



# WILD NEWS

Prince William Wildflower Society, A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2002-02

March-April 2002

## MARCH 18 MEETING

Marion Lobstein will speak on the "Diversity of the *Flora of Virginia* at the next membership meeting. Virginia has 3700 species of plants (native and naturalized species) which, for its land mass, is more species than any other of the lower 48 states. In her presentation Marion will talk about reasons for this diversity - soils, climate, proximity to glaciation but not being glaciated, and "mixing bowl" of northern and southern species. Photos will exemplify this diversity. Marion will also include the need for the *Flora of Virginia* in this talk and, as a member of the Board of Directors for the *Flora of Virginia* Project, she will be glad to answer questions about this historic project.

Following the presentation, the business meeting will focus on spring events for PWWS. Door prizes will also be awarded.

The meeting, which is open to the general public, will be held on the usual third Monday of the month, March 18, 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 Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898.

## May 20 Meeting

Mark your calendar now for the next meeting at 7:30 p.m. on May 20 at Bethel Lutheran Church. Program information will appear in the next newsletter.

## FLORA OF VIRGINIA PROJECT PROGRESSES

The *Flora of Virginia* Project continues to gain momentum. Nicky Staunton and Marion Lobstein, both member of the Board of Directors of the Foundation of the *Flora of Virginia* Project (FFVP), participated in the February 9 *Flora* Advisory Committee meeting to work on the format of the *Flora* and the third Board meeting of the FFVP on February 23. At the February 9 meeting, 33 botanists from around the state met in Richmond to begin work on determining the format of the *Flora of Virginia*. The February Board meeting was a full one with work on seeking funding through grants as well as working with groups such as VNPS, outlining efforts to identify illustrators for the work, finalizing details on a May 24 *Flora of Virginia* Symposium, and following up on the efforts of the first *Flora* Advisory Committee meeting. The *Flora of Virginia* Symposium will be held on May 24 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Virginia Academy of Science Annual Meeting at Hampton University. Marion Lobstein, Vice President of the Academy, extends a special invitation to VNPS members to attend this symposium. Additional details of these meetings and the symposium will be reported in the next VNPS *Bulletin*.

An updated website for the *Flora* Project will be available in the near future. Check it out at [www.dcr.state.va.us/dnh/vaflora.htm](http://www.dcr.state.va.us/dnh/vaflora.htm). Please forward any comments on the website to Marion or Nicky. The continuing support of the project by PWWS has provided essential "seed money for this project and is greatly appreciated.

- Marion Lobstein  
PWWS Botany Chair



## From the President - Nancy Vehrs

Where was winter? Spring is here and we never even experienced a true winter season! With the third warmest and second driest winter on record, I had flowers in nearly continuous bloom in my garden. March "came in like a lion" and I feared that the seasons had played a cruel switch, but warmer spring weather has returned as I write this in early March. Who knows what the year will bring? We all hope for rain, but current forecasts seem to point to a prolonged drought. Let's hope our reliable native plants can tough it out.

Meanwhile, let's enjoy the spring! As Marion's program on March 18 will emphasize, Virginia has an incredible diversity of plants. Why not take the time to discover them in their native habitats? I love to garden, but there's something special about finding flowers that Mother Nature, not man, has planted. She is an effective landscaper who never ceases to come up with some of the most creative and naturally occurring combinations of color and textures that show us how many ways we can balance our own gardens. She also can offer us clues to our own natural design potential.

While we don't have any formal wildflower walks scheduled in Prince William County, don't let that discourage you from exploring on your own with friends and family. Call a fellow member of PWWS. Take along a guidebook, pack a lunch and water, and discover all the natural areas nearby. Visit our local treasures such as Bull Run Mountain, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Conway Robinson State Forest, Prince William Forest Park, Leesylvania State Park, and the Occoquan Bay National Refuge. We're lucky to have these large parks and natural areas as respites from the over development of Northern Virginia.

Spring is fleeting - make the most of it.

- Nancy

## Garden Tours Sunday, Apr 28

Mark your calendars now for the annual spring wildflower garden tours on Sunday, April 28 from noon to 5 p.m. The Haymarket garden of Ed Milhous, with its extensive pond system, is back on the tour for the first time since 1997. Two other gardens in the general Gainesville/Catharpin/Haymarket area will also be featured.

Tour brochures with directions will be mailed to all members in April. For additional copies, contact Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898, email [nvehrs@attglobal.net](mailto:nvehrs@attglobal.net).

## April Board Meeting

The next PWWS Board meeting will be held April 15 (Tax Day!) at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. All members are welcome to attend. For further information, call Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898.

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

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Deadline for the May-June issue is Apr. 27, 2002. Mail information to Nancy Vehrs at 8318 Highland St., Manassas, VA 20110-3671 or send email to [nvehrs@attglobal.net](mailto:nvehrs@attglobal.net).



## Prepare for Plant Sale May 11

This year's plant sale will be on the usual Saturday before Mother's Day, May 11, 9 a.m. to noon, at Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas.

Again this year we are grateful to Karen Rexrode at Windy Hill Plant Farm for allowing us to use her equipment to print out labels with cultivation information for our plants. Thanks also to Joann Krumviede who types the labels. We had several new species of trees, shrubs and water plants last year and Joann has taken care of labels for those. We'll continue with the pricing system using colored plastic labels (i.e. \$2 will be a red label, \$3 blue, etc.) that we've used for the past two years. They will be collected at checkout and reused each year. We hope to have the cultivation labels ready for distribution 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 sold almost every plant we had last year so we're asking everybody to make an extra effort to bring more plants this year. Shade plants, species that attract butterflies and hummingbirds, shrubs, and ferns always sell really well. Call one of the members listed below if you need help potting your plants. If you need the blank white labels we've used in the past call Nancy Vehrs, 703-368-2898. Marie Davis, 703-361-1626, has pots for anyone who needs them. Call Charles Smith, 703-361-5125, if you have questions about shrubs for the sale; call Gina Yurkonis, 540-937-2312 with any water plant questions; and call Leo Stoltz, 703-791-6175, if you have any questions about starting seeds (better hurry!). Call me, 703-368-8431, for labels, for horticulture or pricing guidance, or to help out before and during the sale.

Last year's plant sale was by far the best we've ever had in terms of variety and quantity of plants, number of members involved and the amount of money we made. With your help we'll do even better this year.

- Nancy Arrington, Plant Sale Chairman

## January Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Nancy Vehrs at 7:40 p.m. The members gathered at Bethel Church. Charles Smith introduced the members who shared their slides during the evening.

Martha Slover made our first presentation. Her slides were taken on a canoe trip on the Shenandoah River to Luray and Front Royal. Also included were her slides from the Mangrove Swamp and Everglades of Florida (another canoe trip). Among the slides were flowers and shrubs, such as thistle and button bush.

The next presenter was Nicky Staunton who first showed us the location of Olen Islands, near the Baltic Sea. They consist of 6,500 islands that belong to Finland. Then we viewed many wildflowers and Nordic sights.

Following Nicky was Joann Krumviede who took slides of the Grand Teton National Park and the Sawtooth National Forest. Some of the highlights were colorful photos of elephant head, Indian paintbrush, and fairy trumpet.

Our last presentation was Marion Lobstein's digital collection of photos of her Canada trip to Quebec. She went on a trip along the St. Lawrence River and Prince Edward Island near Nova Scotia. She ended with photos of Ponce De Leon Park, Florida, where there are large mangrove trees.

During a brief fifteen-minute intermission, we enjoyed refreshments provided by Joann Krumviede. Our business meeting followed, led by Nancy Vehrs. Shes invited all members to browse the latest mail that has arrived for PWWS.

Martha Slover made the motion to approve the minutes of the meeting as printed in the *Wild News*. Leo Stoltz seconded it and the motion carried unanimously.

Nancy Vehrs urged members to sign up for the wildflower license plate. Currently there are not enough orders to offer the license. A total of 350 orders are needed. Please contact the DMV

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(Minutes - continued from page 3)

by website or phone if you are interested.

Please write to your delegates, and encourage them to support State legislation regarding trees, SB484 and HB105. We want to control mass removal of trees and to encourage replacement by native species. If members would like to receive the conservation alerts they can forward their email address to Nancy Vehrs.

Marion Lobstein gave her botany report next. On February 9th, botanists will finalize the format for the *Flora* Project at a developmental meeting. Hopefully state budget cuts will not harm the Project. They are looking closely at the possibility of a large grant in the future. Marion Lobstein then presented a gift to Charles Smith, for his past support of the *Flora* Project and his contributions to the PWWS.

Nicky Staunton announced that the VNPS will be offering a workshop again this year. It is held on March 9th, at the University of Richmond. Marion Lobstein gave Nicky a Florida butterfly guide book in appreciation of her continued support of the *Flora* Project.

Charles reminded people that our plant sale 2002 would hopefully feature more trees and shrubs. Please pot them up soon so that they will be ready for spring purchase. Nancy Arrington, Plant Sale Chairman reminded members for the need for pond plants at the sale. If members pick up bargains, please share pieces with the PWWS for the plant sale. If you are donating plants that have never been offered, please tell Martha Slover so that she may get photos for the sale. Joann will be typing the labels, so she also needs to know about any new plants to prepare the labels in advance.

The March meeting topic has not been announced at this time. Charles Smith is looking for suggestions from members. He may contact a speaker through the Friends of Bull Run Mountain. They have naturalists available who might talk about resource management.

Leo and Linda Stoltz and Marion Lobstein donated door prizes. The winners were Elaine

Haug, Joann Krumviede, Joyce Andrew, and Martha Slover. Charlotte Cochard and Leo Stoltz also won, but generously declined the prizes.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

- Submitted by June Najjum, Secretary

**Attendance:** Joyce Andrew, Nancy Arrington, Melissa Bolt, Charlotte Cochard, Kathy Ehrenberger, Jeanne Endrikat, Jeanne Fowler, Amy Hamilton, Elaine Haug, William Hendrickson, Joann Krumviede, Mary Lavoie, Margaret Lewis, Marion Lobstein, June Najjum, John Pauswinski, Helen Rawls, Jennifer Shepard, Martha Slover, Charles Smith, Nicky Staunton, Leo and Linda Stoltz, Micky Sullivan, Carol Thompson, Nancy Vehrs, Helen Walter

## Marion Lobstein's Spring Walks/Workshops

March 17, April 21, May 19: - Great Falls Park, VA Walk, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., third Sundays of the month, phone 703-536-7150.

Wildflower Workshop for Fairfax Audubon Society, lectures 6:30-9:30 p.m., April 3 and 10; fieldtrip 9 a.m.- 1 p.m. April 13 at Ball's Bluff Regional Park, near Leesburg. Fee. Call 703-256-6895.

April 14: Balls Bluff Walk, 2:30-4:30 p.m., 703-536-7150.

Smithsonian Associates Tours - Registration Fee. ([www.residentassociates.org/rap](http://www.residentassociates.org/rap)):

April 20: C&O Canal (Carterock Area), 2 tours: 10 a.m.- 12 noon and 1- 3 p.m.

April 28: US National Arboretum, 9:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.



## GOLDEN ALEXANDERS

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

Golden Alexanders, *Zizia aurea*, is a perennial member of the Apiaceae or carrot family. This bright yellow flowered plant is found in moist woods, along stream edges, and wet meadows in Virginia. Its range is from eastern Canada to Georgia and west to Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. The genus name of *Zizia* is in honor of Johann Ziz, a late 18th-early 19th century European botanist and *aurea* refers to the golden color of the flowers. The blooming period is from April until June. A less common species known as heart-leaved meadow parsnip (*Z. aptera*) can be found in our area, but is more common in the mountains to our west.

The deep yellow flowers of golden alexanders are small (around 1/16" or less wide) and are arranged in compound umbels. Each tiny flower in each umbellet lacks a peduncle (flowering stem). Each tiny flower has five small sepals, five petals, five stamen, and a pistil with two styles and an inferior ovary. The flowers lack any fragrance, but attract a variety of insect pollinators. The fruit that develops from each



fertilized flower is a schizocarp that is up to 3/16" long. The two parts of the fruit split lengthwise at functional maturity.

Each plant is between one to two and a half feet tall. The alternate compound leaves are divided two to three times and leaflets are sharp toothed. The stem may have a reddish tinge. The root system is a taproot up to 4" long.

There was limited medicinal use of this plant by Native American tribes as well as in folk or herbal medicine. These medicinal uses ranged from treating fevers to inducing sleep, treating wounds, and even purportedly to cure syphilis. It can cause violent vomiting at higher doses.

This handsome member of the carrot family adds a splash of bright yellow color to our natural landscape. Enjoy this beautiful species from late April into early June.

## NATIVES FOR THE GARDEN - GOLDEN ALEXANDERS

Golden Alexanders is a long-flowering, attractive and adaptable perennial for garden uses ranging from naturalistic meadows to perennial borders. It's found in all northern and most western Virginia counties and in several other counties throughout the Commonwealth.

The dark green divided foliage of golden alexanders, similar to that of astilbes, forms a mound of about 12" to 18" tall and across. In early May loose airy umbels of greenish-yellow flowers rise a foot or so above the foliage. They are pretty for four to six weeks and are followed by seed pods that are attractive for several more weeks. Foliage will remain fresh and attractive until frost.

Golden alexanders is a great plant for sunny wet spots - meadows, beside streams or ponds, or in low-lying areas that stay wet most of the year. Constant moisture will keep the foliage looking good through the summer. However, it will grow and bloom well in drier sites and in part shade. I've found it to be an excellent companion to

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(*Golden Alexander* - continued from page 5)

spiderworts (*Tradescantia*), serving as a prop and mask for their floppy and sometimes unattractive foliage. It's also a good filler in areas where Virginia bluebells and spring bulbs have gone dormant.

The rounded shape of golden alexanders is an effective contrast for spiky iris, especially ones that like a wet spot, such as *I. Pseudacorus* and *I. Versicolor*. Finely dissected foliage makes it an attractive contrast for solid leaved plants such as hostas. Its greenish-yellow flowers combine nicely with most spring colors including pinks and lavenders that might not look good with a more golden yellow.

This adaptable native has only one drawback: it smells bad! Flowers and foliage have an unpleasant odor that is noticeable only up close outdoors, but keeps it from being a good cut flower.

Golden alexanders usually propagates itself sufficiently by self-sowing. Clip off faded blossoms to prevent too many seedlings. This desirable native is always available at our chapter plant sale.

- Nancy Arrington  
from May-June 1994 Plant Sale Chairman

## Other Events of Interest

**April 6:** Potowmack Chapter walk with Chris Fleming at Turkey Run Park, 301-657-9289.

**April 14,** Annual Bluebell Walk, Bull Run Regional Park, Centreville, 2 p.m., \$6 non-resident park admission, 703-528-5406.

**April 20:** Potowmack Chapter walk with Stan Shetler at Great Falls Park, 2-4:30 p.m., 703-920-1913.

**April 27:** *Spring Fling* Gardening Expo sponsored by the Prince William Extension Office, Prince William County Fairgrounds. PWWS will have an information booth there. 703-792-6285.

**April 27:** Friends of the National Arboretum's 11th Annual Garden Fair and Plant Sale, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Saturday, 202-544-8733.

**May 10-12:** 19th Annual Spring Wildflower Symposium presented by the Wintergreen Nature Foundation and Wintergreen Resort, fee. Liz Salas, 434-325-7451, [www.twnf.org](http://www.twnf.org).

**May 10-12:** Shenandoah National Park's Wildflower Weekend. Programs free, \$10/car park entrance fee. 540-999-3397, [www.nps.gov/shen](http://www.nps.gov/shen).

## PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

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



exp. 10/02

Nancy Arrington  
8388 Briarmont Lane  
Manassas, VA 20112-2755



**Next Meeting: 7:30 p.m., Monday, March 18, Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas**  
**Marion Lobstein on the "Diversity of the Flora of Virginia"**