



WILD NEWS

Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2008-02

March-April 2008

FANTASTIC VOYAGES:

PLANTS of 1607

Plan to join us **Monday evening March 17 at 7:30, Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas, Va.**, for this intriguing program presented by Marion Lobstein, associate professor of biology, NVCC-Manassas, and adjunct professor for UVA's Blandy Experimental Farm. Marion will share her explorations of the vast variety of native plants our early settlers came in contact with at Jamestown in 1607. The first settlers almost starved to death that first winter, because they ran out of food and did not know which native plants they could eat! Local Indian tribes showed them how to live off the land and which plants and berries could be eaten. Some of these plants had unusual uses - the Indians dried, rolled, chopped up, and set fire to the leaves of one plant, and inhaled the smoke thru a pipe (tobacco)! Dried seeds from another plant when placed in a fire, exploded and expanded, could be eaten... Moist seeds and their sheaths of the same plant could also be placed in hot coals, cooked, and eaten (ears of corn). When cooked in this manner they did not explode! Green balls the size of basketballs found growing on vines were harvested when they turned orange and cooked in hot coals and eaten (pumpkins). Other examples of the many native plants we grow, eat, and take for granted today were viewed as bizarre by the early settlers. These new edible plants as well as medicinal and horticultural species were quickly carried back to mother England. An exchange that was part of "fantastic voyages" that traveled in both directions,

with plants taken from the New to Old World and plants brought from the Old to New World.

Join us for this exciting program; all are welcome and refreshments will be served.

VIRGINIA BLUEBELL TO BE DESIGNATED OFFICIAL PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY FLOWER

At the request of PWWS, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors will be designating the Virginia bluebell, *Mertensia virginica*, as the official flower of the



county. A presentation before the board is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 1 at 2 p.m. in the Board Chambers of the McCoart Building**, and members are encouraged to join PWWS President *Charles Smith* there. PWWS commissioned *Nicky Staunton* to produce a beautiful drawing and logo for use by the county.

**Prince William Wildflower Society
Recommendation to Make Virginia
Bluebells the Official Prince William
County Flower**

Whereas, Prince William County, Virginia, does not have an official county flower; and

Whereas, for twenty-five years, the Prince William Wildflower Society, as the local chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, has been promoting the preservation and appreciation of wildflowers and wild places in our region; and

Whereas, Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) is a beautiful native wildflower that lives in floodplains throughout the county and can be seen and appreciated by all; and

Whereas, preservation of bluebell habitat (floodplains) is in keeping with best practices promoted in local ordinances;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Prince William Wildflower Society recommends that the Prince William County Board of Supervisors adopt Virginia bluebells as the county flower.

-Adopted unanimously by the Prince William Wildflower Society Board of Officers, February 18, 2008.

OTHER EVENTS

Thursday, March 27, Ten Steps to a Greener Lawn - 7:00pm-8:30pm

Carol McElroy, Environmental Educator will share 10 ways you can keep your grass green and the water clean. Timing of spring lawn tasks and those that can wait until fall will be discussed. This class will be held at Central Library Community Room, 8601 Mathis Avenue, Manassas, 20110. Cost is FREE but registration is requested. Please call 703-792-7747 to register or for more information.

Wednesday, April 2 - Partners for Water Quality - 7:00-9:00pm

Do you know where that rain goes? We never think about the water flowing down our streets

and walkways during a storm or where all that melting snow goes. But guess what? Most of it flows directly into our streams, lakes, rivers and eventually the Chesapeake Bay. As it flows it takes with it all the dirt, litter, oils, pesticides, fertilizers, leaves and even pet waste directly into our waterways. This type of water pollution, called non point source pollution is now the leading cause of pollution in the Chesapeake Bay.

Prince William County Department of Public Works and Virginia Cooperative Extension in Prince William have formed a program offering an incentive of up to a 30 percent rebate on storm water fees for local business and non profit organizations. Business and Organizational representatives must attend a seminar and fill out a pre and post survey. This seminar will be held at the Jean McCoy Conference Room, Sudley North Government Center, 7987 Ashton Avenue, Manassas 20109. Please call 703-792-4037 to RSVP your space and for any questions you might have.

--Anne Seiff

Parks, Trails & Open Space February 26 2008: Board Adopts New, Lower Parkland Standard

Report from the Prince William Conservation Alliance

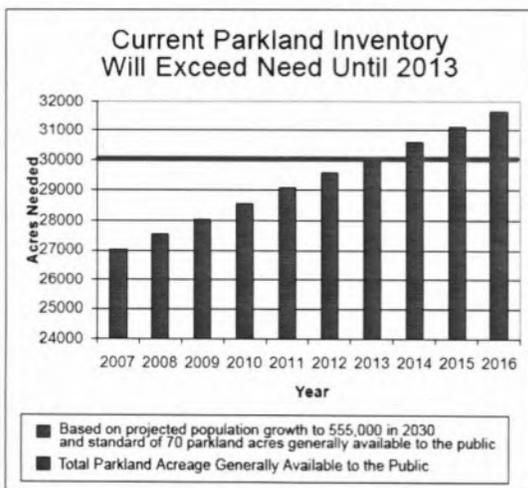
"When the Board of Supervisors voted to adopt a new standard of 70 acres per 1,000 residents of parkland generally accessible to the public, the Supervisors had no inventory to assess the impact of their decision. The tricky loophole is that the standard includes private parks, including golf courses, as well as public parks, including those where the County has no opportunity to control public uses or access.

The devil is in the details. Our evaluation, using previously published statistics from the Planning Department and other readily available information, shows that, under this new standard of 70 acres of public "parkland" per 1,000 residents, Prince William County currently exceeds this new

parkland standard and will continue to exceed the standard until 2013.

The 2003 Comp Plan standard (13.8 parkland acres/1,000 residents) counted only public parks under county control. Under the old standard, the county should have 5,327 acres of public parks. We were 642 acres short. That's no surprise: the 2007-08 Park Authority Needs Assessment and multiple citizen satisfaction surveys make clear that we need more places where kids and adults can play ball, and more places where people can walk with a dog in the woods near their houses.

The new Parks and Open Space chapter for the Comprehensive Plan lowered the standards for the county because the new standard for parkland (70 acres of parkland/1,000 residents) counts "all parks accessible to the general public." By adopting the new standard, the Board



determined the County has an excess of parks and we have immediately exceeded our goal.

By including state and federally owned parkland, golf courses, school grounds and other privately owned "parkland," the new standard creates a paper statistic that does not match reality. Currently Prince William County fares very poorly when compared to both surrounding localities and other localities with comparable populations nationwide. However, this new standard

will make it very difficult for the County and others to compare Prince William's parkland amenities to surrounding jurisdictions, which include only county controlled parkland in their progress reports." From the Prince William Conservation Alliance newsletter, www.pwconserve.org, March 3, 2008. Please see PWCS' Web site for more details.

EVENTS OF NOTE

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND...

and the willingness of some of our gardener members, the **PWWS annual wildflower garden tours** will recommence after a one-year hiatus. We have two repeat gardens on one new one for this year's tour. *Janet Wheatcraft's* City of Manassas garden will once again be open as will *Helen and Rob Walter's* garden on the Occoquan River. The Walter Garden now has a fairy garden in the back yard. Joining them on tour is *Charlotte and Gary Cochard's* garden upstream on the Occoquan just below the Lake Jackson dam. Besides cultivated beds, the Cochard property enjoys natural stands of bluebells on its floodplains.

The tour will take place **Sunday, April 27** from noon until 5 p.m. **Brochures will be mailed in April to all members.** Please consider volunteering to assist as a host or providing refreshments. Nancy Vehrs is coordinating the effort and will circulate a sign-up sheet at the March 17 meeting. If you cannot attend but would like to volunteer in some way, send an email to pwws-vnps@yahoo.com.

PWWS PLANT SALE

It's time to gear up for our big fundraising event of the year: the annual plant sale is **Saturday, May 10**. Nancy Vehrs agreed to chair the sale this year, but she needs your help! If you have pots to spare and share, please bring them to the March 17 meeting. If you have native plants to share, it's not too early to start digging and potting. Email

your list of plants you are bringing to the sale at pwws-vnps@yahoo.com.

Many thanks to **Nancy Arrington**, former VNPS Horticulture Chair, and longtime plant sale chair for all her efforts throughout the years.

MERRIMAC FARM DEDICATION SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 10

The official dedication for Merrimac Farm's acquisition by the Commonwealth's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries is scheduled for **April 10**. This large tract bordering Cedar Run in the Nokesville area is a treasure for wildlife and has an extraordinary display of Virginia bluebells. Find details about the farm's exemplary partnership between Game and Inland Fisheries, Quantico Marine Base, and the Prince William Conservation Alliance on the website of alliance, www.pwconserve.org.
Nancy Vehrs

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW for "CREEPY CRITTERS," a "live," hands-on(!) presentation by **Tony Bulmer**. **Monday, MAY 19 7:30 p.m.**, Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas, Va. Watch for details in the May-June *Wild News*.

January PWWS Member Slide Show.

Members **Marion Lobstein**, **Nicky Staunton**, and **Charles Smith** shared slides with seventeen other members and guests at the January 21 meeting.

Nicky led off the program with a fascinating photographic narrative of a year's worth of observing the plants growing on a rocky outcrop near her home. Some surprises were in store, including a stand of prickly pear flourishing on the outcrop. Nicky's photo journal noted an astonishing variety of plants over the months: saxifrage, violet (triloba and roundleaf), pixiecup lichen, various ferns, pussytoes, yellow cross, field pansy, golden ragweed, wild yam, possibly a woolly-lipped fern, cranesbill, columbine, *silene caroliniana*, solomon's seal, gray penstemon, talinum, *asclepias variegata* (in

April-May), pinks, Virginia rose, ground cherry, butterfly pea, ruellia, mountain mint, blue cohosh, Allegheny chinkapin, juniper, serviceberry, oak, and hickory – to list only some. We hope Nicky will provide a follow up of the outcrop's beauty, as it was recently destroyed by large machinery used to clear cut nearby power lines. We want to see what will survive...or not. **Marion Lobstein** shared lovely photos from various sojourns to Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge in West Virginia, Blackwater Falls, and Cathedral State Park, and Florida trips made with Inky, her cat, and husband George. In West Virginia, Marion noted the prevalence of denizens of the northern arboreal forests, such as red spruce and Canadian fur, left by the receding glaciers on this highest point east of the Mississippi. Other highlights of the area included stands of Indian pipe by the thousands, mosses, lichens, and liverworts. **Charles Smith** shared photos from hikes he took at last year's VNPS annual meeting, including treks to Jamestown Island and Masanutten. In addition to the best beauty berry stand in the wild anyone had ever seen, Charles shared mountain scenes that included many natives (and some nonnatives) growing in the wild, including pale corydalis, corymbed spirea, turkeybeard, hamamelis, equisetum, oakleaf hydrangea, wild bergamot, monarda fistulosa, azizia, overcup oak, and more.

The evening's program was enhanced by delicious refreshments provided by Betty Truax and Joann Krumviede. Present: Charles Smith, Nancy Vehrs, Nicky Staunton, Betty Truax, Charlotte Cochard, Joann Krumviede, Marion Lobstein, Amy Hamilton, John Sunda, Christine Sunda, Ruth Johnston, Jeanne and Stan Fowler, Nancy Arrington, Deanna High, John Pauswinski, and Nancy Arrington.

NOTES FROM ALL OVER

New book of interest to native plant lovers: *Bringing Nature Home*, by Douglas Tallamy (Timber Press, \$27.95). Anne Raver in the March 6th edition of the *New York Times*, writes eloquently about the book and its message. Tallamy connects to the landscape at a deeper level than just plants; his message can be summed up succinctly: "For a beneficiary of the food web, a lilac bush might as well be plastic." Tallamy, a professor of entomology and wildlife ecology at the University of Delaware, and his wife have spent years hacking out oriental bittersweet, Japanese honeysuckle, autumn olive, and multiflora rose on their 10-acre property in Pennsylvania. Tallamy claims, "I'm

not trying to recreate the ancient ecosystem...That is gone. I'm trying to create biodiversity." He contends that as many native plants provide food for insects and birds, so should we encourage the growth of plants that attract these critters. For example, a patch of phlox can support eight species of butterflies, and the buttonbush shrub, blueberry bushes, goldenrod, dogwood, and milkweed are natives that provide food for insects, butterflies, moths, and, of course, the birds who eat the larvae of these plants well. There is a scale of good in this regard: Butterfly bush, which is originally from China, attracts butterflies – but only the adults can sip the nectar – larvae can't eat it. Goldenrod, however, turns up as a highly important member of the ecosystem. Its round galls are perfect for fly maggots, which are in turn high in proteins and fats that "can keep a chickadee alive on a cold day." All in all, as the article notes, "The message is loud and clear: gardeners could slow the rate of extinction [of birds, butterflies, and insects] by planting natives in their yards."

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

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Original Artwork by Nicky Staunton	
<p>Deadline for the May-June issue of Wild News is May 1, 2008</p>	
<p>Please send or email information to Deanna High, 9613 Heather Green Drive, Manassas, VA 20112; <i>deannah@agb.org</i>. VNPS home page: http://www.vnps.org</p>	

PWWS President Charles Smith passed on this notice from Sally Anderson, VNPS president

VNPS Members,

Please take a few minutes to let the House and Senate finance subcommittee members know how important it is to us to fund our Natural Area Preserves. These preserves are one of the foremost ways that native plants are protected. Funding decisions will be made before this week is out, so help us keep up awareness of this issue.

Thank you!
Sally Anderson

Talking points, personalizing your message is much better:

We would appreciate your help in supporting an amendment to add \$850,000 and six full time employees to the appropriations bill that includes the Department of Conservation and Recreation's State Natural Area Preserve System.

These beautiful areas must be safely made available to the citizens to visit. These funds are needed to reopen North Landing River in VA Beach, open Crow's Nest in Stafford County, keep beautiful sites like Buffalo Mountain, Floyd County open, and provide better access to other natural areas around the Commonwealth.

The State Natural Area Preserve System protects some of the Commonwealth's rarest natural communities and rare species habitats, all of which are a significant part of Virginia's legacy to future generations. These natural resources are irreplaceable and vital to maintaining biodiversity, but extremely vulnerable without adequate funding for management.

The Commonwealth now has twice as many acres of natural areas as it did in 2001 but with 33 percent fewer staff and less money for parking areas, boardwalks, etc. Without proper monitoring, without control of invasive species, and without managing deer populations, endangered species and rare plant communities could be lost, and without proper access citizens can not visit their natural areas.

For email links for the Senate subcommittee, go to
<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?081+sub+S05001>
For the House subcommittee, go to
<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?081+sub+H02003>

Barring Bambi – How to Browse-proof Your Plantings

Is Bambi eating you out of house and home? With winter here and hordes of hungry deer, protecting your garden from grazing damage can be a challenge. **Rolf Schilling, horticulturist and plant records coordinator for Garden in the Woods, the display garden for the New England Wild Flower Society**, suggests some strategies on what you can do at home to help your garden and the local animals get along. *This article, which appeared February 13, 2008, is reprinted here with permission from the New England Wild Flower Society, www.newenglandWILD.org. The author can be reached at rschilling@newenglandWILD.org.*

Browse-proof your plantings

Wildlife in the backyard is one of the joys of a countryside home. Deer, with their soulful eyes and graceful form, are a symbol of peace. Yet few gardeners feel peaceful after deer have grazed to the ground choice specimen plants that have been lovingly tended all year. What's a gardener to do?

Fortunately, there are several inventive and proven barriers against deer browsing. Deer barriers fall into a few types: chemical, visual, and physical. In using any of these approaches, it is important to note that starving animals, deer included, will eat even toxic material.

With room, plants that grow quickly and that deer love to eat can be planted at a distance from the plants you want to protect. This is distractive feeding. Adding some barrier to the protected plants makes the fodder planting the easy choice. Animals are very geared toward finding the most nutrition for the least effort.

Another trick is to place a salt lick well away from your plantings. If there is a large

woodlot available, this is ideal. If not, perhaps there is a spot where a neighborhood salt lick can be placed to the satisfaction of the neighbors. This will help everyone's deer browse problem. Please be aware that salt licks cannot be placed out during hunting season in some areas (to prevent their use as an unfair hunting tactic).

Break the habit

Deer are creatures of habit. They take the easiest and safest course across your land and stick to that track unless pressed to change. On a new property, this means you can steer the deer where you prefer them to go with barriers and sprays before they settle into a feeding routine you don't like.

Several wire cordons, hung with cloth flags of a light color, are enough to block deer and confuse them visually. Be sure the deer cannot slip under the bottom cordon (less than 10" from the ground) or leap over the top (more than 8'). Flags will discourage deer from trying to pass between the wires and generally spook them (at least initially).

Aside from wire cordons, a full-fledged fence on sturdy posts, chain link or heavy-duty mesh can be used. Deer fences are the most effective solution. Fences are also costly and won't work aesthetically for everyone. Deer fences must be 8' high and attached to the ground to prevent them from going under. Be aware of local zoning regulations if you plan to install a deer fence. Many communities have height restrictions and require special permits to install a fence over a certain height. Cattle grids have been shown to be ineffective once the deer become accustomed to them.

Another trick is to tie several cordons of fishing line across an area where you want to block deer from entering, or to steer them away from a planting. Fishing line is nearly invisible from only a few feet away, harmless to the deer, and effective. I have

used this in the Western Garden at Garden in the Woods where treading and grazing caused extensive damage to new plantings. Blocked and confused by the lines, the deer group chose a new pathway altogether.

Deterrence

You can also use inedible plants as a barrier. For example, a wide, thriving skirt of *Rhus aromatica* "Grow Low" circling your Rhodies will deter deer. When using inedible plants as barriers, be sure that they are wide enough to prevent deer from simply leaning over them to reach protected plants. The object of the exercise is to keep the deer moving along to an area where you do not object to browsing. Choice and tasty plants, like oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*), can be covered with fine mesh netting, such as the type sold for orchard use. At a distance, fine mesh is all but invisible and affords effective protection.

Some companies sell statues of coyotes in an aggressive posture. I have heard mixed reports on their effectiveness. Tin pans and clackers have also been employed, and Japanese have long used "deer knockers." Motion-sensor irrigation towers, which spook the deer with a sudden spray of water, also work for a time. The downside of these methods is that deer appear to eventually ignore them.

This year at Garden in the Woods, we created a free-form bamboo fence to block deer from plantings reserved for endangered butterfly larvae as feeding plants. Though the fence was quite open, deer preferred not to stick their heads through the gaps in order to feed. We also found that spraying the fence with deer repellent caused the deer to move along without even stopping at the fence (no tracks milling about the fence area). This shows that a visual barrier that only partly blocks physical access, combined with a

scent deterrent, can work well. We received no damage to this area.

Throw them off the scent

Use of scent brings us to the chemical method of deer protection. There are a number of products on the market that are similarly effective. My personal experience has been that antifeedant sprays that contain different combinations of egg yolks, garlic, peppermint oil, and cinnamon are the most effective. Some drawbacks of spraying are that it must be done when there is enough dry weather for the spray to dry, plus excessive rain or hot weather shorten the time before spraying must be repeated. In the summer, this can amount to spraying every week. Temporarily, the odor can be unpleasant.

Deer-resistant plants

Bambi needs to eat. However, with some creativity and effort, you can have your garden and the deer. Following is a list of plants that are useful for distractive feeding during winter, as well as a list of plants that deer will only eat if they are truly starving.

Deer browse plants—tasty to deer and able to regenerate growth

Cornus sericea - red osier

Cornus amomum - silky dogwood

Hydrangea arborescens - American hydrangea, hills-of-snow

Ilex decidua - deciduous holly

Viburnum nudum - possumhaw

Viburnum acerifolium - maple-leaf viburnum

[continued on next page]

Deer-resistant shrubs/ small trees

- Rhus aromatica* – fragrant sumac
- Rhus hirta* (*Rhus typhina*) –stag-horn sumac
- Rhus glabra* –smooth sumac
- Leucothoe axillaris* –coast doghobble
- Leucothoe fontanesiana* – highland doghobble
- Fothergilla gardenii* – dwarf witch-alder
- Fothergilla major* – mountain witch-alder
- Lindera benzoin* –spicebush
- Ilex opaca* – American holly

Leucothoe fontanesiana (*Steud.*) *Sleumer* Drooping
leucothoe, *Highland doghobble* *Ericaceae* (*Heath Family*)
 Photographer: Stefan Bloodworth; Sarah P. Duke Botanical
 Gardens NPIN Image Id: 19011

Deer-resistant perennials

- Euphorbia corollata* – flowering spurge
- Agastache* species – American hyssop species
- Pycnanthemum* species – mountain mints
- Apocynum* species – dogbanes
- Salvia* species – sages
- Asclepias* species – milkweeds, butterfly weed



PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY
 A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society
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"LET US DARE TO READ,
 THINK, SPEAK AND WRITE."
 John Adams, 1765
 power
 USA 41



exp. 10/08

Nancy Arrington
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NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, March 17, Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas, 7:30 p.m.
 Marion Lobstein presents "Fantastic Voyages: Plants of 1607"

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