



Bulletin

A publication of the VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

www.vnps.org

Conserving wild flowers and wild places

Arlington House Woodlands earns Registry status

Most people living in the northern part of the state have at least heard of Lee's Mansion or Arlington House (its historic name); it is the stately columned building on Arlington Ridge visible above the entrance gate to Arlington National Cemetery as you cross Memorial Bridge into Virginia. But not many know about the old-growth forest just behind the mansion.

To improve public awareness of this treasure, on Saturday, August 25, in a small ceremony, your society presented a VNPS Registry Plaque to National Park Service staff recognizing the George Washington Memorial Parkway "for having made a commitment to protect an important part of our natural heritage, the Arlington House Woodlands." Rod Simmons made the award on be-

half of VNPS to Ranger Mary Troy, who is Curator for the GW Memorial Parkway. Also present was Ranger Richelle Brown, who is assigned to "Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial," as the mansion and nearby area is officially known. Attendees from VNPS included Roberta Day, John Dodge, and Ginny and Bob Yacovissi. Bob is vice-president of the Potomack Chapter of VNPS.

Ranger Troy expressed her appreciation for the recognition and the handsome plaque, and said she would provide for the appropriate display of the plaque in the headquarters building, which borders the woodland. Rod Simmons noted that such old growth woodlands are rare in the region; he knows of only a few.

After the plaque award and picture session, Ranger Brown gave an informal talk on how the old-growth forest might have survived. She told in some detail of the activities of the Custis family who owned the property (See *Arlington Woodlands*, page 7)



National Park Service Ranger Mary Troy accepts the VNPS Registry Plaque for the Arlington House Woodlands from Rod Simmons, VNPS Registry Program Co-Chair. A corner of the Woodlands provides the backdrop. (Photo by John Dodge.)

VNPS gives harperella a second chance

Thanks to the generous gift from the Virginia Native Plant Society, the bleak future of *Harperella* (*Ptilimnium nodosum*), isn't quite so grim after all. Currently, there are only 13 remaining populations in the eastern U.S., when just 20 years ago there were 26. Only one of these populations is located in

Virginia. Readers might want to find their April 2003 *Bulletin* for an article by Allen Belden on the rediscovery of *Harperella* in Virginia.

This delicate wildflower shares its family roots with the carrot, dill, and horseradish, as well as several plants

(See *Harperella*, page 3)

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From the president

Birthday bash turns out to be biggest Annual Meeting yet

Our Annual Meeting 2007, complete with a 25th anniversary cake, was our largest meeting yet. Thank you to the John Clayton Chapter for all of the work involved. The setting at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point and historic Yorktown was delightful and the tours and presentations by faculty and staff were a real bonus. Thanks so much to the many helpers, who put in so many hours, and kept us stocked with snacks, as well as Jan Newton for organizing the event. Too bad that the Dragon was dry, but I'm glad we didn't get the hurricane that it would have taken to fix that. Coming from the mountains, I enjoyed the smell of the salt air and the wide expanses of water.

Now the harvest moon has ushered in drier fall weather, and a new round of activities. I took the Master Naturalist training with the Daughter of the Stars Chapter, and I've seen announcements from several other groups. We've learned about natural history topics including insects and mammals, soil and weather, and much more from a very

talented group of teachers. It still strikes me that plants are the foundation for much of what else goes on, but it was interesting to hear questions and points of view from classmates who come from so many backgrounds.

Some of us have been attending the public meetings for the Shenandoah National Park's Rock Outcrop Management Plan, featured in our last newsletter. The comment period was to be over at the end of October, but has been postponed, and there is still time to comment. There is also an opportunity for VNPS members to work with the park staff to keep an eye on the rare plants that they are trying to protect. As always, they are short on resources and time. If you think you might be interested in helping out please let me know, and we can talk more with them about a project.

Enjoy the season of composites and colored leaves.

**Your president,
Sally Anderson**

Contact your Congressional representative about the Roadless Act

I would like to challenge every member of VNPS to write to his or her U.S. Congressional Representative and urge that person to support the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2007. This act would halt road building in all of the continental national forests and would have a very positive impact on the 394,000 roadless acres in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests of Virginia. Logging old growth forests is still practiced despite the body of evidence concerning the high levels of biodiversity found in these untouched areas. Wilderness designations for some of these pristine areas is a very arduous, on-going process which could still be a long time in coming, if at all.

Road building increases the threat to old growth stands not only from logging operations but also from off-road vehicles. It is well documented that the forest service does not have the funds or resources to maintain the roads already built at taxpayer expense. There is no question that these roads are a conduit for invasive plants and increase sediment loads in the watershed from erosion.

In Virginia, public support in favor of the Roadless Act is very high at 98+ percent (out of 45,000 comments). Virginia's U.S. Senator John Warner sponsored the Senate version of the Roadless Act and Senator Jim Webb cosponsored the bill. However, the U.S. House of

Representatives is a different situation. Your representative, especially if he happens to be Sixth District Congressman Bob Goodlatte, needs to hear from YOU about the Roadless Act. The 110th Congress (2007-2008) stands a very good chance of passing this bill; especially, if we make our voices heard. Email is currently not considered as effective as writing a letter. Please write today. If you need more information or sample letters, check out the Wild Virginia web site: <http://wildvirginia.org/programsRoadless.html>.

Thanks for helping your National Forests.

*Chris Bowlen
Shenandoah Chapter*



A single flowering scape of Ptilimnium nodosum has fallen over and rooted at the plantlet-bearing axils.

Harperella reintroduction gives hope for species

(Continued from page 1)

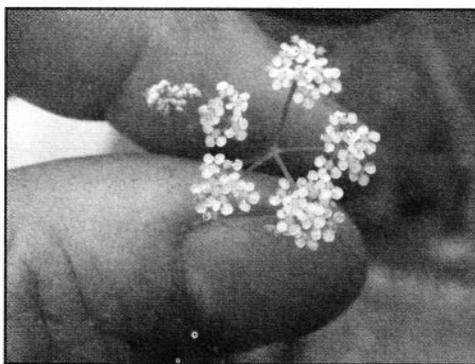
with known medicinal value. Making its home in the good quality water of clear swift-flowing streams, the plant requires a specific water depth, not too high or too low. To learn more about Harperella go to the home page of the Center for Plant Conservation's at www.centerforplantconservation.org by clicking on "Search the National Collection."

Your sponsorship of this species has given it an everlasting funding source. Sponsorship funds are placed in an endowment to generate an annual assistance payment for CPC's Participating Institutions that are assigned the species. They use these funds to help sustain seed collections and restoration efforts. These funds are also used to support related data management and conservation activities at CPC's national office. North Carolina Botanical Garden (NCBG) is the primary custodian of the species. Receiving annual funds, the team there has worked to gain knowledge about the species, collect seed, and has completed an experimental reintroduction in the last year, with some promising results.

Headquartered in St. Louis, CPC is a network of 36 botanical institutions involved in the study, preservation, conservation and restoration of the nation's imperiled native plants. The network of botanists has been studying imperiled plants for more than 20 years. CPC's goal

is to recover all imperiled plants across the country, so that native plants are thriving again.

Reintroductions of imperiled species are a key part of the mission of the Center for Plant Conservation and its national network of Participating Institutions. Working to restore the landscape with the native plants that once flourished is a priority. The North Carolina Botanical Garden (NCBG) has been working with Harperella for many years. Recently, it collaborated with



Harperella (Ptilimnium nodosum) has tiny white flowers that occur in heads, or umbels.

NCBG staff, volunteers, the N.C. Plant Conservation Program, the Natural Heritage Program and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a reintroduction. The team outplanted 800 individuals on an historical site on the Deep River in Piedmont, North Carolina.

These 800 plants began as seedlings propagated from seed collected over a decade ago. The population had been rapidly declining and this seed was collected in hopes of eventually restoring the habitat or providing a new site for the species to thrive. The seed collected was from just eight individuals left in the wild. This species needed a helping hand to get rooted again.

The emergent aquatic plant's habitat of riverine gravel bars led to lots of questions by the team about how to restore it. This reintroduction gave them an opportunity to learn more about the efficiency of using a stabilization technique on the gravel bar, compared to planting the seedlings in their natural cobble.

The team had some challenges. Just one day after the reintroduction, the river waters rose eight feet due to heavy rains. And within that first week, the site flooded three additional times. Another challenge came by air, Canada geese. Their taste for the species caused the fragile seedlings to struggle.

But, after the first season, the plants won. Following the opening growing season, approximately half of the original plants survived. By the end of the season, over 150 of the plants reached 30 centimeters in length and dozens of the flowering scapes rose to knee-height. Between the axils of the branching scapes, many plantlets formed and

(See Beating the odds, page 7)

Annual Meeting brought plants and people together



Starry Campion (Silene stellata) on a Dragon Run field trip. (Photo by Phillip Merritt.)

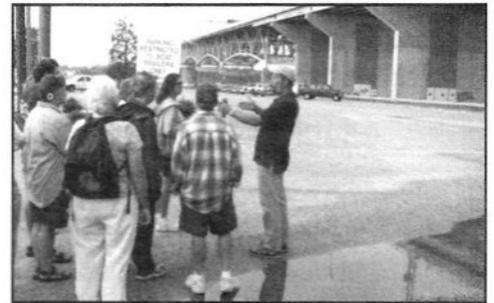


Vicky Schwartz, Judy Roehling and Patricia Salamone at the Eclipse Demonstration Garden (part of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden). (Photo taken by Sue Voigt.)

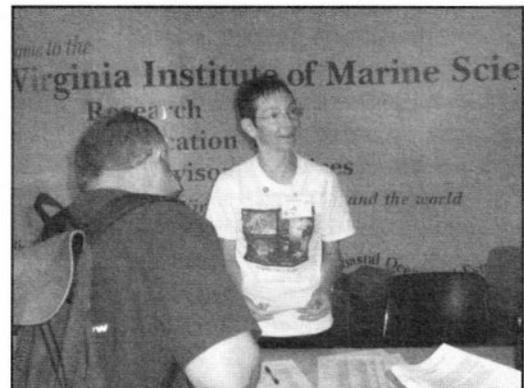


Patti Gray (chair of lunch committee) and Bland Blackford helping with lunch.

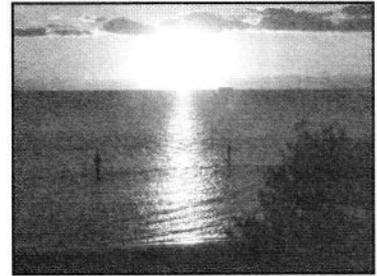
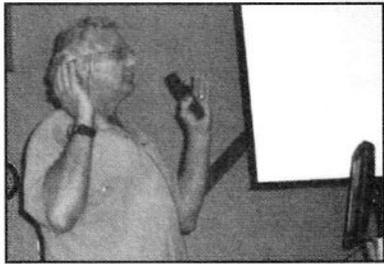
Right, Carl Hershner's tour of the teaching marsh under the Yorktown bridge; below right, VIMS campus tour in the courtyard which features a map of the Chesapeake Bay; and, bottom, Donna War leading a Jamestown fieldtrip.



A smiling group heads out for the Bethel Beach Natural Area Preserve fieldtrip.



Jan Newton helping with registration on the first day of the Annual Meeting.



A good time was had by all!

The partnership of John Clayton Chapter (JCC) and the College of William and Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) generated over 160 participants for the VNPS 25th Anniversary Annual Meeting. Activities began Friday morning, September 14, with two field trips and four presentations by VIMS staff members and Wesley Greene, Founder of the Colonial Garden in Williamsburg. On Friday evening, keynote speaker Dr. Jim Perry, Professor of Marine Science at VIMS, gave a dynamic presentation on native plants and shoreline stabilization.

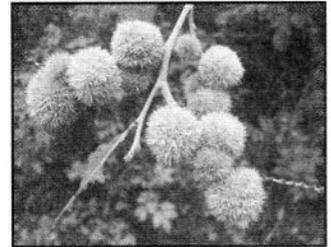
The momentum continued all day Saturday with a full schedule of eight speakers and nine field trips throughout the day. Capping the event was a party at the Freight Shed in Yorktown, now a vast room with glass doors and a patio overlooking the York River. Maps were available for plant walks along the river before a buffet dinner was served. During dinner, raffle tickets were read and happy winners selected from a large array of donations. Thanks to the eager buyers, the raffle generated over \$300 for the JCC Nature Camp Scholarship Fund.

Sally Anderson, VNPS President, then cut the 25th VNPS Anniversary cake and conducted the Annual Meeting, with the election of the slate of officers. At registration, conference participants received an attractive cloisonné pin with the Jamestown lily, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the state organization. If you could not attend the meeting, the pins are available for sale at \$5 each from the VNPS office.

More field trips went out on Sunday, beginning with a bird walk leaving Watermen's Hall at 8 a.m. Many thanks to the coffee and snack providers, who had a food table ready for the early risers! Six more field trips were conducted throughout the morning and early afternoon.

This meeting has been in preparation for a year, and the members of John Clayton Chapter who helped with the planning, organization and implementation were rewarded by the enthusiastic response of the participants. Special thanks goes to the VIMS staff members who provided space, speakers and field trip leaders. It was a great 25th Anniversary for VNPS. Congratulations to all!

-- Helen Hamilton, JCC President



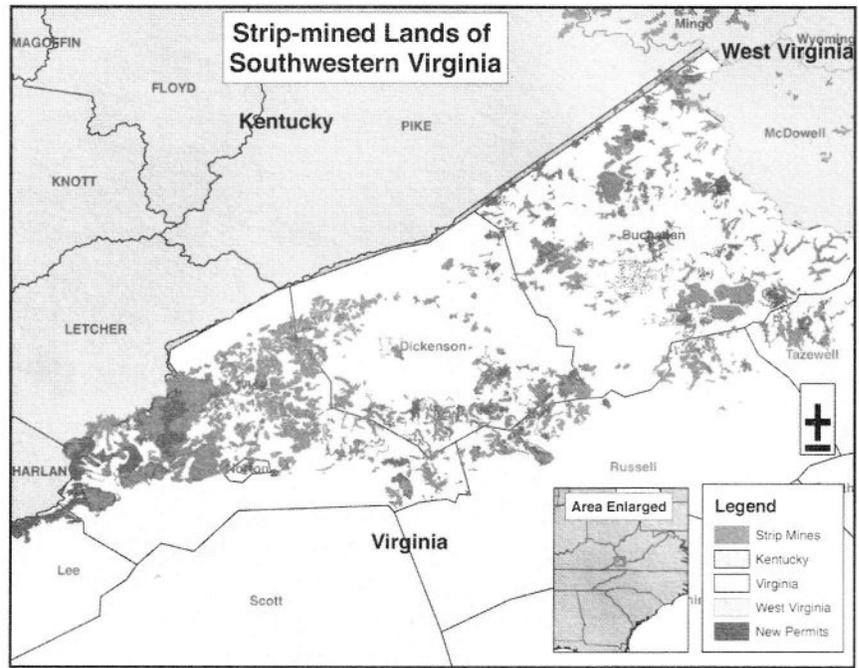
Sunrise over the York River; Allegheny chinkapin (Castanea pumila) was photographed on a Dragon Run field trip by Phillip Merritt; Jan Newton celebrates the last day; Cynthia Long receives the John Clayton Chapter's John Clayton Botany Award for serving the chapter as charter member, past president, membership chair, newsletter chair, and endless other jobs and for her enthusiasm and love for the conservation of native plants and spreading the word to the public. She has been labeled the "Seed Queen" by a local newspaper for her knowledge of and dedication to growing native plants from seeds.



Photos from top to bottom: Keynote speaker Dr. Jim Perry addresses the audience; Libbey Oliver prepares native plant arrangements for the buffet/party at the Freight Shed; Carol Heiser gives her "Promoting Native Plants through Conservation Landscaping" talk; preparing for field trip send offs; and, top middle, the VNPS 25th anniversary pin was given to all Annual Meeting attendees.

Sen. Warner applauded for conservation efforts

The Virginia Native Plant Society joined numerous environmental organizations in the Virginia Conservation Network in signing a letter applauding Senator John Warner for his leadership on global warming, his willingness to draft legislation to regulate greenhouse gases, and his intention to include provisions to dedicate funding to federal wildlife programs, which have helped to save and restore habitat in Virginia. The letter recommends that the legislation address several principles, including capping and cutting carbon emissions to science-based levels, market flexibility for cost-effective reductions, using carbon permits for public benefit, and reforming the energy sector. It asks that allowances be made to help fish, wildlife and ecosystems adapt in the face of global warming's complex threats, including funds for maintaining and improving natural resources within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.



Mountain top removal in southwest Virginia has been underway for sometime as can be seen on this map (<http://www.samsva.org/wp-content/uploads/swvaminemap.jpg>). Look for more on this subject in our next *Bulletin*. In the meantime, educate yourself on this tragedy by viewing satellite photos of mountain top removal mining at Google Earth, under "layers" click on Global Awareness and then on Appalachian Mountaintop Removal; go to Wikipedia.com: Surface Mining; learn about the dense communities of endangered and threatened species in harm's way at www.Natureserve.com; read *Mountaintop coal mining at Hale Gap, Va.*, By John M. Broder of the *New York Times*, published August 23, 2007, and read what Sierra and National Geographic have both covered on their websites.

VNPS holiday gift ideas

VNPS Membership

Give a membership to a friend or family member interested in conservation of Virginia's natural areas, hiking, or gardening! Introduce a student to Conserving Wildflowers and Wild Places with a VNPS membership. See the order form on page 7 of this newsletter.

VNPS T-shirt

Someone will want to wear this mocha brown, forest green or mulberry T-shirt with Anita Cooper's beautiful collection of native plants. Sizes: small, medium, large or extra-large; \$15 + \$2.75 for tax and shipping.

New! 25th Anniversary Pin

Celebrate the 25th anniversary of VNPS by giving the beautiful lapel pin seen above. The pin was created to celebrate this 25th year of VNPS's advocacy for native plants and their habitats. Gold with bright royal blue background and a brilliant white atamasco lily, our Wildflower of the Year 2007; \$5 + .70 for tax and shipping.

VNPS notepads

These 4 inch by 6 inch notepads have the same Anita Cooper design that is found on the VNPS T-shirt. There are 50 sheets in each notepad; \$4 + \$1.70 for shipping and tax



Technical problems delay rock outcrop plan

The National Park Service has determined that there were a variety of technical problems that require revisions to its Rock Outcrop Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Shenandoah National Park. The plan was released for public review Oct. 1. As a result of the determination, public review of the plan has been suspended pending issuances of a new environmental assessment.

Comments that have been received to date will be retained and considered as the planning process continues.

The public will be notified when the new management plan and environmental assessment are released and a new 30-day public comment period will begin. No date has been set for the release.

For more information, call 540-999-3500.

To order any of the above items, send check or money order to: VNPS, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2 Boyce, Virginia 22620.

• Beating the odds

(Continued from page 3)

due to the weight of the branch, laid down and rooted. The team is optimistic that other plantlets detached, made their way downstream, and may establish a new site on an available gravel bar.

During the following winter and spring the plants were challenged again. They were completely submerged and faced another difficult growing season. But, once again the plants won. Under inspection in the summer of 2007, the team counted 125 individuals, 107 of which occurred in the coconut fabric plots, one of the two experimental stabilization treatments.

Attrition of the original planting was expected, but the team is already seeing on-site sexual and vegetative reproduction. They will follow the progress of the reintroduction over many years, and continue to be optimistic about the future of *Harperella* on the Piedmont River.

This is a story of hope the Center for Plant Conservation loves to share. *Harperella* has made real progress back from the brink with the help of many friends! We are confident our native plants can be saved and with help like yours, species by species, we can restore the native flora across our country.

Building support for plant conservation and stewardship is one of CPC's priorities. CPC has established this plant sponsorship program to build sustainable funding for vulnerable plants and we are proud of the Virginia Native Plant Society's partnership to achieve sponsorships for Virginia's species. For each sponsored species, funds are provided annually to assist in restoration efforts. These funds have already significantly sup-

ported work for *Harperella*. But there are a number of Virginia natives that are not sponsored. If you would like more information about the CPC or plant sponsorship, visit our website www.centerforplantconservation.org or call 314-577-9450. Let's work together to make sure Virginia's imperiled plants populations are restored for future generations!

Jo Meyerkord, Communications Coordinator, Center for Plant Conservation

• Arlington Woodlands

(Continued from page 1)

for several generations. Her knowledge of the Arlington House history through the eras from the American Revolution, through the founding of Washington, D.C., as a Federal District that was the nation's capital, and through the Civil War was evident.

The mansion and extensive estate were home to General Robert E. Lee and his family as Lee's wife was the daughter of George Washington Parke Custis, the adopted son of George and Martha Washington. When Lee cast his lot with the Confederacy during the Civil War, the Union Army confiscated the estate and the grounds were turned into a national cemetery. The Lees never returned to their home.

After Ranger Brown's talk, Rod Simmons led a walk down the hill from the mansion along the edge of the woodland, and then into the woodland and partway back up the hill. The primary attractions were the large old trees, mainly northern red oaks (*Quercus rubra*), many of which were likely older than 100 years.

Arrangements to make the Arlington House Woodlands a VNPS Registered Site were the result of work by both Rod Simmons and the Arlington House Site Manager Kendall Thompson (who is on temporary assignment elsewhere). VNPS congratulates both men and appreciates and shares their concern for the conservation of the Arlington House Woodlands.

John Dodge, VNPS Registry Co-chair

See the address label for your membership expiration date
VNPS Membership/Renewal Form

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*Please designate one person as delegate for Associate membership
 To give a gift membership or join additional chapters: Enclose dues, name, address, and chapter (non-voting memberships in any other than your primary chapter are \$5)

I wish to make an additional contribution to ___ VNPS or _____ Chapter in the amount of ___\$10 ___\$25 ___\$50 ___\$100 ___\$(Other) _____
 _____ Check if you do not wish your name to be listed to be exchanged with similar organizations in a chapter directory

Make check payable to VNPS and mail to:

VNPS Membership Chair, Blandy Experimental Farm, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2, Boyce, VA 22620

Membership dues are tax deductible in the amount they exceed \$5. Contributions are tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

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 The deadline for the next issue is **Jan. 2**.

Shadow witch thrills annual meeting goers

A few years ago when the John Clayton Chapter hosted a VNPS annual meeting in Williamsburg, a highlight for me was being introduced to *Ponthieva racemosa*. Pat Baldwin, our field trip leader, stopped our caravan of cars by a ditch in Yorktown to introduce us to the shadow witch orchid. I'd never seen it before or since. On hearing the announcement that John Clayton would host the 2007 annual meeting, my hopes rose that I might again visit this interesting small orchid. This would offer the opportunity for other fellow VNPS members to join my admiration for this dainty orchid.

When one makes known a wish of that sort in VNPS, "someone" comes through with a field trip to make your wish come true. In this instance, Mary

Hyde Berg arranged a visit to this orchid of southeastern Virginia. The 25th anniversary of VNPS in September included a visit to her land of *Magnolia tripetala* and *Ponthieva racemosa*. The 15 acres of wooded land with small hills and a cliff is interesting and little used.

Mary describes it thusly: "this woods is much richer in biomass and species than the sandy woods of Summerfield (her home site) due to a thin shell strata and more water. It is part of the Haynes Pond watershed, which is generally rich in mountain disjunct species and spring ephemerals. Most notable are *Magnolia tripetala*, *Adiantum pedatum*, *Ponthieva racemosa* and state champion mockernut hickory."

In fact, Mary had to do difficult



Ponthieva racemosa
shadow witch
Illustration by
Nicky Staunton

bushwhacking to get us to a stream flowing over marl where there were several colonies of shadow witch living nearby. The "witch" appears to be dressed for a ball, due to the flaring lower petals combined with its up raised sepals.

VNPS members enjoy this sort of field trip sharing of native plants. We meet new-to-us native plants through the enthusiasm and kindness of people who know what plants are on their property or public land and share that knowledge. I'm grateful to Mary Hyde Berg and I know that this trip to Gloucester will stay in my memory to enjoy again and again. At least, until the next visit to where the shadow witch lives and I may visit to again "pay my respects."

Nicky Staunton, 2nd VNPS Vice-president

Ponthieva R. Brown 1813 (shadow witch)
A genus of about 30-53 species, of tropical and warm temperate America. References: Ackerman in FNA (2002a); Pridgeon et al. (1999b).
Ponthieva racemosa (Walter) C. Mohr, shadow witch. Cp (GA, NC, SC, VA): bottomlands, floodplains, moist ravines, nearly always over calcareous rock ("marl" or coquina limestone); rare (GA, Special Concern, NC Rare, SC Rare, VA WatchList). September-October. Se. VA south to FL and west to se. TX; disjunct in the Eastern Highland Rim, TN, and south into Central and South America. The basal rosette of leaves, white (suffused with green) flowers in fall, and habitat are distinctive.
[= RAB, C, F, FNA, G, GW, K, S, X; *P. racemosa* var. *racemosa* - L] From *Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia and surrounding areas* Alan S. Weakly

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