



WILD NEWS

Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2010-05

September-October 2010



PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING and POTLUCK LUNCH

Sunday, September 26, 2010

Noon to 3:00 pm

Occoquan Forest Pavilion, Split Rail Drive

Manassas, Virginia 20112

Schedule: 12:00 pm

Potluck Lunch
Drawings for Door Prizes

1:30 pm

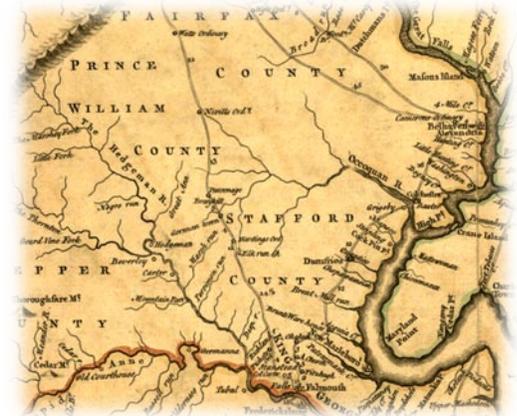
Chapter Business Meeting & President's Report
Election of Chapter's Slate of Officers
Vote on Proposed 2011 Budget

2:00

Hike led by Marion Lobstein
Plant and Seed Swap

Potluck lunch: Bring a salad, vegetable, main dish, or dessert and a serving utensil. PWWS will provide bottled water, lemondade, plates, cups, utensils, and a cooler of ice. There are ten picnic tables, so plenty of seating is available under the pavilion, but bring a lawn chair if you wish. Wear your bluebell membership pin!

RSPV: Please call PWWS Secretary *Karen Waltman* at (703) 830-5710 or email her at geraldwaltman@hotmail.com to let her know that you are coming and what dish you will be bringing. If you need a ride to the meeting, please ask Karen.



Election: Voting for the slate of officers will take place at the Annual Meeting. Proxy ballots will be counted on site.

Directions: Occoquan Forest is off Davis Ford Road. **From Manassas:** Take the Prince William Parkway east. Turn left on Yates Fords Road and go 1.1 miles. Turn right on Davis Ford Road and go 1.6 miles. Turn left onto

Occoquan Forest Drive, which is the first left after the bridge, and go .3 miles. Turn right onto Split Rail Drive, and go .4 miles. The park is at the end of Split Rail. **From Woodbridge:** Take the Prince William Parkway west, take a right on Davis Ford Road, just past the McCoart Building, right on Occoquan Forest Drive, just before the bridge.

When you get to the end of Split Rail Drive, the pavilion is on the right, and the parking lot on the left. People who may have trouble walking a distance may be dropped off at the pavilion before proceeding to the parking lot.



Nominees for PWWS Slate of Officers (to serve a two-year term beginning on November 1, 2010)

PRESIDENT—Dee Brown

After reading Thoreau's *Walden Pond* as a teenager, Dee decided that living in harmony with nature was a great idea. In the 1970s Dee and her husband spent several years in the Sierra Nevada Mountains living in a wilderness cabin with no heat or electricity. Since, they have not lived quite that close to nature. But their home in Occoquan Forest, perched above the river, is an NWF wildlife habitat abundant with native plants—as many of you saw on this spring's home tour. After many years as a globe-trotting psychologist and university professor, Dee retired and became a Virginia Master Gardener. Dog rescue and training form another aspect of her love of nature. Other loves are theater, world travel (she recently returned from the Galapagos), art, reading, international cooking, folk festivals, and various crafts.

VICE PRESIDENT—Betty Truax

Betty is a key member of the PWWS refreshments committee and has served as PWWS vice president for the last two years. She has volunteered over 1,000 hours as a Master Gardener since 2005. Her favorite project has been installing a woodland garden (over 75 percent native plants) at the Teaching Garden located at Linton Hall in Gainesville. Betty and her husband love to travel and she visits gardens wherever they go. Betty enjoys photography, especially shooting insects on flowers. She and her husband have a blended family: She had one, he had two, and they adopted one together—all are grown now. Betty likes to cook, craft, entertain, and garden with natives, especially shade-loving plants.

TREASURER—Diane Flaherty

Immersed in love of nature since a child, Diane thanks her father for introducing her to wildflower walks and gardens. In keeping with her strong environmental interests, she worked for the Nature Conservancy for 14 years. With the Flaherty “travel-life list” getting longer—along with the beckoning call of Downeast Maine—Diane retired in June. Besides travel, she also plans on donning her green garden gloves to do battle with the stilt grass invading her yard and parts of the surrounding woods. Diane has served PWWS on the nominating committee, as secretary, and is the current treasurer of the chapter.

SECRETARY—Karen Waltman

Karen and her family moved to Centreville in 1985, where she worked as a naturalist at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park for 21 years, retiring in 2009. Karen still takes care of the two bee hives at the park and recently presented a program on bees for our chapter. Karen attended her first meeting at PWWS because it was about bees, and stayed on to learn more about flowers and to serve as secretary and on the nominating committee. Karen enjoys sewing, babysitting for her grandchildren, monitoring two Fairfax County streams, and taking classes from the Lifelong Learning Institute of Manassas.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Last Letter from Helen!

After this issue of *Wild News*, I'm turning my quill pen over to incoming president Dee Brown so I can focus on programs, publicity, and registry sites. As for programs, I'm open to suggestions here. This is your wildflower society, so I need to know what interests you enough to come out on a Monday night, and if you know of a program or speaker worth sharing, tell me about it. I'm also open to exploring ways to get our message out there. What resources do you use to find events of special interest to you?

Registry sites are places in the county containing special plant communities and my job will be to visit them periodically to check on their condition, then send a report to the VNPS registry chair for the state database. Right now we have three registry sites in our county, Merrimac Farm, James Long Park, and the Manassas National Battlefield Park. Recently, Marion Lobstein and Charles Smith met me at Deep Cut at the battlefield and that was really encouraging in spite of a temperature reading of 101F at the community college. The park service maintains it as a meadow with routine mowing and we were thrilled to see how many native meadow plants were thriving there in spite of the inevitable invasives. Next week, Marion and I will meet at Long Park to look for the closed gentians and the curly tops.

I hope most of you can come to our annual meeting here in Occoquan Forest at the end of the month. You should already know how to find it, because I was on the garden tour recently and Dee was on this year's tour. We have a small park with a picnic pavilion and boat launch, so you're welcome to bring canoes or kayaks and make a day of it. Marion will lead a wildflower walk after the picnic and my dream is that she'll discover a colony of rare plants that would qualify the Forest as a registry site.

--Your President, **Helen Walter**

Monday, July 19, 2010, 7:30 pm
Bull Run Unitarian Universalist Church
Prince William Wildflower Society
Meeting Minutes (Photos: Courtesy of Nicky Staunton)

Because of scheduling conflicts with Bethel Lutheran Church's Bible School, the July meeting was held at the Bull Run Unitarian Universalist Church on the corner of Church and Main Streets in old town Manassas.



The title of the program was "Nicky's Nature: Images of the Northern Piedmont", and the speaker, Nicky Staunton, was introduced by PWWS president Helen Walter. Nicky is an advisor and the 1st vice president of the Virginia Native Plant Society; she is well

known for her expertise in identifying native wildflowers and in photographing them as well. Nicky got started

identifying wildflowers with a 1982 class from Northern Virginia Community College botany professor Marion Lobstein and more recently refreshed by "The



Power of Observation" by Rebecca Dolan, director of the Friesner Herbarium at Butler University.

With infectious enthusiasm Nicky exclaimed that, "Everything's an adventure." She suggested that to identify native wildflowers one should take curiosity and Newcomb's guide out in the field with you. Know the soil, water, light, the other plants around a flower you are identifying, the petals, leaves, the season, blooming time, and whether it is an herb, shrub or vine. We were all then treated to a variety of beautiful pictures taken by Nicky of native wildflowers, trees and some

insects that just happened to be in the eye of the camera. It was a very enjoyable adventure to see these images taken in and around the Blue Ridge Mountains. Thank you to Nicky for sharing them with us.

Announcements

- The VNPS annual meeting will be hosted by the Piedmont Chapter in the Shenandoah National Park on September 10-12, 2010. Nicky's wildflower tour will be on Saturday, September 11, and other interesting programs and hikes are promised.
- The PWWS annual meeting will be Sunday, September 26, 2010, noon to 3 p.m. at the Occoquan Forest Pavilion. Invitations will be mailed the end of August to PWWS members.
- The Featherstone Wildlife Refuge has been closed to the public for its 40 years of existence, and a drive is underway to have it opened to the public.
- Bird walks are being held at Merrimac Farm on Sundays at 8 am. Bring binoculars.

- Charles Smith wants to support controlled burns of meadows instead of mowing.
- Helen wants to check on registry sites with John Dodge, co-chair, Registry, VNPS, and any interested PWWS members.
- The nominating committee will be submitting nominees for the slate of officers to be voted on at the Sept. 26 annual meeting.

Those in attendance: Nicky Staunton (PWWS member and speaker), Gwen McIntyre (guest) Jeanne Endrikat, Sheryl Pollock, Mary Sherman, Phyllis Putnam, June Najjun, Rose Breece, Linda Stolls, Janet Wheatcraft, Steve Vogel, Amy Hamilton, Ruth Johnston, Helen Walter, Betty Truax, Nancy Vehrs, Denna Brown, Deanna High, Glen Macdonald, Brenda Hallam, Jeanne Fowler, Stan Fowler, Nancy Arrington, John Pauswinski, William Hendrickson, Elaine Haug, Tiana Camford, Amy Mortenson, Joyce Andrew, Marjorie Prochaska, Jerome Prochaska, Charlotte Cochard, Charles Smith, Karen Waltman.

--Respectively submitted,
Karen Waltman, PWWS Secretary

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

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

Chartered January 10, 1983

Logo: *Mertensia virginia* (Virginia Bluebells)

President & Programs: Helen Walter, belenwalt43@verizon.net (Tel: 703-330-9614)

Vice-President: Betty Truax, emtruax@comcast.net (Tel: 703-794-8272)

Secretary: Karen Waltman, geraldwaltman@hotmail.com (Tel: 703-830-5710)

Treasurer: Diane Flaherty, talltrees@verizon.net or dflaherty@tnc.org (Tel: 703-330-9862 or 703-247-3732)

Botany: Marion Lobstein, mblobstein@earthlink.net (Tel: 703-536-7150 or 703-257-6643)

Conservation & Education: Charles Smith, chrlsmith@msn.com (Tel: 703-361-5125 or 703-324-8555)

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Plant Sale Co-Chair: Nancy Arrington, narrington1@verizon.net (Tel: 703-368-8431 or 703-368-9711 or 703-408-7446)

Advisor and VNPS 1st VP: Nicky Staunton, nstaunton@earthlink.net (Tel: 540-547-2813)

Publicity: VACANT

Refreshments: VACANT

Registry: VACANT

Wild News is published bimonthly; deadline for submissions for the November-December issue is November 1, 2010

Please send submissions to Deanna High, editor, *Wild News*, at deannahigh@gmail.com

EVENTS OF NOTE

Saturdays, September-December, 10 a.m. Fall / Holiday 2010 Free Gardening and Landscaping Seminars and Holiday Decorating Demonstrations, Merrifield Garden Center, 6895 Wellington Road, Gainesville, Va.

- September 25:** Fall Container Gardens, with Lynn Cohen, Plant Specialist
- October 2:** Building Your Garden in Stages, with Mary Kirk Menefee, Landscape Designer
- October 9:** Growing Beautiful Bulbs, with Paul Knight, Plant Specialist

- October 16:** Gardening for Children (Ages 6 – 12), with Amy Strunk, Landscape Designer
- October 23:** Fall Magic with Trees and Shrubs, with Robert Woodman, Plant Specialist
- October 30:** Landscape Construction, with Joshua Dean, Landscape Designer
- November 20:** How to Create a Festive Container Garden, with Renatta Holt, Landscape Designer
- December 4:** How to Create Your Own Holiday Theme Tree, with Joyce Watkins, Design Specialist

Tuesday, September 21, 10-11:30 a.m., Blandy Experimental Farm and Virginia Arboretum, "Trees, Landscapes, & Indigenous Lifestyles," with Jeff Kirwan, Virginia Tech. Trees, names, and accounts of early European explorers can tell us a lot about the indigenous Native Americans and their lives and diets. Reservations required; space is limited. Presented in cooperation with the Winchester-Clarke Garden Club. FOSA Members \$8; nonmembers \$10. Call (540) 837-1758, Ext 0 to register with credit card.

Saturday, September 26, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., and Sunday, September 27, Noon to 4 p.m., Prince William County Farm Day. Enjoy a weekend in the country experiencing modern farm life and the rich rural history of western Prince William County at the tenth annual Prince William County Farm Tour. Twelve locations are open to the public with fun and educational activities for the whole family. Visit as many of the tour stops as you like, traveling in the comfort of your own vehicle. You can follow the farm tour map and look for bright yellow directional signs along the way. Parking areas are designated at each stop. This is a free event for all. For more information, see <http://www.pwcfarmtour.com/Info/info.html>.

Sunday, September 26, October 31, and November 28: Bird Walks at Merrimac Farm. Meet at 8 a.m. (last Sunday of every month). We'll look for birds and other wildlife, especially butterflies, as we travel through the uplands to the edge of the floodplain, covering a variety of habitats, including open fields and woodland edges. Everyone is welcome. Dress for the weather, bring binoculars and cameras. More info and RSVP (not required) to PWCA, (703)499-4954 or alliance@pwconserve.org. Merrimac Farm, North Parking Lot 14710 Deepwood Lane, Manassas.

Sunday, September 26, Noon to 3 p.m., Prince William Wildflower Society Annual Meeting, Occoquan Forest Pavilion, Manassas, Va. Details on page 1 of this newsletter or see <http://vnps.org/pwus>.

Sunday, September 26, 5 p.m. and Saturday, October 2, 10 a.m., "Occoquan River Cruises," Prince William Conservation Alliance. Join like-minded nature lovers for guided scenic tours of the Occoquan River. Twilight cruise on Sept. 26 begins at 5 p.m.; morning cruise on October 2 begins at 10 a.m. All proceeds from the cruises benefit habitat enhancement at the Merrimac Farm Stone House Visitor Center. Each tour is limited to 8

people; suggested donation is \$100 per person. To register for the cruise or to make a donation, please see <http://www.pwconserve.org/rivercruise.html>.

Saturday, October 1, 10:30 am--3 pm VNPS Field Trip Walk the boardwalk through a swamp of what was formerly the New Kent Forestry Center near Providence Forge. The trip will be led by College of William and Mary botanist *Donna Ware*. \$10 donation required. To register online, go to www.vnps.org and click on the calendar date or call the VNPS Office at (540) 837-1600.

Sunday October 2, 10:30 am-3 pm VNPS Field Trip See a 50-foot sand dune, many plant communities, and a beach that is home to rare tiger beetles at Savage Neck Dunes Natural Area Preserve. Sunday's trip will be led by Natural Heritage botanist *Dot Field*. \$10 donation required. To register, call the VNPS Office at (540) 837-1600 or email Karen York at vnpsofc@shentel.net.

Thursday, October 7, 7:30--9 p.m., Bull Run Universalist Unitarian Church, Manassas. "Manassas National Battlefield Park," with Bryan Gorsira, Natural Resources Manager, Manassas National Battlefield Park. 1st Thursday Series, Prince William Conservation Alliance. Manassas National Battlefield Park is an Audubon Important Bird Area, selected based on quality habitats, including grasslands, and numerous bird species (54 confirmed breeders).

October 9-10, 10 a.m.--4:30 p.m. both days, ArborFest at Blandy Farm. Select vendors with perennials, shrubs, trees, and fine items for home & garden. Children's activities, information, food, and more. \$10 per car. For directions and more information, see <http://www.virginia.edu/blandy/>

Thursday, December 2, 10 a.m.-Noon, Blandy Experimental Farm and the Virginia Arboretum, "Virginia Birds in Winter," with Dave Carr, director, Blandy Experimental Farm. Learn about birds that arrive each winter from the arctic and northern forests to spend the winter in Virginia. We'll conclude with a walk on Blandy's grounds, so dress for the weather and bring binoculars! FOSA members \$8; nonmembers \$10. Call (540) 837-1758, Ext 0 to register with credit card.

They Might Be Giants?

Lofty Fall-bloomers, Mostly Native to PWC

Among the plants blooming in Shenandoah National Park last weekend, most immediately noticeable was White Snakeroot (*Ageratina altissima*), as both the road up to the lodge—where the VNPS annual meeting was held—and all around it were swathed in patches of frothy white. At first, while driving, I mistook it for another white bloomer at this time of year, Common Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), or for the Tall Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium altissimum*) that up until a day or two ago, I *thought* was the dominate boneset in my yard and on our dead-end street. A choice specimen took root last year near my front door, and it was so lovely I didn't have the heart to pull it out. This season, it has been covered with pollinators, tiny and large, ever since it began to bloom, and thus seemed to embody summer pulling itself out of the year in a last-minute feeding frenzy. My doorway specimen is about 5 or more feet tall, although it is completely arched over, seemingly stooped from the sheer number and weight of all those pollinators—wasps especially seem to be fond of it. So it appears much bushier, more silvery than the picture below.



(more on the genus *Eupatorium*, below)—and can be a bit confusing to identify. On closer look, I began to doubt that my dooryard plant—and the ones on the street—were *E. altissimum* after all. One key division is whether or not the lower leaves are stalked or stalkless, but there are other distinctions as well. My plant's leaves are definitely stalked to some degree. But they do not appear to have the

Less frequent on the street—in fact, I haven't noticed any, yet—is Common Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), the name and look of I like so much I was hoping to find it close by. All of these plants are related—the Thoroughworts

three prominent veins of *E. altissimum* as described in Newcomb and elsewhere. Rather, the leaves have a prominent central vein, with four lesser veins, they are lance-shaped and taper at both ends, and they are toothed. (In contrast, the White Snakeroot we admired in the mountains has leaves broadly egg-shaped, and brighter flowers, and looks to my eye, more like a “white” version of



Blue Mistflower

[*Conoclinium coelestinum*; sometimes listed as *Eupatorium coelestinum*.]

So, I'm guessing that my plant is probably Late-Flowering Boneset (*Eupatorium Serotinum*), which has definitely stalked lower leaves and lower leaves broadly lance-shaped, according to

Newcomb. From www.illinoiswildflowers.info, I learned that *E. Serotinum* is “very popular with many kinds of insects, including long-tongued bees, short-tongued bees, wasps, flies, small to medium-sized butterflies, skippers, moths, and beetles. Most of these insects seek nectar, although bees may collect pollen and beetles may feed on it.” This source also confirms that Late-Flowering Boneset is lightly scented, something I'd noticed on approaching my plant. This source also lists the caterpillars of various moths that feed on this and other bonesets, but notes that mammals don't generally eat it (deer-proof!) because of its bitter foliage.

All in all, these tall white perennials are rather beautiful in the wild, lighting up dark edges of woods, roads, and clearings. The Digital Atlas of the Flora of Virginia (http://www.biol.vt.edu/digital_atlas) lists all of the ones mentioned here (and others) for Prince William County and over much of the state.

(Photos: *Eupatorium Serotinum*, *Coreopsis Tripteris*, www.missouriplants.com; *New England Aster*, *Wasp on E. Serotinum*, *Boltonia asteroides*, Deanna High)

But not all big, white late bloomers are “weeds.” Towering billows of native *Boltonia asteroides* (“False Aster” is one common name; “Doll's Daisy,” another) are gracing the garden with full-bloom just now. They last for a while, and I expect to see them for another couple of weeks at least. A “see-through” plant, with beautiful blue-green foliage, it can get very large. My biggest clump, which I've had for five or six years, is over 6 feet tall and about 4 or more feet wide, and has begun to shower the rest of the garden with its seedlings. This tendency can be checked fairly easily by

just pulling seedlings up earlier in the season, although it is tempting to leave them, as echoing white clouds of Boltonia pair nicely with other late, tall bloomers such as Ironweed and Tall Coreopsis (*Coreopsis Tripteris*). Boltonia also combines



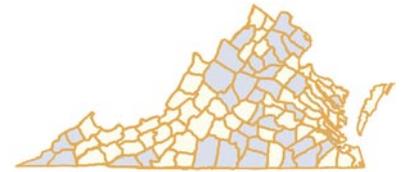
beautifully with tall goldenrods, its rayed, daisy-like flowers with yellow centers “picking” up the green-gold yellow of *Solidago*. I pulled out some of the unwanted seedlings, but left others, and now have three distinct white “clouds” floating above different beds in the garden. The mother clump was planted behind an American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa Americana*), as I imagined that the magenta purple berries of Beautyberry would show up nicely in front of Boltonia’s airy mass. In bloom, however, the Boltonia practically subsumes the Beautyberry altogether, so I may need to rethink that combination.

distinguish from the other yellow composites from a distance, but Missouri Plants database reports that “it is easy to i.d. in the field because of its glabrous, glaucous stems and trifoliolate leaves.” The latter is an especially distinctive trait on my plant. Like other coreopsis, it will keep blooming if you deadhead the spent blooms promptly. Tall Coreopsis is available from many native plant nurseries (the VNPS regional list of native nurseries is a good

place to start; see “Growing Natives”

at www.vnps.org) or you can get seed from Prairie Moon Nursery (www.prairiemoon.com). Seed propagation requires cold stratification for 60 days.

–Deanna High



Distribution of *Coreopsis Tripteris* in Virginia

Eupatorium: Joe Pye Weed and Beyond

Family: *Asteraceae*

Genus: *Eupatorium* From the Greek, Mithridates Eupator, King of Pontus (c. 115 B.C.), who is said to have discovered an antidote to a commonly used poison in one of the species.

- I tell the tale that I heard told. Mithridates, he died old.

[From “Terence, this is stupid stuff,” by A. E. Housman (1896)]



Eupatorium cannabinum

None of the six species of Boltonia found in Virginia are shown in Prince William, and they are infrequent in the state and elsewhere. Several cultivars are worthy of note: Snowbank (white) and Pink Beauty are both good bloomers, although Pink Beauty is much less vigorous in my garden than the species. The cultivar ‘Jim Crockett,’ a blue variety, promptly gave



up the ghost in my garden, so I can’t vouch for it.

Another member of the Aster family, Tall Coreopsis (*Coreopsis Tripteris*), I grew for the first time this year. I have been pleasantly surprised by how much I like it. Its bloom shows up cheerfully between a blue butterfly bush and dark purple New England Aster and has lasted for weeks now. It is more vertical and perhaps taller than either greenheaded coneflower or Bidens, and has a tidier habit than those two, so is somewhat more suitable for the garden. In the wild, Tall Coreopsis may be hard to

Eupatorium species in Virginia: 25; in *Prince William County: 13 (marked with *)

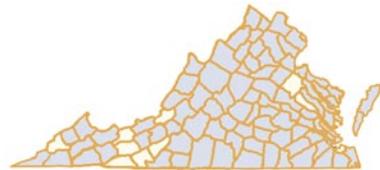
- **Eupatorium album** L. (White thoroughwort)*
- **Eupatorium altissimum** L. *
- **Eupatorium anomalum** Nash
- **Eupatorium cannabinum** L. (Fairfax County)
- **Eupatorium capillifolium** (Lam.) Small (Fairfax and Arlington)
- **Eupatorium dubium** Willd. ex Poir. (Fairfax)
(Some lovely photographs of this one can be viewed at www.biol.vt.edu/digital_atlas)
- **Eupatorium fistulosum** Barratt*
- **Eupatorium glaucescens** Ell.
- **Eupatorium godfreyanum** Cronq. (Stafford, Fairfax, Culpeper)
- **Eupatorium hyssopifolium** L. *
- **Eupatorium leucolepis** (DC.) Torr. & Gray var. *leucolepis* (Fairfax and Fauquier)
- **Eupatorium maculatum** L. var. *maculatum* * (Prince William only)
- **Eupatorium mohrii** Greene
- **Eupatorium perfoliatum** L. var. *perfoliatum* *
- **Eupatorium pilosum** Walt. (Hairy boneset)*

- **Eupatorium pubescens** Muhl. ex Willd. *
- **Eupatorium purpureum** L. *
- **Eupatorium rotundifolium** L. *
- **Eupatorium saltuense** Fern.
- **Eupatorium semiserratum** DC.
- **Eupatorium serotinum** Michx.*
- **Eupatorium sessilifolium** L. *
- **Eupatorium steelei** E. Lamont
- **Eupatorium torreyanum** Short and Peter *
- **Eupatorium vaseyi** Porter

Source: *Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora*, www.biol.vt.edu/digital_atlas. Accessed September 18, 2010

Blue Mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*) is closely related to the *Eupatorium* and is found in the wild over much of the state. To my delight, I recently spied a small patch growing just down the road from me. A big clump is easy to achieve in the garden, in fact, you will have to pull some out from time to time, but it's fully worth the trouble.

—Deanna LaValle High



Distribution of *Conoclinium Coelestinum* in Virginia



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

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, September 26, Noon-3:00 pm
Occoquan Forest Pavilion, Manassas, Virginia
Prince William Wildflower Society's Annual Meeting and Potluck Lunch