



# WILD NEWS

## Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Web site: [www. http://vnps.org/pwws](http://vnps.org/pwws)

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### PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY 2012 ANNUAL MEMBER SLIDE SHOW

Monday, January 16, 7:30 p.m.

Bethel Lutheran Church

8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas, Va. 20110

Join Prince William Wildflower Society members January 16 for our annual members' slideshow program. Enjoy visiting with friends and some tasty snacks, too! The meeting is free and open to the public, so bring a friend or two. All are welcome. The program will feature slides of the natural world from near and far. If you would like to participate in the program, please contact PWWs President Nancy Vehrs at [nvehrs1@yahoo.com](mailto:nvehrs1@yahoo.com) or (703)368-2898, or Program Chair Helen Walter, at [helenwalt43@verizon.net](mailto:helenwalt43@verizon.net) or (703) 330-9614. Presenters are asked to please limit slideshows to 15-20 minutes to allow time for discussion. A projector and laptop will be available; just bring your disc or flash drive.

Bethel Lutheran Church is located at 8712 Plantation Lane, opposite the Prince William Hospital on Rte 234 Business (Sudley Road). If you need a ride to the meeting, please contact Nancy Vehrs, president, at [nvehrs1@yahoo.com](mailto:nvehrs1@yahoo.com) or (703) 368-2898.

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Retired! What a wonderful word! For many, it connotes leisure and freedom. After more than 31 years with the Fairfax County government, as of earlier this month, I can count myself as a member of the retired set. And as your president yet again, I hope to devote more

time to the society and to other environmental and outdoor pursuits. In celebration of my new-found freedom, Harry and I have planned an exciting trip to Costa Rica in February, a time of year now available to me for travel. Enchanting flora and fauna await us!



*Bottlebrush buckeye in snow*

We plan to take lots of photos and perhaps share them at a future meeting.

PWWs and the VNPS attract both gardeners and naturalists as members, and many of us count ourselves as members of both camps. PWWs has a number of gardening members, and we want to encourage the use of native plants in our home landscapes. In Prince William County we are also very fortunate to have some incredible natural areas—mountains, meadows, forests, and wetlands—that are just waiting to be explored by you. This coming year we plan to schedule more field trips—both along the trail and in the garden. Our botanist-extraordinaire Marion Lobstein will be offering some local field trips this spring, and we will partner with the Prince William

Conservation Alliance for others. For our native plant gardeners, I hope to coordinate a trip to northern Delaware's Mt. Cuba Center, which is "dedicated to the study, conservation, and appreciation of plants native to the Appalachian Piedmont Region through garden display, education, and research." I visited there with the VNPS in the early 1990s, and it was a real treat. Other magnificent gardens in that area, Longwood and Winterthur, also have expansive native plant areas.

**Prince William Wildflower Society  
Annual Meeting  
Monday, November 21, 2011  
Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas**

**Business:** Nancy Vehrs opened the meeting and announced that President Dee Brown had resigned, and Dee was presented a thank-you gift for her service, a book entitled *Seeing Trees* by Nancy Hugo. Nancy Vehrs volunteered to take on the presidency, and other board members remained in their positions.

Nancy introduced the slate for the Nominating Committee members: **Brian McDougal, Janet Wheatcraft** and **Joyce Wenger**. Marion Lobstein made a motion to accept the slate, and Helen Walter seconded it. Motion passed, and the new nominating committee members were thanked for serving on the committee.

Harry Glasgow moved and Rick Flaherty seconded a motion to accept the 2012 proposed budget; the motion passed.

**Announcements:** Marion Lobstein said the final editing stages of the new *Flora of Virginia* was ongoing, and it is thought the book will cost around \$90 and will be published in 2012. It's been 250 years since the last flora of Virginia was published!

On November 8, 2011, at the State Arboretum of Virginia at Bland Experimental Farm, a chestnut tree was planted in honor of **Marion Lobstein's** contribution to Virginia's flora, and to also honor her husband **George Lobstein**, for his love and support of Marion. The ceremony was sponsored by Virginia Native Plant Society, and many friends and PWWS members attended.

Though it is winter, we are sometimes spoiled by a warm day or two. Take advantage of those days and explore our beautiful outdoors. Or bundle up on a cold day and take a brisk walk. As I have heard, "There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes."

**See you soon.**

*Nancy*

Nancy recognized new member **Chris Drazdowsky**, and she was welcomed to PWWS.

**Program: Wildflowers of the Kansas  
Tallgrass Prairie**

In June, Diane and Rick Flaherty participated in the Virginia Native Plant Society's trip to Kansas to visit one of the last remaining undisturbed remnants of the 400,000 square miles of tallgrass prairie that once covered North America. Weeks before the grasses have grown to their full height of 10 to 12 feet, the much shorter native wildflowers create a colorful show throughout the greening prairie hills.

Diane and Rick showed us many beautiful pictures of wildflowers taken June 11-17 (Mead's milkweed, Cat's claw, prairie larkspur, goat's rue, purple prairie clover, and more), as well as bison, an 1881 ranch house, past hunting grounds of the Kansa and Osage Indians, Mushroom Ranch, Cottonwood Falls, and Kaw Preserve. It was a very enjoyable tour of this very interesting land. Thank you, Diane and Rick, for sharing your pictures of this trip with us.

Those in attendance: *Nancy Vehrs, Marion Lobstein, Helen Walter, Diane Flaherty, Rick Flaherty, Brenda Hallam, Joyce Andrew, Tom Andrew, Christine Drazdowsky, Harry Glasgow, Deanna Lavalley High, Jack High, Nancy Arrington, Charles Smith, Harry Smith, Cara Tirrell, Cindy Smith, Mike Wenger, Joyce Wenger, Janet Wheatcraft, Mary Sherman, Jeanne Fowler, Stan Fowler, Dee Brown, Glen Macdonald, Karen Waltman.*

Respectively submitted,  
**Karen Waltman, Secretary, PWWS**



**DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE:  
BUTTONBUSH**  
By PWWS Vice President  
Betty Truax

A few years ago my husband and I moved to a lake front property that had lawn growing down to the water

edge. I immediately started researching putting in a riparian buffer (I always think of Hyacinth from the britcom "Keeping Up Appearances" touting her "riparian buffet" when I hear that phrase).

I was thrilled to learn there were so many exciting plant choices. I bought some New York Ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*) and was pleasantly surprised to see how well the purple blooms mixed with the orange Jewelweed blooms (*Impatiens capensis*) that had naturally planted themselves in my garden. I incorporated some Louisiana Iris (*Iris louisiana*), some Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*) and a River Birch (*Betula nigra*). A couple of mysterious pink Hibiscus quickly popped up in my garden. A twisted willow, a variegated willow and a native Spicebush (*Calycanthus occidentalis*) were also added.



But adding native Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) really pulled my garden together. In a couple of seasons the small plants I had planted grew to over six feet tall and the bright shiny green leaves really filled in my

waterfront garden. The black ripened fruit are attractive. The white ping-pong sized balls of blooms remind me of the speck of dust that Horton (from Dr. Seuss) carried around, only much larger of

course. The balls consisting of many tiny white blooms are uniquely charming.

Butterflies, bees, insects and hummingbirds all love those pretty and fragrant little puffs, although I suspect the hummingbirds are more interested in the small insects than the nectar. My shrubs are loaded with blooms from June through July and into early August. Birds use the dense foliage for hiding. Bluebirds, finches, cardinals, titmouse and chickadees dart in and out of the shrubs regularly often looking like kids playing a game of tag. In the fall, and during winter, ducks and geese eat the Buttonbush fruit as it ripens.



Buttonbush quickly develops a deep root system. I have been able to dig up a couple of small seedlings but only when they were very small. The plant grows quickly so that generally isn't a problem. My Buttonbushes are growing in full sun and seem very happy even though I have never pruned them. They definitely like wet feet and would be the perfect solution for a low lying wet spot. I love, love, love this easy to grow, easy to care for native plant!  
(Photos: Ripening fruit, Betty Truax, garden photo; bloom, courtesy of Dr. B. Eugene Wofford, University of Tennessee Herbarium.)

--Betty Truax

## EVENTS of NOTE

**Saturday, January 21, 6:00 p.m. (dinner); program begins at 7:00 p.m. Nature Night, Prince William Conservation Alliance.** Open to the public and free of charge, purchase your own food & drinks, Bungalow Alehouse, 2840 Prince William Parkway, Woodbridge. RSVP to [alliance@pwconserve.org](mailto:alliance@pwconserve.org). PechaKucha 20X20 is a simple presentation format where you show 20 images, each for 20 seconds. All the presentations are timed, the slides move forward automatically. Each presentation is a total of six minutes 40 seconds long. You won't want to miss Nature Night, featuring presentations by: Martin Jeter - Race Cars Take a Cue from Nature; John McBride - Columbia River Gorge Waterfalls; Amelia May - Natural Manmade Wonders; Rob Hartwell - the Nations River; Shirley Couteau - The Preakness; Jim Knapp - Rocky Mountains; Larry Underwood - Alaska; Harry Glasgow - WWMND; Kate Norris - Hawaii; Earnie Porta - Top Ten 2011 Astronomy Events; Judy Gallagher - Spring Comes to Woodbridge.

**Sunday, January 29, 8:00 a.m., Bird Watch, Prince William Conservation Alliance, Merrimac Farm Stone House Visitor Center, 15020 Deepwood Lane.** 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 at (703) 499.4954 or [alliance@pwconserve.org](mailto:alliance@pwconserve.org).

**Monday, March 19, Prince William Wildflower Society Membership Meeting, "The Flora of Virginia-worth the 250 year wait!" with Marion Lobstein, botany chair.** Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas, Virginia, 7:30 p.m. It has been 250 years since the last update of a Flora of Virginia! Finally this November the long-awaited the "Flora of

**Save the Date!**  
**VNPS Winter Workshop**  
**"Virginia's Ecosystems"**  
**University of Richmond**  
**March 10, 2012**  
**9:15 am - 3:15 pm**  
**\$45 per person**

**Martin Ogle** of NVRPA will be the keynote speaker; **Tom Dierauf**, retired forester will speak on forest ecology; **Mike Hayslett** of Sweetbriar College will speak on non-tidal wetland ecology; and **Ben Tracy** of Virginia Tech will talk about grassland ecology. Registration will open early February. Watch for your brochure in the mail or check [vnps.org](http://vnps.org) in late January.

Virginia" will be published. The Flora will use scientific names that may be different to users. **Marion Lobstein**, who has been involved with this project since its inception, will highlight some of these changes and the reasons for the changes.

### **GREEN SPRING GARDENS WINTER LECTURE SERIES**

Greenspring Gardens is located at 4603 Greenspring Road, Alexandria, Va., 22312. Registration is required; seating is limited. There is a \$10 fee per program. Register online at the Fairfax County Park web site, at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks>, or call (703) 642-5173.

**Sunday, January 22, 2012, 1:30 p.m., Green Spring Gardens Park, "Discover the Secret of Trees," with Nancy Ross Hugo.** Have you really seen a tree? Do you know the secrets of that old familiar oak? In this lecture author Nancy Hugo teaches us a whole new way of observing a tree and invites us to deepen our relationships with these earthy treasures. Book signing. Refreshments served after the program.

**Sunday, January 29, 1:30 p.m., Green Spring Gardens Park, "Native Plants for Diverse Landscapes."** There are many excellent native plants available in the trade that can contribute to the diversity and beauty of landscapes. As gardeners broaden their interest and use of native plants, there are also many excellent underused native plants that have the potential for wider use in landscapes. Add to your list of potential plants for use in the landscape and rediscover some old favorites that deserve continued use.

**Sunday, February 5, 1:30 p.m., Green Spring Gardens Park, "George Washington's Garden."** For over 150 years people have studied, researched and dug the earth for clues helping make the home of George Washington one of the most accurately restored 18th century estates in America. The beauty, use and importance of Mount Vernon's gardens and landscape will be discussed with a focus on the most recently restored pleasure garden. Norton's presentation is not a history lesson, but an

informative yet entertaining look at the gardening world of George Washington. Call Green Spring Gardens at (703) 642-5173 for more information.

**Sunday, February 12, 1:30 p.m., Green Spring Gardens Park, "Collaborating with Native Wild Plants, with Chris and Lisa Bright, founders of Earth Sangha.** Chris and Lisa Bright will share their experience propagating native plants directly from the wild. Earth Sangha operates the Wild Plant Nursery, a volunteer-based nursery now producing over 200 species of native trees, shrubs, vines, forbs, and grasses for local ecological restoration projects. The Brights' talk will cover all phases of the nursery's work, from seed collection to planting out the stock.

**Sunday, February 19, 1:30 p.m., Green Spring Gardens Park, "Grow the Best Tasting Tomatoes, Ever!"** Tired of tasteless tomatoes? Tomato lover and WTOP host of You Bet Your Garden, Mike McGrath, reveals tricks and tips you need to be a tomato taste-test winner, focusing on the importance of correct planting, feeding, watering and support, with a special emphasis on common mistakes to avoid when growing tasty tomatoes in containers. Book signing.

**Sunday, February 26, 1:30 p.m., Green Spring Gardens Park, "Design in the Natural World," with Steve Robinson of Axios Architecture.** Nature inspires great design. Steve Robinson of Axios Architecture in Atlanta shares a reverence for nature and creates structures that have conversations with their natural surroundings. Steve will share design process, actual projects (including the acclaimed 600' long canopy walk at the Atlanta Botanical Garden) and ideas for the future.

**Sunday, March 4, 1:30 p.m., Green Spring Gardens Park, "Designing with Conifers: Wise Choices."** Learn how to make better choices when selecting conifers for your landscape from Dr. Richard Bitner, author of *Designing with Conifers*. He will challenge your thinking about conifers and inspire you with sumptuous images of conifers used in imaginative and practical ways. Book signing.

**Sunday, March 11, 1:30 p.m., Green Spring Gardens Park, "Beautiful No-Mow Yards."** Tired of mowing? Let award-winning author Evelyn Hadden help you rethink your yard. Hadden presents inspiring no-mow designs by everyday gardeners and landscape professionals that you can adapt to your own yard. You'll see lively grass gardens, shady havens, elegant edibles, and more. Book signing.



"THALICTRUM AND CIMICIFUGA"

Thalictrum and Cimicifuga,  
Married for life:  
"I love your filigreed purple curls."  
I love your pompous white spikes."

Look at them swaying there out in the  
wind,  
Bowed by the nastiest weather:  
Always reverting to genus  
and always together.

--Jonathan Galassi



*The creature in the woods*

[Photos: Snowy Bottlebrush Buckeye, Creature in the Woods, and Little Bluestem in Pot, Deanna LaValle High; "Cimicifuga" (*Actaea racemosa* var. *racemosa*), Thomas L. Muller, National Wildflower Center Digital Library, NPIN Image id #27510, accessed at [www.wildflower.org](http://www.wildflower.org)]



Prince William Wildflower Society  
SPRING 2012 EVENTS

≈ Sunday, March 18—Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm ≈  
<http://www.pwconserve.org>

≈ Monday, March 19, 7:30 p.m. “The Flora of Virginia—  
Worth the 250-Year Wait!” ≈

Prince William Wildflower Society Membership Meeting  
Join us for this intriguing presentation by Botany Chair Marion Lobstein  
Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas, Va.

≈ Watch for details of Spring Events in the March-April issue of *Wild News*, or visit our  
Web site at [vnps.org/wp/pwws](http://vnps.org/wp/pwws), or join the discussions on our Facebook page, Prince William Wildflower  
Society at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) ≈

≈ Sunday, April 29, Noon-5 p.m. Annual Spring Garden Tour ≈  
Email [pwws.vnps@yahoo.com](mailto:pwws.vnps@yahoo.com) or call (703) 368-2898  
If you would like to feature your garden on the tour

≈ Saturday, May 12, 9:00 a.m.- Noon. PWWs Annual Native Plant Sale ≈  
Grounds of Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas  
Sun- and shade-loving native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees; great prices, lots of variety!  
Bethel Lutheran Church, 8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas, Va. 20110\*

\* Prince William Wildflower Society events are free and open to the public.



**PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY**  
**P.O. Box 83 - Manassas, VA 20108-0083**  
**Chartered: January 10, 1983**  
**Logo: *Mertensia virginica* - Virginia Bluebells**  
**Web site: [www. http://vnps.org/pwws](http://vnps.org/pwws)**

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<b>Publicity</b>	VACANT	
<b>Refreshments</b>	VACANT	
<b>Advisor/VNPS 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President</b>	<b>Nicky Staunton</b> , 14457 Rocks Edge Road Reva, VA 22735 email: <a href="mailto:nstaunton@earthlink.net">nstaunton@earthlink.net</a>	H: 540-547-2813

## WETLANDS

Ever wondered what the difference is between a swamp and a bog, or a bog and a fen? I have, but a bewildering array of terms associated with the term "wetlands" leaps to mind: bog, swamp, fen, lowland, marsh, bottom, marshland, mire, moor, muskeg, morass, moss, peat, pocosin, playa, sinkhole, vernal pool, quag, quagmire, slough, sump, swale, estuary, tundra, floodplain, palustrine-, riparian-, estuarine-, marine-, riverine-wetlands, glade, holm, polder, la prairie tremblante, and so on.

So, to start simply: The following is taken from the Introduction to *The Book of Swamp and Bog: Trees, Shrubs, and Wildflowers of Eastern Freshwater Wetlands* by John Eastman and Amelia Hansen

(Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1995—available at the PWC Public Library).

So what are wetlands? The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service defines them as "lands where saturation with water is the dominant factor determining the nature of solid development and the types of plant and animal communities living in the soil and on its surface. Wetlands are lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water."

**Five major categories of wetlands are:**

**Bog** — An acidic wetland dominated by sphagnum mosses and shrub heaths, characterized by the accumulation of plant materials as peat, and with rain or snow as its only water source. Some authors use the term *bog* for any peatland, whether it consists of sphagnum or sedge peats, but [specifically] the term refers to nutrient-poor *acid* environments.

**Fen** — In contrast to bogs, a *mineral-rich* wetland (alkaline bog) usually dominated by sedges and calcium-loving herbs and shrubs, characterized by the accumulation of peat. Two fen extremes enclose many transitional forms: *Rich* fens constantly receive nutrients by means of surface and ground waters flowing into and through them. *Poor* fens are transitional to bogs. They are characterized by waters that are increasingly sealed off from surface and ground inflow, thus leading to acidic conditions. Fens often develop into swamps or bogs.

**Marsh** — A mineral-rich wetland dominated by emergent grasslike herbs, such as grasses, cattails, rushes, and others. Marshes often develop into swamps.

**Swamp** — In contrast to marshes, a wooded wetland that includes either or both conifers

and hardwood shrubs or trees. Swamps often develop into swamp forests. Flooding or raised water tables, however, may kill woody vegetation, and the swamp may revert to a marsh.

**Shrub-carr** — A wetland thicket dominated by shrubs such as alders, willows, buttonbush, and red-osier dogwood. Other shrub-carr borders bogs and fens as transitional zones between wetland vegetation and upland forest. Shrub-carr may also invade marshes, fens, and bogs as islands of woody thicket; it may become the dominant form of vegetation in swamps.

Now, having got that straight (sort of, as nature is, of course, naturally messy), I can move on to discover the mysteries of muskegs! Which turn out to be "...nutrient-poor peatland characterized by acidic, saturated peat, and scattered or clumped, stunted conifer trees set in a matrix of sphagnum mosses and ericaceous shrubs" — sounds like a bog with swamp-like, special characteristics. (*Muskeg description courtesy of the Michigan Natural Features Inventory at <http://mnfi.anr.msu.edu>*). Connecting the eponymous town Muskegon (Michigan) to its natural land formation is a bonus. —*Deanna High*



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A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society  
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*Next Meeting: Monday, January 16, 2012, 7:30 p.m.*  
*"PWWS Annual Member Slideshow"*

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