



WILD NEWS

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

Number 2003-05

September-October 2003

ANNUAL PICNIC MEETING

The PWWS annual meeting will be held on Sunday, October 26 at 1 p.m. at Stuart's Hill in the Manassas National Battlefield Park. A pot luck picnic, business meeting, plant swap, and walk are all on the agenda. An insert has been included with this newsletter, and it contains further information about the annual meeting, including detailed directions, as well as a ballot.

Members will vote on the budget for the next year as well as elect the new nominating committee for the years 2003-2005. Short biographies of the nominees, Carol Nelson, Linda Stoltz, and Karen Waltman, are also inside.

Can't attend the meeting? Please return your self-mailer ballot. Simply mark, fold, tape, stamp, and drop it in a mailbox by the deadline of October 20 to ensure a quorum for the election.

Call President Charles Smith at 703-361-5125 for additional information.

LOOKING AHEAD

November Meeting

Mark your calendar now for the November 17 meeting at Bethel Lutheran Church at 7:30 p.m. The program has not yet been set. See the next edition of *Wild News* for details.

FALLING OAKS

This year a large southern red oak, three and a half feet in diameter, fell across Woodland Avenue at the junction with Sumpter Street (in Lynchburg), just a block from my home. This huge monarch had snapped off at ground level. There were few roots visible; instead, there was a gaping hole with evidence of fungal growth on the matted dead roots. Although inconvenienced since I had to walk home from this point, I was more intrigued since another of these apparently healthy oaks just across the street had crashed last fall; again, with few living roots. There was no splintering of the trunk, no strong winds involved, but the massive oak had just toppled over. Why? This set me on a trail to try to find a reasonable explanation.

In talking with Don Davis, our city extension agent, I learned that a half dozen large oaks in Miller Park in the City of Lynchburg had met their demise in a similar manner. The internet was helpful in providing some current facts on diseases of oaks and other hardwoods. Even more enlightening was the information presented in Charles E. Little's book, *The Dying of the Trees*.

The pathogen or fungal causative agent of these root and butt rot diseases of hardwoods is caused by a basic diomycete, which is probably a species of *Armillaria*, perhaps *A. calvescens*. This fungus may be spread by direct contact of the fungal threads (Mycelia) in the soil or by growth of fungal strands through the soil to uninfected trees or by spores. The most apparent observable signs of distress is the dieback of twigs and branches in hardwoods.

There is a large oak just outside the Randolph-Macon Woman's College Botanic

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From the President - Charles Smith

My Two Cents

I want to thank all of our members who made the VNPS Annual Meeting happen. I was very impressed by the response by our membership. The event went well due to all of you who helped plan, prepare, purchase, put things together, haul, bake, sort, organize, and do. I hope that I do not miss anyone:

Nancy Vehrs, Marion Lobstein, Nancy Arrington, Helen Walter, Nicky Staunton, Martha Slover, Leo Stoltz, Linda Stoltz, Amy Hamilton, Carol Nelson, Ron Nelson, Chris Thompson, Gina Yurkonis, Charlotte Cochard, Bill Hendrickson, Mary Sherman, Wendy Pierce, Joyce Andrew, Karen Waltman, Diane Flaherty, Jeanne Endrikat, Joann Krumviede, June Najjum, Tiana Camfiord, Toni Crouch, Elaine Haug, Claudia Thompson-Deahl, Sue Smith, and Rosie Jones.

For all of the worrying in advance, I enjoyed the annual meeting: working with PWWS members, seeing folks from around the state whom I hadn't seen in some time, and meeting people whom I had never met. One of the best experiences was on Saturday afternoon.

I was on the Occoquan-Leesylvania field trip, and only five of our group went to Leesylvania for the second part of the field trip. All five of us were from different chapters, and we were mostly meeting for the first time. I have been to Leesylvania a number of times, but the group decided to walk part of the Brushy Point Trail, which I had never been on. We managed to cover about 200 feet of board walk in 1½ hours. It was fantastic. We saw bald eagles, osprey, green frogs, damsel flies, Virginia dayflower, three species of dogwood, several viburnums, two hollies, sunflowers, climbing hempweed, dodder,

and the largest sweetgum trees any of us had ever seen.

To me, it is experiences such as that which makes the annual meeting worthwhile.

-Charles

Thanks to President

Many thanks to President Charles Smith for all of his efforts in coordinating this year's VNPS annual meeting. Well done!

No Board Meeting

There is no PWWS Board meeting scheduled for the month of October.

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

President	Charles Smith, 703-361-5125 chrissmith@juno.com
Vice President	Martha Slover, 571-238-5713
Secretary	Charlotte Cochard, 703-330-6960
Treasurer	Diane Flaherty, 703-330-9862
Botany	Marion Lobstein, 703-536-7150
Conservation	OPEN
Education	OPEN
Flora Liaison	Regina Yurkonis, 540-937-2312
Historian	Robyn Thoreson, 703-335-1015
Hospitality	OPEN
Membership	Nancy Vehrs, 703-368-2898
Programs	OPEN
Plant Sale	Nancy Arrington, 703-368-8431
Publicity	Leo Stoltz, 703-791-6175
Refreshments	Joann Krumviede, 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 Nov-Dec issue is **November 1, 2003**. Mail information to Nancy Vehrs at 8318 Highland St., Manassas, VA 20110-3671 or send email to nvehrs@attglobal.net.

July 21, 2003, Meeting Minutes

The Prince William Wildflower Society met on July 21, 2003, at Conference Room A, Prince William Hospital. President Charles Smith began the meeting at 7:45 p.m. by introducing the guest speaker, Ginny Lellinger and welcoming her husband Dave Lellinger. Ms. Lellinger, the "fern lady," conducts programs for the Audubon Naturalist Society and teaches a course on ferns and fern allies for the USDA Graduate School. Her presentation to the PWWS membership was an interesting overview of the world of ferns and fern allies. She familiarized us with fern habitats and structures and then took us on a slide show tour of the ferns and fern allies that we can see in this area by season and year-round.

The slide show featured approximately 25 different ferns and fern allies including cinnamon, interrupted, rattlesnake, fragile, ostrich, Christmas fern, club mosses, and many more. She gave us key identification features of many of the like-alike ferns such as the hay-scented and lady ferns to include the appearances of fertile and sterile fronds and the shapes and location of the sorus. Following the presentation and a question and answer period, the attendees broke for refreshments.

The membership reconvened for a short business meeting.

Nancy Vehrs announced that the Summer Garden Tours were held on Sunday, July 20, 2003, at the Najjum, Sepkowski, and Teels gardens. She expressed her thanks to all who helped with the event. Although the total attendance seemed less than previous years, there was a strong turn-out at individual gardens.

Charles Smith announced that the PWWS Board approved a \$750 donation now to the *Flora of Virginia* Project with the intent to send more later if the chapter balance permits.

No Treasurer Report was available.

Charles announced that the VNPS Annual Meeting registration forms will be mailed soon. PWWS is hosting the meeting in Manassas from 12 to 14 September 2003. Everyone in the PWWS chapter is needed to help with meeting plans and

events. A planning meeting and working session is scheduled for August 11, 2003, 7:30 p.m., at Bethel Lutheran Church. Jobs will be assigned and small groups will work on specific details. Closer to the event, more help will be needed with the field trips. Knowledgeable trip leaders are identified for all field trips. For the Friday night event, the chapter will provide desserts and coffee. Chapter members working at the meeting events will be required to also register. The registration fee for Friday and Saturday nights and the field trips is \$69.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte Cochard, Secretary*

Attendance: Nancy Arrington, Tom Attanaro, Tiana Camfiord, Charlotte Cochard, Jeanne Endrikat, Amy Hamilton, William Hendrickson, Frances Louer, Phil Louer, June Najjum, David Nanney, Leslie Nanney, Wendy Pierce, Charles Smith, Linda Stoltz, Leo Stoltz, Nancy Vehrs, Karen Waltman

Membership Dues

Are your dues up to date? See your mailing label for membership expiration date and renew accordingly.

Welcome New Members

PWWS welcomes its members who joined recently:

Joanne Balint, Manassas
Phyllis Boyd, Gainesville
William Holbrook, Woodbridge
John Litten, Manassas
Joan Makurat, Fairfax
Tom Peterman, Manassas
John Strecker, Manassas

Citizens Guide to Invasive Plant Control Now Available

According to the Sept/Oct edition of *Claytonia*, the newsletter for the John Clayton Chapter, a new booklet for citizen organizations on invasive plant control is available from the Alliance from the Chesapeake Bay. This booklet uses a case study format to describe restoration projects that successfully deploy volunteers to control invasive plants. It also provides an overview of invasive plant control methods in riparian and wetland settings, and offers information on volunteer recruitment, deployment and retention.

The guide is free, but to cover postage cost, a charge of \$2 will be applied per guidebook. To order copies of the publication, contact the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay by phone at 804-775-0951, or by e-mail at hmilliken@acb-online.org.

Note from Nicky

To each of my fellow Prince William Wildflower Society friends,

The 21st Annual Meeting of VNPS was "the best!" Thank you for all of the gifts of time, self, spirit and flowers that you shared with me and your fellow members from near and far. As from the start of our group in 1982, kindred spirits have fun, help native plants and share.

The thoughtful gift of an 1893 "How to Know the Wild Flowers" from "a lady who left it at the desk" tells about the thoughtfulness of someone who knows my multiple affection for old books, wild flowers and illustrations. It is a treasured reminder of friendship.

As I complete this 3-year term, I leave it riding on a humongous wave of wildflowers and warm feelings and gratitude.

Thank you from Nicky
VNPS President

And THANK YOU, Nicky for all your service!

Events of Interest

October 4 - 5: Multi-State Fall Conference sponsored by the Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia Native Plant Societies and National Park Service. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. This conference will focus on how the Potomac River connects three states, rather than divides them. Registration fee. For more information, contact Meghan Tice, 2003 Regional Conference Chair, cecropia13@msn.com, or 301-809-0139, Maryland Native Plant Society, PO Box 25, Bowie, MD 20719.

October 6: Trees That Please. Trees, the right ones, can enhance your property while creating shade, providing bird habitat, or that seasonal WOW from colorful foliage, flowers, or fruit. Sara Howell takes you on a colorful tour of small and large trees that fit the urban landscape and grow easily in the Prince William area. 7 - 8:30 p.m. Community Room, Bull Run Regional Library, 8051 Ashton Avenue, Manassas, Free; Registration required, 703-792-6289.

October 18: Get Nuts for Clean Water! People throughout the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay region will be helping to restore native forests, one acorn at a time. Join thousands of Growing Native volunteers who will collect native tree seeds, which will be used to grow seedlings for restoration projects throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Native forests ensure cleaner water far in the future. For more information, visit www.growingnative.org.

October 23: Potomac Chapter Annual Meeting with a presentation by Jim Long, coordinator of Friends of Mattawoman Creek, on "Magnolia Bogs - Gems of the Fall Line." 7:30 p.m., Green Spring Gardens Park, Alexandria.

October 25: Rod Simmons, noted field ecologist, will lead a walk at the magnolia bog in Franconia/Springfield from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. For more information, call 703-256-5671.

Falling Oaks

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Garden, which has an excessive amount of dead and dying branches that continually litter the lawn and the edge of the garden. Thirty or more years ago, an oak had died in this spot. I was told that the disease of this oak was spread by root contact and within a few years several other oaks had died in a similar manner. I never saw the roots of the previous tree, but suspect that it probably showed evidence of root decay and fungal growth. How long will the present oak remain standing before it, too, succumbs to root rot?

Although the fungus is the primary cause of the decay of the usually swollen butt, other agents may be involved. An urban setting is not an ideal environment for the growth of an oak, which is usually a component of a forest. Acid rain, smog, and other types of pollution may affect the vigor and health of the tree. In a city, lawns are frequently limed since grass grows best under alkaline conditions while oaks prefer deep fertile soils on the acidic side. In addition, compaction of soils and pollutants from rain water contaminated with street drainage may be of significance. How many more oaks that add so much to the beauty of our city lawns and streets will be lost in the coming years?

Charles Little describes how the oak and other hardwoods in the mixed mesophytic forest of the eastern United States are weakened by pollution and how ozone and the altering of the carbon/nitrogen ratio and the resulting root growth is impaired. The fungi grow rapidly in the weakened tissue. This results in the decay and rotting of the roots and the eventual toppling of the tree.

The death of the oaks is not an isolated incident, but major forest trees are dying at an unprecedented rate, from the California coast to the sugar maples in New England to the eastern mesophytic forest. In a few words, our forests are dying.

The disastrous changes taking place in our forest is clearly described in Mr. Little's book, which is available in most libraries and may be

purchased in many bookstores.

-Dorothy C. Bliss

(Ed. note: The preceding article was originally printed in the July 2003 edition of the newsletter of the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society, a chapter of VNPS. It is reprinted with permission.)

Native for the Garden - Pink Turtlehead

White turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*), native to most of the eastern U.S., is an attractive garden-worthy perennial, but I'd like to recommend the pink turtlehead (*c. lyonii*). Though this species is native to a restricted area of rich spruce-fir forests and stream banks in the southern Appalachian mountains, it is hardy and adaptable and has naturalized in parts of New England where it has been cultivated in gardens.



Turtlehead

Pink turtlehead is 2-3' tall and each plant will expand to a sizable clump in a few years. Stems are clothed with shiny, dark green, lance-shaped leaves that are up to 5" long and about 2" wide. Terminal clusters of 1" along 2-lipped pink flowers begin blooming in September and continue into October. The upper part of the flower is curved and when viewed from the side resembles a snake's or turtle's head. The lower part is flat with darker pink lines and yellow hairs. Flower clusters also appear in the opposite leaf axils or on short stems at these axils.

Grow pink turtlehead in low, constantly

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(*Turtlehead* - continued from page 5)

moist areas or beside streams or ponds. Amend the soil with organic matter such as compost, leafmold, manure, or rotted sawdust and mulch to retain moisture. Plants will bloom in lightly shaded settings, but flowering will be better in full sun. This species is long-lived and doesn't need division to remain healthy.

Pink turtlehead is a good companion for other moisture-lovers including blue lobelia (*L. siphilitica*), ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*), and seashore mallow (*Kosteletzkya virginica*). Foliage is attractive through the summer and is pretty with ferns such as cinnamon, royal, and marsh that thrive in wet areas.

Turtlehead can be propagated by division of the roots in early spring or by cuttings taken before flowering. Seeds need a 6-week moist period (stratification) and can be sown outdoors in late fall. Seed that has been stored dry through the winter can be sowed in small pots or flats, watered, covered with plastic, and refrigerated for 6 weeks. Seed will germinate when placed in a warm room.

Seedlings usually bloom during their second year.
-Nancy Arrington

(Ed. note: The preceding article was originally printed in the Sept-Oct 1991 edition of Wild News.)

Summer Garden Tours

Pleasant summer weather was on tap for the third annual summer garden tour July 20. Many thanks to our gardeners, June Najjum, Sharon and Steven Sepkowski, and Phyllis and Billy Teels for opening their lovely gardens to us. Also, thanks go to Nancy Arrington, Tiana Camfiord, Charlotte Cochard, Marie Davis, Rose Schwitzer, Charles Smith, Nancy Vehrs, and Helen Walter for serving as tour hosts, and Marie Davis, Jeanne Fowler, Amy Hamilton, Judy Jellen, and Nancy Vehrs for providing refreshments. Many visitors delighted in June's novel plant markers, miniature painted clay pots set upside down on dowels.

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

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



exp. 10/0.

Nancy Arrington
3388 Briarmont Lane
Manassas, VA 20112-2755



**Next Meeting: 1 p.m., Sunday, October 26, Manassas National Battlefield Park
"Annual Picnic Meeting"**