



WILD NEWS

Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2016-02

March-April 2016

Prince William Wildflower Society
Vickie Shufer, "Foraging through the
Seasons: Edible and Medicinal Plants"
Monday, March 21, 2016
Bethel Lutheran Church
8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas, Va.

You won't want to miss this entertaining and informative program! **Vickie Shufer** is a naturalist, herbalist, and forager with a master's degree in therapeutic herbalism. She teaches classes on edible and medicinal plants, as well as outdoor education programs. Vickie is the author of several books, including *The Everything Guide to Foraging* (Adams Media, 2011), and was the editor/publisher of the *Wild Foods Forum* newsletter from 1994 to 2014. Vickie also has a certified, 16-acre native nursery in northeastern North Carolina where she propagates coastal native plants and forest botanicals and teaches groups how to use them for food, medicine, and crafts. Vickie founded Eco Images (<http://www.ecoimages-us.com>) in 1986 to help others connect with nature and enhance their appreciation of the outdoors. If you are interested in find out more about Vickie, she was featured in an article, "The Forager," in *Garden & Gun* (Feb-Mar 2010) magazine, available online at gardenandgun.com/article/forager.

Bring a friend or two to enjoy the program, refreshments, and doorprizes! PWWS membership meetings are free and open to the public.

President's Corner

That wild, frenzied time of year has arrived! Spring! So much to do, so much to see! Unpredictable weather and colors rising from bare earth, leaf litter, and naked branches: How I love Spring!



We're in for a real treat with our speaker this month. Harry and I had the pleasure of participating on a Fall field trip to False Cape State Park in Virginia Beach where Vickie Shufer was a co-leader. She had us tasting and eating wild plants ranging from live oak acorns to native grapes. An energetic and engaging naturalist,

she will provide lots of tips on what we can forage from nature.

For the fourth year in a row, our annual author event was a tremendous success and we thank our co-sponsors the Prince William Master Gardeners and the Prince William Conservation Alliance as well as all of their volunteers. More than 150 people turned out for Thomas Rainer's lecture on his book *Planting in a Post-Wild World*. Each of our co-sponsors had exhibits and we had so many volunteers bring refreshments. A special thank you goes to the City of Manassas Park and its community center staff. And I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that County Extension Agent Paige Thacker saved the day by driving back to her office to fetch a laptop computer in time for the presentation.

Virginia Bluebell, our chapter's logo flower, as well as the official flower of Prince William County, are well on their way to blooming in April. I found tiny purple buds in my garden on March 6. The annual Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm is scheduled for Sunday, April 17 and let's hope that the bluebells cooperate this year. Come on out for this fun environmental festival organized by the Prince William Conservation Alliance. There will be

guided nature walks, exhibits, activities for kids, food, and more. And, if you'd like to volunteer, we would welcome you at the PWWS booth.

Our other major spring events, the annual spring wildflower garden tour and native plant sale are on track. Carol Thompson's large property with its lovely woodland wildflower garden is on tour again as well as Teresa Blecksmith's horticultural dream property in suburban Montclair. New this year is the private Arrington Family cemetery garden in Manassas Park that Nancy Arrington maintains. It demonstrates just how much can be planted in a small space. Mark your calendars for the tour on Sunday, April 24. The plant sale will take place on Saturday, May 7. Please consider supporting these events by volunteering your time.
~ Nancy

Prince William Wildflower Society Membership Meeting Minutes, Monday, January 18, 2016, Bethel Lutheran Church

President Nancy Vehrs welcomed all and introduced new member, Jimmie Gallagher, husband of Judi Gallagher. Nancy reminded all to sign in on the attendance list being passed around, and she asked for volunteers to bring finger foods for the February 21 program. A sign-up list for that was also passed around.

The following were thanked for bringing refreshments: Janet Wheatcraft, Carol Thompson, Brenda Hallam, Helen Walter, and Dana and Mary Hollifield.

Announcements:

Nancy updated us on a Virginia General Assembly House Bill on noxious weeds. The bill expands the definition of noxious weeds to include plants already widely disseminated within the state. However, plants that are commercially viable, such as English ivy, cannot be declared a noxious weed. Regardless, this is a huge step in the right direction regarding invasive plants.

Dee Brown gave information on a talk and film about Aldo Leopold's life to be held Friday, January 22 at 7 p.m. at the Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church. The film is

entitled *Greenfire*, and the event is sponsored by the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust.

Charles Smith announced a meeting of the Friends of the Potomac River Refuges to be held at Gunston Hall on Saturday, January 30.

On the last Sunday of each month Harry Glasgow and Nancy Vehrs lead a bird hike at Merrimack Farm in Nokesville. Please call their home number at (703) 368-2898 to let them know you are joining them.

Is There Such a Thing as Deer Resistant Plants?

The Plant NoVA Natives Marketing Campaign has published a spreadsheet by Jerry Peters that rates plants on their deer resistance using a rating of one to five. Be sure to check it out under Resources at www.plantnovanatives.org. You can also help with citizen science and record your experiences by taking the Deer Damage Survey posted on the same page. The more experiences recorded, the better the data.

Program: 2016 Winter Slideshow:

Christine Sunda showed slides of flowers and scenery from Greece, a surprisingly arid landscape. Slides of Norway included scenes of farm animals on lush farms and small farm buildings with green roofs.

Nancy Vehrs attended the 2015 Cullowhee Native Plant Conference at Western Carolina University, and showed slides of flowers seen on field trips. She also showed photos from the VNPS trip to the University of Virginia's Mountain Lake Biological Station, located west of Blacksburg. Mountain Lake is one of two natural lakes in Virginia.

Judi Gallagher had beautiful photos of flowers with insects on them and photos of a variety of 'bugs' at Merrimack Farm in Nokesville. **Charles**

Smith visited the Florida Keys and showed pictures from Beland State Park and Big Pine Key. The tiny Key deer also made an appearance. Plants and scenes were shown from the Deep Cut area [a VNPS registry site] at the Manassas National Battlefield Park and Crabtree Falls in the George Washington National Park.

Thank You to the PWWS members above who volunteered to show slides of wildflowers, native animals, and scenery from local areas or from their travels. Next January, PWWS members are welcome to share their flora and fauna pictures at the annual member slideshow. If you are interested, please notify vice-president and program chairperson, Tamie Boone, at (703) 583-1187 or tamie.boone@verizon.net.

Doorprizes: Judi Gallagher, *Butterflies: Prince William's Potomac River Waterfront and Nearby Areas*; Mary Hollifield and Christine Sunda, calendars; Janet Wheatcraft, *Native Shrubs and Woody Vines of Virginia*;

Jeanne Fowler, *Common Native Trees of Virginia* by the Department of Forestry; Bob Glasgow-

In attendance: Tamie Boone, Nancy Vehrs, Harry Glasgow, Sheryl and David Pollock, Judi and Jim Gallagher, Suzy Stasulis, Amy Hamilton, Karen Waltman, Janet Wheatcraft, Dana and Mary Hollifield, Brenda Hallam, Beverly Houston, Libby Pemberton, Jeanne Fowler, Barbara Deegan, Michelle Borzillo, Charlie Grymes, Helen Walter, Christine Sunda, Nancy Arrington, Carol Thompson, Charles Smith, Diane and Rick Flaherty, Bob Glasgow, GlenMacdonald, Dee Brown. ~ Karen Waltman, Secretary

Post- Planting in a Post-Wild World

Approximately 150 attendees enjoyed Thomas Rainer's intense presentation of the planting design principles from his and Claudia West's popular book, *Planting in a Post-Wild World:*

Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes (Timber Press 2015).

For those who could not attend, there is an excellent recap of Rainer's talk, "Post-Wild Planting Solutions," by Sue Dingwell, available online at

<http://vnps.org/2016/02>, and a book review, "Not So Wild?" by Deanna High, from the January-February 2016 issue of *Wild News*, available at <http://vnps.org/princewilliamwildflowersociety>. The event, co-sponsored by PWWS, Master Gardeners of Prince William County, and the Prince William Conservation Alliance depended on the capable support of many

volunteers. PWWS thanks especially Paige Thacker for her help and the City of Manassas Park for the use of the facility. Snacks were plentiful and yummy! Thanks to all of you who provided sustenance and help in the kitchen: Tamie Boone, Carol Thompson, Dee Brown, Mary Hollifield, Helen Walter, Charles Smith, Barbara Deegan, Judy Gallagher, Nancy Vehrs,

Brenda Hallam, Beverly Houston, Libby Pemberton, Karen Waltman, other contributors from the Master Gardeners, and to all those who helped set up the room. Thanks also to PWWS board members Janet Wheatcraft and Nancy Arrington for their help with book sales and signing. In the words of Brenda Hallam, "It turned out to be a great event!"



SPRING EVENTS



New Nature Walks

We have some new areas to explore in Prince William County. Doves Landing Park near Manassas officially opened this past fall, and Leopold's Preserve in Haymarket now has a regular parking lot and signage. If anyone would like to join me on the following walks, please let me know at nvehrs1@yahoo.com, (703) 368-2898. **Thursday, April 7, 1 p.m., Dove's Landing; Wednesday, April 13, 10 a.m., Leopold's Preserve; Sunday, May 1, 2 p.m., Leopold's Preserve.**

[Images: Drawing of Virginia bluebell, Virginia cowslip, S.T. Edwards, *Botanical Magazine*, v.5, (1792), Missouri Botanical Garden, accessed at <http://plantillustrations.org>, illus.#2953; *Erigenia bulbosa* (Michx.) Nutt., harbinger of spring, pepper and salt, unsigned drawing from J. Torrey, *A flora of the state of New York*, v.1 (1843), New York State Library, accessed at <http://plantillustrations.org>, illustration#58540;

White bluebell, Doug Sherman, Native Plant Information Network, accessed at www.wildflower.org, NPIN image id#3205. Photos: Vickie Shufer, courtesy of Vickie Shufer; Thomas Rainer event photos, Deanna LaValle High; Bluebell, p.7, Gloria Schoenholtz, *Virginia wildflowers.org*, a natural history gallery of wildflowers and mushrooms, accessed at <http://virginiawildflowers.org>; emerging Bluebells, p. 8, Deanna LaValle High; *Erigenia bulbosa*, Elizabeth's Wildflower Blog, accessed at <https://elizabethryblog.wordpress.com>.]



MARCH

Saturday, March 19, 10:00 am, "Drainage Solutions," with Renatta Holt, Merrifield landscape designer, Merrifield Garden Center, Gainesville. Areas that stay wet and don't drain, or where the soil is eroding, are always challenging. Attend this seminar to learn how to fix a problem area and improve your landscape. Free.

Sunday, March 20, 2:00 p.m., Winter Speaker Series: Nicky Staunton, "Recording the Natural World," Tri-County Feeds Meeting Room (upstairs), 7408 John Marshall Hwy, Marshall, Va. Piedmont Chapter of VNPS hosts a talk by former PWWS and VNPS president Nicky Staunton. Nicky is an accomplished illustrator, photographer, and naturalist, who will share her curiosity about the natural world and show how she records her observations. For more information, email piedmontvnps@gmail.com.

Saturday, March 26, 10:00 am, "Growing Herbs," with Nicole Schermerhorn, co-owner, A Thyme to Plant Herb Farm, Merrifield Garden Center, Gainesville. Bring out the best in your recipes with herbs grown in your own garden. Join Nicole to learn how to plan, plant, and harvest an herb garden that will look as good as it tastes. Free.

Sunday, March 27, 8:00 a.m. (the last Sunday of every month) Bird Walks at Merrimac Farm, Stone House, 15014 Deepwood Lane, Nokesville, Va. We'll look for birds 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. You may view the bird list for Merrimac Farm at www.pwconserve.org. Dress for weather, bring binoculars and cameras. More info and RSVP to PWCA, (703) 499-4954 or alliance@pwconserve.org.

March 28, 7:00 to 8:30 pm, Virginia County Extension Prince William Drinking Water Clinic Kick-off Meeting, 9248 Lee Avenue, Old Courthouse, Manassas. This meeting will be followed by a results interpretation meeting on May 11 (see below). **Water Sample Drop-off is March 30, 6:30 to 10:00 am at the Extension Office, 8033 Ashton, Suite 105, Manassas, 20109.** Do you know what's in your drinking water? While public water supplies are tested daily for contaminants, most private water supplies, like wells and springs, are rarely tested. It is recommended that well owners test their water at least annually for bacteria and nitrates. Regular well testing allows you detect and fix problems early. Basic well testing can cost over \$250, but through the Virginia Household Water Quality Program (VHWQP) an array of tests only costs \$55.

The goal of VHWQP is to improve the water quality of private water supplies by offering low-cost water sampling and information about possible treatment options. The kick-off meeting introduces water quality concerns in our area; kits will be provided. The interpretation meeting will explain the report, include a discussion and answer questions on dealing with water problems. For more information on this statewide

program go to www.wellwater.bse.vt.edu/index.php. **How much does it cost? \$55. No cash, please; checks or money orders only!** Fee will be collected at the kick-off meeting on March 28.



APRIL

Saturday April 2 and Sunday, April 3: Bluebird Trail Training and Monitoring. Thanks to the many people who install and tend to nesting boxes, Bluebird populations are growing. In order to keep this up, Prince William Conservation Alliance needs volunteers to help monitor the Bluebird Trails at Chinn Park, Merrimac Farm, and Veterans Park throughout the Spring and into the Summer. Volunteers make sure all is well, address problems as needed, and record information about activity in each of the nesting boxes found throughout the Bluebird Trails. Volunteers will follow a protocol to ensure birds nesting in the boxes are not disturbed.

This is a great activity for families. It takes about 90 minutes to cover an entire trail. There's nothing quite like seeing newborn Bluebirds grow from hatchling to fledgling. Training dates for three venues are listed below; for more information, see PWCA's website, <http://www.pwconserve.org>, email, alliance@pwconserve.org or call (703) 499-4954.

Training Dates:

- **Chinn Park: Saturday, April 2 from 1:30pm to 3:30pm**
- **Merrimac Farm WMA: Sunday, April 3 from 12:30pm to 2:30pm**
- **Veterans Memorial Regional Park: Sunday, April 3 from 4:00pm to 5:30pm**

Saturdays, April 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30; May 14, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, "Ask a Master Gardener Your Gardening Questions," sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension Plant Clinics. **Sites:** Lowe's Woodbridge, Lowe's Gainesville, Lowe's Manassas, Southern States Manassas, Merrifield Gainesville.

Sunday, April 3, 1:00 pm, "Water Gardening," with Craig Takacs, Merrifield water garden specialist, Merrifield Garden Center, Gainesville. If you are considering a water garden or already have one, don't miss this seminar. Craig will discuss plants and fish as well as how to maintain your water garden.

Saturday, April 9, 10:00 am, "Growing Beautiful Roses," with Paul McLane, Merrifield plant specialist, Merrifield Garden Center, Gainesville. Paul will explain the attributes and characteristics of many different roses and give tips on how to successfully grow them.

Sunday, April 10, 10:00 am, "Shade Gardens," with Steve Gable, Merrifield plant specialist, Merrifield Garden Center, Gainesville. With attention to plant selection, soil preparation, and watering, you can have a beautiful, colorful shade garden. If you have areas that are completely sun deprived, Steve will discuss other options. Free.

Saturdays, April 16, May 21, June 18, 9:00 am to Noon,
Saturday in the Garden, classes taught by Virginia Cooperative Extension/Prince William Master Gardener Volunteers. Each class is held at the Teaching Garden at St. Benedict Monastery, 9535 Linton Hall Road, Bristow, 20136. All programs are free and run from 9:00am - Noon. Registration is requested call (703) 792-7747 or email master_gardener@pwccgov.org.

Saturday, April 16, 10:00 am, "Miniature Gardens," with Linda Brining, Merrifield plant specialist, Merrifield Garden Center, Gainesville. Gardens don't have to be big to make an impact. Whimsical and magical, miniature gardens combine dwarf and alpine plants with figurines and accents to create a dream garden in miniature—a fun way to garden with children. Free.

Sunday, April 17, 1:00 pm, "Spring Color with Shrubs, with Danielle Hall, Merrifield plant specialist, Merrifield Garden Center, Gainesville. Danielle will show you the many different types of shrubs with the breathtaking color of the season and give you tips on how to successfully grow them. Free.

Sunday, April 17, 2016, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm



Please join Prince William Conservation Alliance to

welcome spring and view the spectacular display of Virginia bluebells that carpet the floodplain along Cedar Run for nearly a mile. In the words of one visitor, "it's like walking through Oz." A series of naturalist led tours will follow an easy one-mile walk through the floodplain. Each tour has a special focus, although leaders cover all interesting sights. Local environmental organizations will be there with displays and activities for children of all ages. A bake sale and a hand-painted rain barrel raffle to benefit stewardship projects at Merrimac Farm round out the event. Concessions and food will be available for purchase. Bring binoculars, cameras, and the kids, and come out to join us for a day of fun!

Schedule of Events Tours last about 90 minutes and take an easy one-mile walk through the floodplain. Each tour has a special focus, although leaders also cover other interesting sights you see along the way. Bring binoculars, cameras and the kids!

Sunday, April 24, Noon to 5:00 p.m., 2016 Prince William Wildflower Society's Annual Spring Native Garden Tour

The event everyone looks forward to! This year's tour will feature three local gardens that showcase native plants in creative landscapes. Please join us for this popular annual outing that is free and open to the public. The gardens feature a wide variety of spring ephemerals and native shrubs and trees. Visitors will enjoy refreshments and the opportunity to share thoughts and questions about the garden and its plants with PWWs hosts and other visitors. PWWs members opening their gardens for this year's tour include **Theresa Blecksmith**, whose mostly shady backyard garden in Montclair returns to the tour this year; **Carol Thompson's** extensive native woodland garden in Woodbridge; plus a new venue, **Nancy Arrington's** family cemetery garden in Manassas Park, which brings an unexpected, whimsical approach to a historical garden setting. You'll see combinations of an appropriately somber grove of Black Walnut trees offset by lovingly planted paths of spring ephemerals that weave through the gravestones. You won't want to miss this triple showcasing of different approaches to gardening with natives. PWWs members: the tour brochure with a detailed description of the gardens and directions will be mailed to you in a few weeks. Details will also be posted on the PWWs website, under chapter Events (vnps.org/princewilliamwildflowersociety).

We need volunteers to make the tour a success. If you can donate baked goods or other snacks to offer as refreshments or can serve as a host at one of the gardens, please contact Nancy Vehrs at nvehrs1@yahoo.com or (703) 368-2898. There will be a signup sheet at our March 21 meeting.



MAY

Saturday, May 7, 2016, 9:00 a.m. to Noon, PWWs Annual Native Plant Sale, Grounds of Bethel Lutheran Church, 8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas. Sun- and shade-loving native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees; great prices, lots of variety!
Bethel Lutheran Church, 8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas, Va.

PWWs members: We need your plants! It's time to start potting-up and planning for our **May 7** plant sale. Think about what natives you can contribute as your plants begin emerging this spring. I have compiled some suggestions and instructions for potting, which I will have at the March membership meeting or I can email them to you. We have labels and pots for you if you need them to pot up your plants. Let me know if you have any questions. Thanks in advance for helping with the sale. Even if you don't have plants to contribute, there are many ways you can help out and we need all the help we can get! Please let me know if you'll be available:
(703) 408-7446 or narrington1@verizon.net. ~Nancy Arrington

May 11, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Prince William Drinking Water Clinic Results Interpretation Meeting, 9248 Lee Avenue, Old Courthouse, Manassas. See above (March) for details on this program.

UPCOMING 2016 PWWS MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Heads up! PWWS Program Chair Tamea Boone has lined up an exciting array of programs for the rest of the year, so mark your calendars now: On **May 16, Patricia Reilly will present "Appreciating Mosses and Lichens."** Pat is an environmental consultant and former master gardener coordinator in Prince William County who has taught classes about mosses for more than a decade. On **July 18, Meredith Keppel** will present a program on mushrooms and fungus; and for our annual Fall meeting **September 19, PWWS board member Charles Smith**, a natural area restoration professional, will explore the broader issues affecting our natural resources and natural areas to focus on what we can do regionally and locally to make a positive impact.

HARBINGER-OF-SPRING

By **Marion Lobstein**, botany chair, PWWS and professor emeritus, Northern Virginia Community College

One of the first signs of spring is the appearance of Harbinger-of-Spring (*Eriogonum bulbosum*). This diminutive plant flowers as early as mid-February, making it, along with Hepatica (*Anemone americana*, formerly *Hepatica americana*) and Skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), one of the earliest spring wildflowers to bloom in our area. Its habitat is rich, deciduous woods. This perennial member of Apiaceae or Umbelliferae, the Carrot Family, is not common in Virginia. According to the *Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora*, this species is found only in Prince William, Loudoun, Fairfax, Arlington, and Clarke counties in Northern Virginia, one county in the southern piedmont, and the southwest counties of Virginia. *Eriogonum bulbosum* can be found from Ontario Province in Canada and Wisconsin and sporadically south to Georgia and west to Oklahoma. It is more common in West Virginia and but less common in Maryland.

Its scientific name, *Eriogonum*, Greek for early-born, refers to the early appearance of this species in the spring,

and *bulbosum*, meaning bulbous, refers to the prominent underground bulb-like storage structure that is actually a tuber, an underground storage stem. The other common name of Harbinger-of-Spring is "Pepper-and-Salt," which refers to the contrast of the maroon to black stamens against the white petals.

The small flowers borne in few-flowered umbels with leafy bracts appear before the leaves in February or early March. The individual flowers, less than 3/8 inch in diameter, have no apparent sepals, five white petals, five maroon to black stamens, and an inferior ovary with a two-parted style. The peduncle or flowering stem is usually from two to four inches and at most

nine inches tall. Pollination is primarily by insects such as syrphid flies, solitary bees, honey bees, and other insects that are active in early spring. The fruit is a schizocarp typical of the carrot family and are less than 1/8 inch long and about twice as wide with five prominent ribs on the surface and a two-parted style that persists.

The one to two leaves of each plant are two to three times divided into thirds. The finely-divided and smooth leaves resemble the leaves of Sweet cicely (*Osmorhiza* species) but are not toothed and are much shorter, reaching heights of fewer than six to nine inches, whereas Sweet cicely leaves may be up to three feet tall by late spring. The leaves of Harbinger-of-Spring appear after the flowers. The underground storage structure is a well-developed tuber with a fairly shallow root system.

The medicinal use of this plant is limited but for the Cherokee Indian practice of chewing probably the tuber for toothache. The tuber is edible raw or cooked, but since this species is not common, please do not try this. The Irish potato, also a tuber, is a better choice!

Harbinger-of-Spring can be found in parks such as Manassas National Battlefield Park, Great Falls Parks (Virginia and Maryland), and Balls Bluff in Loudoun County. Seeing this lovely plant emerging from underneath beech or other deciduous hardwood leaves in late February or early March is well worth a trip to one of the parks where it is found. It lives up to its name of Harbinger-of-Spring; once you see it you know the spectacular diversity of other spring wildflowers will soon follow.



Harbinger-of-Spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*) and Apiaceae Taxonomy Overview

By Marion Lobstein, botany chair, Prince William Wildflower Society

Worldwide, Apiaceae (Umbelliferae), the Carrot Family, comprises approximately 434 genera and 3,780 species. This family is primarily herbaceous with some shrubs. It was named Umbelliferae by A.L. de Jussieu in 1789, which name was followed by Apiaceae, by John Lindley in 1836. Apiaceae is the preferred name of the family, but Umbelliferae is also a correct name. Apiaceae is based on the genus *Apium*, the celery genus, which dates to 50 AD to the term Pliny the Elder used to refer to a celery-like plant. Umbelliferae is based on the umbel type of inflorescence in this family.

References to members of the Apiaceae go back to Egyptian as well as to Greek and Roman times. In these cultures, Apiaceae members, such as parsley and celery, were used to make garlands for celebration and funeral ceremonies in addition to their medicinal use. The Greek physician Dioscorides, in the first century *De Materia Medica*, grouped members of this family together, which indicates an understanding of these plants as a group. Sixteenth-century European herbalists, such as Rembert Dodoens and Mathias de l'Obel, also grouped members of this family together in recognition of these as a distinct group, but it was Jacques d'Aleschamp who formally recognized this family in the 1586 *Historian Generalis Plantarum*. In 1672, Robert Morison published a systematic treatment of Umbelliferae, the first such treatment of any plant family. Plant species in these works were often referred to as umbelliferas. John Clayton in the *Flora Virginica* (2nd ed., 1762) listed a number of species of Apiaceae and some of his herbarium specimen were used by Linnaeus as species type specimens.

In the *Flora of Virginia* (2012), the treatment of Apiaceae includes 32 genera and approximately 50 species and reflects a number of major taxonomic changes in this family. The genus *Hydrocotyle*, or Water-pennywort, with seven species occurring in Virginia, has been moved to the Araliaceae, the Ginseng family. These two families have many similarities of structures, such as flowers borne in umbels, and their respective DNA shows a close relationship. Other changes include the movements of the Marsh Parsley binomial, formerly *Apium leptophyllum*, to *Cyclospermum leptophyllum*; Mountain pimpinell, formerly *Pseudotaenidia montana*, to *Taenidia Montana*; and Clustered snake root, formerly *Sanicula gregaria*, to *S. odorata*. Reasons for changes are based on morphological studies (Mountain pimpinell) or on reassigning an earlier, valid binomial as in the case of the other two changes.

Harbinger-of-Spring has been known as *Erigenia bulbosa* since 1818. It was discovered and collected by Andre Michaux in the late 1700s in what is now probably Tennessee. Michaux named the species *Sison bulbosum* in 1803. Nuttall moved it to a new genus, *Erigenia*, and retained the species epithet *bulbosa* based on Michaux's *bulbosum*. It is the sole species of the genus *Erigenia*. Former names include *Sium bulbosum*, by Pierre Poiteau (1811); *Ligusticum bulbosum*, by C. Persoon (1803); various species of *Hydrocotyle*, such as *H. ambigua*, by Pursh (1818); *H. bipinnata*, by Constantine Rafinesque, from work of H. Muhlenbeck (1817); *H. bulbosa*, by Amos Eaton and John Wright (1840); and *H. composita*, by Frederick Pursh (1813). In 1937, *Thorella bulbosa* was proposed by Pierre Nicolas Fournie. Harbinger-of-Spring binomial *Erigenia bulbosa* since has held its ground.

Blue, blue, my love is blue...

The question of where to find Virginia Bluebells in Prince William County and Northern Virginia in general came up at a recent board meeting. One valuable reference is *Finding Wildflowers in the Washington-Baltimore Area* (JHU Press 1995), by Cristol Fleming, **Marion Lobstein**, and Barbara Tufty. In paperback form, it is still available online and sometimes in used bookstores. A newer venue for Bluebell ogling is the **Merrimac Farm Wildlife Management Area**, (host of the annual **Bluebell Festival April 17**; see details under *Events*, above), where satisfyingly large swaths of blue prevail in the floodplains of Cedar Run. In PWC, the banks of Broad Run also are home to amazing colonies of Bluebells, but are not always accessible. But there's always the internationally recognized for Bluebells site of Bull Run Regional Park (free for residents of Prince William, Fairfax, and Loudon

counties), where the dainty delight of thousands of Spring Beauty dance among the Bluebells, or our own Bull Run National Battlefield, where you can experience a double dose of history and nature's eye candy at one go. Just don't pick the flowers!



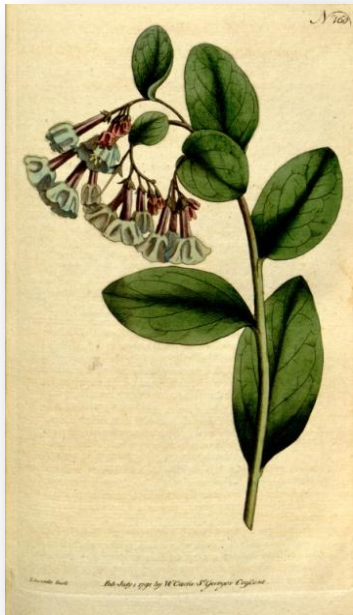
A bit further afield, there are River Bend Park in Great Falls (free, except for special events); Fern Valley at the National Arboretum in D.C. (free); Ball's Bluff Regional Park (Leesburg), a fabulous place to see all kinds of spring wildflowers; Turkey Run Park (McLean); Scott's Run Nature Preserve (McLean); the C&O Canal and Towpath (D.C., Maryland, and West Virginia); and Rock Creek Park (D.C., free). All of these venues are kid-friendly and some allow leashed pets as well. Wouldn't it be a fun way to spend a weekend morning or afternoon? Peak bloom times vary, of course, with the season's weather, but usually in Northern Virginia, peak bloom is mid-April.



What else will you see on such a jaunt? According to Nancy Hugo, writing about the first VNPS Wildflower of the Year (1989), "Other wildflowers that grow and bloom with Virginia bluebells include Spring beauty, Dutchman's-breeches, Toothwort, Rue-anemone, Trout-lily, Wild ginger, and Violets. Redbud, Serviceberry, and Dogwood also celebrate spring with the Bluebells."

What about pollinators? Neltje Blanchen states that "a great variety of insects visit this blossom, which, being tubular, conducts them straight to the ample feast; but not until they have deposited some pollen brought from another flower on the stigma in their way." This jibes with a more prosaic but specific account from www.illinoiswildflowers.info: "The flowers are cross-pollinated by long-tongued bees primarily, including honeybees, bumblebees, Anthophorid bees and Mason bees; these insects obtain nectar and/or collect pollen. Other visitors of the flowers include the Giant Bee Fly, butterflies, skippers, and Sphinx moths, including a hummingbird moth. This group of visitors sucks nectar from the flowers. Halictid bees and Syrphid flies sometimes visit the flowers, but they are too small in size to be effective pollinators. In some areas, the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird has been observed to visit the flowers. When this plant forms large colonies, it provides protective cover for many kinds of wildlife during the spring."

Want to create a bit of blue heaven in your own garden? Bluebells will grow even in drier garden soils, although their native habitat are floodplains. William Cullina says they are only "moderately difficult to propagate from seed, so pick the seeds as they begin to darken." Either plant outside or cold-stratify for 8 months. (See Cullina's *Growing and Propagating Wildflowers of the United States and Canada*, Houghton Mifflin 2000 for more details). Or, take the easy way: visit the **PWWS Native Plant Sale on May 7** (Saturday before Mother's Day, see under "Events," above), and pick up some Virginia bluebell plants at very good prices! ~ *Deanna High, editor*



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

Next Meeting: Monday, March 21, 2016, 7:30 p.m.

Vickie Shufer: "Foraging through the Seasons: Edible and Medicinal Plants"
Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church, 8712 Plantation Lane, Manassas, Virginia 20110