



# Wild News

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Prince William Wildflower Society  
A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2025-1

May-June 2025

## Prince William Wildflower Society Membership Meeting, May 19, 2025, 7:30 pm

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Manassas  
8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas



### "Why Trees Are Not a Clade"

*"A clade is a group of organisms that can be pruned from the tree of life with a single cut. To understand why trees are not a clade we need to look at the evolution of terrestrial plants, particularly their vascular structures."*

Come spend an evening with ecologist Jim McGlone, and together we will learn why trees do not fall into the designation of a clade.

Jim McGlone has a PhD in Human Ecology (aka Economics) from Virginia Tech and a Master's Certificate in Environmental Law and Policy from the USDA Graduate School. A self-taught naturalist and ecologist, he has managed the natural resources of a 500-acre park in Fairfax County and is retired from 17 years as an Urban Forest Conservationist with the Virginia Department of Forestry in Northern Virginia. He continues to do environmental education with Tree Stewards, Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, and other groups. He and his wife have been practicing conservation landscaping since 2005 and removed turf grass from their property in 2008. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and has the ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification.



## Upcoming Events

\* Green Spring Annual Garden Day & Native Plant Sale. Saturday, May 17, 9 am - 3 pm. 4603 Green Spring Rd. Alexandria.

\* Fifth Annual Manassas Bee Festival. Saturday, June 21, 10 - 2 pm. Liberia House and Grounds, 8601 Portner Ave. Native plants by Green Steeze.

\* For upcoming VNPS chapter events, please continue to check local chapters' "Events".  
<https://vnps.org/chapters/>

\* Consider becoming a Friend of the Clifton Institute, Fauquier County, to enjoy the various walks and events they hold on a regular basis. <https://cliftoninstitute.org>

## President's Column and Native Plant Sale Photographs

As we age, time seems to pass at an accelerating pace. Remember when you were a kid, and you couldn't wait for summer vacation? A month was such a long time. Now, as I'm in my 60s, time passes in a flash. Spring comes, and poof, summer is here already! If only spring and its flowers would last. This year I missed the blooms of Hepatica, Trailing Arbutus, and Twinleaf. But I did see Pink Shooting Stars, Squirrel Corn, and White Trout Lilies in their glory. Our Virginia Bluebells enjoyed a long season of bloom this spring, and for that I am very grateful. Perhaps I am greedy wanting to see *all* the spring flowers *every* spring. Perhaps next year . . .

After several years of early-blooming Bluebells, the Prince William Conservation Alliance decided to move the annual Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm into March. That seemed a risky move as we had a colder-than-expected winter. Would there be Bluebells in flower for the festival? Some warm weather that week enticed the Bluebells to begin blooming, and they made a decent show for the March 30 festival. And the weather that day was fabulous—sunny and warm! If we had stayed with an April date, we would have had rain or much cooler temperatures. Our volunteers educated many visitors with a plant model and rewards of jellybeans as well as

the distribution of free literature and the sale of Plant NOVA Natives guides. I thank all our volunteers: Joyce Andrew, Brigitte Hartke, Janine Lawton, Marion Lobstein, Lois Montgomery, Val Neitzey, and Karen Waltman. Claudia Thompson-Deahl and I were two of the numerous tour leaders, and we both enjoyed our enthusiastic groups.

Our March 17 meeting was not well attended, but Dr. Andrea Weeks presented a fascinating talk on 20<sup>th</sup> century botanist Lena Artz. Marion Lobstein recapped the program elsewhere in this issue. For our May 19 meeting, we have Jim McGlone, who retired as an urban forestry conservationist with the Virginia Department of Forestry. He will delve into the evolution of terrestrial plants with a particular emphasis on their vascular structures. Sound technical? Jim will make it understandable even for non-scientists.

Saturday, May 10, marked our annual plant sale, our chapter's major fundraiser. We have been holding these sales since 1983 and missed only the 2020 sale because of the pandemic. We appreciate all plant contributions and volunteer efforts. PWWS founder Nancy Arrington serves as our plant sale chair and gives generously of her beautiful plants and her time. Thank you all!

~ Nancy Vehrs

*Editor's Note and Photos: Customers took home treasures grown and sold by members of the Prince William Wildflower Society at the native plant sale held on May 10, the day before Mother's Day. We have a mighty army of volunteers at this annual event, and we couldn't hold the sale without their planning, plant contributions, ticketing, and cashiering at the checkout tent. A special thank you to Nancy Arrington, for heading up another native plant sale.*





## PWWS Participates in First Annual Student Environmental Action Showcase (SEAS)

by Marion Lobstein,  
Botany Chair

On April 24, in celebration of Earth Week, the Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) held the first annual PWCS Student Environmental Action Showcase (SEAS). At this event, more than 80 student projects were presented by over 250 PWCS students. In addition, 30 expo tables were hosted by 30 environmental sustainability community partners. This event was open to the public and was well attended by families of participants, students, and community members. PWWS was a sponsor of this event with an expo table and awarded four projects with a Prince William Wildflower Society Native Plant Project Award.

PWWS members were involved with the SEAS event. Val Neitzey and Diane Liga hosted the PWWS table with interactive displays and information. Marion Lobstein judged projects connected with native plants and chose the four projects to receive the PWWS awards. Marion was impressed with the quality of projects and the student presenters. Also, Janine Lawton served as one of

the judges of elementary school projects. At the concluding assembly, Marion announced the two elementary/middle school projects, and two high school projects selected to receive the PWWS Native Plant Project awards. Diane presented the certificates and gift card awards to the students who presented the winning projects. One of the elementary school project groups selected to receive an award was not present but will receive their certificate and gift card award. In addition, PWWS donated directly to the SEAS project.

Congratulations to PWWS member Melinda Landry who headed up the organization of this successful event and thanks for her help with working with PWWS participants.

*Many thanks to Diane Liga for taking and sending photos.*





## Some Highlights of the April 3 Stone Bridge Bluebell Walk

by Marion Lobstein,  
Botany Chair

The blue haze of Virginia Bluebells along the Bull Run Trail in the Manassas National Battlefield Park (MNBPP) delighted 16 enthusiastic participants on the April 3rd walk lead by Marion Lobstein, PWWS Botany Chair, and Claudia Thompson-Deahl, PWWS Conservation Chair. The participants met Marion and Claudia at the Stone Bridge parking lot and explored the Bluebells and other special spring wildflowers along the banks of the Bull Run Trail. MNBPP Ranger Wayne Heideman and retired Ranger Bryan Gorsira joined the group and provided historical background to the Civil War events that occurred along Bull Run.

Once again, the group of participants were enthusiastic, asked questions, added additional observations and information, and interacted with Marion, Claudia, and with each other. Brigitte Hartke, Janet Wheatcraft, Linda Mossey, and Marion Bundens shared their photographs of the walk with Marion who forwarded these to the other participants.

As the group followed the trail to the Stone Bridge, the nonnative species dominated with countless Dandelions, patches of Purple Dead-nettle, Ivy-leaved Speedwells, and Yellow-rocket Mustard. Once the group crossed the Stone Bridge and started down the path paralleling Bull Run, native spring wildflower species dominated. The Virginia Bluebells were the most prolific

species on both sides of the path. These were in an earlier stage of bloom this year relative to walks previous springs. Other native spring wildflowers along the path included Spring Beauty, the Common Blue Violets, and Golden Ragwort or Groundsel, Yellow Trout lilies, Dutchman's Breeches and Cutleaf Toothwort, and the Kidney-leaved Buttercup.

The ephemeral nature of these plants that will soon die back after their burst of blooming, attracting pollinators, setting fruit, and having their seeds disperse (seeds of many of these species are dispersed by ants) along with underground storage structures such as rhizomes, corms, and bulbs were also highlighted by Marion. Claudia identified and provided background information on the trees along the path as well as interactions of birds and insects in the ecosystem. She also discussed the importance and conservation of insects as pollinators and food for many bird species. Other participants added additional information based on their own experiences and expertise.



## The Year of the Mayapple

*Mayapple* is the VNPS 2025 Wildflower of the Year; visit the following link to view the brochure on Mayapple: <https://vnps.org/wildflower-of-the-year-2025-mayapple-podophyllum-peltatum/>. You may want to consider ordering the Mayflower, VNPS 2025 Wildflower of the Year T-shirt at: <https://www.bonfire.com/store/vnps/>. Also, checkout John Hayden's article on the naming of Mayapple in Issue 1 2025 of the VNPS quarterly publication *Sempervirens*: [https://vnps.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm\\_uploads/2025/02/Sempervirens-Winter-2025.pdf](https://vnps.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2025/02/Sempervirens-Winter-2025.pdf)

## The PWWS March 17 Membership Meeting Minutes

by Marion Lobstein,  
Botany Chair

On Monday, March 17, 2025, the Prince William Wildflower Society met at the Bethel Lutheran Church in Manassas, VA. Nancy Vehrs, PWWS President, called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. Nancy made a number of announcements including the brochures for Mayapple, the VNPS Wildflower of the Year, being available, as well as dates and information on the March 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm and the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Bluebell walk at Stone Bridge in the Manassas National Battlefield Park. She also mentioned an editor for PWWS newsletter *Wild News* is needed.



Nancy introduced Dr. Andrea Weeks (pictured above) as the guest speaker. Dr. Weeks is the director of the Ted R. Bradley Herbarium and an Associate Professor of Biology at George Mason University (GMU) and serves on the board of the Foundation of the Flora of Virginia Project. The title of her presentation was "A pioneering

botanist of the Massanutten: Lena Artz (1891-1976)" which was timely for March Women's History Month.

In her PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Weeks recounted that all she initially knew of Lena Artz was a single photograph of her in the 2012 *Flora of Virginia* manual. Artz was the only individual female image included in the history section of the *Flora*. She then shared the background of how she discovered the life and contributions of Artz. In 2019, the herbarium of Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) (now Laurel Ridge Community College) was gifted to GMU. A VNPS grant and a later National Science Foundation grant supported the expenses of transfer of this herbarium to GMU. In examining this collection, Weeks found many herbarium specimens collected by Artz. When Weeks tried to research the background of Artz, she could only locate a record of her birth and a picture of her gravestone. Later Weeks became aware of boxes of Artz's notes and books at LFCC and retrieved these. With examination of these

materials, Weeks recounted how she became a history sleuth to unravel the fascinating story of the life of Artz and her contributions. She has also received grants to teach other botanists to retrieve historical records. Weeks has presented numerous programs on Artz as well as creating a Wikipedia page and authoring a paper on Artz. Weeks concluded with a summary of the legacy and her importance today for continued botanical exploration. After the presentation Weeks answered questions and invited participants to view a number of Artz's herbarium sheets she had on display.

Following the program, the following PWWS members won door prizes: Judy Gallagher – a book on grasses, sedges, and rushes (donated by former member Andrea Kinder); Jeanne Endrikat – a book by Senator Tim Kaine *Walk, Ride, Paddle: A Life Outside*; and Janet Wheatcraft – notecards. Refreshments provided by Brigitte Hartke were enjoyed as members socialized at the end of meeting.

*"Born near Woodstock, VA in 1891, Lena Artz spent her career documenting the unique plant communities of the shale barrens in Shenandoah, Warren, and Rockingham Counties. Despite publishing 30 scientific papers over the course of 40 years, her contributions to Appalachian botany were largely forgotten.... at least until Dr. Andrea Weeks (George Mason University) started digging into Artz's past." (photo not attributed)*





## MAYAPPLE

(*Podophyllum peltatum*)

(Reprinted with minor changes from  
Wild News May-June 2012 issue)

Marion Blois Lobstein,  
Botany Chair, Prince  
William Wildflower Society

Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) is one of the most easily recognizable spring wildflowers by its distinctive foliage. By early- to mid-April the unopened, peltate leaves of Mayapple begin to poke through the forest litter resembling a fat green umbrella ready to unfurl. The single-leafed stems will not produce a flower that season. The forked stems bearing two leaves will have a tight flower bud nestled at the base of the two petioles. By the end of April and often the first week of May, the lovely white, waxy flowers begin to open.

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 (genus and species) 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 to 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. Frequency of successful pollination is often not high in Mayapple flowers, 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 that is technically a berry one-and-a-half to two inches long. The fruit matures by August, and if the seeds remain in the same area as the parent colony, the

germination rate is low. 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. There is some evidence that the white-footed mouse, the gray squirrel, and the grackle may also serve as seed dispersers along with opossum, raccoon, fox, and even black bear.

To humans, the immature fruit as well as the other plant parts are poisonous, although there are modern medicinal uses of the rhizome.

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, a horizontal underground stem, 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 a plant is 12 years old. Colonies grow at a rate of 4 to 6 inches per year, and very large 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 a 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, the leaves usually senesce (die back) by early summer. Leaves persist in plants that have maturing fruits.

**MAYAPPLE, continued:** As mentioned before, immature fruits as well as the vegetative structures of Mayapple are poisonous. As with many drugs, there is a fine line between poison and effective medicinal use. American Indians ate the ripe fruits and used a number of medicinal Mayapple preparations. The list of uses by American Indians include treatments for rheumatism, as a laxative as well as treatment for diarrhea, ulcers, sores, liver and bile problems, hemorrhoids, headaches, diuretic, whooping cough, cholera, pneumonia, problems of male and female reproductive tracts, as a purgative, and for anthelmintic (worming) purposes. Reportedly, individuals of some Indian tribes even used rhizomes of this plant to commit suicide.

In the 1800s and early 1900s, Mayapple extract was used as an active ingredient in Carter's Little Liver Pills; today, it is used as an extract called "Podophyllin" to remove genital warts. Drugs derived from the rhizome are being used in Europe, and are being tested in this country to treat forms of cancer such as cancer of the testes, two forms of lung cancer, Kaposi sarcoma, and some forms of leukemia. It also has been used to treat syphilis. There is some evidence that American Indians used this plant also to treat forms of cancer such as ovarian and skin cancer. Modern research shows evidence of Mayapple extracts that inhibit cell division, thus blocking new growth of tumors.

Mayapple's ripe fruits are edible, and there are recipes for jellies

and pies as well as the extraction of its juice to add to lemonade. This spring, savor the beauty of Mayapple. Be very cautious if you wish to sample the fruit, but do it soon, before the forest animals enjoy it instead!

### ***An overview of the history of the naming and classification of Mayapple***



The story of the common and scientific names and classification of Mayapple has been one of many changes. Many American Indian tribes used names that described the physical appearance or medicinal use of Mayapple. The Cherokee name for Mayapple was OO-NEE-SQUATOO-KEY ("it wears a hat"), and the Osage Indian name was CHE-SANE-PE-SHA ("it pains the bowels"). In 1615, the French explorer, Samuel de Champlain was the first European to record observing Mayapple cultivated in Canada by the Huron Indians. Some common French names

include "ipécacuanha de la Caroline," referring to the purgative properties of the plant. In England, the use of Mayapple as a purgative led to the common name of American mandrake (the European mandrake, a different plant, was a commonly used purgative), and it is thought the herbalist Nicholas Culpeper included American mandrake in his famous herbal of the late 1600s. In 1700, the French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort gave Mayapple the Latin name of *Anapodophyllum canadense morini* with the genus meaning "duck's foot leaf." In 1789, A.L. de Jussieu proposed the Barberry family (Berberidaceae), but placed Mayapple in the Buttercup family (Ranunculaceae). Mark Catesby used the name *Anapodophyllum canadense* in 1730 when he sent Mayapple specimens to Linnaeus. By 1753, Linnaeus had shortened the genus name from *Anapodophyllum* to *Podophyllum* and changed the species name (epithet) to *peltatum* but placed Mayapple in the family that is now part of the Poppy family (Papveraceae). In the 1762 *Flora Virginica* (second edition), Mayapple appears as *Podophyllum foliis pellatis lobatis*. By the 1800s, the American botanist Asa Gray in his famous *Gray's Manual of Botany* had placed Mayapple in its present barberry family (Berberidaceae). Recent DNA analysis has shown Mayapple to be properly placed in Berberidaceae. It has been a long and changing road to the present classification of this special plant!

# Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

P.O. Box 83, Manassas, Virginia 20108-0083



**Next Meeting: May 19, 2025, 7:30 pm**

**Jim McGlone: "Why Trees Are Not a Clade"**

**Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, 8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas**

## *A Book Review by PWWS Member Claudia Thompson-Deahl*

### Night Magic by Leigh Ann Henion

Even though it is now May and International Dark Sky Week is recognized in April, we can celebrate night magic by reducing light pollution all year long. Discovering the natural wonders of the night is a whole other way to celebrate nature. Sure, we all know fireflies and bats come out at night, but are you familiar with synchronous fireflies, Mothapalooza, the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network's Bat Blitz event, and glowing foxfire?

Leigh Ann explores and shares night adventures like springtime salamander migration and night time frog calls. Discovering vernal pools is an eye opener into the fascinating importance of these unique habitats. Sitting in the darkness next to a springtime vernal is truly a wondrous experience. The explosion of wood frog activity and seeing spotted salamanders is experiencing nature at its finest. It's hard to protect what you haven't seen or experienced, and hats off to the volunteers that are out all night to help salamanders cross a road during salamander migration nights.

Of course bats and owls are always a night time highlight. And so are moon gardens! These gardens have plants that are enjoyed after sunset and are designed with night bloomers and silver and white foliage meant to catch moonlight. In a time of so much artificial light, it was refreshing to read about the night time biodiversity surrounding us.

