

# WILD NEWS

## Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society  
2008, no. 3

May-June 2008

### DON'T MISS IT!

#### PWWS Wildflower Plant Sale

**SATURDAY, MAY 10, from 9:00-Noon**

**Bethel Lutheran Church Grounds**

**8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas**

(Corner of Sudley Road and Plantation Lane, near the main Manassas post office, Commerce Bank, and Prince William Hospital) *Come Early for Best Selection*



Many of the wildflowers you saw last weekend on the PWWS Garden Tour (description below) will be offered for sale at our 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Wildflower Plant Sale, Saturday, May 10, 9 a.m.- noon on the grounds of Bethel Lutheran Church. All plants offered for sale have been propagated by members or shared from their gardens – none have been collected from the wild. For more information about the sale or if you'd like to donate plants or volunteer to help with the sale, please call Plant Sale Chair Nancy Vehrs at 703-368-2898, or email her at [pwws-vnps@yahoo.com](mailto:pwws-vnps@yahoo.com).

**Volunteers:** Please be at the church grounds at **6:30 a.m.** on Saturday to help set up the plant sale. We are counting on volunteers to make the sale a success. It is our only fundraising event for the year, so your help and contribution is critical. Questions? Contact Nancy Vehrs.

#### Mark Your Calendars for Monday, MAY 19 Member Meeting

"Reptiles Alive" wildlife educator Tony Bulmer will present PWWS' May membership meeting, **Monday, May 19, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas.** According to the "Reptiles Alive" Web site, Tony Bulmer was born an animal lover. While growing up, he spent most of his time in the woods observing wildlife and learning about nature. He achieved a degree in Parks and Recreation and is now a Senior Naturalist at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park in Western Fairfax County. His primary responsibility at the park is providing high quality interpretive programs for its many visitors. Plan to join fellow PWWS members for this entertaining and informative program. PWWS members, nonmembers, and guests are all welcome. Refreshments will be served.

## A SPECIAL INVITATION

From PWWS member *Nicky Staunton*

I want to invite everyone in PWWS to come visit my woodlands and me on **Sunday May 18** for an afternoon visit with refreshments. We can tiptoe through the woodland, prowl the power line, take a longer walk around the neighboring woods and visit. I hope the spring flowers will still be blooming. The Lady slipper leaves are up, no buds yet. I expect 1-4 p.m. would be the hours.



Directions from Google Maps are about as good as possible. I would like to know if anyone plans to come, though, so an e-mail or phone call would be helpful from anyone who might want to travel this far. **(Please contact Nancy Arrington at 703-368-8431 (H) or 703-408-7446 (C) or email her at [narrington1@verizon.net](mailto:narrington1@verizon.net) if you would like to visit Nicky's garden. We are planning to gather at 12:30 at Bethel Lutheran Church to organize carpools out to Nicky's. Please contact Nancy Arrington if you're interested in carpooling to Nicky's.)**

If it is too far to drive for an afternoon walk, I understand. It is 54 miles, an hour and 15 minutes, from Manassas via Rt. 28 to Rt. 29, left south toward Charlottesville, then, 7 miles off Rt. 29 via a right onto Rt. 609 (Hoover Road) past Reva Market and a red barn home, a right onto Rt. 607 (Ridgeview Road), a left on Rt. 606 (Novum Road), right on Rt. 605 (Parish Road at the dilapidated old Novum Community Center and then, at Rocks Edge Road, leave Rt. 605 to drive straight ahead to the horse ring on your right and >down< the hill on the road to my driveway on right.)

The botrychiums are coming up, *Goodyera*, cranefly and putty root orchids leaves persist and the little *Oblaria* blooms away, waiting to greet the next blooms in the spring cycle. Of course, lycopodium is my "lawn" in the low woods. The meadow is filling in a bit with grasses and wildflowers. Have a family of 'pillars of the Red Admiral on an unidentified shrub/tree that came with the Fringe Tree I purchased last year. The columbines and wild pinks are blooming over on the black rock. The tree leaves opened this weekend erasing the winter's landscape.

Finally.

-Nicky Staunton

## SUMMER SOLSTICE WALK

Celebrate the Summer Solstice on a joint field trip with VNPS Powtowmack Chapter, **Prince William Wildflower Society**, and Maryland Native Plant Society. **Charles Smith** (PWWS president) and **Rod Simmons** (Powtomack chapter) will lead a co-chapter walk at the Sully Woodlands property in **Western Fairfax County, Sunday, June 22, from 10 a.m – 3 p.m.** This walk is limited to 25 participants, so contact Charles right away if you're interested in registering. (Email: [chrlssmith@msn.com](mailto:chrlssmith@msn.com); Phone: 703-361-5125).

**About the site:** Purple milkweed should be in bloom, and we may be able to catch the tway-blade orchid and some of the plants at the two globally rare plant communities we will visit: Diabase

Glade Forest (also known as Basic Oak-Hickory Forest) and the Basic Bald. In addition to the plant communities, the field complex we will visit has breeding populations of prairie warbler, yellow-breasted chat, field sparrow, several hawk species, eastern meadowlark, and grasshopper sparrow (latter is uncommon in our region). We may be lucky enough to see black racer snakes, a copperhead or two, and lots of box turtles!

**About the walk:** *Be prepared.* Difficulty level of the walk is moderate. We will be in the field for 5 hours. There are no bathrooms, and the area we are visiting has the highest tick counts in Fairfax County. We will break for lunch, so participants should pack a lunch (and plenty of water). There may be the option of leaving for lunch and meeting up with the group later as Centreville is only about three miles from the trip location.

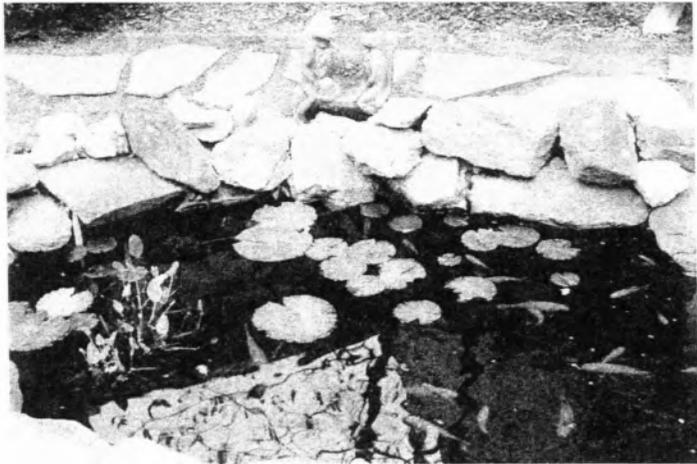
**Directions:** Take Rte 50 West from Fairfax and I-66 to Pleasant Valley Road. Turn left on Pleasant Valley Road and proceed SW for several miles. Take note at intersection of Pleasant Valley Road and Braddock Road (Cox Farms on right) and proceed a short distance past intersection on Pleasant Valley Road and look for parked cars along road edge on right. Park along road edge and fenced field.

**Monday, March 17, 2008**

### **Prince William Wildflower Society Meeting Minutes**

President Charles Smith was on vacation; Marion Lobstein opened the meeting and asked Nicky Staunton to talk about the proposal to make Virginia bluebells the official county wildflower.

Nicky also showed her drawing, which was commissioned by PWWS to go along with the proposal to the P.W. Board of County Supervisors.



Nancy Vehrs spoke about the three gardens that will be on the garden tour on April 27, 2008. She asked for volunteers for that day. The gardens on the tour will be at the homes of Helen Walter, Charlotte Cochard, and Janet Wheatcraft.

Nancy V. also reminded everyone of the Saturday, May 10, 2008 plant sale.

Sally Anderson, president of the Virginia Native Plant Society, was introduced. She invited those present to take some of the Wildflower of the Year brochures that she brought with her.

Kim Strader, the new horticultural chairman of VNPS was introduced. She works at Blandy as well.

Marion Lobstein presented a program entitled "Fantastic Voyages: the Plants of 1607". Marion has been interested in medicinal plants and did research in the early 1990s on the health and medical practices of both the local Indians and the Europeans in the late fifteenth century and into the early seventeenth century.

Using maize (corn), tobacco and sassafras, Marion relayed an interesting story of the 1607 settlers and the hardships and finally successes that they encountered. The settlers who arrived

in what was to become Jamestown, Virginia might have been malnourished already, as food and good health were limited in England. The settlement site chosen had brackish water; the men and boys were not experienced farmers; and edible plants that were grown by the Indians (corn, beans and squashes), and the native plants in Virginia, were all unfamiliar to the settlers. Their eventual acceptance of these plants for food and medicine, as well as the cultivation of tobacco as a cash crop contributed to their success.

Marion reported on some early botanists who documented the plants found in the New Land during the 1600 and 1700s. Some of these botanists introduced plants back into Europe, and plants from Europe were brought over to the colonies also. John Clayton wrote the first flora of Virginia, *Flora Virginica*, first published in 1742. The little spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*) is named after him.

It was proudly reported that the modern *Flora of Virginia* will be completed by 2012. Most of the work is done, and Marion added that donations are always welcome to the Flora of Virginia Project.

Those present at the meeting were: Bill Lehman, Jane Lehman, Jeanne Fowler, Marion Lobstein, Kim Strader, Maggie Hart, Nancy Vehrs, Sally Anderson (VNPS), Joann Krumvielde, John Pauswinski, Nancy Arrington, Bonnie Nahas, Diane Flaherty, Helen Walter, Helen Rawls, Nicky Staunton, Betty Truax, Tiana Camfiord, Katy Segel, Ruth Johnston, Karrie Cox and Karen Waltman.

--Respectively submitted, Karen Waltman, PWWS Secretary

### Photo Gallery from PWWS Garden Tour 2008

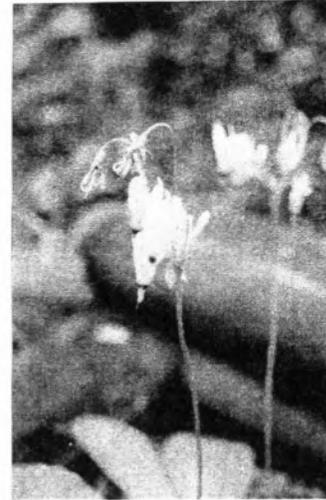
Cool weather (but no rain!) prevailed last weekend for the PWWS 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Garden Tour. Three outstanding and very different gardens were featured. Final counts are not yet in, but the overall consensus is that this year's Prince Wildflower Society Garden Tour was a success. Well over 100 visitors were counted at each of the three gardens on the tour, and there was much appreciation for the different gardening styles, plants, and displays in each garden. A whopping thanks goes to Garden Tour Chair Nancy Vehrs for her tireless efforts in organizing this year's tour. Very nice work, Nancy! PWWS also thanks garden tour hosts Helen Walters, Charlotte Cochard, and Janet Wheatcraft for generously opening their lovely gardens to the public. Pictures taken at the gardens are scattered throughout this newsletter. (At right Nancy Vehrs, Janet Wheatcraft, and trumpet vine.)

(Previous pages, Golden Alexander [zizia], spring wildflower bouquet of pinxter flower, camassia, phlox divaricata, and foam flower; fish pond, Cochard garden.)





Left, Helen Walter (and a friendly tree);  
below r., shooting star at the Walter  
garden; below left, Joanne Krumviede and  
guest at the Cochard garden



#### PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

President Charles Smith, (703) 361-5125 [chrlssmith@msn.com](mailto:chrlssmith@msn.com)  
 Vice President & VNPS Co-Treasurer Martha Slover, (571) 238-5713 [mslover@gmu.edu](mailto:mslover@gmu.edu)  
 Secretary Karen Waltman, (703) 830-5710 [geraldwaltman@hotmail.com](mailto:geraldwaltman@hotmail.com)  
 Treasurer Diane Flaherty, (703) 330-9862  
 Botany Marion Lobstein, (703) 536-7150  
 Conservation OPEN  
 Programs Bonnie Fulford Nahas, (703) 361-7409  
 History OPEN  
 Membership Nancy Vehrs, (703) 368-2898 [pwvs.vnps@yahoo.com](mailto:pwvs.vnps@yahoo.com)  
 Plant Sale Nancy Vehrs (703) 368-2898  
 Publicity OPEN  
 Refreshments Joann Krumviede, (703) 938-4378 and Betty Truax  
 Editor Deanna LaValle High, (703) 392-3505 [deannah@agb.org](mailto:deannah@agb.org)  
 Advisor/VNPS  
 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Nicky Staunton, (703) 368-9803 [nstaunton@earthlink.net](mailto:nstaunton@earthlink.net)  
 Original Artwork by Nicky Staunton

**Deadline for the July-August issue of Wild News is July 1, 2008**

Please send or email information to Deanna High, 9613 Heather Green Drive, Manassas, VA 20112; [deannah@agb.org](mailto:deannah@agb.org).  
 VNPS home page: <http://www.vnps.org>

**NICKY STAUNTON**  
14457 ROCKS EDGE ROAD  
REVA, VIRGINIA 22735

April 21, 2008

To Prince William Wildflower Society

Dear Charles,

Until I heard the weather/rain forecast for this evening, I had hoped to attend tonight's Board meeting to thank our Prince William Wildflower Society for supporting me with the request for a Bluebell "portrait" to present to the Prince William County Board of Supervisors at the time of their adoption of *Mertensia virginiana* as the county flower on the first of this month.

I hope that those who did see the watercolor drawing given to PWC were pleased. There were several watercolors created in the process. The second one was suitable to frame and to present to Kim Hosen for the PWCA Merrimac Farm WMA event on April 10th. I explained to her that it was part of the

### **Merrimac Farm**

The Prince William Conservation Alliance and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will host a public tour of Merrimac Farm on **Saturday, June 23, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.**

The 302-acre farm near Quantico Marine Base is now an open-space reality for Prince William citizens and visitors. Opening ceremonies took place on April 10, 2008. The Prince William Conservation Alliance hosts a new Web site for Merrimac Farms, see [www.pwconserve.org/merrimacfarm/index.htm](http://www.pwconserve.org/merrimacfarm/index.htm) for photos and events information.

"The property is on the National Registry of Historic Sites, has a 115-acre floodplain parallel to Cedar Run, and contains suitable habitat for Small Whorled Pogonia - the rarest species of American orchid. The property's 100 acres of contiguous forested wetlands provide a one-mile buffer along Cedar Run's northern bank." (From Governor Tim Kaine's 2007 press release announcing the grant)

commission by PWWS and should be considered a gift from the chapter.

So, I want you to know that there is a Bluebell watercolor created for you that is with the PW County Supervisors and a second one with Kim, so it can eventually be a companion for the PW County's Bluebell Plaque presented to you, Charles, at the Supervisor's meeting on April 1st.

Your commission was very generous to a practicing artist and I do thank you for faith in my being able to create the Bluebell to present. It will be used now to increase my drawing and watercolor skills by attending Lara Gastinger's Field Sketching workshop at Nancy Hugo's Flower Camp in Howardsville.

PWWS is my home chapter where friendships have remained and grown since 1982! I'm grateful for your friendship and your encouragement.

With great affection for you all,

Nicky

## NATIVE PLANT PROFILE: MAYAPPLE

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

*Podophyllum pentatum* or mayapple is one of the most recognizable spring wildflowers by its distinctive foliage. By early to mid-April the unfurled peltate leaves of mayapple begin to poke through the forest litter and resemble fat green umbrellas that are ready to unfurl. The forked stems bearing two leaves will have a tight flower bud nestled at the base of the two petioles. The single-leaved stems will not produce a flower that season. By the end of April and often the first week of May the lovely waxy white flowers begin to open. This species is found in rich woods, thickets, and even roadsides from Quebec and Ontario south to Florida and Texas. This species is now placed in the Berberidaceae or barberry family, although it once was included in the Ranunculaceae or buttercup family. Linnaeus assigned the binomial of *Podophyllum* from "podos" meaning foot, "phylum" meaning leaf, and "peltatum" meaning shield. Other common names are mandrake, wild lemon, and raccoon berry.

The flowers of mayapple are up to two inches in diameter with six sepals that are shed early in blooming, 6-9 white waxy petals, numerous yellow stamens (usually twice the number of petals) with the anthers opening down the side, and a pistil with a large stigma. The flowers lack nectar, but offer the native bees and bumblebees that visit them a rich pollen reward. There is a fragrance to the flower that is a bit pungent or musky. The frequency of pollination success is often not that high in *Podophyllum*, even though there is extended anthesis (shedding of pollen) as well as receptiveness of the stigma if pollination has not been accomplished. Queen bumblebees are especially attracted to mayapple flowers to collect pollen for rearing workers and thus may be primary pollinators.



Fruit-set rates are often low for individual colonies of plants and mature fruits are even rarer. Mature fruits resemble a small lemon-colored, egg-shaped fruit, which is technically a berry 1 to 2 inches long. The fruit matures by late August to early September. If the seed does germinate, the seedling may be shaded out by other individuals the next spring. The Eastern box turtle is thought to be the primary seed disperser. In studies of seeds ingested by and passed through the digestive tracts of box turtles, these seeds germinate faster. There is some evidence that the white-footed mouse, squirrel, and grackle may also be seed dispersers with opossum, raccoon, fox, and even black bear as possible seed dispersers.

Each plant has one to two deeply divided, umbrella-like leaves that may be up to ten inches broad. Only the plants with two leaves will bloom. Plants can be up to 15 inches tall. The underground storage structure is a rhizome that has thick fibrous roots. The mayapple may put up to 40 percent of its energy into its underground rhizome compared to only 8 percent of its energy into sexual reproduction. The rhizome is the main method of producing new plants. A colony of mayapple plants may all have developed from a single seed. A seed once it germinates will not form a rhizome until it is over five years old and may not produce blooms until the plant is 12 years old. Colonies grow at a rate of 5 inches per year and many larger colonies may be more than 100 years old. One colony may contain up to 1,000 shoots. If an individual plant has produced mature fruit during a given season, it will have decreased rhizome growth and decreased chance of being forked the next year and bearing flowers. If a plant does not produce fruit,

or if it is a single-leafed plant, its leaves usually senesce by early summer. The leaves persist in plants that have maturing fruits.



The immature fruits as well as the vegetative structure of mayapple are poisonous. As with many drugs, there is a fine line between poison and effective medicinal use. Native Americans ate the ripe fruits and had a number of medicinal uses of mayapple preparations. The list of their uses include use as a laxative as well as a treatment for rheumatism, diarrhea, ulcers, sores, liver and bile problems hemorrhoids, headaches, diuretic, whooping cough, cholera, pneumonia, problems of the male and female reproductive tracts, purgatives, and antihelmentic (worming) purposes. Reportedly some tribes even used rhizomes of this plant to commit

suicide. Later it was used as the active ingredient in Carter's Little Liver Pills and as an extract called *Podophyllin* to remove genital warts. Now drugs derived from the rhizome are being used in Europe and are being test in this country to treat caner such as cancer of t he testis, two forms of lung cancer, Karposi's sarcoma, and some forms of leukemia. It has also been used to treat syphilis. There is also evidence that Native Americans used this plant to treat forms of cancer, such as ovarian and skin cancers. The ripe fruits are edible and there are recipes for jellies and pies as well as for a juice extraction to add to lemonade.

This spring enjoy the beauty of the mayapple. Be very cautious if you wish to sample the fruit. It is difficult to find before the forest animals enjoy it!

--First published in *Wild News*, May-June 2002

(Pictures: NYPL Digital Gallery, Digital Image ID 1107182. Jacob Bigelow, 1787-1879, artist. *American Medical Botany*, 1817-20. Flower, Albert F.W. Vick, photographer, NPIN Image Gallery, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Image ID 3021, 1988.)

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

DULLES VA 201

05 MAY 2008 PM 2 T



exp. 10/08

Nancy Arrington  
8388 Briarmont Lane  
Manassas, VA 20112-2755

**NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, May 19, Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Tony Bulmer on the "critters around us"**

20112+2755

