



WILD NEWS

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

Number 2003-02

March-April 2003

MARCH 17 MEETING

Michael Kieffer of the Friends of Bull Run (FoBR) will guide PWWS members through the Bull Run Mountains, piedmont, and more as we watch his slide presentation on March 17. The mountains' varied elevation, topography, soils, and hydrology contribute to a great diversity of habitats and species. FoBR was founded in 1995 to manage the 800-acre Bull Run Mountain Natural Area Preserve and provide public access, education programs, and research assistance. Its mission is to protect this unique resource by educating children and adults on the ecological, cultural, and historical heritage of this preserve and other open space communities. Michael Kieffer began as executive director of FoBR in March 2000. He worked as a naturalist for the Piedmont Environmental Center in High Point, NC, for almost five years. He has a biology degree from the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Following the program there will be a short business meeting to discuss upcoming events and issues. The meeting, which is open to the general public, will be held on the usual third Monday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church, corner of Sudley Road/Rt. 234 and Plantation Lane in Manassas. Call President Charles Smith at 703-361-5125 for additional information.

LOOKING AHEAD

Mark your calendar now for the May 19, 2003, meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas. Program details will appear in the next edition of *Wild News*.

NATIVE ALTERNATIVES FOR LANDSCAPING

In his program *More than a Pretty Face—Native Alternatives to Invasive Exotics* presented to the VNPS at its annual meeting last September, Cole Burrell, VNPS Horticulture Chair and renowned landscape designer, presented many native plant solutions for landscape challenges.

For plants with colorful/textural foliage, he recommended **sugar maple** (*Acer saccharum*) and the groundcover **wild ginger**, *Asarum canadense*. For decorative bark, he suggested that you try **paper birch** (*Betula papyrifera*) and **Allegheny serviceberry** (*Amelanchier laevis*). If you're looking for decorative fruits, **red baneberry** (*Actaea rubra*) and **spikenard** (*Aralia racemosa*) are two possibilities.

Instead of the invasive exotic lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), choose **marsh marigold** (*Caltha palustris*), **green and gold** (*Chrysogonum virginianum*), **golden groundsel** or **golden ragwort** (*Senecio aureus*), or **golden Alexanders** (*Zizia aurea*). Substitute **American wisteria** (*Wisteria frutescens*) or **Kentucky wisteria** (*Wisteria macrostachys*) for the troublesome exotic Japanese wisteria.

For a cool color palette, try **hibiscus**, **monarda**, and **veronicastrum**. For warm colors, use **stylophorum** and **matteuccia**. **Eupatorium** and **phlox** are great for a complementary color scheme in the summer and fall, while **physotegia** and **solidago** present a contrasting scheme for that same time of year.

Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) and **bloodroot** (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) offer a prostrate form, while **columbine** (*Aquilegia canadensis* 'Corbett') and **bluestar** (*Amsonia*

(continued on page five)



From the President - Charles Smith

"The world does not exist merely to be written about, any more than it exists merely to be studied. It is real, before and after human work. What we write is finally to be measured by the health of what we write about. What we think we know affects the health of the thing we think we know."

- Wendell Berry, *Life is a Miracle*, p.87

The Nature Conservancy recently featured writings by religious people in its magazine. It is usually considered taboo to talk about religion in environmental circles. Either people are uncomfortable with religion in general or some extreme form (or person) with which they do not agree. But it was really nice to read the candid accounts written by fellow lovers of nature. None of the testimonials was preachy. They were simply people sharing something about who they are and their personal relationships with the natural world.

I have my own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that shape my relationship with the natural world. I will not share them here. But, I do encourage fellow members to think about what they believe and respect the beliefs of others. I firmly believe that the relationship that most of us have with plants and their ecosystems has a large spiritual side.

And if Wendell Berry's thought above is true, fostering that spiritual relationship could be one of the most important things we can do to preserve beauty in the natural world.

-Charles

Next Board Meeting

The next PWWS Board meeting will be held Monday, April 21 at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. All members are welcome to attend. For further information, call President Charles Smith at 703-361-5125.

VNPS Annual Meeting Update

A PWWS committee is beginning to make plans for hosting an exciting Virginia Native Plant Society annual meeting September 12-14. Field trips will feature Prince William County's diverse geography--mountains, piedmont, and coastal plain. Participants will choose from Bull Run Mountain, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Conway Robinson Memorial State Forest, Prince William Forest Park, Leesylvania State Park, and Occoquan Bay National Wildlife, as well as nature trails and possible garden tours. If you'd like to join the planning committee, call Charles Smith at 703-361-5125.

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

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Deadline for the May-June issue is April 25, 2003.
Mail information to Nancy Vehrs at 8318 Highland St.,
Manassas, VA 20110-3671 or send email to
nvehrs@attglobal.net.

January 20, 2003, Meeting Minutes

The Prince William Wildflower Society met on January 20, 2003, at Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas, Virginia for the annual members' slide show.

A brief business meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm. Treasurer Diane Flaherty presented her report.

President Charles Smith announced that House Bill 2154 in the Virginia State Legislature proposes that Game and Fisheries be subsumed under the Virginia Resources Commission. Revenues for license fees would be the only source of funding. Charles encouraged members to contact their state representatives to register their opinions. (*Ed. Note: The bill did not pass.*)

Botany Chair Marion Lobstein continues to rally Northern Virginia Community College biology and botany students to maintain the nature trail and wildflower garden at NVCC-Manassas campus. She welcomes donations of plants, particularly spring ephemerals and summer blooming plants. Contact Marion for more information.

Congratulations to Marion. She has been granted a one-semester sabbatical to devote full-time work on the Flora of Virginia Project. She plans to take the sabbatical in 2004.

Plant Sale Chair Nancy Arrington reminded members that the date for the PWWS annual plant sale is May 10, 2003. The sale will be held from 9 a.m. to noon on the grounds of Bethel Lutheran Church. She encouraged all to begin potting plants for the sale. A good target would be before the next meeting in March (if the snow is melted by then)!

Charles announced that we still need a Program Coordinator for the chapter. The Education and Conservation Chairs are also open. Contact Charles for more information and to volunteer.

Following the business meeting, Lou Staunton, Nicky Staunton, and Marion Lobstein

shared their pictures and adventures with all. Lou gave a tour of the plants and animals of Wildcat Mountain, a Nature Conservancy site in Fauquier County. Thanks to Lou for giving us a close-up of her home territory.

Nicky, a veteran visitor to Bruce Peninsula, Ontario, Canada, provided a glimpse of the beautiful scenery and plants, particularly orchids, which can be seen on this annual trip.

Marion took the group to the West Virginia highlands, including Cranberry Glades and the spruce forests, and also down the Blue Ridge Parkway and through the North Carolina mountains. She showed pictures of the deforestation of Mount Mitchell, due to acid rain and air pollution. Marion also shared pictures from a winter trip to Florida that included lots of plants, birds, and a gopher tortoise and a feral hog.

Many thanks to Martha Slover for taking the meeting notes for the minutes.

*Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte Cochard, Secretary*

Attendance: Nancy Arrington, Toni Crouch, Marie Davis, Diane Flaherty, Jeanne Fowler, Amy Hamilton, William Hendrickson, Rosie Jones, Marion Lobstein, Mary Sherman, Martha Slover, Charles Smith, Nicky Staunton, Lou Staunton, Linda Stoltz, Leo Stoltz, Mickey Sullivan, Nancy Vehrs, Helen Walter, Karen Waltman, Audrey Wilson

NVCC News

Our own Marion Lobstein recently learned that she is one of three NVCC faculty selected to receive a sabbatical for the academic year 2003-2004. She will take the sabbatical in spring 2004 to work on the *Flora of Virginia* Project.

Marion is working with her biology students at the NVCC-Manassas Campus on the Jack Finzel Wildflower Garden. This spring she would like additional wildflowers to plant in the garden. If you have native plants you would like to contribute to the garden, please let her know and she will arrange to pick them up from you. For more information, please call her at 703-536-7150 or e-mail her at mblobstein@earthlink.net.

Potowmack Chapter to Present Programs in March & April

The Potowmack Chapter of the VNPS offers the following upcoming programs that are free of charge with no reservations required:

March 13, 7:30 p.m.: "The Threat to Biodiversity from Invasive Alien Plants." Gain a better understanding of how invasive alien plants affect biodiversity in a program presented by Dr. Faith Campbell of the American Lands Alliance. Library at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, 6560 Braddock Road. (From the Beltway, go east on Rt. 236, Little River Turnpike, and turn right on Braddock Road.) 703-534-8179.

April 10, 7:30 p.m.: "Wildflowers for Beginners" at Green Spring Gardens Park. Marianne Mooney and Mary Ann Lawlor will help novices learn to identify native plants using field guides and keys. They will present a slide show on some of the more common and beautiful of local wildflowers with information on where to find them. On Saturday, **April 12** they will lead a follow up "Wildflower Walk for Beginners" at 2 p.m. at Turkey Run. Program location may change; contact Marianne at 703-534-8179 for latest info.

Other Events of Interest

March 13: "Land Conservation for Rural Areas" talk by Leslie Grayson of the Va. Outdoors Foundation, 7:30 p.m., Manassas Mall Community Room. Free. 703-367-0069.

March 29: 17th Annual Lahr Symposium on Native Plants: "The Future of Earth's Gardens," National Arboretum, \$70. For program brochure and registration form, call 202-245-5898, or visit www.usna.usda.gov/Education/events.html#March.

March 29: Native Plant Sale, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the National Arboretum's Administration Building East Terrace, 202-245-5898.

March 30, April 20, and May 18: Walks at Great Falls Park, VA led by Marion Lobstein, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. For more information and to make reservations, call her at 703-536-7150 or e-mail her at mblobstein@earthlink.net.

April 12: Wildflower Walk, Bull Run Mountain, FoBR, 10 a.m.-12 noon. \$10 fee, registration required, www.fobr.org, 703-753-2631.

April 12: Tour of Fern Valley at the National Arboretum with native plant curator Joan Feeley, 10 a.m. - 12 noon. Meet at Fern Valley Native Plant Collection. Free. Registration required. www.usna.usda.gov/Education/registform.html. 202-245-5898.

April 13: Annual Bluebell Walk, Bull Run Regional Park, Centreville, 2 p.m., non-resident park admission; walk is free, 703-528-5406.

April 20: Wildflower Walk at Balls Bluff, VA led by Marion Lobstein, 2:30 p.m. For more information and to make reservations, call her at 703-536-7150 or e-mail her at mblobstein@earthlink.net.

April 25: Prince William Forest Park Birding and Wildflower Walk, Audubon Naturalist Society, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. \$34 for non-members. 301-652-9188, x16.

April 26: *Spring Fling* Gardening Extravaganza sponsored by the Prince William Extension Office, Prince William County Fairgrounds, Manassas, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Displays, educational booths, vendors. Free. PWWS will participate with an information booth. 703-792-7747.

April 27: Bull Run Ramble at Hemlock Overlook Park in Clifton, 1-3 p.m. 703-803-8400.

May 9-11: 20th Annual Spring Wildflower Symposium presented by the Wintergreen Nature Foundation and Wintergreen Resort, registration fee. 434-325-7451, www.twmf.org.

May 10-11: Shenandoah National Park's Wildflower Weekend. Programs free, park entrance fee. 540-999-3397, <http://www.nps.gov/shen/2g1.htm>

May 17: "Ferns and Friends," Bull Run Mountain, FoBR, \$10 fee, registration required, www.fobr.org, 703-753-2631.

(**Native Alternatives**, continued from page one) *tabernaemontana*) present mounding forms. For spiky forms, try **bugbane** (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) or **prairie blazing star** (*Liatris pycnostachya*).

To achieve different kinds of textures, choose **goatsbeard** (*Aruncus dioicus*) and **prairie dropseed** (*sporobolus heterolepis*) for a fine texture or **pickerel weed** (*Pontederia cordata*) and **umbrella leaf** (*Diphyllia cymosa*) for a bold one. **Bowman's root** (*Porteranthus trifolius*) and **winecups** (*Callirhoe involucrata*) can provide medium texture.

Phlox and **sweetbay** (*Magnolia virginiana*) lend fragrance, while **prairie smoke** (*Geum triflorum*) and **prairie dropseed** (*sporobolus heterolepis*) provide luminescence.

Some of these plants will be offered for sale at the chapter's annual plant sale in May. For other sources, check out the *Source List for Native Plants* on the VNPS website, www.vnps.org.

Rue Anemone for the Garden

The lovely, fragile-looking rue anemone (*Anemonella thalictroides*) is actually one of the easiest plants we can grow in our woodland gardens. An exceptionally long blooming season adds to its desirability.

It grows naturally in the humus-rich, often stony soil of deciduous woodlands. Plants are six to ten inches tall with clusters of half-inch white flowers above a whorl of small three-lobed stem leaves. Slender wiry stems allow flowers to move with the slightest breeze giving it the common name windflower. Flowering begins in late April along with the early spring ephemerals including bloodroot, toothwort, and spring beauty, but unlike these which bloom for two to three weeks before going dormant, rue anemone continues blooming into early June.

In the garden, as in its native habitats, rue anemone will be happy in a slightly acid, humus-rich soil that drains well. Plant it under deciduous trees where it will get full sun in early spring and filtered shade or at least afternoon shade after the trees leaf out. A site that dries out in summer

when plants are dormant will be fine as long as the soil stays slightly moist through the blooming period. A single plant will soon increase into a sizeable clump and self-sown seedlings will form nice colonies.

Rue anemone should be carefully located so it isn't lost among larger and more robust wildflowers. Give it highly visible spots at the edges of woodland beds or beside paths. It's very effective planted among small rocks or nestled against stumps or tree trunks. Combine it with other wildflowers of similar stature including bloodroot, hepatica, partridgeberry, and spring beauty.

Propagate rue anemone by careful separation of the tuberous roots while plants are dormant. Be sure each division has an eye. Collect seed in early summer just before plants go dormant and sow in flats or pots and leave outdoors through the winter. Available selections include "Schoaf's Double Pink" with tiny, deep pink, long lasting pompoms, and "Flora Plena," a rare white double.

-Nancy Arrington

(Ed. Note: The preceding article is an abridged version of the original that was printed in the March-April 1994 edition of *Wild News*.)

Garden Tours Sunday, Apr. 27

It's hard to believe after the long snowy winter we've had, but the annual spring garden tours are just around the corner. Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 27 from noon to 5 p.m. Former PWWS President Helen Walter will have her Occoquan Forest garden on tour for the first time. Two other gardens will also be featured.

Tour brochures with directions will be mailed to all members in April and information will be posted on the VNPS website at www.vnps.org. To request additional copies of the brochures once they are available, contact Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898, email nvehrs@attglobal.net.

Volunteers are always needed. Call Nancy to volunteer your services as a host or to bring refreshments.

Sign Up for the *Flora of Virginia* Symposium April 11

For many plant lovers, there is no such thing as too many books about plants. Books on gardening fill the niche for practical uses of plants, and the books on plant lore satisfy our need to know the stories behind plant uses. But, what if you wanted one book that described plants found in Virginia; where would you turn? Not since John Clayton wrote *Flora Virginica* in 1743 has there been one book that described every plant known to grow in Virginia. In a few years, Virginia will have such a resource, the *Flora of Virginia*.

Currently over 3700 species have been documented in uncultivated areas of Virginia, making Virginia one of the most botanically diverse states in the United States. Illustrating, describing, and organizing this vast plant collection will be the task of The Flora of Virginia Project. Botanists and illustrators will research, describe, and illustrate the trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses of our woods, meadows, and wetlands. The multi-year project is estimated to cost \$1.8 million to produce both print and digital versions.

High on the list of priorities for the Foundation of the State Arboretum is to support education about the plants of the Commonwealth. Led by past FOSA Presidents, Charlotte Miller

and Joslin Gallatin, we have organized a symposium to illustrate the diverse botanical riches of Virginia and to support the development of an updated and complete flora of Virginia.

We invite you to explore Virginia's botanical diversity on April 11, when the Foundation of the State Arboretum of Virginia hosts the symposium, the *Flora of Virginia*. From 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., four botanical experts will take you from the past to the present and from the coast to the mountains. The symposium will inform and delight; and, just as importantly, net proceeds from the symposium will support the development and publication of a manual, *The Flora of Virginia*.

The first speaker, Dr. Donna Ware, will take us back in time to when the colonists first encountered and documented the rich botanical resources of Virginia's wetlands, meadows and woods. Oaks and maples abound in our forests, but what about the rare plants found only in selected habitats? John Townsend, chief botanist with the Natural Heritage Program, will describe the rare plants, some of which may be threatened by development.

After a delicious lunch prepared under the leadership of Arboretum volunteer, Liz Hinkley, Dr. Ruth Douglas, Professor Emerita at Piedmont Virginia Community College and Coordinator, Invasive Plant Project, VNPS, will address the threats of invasive plants in our natural plant communities. Next to loss of habitat to development, invasive plants like English ivy, kudzu, and honeysuckle overrun natural habitats and threaten the existence of native Virginia flora.

Dr. Chris Ludwig will conclude the symposium with a presentation on the *Flora of Virginia* Project. Producing a flora of Virginia is a long overdue and ambitious effort to document, describe, and illustrate the plants of Virginia and their habitats.

Invite a friend to join you for the day. Call the main office of the State Arboretum of Virginia at 540-837-1758, ext 23, to register. The \$75 fee includes all four lectures and lunch. The registration deadline is Friday, April 4.

-Marion Lobstein



Hepatica
(*Hepatica americana*)

RUE ANEMONE

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

One of the most common early spring wildflowers is the delicate rue anemone or windflower (*Anemonella thalictroides*). This lovely member of the buttercup family (*Ranunculaceae*) can be found blooming in woodlands, often in thin rocky soil, from mid to late March into May. The range of this species is from Maine to Florida and west to Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Minnesota. The genus name of *Anemonellae* means "small anemone," referring to the resemblance to true anemone and the species name *thalictroides* means "Thalictrum-like," because of the similarity of the leaves to that of members of the *Thalictrum* or meadowrue genus. It is called *Thalictrum thalictroides* in the *Atlas of the Virginia Flora*.

The white to pink one-half to almost one inch disk-shaped flowers are borne in groups of three with the center flower blooming first. The 5-10 "petals" are actually petaloid sepals. There are numerous stamens with yellow anthers arranged in a spiral pattern as are the 4-15 separate female parts, the carpels. The flowers are scentless and nectarless, but are insect pollinated. The disk-shape of the flowers is very common in many spring wildflowers such as spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) and the attraction of insects may be a type of mimicry of species that are good nectar producers such as the spring beauty. The fruits that develop from each carpel are small achenes. At maturity the achenes fall to the forest floor, and, like *Hepatica americana* and other similar members of the buttercup family, may have the seeds secondarily dispersed by ants.

The delicate four to eight inch tall wiry stems quiver in even a gently breeze, thus the name windflower. Below each group of flowers, there are 2-3 opposite or whorled leaves that are ternately (three times divided) compound. The

delicate leaflets each have three rounded lobes. Fibrous root systems have tuberous structures developing below the origin of the stem or stems. Basal leaves which may or may not be compounded are often present on older plants.

There have been few herbal and edible uses of rue anemone. Teas from the roots were used by some Indian tribes to treat diarrhea and vomiting, and some herbalists have recommended root preparation to treat piles or hemorrhoids. Some Native American tribes apparently did consider the tuberous structures of the roots edible.

The NVCC-Manassas Campus Nature Trail is an excellent place to see this delicate woodland wildflower blooming along with hepatica (*Hepatica americana*), which blooms a little earlier, spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), early saxifrage (*Saxifraga virginensis*), and plaintain-leaved pussytoes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*). In 1992 I had one of my photographs of rue anemones taken on the nature trail included in the Postal Services book that accompanied the wildflower stamps issued that year. Enjoy this lovely spring wildflower, but if you want to photograph it, be sure it is a still day or you, too, will be calling this delicate-stemmed species the windflower!



Volunteers Needed to Fill Important Board Positions

PWWS needs members to serve in the important positions of Conservation Chair, Education Chair, and Program Chair, respectively. Incumbents can tailor the positions to their interests and level of expertise. A Hospitality Chair is also needed. Contact Charles Smith at 703-361-5125 for more information.

Volunteer for Spring Fling April 26

PWWS needs volunteers to staff its exhibit at *Spring Fling*, a gardening extravaganza held at the Prince William County Fairgrounds and sponsored by the Prince William Extension Office. Sign up at the March meeting or call Charles at 703-361-5125.

Plant Sale May 10

The annual PWWS plant sale is scheduled for the morning of Saturday, May 10 on the grounds of Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas. Plant Sale Chairman Nancy Arrington will have plant labels to distribute at the March meeting. Members with leftover plant labels who do not plan to use them should bring them to the meeting or communicate with Nancy Arrington at 703-368-8431 regarding label use at this year's sale.

Once again the sale will include many native shrubs, trees, and aquatic plants in addition to traditional native perennials for shady, sunny, wet, and dry conditions.

For best success, members donating plants should pot them up at least two weeks prior to the sale. Call Nancy Arrington with numbers and types of plants. Bring plants to the sale prior to 7:30 a.m. on May 10 or arrange for prior pickup. Extra volunteers and plant donors are always needed; contact Nancy for more information.

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



exp. 10/03

Nancy Arrington
8388 Briarmont Lane
Manassas, VA 20112-2755



**Next Meeting: 7:30 p.m., Monday, March 17, Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas
"Bull Run Mountain"**