



# WILD NEWS

## Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2006-03 May-June 2006

### PWWS PLANT SALE SATURDAY MAY 13

Join us for our biggest fundraiser and outreach to members and nonmembers. The PWWS annual native plant sale will be held on the grounds of **Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas (off Rte. 234 Business at Plantation Lane) from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon.** Get there early for the best selection.

#### Plants and people are needed for the sale.

If you have plants to donate or would like to help with the sale, **contact Nancy Arrington at [narrington@starpower.net](mailto:narrington@starpower.net) or call 703/368-8431.** **Volunteers:** Please be at the Church grounds at **7:00 a.m.** to help unload plants and set up the plant displays and sales areas.

#### Highlights of This Year's Sale

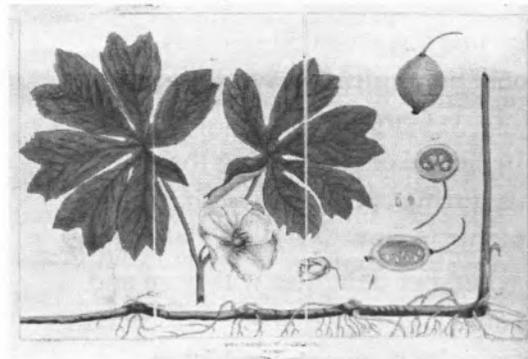
Plants at this year's sale will include *old favorites* seen on the tour such as woodland phlox (*P. divaricata*), dwarf crested iris (*I. cristata*), wild geranium (*G. maculatum*), foamflower, (*Tiarella cordifolia*), green and gold, (*Chrysogonum virginianum*) and several fern species.

New plants for shade gardens include goldenseal (*Hydrastis Canadensis*) and shooting star (*Dodecatheon meadia*). We will have a very nice aster for *the sunny summer garden* as well -- flat topped aster, *A.*

*umbellatus*. It's around 3' tall and has numerous small white flowers all summer long.

We'll have some *shrubs and small trees* including oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*), itea (*Itea virginica ssp.*), redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), plus several dogwood species as well as some oaks and maples.

-Nancy Arrington

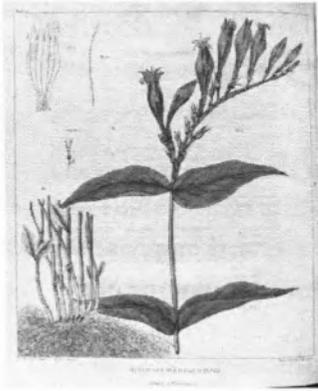


### MONDAY, MAY 15 MEMBERSHIP MEETING

*Karen Rexrode*, owner of Windy Hill Nursery, will talk to us about using native plants in the garden and landscape. The meeting will begin at 7:30 and end around 9:30. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at Bethel Lutheran Church, which is located at Plantation Lane and Rte 234 Business (Sudley Road.)

*Here is Karen's description of the program:*  
The use of native plants in the landscape

has become very popular. The reasons for their popularity may be many and vary from one gardener to another. When using native plants you can re-build lost habitats or use them in difficult situations where other plants have failed. My program is about identifying your particular site's natural habitat



*Spigelia marilandica* : Carolina pink-root and working with that to select native plants. This program does not entirely ignore non-native plants, it includes their use, some of which are little more than a simple sidestep in the scheme of evolution.

*Karen Rexrode* has spent 30 years as a professional horticulturist. Working at Kenny Roberts Garden Center in the 1970s, she was in charge of purchasing the perennials during spring and working with tropical plants in summer. Karen left Kenny Robert's when her daughter was born and opened a small nursery named "Windy Hill Plant Farm" which existed for 25 years before closing its doors in 2005. The nursery grew many perennials and woody plants with an emphasis on natives.

All are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served at the meeting.

**21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR**  
 Blue skies and a warm sun added sparkle to PWWS' annual spring garden tour Sunday, April 29. The three gardens on tour were stunningly beautiful, and everyone was in full agreement on the "fineness of the day

and the gardens on tour." Many thanks to: host gardeners *Fran and Ken Bass*, *Nancy Arrington*, and *Frances and Phil Louer* for sharing their lovely spaces with us all; to the volunteer hosts, Tiana Camfiord, Deanna High, Charlotte Cochard, Nancy Vehrs, Janet Wheatcraft, Martha Slover, and Jeanne Endrikat, and to the following folks who generously lent time and effort to make a variety of tasty refreshments to tempt garden visitors: Jeanne Fowler, Amy Hamilton, Ruth Johnson, Janet Wheatcraft, Mickey Sullivan, and Nancy Vehrs. A special thanks, of course, goes to *Nancy Vehrs*, who did a great job organizing this year's tour.

**"FLORISTA" of VIRGINIA**

The May issue of *Southern Living* featured "Finding Virginia's Flora," a summary of PWWS member *Marion Lobstein's* efforts on behalf of the *Flora of Virginia* project and her ongoing



teaching and advocacy for wildflower and native plant education (Mid-Atlantic Living section, page 6.) Marion also got some nice plugs for the Great Falls

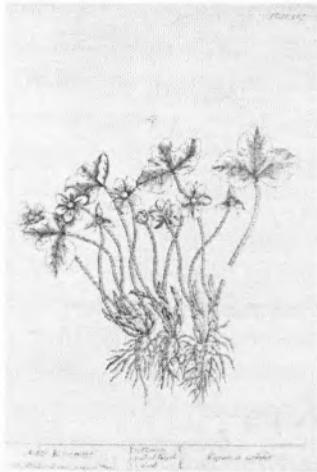
Park walks and her Field Botany Course at Blandy Farm. (See the Upcoming Events section for more info.)

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I have encountered a recurring theme over the last several weeks with friends, family members and myself who are suffering through illness, have experienced the recent death of a loved one or are remembering one that is still very present with them. Not that I always focus on the morbid, but we have to face each occurrence in life as it comes.

For some reason I find it less and less ironic that these experiences come during spring – the time of rebirth. Both naturally and religiously, spring brings a flush of new or renewed life that is too obvious to be denied. For me it is the almost daily appearance of a wildflower or bird that I either hadn't anticipated or just plain forgotten about.

My spring started in late winter. I have dreams occasionally in the winter about round-lobed hepatica. It is one of these



improbable flowers that can sometimes be found blooming with snow around it. I usually look at the base of oak trees on a slope where the angle to the sun or the position on the slope create a

micro-climate that allows flower and pollinator a minor temperature edge to push winter back and complete their life cycles.

This year there was no snow the day it surprised me. The day was rather warm, and I had pretty much forgotten about hepatica, thinking I had missed this fickle species for the year. I had a few extra minutes between errands and pulled over to the side of the road to explore a piece of woods and a field that I had seen for years and are under development pressure. I was watching winter resident birds forage in a power-line easement, and then slipped into the woods. These woods had not been overrun but Japanese stilt grass or otherwise been highly disturbed – that held promise. I was about 50 feet inside the edge when I saw my first patch of colors. It was a single hepatica plant with dark green leaves and one flower blooming white with blue (or blue with white if you prefer).

It took me by surprise. Like an old friend encountered unexpectedly. Those are the best kind of surprises. I spent some minutes with my old friend – looking at it, taking in its surroundings, feeling the slight breeze moving across the forest floor and the warmth of the bit of sunlight hitting the patch of ground where it lives. The lateness of its blooming and the position in the forest had made its appearance all the more unexpected. I was refreshed and educated. Then the moment was over. We parted with no promise of future meetings – only the hope. But my day was brightened and my burdens lessened, even by the memory.

--Charles Smith

## BEAUTEOUS RELIEF FOR NATIVE GARDENERS?

*Folk Remedy Yields Mosquito-Thwarting Compound*

ARS scientists have isolated a natural compound that in laboratory tests was effective in warding off mosquito bites. The efficacy of the isolated compound—called “callicarpenal”—was affirmed through tests simulating human skin. But these results may not have been a surprise in northeastern Mississippi as long as a century ago, once the source of the callicarpenal was revealed.

Seems that it was known there that fresh, crushed leaves of American beautyberry, *Callicarpa americana*, in the family *Verbenaceae*, helped keep biting insects away from animals such as horses and mules. Placing crushed beautyberry leaves under the animals’ harnesses, residents knew, would mash out a repellent oil. Eventually, some folks there took to mashing the leaves and rubbing the residue on their own skins.

Privy to this knowledge was young Charles T. Bryson, who was told about it by his granddad, John Rives Crumpton. Today, Bryson is a botanist in ARS’s Southern Weed Science Research Unit at Stoneville, Mississippi. And he’s told researchers in ARS’s Natural Products Utilization Unit at Oxford, Mississippi, about beautyberry’s powers. This led Oxford chemist Charles Cantrell—with entomologist Jerome Klun of ARS’s Chemicals Affecting Insect Behavior Research Laboratory in Beltsville, Maryland, and Oxford plant physiologist Stephen Duke—to isolate from American beautyberry and a Japanese counterpart, *C. japonica*, five insect-repelling compounds.



(Picture courtesy of J.S. Peterson @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database)

Among them was callicarpenal, which may represent ARS’s next important contribution against mosquitoes. ARS developed—and USDA patented in 2003—SS220, a repellent that’s just as effective as DEET, the world’s most-used insect repellent, which itself was developed by ARS for the U.S. Army decades ago. “In laboratory tests, isolated callicarpenal was just as effective as SS220 in preventing mosquito bites,” says Cantrell.

Cantrell says a patent application has been submitted for callicarpenal. Subsequent work will include tests against ticks and developing ways of producing large quantities of the compound, either through synthesis or crops. Toxicity trials will precede any testing on humans.—Adapted from article by Luis Pons, ARS.

([www.nps.ars.usda.gov](http://www.nps.ars.usda.gov).) This research is part of Plant Biological and Molecular Processes (#302) and Quality and Utilization of Agricultural Products (#306), two ARS National Programs described on the World Wide Web at [www.nps.ars.usda.gov](http://www.nps.ars.usda.gov).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 18 Daylong symposium at the United States Botanic Garden to assess the status of and how to improve plant-based conservation education in the United States. During the day, we will hear case studies of plant-based conservation education and public awareness programs from around the country. We will also collaboratively create a series of

recommended actions and indicators that you can take back and use at your garden, park, or agency. For more information, visit [http://www.bgci.org/usa/T14\\_Symposium](http://www.bgci.org/usa/T14_Symposium).

*Sunday, May 21, 10-12:30 a.m.* Great Falls Park, Great Falls, Virginia. Marion Lobstein leads a wildflower walk. Call Marion at 703/257-6643 to reserve a space for the walk, or see [www.blobstein.com](http://www.blobstein.com) for more information on Marion, her courses, walks, and the Flora Project.

*Thursday, May 25, 7:00 -- 8:30 pm.* **Pruning of Azaleas. Timing is right NOW for pruning azaleas!** The Master Gardener Pruning Team is prepared to teach you what you need to know about these beloved landscape plants. Making the right cuts for the right reason at the right place at the right time results in abundant blooms next spring! Join us for this lecture and demonstration. **Location:** Community Room, Chinn Park Regional Library, 13083 Chinn Park Drive, Prince William, VA. **Free** class. Registration required. Call 703-792-7747.

*Butterfly Walks--Every Sunday, May 7, thru Sept. 24, 2006, 3 PM*  
Walk into the winged world of butterflies with this introductory guided stroll with hobbyist/butterfly enthusiast Mona Miller, plus members of the Washington Area Butterfly Club (<http://users.sitestar.net/butterfly>) Learn how the gardens attract these enticing, almost magical creatures. Walks begin, Sunday, May 07, at 3 PM and will continue every Sunday (weather permitting) through September 24, 2006. Reservations not required. There is a \$4.00 fee for the walk itself, this helps Meadowlark Botanical Gardens in its butterfly habitat restoration projects and includes a copy of *Butterflies of Meadowlark*, an identification guide to the 20 most common butterflies found in the Garden. Rental binoculars are available at the Visitor Center. Weather dependent; call 703-255-3631 to confirm walk plans. Note: We will also be walking through the Potomac

Wildflower Collection, which has numerous native plants in bloom.

*June 1-3, Native Plants in the Landscape Conference and Plant Sale, Millersville, Pennsylvania.* Field trips, educational workshops, native plant and book sale, and other native plant merchandise are featured in this 3-day annual conference. For more information, see [www.millersvillennativeplants.org](http://www.millersvillennativeplants.org) or call 717/8723030.

*June 26-29, July 3-7, and July 10-13. 9:00 a.m. -- 4 p.m. (all three weeks.)* PWWS member and NOVA-Manassas biology professor Marion Lobstein will conduct her Field Botany course offered through the University of Virginia, at Blandly Farm. Details of the course and how to enroll are available on Marion's website, [www.blobstein.com](http://www.blobstein.com).

*Lobelia cardinalis* : cardinal plant. Barton, William P. C. (William Paul Crillon), 1786-1856 -- Artist Tanner, Vallance, Kearny & Co. -- Engraver .

In *Vegetable materia medica of the United States*, 1818-25. New York Public Library Digital Image 1101769

