: Claudia Thompson-Deahl, 703-754-9235

Editor: Nancy Vehrs, 703-368-2898

Original Artwork by Nicky Staunton, 703-368-9803

Deadline for the March-April issue is March 1, 2001. Mail information to Nancy Vehrs at 8318 Highland St., Manassas, VA 20110-3671 or email to nvehrs@attglobal.net.

November Meeting Minutes

The November meeting was held at Bethel Lutheran Church on Nov. 20, 2000. Our new president, Nancy Vehrs, opened the meeting. We divided into small groups for a brainstorming session to discuss ideas on the direction we would like to see PWWS to follow in the coming years. Each group was led by a PWWS board member who will take those ideas into account when making future club plans. (*Ed. Note: See page 4-5 for further info.*)

Nancy Arrington, PWWS founder and first president, presented a program on gardening with native shrubs, which included a beautiful slide presentation. (*Ed. Note: See page four for a list of the plants featured.*)

Nancy Vehrs announced that a membership chair volunteer is needed. Nancy has filled this position for the past several years.

Wildflower T-shirts and mugs were offered for sale.

Blythe Merritt announced that Cliff Fairweather will lead two conservation forums. The first forum is EXPLORE LITTLE BULL RUN. Participants will explore by foot and carpool Bull Run stream and its surrounding watershed. It will be held on Sunday, January 14 (1-4 p.m.) in the Gainesville area of Prince William County, VA. The other forum is WATER QUALITY MONITORING IN VA. with Audubon Naturalist Society which is being held on Thurs. Jan. 25, 7:00 - 8:45 pm in Manassas, VA, possibly at Bull Run. It will include a slide presentation and discussion of the life in streams, how humans affect water quality, and how volunteers can monitor the health of local streams. Call Cliff at 703-803-8400 to sign up.

Marion Lobstein reminded us that the State Arboretum at Blandly, VA is a beautiful place to visit in the winter with holiday workshops and plant trails to explore. She will be teaching botany courses this spring. Details can be found soon on her web site at <http://www.mnsinc.com/mblobst>.

Charles Smith asked members to contact him

if they have slides that they would like to present at the January meeting.

Door prizes including two garden boxes and two Virginia native plants were awarded and the meeting was adjourned.

-Carol Thompson
Substitute Secretary

Attendees:

Nancy Arrington	Tiana Camfiord
Marie Davis	Jeanne Endrikat
Amy Hamilton	Barbara Hassel
Katy	Paul Kovenock
Joann Krumviede	Margaret Lewis
Marion Lobstein	Blythe Merritt
Valerie Neitzey	Wendy Pierce
Helen Rawls	Warren Ryder
Rose Schwitzer	Sandra Sheriff
Charles Smith	Nicky Staunton
Leo Stoltz	Linda Stoltz
Carol Thompson	Nancy Vehrs
Gina Yurkonis	

Birds, Trees, and Cow Pies

Population snapshot: The 4th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count is scheduled for February 16-19. For more information, call 1-888-302-2473 or go to www.birdsource.org.

Sustainable forestry: If you have projects planned for the spring garden, look for FSG products at Home Depot and Lowes. The Forest Stewardship Council has certified 6.4 million acres of forest in the USA, and 38.6 million acres in 34 countries. Certification guarantees that sustainable forestry techniques protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities.

Loads of manure for spring: The Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District offers a list of farms where the homeowner can get free manure. Call Kate Norris at 703-361-1710.

-Wendy Pierce
Conservation Chair

Native Shrubs for the Garden

For those who missed it, Nancy Arrington's November program featured the following shrubs:

- Bottlebush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*)
- Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)
- Sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*)
- Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)
- Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*)
- Strawberry bush (*Euonymus americanus*)
- Fothergilla (*F. major* and *F. gardenii*)
- Oakleaf hydrangea (*H. quercifolia*)
- Winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*)
- Virginia Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)
- Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*)
- Leucothoe (*L. fontanesiana*)
- Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
- Native azaleas (rhododendrons):
 - R. austrinum* (Florida flame)
 - R. roseum*
 - R. calendulaceum* (Flame)
 - R. alabamensis* (Alabama)
 - R. prunifolium*
 - R. arborensens*
- Wild Rose (*Rosa spp.*)
- Mapleleaf viburnum (*V. acerfolium*)

For a list of nursery sources or for cultivation information, contact Nancy at 703-368-8431.

Potowmack Chapter to Offer Program on Native Azaleas

Don Hyatt, who spoke at the PWWS meeting in July, will present a program on native azaleas to the Potowmack Chapter. He will place a special emphasis on the species found in the eastern mountains, including some of the rare "hybrid swarms" found there, such as Gregory Bald in the Smokies. The program will be held at 7:30 p.m. on February 8 at the Horticultural Center of Green Spring Gardens Park, located at 4603 Green Spring Road, off Route 236 in Alexandria.

Report from Brainstorming Sessions

While the write up from the sessions at the November meeting is not yet complete, here are some items gleaned from the leaders' notes.

Participants enjoy the bi-monthly program meetings and cited Cole Burrell's program on native plants and Don Hyatt's program on native azaleas as especially good last year. Members suggested scheduling speakers beyond just a wildflower focus and suggested topics such as geology, terrain, what plants should go where, a nature video, *Flora of Va*, and bats.

Members also enjoy the spring garden tours and plant sale. Garden tours could benefit from more plant labeling to be more educational. Photos and more outreach were suggested. More donors and workers are needed for the plant sale.

Workshops on solid botany were suggested as a possible new activity. A field trip could be conducted instead of a meeting or a field trip could follow an information session about using Newcomb's guide.

PWWS should continue to invite garden clubs to programs and establish a list of conservation-oriented folks to participate in activities.

Plant rescues had a mixed reaction. They can be an awkward public relations issue because the focus should be on conservation, not moving plants to another location. However, there is interest among members. Perhaps plants could be moved to public places or schools. Timing is problematic; email or a list serve would be the way to notify participants in a timely manner.

Members expressed interest in holding more summertime events because it's not as busy a time as the spring.

Some suggestions were made about fundraising for the *Flora* project. Perhaps PWWS could raffle off a garden - volunteers could install a small (8x8' perhaps) garden plot with native plants. Another suggestion was to raffle off a plant survey whereby volunteers could conduct a

survey of someone's yard or natural habitat. Both could be conducted as part of Prince William's Spring Fling event in April that attracts many people.

One group discussed guided walks and most agreed that there should be a minimal (\$5) charge. People assign a value and commitment to something they must pay for.

Some members expressed that, in addition to regular activities, PWWS should do the following:

- Activate the registry program.
- Keep up with land use issues and keep members informed.
- Interface with the County and VDOT.
- Conduct more educational events and workshops.
- Extend more outreach.
- Provide more publicity for programs and meetings.
- Participate more with other groups.
- Conduct school-aged children's programs.
- Develop a speakers' bureau.

As for what PWWS should be like in the future, members said it should grow and seek more members, but remain one chapter. It's difficult to staff events even now. Members want to maintain quality; some said that big is not necessarily better. Members enjoy the current camaraderie and enjoy their association with PWWS.

In Trivial Pursuit of Trees and Shrubs

The following quiz was found recently in the Society's archives. Find a tree or shrub that matches the clues.

1. Shrub named for a pioneer woman in a mountain song
2. Tree whose twigs are used for snuff sticks
3. Oak with bitter acorns and sharply cut leaves
4. Tree with wintergreen taste and flavor
5. Tree with white flowers, planted by the moon and star maiden
6. Tree named for a vegetable
7. Tree with lucky fruit that supposedly can keep away rheumatism
8. Tree with flowers used for an herbal tea
9. Tree that barks "arf, arf."
10. Tree with eared leaves
11. Ghostwood of an ancient tree
12. Tree called by the Cherokees, the "Grandfather of Man"
13. Tree called qualla, a Cherokee lemonade
14. The youngest thing in the forest
15. Tree with three leaf shapes
16. Evergreen shrub with a long name and long leaf
17. Tree with wintergreen taste and flavor
18. Bush or small tree known locally as "calico bush"
19. Native American tree decimated by blight, a foreign fungus invader
20. Evergreen tree that supplied tanbark for tanning leather
21. Tree that supplied timbers for the king's navy.
22. Shrub with twigs used for dowsing
23. Tree with divided leaves and a hard-shelled edible fruit
24. The witch of the woods; blooms in late autumn
25. Tree that flaunts something red at any time of year; hated by witches
26. Oak with largest of all acorns
27. Tree used by the Cherokees to make dug-out canoes
28. First forest product exported from America
29. Tree, combined with wild cherry, for cough medicine
30. Little brother of the chestnut
31. Tree with the longest cone in the forest
32. Tree with the smallest cone in the forest
33. One of the Sacred Seven of the Cherokee; tip points to east, land of spirits
34. Shrub with spicy twigs, leaves, and red berries; used for seasoning (continued p. 6)

(Tree Quiz continued from page 5)

35. Tree that was a favored spring tonic and blood purifier
36. Tree most favored by honey bees in the mountains
37. Shrub lover of all wet ground; fixes nitrogen in the soil
38. Evergreen tree with blue berries
39. Shrub with yellow root used for medicine
40. My wood can make baskets, shingles, and casks, strong and so mighty for heaviest tasks.
41. Tree most susceptible to lightning
42. A tree favored for bow wood
43. Tree with silvery gray button seeds, formed in autumn
44. Tree used for dye, food, medicine, and gun stocks
45. Fastest growing tree in the forest
46. Tree most used for making Cherokee baskets
47. An oak whose leaves resemble the shape of the tree
48. Tree whose wood was used for making spindles
49. Tree with berries used to make wine and cordials
50. Tree with smooth gray bark; people cannot resist carving on it.
51. Flowering bush discovered by William Bartram in 1776
52. Sacred seven trees of the Cherokees
53. Bush used as a Cherokee hunting charm
54. Bush whose bark peels in layers; a Cherokee medicine bush



Quercus alba
white oak
Illustration by
Nicky Staunton

State Environmental News

Nicky Staunton, VNPS President, and Jessica Strother, VNPS Conservation Chair, recently shared some alarming news for the state's environment. Governor Gilmore's proposed amendments to the previously approved 2000-2002 budget will reduce funds approved for both the Natural Heritage Program and the Department of Environmental Quality in 2001.

House Speaker S. Vance Wilkins of Amherst is attempting to restore the planned second year of funding of \$6.2 million to acquire land that would preserve land for parks and wilderness and would help Virginia meet its share of a goal of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to protect one million acres in the Chesapeake Bay watershed over the next decade. Last year, \$15.8 million over two years was approved. Now it has been reduced by \$6.2 million to support the popular repeal of the tax on personal cars and trucks.

The Natural Heritage Program will lose four full time employees and suffer a \$250,000 cut in funds previously approved if these budget amendments are adopted. Additional expected cuts in the program will reach a total of \$500,000. To check out the proposed amendments go to: www.dpb.state.va.us/budget/00-02/buddoc01/natg.res.doc.

Budget hearings are underway now; the final one is scheduled in Richmond as follows: Monday, January 15 at 1 p.m.; House Appropriations & Senate Finance; Regional Public Hearing on Governor's proposed amendments to 2000-02 State Budget, General Assembly Building House Room D.

Contact your State representatives to voice your opinion.

For further information, contact Jessie at sylvantica9@juno.com or Nicky at 703-368-9803, nstaunton@earthlink.net.

SPRING BEAUTY

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

Spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) is one of the loveliest and most easily recognizable of our early spring wildflowers. Its genus name *Claytonia* was assigned by Linnaeus to honor John Clayton, one of Virginia's earliest and best known naturalists, and *virginica* to honor the site of specimen collection. Spring beauty is in the Portulacaceae (portulaca or purslane) family. Like garden portulacas, the stem and leaves are succulent and both groups close their flowers at night and on overcast days. Its habitat is moist woods, open meadows, and even lawns. The distribution of this species is from Georgia to Nova Scotia and west into Texas. Its blooming period in our area runs from late February to early May. It often competes with hepatica as one of the earliest spring wildflowers (except, of course, for skunk cabbage and harbinger-of-spring).

The inflorescence is a racemose cyme bearing five to 25 flowers, approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch across. There are two green sepals forming the calyx. The five white, white with pink stripes, or pink petals are slightly joined at their bases to form a saucer-shaped corolla. The pink stripes which may serve as nectar lines for pollinators remind one of peppermint candy striping. There are five stamens with pink anthers and pink filaments. The filaments reflect ultraviolet radiation which insect pollinators can see. The pistil has a superior ovary and a three-cleft style. The first day a flower opens, its stamens are functional and release pollen. The next day and up to seven more days, the pistil is receptive to pollen. During this period the stamens bend the anthers back against the petals. The ultraviolet-reflecting filaments that are also bent back may act as nectar lines to guide the insect pollinators

down to the nectary glands at the base of each petal. The nectar production of spring beauty is very generous. At least 23 different species of native bees, bumblebees, the honeybee, and syrphid flies have been observed visiting spring beauty flowers. Some other spring wildflowers, such as anemone and hepatica, that are not generous nectar producers may attract pollinators by mimicking the shape and size of spring beauty.

The fruit is a triangular-shaped capsule containing up to 25-30 or more shiny black seeds with small appendages known as elaiosomes. The fruit matures about ten days following pollination and fertilization. The seeds are forcibly ejected from the capsule at maturity and may be further dispersed by ants attracted to the elaiosomes.

The six to ten-inch tall plant with its pair of long slender leaves resembles grass at first glance. The stem is a slender, delicate structure that droops with the weight of the developing fruit. The underground storage stem is a small corm that is quite tasty and was a popular treat for Native American children. Squirrels and other forest wildlife eat the corms. The corm sends up only one leaf if no flowers are to be formed for a growing season. Two leaves form on mature plants capable of forming flowers.

Even though spring beauty may be one of our commonest spring wildflowers, it still brings us much joy and beauty each spring on walks through the woods or even in our own lawns.



Answers to Quiz

See quiz on page 5-6. 1. Sweet Betsy (sweet shrub), 2. Black gum, 3. Scarlet oak, 4. Black, sweet, or cherry birch, 5. Black locust, 6. Cucumber tree, 7. Buckeye, 8. Linden, basswood, 9. Dogwood, 10. Fraser's magnolia, 11. Chestnut, 12. Beech, 13. Sumac, 14. Tree seed, 15. Sassafras, 16. Rhododendron, 17. Black gum or tupelo, 18. Mountain laurel, 19. American chestnut, 20. Hemlock, 21. White pine, 22. Witch hazel, 23. Hickory, 24. Witch hazel, 25. Red maple, 26. Chestnut oak, 27. Tulip, yellow poplar, 28. Sassafras, 29. White pine, 30. Chinquapin, 31. White pine, longleaf pine, 32. Hemlock, 33. Hemlock, 34. Spicebush, 35. Sassafras, 36. Sourwood, 37. Alder, 38. Red cedar, juniper, 39. Yellowroot, 40. White oak, 41. Black locust, 42. Hickory, osage orange, 43. Dogwood, 44. Black walnut, 45. Tulip poplar, 46. White oak, 47. White oak, 48. Dogwood, 49. Wild cherry, 50. Beech, 51. Flame azalea, Carolina rhododendron, oakleaf hydrangea, 52. Hemlock, spruce, balsam, pine, red cedar, rhododendron, & mountain laurel, 53. Buffalo nut, 54. Wild hydrangea.

February Board Meeting

The PWWS Board will hold its spring planning meeting on February 21 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Nancy Vehrs. For directions or more info, call Nancy at 703-368-2898, or email at nvehrs@attglobal.net.

"Kaleidoscapes" at the Maymont Flower and Garden Show in February

Beautiful gardens, like kaleidoscopes, are celebrations of color, light and movement in ever-changing patterns. These facets combine to form . . . "Kaleidoscapes" - a dazzling exhibition of blooming brilliance at the 12th Annual Maymont Flower & Garden Show on February 22-25 at the Richmond Center, 400 East Marshall Street, Richmond. Garden exhibits, a garden marketplace, and expert speakers, including VNPS member Cole Burrell, combine for an inspiring garden event in the middle of winter. Even the Pocahontas chapter of the VNPS will participate with a booth.

Call the Maymont Foundation at 804-358-7166 for a free brochure. Further information is also available at the Maymont website, www.maymont.org/special/flower.html.

Reminder: All members are invited to the VNPS Stakeholders Retreat February 24-25. See VNPS *Bulletin* for details.

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

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

exp. 10/01

Nancy Arrington
8388 Briarmont Lane
Manassas, VA 20111



**January Meeting: 7:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 15, Bethel Lutheran Church
"Member Slide Show"**