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Wild, wonderful West Virginia!

Native plant enthusiasts team up for outdoors treat

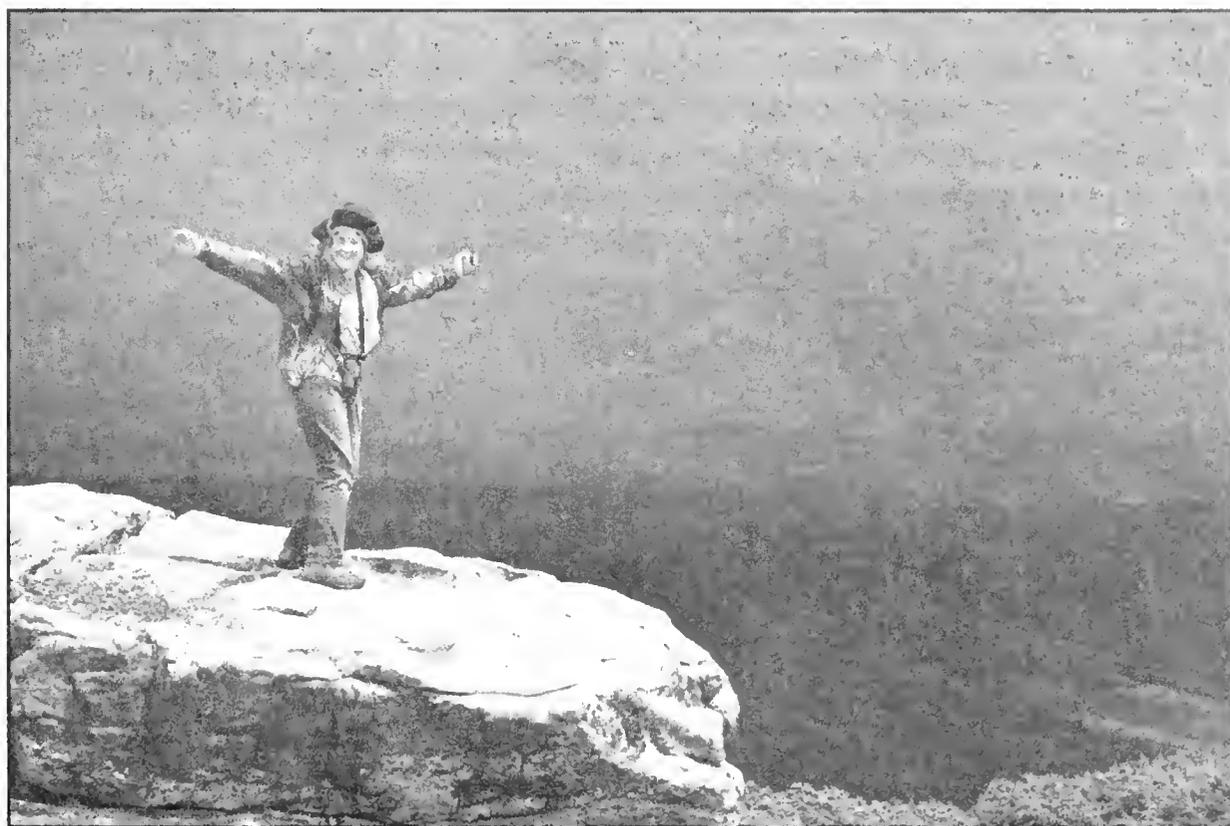
A little bird got wind of a wildflower weekend scheduled for July 6 and 7, and at the last minute, eight of us from VNPS were able to join a group of West Virginia Native Plant Society members on a joint field trip coordinated by Shirley Gay. We each made private arrangements for accommodations, staying with friends or in vacation homes. Some of the West Virginia folks stayed in the lodge at Blackwater Falls State Park. We spent our first day in Canaan Valley State Park, where our guide was the sparkling Elizabeth Byers, vegetation ecologist with the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. Some of you may remember her from our winter workshop three years ago when she was a presenter.

We began with a walk on the Abe Run Boardwalk. We were entering a globally rare (G1) balsam fir-black ash swamp, fed by seepage water from limestone bedrock. When we first entered the woods, we noticed that the trees were almost exclusively maples, a sign of high calcium content in the soil. We were looking for the rare (G4) Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium vanbruntiae*), which we found, but not before being introduced to a dozen or so of the 47 *Carex* sp. present in the wetland. The brome-like sedge (*Carex bromoides*)

stands out, as does the indicator species, three-seeded sedge (*Carex trisperma*). We saw lots of alder-leaf buckthorn (*Rhamnus alnifolia*) and my favorite, the showy glade spurge (*Euphorbia purpurea*). It turns out we were walking through a chemical gradient, and we finished with seeing some of the dozen or so sphagnum mosses building their own highly acidic substrate of peat.

Elizabeth next took us along the Blackwater River Trail to a magical place where the slow-moving water allowed for bluejoint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*) and tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*) to dominate the grassy riverside meadows. The grass was soft to the touch and green, and the location so pristine, that we felt we had entered the landscape.

(See *West Virginia*, page 5)



Nancy Vehrs clammers out on Bear Rocks while on the West Virginia Native Plant Society trip. (Photo by Carol Hammer)

VNPS Annual Meeting September 13-15!



From the president

'Garden in the Woods' offers natural inspiration

Garden in the Woods. That's the name for the lovely public native plant garden of the New England Wild Flower Society (NEWFS) that Harry and I visited in July. In addition to the garden, the NEWFS offices and educational center are located on the site in Framingham, Massachusetts. Accessed from a residential area, visitors drive up a one-way paved road through the woods to the parking area. The bright blue blooms of Stoke's asters (*Stokesia laevis*) greeted us at the garden entrance. The obligatory gift shop sells admission tickets to the garden as well as a wonderful range of books and garden-themed items. Outside is a well-stocked native plant nursery shop.

Tall fairy candles (*Actaea racemosa*) lit the way along the first part of the main Curtis Path of crushed stone. The path is named for garden founder Will C. Curtis who deeded his Garden in the Woods to NEWFS in 1965. His original cottage can be found between the idea garden and the original woodland garden. I found the stunning Turk's-cap lily (*Lilium superbum*) in bloom there near some green-roofed garden sheds. Some raised propagation beds are nearby and filled with trillium and lady's-slipper seedlings.

The long-established woodland garden is lush with layers of green vegetation this time of year. The sweet scent of smooth hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*) permeated the humid air. A stone-stepped side trail tumbled like a waterfall. Just beyond, the canopy opened to reveal a woodland pond surrounded by the bright colors of swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), queen-of-the prairie (*Filipendula rubra*), and pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*). Nearby was a stunning clump of zigzag iris (*I. brevicaulis*), with its bright

blue and white petals. White water lilies (*Nymphaea odorata*) and tiny duckweed (*Lemna*) covered part of the pond's surface.

Other areas of interest included a small meadow as well as the bog garden where different species of the fascinating pitcher plants thrived. A children's activity area featured a rock pond, habitat area, and a labyrinth currently under construction. The New England rare plants exhibit garden included some of our Virginia plants such as butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrine*), southern agrimony (*A. parviflora*), goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*), and creeping juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis*).

One visit was not enough for me, so I returned the next day to explore all of the side trails that I had missed. Beyond the garden areas were more native woods where lady's-slippers thrive in the spring. The lovely Hop Brook was lined with lush ferns and evoked the feeling of standing next to a mountain stream. If you're ever in the Boston area, allow at least a few hours for a visit to the delightful Garden in the Woods in Framingham and discover the fruits of our nation's oldest native plant society with its origins in 1900.

Our annual meeting is upon us and I hope to see many of you in Charlottesville. The field trips offer something for all interests – native plant gardens, trees, a national park, wetlands, meadows, and more. The principal illustrator for the Flora of Virginia, Lara Gastinger, will provide a window into her artistic world for the Friday night presentation and on Saturday evening ecologist Nancy Adamson will share her considerable knowledge about the importance of native plants for pollinators.

Your President, Nancy Vehrs



Stoke's aster (*Stokesia laevis*)



Zigzag iris
(*I. brevicaulis*)



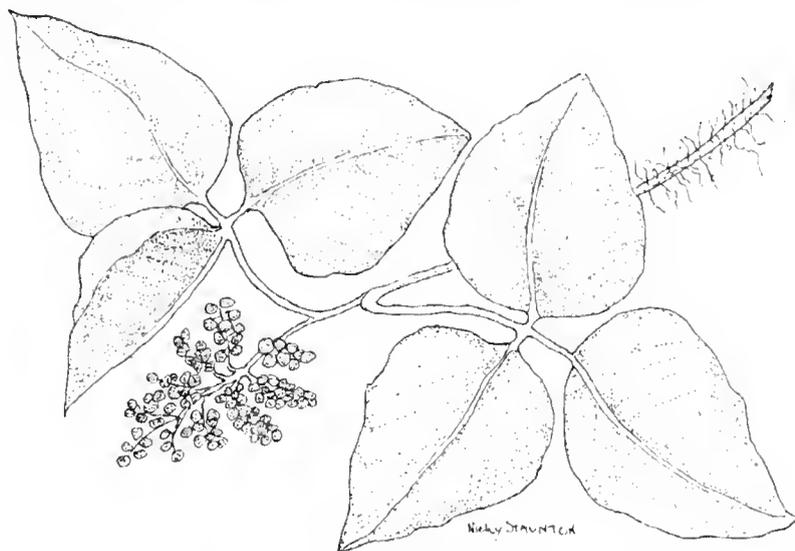
Turk's-cap lily
(*Lilium superbum*)

'Poison ivy' itch continues Down Under

Unmistakable masses of telltale oozing red blisters, the unbearable itching, the agonizing urge to scratch, urushiol-induced contact dermatitis to the medical profession, *poison ivy* to the rest of us! Urushiol being the clear liquid compound found within the sap of the plant responsible for the reaction. How many times have we heard it, "Leaves of three beware of thee," "leaves of three, let it be,"? We all know them, words of wisdom passed down to the youngest of scouts on his or her first camping trip. Unremarkable, really, to anyone in Virginia accustomed to the occasional walk in the woods but how to explain this postcard from my past here in the tropical corner of Far North Queensland, Australia, well-removed from the temperate forests of Virginia.

From an early age the woods called me. I spent hours exploring the small patch of forest behind our house, but not without risk. It was Alexandria, Virginia, in the 1960s and still one could find the odd patch of remnant forest to explore. At age six, the big yellow school bus pulled up and I was off to attend the, recently desegregated, Stonewall Jackson Elementary School where we would file in, all, black and white together, under the steady gaze of a larger-than-life black and white photograph of the Confederate war hero. Not the easiest of times for a small, glasses-wearing, always last-to-be-picked-for-kickball kid, who wanted nothing more than to disappear into the background. And then it would come, under the "You're not sick enough to stay home," mantra of my mother, out the door and off to face the world or at least Stonewall Jackson Elementary, hands and face covered in chalky-pink calamine lotion, looking whiter and pinker than ever – a result of my woodland adventures. The trauma, I mean memories..., all come flooding back, *poison ivy*!

This love of nature and the forests of Virginia ultimately led to a career in horticulture where I would once again confront my old adversary. Clearly an occupational hazard, *Toxicodendron radicans* should be up there with asbestos for horticulturists where even the



Toxicodendron radicans
poison ivy
Illustration by
Nicky Staunton

best of training and wisdom gained from past experience cannot always ensure one's safety! Early in my career I worked as a landscape gardener in the gated-communities of greater Williamsburg where poison ivy grows to great heights reaching its full potential in the moist humid stretches along the river. Huge hairy vines cling to loblolly pines (*Pinus taeda*), and reach into the very canopies of the trees. And yes, we all know poison ivy when we see it, the key part of that phrase being, "when we see it..." It was here that I caught the worst case I have ever had. As gardeners we often like the feel of the earth and wearing gloves, seems, well, a hindrance when say, pulling weeds or transplanting seedlings. And, it was, while weeding false strawberry (*Duchesnea indica*) from under someone's astilbes that I must have gotten into the roots of a monster poison ivy vine that was not in immediate sight. A day or two later my hands erupted into a continuous layer of blisters that resembled something one might come across in a medical journal – photographs of second or third degree burn wounds. It was the first time I considered seeking medical help. People have in fact died from exposure to poison ivy, workers burning brush have unwittingly inhaled smoke from burning *Toxicodendron radicans* which, when coming into contact, has a similar effect on the respiratory system.

According to Wikipedia, "Most people will become sensitized with repeated or more concentrated exposure to urushiol" What's new? By now, all I needed to do was to simply look at the plant to break out in a rash. My horti-

cultural career moved me from Williamsburg up to Richmond where I accepted a position as horticulturist with Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and where once again I would encounter my nemesis. Wikipedia explains further: "Urushiol oil can remain active for several years, so handling dead leaves or vines can cause a reaction. In addition, oil transferred from the plant to other objects (such as pet fur) can cause the rash if it comes into contact with the skin. Clothing, tools, and other objects that have been exposed to the oil should be washed to prevent further transmission."

You can see where this is going... The horticultural team at Ginter, as one would expect, all share tools, utility vehicles, etc. Colleagues, let's not name any names, would occasionally take on clearing out a patch of poison ivy, usually in some out-of-the-way corner of the garden. And, very sensibly, wear gloves and protective clothing but then promptly handle garden tools or perhaps the steering wheels of work vehicles – the same tools that we all shared! Days later... and miles away from any plant, again the blisters would appear; this time it was happening just too often and I did go to see the doctor. Cortisone cream became a mainstay of the medicine chest. At this point, it might be helpful to note that many people, old boy scouts, seem to love to perpetuate the old folklore that jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) is a natural remedy for poison ivy. How many times do we have to hear this wishful thinking? Believe me, I have had ample opportunity to test this out and can say that, at least for me, it doesn't help and

(See *Skin irritation*, page 6)

Pocahontas SP offers floral wonders to explore

Named for a larger than life protagonist in one of the most iconic episodes from Virginia's history, Pocahontas State Park is a green gem in the heart of a growing metropolis.

As a Virginia-bred naturalist, I've been drawn to the park time and again and still haven't had opportunities enough to explore all of it. At nearly 8,000 acres, a complete floral survey would be quite an undertaking. However, in my limited time, I have seen many of its floral wonders.

One of my favorite areas of the park is a grove of American beech (*Fagus grandiflora*). American beech, once common in the east and now scattered and rare, seems to retain its majesty here. The grove is fetching at any season but my favorite is in the autumn when the golden leaves and pale trunks stand in bold contrast to a blue sky. This is also when a carpet of golden leaves covers the ground and reflects the rays of sunlight. In addition, this is also the best time to see American beech's attendant parasite, beech drops (*Epifagus virginianus*). In a propitious sunfleck you may see the purple brown stems and the brown-purple striped flowers of beechdrops in stark contrast to the golden beech leaves. So inculcated is this beech grove that I have even seen it in a dream.

A wander on any park trail will show visitors the history of the region. One area has a cluster of 70-foot tall loblolly pines indicating they were the first to colonize open ground many years ago. One pine makes an interesting landmark as unlike all others this

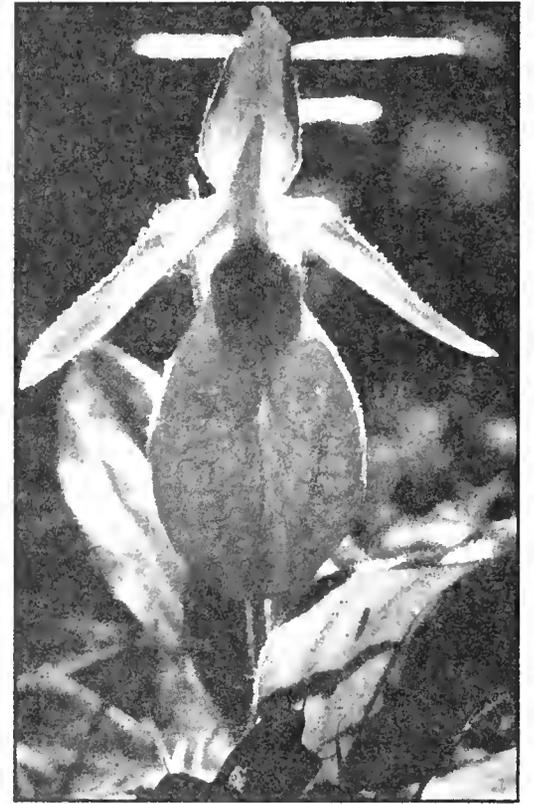
one sagged during midlife and now has an attractive tilted "S" shape in old age. Another area may have a grove of red maples (*Acer rubrum*) that are replacing pines and also indicating wet soil. In autumn these maples turn a brilliant red that seems to catch fire when struck by sunlight.

Another tree that came to the park's once open fields was tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). All tulip trees there are 80 eighty feet tall, sentinels only able to recruit if and when another major tree falls. The best opportunity to see its tulip-like flower is when a squirrel nips one off and it drops to the forest floor.

In the presence of the aforementioned canopy trees including several oak species such as northern red (*Quercus rubra*), willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), understory trees begin to colonize, creating a subcanopy. In wet areas I have found non-flowering sweet bay (*Magnolia virginiana*) and beautifully flowering pinxter flower (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*). At moist forest edges I once found a flowering fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*). In flower, fringe tree takes on the appearance of an arrested snowstorm. Other moist forest edges have become thickets of red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*)

On drier forest edges I've seen sporadic flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) whose floral subtending bracts assume bends and curls making them appear as frothy waves at sea. A sad sight on drier forest edges is an American chestnut (*Castaena dentata*) robbed of its canopy status by chestnut blight and now struggling to remain an intermittent member somewhere beneath the subcanopy.

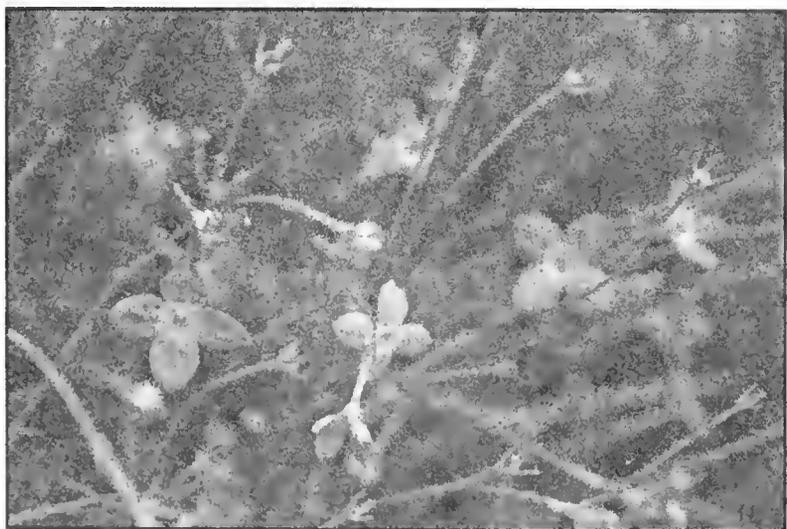
Then there is the herb layer on the forest floor. Because much of the area occurs on acidic substrates, you can expect an acidophilus ground flora. The most magnificent member of this flora is the pink lady's-slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) and a



Pink lady's-slipper
Cypripedium acaule

sometimes-close associate Indian cucumber root (*Medeola virginica*). But there are some open meadows in bright shade that support different flora. One favorite is the beautiful but diminutive bluets (*Houstonia caerulea*) that are generally hidden among grasses until the tiny powder blue cross flowers appear. Then you may see a bluet floral continuum creating a mist-blue carpet. An orchid sporadically venturing into grassy meadows and sometimes accompanying bluets is southern slender ladies'-tresses orchid (*Spiranthes lacera* var. *gracilis*) ranging from an easily missed six inches to a fairly majestic foot and a half. A large and distinctive grass of the forest edge is bottlebrush grass (*Hystrix patula* or *Elymus hystrix*) with long and starkly spiked awns. Other forest edge species are far bolder than bluets and lady's-tresses. In wetter lowlands, hoary tick trefoil (*Desmodium canescens*) with its perfectly Velcro-covered fragmenting fruits can restitch your shirttails, pant legs and socks into unpleasant new constricted arrangements. In drier uplands tick trefoil (*Desmodium paniculatum*) provides the same service. Grabbing your attention rather than your clothes is the widespread

(See *Pocahontas*, page 8)



Bluets, *Houstonia caerulea*

• West Virginia

(Continued from page 1)

Another trail led us through a meadow, then woods and then to the edge of a swamp where we found a surprising population of several dozen Small's twayblade (*Listera smallii*). The West Virginia folks knew that this orchid was there, but they had never seen it in such abundance.



Plants sighted in West Virginia included, top to bottom, Small's twayblade (*Listera smallii*), oxalis, and round leaf sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*).

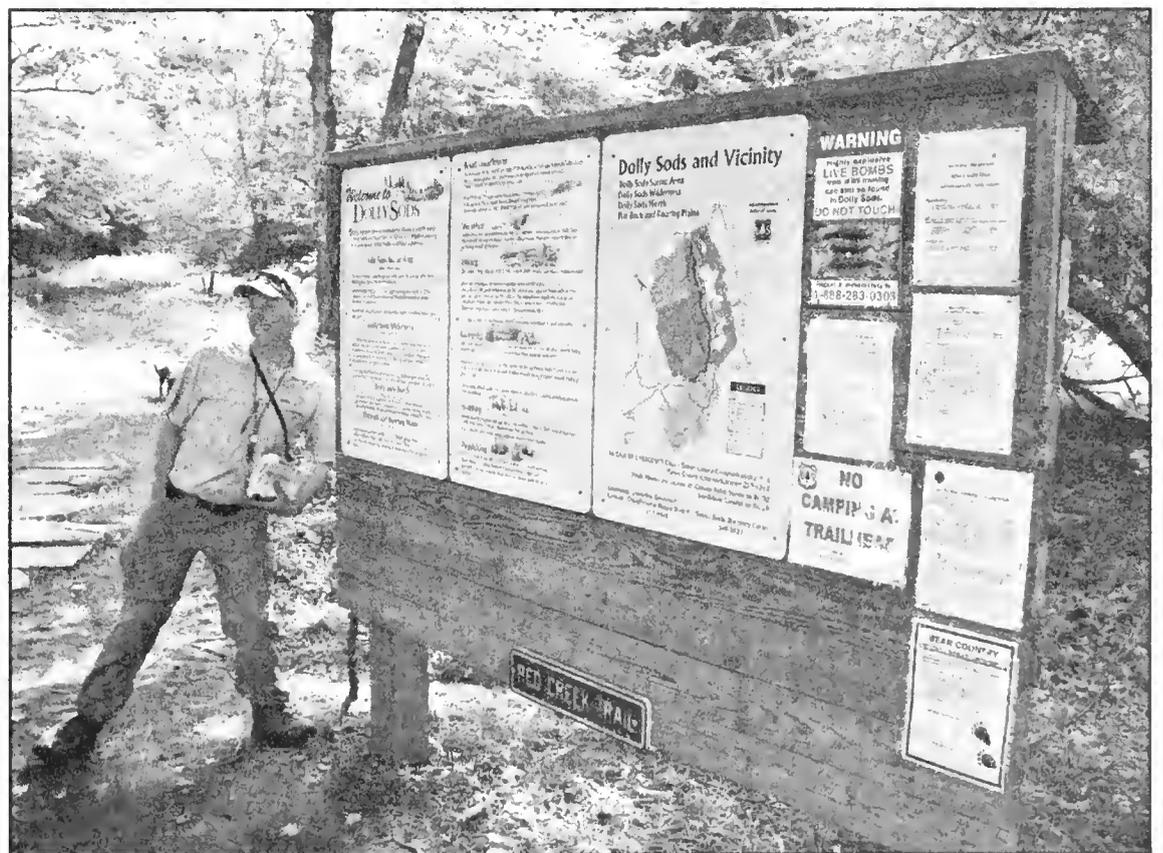
Our last stop was at a seep along Back Hollow Slope where we entered into an intense discussion about the differences between southern and northern lady fern. It has to do with pointed toes, and no hairs on her legs, and where the lady is broad.

Sunday was spent in Dolly Sods with Brian Streets, staff ecologist with the West Virginia Natural Heritage Program. We met at the Division of Natural Resources' Laneville cabin at the beginning of the Red Creek Trail, and from there drove north on a gravel road for much of the day. At the Dolly Sods Overlook, Brian explained that we were standing on the Allegheny Front, the highest massif in West Virginia, at the juncture of the intensely folded ridge and valley geologic strata and the gentler Alleghenies. He described the steep hike up North Fork Mountain to the east, with its reputed "best view in the state." He clearly piqued my interest to return and tackle the climb later. We saw a variety of heath shrubs including the minniebush (*Menziesia pilosa*), as well as wild holly (*Nemopanthus mucronatus*), both distinctive for their mucronate leaves.

The Northland Loop Trail to Alder Run Bog took us through a natural open peatland. Here we saw the native

sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia* var. *rotundifolia*) and the introduced *Drosera intermedia*. A first for me was oceanorus (*Zigadenus leimanthoides*, now *Stenanthium leimanthoides*), growing among vast stands of lushly blooming mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*). I was dazzled. We also saw a small, rare pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*) community at the edge of the bog. Some of the West Virginia members are active in the Brooks Bird Club, and after lunch, they took us to a banding site where they explained their protocols for netting and banding birds beginning in mid-August. We continued our drive north in the rain and by the time we got to the open heathland of Bear Rocks, the rain had stopped, and the wind had picked up. It was fitting weather to cap our day. When Thomas Lewis surveyed this area in 1743, he noted the cranberry bog and the ridgetop free of timber. Something is keeping this bald open and the shrubs low. The wind may well play a role. We climbed over rocks to great views to the north and east and descended to go our separate ways, exchanging addresses and vowing to join the West Virginia enthusiasts again. And, in fact, VNPS is already planning an extended field trip to West Virginia in the summer of 2014.

Marjorie Prochaska, Piedmont Chapter



Trip leader Brian Streets at the Black Creek Trail at Dolly Sods, West Virginia. (All photos by Carol Hammer)

• SKIN IRRITATION

(Continued from page 3)

actually made the thing itch more as I recall. There are some products that if applied soon after contact may help prevent the outbreak of the rash but you need to be aware that you have been exposed.

The icing on the cake came during one Christmas season at Ginter. Gardenfest of Lights they call it, a time of the winter solstice when the trees are bare and the days at their shortest. In early November the horticultural staff would be pressed into arts and crafts duty to turn out the hallmark botanically-inspired holiday decorations that Richmonders have come to know and expect; dried plants, fresh pine, holly all being used to adorn the visitors center, the Japanese Tea House, and Bloemendaal House. Each gardener is given a specific area to decorate and competition for the best dried flowers, branches and twigs becomes fierce. The coveted bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*), with its lovely two-tone orange berries having long been claimed by other staff members, veterans of the holiday decoration brigade, I went on the hunt for something new to use in some ikebana-inspired table decorations I was putting together for the Japanese Tea House that year.

In a moment of clearly artistic insanity, I came across some unusual gray berries hanging in clusters from trees down by the lake. "Well that's something new," I thought, so I gathered up a bunch and set myself to making the ikebana arrangements. I'll give the veterans a run for their money this year and the arrangements were indeed, interesting but well, you know, hey, it was winter, no leaves to be seen and I'd never actually intentionally gotten close enough to *Toxicodendron radicans* to really examine the berries. This time it wasn't another tube of cortisone cream but a course of cortisone tablets from the doctor! Very amusing for the horticultural staff. By this time I had established a fairly firm reputation as *Mr. Native Plant* around the garden. I never heard how that all went over in the Tea House. I suppose people aren't meant to touch the decorations anyway.



New place of employment (left), but the same old itch for Michael Sawyer. This time it is cashew (Semecarpus australiensis Engl.) causing the problem. (Photos by Michael Sawyer)

In 2002 I left Ginter to take up a position as senior horticulturist with the Hortus Botanicus Amsterdam. Finally, 4,000 miles and an ocean away I thought, at least I won't have any more poison ivy to contend with or so you would think. Europeans are avid collectors; they have a long history of scouring the earth looking for new discoveries, botanic and otherwise, and there it was, in one of the overly manicured display beds, a large, six-foot-high shrubby specimen of *Toxicodendron radicans*! Naturally, it was right in the middle of my area of the garden! Thankfully, there was an older volunteer, a Dutch woman of exceptional intestinal fortitude, who said that she had been in the area many times and had never been affected by the plant. Well maybe it was true, that they, the Dutch, having not been exposed to the plant previously had not developed the same sensitivity to it? Or could it be that in fact, 15 to 30 percent of the population really suffers no effect from the plant? So I sent Inge in to tame the beast when it started to encroach on our display of delicate spring-flowering galanthus. Inge had survived the Nazi occupation of The Netherlands and the devastating 1953 Flood that breached the dikes in the south so I figured she could take on the poison ivy. And indeed she emerged, every time, unscathed.

But now here, even further away from Virginia, working for Yuruga (Australian) Native Plant Nursery in tropical Queensland and still, there they

were, exactly the same oozing red blisters but how, surely it couldn't be... POISON IVY, here? I thought back, what had I been doing, what plants had we been working with the last days that may have set this off? I asked Fiona, a compact, resilient little woman, raised on a cattle farm, never without her signature cowboy hat, what could it be? We had all been packing a shipment of native trees destined for a rainforest revegetation project in the Daintree a few days earlier. Fiona was in charge of our native plant propagation and production, "Oh yeah," she said, "I've seen that before, that'd be *Semecarpus australiensis*—native cashew. The whole thing is poisonous you know, you're not meant to touch it."

"Well no, Fiona, actually I didn't know that."

Another web search later and again courtesy of Wikipedia, I found this information: "People who are sensitive to poison ivy can also experience a similar rash from mangoes. Mangoes are in the same family (Anacardiaceae) as poison ivy; the sap of the mango tree and skin of mangoes have a chemical compound similar to urushiol. A related allergenic compound is present in the raw shells of cashews..."

There it was, cashews. Who knew? I guess you never stop learning.

Michael Sawyer, former first vice president of VNPS, now lives and works in tropical north Queensland, Australia, as a researcher in the new crop development unit of Clonal Solutions Australia, a division of Yuruga Native Plant Nursery.

Nicky Staunton sends out 'thanks' for opportunities

Recently a copy of the *Flora of Virginia* was presented to the Simpson Library of the University of Mary Washington in my honor. Giving it the reunion week of my 1953 graduating class is grand timing. I am grateful and thank each of you for this honor.

The Prince William Wildflower Society, Piedmont, Shenandoah, and South Hampton Roads Chapter and Marion Lobstein have also given copies of the *Flora* in my honor. I do appreciate the honor and thank you.

VNPS chapters have been very generous placing volumes of the *Flora* in schools, and nature centers, also. Each *Flora* will encourage students of botany to know Virginia's rich biodiversity and will help to fulfill the VNPS mission to learn, educate and protect Virginia's native plants and communities.

Virginia Native Plant Society members and our native plants have been my companions for 31 years and every day has provided new gifts.

VNPS friendships over the years have provided me special botanical experiences. One memorable event occurred on a VNPS trip to False Cape State Park with Vickie Shufer on an introduction to wild plant foraging when an unidentified plant challenged us to learn its name. Using keys of flora manuals of the northeast did not match our plant. Several weeks later, remembering we were on the North Carolina-Virginia

state line, I hauled out *Manual of North Carolina Flora* that contained its description, *Bartonia verna*, last reported in the 1700s by Frederick Pursch. A drawing of it included in our *Bulletin* spurred Allen Belden to contact me to share that revelation. Johnny Townsend went to False Cape and documented the colonies of *Bartonia verna* living there. Now, I'm alert for any plant I do not know and have my *Flora of Virginia* to shorten my search.

I've served as the Virginia Native Plant Society representative on the original Floral of Virginia Project Foundation Board since 2001. Leading our members to support this once-in-a-lifetime publication 250 years after Virginia's first, *Flora Virginica*, has been a distinct honor and pleasure. I somewhat regret listening to the wise side of my brain, but have resigned my VNPS directorship on the FOVPF board and at the same time, am happy to announce that our VNPS immediate past- (See *Memories*, page 8)



VNPS President Nancy Vehrs, Past VNPS President Sally Anderson, and Flora editor Bland Crowder present a copy of the *Flora of Virginia* to Mary Washington University Simpson Library reference librarian in honor of Nicky Staunton.

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 The deadline for the next issue is **October 15, 2013.**

• Memories

(Continued from page 7)

president, Sally Anderson, will carry that "torch" in the future as the *Flora* is digitized, reprinted and a second edition prepared. Bland Crowder will be the executive director of the *Flora's* future. More will be announced soon.

A biology class with Miss Kemp in high school introduced me to botany. Later in the 1980s Marion Lobstein's classes strengthened that knowledge where I learned to identify a plant by using a key. Both women have brought me to enjoyment of identifying and illustrating our native plants.

Helping those who walk by plants with unseeing eyes, to actually look at them, appreciate them, love them and want to protect them in the natural world is a mission never completed. New generations keep coming onto botanical paths.

I appreciate your honoring me for doing what I love to do, which is advocate for our native plants and their space on earth.

Nicky Staunton
VNPS 1st Vice President

• Pocahontas

(Continued from page 4)

Virginia spiderwort (*Tradescatia virginiana*) with flowers usually lavender but occasionally blue.

An easy-to-miss member of the park's flora is more physiologically interesting than showy. Various called elephant's foot or more bizarrely devil's grandmother, *Elephantopus tomentosus*, places its densely hairy and felt-like leaves so close to the ground that it inhabits a ground zone rich in carbon dioxide and humidity. This strategy allows it to keep its stomata open to take up a relatively rich and continuous supply of carbon dioxide for photosynthesis while losing very little water.

Where canopy densities are higher and light levels on the forest floor consequently lower, few if any herbs are found. These habitats are better opportunities for vines. Yes, the typical vine one may think of, poison ivy, is there along with one confused for poison ivy, Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) but wider wandering may lead you to natural barbed wire fences, briars such as laurel leaved

green brier (*Smilax laurifolia*) and sawbrier (*Smilax glauca*). Then there is the weak and unarmed vine, whose relatives have great horticultural interest but here are so small as to be overlooked, yellow passion vine (*Passiflora lutea*). I have not, as yet, found one showing its classically intricate but tiny flowers.

While the park has some large recreational lakes, smaller wetlands are strewn throughout. While pushing through vegetation I came to one tiny wetland completely encircled by lizard's tail (*Sururus cernuus*). I felt lucky to find the lizard's tail in flower. Other wetland margins were enveloped in shade loving but non-flowering rushes and sedges.

The treks that led me to this subset of the park's flora took hours to accomplish yet revealed so little. But other callings took my time and eventually took me away. It's rewarding to know that the park is still there awaiting my return.

Stephen Johnson is a freelance plant ecologist originally from Virginia and now living in Iowa. He enjoys sharing plant memories from the Old Dominion with his fellow VNPSers.

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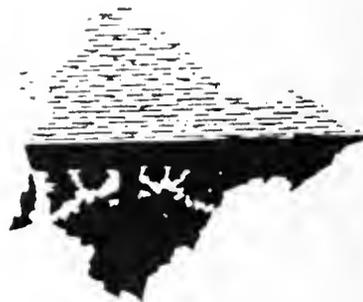


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