

WILD NEWS



Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2005-02

March-April 2005

MARCH 21 MEETING

Be sure to mark your calendars for the March program, "Current Issues in Beekeeping," which will be presented by *John Strecker and Tom Berry*, local beekeepers and members of the Prince William-Stafford Beekeepers Association. They will discuss plants for pollen and nectar, the role of honeybees in pollination, pests and diseases, and other topics pertaining to beekeeping in Prince William County.

The meeting, which is open to the general public, will be held on the usual third Monday of the month, **March 21, at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church**, located at the corner of Sudley Road (Rte. 234) and Plantation Lane in Manassas.

For more information, contact chapter president *Charles Smith* at 703/361-5125.

-*Nancy Arrington*

JANUARY MEETING

The Prince William Wildflower Society (PWWS) met on January 17, 2005 at Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas, Virginia for the annual members' slide show. (This year it was a fully digital show.) President *Charles Smith* welcomed everyone and *Nicky Staunton* kicked off the presentations with a

visual introduction to some of the key participants in the Flora of Virginia project. Coauthors *Alan Weakley*, UNC Herbarium curator and *Chris Ludwig*, chief biologist, Va. DCR-DNH; *Lara Gasting*, illustrator; and others who shared a field trip to Difficult Creek, a Virginia Natural Heritage Stewardship site in Halifax County near the North Carolina border. Among the featured wildflowers were the rare Barbara's Buttons (*Marshallia grandiflora*) and Rattlesnake Master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*.) An extra treat was a series of photos of Alan's 2-year-old daughter discovering an Io moth.

Martha Slover's recent canoe trip in Florida allowed PWWS members to experience a sampling of Florida's rivers, flora, and fauna. Martha reported seeing some evidence of hurricane damage during her trip. Rainbow Springs, near Ocala, and Alexander Springs, near Orlando, were among the settings for the canoe-side views that she gave us. Martha emphasized the diversity of eco-systems that she experienced at Silver Springs and included photos of cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) growing in water.

Don and Kathy Ehrenberger took a 12,246-mile road trip in August and September that included a track from Michigan's upper peninsula, up into Canada, across to Washington, Oregon, and northern California coast, and headed back east through Idaho and Wyoming. Thanks to the features of digital display technology, the members enjoyed the "Flowers Along the Way" story of their

tour and labeled the images with the common and botanical names of their discoveries. Along the way, they found the forests, parks, wildflower trails and landscapes packed with "postcard-like" scenes, and the PWWS members enjoyed traveling with them.

During a break in the presentations, Charles made and asked for announcements: The **March 21st PWWS meeting** will feature a presentation on beekeeping. Saturday, April 23, 2005 is the annual **Prince William "Spring Fling."** PWWS will participate.

Sunday, April 24th is the date for the PWWS Spring Gardens Tour. PWWS Plant Sale is on Saturday, May 7, 2005, on the lawn of the Bethel Lutheran Church. *Nancy Arrington* added that there would be a class on beekeeping at the Coles Firehouse in early March.

Nicky Staunton reported that fundraisers for the Flora Project are planned. One is on March 4, 2005 in Charlottesville in conjunction with an exhibit of Lara Gastinger's works. She also reported that VNPS is halfway toward raising the \$10,000 donation to sponsor a rare Virginia native. The annual VNPS workshop is February 26 at the University of Richmond. *Nicky* added that the Brice trip is still open but the Newfoundland trip is full.

Marion Lobstein announced that she is teaching the Field Botany course this summer, as well as an eight-week course for the National Audubon Society. The wildflower garden at the NVSCC Manassas campus benefited from a cleanup by students and still is in need of plants.

During the break, members enjoyed refreshments prepared by Joann Krumviede. Amy Hamilton, Laura Farron, Don Ehrenberger, and Phil Louer won the beautiful door prizes from the National Wildlife Federation.

Marion rounded out the evening's presentations with images from her May trip to the Breaks Interstate Park, a joint Virginia and Kentucky park on the border. In addition to beautiful pictures

including the huge Dutchman's Pipe vine (*Aristolochia macrophylla*) and *Galax* in bloom, Marion introduced us to a shot of a "real McCoy," a member of the infamous family in town for a Hatfield-McCoy reunion.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Attending were: Charles Smith, Joann Krumviede, Nicky Staunton, Kathy Ehrenberger, Don Ehrenberger, Jennifer Shepard, Jeanne Fowler, Stan Fowler, Nancy Arrington, Deanna High, Diane Flaherty, Laura Farron, Bonnie Nahas, William Hendrickson, John Pauswinski, Nancy Vehrs, Helen Walter, Frances Louer, Phil Louer, Martha Slover, Marion Lobstein.

-Charlotte Cochard

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Charles Smith

Between snow events I was fortunate to attend the VNPS annual workshop in Richmond on February 26. It was a good opportunity to visit briefly with old VNPS acquaintances and to meet a few new people. The speakers really sparked great discussion and it was also a chance to celebrate several milestones.

The first was the presentation of a check for \$10,000 from VNPS to our first speaker, *Kathryn Kennedy*, president and executive director of the Center for Plant Conservation, to sponsor the rare plant harparella (*Ptilimnium nodosum*). With this act, VNPS became the first native plant society to sponsor a rare plant in the United States.

The second milestone was an open and frank discussion about plant conservation: protection in situ, ex situ, and reintroduction. I have not heard this discussion in a VNPS venue before. In situ preservation is protecting a plant where it is naturally occurring. This is truly the most important step that can be taken. If we can maintain "multiple, robust populations in the wild" (to quote Kathryn), then we have the best chance of preserving the species, the system(s) it lives in and the other organisms that may depend upon it. If you cannot preserve a plant in situ, then

you must consider ex situ preservation. Ex situ from a rare plant to be stored, grown, and studied out of its natural environment in order to save the species. The ultimate goal of ex situ preservation is to preserve the species in the broadest possible genetic spectrum and to reintroduce that species into the wild. Reintroductions could occur in locations where the plant was previously known to occur, or into a habitat that is considered appropriate.

I was pleased to hear and take part in this discussion. Organisms go extinct at a fairly regular rate. But the current rate of extinction is far above the average, and it is the result of human agency.

The workshop speakers essentially reinforced that just as human activities and human related factors (such as the introduction of invasive species) are the primary threats to sensitive species, we also must take an active role in preservation and restoration where possible.

The workshop also reinforced the importance of organizations like VNPS that foster a love of the resources, discussion, education and, hopefully, action to protect our natural heritage. But it was also a reminder that we must do much more. We cannot just preach to the choir—we must reach out to those who through ignorance or indifference do not do what they can to protect our natural heritage. We must also be educated consumers and advocates that help policy makers and those who work in businesses and industries that impact the land to make wise decisions and end damaging practices.

This last part is often the hardest. The most courageous person at the workshop was a lady who represents the Virginia Nurserymen's Association. She said that she would really like to help promote better practices to limit sales of invasive plants, but that nurserymen always feel on the defensive because native plant advocates see them as the bad guys and want them to stop selling many plants for which they do not know of an alternative. I told her that I really appreciated her work. I recognized that we need to try to work

preservation involves collecting seed and/or tissue together and that this will take effort on both sides. Wildlife advocates can do a better job identifying issues and finding solutions rather than pointing fingers. But I also told her that sometimes, folks are just going to have to recognize that there may be no alternative for a damaging plant or practice. This is where recognition may be the beginning of change.

-Charles

THE SEARCH IS OVER

With this issue of *Wild News*, PWWS welcomes its new editor, *Deanna High*. She heard my plea for a replacement, and she graciously volunteered her services. Deanna is a professional editor and currently works for a trade association downtown. She's a lifelong lover of nature and spent her childhood running barefoot along the banks of a bayou in Louisiana. She and her family were introduced to PWWS through the garden tours, and she credits *Marie Davis's* friendliness and passion for native plants with her positive impression of the society. Deanna has gardened for many years, but her large woodland garden in the Manassas area created special challenges when she moved here seven years ago. She has learned about shade gardening and the natives that thrive there. She also attended some of *Marion Lobstein's* guided walks to expand her knowledge of natives.

Deanna has many ideas for enhancing the newsletter, but expects this to be an evolutionary process. She would like to continue the feature articles on selected plants and expand use of pictures and photographs. She plans to scrutinize other newsletters and sources to incorporate the "best of the rest," and introduce us to regional or even international issues. As an example of her commitment, she has enrolled in Greenspring's Garden Writing Workshop this month, which *Cole Burrell* is co-teaching. She looks forward to incorporating member ideas and suggestions as well.

We'll look for good things ahead in the months to come. Of course, she *will* need *our* cooperation in writing articles and sending items of interest.

Welcome aboard, Deanna!

-Nancy Vehrs

PREPARE FOR PLANT SALE SATURDAY MAY 7

The **annual PWWS plant sale** is schedule for Saturday, May 7 from 9 a.m. —noon on the grounds of Bethel Lutheran Church on Plantation Lane in Manassas. Plant Sale chairman *Nancy Arrington* will have plant labels and instruction sheets for distribution at the March membership meeting. Please consider donating plants for the sale. In addition to traditional native perennials and ferns, native trees, shrubs, and aquatic plants will be sold. Contact *Charles Smith*, 703/361-5125 about trees and shrubs for the sale. Shade plants and species that attract butterflies and hummingbirds always sell well.

Members donating plants are urged to coordinate with *Nancy Arrington*, 703/368-8431 (narrington@starpower.net) to label and price their plants *prior to the sale*. The pricing system using colored plastic labels will continue this year. Members offering new plant selections should contact *Martha Slover*, 571/238-5713 (mslover@gmu.edu) to ensure that a photo of a blooming plant is available on sale day. For the healthiest plants, they should be potted up at least tow weeks prior to the sale. Please deliver them to the church by 7:30 a.m. on the day of the sale.

The plant sale is the only fundraiser for the chapter and takes a tremendous team effort by chapter members! If you would like to volunteer to participate in any capacity, please contact *Nancy Arrington*.

PWWS SPRING GARDEN TOUR SET FOR APRIL 24

This year's garden tour is set for *Sunday, April 24* from 12 noon —5:00 p.m. One garden is new to the tour, one is a veteran garden, and one was on the tour a few years ago. All three are woodland gardens, but all differ in character and features. The Davis garden features woodland paths surrounding the home that invite you into the woods to admire lovely spring-blooming native wildflowers and shrubs. The Fulford-Nahas garden is a woodland wildflower garden with stone-bordered planting areas and two small ponds at the back of the property and features a mix of native and nonnative plants. The High garden, which is new this year, features a large moss garden and stone paths leading to rustic seating areas nestled in the woods.

Tour brochures will be ready in April and mailed to all members.

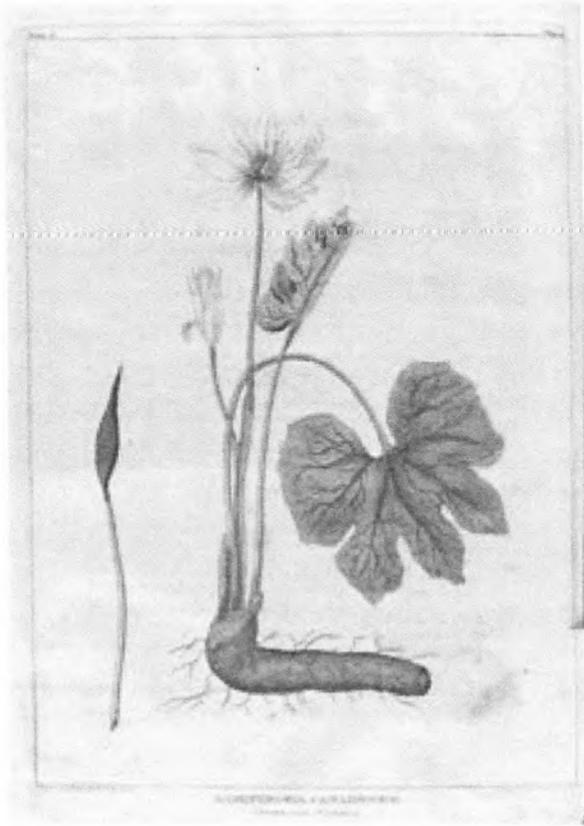
Volunteers are also needed for the event to serve as hosts or to bring refreshments.

For additional copies of the brochure or how to volunteer, please contact *Nancy Vehrs* at 703/368-2898 or email her at nvehrs@attglobal.net.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next regular membership meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church. The program has not been announced at this point. Contact president and program chair *Charles Smith* at 703/361-5125 for more information.

Virginia Wildflower of the Year 2005: **Bloodroot** (*Sanguinaria Canadensis*)



Throughout eastern North America, a patch of bloodroot blooming on a woodland hillside is one of the cherished early signs of spring.

Description

Bloodroot is an herbaceous perennial that grows from a persistent, branched underground stem or rhizome. Early each spring, while the forest canopy is still bare, each well-developed rhizome tip produces one leaf and one flower stalk. The leaf is kidney-shaped in its overall outline, but it is also divided into a pattern of rounded lobes and sinuses, rendering a complex overall shape. At flowering time, bloodroot leaves form a loose vertically-oriented collar around the flower stalk with the bluish-green lower leaf surface forming the outside of the collar; as the season progresses,

the leaves open flat and expand to their full size, which commonly ranges from six to eight inches across, and held about a foot above the ground, but leaves can become larger in favorable locations.

The flower buds are enclosed by a pair of sepals that promptly fall away as the flower opens. Petals are white or pale pink, relatively narrow, and variable in number from 8 to 16 or so. The bright yellow stamens number from 12 to 24. At the center of the flower there is a single greenish simple pistil with a short style and bi-lobed stigma. Inside the ovary, two rows of ovules are attached along the suture line of the carpel margins. The ovary forms a tapered cylindrical follicular fruit that opens while still more or less pale green or with just a hint of yellowing. The seeds are black or dark reddish brown, and fitted with an oil-rich appendage known as an elaiosome.

Derivation of Names and Relationships

Linnaeus gave bloodroot its scientific name, *Sanguinaria canadensis*. The genus name is based on *sanguinarius* (Latin, bleeding), a reference to the reddish latex found in the rhizome, petiole and flower stalk and the species name means "from Canada." Bloodroot is classified in the poppy family, Papaveraceae. Thus, it is related to the celandine or wood poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*), as well as the various species of poppy frequently cultivated in gardens and to the opium poppy, *Papaver somniferum*.

Chemistry

Like other members of the poppy family, bloodroot contains alkaloid molecules that are responsible for both toxic and therapeutic effects. Thus, the plant can be considered both poisonous and medicinal. There is a long tradition of use in folk medicine and bloodroot extracts can be found as an ingredient in over-

the-counter oral hygiene products. (Cont on p.6)
Pharmacological studies demonstrate antibacterial and antitumor activities, but the same constituents also have deleterious effects on fundamental metabolic processes of human cells. Despite folk tradition, ingestion of bloodroot products cannot be recommended. The red pigments contained in the latex can be used to dye fabrics or craft items like baskets.

Ecology

Bloodroot grows in the shade of deciduous trees. It prefers rich sandy soils, but can tolerate clay if the site is well-drained. Bloodroot ranges throughout the eastern deciduous forest region, from southern Canada to the Gulf coast and westward to the Great Plains. Flowering dates vary from year to year. Throughout much of Virginia, flowers can be expected sometime in March, or somewhat later at higher elevations. Ants gather the seeds for the food value of the elaiosome and, in doing so, they disperse seeds away from parent plants.

Cultivation and Propagation

Bloodroot adapts well to cultivation. Garden conditions that mimic its natural woodland habitat are best.

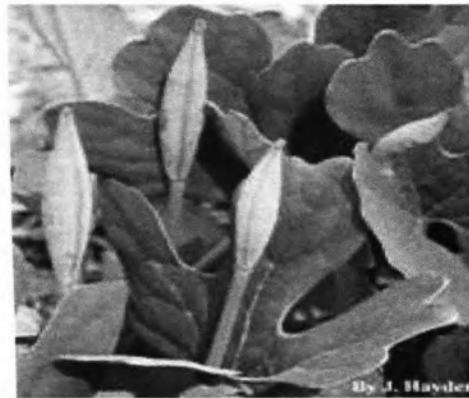
Thus, a site under deciduous trees will provide sunlight in late winter to early spring and shade in the summer. Moderately rich soil and good drainage are recommended. In overly moist soils, the rhizomes are subject to decay.

Bloodroot grows well from seeds provided that they are planted promptly, as soon as the

fruits open. If the elaiosome is allowed to dry while still attached to the seeds, germination is severely inhibited. Also, seedlings from ant-dispersed seeds will be common around established garden specimens. Large plants can also be propagated by division of the rhizome when the plant is dormant, i.e., fall or very early spring.

Bloodroot is frequently available in the commercial nursery trade, but to preserve wild populations, responsible gardeners should insist on purchasing only nursery-propagated specimens. There is a large-flowered variety, *S. canadensis* var. *grandiflora* and forms with "double" flowers are known horticulturally as cv 'Multiplex' or 'Flore-pleno.' The showy large-flowered and double forms are preferred by some in garden settings. Although bloodroot flowers are short-lived, its bold leaves provide a distinctive textural feature in the woodland garden. Mulching will help to conserve foliage during summer.

Where it Grows



Bloodroot grows in deciduous woodlands throughout Virginia. Beyond the Old Dominion, bloodroot can be found from southern Canada to the Gulf Coast and westward to the limits of deciduous forest in the central plains. It is also well-represented in public and private woodland gardens throughout eastern North America.

Conservation

The main threats to this common native species are habitat destruction and collection of wild plants for horticulture or medicinal use.

-Adapted from 2005 Virginia Wildflower of the Year brochure, written by W. John Hayden

-Picture of bloodroot root section from

http://www.mwrop.org/W_Needham/Bloodroot_040321.htm

*-Top illustration taken from NYPL Digital Gallery. Barton, William P. C. (William Paul Crillon), 1786-1856, Artist; Tanner, Vallance, Kearny & Co., Engraver; in *Vegetable materia medica of the United States; or, Medical botany: containing a botanical, general, and medical history of medicinal plants indigenous to the United States. Illustrated by coloured engravings ... done by the author.* Published 1818-25.*

EVENTS OF NOTE

PLANT SALES

May 7—PWWS Annual Plant Sale. Lutheran Bethel Church in Manassas, 9:00-1:00. See page x of this newsletter for details.

May 14—Annual VNPS Plant Sale at Green Spring, Powtomack Chapter.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

April 16-17—15th Annual Leesburg Flower & Garden Festival. Leesburg, Virginia. Admission \$3 per person, ages 6 and under are free. Leesburg Parks and Recreation department 703/777-1368 or www.idalee.org

April 23—Annual "Spring Fling" sponsored by the Prince William Cooperative Extension Office, Prince William County Fairgrounds. PWWS will have a booth at this all day popular event, so make sure to drop by and bring your friends!

May 7-8—Garden Fair, State Arboretum of Virginia. Blandy Farm, Boyce, Virginia. Free tours, kids' activities, bird walks. \$5 per car. Call Jean Davis at 540/837-1758 for more info.

May 7—Virginia Annual Wildflower Weekend, Shenandoah National Park, Luray, Va. A weekend

of special hikes and programs focusing on native woodland wildflowers. Events are free but there is a \$10 per car fee for entrance fee to the park. Website: National Park Service.

WALKS, LECTURES, & TOURS

April 8—"The Plants of the U.S. Exploring Expedition," 12:00-1:00 p.m. To register, see www.usbg.gov/education/events/index.cfm.

April 24—PWWS Spring Garden Tour. Local gardens featuring native landscapes. Contact Nancy Arrington at 703/368-8431 for more information.

April 29—"The Plants of Lewis and Clark," U.S. Botanic Garden, 12-1:00 p.m. For more, see www.usbg.gov/education/events/index.cfm.

May 6—"Moss: Bane or Blessing? A Shade Gardener's Odyssey," 12-1:00 p.m. U.S. Botanic Garden. See USBG website for details.

May 8—Maryland "Wildflower Walk." Catoctin Mountain Park Visitor Center, 11 a.m. Website: Catoctin Mountain Park.

May 12—"Green Roof Gardening in the U.S.," U.S. Botanic Garden

May 22—Maryland "Wildflower Walk." National Park Service, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, MD. 11 a.m. Call 301/663-9388 for more info.

SYMPOSIA & CLASSES

March 16-19—North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. A one-day session on invasive plants, "Stemming the Tide of Nonnative Invasive Plants" will be held on *Saturday, March 19* as part of the conference. Location is Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington; cost is \$150 for the day. For more info, contact *Richard McCabe* at 202/371-1808 or see: www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org.

March 19—U.S. National Arboretum, 19th Annual Lahr Symposium, "Connecting Gardens, Nature, and People." For times and more information, see www.usna.usda.gov/Education/lahr.pdf.

March 30—with additional dates of April 3 and April 6. "Weed-Warrior Training for Volunteers

in the Potomac Gorge." Commit a few hours each month to get out on your own and control invasive plants on National Park land between Great Falls and Georgetown as a "VIP" (Volunteer in Parks). For more on training dates, times, and signup, contact *Mary Travaglino* at 301/897-8570 or email: PotomacGorgeVol@tnc.org.

April 15-16—Smithsonian Botanical Symposium 2005. "The Future of Floras: New Frameworks, New Technologies, New Uses." Information and registration at website or email Smithsonian Botanical Institute at sbs@si.edu.

April 15-17—"Botanical Art and Flowers". VNPS Pocahontas Chapter member *Nancy Ross Hugo* is organizing a weekend workshop at Flower Camp in Buckingham County that will benefit **The Flora of Virginia Project**. Botanical artist *Lara Gastinger*, creator of illustrations for The Flora, will be teaching the workshop. Both beginners and experts are welcome. Tuition is \$250 (10% will be donated to the Flora Project) which includes instruction, five meals, and two nights' overnight accommodations.

For more info, contact *Nancy Hugo* at 804-798-6364 or visit www.flowercamp.org.

Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, VA 20108. Permission is given to use material with credit to source.
VNPS home page: <http://www.vnps.org>

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Original Artwork by Nicky Staunton,
Deadline for the May-June issue is **April 30, 2005**.
Please send information to Deanna High, 9613 Heather Green
Drive, Manassas, VA 20112 or to deannah@agb.org.

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exp. 10/05

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☞ **Next Meeting: 7:30 p.m., Monday, March 21, Bethel Lutheran Church,
Manassas "Current Issues in Beekeeping"**