



WILD NEWS

Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2009-06

November-December 2009

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16

PWWS Membership Meeting

Where: Bethel Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, Manassas

When: 7:30 p.m.

Refreshments will be served.

Join us to hear **Bull Run Mountains Conservancy Executive Director Michael Kieffer** talks about the work of the Conservancy and its many educational programs for both adults and children. A native of Amherst, New York, Michael is a veteran naturalist, biologist, and educator. He spent five years as a naturalist for the Piedmont Environmental Center in High Point, N.C., where he specialized in targeting environmental education programs toward high school AP students and special education students of all ages and initiated adult programming for special interest groups, including the mentally retarded and the hearing and visually impaired.

Please plan to attend this fascinating program. PWWS members, guests, and all interested are welcome. Bethel Lutheran Church is located at 8712 Plantation Lane, in Manassas, just off Rte 234 Bus., opposite the Prince William Hospital. If you need a ride to the meeting, please call PWWS President Helen Walter at 703-330-9614.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The trip to Salem for the VNPS annual meeting at the end of September was memorable for the wonderful hospitality of the Blue Ridge Chapter and for Monarch butterflies which I saw all along the road both on the trip down and on the return, so that weekend must have been during their peak migration. On my field trip to Bent Mountain I saw high mountain meadows full of milkweed loaded with pods, perfect for the Monarchs, so they knew where they were going. Great field trips, great speakers, great food at the dinner. If you weren't there, you missed a terrific weekend.

The big news at the state board meeting is that next year's annual meeting will be on Skyline Drive, hosted by the Piedmont Chapter, and they're already scouting out restaurants, motels, and places for field trips. An issue of concern at the state meeting is declining membership and difficulty filling offices at the state and chapter level with a number of positions listed as "open." We have a great organization with an agenda needed now more than ever as sprawl continues to gobble up our wild places, so how can we get our message out to a wider audience and bring in new members?

Your President, Helen

HEADS UP: 2010 EVENTS

- Monday, January 18, 7:30 pm
PWWS Members' Slideshow
- Sunday, April 11
Bluebell Festival at Merrimac

Meeting Minutes
Prince William Wildflower Society Annual Meeting
Saturday, September 19, 2009



The 2009 Annual Meeting was held at the Bull Run Mountains Conservancy headquarters.
Bull Run Mountains Conservancy 17405 Beverly Mill Dr.,
Broad Run, VA 20137

President Helen Walter called the meeting/luncheon to order at 12:45 p.m. Charles Smith gave a brief summary of his field notes from Silver Lake. See a detailed account in the September-October 2009 WILD NEWS newsletter online at www.vnps.org/chapters/princewilliam.

Charles Smith made a motion to accept the nominating committee slate of officers. Betty Truax seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The new nominating committee includes Charlotte Cochard, Jeanne Fowler, and Mary Sherman.

Charles Smith made a motion to accept the proposed 2010 budget. Mary Sherman seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Announcements: Helen Walter said she plans to set up a table with our brochures at the Sat., October 17, 2009 Rippon Lodge Harvest Festival, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. She asked members to please let her know if anyone wanted to join her.

Nancy Vehrs announced bird walks that would be held at Merrimac Farm. They would be led by Harry Glasgow and start at 8 a.m. at the Stone House on Sunday, September 20 and Sunday, October 25.

The meeting was adjourned and all were invited to enjoy the potluck luncheon. Many in attendance went on a hike to the old mill following the luncheon, and the weather cooperated with a nice day.

The following 19 people attended the annual meeting:

Helen Walter, Rob Walter, Cindy Patterson, Jeanne Fowler, Stan Fowler, Betty Truax, William Hendrickson, Brenda Hallam, Deanna High, Jack High, Amy Hamilton, Charles Smith, Charlotte Cochard, Mary Sherman, Harry Glasgow, Marion Lobstein, Nancy Vehrs, Karen Waltman, and Val Morgan-member of Potomac chapter.

Respectively submitted,
Karen Waltman, Secretary, Prince William Wildflower Society

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY
P.O. Box 83, Manassas, Virginia 20108-0083
Chartered January 10, 1983
Logo: *Mertensia virginia* (Virginia Bluebells)

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Registry, VACANT
Advisor/VNPS 2-VP, Nicky Staunton, nstaunton@earthlink.net (Tel: 540-547-2813)

2008/2009 Annual Report
Prince William Wildflower Society
By Helen Walter, President

EVENTS

Saturday, October 4, 2008

Our annual meeting and picnic was also our chapter's twenty-fifth anniversary, so thanks to a lot of planning and hard work from Karen Waltman, we had a beautiful celebration at the Stone House at the Merrimac Farm Wildlife Management Area that included gift boxes with special commemorative pins for the members. After the meeting, Kim Hosen of the Prince William Conservation Alliance led the group on a tour of the property. New officers elected at the meeting are Helen Walter, President; Betty Truax, Vice President; Diane Flaherty, Treasurer; and Karen Waltman, Secretary.

Sunday, April 19, 2009

We had our annual garden tour a week early to accommodate the earlier bloom times of many of the spring flowers. We featured three Manassas area gardens belonging to Jeanne and Hans Endrikat, Martha Slover, and Nancy Vehrs, with refreshments at the Vehrs garden. All of them have been on the tour before, giving visitors a chance to observe the evolution of the gardens.

Saturday, May 9, 2009

The annual plant sale, our chapter's only fundraiser, was held on the Saturday before Mothers' Day as usual on the grounds of the Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas. Including sales of plants and books along with new memberships, we made \$3,151.

PROGRAMS

November 17, 2008

Julia Flanagan, arborist for Prince William County, discussed tree preservation during the rezoning process and provided us with behind the scene information on how the process works.

January 19, 2009

We had our annual members' slide show on a night threatening snow, the reason we don't try to schedule a speaker in January. The weather held and we saw pictures from the travels of Betty Truax, Marion Lobstein, and Charles Smith taken when it was warmer and plants were blooming.

March 16, 2009

Ellen Percy-Miller, executive director of Turn the Mill Around Campaign, gave a program on the history of the Chapman/Beverly Mill, which was almost destroyed by arsonists ten years ago. Her organization is working to stabilize and restore this substantial piece of history in Prince William. Along with the history of the mill, we learned a lot about the history of Prince William County.

May 18, 2009

Kim Hosen of the Prince William Conservation Alliance described the challenges of preserving publicly owned lands for passive recreation and making them accessible to the public. She told us about her organization's work with Dove's Landing, Silver Lake, and the Featherstone National Wildlife Refuge.

July 20, 2009

Charles Smith gave a lively talk on birds native to our area and showed us some wonderful bird pictures.

PARTNERSHIPS

Prince William Conservation Alliance

Since our two organizations have a similar mission, we partnered with PWCA during the year, including the following events:

February 28, 2009

PWWS past president Charles Smith was the featured speaker at the Alliance's Green Breakfast, and many of our members were there.

April 11, 2009

PWWS hosted a table at the Merrimac Farm Bluebell Festival.

May 2, 2009

PWWS participated in Virginia's first invasives eradication day by pulling Garlic Mustard from the flood plain at Merrimac Farm.

Many of our members regularly attend the Alliance's program series First Thursday Nature Tales held at the Bull Run Unitarian Universalist Church in Manassas.

Flora of Virginia Project

PWWS has made a donation every year to the Flora project, and have contributed \$9,750 to date.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Basics of Gardening: Winter 2010. Classes are Saturday mornings, 9:00 am until 1:00 pm on **January 30** and **March 6**, then 9:00 am until 12 noon **February 6** through **February 27**. Class location is McCoy Conference Room, Sudley North Government Building, Manassas. Fee of \$50 for the series includes all materials and light refreshments. Couples may register for \$80 for *one set* of materials. Please call 703-792-7747 or email master_gardener@pwcgov.org to reserve your seat.

Saturday, November 14, 9:30am-12:30pm. Tools for Change Workshop: Conservation Advocacy. *Where:* Braddock Hall, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Springfield, Va. 22015. For directions to the workshop and registration online, please see www.pwconserve.org.

Agenda for the Workshop:

Opening Remarks - What is Congress doing?

Christina Yagjian, National Organizer for Global Warming Programs, Sierra Club

Workshop I: Working with the Press, *Tony Iallornado, Director of Communications, National Wildlife Federation*

Workshop II: Building a Relationship with Government Officials, *Glenda Booth, Virginia Outreach Coordinator, National Audubon Society*

Workshop III: Advocacy for the Active Person, *Lauren Glickman, Virginia Campaign Coordinator, CCAN*

Sponsoring Organizations: Prince William Conservation Alliance, Virginia Native Plant Society, Sierra Club, Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, Friends of Potomac River Refuges, Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Audubon Naturalist Society, Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment, Sustainable Loudoun

Sunday, November 15 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Especially for Families - Nature Journaling at Merrimac Farm

Where: Merrimac Farm Stone House Visitor Center, 15020 Deepwood Lane, Nokesville,

Have you ever taken a great hike and wished you had a way to remember what you saw and heard?

Nature journals are a great way to record your personal reflections and observations about the great outdoors. Join PWCA's Linda Johnston to explore some creative ways to record your reflections about the natural world.

We'll take a short walk and return to the Stone House to explore various ways of putting observations from our minds eye to paper. All ages welcome! This program is free of charge. RSVP appreciated to PWCA, alliance@pwconserve.org or 703.499.4954

Sunday, December 27 beginning at 6:30 a.m.
Nokesville Christmas Bird Count - Save the Date!

Where: Meet at Merrimac Farm WMA North Entrance, 14712 Deepwood Lane
Registration required. RSVP to 703.499.4954 or alliance@pwconserve.org

For more than 100 years, citizen scientists throughout the United States have volunteered their time to count birds for the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Their efforts provide important information about wintering bird populations, distribution, and changes over time.

The count circle covers nearly 180 sq. miles. It includes Merrimac Farm Wildlife Management Area, Cedar Run and Foggy Bottom Wetland Banks, Nokesville Park, and the Prince William County landfill as well as portions of Prince William Forest Park, Marine Corps Base Quantico, and Fauquier County.

Volunteer birders (including beginners) join a team covering a sector within this area and meet at the end of the day for a tally rally at Merrimac Farm. We had a great time last year, when volunteers observed and recorded 15,873 individual birds representing 82 different species for the Nokesville Circle (survey area).

FALL NOTEBOOK: October 24, 2009 Manassas

"Understory"

Thousands of leaves came down in last night's warm rain, as I discovered when walking the dog this morning. The last third of our long, winding driveway was thickly littered, especially with dark golden hickory leaves. The soft murmur of the rain all night long was punctuated every so often by the sharp crack! pop! of acorns ricocheting off the roof and skylights—noise enough to rouse one for a groggy second or two. Just a few weeks ago, though, I pretty much jumped every time an acorn rattled down. Late acorns—those coming down now—are fewer but sound heavier, a more serious projectile. In any case, we are happy to see acorns again after last year's dearth of them. I can tell the squirrels are happier too, as they have not raided the ornamental corn I have on the door as they did last year.

Dogwoods are intensely red and holding on to leaves for now despite the rain; Ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*) leaves have turned lemony yellow in



one delicate instance, and another specimen in deeper shade has leaves of a muted orangish-red. In terms of fall color (and perhaps in every way), *C. caroliniana* to my mind is superior to its closely related cousin, hop hornbeam (*Ostrya caroliniana*), the latter not having much in the way of fall color, turning instead dull green and spotty—definitely not its best season, anyway. *C. caroliniana* is among our most beautiful understory trees: its smooth, muscular, fluted bark alone is worth the effort of getting one if you don't have it already growing naturally. Medium grey, with sinewy limbs and white splotches like a fawn's back, Ironwood's graceful



habit all year round is reason #2 to cultivate and embrace this tree. Fountain shaped, its airy and delicate leaf in the summer creates a sun dappled shade umbrella ("A shade cool, but not dark," according to Donald Culross Peattie). In fall, the gentle chimes of its pale golden yellow or soft reddish-orange leaves strike a lovely chord in the landscape, especially when backdropped by dark hollies or evergreens.

A member of the Birch family, *Betulaceae*, Ironwood seldom grows beyond 30-50 feet (a height of 15-20 feet is more common) and is quite tolerant of shade, as its understory status suggests. I find it very effective as an "edge" tree, and easily can imagine it intermingled with taller trees in a mixed allee, drooping gracefully over the edge of a structure, patio, or, as in my case, embracing the driveway and drawing the eye into the landscape. The beauty of the tree extends to other seasons as well: Rick Darke claims that Ironwood "is among the best small trees with four-season interest in the woodland landscape...[as its] horizontal layering in the branch tracery continues as a delight through winter snows." In spring, the leaves emerge a fresh chartreuse; summer foliage is dark green, accompanied by pendent fruit clusters.

Some common names for *Carpinus caroliniana* are more or less self-explanatory: Ironwood, because of the incredible density and strength of the wood (49 pounds per cubic foot, dry weight, it was used for machine gears or tool handles in the Colonial era, as well as for dishes and bowls, as it did not crack); Blue beech or Water beech from its leaves' similarity to American beech leaves and its habitat; Musclewood, from the sinewy multiple trunks; American hornbeam, from a combining of "horn = toughness" and "beam = tree" (from the German *baum*).



Habitat: Native to most of eastern U.S., Ironwood ranges from Nova Scotia to Minnesota and south to Florida and Texas, occurring typically in moist woods and on floodplains or as understory in bottomland mixed hardwood forests. Hardy to Zone 3, it is most likely flood tolerant. It has been found in mountains high as 900 feet (Great Smoky Mountains), but more frequently is found at altitudes of 490 ft or lower. Present in a variety of hardwood forest types, including White Oak-Black Oak-Northern Red Oak, it is associated throughout much of its range with flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), eastern hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), the serviceberries (*Amelanchier* spp.), and speckled alder (*Alnus rugosa*). Shrub species associated with Ironwood throughout its range include spicebush (*Lindera bezoin*), arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*), mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), and winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), among others. Ironwood is an important food of gray squirrels in southern bottom-land hardwoods and its seeds, buds, or catkins are eaten by a number of songbirds, ruffed grouse, ring-necked pheasants, bobwhite, turkey, and others. Beaver use it heavily because of its availability in their habitat.

Culture: Slow growing and said to be difficult to transplant, but incredibly hardy and not limited to understory status. Dirr points to its successful use as a decorative tree in a Georgia shopping mall and its ability to withstand pruning to serve as a hedge or screen—a more formal element—as used in the William Paca Gardens in Annapolis, probably in lieu of European hornbeam, which is often used for formal hedges and screens (Dumbarton Oaks). I have been to the Paca Gardens but do not remember the use of Ironwood, may be worth a trip to look again. University of Connecticut horticulture Web site (www.hort.uconn.edu) shows it in use as a landscape tree in an enclosed, raised bed next to a college building.

Propagation: Seed, moist stratification; not easily propagated by cuttings. Species is *monoecious*, with male and female catkins borne separately on the same tree and appearing in the spring with the leaves. Fruit is an ovoid, ribbed, long nutlet, which matures in one season, changing from green to light greenish brown or brown on maturity.

Cultivars and Availability: Dirr lists two cultivars, "Palisade" and "Pyramidalis" but neither seem to have much if any advantage over the species for Fall color and general beauty of form. Since it is not easy to propagate, it may be a challenge to locate a native tree nursery that sells *C. caroliniana*; a good place to start is the VNPS native nursery list, at www.vnps.org/growing.html. A quick Google search also revealed some tree nurseries in Pennsylvania listing Ironwood for sale. —Deanna LaValle High

Photographs: Deanna High, October 24, 2009, Manassas, Va.

References: Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees, Eastern Region, Alfred A. Knopf, 1980; Donald Culross Peattie, *A Natural History of Trees of Eastern and Central North America*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991 ed. (first published 1948); Rick Darke, *The American Woodland Garden: Capturing the Spirit of the Deciduous Forest*, Timber Press, 2002; Michael A. Dirr, *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation, and Uses*, 5th ed, Stipes Publishing LLC, 1998; *Silvics of North America*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Agriculture Handbook 654, vol. 2, accessed at www.na.fs.fed.us; University of Connecticut Plant Database, accessed at www.hort.uconn.edu.

Under the Understory: Fall Color

Abundant and delightfully common, Mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*) is nevertheless a real show-off in autumn. Even very young, low saplings turn red, orange, and yellow, so from ankle to chest—depending on size and age of your thicket—it's possible to wade in a sea of color in October and November. Some MVs in my woods offer a curious spotty green look, as if the chlorophyll has been sucked out of the leaves, but even this variation is interestingly pretty. More often, however, the maple-like leaves turn various shades of pale or dark dusty reddish pink, lightening the lower story of the woodland landscape. When its prominent blue-black berries are still around—and the beauty of it is that they do hang on for a long while—the combination with the colorful leaves is especially appealing. If you don't have any mapleleaf



viburnum, plan to get some at next year's PWWS Plant Sale, because they are also wonderful in spring, blooming in May with fluffy white flowers. Understated but not dull, a big running clump of them—perhaps underplanted with ferns—is a great way to add care-free, year-round beauty to a shady corner.



A member of the honeysuckle family (*Caprifoliaceae*), Mapleleaf viburnum (sometimes called dogmackie), develops large, open colonies in the wild and is well adapted to shade, and especially important for us in Prince William, it flourishes even in *dry* shade. The fall colors range from creamy pink, salmon rose, red, grayish pink to "grape-juice" purple (Dirr). It roots well from cuttings taken in June July, is cold-hardy to Zone 4, and bears creamy white flowers in May. Rick Darke claims that when it is sited in shade, it is loose and open, but planted in full sun, it will become full and bushy. I have not

yet tried planting it in sun, but may use it in a sunnier spot that I am "planting up" with native trees and shrubs. —Deanna LaValle High

Photographs: Summer leaves with berries, Albert F.W. Vick, NPIN Image 2701, accessed at www.wildflower.org; Autumn leaf, Emmet J. Judzewicz, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and Madison, accessed at <http://fwisplants.uwsp.edu>

References: Michael A. Dirr, *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation, and Uses*, 5th ed, Stipes Publishing LLC, 1998; Rick Darke, *The American Woodland Garden: Capturing the Spirit of the Deciduous Forest*, Timber Press, 2002

MORE NATIVE TREES and SHRUBS BEAUTIFUL in FALL

Just a few more of my favorites—all native to Virginia and most native to PWC—What are yours?

Dogwood (*Cornus florida*). Variable, but always beautiful, dogwoods account for much of the vivid fall color in Virginia, where sugar maples are not naturally abundant.

Hickories (*Carya spp.*) Pignut hickory and Mockernut hickory both have beautiful habits, tobacco-golden leaves which light up the woods.

Grown with native hollies (*Ilex opaca*) as a backdrop, they are unparalleled in autumn beauty.

American Beech (*Fagus grandiflora*) Even the smaller trees have a full head of tawny-golden leaves swirling down from the crown. The color starts as a pale gold and deepens with the season. Yes, you need a large space for American beech, but it's worth making room for it if you can.

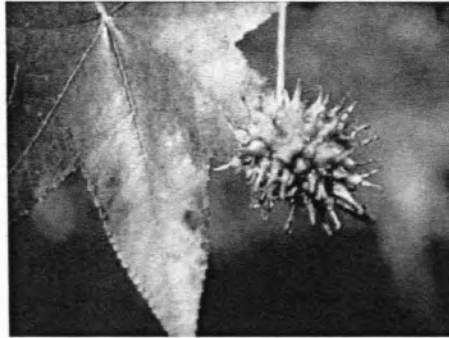
Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) another relatively rare Virginia native beautiful at all times of year, but especially in fall, when it turns a brilliant red. Its pendent habit, vibrant leaves, and

white racemes combine spectacularly in the fall—a traffic stopper.

Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) Not common in PWC, but who could leave it out? *The Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora* says that it is “common in the mountains in rich cove forests, dry-mesic and dry calcareous forests and woodlands, and northern hardwood forests at higher elevations. In the Piedmont, [it is] uncommon and more restricted to fertile river-fronting slopes and sheltered ravines.”

Sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) A tree I grew up with in the deep south and dearly love, although some

people do not like the gumballs. (They are fun for kids, however, plus the leaf stems are tasty to suck on.) Sweet gum’s starry shaped leaves and lovely habit make the gumballs worth suffering. Fall color is usually spectacular, with green-gold, gold, red and orange variations. There is no more beautiful leaf on the ground in the Fall. Sweet gum is a very unfussy tree, easy to climb and easy to love.



Oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) has wonderful color variation, with dark red, green, purplish red and gold leaves. The size of the leaves along with the dried blooms from summer make a stunning combination, either in masses or as a single specimen. They are also look wonderful indoors in a large vase if you can bear to cut them. I prefer to allow mine to sprawl mostly uncut as they

provide horizontal texture in the winter landscape and catch the snow in a nice way.

Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*) Great at any time of year, but in the fall, its leaves reliably turn deep red and green and droop gracefully over a path. Good in groups and very easy to grow either in deep or partial shade.

Sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*) There are many cultivars, but even the species has lemony gold leaves, highlighted by the cinnamon bark, loose habit, and dark seed pods that hang on for a long while. Plus all parts of *Calycanthus* are fragrant. Crushing a

leaf or stem under the nose can provide a quick fall/winter pick-me-up.

--Deanna LaValle High

Photograph: Albert F.W. Vick, Lady Bird Johnson
Wildflower Center Image Gallery, NPIN image ID 124.
Accessed at www.wildflower.org

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY
A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 83, Manassas, Virginia, 20108-0083



exp. 10/09

Nancy Arrington
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Manassas, VA 20112-2755

NEXT MEETING: Monday, November 16, 2009
MICHAEL KIEFFER on the work of the BULL RUN MOUNTAINS
CONSERVANCY