



WILD NEWS

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

Number 2002-05

September-October 2002

ANNUAL MEETING OCT 6

Come to the PWWS annual picnic meeting at 1 p.m. on Sunday, October 6 at the Manassas area home of Gary and Charlotte Cochard. Socialize with fellow members in this lovely woodland setting along the banks of the Occoquan River.

Please bring a salad, main dish, vegetable, or dessert to share at the potluck picnic. PWWS will furnish beverages, utensils, and paper products.

Schedule:

1 p.m. - Potluck Picnic (held rain or shine)

2:30 p.m. - Chapter Business meeting:

President's Report

Election of Officers

Vote on Proposed 2003 Budget

3 p.m. Plant Swap followed by nature walk.

Bring plant(s) to share.

The nominees for office are:

President: **Charles Smith**

Vice- President: **Martha Slover**

Secretary: **Charlotte Cochard**

Treasurer: **Diane Flaherty**

Please refer to the annual meeting notice for biographical details on the nominees.

The proposed annual budget is printed on page five.

Directions: From Manassas: At the intersection of Route 234 and the Prince William Parkway, turn onto the Parkway and proceed for 1.5 miles to the first light, Lake Jackson Drive. Turn right and go **1.6** miles. (Please note that this is a correction from the meeting mailing.) Turn left onto Knightshayes and proceed to the 8th mailbox on the right, #7997.

From Woodbridge: Take the Prince William Parkway toward Manassas. Approaching Manassas, the Parkway turns left and Liberia Avenue goes right. At that junction turn left to

remain on the Parkway, then turn left onto Lake Jackson Drive. Follow Lake Jackson for 1.6 miles, then turn left onto Knightshayes Drive. Proceed to the 8th mailbox, #7997.

Approximately 12 cars can park near the house; others should park on Knightshayes. The Cochard's phone number is 703-330-6960.

If you cannot attend the meeting, please return the proxy ballot to ensure a quorum in accordance with chapter bylaws. For further information about the meeting, call Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898.

GARDEN TOURS A BIG HIT

Thanks to some excellent publicity courtesy of our Publicity Chair, Vice-President Leo Stolz, and Ken Bass, one of our garden hosts, this year's summer garden tours enjoyed great attendance despite the hot and humid weather (and a couple of thunderstorms). The Basses had more than 150 visitors and the others were not far behind.

Though this year's drought had an effect on the gardens, visitors still were treated to many summer blooms. Many thanks to Ken and Fran Bass, Tiana Camfiord, and Marie and Paul Davis who so generously opened their gardens. Thanks also go to volunteer hosts Nancy Arrington, Charlotte Cochard, Kathy Ehrenberger, Jeanne Fowler, Nicky Staunton, Linda & Leo Stoltz, Nancy Vehrs, and Helen Walter. Additional thanks go to bakers Marie Davis, Jeanne Fowler, Linda Stoltz, and Nancy Vehrs for supplying refreshments.

These popular tours can continue only if members are willing to volunteer their gardens. If you have a spring or summer wildflower garden, please consider sharing it on one of the seasonal tours. Call Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898 for info.



From the President - Nancy Vehrs

We all know that we're in a terrible drought pattern, but a few of us had nearly three inches of rain in short order the first Saturday of August. And not just rain, either! A narrow area of Manassas endured a violent hailstorm that shredded our garden and downed many trees in nearby neighborhoods. I'm thankful that the garden has recovered somewhat from that brutal beating. If only we could have spread that rainfall over a few weeks instead of hours.

Early this month Warren and I wanted to go somewhere different to hike and I suggested Sky Meadows State Park in Delaplane. It's a fairly new state park that I had only visited a couple of times. Hiking in the high meadow there is such a treat - on a clear day the views of the rolling countryside are fabulous. We also watched colorful butterflies and goldfinches feasting on the vegetation. One can even stop and rest for inspiration on one of several benches that capture the big sky view. When the leaves turn color (if the drought doesn't affect them too adversely), the view following the short climb would be worth the effort even for non-hikers. We lengthened our mini-hike by connecting to the Appalachian Trail. Along the way there was so much spicebush in fruit - the Labor Day weekend rain in that area must have replenished the water supply for the natural springs that keep the area moist. We also saw some spicebush swallowtail butterflies fluttering in the area.

Also this September I attended the VNPS annual meeting. I enjoyed the field trips even though the expected sea of yellow tickseed sunflower did not materialize at Cumberland Marsh, a Nature Conservancy site in New Kent County. Apparently when the water level is down, the salt content in the marsh increases and plants like tickseed sunflowers are rather salt intolerant. Back here in Northern Virginia the sunflowers are cheerfully blooming along the

roadside now.

Cole Burrell, new VNPS Horticulture Chair, presented the Saturday evening slide lecture that provided garden-worthy native plant alternatives to many showy invasive exotic garden plants. I've included some of his suggestions elsewhere in this newsletter (p. 6). Very few members from PWWS attended the annual meeting, but maybe more of you will next year when we serve as the host chapter.

I hope that many of you will come to our chapter's annual meeting at the Cochard home. The potluck picnic is a wonderful opportunity to meet fellow members and the setting along the Occoquan should be grand.

This is my last column as your president, but I'll offer a wrap-up in November. I wish Charles and the new slate of officers all the best and I thank everyone who served on the board with me.

- Nancy

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

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Education	OPEN
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Deadline for the November-December issue is **November 1, 2002**. Mail information to Nancy Vehrs at 8318 Highland St., Manassas, VA 20110-3671 or send email to nvehrs@attglobal.net.

“Native Plants” Defined

Some people think all plants that grow without cultivation are native plants. But many familiar roadside flowers such as Queen Anne's lace, ox-eye daisy, and chicory arrived in North America along with European settlers. These plants are called exotics. They are not native, they are naturalized, and they grow without the benefit of cultivation. Native plants, on the other hand, grew here before the arrival of Europeans. It's not enough to say a plant is native if it grows in North America, however. Different plants are found in different regions of the country, and in different habitats, so geography and ecology must be considered together.

In the narrowest interpretation, a native plant is one that was growing and reproducing in a given region, within a particular habitat or ecological niche, prior to European settlement. The definition can apply to plants in a local, state, or regional context because many ecosystems cross political boundaries. The Eastern deciduous forest, for example, stretches from New England and Minnesota, south to Northern Georgia and Arkansas. A plant indigenous to Virginia is a native plant in Virginia. The same species may also be indigenous to Minnesota, so is a native there as well. A plant from Virginia that is not indigenous to Minnesota, but grows there by introduction, is exotic in Minnesota, even though it is native to North America.

In a horticultural context, the term "native" is subject to lax interpretation. To a gardener who grows plants from all over the world, "native" may be relative to the continent or county of origin. It is common practice to bestow a blanket designation of "native" to any plant indigenous to North America. However, few plants are indigenous throughout a country. Plants do not recognize political boundaries. Ecologically and horticulturally you may distinguish between a County native, a State native, a Regional native, and a North American native, but these designations do not take into account the soil,

moisture, temperature, and exposure, which are all factors that limit the growth, reproduction and distribution of species.

It is often said that native plants are the best plants for a given area because they are better adapted than non-native plants. Not always so. The rationale for that statement is that they evolved on the site. Dozens of non-native species such as oriental bittersweet do quite well in our region, though they did not evolve here. The reason they succeed is that they evolved under similar conditions on another continent. Few plants are better adapted to our landscape than Japanese honeysuckle, kudzu, and tree of heaven, though none of these is native to North America.

When growing plants from outside their native range, whether they are North American or European, it is paramount to understand how they will behave in cultivation. While some exotic plants are innocuous, others collide head-on with local flora. The plight of wetlands reduced to monoculture by purple loosestrife is all too familiar. Exotic thugs such as porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*), Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), and Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), to name a few, are displacing native species and reducing habitat diversity throughout the Eastern and Central states.

In summary native plants are those found growing on a particular site under a given set of environmental conditions before European settlement. They give an area its regional identity. Their distribution is determined by physical and biological factors that influence or limit reproduction, growth, or dispersal. The term native plant includes trees, shrubs, herbaceous flowering plants, ferns, mosses and algae.

- Cole Burrell
VNPS Horticulture Chair

(Ed. Note: The preceding article appeared in the Sept/Oct 2002 issue of *Potowmack News*, the newsletter of the Potowmack Chapter and has been reprinted by permission from the author.)

July 8 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. Charles introduced our speaker for the evening, Deanne Eversmeyer, VNPS Horticultural Chair. She shared information on "Creating a Suburban Meadow." She presented slides of her quarter-acre lot, which contains extensive wildflowers in her landscape.

Some of the plants that were mentioned were: asters, fireworks goldenrod, crocus, buttercups, eared coreopsis, beardtongue, heliopsis, joe pye weed, squaw grass, purple coneflower, swamp milkweed, butterfly weed, black-eyed susans, liatris, little blue stem, cupflower, boltonia, ironweed, purple top grass, lirope, broomsedge, summer phlox, bottlebrush, hardy ageratum, goatsbeard, queen of the meadow, scarlet hibiscus, pitcher plant, and sundews.

Here are some meadow gardening tips that were discussed. Do not cut down the old plants until about late spring - leave them up for winter interest. Joe pye weed makes a nice privacy screen. Liriope makes a good edging plant and gives the meadow a neat appearance. Direct your drain pipes to a low area so that you may grow plants such as cardinal flower that prefer moisture. Deanne prefers the quiet handheld hedge trimmer to a noisy weed wacker for grooming the garden in the late spring. Lots of birds and butterflies enjoy meadow gardens too. Pine needles make excellent mulch for garden paths. Cultivate good PR with the neighbors. Once established, Deanne does not water the meadow. When starting a meadow - consider using small plugs of native grasses (like little bluestem) You may choose to start them yourself from seed, and plant them in mulch later, after you have eliminated the lawn (smothered or by herbicide).

Joann Krumviede provided refreshments for the break that followed the presentation. After enjoying displays, and sharing thoughts about meadow gardening, the meeting reconvened at 8:30 p.m.

A motion was made by June Najjum to approve the minutes of the May meeting, as printed in the Wild News. Wendy Pierce seconded it, and it passed with a unanimous vote.

The treasurer's report was next. Marie Davis announced that the balance at this time was \$4,856.12. She will proceed with the motion from the board to donate \$500 to the VNPS.

Nancy Vehrs reminded everyone of the Summer Garden Tour coming up on July 21st. A sign up sheet was passed around for various volunteer duties. Nancy Vehrs brought the goldenrod-colored flyers for members to pass to friends, so that they could locate the gardens of Marie Davis, Fran and Ken Bass, and Tiana Camfiord. Tiana will also be selling plants and donating the proceeds to the *Flora* Project. Information is also online at www.vnps.org by clicking on events, field trips.

Marion Lobstein was not able to attend the meeting. However, it was announced that the *Flora* Project received its nonprofit status. All donations are tax deductible. Marion could also use help with the weeding at the NVCC Wildflower Garden. Any volunteers should turn in their names and phone numbers to Marion Lobstein or Nancy Vehrs, so that they may be contacted.

Members were reminded of the upcoming VNPS Annual Meeting in Glen Allen, near Richmond, Virginia. It will be held on September 13 -15. Nicky Staunton is involved in the activities such as field trips, and their one big fund raiser- the silent auction. Donations for the auction from PWWS members are welcome.

The Nominating Committee, which consists of Nancy Arrington, Jeanne Endrikat, Diane Flaherty, Martha Slover, and Charles Smith, is seeking members who would like to serve on the board for the next two-year term.

Everyone should mark his or her calendars for the Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 6th. The location has not been announced. A potluck dinner will be served and members will receive

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further information in the mail.

Linda Stoltz and Marie Davis won the door prizes. They each received a native plant. Charles reminded the members that we had to be out of the library by 8:45 p.m. Jeanne Endrikat suggested the Community Room at Manassas Mall as an alternative site when the church is unavailable. The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Submitted by June Najjum, secretary.

Attendance: Nancy Arrington, Tiana Camfiord, Charlotte Cochard, Marie Davis, Lucy Diercks, Karen Dwyer, Jeanne Endrikat, Deanne Eversmeyer, Jeanne Fowler, Mary Hamilton, Amy Hamilton, William Hendrickson, Judy Jellen, Frances Louer, Phil Louer, June Najjum, Wendy Pierce, Vera Schuler, Mary Sherman, Charles Smith, Suzanne Smith, Linda Stoltz, Leo Stoltz, Nancy Vehrs, Karen Waltman, Catherine B. Waterhouse, and Gina Yurkonis

Budget Proposed for 2003

PWWS Treasurer Marie Davis has proposed the following budget for the next fiscal year. Members will vote to approve the budget at the annual meeting on October 6.

PROPOSED FY 2003 BUDGET	
(November 1, 2002-October 31, 2003)	
RECEIPTS:	
Dues	\$ 1,000
Plant Sale	2,700
TOTAL	\$3,700
DISBURSEMENTS:	
Postage	\$ 850
Printing	1,050
Gifts and Honoraria	450
Programs and Speakers	500
Sales Tax	125
Special Events	725
Plant Sale	
Garden Tours	
Annual Meeting	
TOTAL	\$3,700

FLORA Update

The *Flora of Virginia* Project continues to move along with support of PWWS and many other groups and individuals. Many of you responded in 2000 to a questionnaire regarding this important endeavor indicating your interest in volunteering in the development of the historic work.

As you may know from following the progress of the Project through the VNPS *Bulletin*, the Foundation of the *Flora of Virginia* Project, Inc. has been granted Federal 501(c)(3) status and is moving forward with the actual work of developing the *Flora of Virginia*. In February of this year, a *Flora* Advisory Board, comprised of 50 botanists from around the Commonwealth, met to begin work on the format and other aspects of the *Flora*. With the input of this advisory group, the two authors of the *Flora*, Chris Ludwig and Alan Weakley, have finalized the format and begun work on plant descriptions. An illustrator is under contract and is beginning work on the illustrations.

As you might expect, the volunteer needs for this project have evolved a great deal in the last two years. After careful reconsideration of project needs, we have identified two primary areas where your volunteer efforts are very much needed. We hope that one or both of the ideas will be of interest to you:

- Contributing photographs of Virginia native or naturalized plant species for use in the electronic media that will broaden the scope of the project.
- Researching areas of information such as invasive species, medicinal uses, edible uses, wetland status, and other information on Virginia's plant species. This information will be used to develop a database to be used with the electronic media, i.e. website, CD-ROM or DVD, etc.

VNPS members Richard Stromberg and Sally Anderson have volunteered to help coordinate the
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(Flora - continued from page 5)

volunteer efforts in these two areas. If you are still interested in helping, please contact either Richard (arbiess@rmaonline.net, 14 Martin Road, Front Royal, VA 22630) or Sally (rccsca@visuallink.com, 112 Old Forest Circle, Winchester, VA 22602) and let them know what your interests are.

PWWS and your individual support has been instrumental in the progress of the *Flora of Virginia* thus far and your continued support of the project is essential in realizing the dream of our having a modern *Flora of Virginia*. Thank you for all your efforts in the past as well as in the future.

- Marion Lobstein

Events of Interest

Saturday, September 28, 9 a.m. - Noon, State Arboretum at Blandy. Arboretum Work Party in Conjunction with National Public Lands Day. Volunteers will pull weeds and remove vines. Refreshments and tools provided, visit www.virginia.edu/~blandy/ for more information.

Saturday, October 12, with associated field trips on Sunday, October 13, Maryland Native Plant Society's 11th Annual Fall Conference on "Native Plants, Natural Communities, and Geology of the Fall Line of Maryland." VNPS members may register at member rate, \$35. For information, call 301-809-0139, or visit <http://www.mdflora.org/>.

Thursday, October 10 at 7:30p.m. Lecture by Steve Libby, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, entitled "Growing well or going to...?" at the Community Room in Manassas Mall. The Prince William Conservation Alliance is sponsoring a series of these informational presentations. For a complete listing of programs, call Kim Hosen at 703-367-0069 or visit <http://www.pwconserve.org>.

Native Plant Alternatives

VNPS Horticulture Chair Cole Burrell, a landscape designer and garden writer, presented a program on *Native Alternatives to Invasive Exotics* at the VNPS annual meeting. Here are a few of his suggestions for plants for foliage effect. Instead of autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), try:

Shadbush (*Amelanchier species*)
 Groundsel tree (*Baccharis halimifolia*)
 Musclewood (*Carpinus caroliniana*)
 Alabama croton (*Croton alabamensis*)
 Wax myrtle (*Myrica pensylvanica, cerifera*).

Replace winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*) with:

Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*)
 Black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*)
 Witch alder (*fothergilla gardenii*)
 Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)
 Winged sumac (*Rhus copallina*)

Plant these alternatives instead of Japanese silver grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*):

Erianthus (*Erianthus giganteus, contortus*)
 Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)
 Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*)

If you cannot find these plants at local nurseries, check the VNPS website for mail order nurseries at www.vnps.org/nursery.htm.



**Giant
Sunflower**
Helianthus giganteus

Sunflowers and "Sunflower-like" Relatives

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

This time of year, from late summer into early fall, many of our fields, meadows, and roadsides are ablaze with the bright yellow of true sunflowers (*Helianthus* spp.) and other sunflower-like species. These are all members of the Asteraceae or composite family. Each flower is not just a single flower, but rather a composite head of flowers. The outer petal-like flowers are the ray flowers and are varying shades of yellow. The center flowers are tubular or disk flowers and are yellow in most of these species but may be a darker color. On the back of the flower head is a leafy cup or involucre that is made up of leafy bracts. The following is a list of sunflower and related species in the Northern Virginia area along with their common names and blooming dates:

- Bidens aristosa*, Tickseed sunflower, Aug-Oct
- B. bipinnata* - Spanish needles, Aug-Oct
- B. cernua* - Nodding bur marigold, Aug-Oct
- B. coronata* - Tickseed sunflower, Aug-Oct
- B. discoidea*, Small beggar-ticks, Aug-Oct
- B. frondosa*, Beggar-ticks, sticktight, Aug-Oct
- B. laevis*, Larger bur-marigold, Aug-Oct
- B. polylepis*, Tickseed sunflower, Aug-Oct
- B. tripartita*, European tickseed, Aug-Oct
- B. vulgata*, Common beggar-ticks, Aug-Oct
- Helianthus angustifolius*, Narrow-leaf sunflower, Aug-Oct
- H. annuus*, Common sunflower, July-Sept
- H. atrorubens*, Purple-disk sunflower, Aug-Oct
- H. decapetalus*, Thin-leaved sunflower, Aug-Oct
- H. divaricatus*, Woodland sunflower, Jul-Sept
- H. giganteus*, Giant sunflower, Aug-Oct
- H. gross-serratus*, Saw-tooth sunflower, Aug-Oct

- H. hirsutus*, Hirsute sunflower, July-Oct
- H. laetiflorus*, Showy sunflower, Aug-Sept.
- H. laevigatus*, Smooth sunflower, Aug.
- H. maximiliani*, Maximillian's sunflower, Aug-Oct
- H. microcephalus*, Small-headed sunflower, July-Sept
- H. mollis*, Gray sunflower, Aug-Oct
- H. occidentalis*, Western sunflower, July-Aug
- H. strumosus*, Pale-leaved sunflower, Jul-Sept
- H. tuberosus*, Jerusalem artichoke, Aug-Oct
- Heliopsis helianthoides*, Ox-eye, June-Sept
- Silphium trifoliatum*, Whorled rosinweed, July-Sept
- Verbesina alternifolia* (*Actinomeris alternifolia*), Wingstem, July-Sept
- V. occidentalis*, Crownbeard, July-Oct

The *Bidens* species in our area are broken into several broad groups: tickseed sunflowers, bur marigolds, beggar ticks, and Spanish needles. Members of this genus have flattened fruits called achenes that have hard outer coverings and barbs or bristles on the ends of the fruits for dispersal. The bracts forming the involucre are in a double row. In the *Helianthus* or "true" sunflower genus, fruits are also achenes (that develop only from the disk flowers), but lack the barbs or thistles. The bracts of the involucre are in a single row in this genus. Ox-eye (*Heliopsis helianthoides*) resembles the true sunflowers, but has achenes that develop from both ray and disk flowers. In the whorled rosinweed (*Silphium trifoliatum*) the leaves are in whorls in groups of threes. Also, the achenes are formed from the ray flowers only and have a winged edge. Wingstem (*Verbesina alternifolia* or *Actinomeris alternifolia*) and crownbeard (*V. occidentalis*) both have winged stems, but wingstem has alternate leaves and crownbeard has opposite.

Details of the structure of the ray and disk flowers, structure of the involucre, vegetative characteristics of the stem and leaf structures, as well as habitat information are possible points to

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be considered in identifying individual species of these groups. Both the Peterson *Field Guide to Wildflowers of Northeastern/Northcentral North America* and the Newcomb's *Wildflower Guide* are excellent sources for identifying most of these species. Identifying these fall composites is often a challenge, but is well worth the time invested.

Learn More about Va Parks and Natural Areas Bond

Voters will decide on a \$119 million statewide Parks and Natural Areas bond referendum on November 5. If approved, bond funds will be used to help conserve Virginia's important natural resources and provide more recreational offerings. It will allow for the purchase of three new state parks, more land for 11 existing parks, 10 new natural area preserves, and additions to eight existing preserves.

Specifically, passage of this bond referendum

would provide \$30 million to purchase new park and natural area land, \$6.5 million for additional land to existing parks, and \$4.5 million to protect park land from severe shoreline erosion. The remaining \$78 million would be for construction, improvement, and repair projects such as cabins, campgrounds, and other offerings throughout Virginia's 34 state parks. Funds will be used for specific projects, not regular operating costs.

Despite ranking 50th in terms of percentage of state budget spent on parks and 49th in per capita state park spending, Virginia's state park system was named the best-run park system in America by the National Sporting Goods Association's Sports Foundation in 2001.

State biologists with Virginia's Natural Heritage Programs have identified 1,450 critical natural areas. Only 36 have been dedicated Natural Area Preserves. Proceeds from the bond will help protect additional natural areas.

Please give this bond referendum your serious consideration. For further information call 1-800-933-PARK or visit www.dcr.state.va.us/bond/.

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

 Annual Meeting: 1 p.m., Sunday, October 6, Home of Charlotte and Gary Cochard on the banks of the Occoquan River, Manassas

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