



WILD NEWS

Prince William Wildflower Society

A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Number 2019-02

March - April 2019

Thurs., Mar. 7, 2019, 7:30 p.m.
Prince William Wildflower Society
Membership Meeting
Bethel Lutheran Church, 8712 Plantation Lane,
Manassas, VA
“Propagation: Tips and Techniques to Make
More Plants” with Paige Thacker



Learn the basic concepts for successful plant propagation from seed, cutting and division as well as some advanced techniques for some of the harder-to-grow varieties. Paige will also share her favorite sources and resources for growing more plants.

About Paige Thacker

Paige Thacker is the Horticulture Agent and Unit Coordinator for Virginia Cooperative Extension-Prince William. She has been with VCE since 2002. She has a BS in Horticulture and an MS in Agriculture and Extension Education. She worked with Riverbend Nursery for 11 years, working her way up from propagator, to waterer, and then propagation manager producing millions of perennials, groundcovers, annuals and grasses in her career. She grew up in Prince William County and also serves as a Director for Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District.

From the President

What an outstanding presentation we had by Heather Holm on the pollinators of native plants! More than 150 people attended our seventh annual “Author Event” on February 17. We sold out of both of the books by Heather and could have sold more! I bought copies and, despite having been around Heather for three days, I neglected to get her to sign them. Sigh. I thank our many co-sponsors who made the event such a success: the Prince William Regional Beekeepers Association, the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, the Virginia Cooperative Extension and Master Gardeners of Prince William, the Prince William Conservation Alliance, the Merrimac Farm Master Naturalists, Bees in Schools LLC, and Plant NoVA Natives. I also thank all of our volunteers and those of you who provided refreshments. If you had the misfortune of missing this event, elsewhere in this issue Dee Brown recaps the lecture.



Photos: Lois Montgomery, Janis Stone, Betty Truax & Andrea Kinder examining moss spores; on bridge at right, Bev Horton, Janis Stone, Bobbi Frye, Judy Gallagher, Lois Montgomery, Andrea Kinder

On Tuesday, February 19, Janis Stone led a group of us on a walk at Leopold's Preserve in Haymarket (pictured above). While invasive plants were all too noticeable, we found many native plants of interest. We all had to pet the soft head of a common cattail. Janis delighted us with her moss spore dispersal at the base of a huge huge flat rock covered with mosses and lichens. Evergreen ebony spleenwort, rock polypody, and interrupted fern joined the well known Christmas fern on the forest floor. We all admired some lovely seedheads that were later identified for us by botanist Johnny Townsend as common evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis*). There is always something to see, even in the so-called dead of winter.

Please join me in welcoming **Andrea Kinder** as our new Membership Chair for PWWS. As some of you know, Andrea is both a Master Gardener and Master Naturalist and hails from Germany. She is an excellent photographer and enjoys participating on

native plant walks. She lives in a development next to Bristoe Battlefield. She volunteers at our I-95 rest area planting and at Blandy's native plant trail in addition to other volunteer activities. We are very pleased to have her join our board!

Spring approaches in fits and starts, but we know that it will come eventually. Our topic for the March 7 meeting, "Propagation: Tips and Techniques to Make More Plants" should satisfy our itch to plant. We are fortunate to have our local Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent Paige Thacker to present on this subject. Perhaps we can put some of these tips to use in producing plants for our annual plant sale May 11 or in future years.

And as we think of Spring, my mind turns to Virginia bluebells, our chapter's icon and the official flower of Prince William County. Please join us at the Prince William Conservation Alliance's annual **Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm on Sunday, April 14**. It's a fun environmental festival for the whole family, and the bluebells carpeting Cedar Run are glorious.

~ Nancy



Photos: lower left, Bev Horton & Judy Gallagher by cattails at Leopold's Preserve; right, evening primrose in fruit



Prince William Wildflower Society Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 3, 2019 7:30 p.m.
Bethel Lutheran Church, Manassas

President Nancy Vehrs called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. She welcomed all and then provided information about the Sunday, February 17 Author Event, to be held at the Manassas Park Community Center. Author Heather Holm will speak on native bees and pollinators and offer her books for sale and for signing. (*Pollinators of Native Plants and Bees: An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide.*) Doors open at 3:30 p.m.

Announcements of upcoming events and walks were given, and those can be found in the newsletter under Events. Nancy thanked the following for bringing refreshments: Brenda Hallam, Beverly Houston, Cathy Hindman, and Mary Sherman. Treasurer, Valerie Kenyon Gaffney reported \$1,460.11 in the PWWS checking account.



Program, Annual Member Slide Show:

The PWWS *Wild News* editor, Brigitte Hartke was introduced, and she showed pictures from around her Centreville home, located close to the Manassas National Battlefield Park. The vistas were open and just beautiful, and she included pictures of grasses, birds, butterflies, mushrooms, Virginia creeper, and of course her cute grandson in an open field. [Look for pictures taken by Brigitte in *Wild News*.]

Nancy Vehrs showed pictures taken on the VNPS trip to southwest Virginia in June 2018. The group stayed at a hotel in Abingdon and visited Mt. Rogers Recreation Area, Whitetop Mountain and Grayson

Highlands State Park. Photos included Turks cap lily, flame azaleas, Fraser's sedge, small purple fringed orchids, rare bluets, ferns, and mosses.

She also showed photos from The Cedars Appreciation Day, May 4-5, 2018, which also included a stay at Natural Tunnel State Park. Highlights included yellow star grass; golden seal; giant cane, the tallest native grass; dwarf larkspur, *pictured*; running glade clover, rare and only found in The Cedars Natural Area Preserve in Lee County, Virginia.

On a cold evening, we enjoyed views and native flowers of warmer days. Thank you, Brigitte and Nancy!

Door prizes: Barbara Deegan- *Garden Revolution*, signed by Larry Weiner; Glen Macdonald-a journal; Carol Thompson-dragonfly dish towel; Mike Carson-Yankee candle.

In Attendance: Jim and Judy Gallagher, Sharon Figueroa, Annette Doktor, Nancy Arrington, Andrea Kinder, Janet Wheatcraft, Cathy Hindman, Leslie Larson, Mike Carson, Theresa DeFluri, Dee Brown, Glen Macdonald, Val Neitzey, Mary Sherman, Carol Thompson, Jeanne Fowler, Harriet Carter, Brenda Hallam, Beverly Houston, Peggy Martin, Rita Romano, Barbara Deegan, Tom Attanaro, Arlene Stewart, Jane Smith, Brigitte Hartke, Nancy Vehrs, Harry Glasgow, Karen Waltman.



March

Sunday, March 3, 2 pm, Dove's Landing Hike, 9307 Dove's Landing Park, Manassas, VA. Contact Nancy Vehrs at nvehrs1@yahoo.com for more information, and visit: <https://vnps.org/princewilliamwildflowersociety/events/wintertime-walk-at-doves-landing-park/>

Saturday, March 9, 1:30 - 4:30 pm, "Become a Climate Advocate", by Citizens' Climate Lobby — Regency Clubhouse, 15351 Championship Dr., Haymarket, VA. Come to a free Climate Advocacy Training & Group Start led by Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL), a nonpartisan volunteer group (www.citizensclimatelobby.org) focused on national policies to address climate change. Trainers from CCL will teach techniques to use in lobbying Congress on climate change and building public political will for climate action. All are welcome to attend, and attendance is not a commitment. There is plenty of free parking available. Coffee, tea, and cookies will be provided.

Also on Saturday, March 9, 9 - 3:15 pm, in Charlottesville at the Piedmont Va. Community College, a VNPS workshop: "Our Changing Forests: Forest Health, Management and Restoration" For full information, visit: <https://vnps.org/vnps-winter-workshop-2019/>

Thursday, March 14, 7:30 - 9 pm "From Garlic Mustard to Japanese Stiltgrass: Non-Native Invasive ID and Control", a talk by Patrick Whitehouse sponsored by the Potomack Chapter of VNPS. Free Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road Alexandria, VA 22312

Invasive plants are non-native species that degrade our natural ecosystems. They can tolerate a wide range of habitats, generate many offspring, mature quickly and spread. They out-compete native species, reducing or eliminating them. This can lead to fewer native birds and wildlife. Habitat restoration such as the Invasive Management Area (IMA) project can support the success of native plant species. The IMA Project began in 2006 and now manages more

than 35 acres in Fairfax County. The Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) program is another county effort that finds new invasive species through surveys, then eradicates them before they cause harm. This data on invasive species is tracked across the county. Fairfax County offers many resources about invasive plants to the general public including these:

"Invasive Forest Plants" Brochure [[download](#)]
"Non-Native Invasive ID and Control" Guide [[download](#)]

Sunday, March 31, 8 - 11 am

Last Sunday Bird Walks at Merrimac Farm

We'll look for birds and interesting plants as we travel through the uplands to the edge of the floodplain, covering a variety of habitats, including open fields and woodland edges. Everyone welcome. Dress for the weather, bring binoculars and cameras. More info and RSVP (appreciated though not required): PWCA, 703 499-4954 or alliance@pwconserve.org. View the bird list: <http://www.pwconserve.org/wildlife/birds/lists/merrimacfarm.htm>

April

Thursday, April 11 and Friday, April 12, 2019 at Blandy Experimental Farm, the State Arboretum.

Marion Lobstein and Sally Anderson will offer a two-session Spring Wildflower Identification Workshop. Both sessions will be from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Blandy Community Classroom and grounds. Participants will use Newcomb's Wildflower Guide, the Flora of Virginia, and Flora of Virginia app to identify spring wildflowers in the lab and field. Participants should bring lunch and a 10x ocular, books, and app if they have them. The cost of this workshop is: FOSA & VNPS members, \$35; non-members, \$40.

Registration through Blandy is required and space is limited. Registration assumes attendance both days.

For additional information on how to register for activities at Blandy Farm, visit: http://www.virginia.edu/blandy/blandy_web/all_blandy/2019SpringPrograms-WEB.pdf

May

Friday, May 3, 12:30 - 4 pm. Marion Lobstein will lead a Trillium Field Trip to Thompson Wildlife Management Area to explore a spectacular wildflower display featuring a sea of trilliums. Participants will meet at the Blandy library to carpool to the trillium site. The cost of this fieldtrip is: FOSA members, \$10; nonmembers, \$15. Reservations are required and space is limited.



Heather Holm's "Our Native Bees and Plants"

A synopsis by Dee Brown

Photo: bumble bee on short-toothed mountain mint

February 17, 2019: This year's joint presentation on native plants featured Heather Holm. Heather, originally from Canada, has studied the interactions between bees and plants for years. She began her talk with an amazing statistic: there are 400 species of bees native to Virginia, 4,000 to North America, and 20,000 worldwide.

Our Virginia bees are almost the opposite of the lovely honey bees we usually associate with the word "bee". The Virginia bees are solitary and nest alone underground (70%), not social insects living in large hive colonies. They live only a few weeks and do not produce honey. What they are excellent at is pollination (the exchange of pollen among plants).

Pollen is collected only by the females, but both sexes collect nectar for food. Bees are often attracted to very specific pollen flowers. Because of their extremely short lifespan, it is critical that the bees emerge just as those flowers are producing pollen. Unfortunately climate change is causing this to get out of sync.

Since pollination is necessary to the plants, they have evolved certain ways to attract the bees. Stripes are like directional arrows pointing to the pollen and nectar. Flat aster-like flowers are easier for the bees to enter. Bees are also attracted to

contrasting colors — think dark-centered brown or black-eyed Susans surrounded by bright yellow. Yellow itself is also a lure. Flowers also vary widely in the protein content of the pollen and sugar concentration of the nectar. Dandelions, for example, are 15% protein while willows are 40%. Thus some flowers are more nutritionally valuable. Fragrance and even electrical charge also play a role.

She offers these guidelines for improving your landscaping. Never use pesticides on your pollen plants. Plant a variety of colors and shapes; again, for their short lives, they need a succession of things blooming up to late autumn. Leave leaf litter, decaying logs, pithy stem rubble, and bare ground patches for both the 70% who tunnel underground and the 30% who are above-ground nesters. She recommends against too much wood mulch (which prevents tunneling) and suggests leaving natural debris instead. Make sure also to include trees (red maples are a spring favorite) and shrubs as well as flowers. Of course, all of these should be Virginia natives to make these non-aggressive, industrious, and very beneficial little insects welcome.

Heather Holm has written two books on bees:

2014 — Pollinators of Native Plants: Attract, Observe, and Identify Pollinators and Beneficial Insects with Native Plants

2017 — Bees: An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide



Photos: Heather Holm on the Monday morning Huntley Meadows bird walk just before her flight home



Tatiana Lisle, Harry Glasgow, Heather Holm and Nancy Vehrs share a moment together just before Heather gives her talk

Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Marion Lobstein, PWS Botany Chair

One of the most beautiful flowering tree combinations of spring is the pink to magenta flowers of redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) contrasted with the white to pink bracts of flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*). In mid-to-late March, clusters of redbud flowers develop out of the bark of branches, even the trunk of the tree before the leaves appear. This development of flowers from woody tissues of a tree or shrub is a phenomenon known as cauliflory, a condition more common in the tropics than in temperate zones. This colorful member of the legume family (Fabaceae) is commonly found in rich moist forest understories and along forest edges. The genus name *Cercis* is from the ancient name for the oriental Judas tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*) and the species "*canadensis*" means canadian or of the north. Its range is from Connecticut to Florida and northern Mexico and west to eastern Nebraska. It is found in virtually every county in Virginia except on the Eastern Shore. The common name of redbud refers to the flower buds that are a deep red color. As mentioned earlier, another common name for redbud is Judas tree based on the legend of Judas Iscariot hanging himself on an Asiatic species of this genus.



The pink to magenta flowers are borne on 3/8 to 1/2 inch long pedicels (flowering stalks) in loose clusters of six or more flowers. The 3/8 inch long flowers have an irregular symmetry and are papilionaceous (butterfly-shaped). Each flower is composed of a calyx of 5 deep red sepals, 5 pink to magenta petals (with the upper petal or standard being the smallest, the two lateral or wings being intermediate in size, and the two lowest petals forming the keel being the largest petals), ten separate stamens, and a pistil with an elongated style. Flowers lack a scent but are pollinated by a variety of insects active in early spring. The fruit that develops is

a pod or legume, typical of the pea family. The slender pod that turns reddish brown by fall is 2-3 inches and 3/4 inch wide and has up to 10-12 flattened brown seeds. These fruits are eaten by deer and a number of bird species which disperse in their droppings.



The handsome alternate leaves of redbud are broadly heart-shaped and are 2-6 inches broad and just slightly less long. The leaf margins are smooth and the leaf surfaces are essentially smooth or only sparsely hairy on the underside. The bark of the slender trunk is dark gray-brown and develops scaly ridges in older trees. The slender zigzag twigs are reddish-brown, and the small lateral buds (terminal buds are absent) are deep red to maroon in color. Redbud is an understory tree with a broad spreading shape that averages 15-20 feet in height but may reach heights of 50 feet with a diameter of eighteen inches in some instances.

The historical use of redbud by American Indian tribes has been somewhat limited: small branches were used to make baskets, children of some tribes ate the flowers, and a tea made from the bark was used to treat whooping cough and other respiratory problems. The astringent nature of the bark extract also made this tea or other extracts a treatment for diarrhea and dysentery. As mentioned earlier, the fruits of redbud are eaten by wildlife as are the young twigs and flowers. The flowers, fruits, and leaves are also edible raw or cooked by humans, but its primary use today is as an ornamental species.

This spring look for the burst of color of redbud in bloom in local woods. Enjoy the contrast of this color along with the beauty of flowering dogwood. This late spring into fall enjoy the handsome heart-shaped leaves, striking dark bark, and the clusters of fruits of redbud. This species is certainly one of our most distinct and eye-catching in the understory of our local woods.

Heather Holm Lecture Views

MANY PEOPLE contributed to this year's successful author event on February 17, from organizing and serving refreshments, checking the sound equipment, manning the book table, signing people in, providing information at the educational tables, not to mention trips to the airport and hosting a dinner in her honor. We thank all of you, and wish we had photos of everyone. Here are a few views taken by your editor on the day of Heather's talk:



Prince William Wildflower Society

Wild News is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Prince William Wildflower Society, P.O. Box 83, Manassas, Virginia 20108, vnps.org/princewilliamwildflowersociety/ Nancy Vehrs, President; Brigitte Hartke, Editor. Original Material in *Wild News* may be reprinted if credit is given to PWWS, to *Wild News* and to the author of the material, if named.

Next submission deadline:
April 12, 2019

SAVE the DATES

Sunday, April 7, 2019 — Annual Bluebell Festival at Merrimac Farm, Nokesville, VA

Thursday, May 2, 2019 — PWWS General meeting will feature a presentation by Nancy Berlin entitled "Container Gardening With Natives"

Saturday, May 11, 9 am - 12 noon — Prince William Wildflower Society's Annual Wildflower and Native Plant Sale

PRINCE WILLIAM WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

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



Next Meeting: Thursday, March 7, 2019, 7:30 pm
Paige Thacker: "Propagation: Tips and Techniques to Make More Plants"
Bethel Lutheran Church, Plantation Lane, Manassas, Virginia 20110



SAVE the DATE !!

Please join us at the PWWS
Wildflower and Native Plant Sale
on
Saturday, May 11, 9 am to Noon

