

Northern Neck Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

NN Native Plant News

Fall 2010, Volume 7, No. 3

Native

Plant

SALE

Saturday

SEPT. 11

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Kosteleskya virginica, seashore mallow

Joan Hattersley (artwork)

Message from the President

Hello Everyone!

WHEW! I NEED NOT TELL YOU how rough this summer has been on our gardens. Even native plant gardens have suffered from the heat, hot wind, and insufficient rain. This weather has also affected the plants for our big plant sale, which will take place on Saturday, September 11, starting at 9 a.m. in Wicomico Church.

Those of you who have been caring for potted plants for the sale know how hard it has been to keep them from drying out. They may not look their best. Sometimes one wants to give up. But take heart! Any potted plant which survives this summer, no matter how raggedy or stunted it may look, is one tough plant that will be depended on to grow well in the landscape or garden with no pampering once past its first year after planting. We will just have to convince the public who will attend the sale of their worth.

On another note, I have been botanizing on a trail in Chilton Woods this spring and summer. When the crested yellow orchid (*Platanthera cristata*) tried to bloom in mid July, only a few plants produced healthy flowers. Too many of the others simply turned brown and died. At the end of July, when we botanized again there, several perennials such as joe-pye weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*) had flowers or flowerheads half the size of healthy plants. Hopefully we will never see another summer like this. With that in mind, I will now close off and water my potted oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) which have remained small because of the heat.

Marie F. Minor



Trees and Shrubs Featured at Plant Sale

As you already know, our annual plant sale will take place, rain or shine, on the front lawn of the Wicomico Parish Church Thrift Shop on Saturday, September 11, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

This year more trees and shrubs will be offered for sale than ever before! "We will have our usual variety of perennials, but we are excited about bringing along many more native trees and shrubs this year," said Judy Lang. "I'm hoping that this sale will increase awareness of the intrinsic beauty of so many of our larger native plants."

In addition to the trees and shrubs, buyers at our only major annual fund-raiser will find a variety of native ferns, grasses, flowers and vines, all carefully marked for shade or sunny planting. Once again, the local boy scout troop will be on hand to help buyers carry away their purchases.

Another benefit of this sale is the availability of our native plant experts to provide advice on selections and try to give names to plants brought for identification by the public. There will also be native plant books for sale.

Remember: no early sales before 9 a.m., and also that we need you, our members, to come help interact with the public and to purchase a few plants. For more information, contact Judy Lang at klang@riposi.net or (804) 453-6605.

text: Jay Walker; potting party photo: Judy Lang



September Field Outing

Paula Boundy's Fall Garden in Hills Quarters
Thursday, Sep. 23, 10:00 a.m.
VNPS Members Only



Blandy Farm

ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, Sally Anderson, state VNPS president, led a walk through a managed meadow being studied at the State Arboretum of Virginia. Nick and I decided to go because we have twice driven by the Arboretum, and we concluded that unless we made it a destination we would never actually turn into the entrance. The Arboretum is on Route 50 in Clark County, about a three-hour drive from downtown Mollusk (a fact I know you will find helpful). Keep going and you will be in Winchester, should that help you understand where it is geographically.

The Arboretum is located within the 700-acre Blandy Experimental Farm, a University of Virginia research center. There are areas dedicated to various species of trees, plants, herbs, flowers, research and a native plant trail. It is a big place close to the Shenandoah mountains, a topography that contains rocks. Big rocks. Particularly noticeable if you live on the rock-free Northern Neck and definitely worth a visit.

The meadow that Sally led us through was noticeably large on a hot day, being mostly below the line of mountain breezes. Nonetheless, it was very interesting, being either a restoration or a creation, having been carved out of previously woody and overgrown land. After clearing, the land was planted with native plants, grasses, and wildflowers. Parts of it are mowed and parts are burned every third year if the wind allows. Native grasses included big blue stem, purple top, and switch grass. Since most of these natives are bunch grasses (new factoid for me), the meadow provides habitat for quail. Plants that were in bloom included New York aster, lots of button bush, joe-pye weed, cardinal flower, and various yellow composites, names forgotten. Invasives, intruding on their own, included *Ailanthus* and buckthorn—a plant we have not yet encountered on the Northern Neck. About twenty-five hardy native plant people came for the walk. If Sally does it again, you should definitely consider going.

text: Jackie Ferriter, girl guide; photo: Nick Ferriter

The Holly in the Cherry



On my lot is a large native cherry tree (*Prunus serotina*) which, for several years had a small limb of American holly (*Ilex opaca*) growing out of its trunk about eight inches up from the ground. The holly limb grew from a hole that had rotted in the trunk of the cherry after a small branch had been cut off. Somehow, a holly seed had gotten into the hole where it sprouted, grew, and grafted itself into the cherry tree. I observed the holly limb growing from the cherry trunk for several years. It produced normally shaped, small holly leaves; no berries. Then in 2009 it died; the leaves dried and fell off; the limb remained attached, dead.

Now a new limb with new leaves is sprouting at the base of the old! To me, this is quite an oddity and I wonder if any member can report a similar happening.

Here is a recent photo. Note the old dried small limb (twig) with new growth (white arrow) coming from its base at the cherry trunk. *text and photo: Dan Bashore*

Meditation on the White Wood Aster (*Euphorbia divaricata*)

From: Jackieef@aol.com

Date: June 11, 2010 4:29:09 PM EDT

To: jlang@riposi.net

Subject: Re: your white wood aster

My dear. My white wood asters are taking over the world. I think we have potted one so far, but I just got myself some fancy diggers from Lee Valley that I intend to use to dig up and separate the ones that are burying my ferns and my non-native lenten roses which a friend gave me and which have taken three years to turn into lovely shade-loving, non-native plants scattered among my devouring wood aster. Can't answer the "how many" question (for the plant sale) until I have time to dig on a day that isn't sweltering. It could be thousands, but I lack that much stamina. *Jackie*



ONE OF THE FLOWERS THAT WILL BE available at our plant sale in September is the white wood aster, a plant that appears to have had a number of Latin names, the most recent of which appears above. I purchased this plant as a "left over" at one of our early plant sales, it having been characterized by Anne Olsen as "loves dry shade." Accordingly, I planted it in what I deemed to be just that, and left it to its own devices, a technique I seem to employ routinely and which I do not recommend to those of you who actually plan their

landscapes in hopes of achieving the perfect *feng shui* garden.

Most of you who read this newsletter are familiar with plants we refer to as "invasive," a term that we do not generally view as desirable, being commonly applied to non-native plants. Well, I would have to say that, given the right dry shady conditions, this native plant could be viewed as such. This is not necessarily a bad thing as, to my mind, it is rather attractive, putting out sprays of small white flowers in late August. Although it is not evergreen, it keeps its leaves through the winter and the brown stems are quite attractive if a bit out of control.

I now have to work to keep this plant in bounds, not a terribly difficult job if you can tolerate treating an actual native flower as a weed and pulling it, weed-whacking it, or potting it for sale.

I am also trying it on our bank in hopes of finding it useful as an erosion control device. This summer's drought has been extraordinary and, although my transplants are failing to thrive, they have not all died. I shall continue the experiment.

BUY SOME AT THE SALE!

text: Jackie Ferriter; photo Nick Ferriter



Orchids at the King Carter Golf Course/Hills Quarter Bluebird Trail

Did you realize that Virginia is home to quite a few native orchids? Hundreds, probably. I could not find a good estimate of how many there are. A dozen or more of the native orchids are located in the Northern Neck. Last week, Earline (Walker) and I (re-)found one of the native orchids in the circle at the end of Middle Gate Road. They are in bloom, even as we speak. This one is *Isotria verticillata*, large whorled pogonia. It is not considered rare, but this is the only place I have seen them on the Northern Neck. There are about 15-20 plants in this colony.

Text and photos: Tom Teeples, April 19, 2010



Did You Know?

Mapping Effort (near New York City) Hopes to Save Dozens of Native Plants

American colonists once watched for the spring bloom of the **Nantucket shadbush** (*Amelanchier nantucketensis*), a sign that it was warm enough to bury the winter's dead. Today, that shadbush and dozens of other flora native to the New York region face extinction, a result of urban development and the encroachment of invasive plants from foreign lands, scientists from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden report.

Hoping to revive the plants, the scientists recently completed a 20-year project mapping of species in every county within a 50-mile radius of New York, providing detailed information on the health of more than 15,000 native and nonnative species.

from New York Times, April 3, 2010

Look for shadbush, and dozens of other native trees, shrubs, ferns, grasses, perennials and even some vines at our September 11th Native Plant Sale!

Virginia's Mapping Effort

To keep up-to-date on which native plants are known to have occurred historically in which counties of Virginia, consult the Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora (http://www.biol.vt.edu/digital_atlas/) from which the following description was taken:

“The Digital Atlas of the Virginia is very much a work-in-progress. The digital format will allow for continual updating of distributional records ; but more than this, numerous issues regarding taxonomy and nomenclature remain unresolved and subject to change. The digital atlas includes nearly 700 taxa not included in *Atlas of the Virginia Flora, 3rd Ed.* While many of these could easily be mapped, many others could not without revisiting the original herbarium specimens from which the original record was derived. With Virginia's herbarium resources being so widely scattered, this endeavor will go on for years. In the meantime, some maps will be blank while others will be incomplete. New information will be added as it becomes available.”



Shadbush after being repotted for our annual plant sale *photo: Nick Ferriter*

Amelanchier, also known as **shadbush**, **serviceberry**, **sarvisberry**, **juneberry**, **saskatoon**, **shadblow**, **shadwood**, **sugarplum**, **chuckley pear**, and **wild-plum**, is a genus of about 20 species of shrubs and small deciduous trees in the Rosaceae (Rose family).

The genus is native to temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere, growing primarily in early successional habitats. It is most diverse taxonomically in North America, especially in the northern United States and in Canada, and is native to every state of the United States except Hawaii. Two species also occur in Asia, and one in Europe. These plants are valued horticulturally, and their fruits are important to wildlife.

The taxonomy of shadbushes has long perplexed botanists, horticulturalists, and others. Major sources of complexity are the occurrence of apomixis (asexual seed production), polyploidy (having more than two set of chromosomes in a cell—which is common in plants) and hybridization (crosses between different subspecies or different species).

Adapted from Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amelanchier>

Nick Ferriter's Potting Efforts



Nick Ferriter (*white hat above and far left*) located many of the shrubs and trees for our plant sale in September, and the Ferriters hosted two potting parties for our members. Jeff Wainscott mixed untold wheelbarrows full of rich potting soil, here being used to transplant trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*).

text and photos: Judy Lang

What They're Writing in...

...Virginia



Close-up of the bloom of a *Uvularia perfoliata* seen during the Spring Ephemerals Walk at Hickory Hollow Natural Area Preserve.

photo: Carol Hammer

Yesterday's Hickory Hollow walk was spectacular! We had over 30 participants and all were enthusiastic and happy. I heard many comments about how pleased people were that we are having Saturday outings. Tom (Teeples) and Ellis (Squires) made us proud with their expertise and ability to interpret, and Cabin Swamp shared its glorious offerings with all. Sandy Spencer and Paul Billings were a welcome addition to our walk.

I won't try to list all the plants, but the delicate, lemony-colored blooming perfoliate bellwort, *Uvularia perfoliata* was a first for me and Judy L., and we will not soon forget it!

Earline Walker, April 18, 2010

October Field Outings

Mature Hardwood Forest
Voorhees Nature Preserve
Saturday, October 2,
10:00 a.m.

Fall Mushroom Walk
Chilton Woods State Forest
Saturday, October 23,
10:00 a.m.

Public Welcome

...American Society of Botanical Artists' Website

Losing Paradise? *Endangered Plants Here and Around the World* is a project of The American Society of Botanical Artists. At the convergence of art, science, conservation, and education, the exhibition includes 44 works of botanical art portraying endangered plants in a variety of media.

After opening at the Chicago Botanic Garden last January, and then traveling to the New York Botanic Garden, the exhibition will be on display at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History from August 14 - December 10th. **Anyone traveling to the DC area during that interval is encouraged to check out these hauntingly beautiful depictions of plants at risk of extinction.**

<http://huntbot.andrew.cmu.edu/ASBA/ASBA-Losing.html>

...and New York

A GARDEN FIT FOR BIRDS Eat local. That's the theory behind the Bedford Audubon Society's bird-friendly vegetable garden, planted first in 2009 and doubled in size to 2,400 square feet this year. **"If we can grow our own food and, of course, do it without pesticides, it may be the most practical thing people can do to combat climate change,"** says Jim Nordgren, executive director of the chapter, located in Katonah, New York. Gardeners use natural repellents (think smelly herbs) and companion plantings, where, for example, a corn stalk acts as structural support for nearby beans. They plant dill, hyssop, and other pollinator attractors, and teach what Nordgren calls "beneficial borders," using mint and wormwood to deter plant eaters. Last year the garden attracted 14 pairs of nesting birds and generated more than 200 pounds of produce for the local food bank. "It's not about growing as much as we can," Nordgren says. "It's about learning the process."

Michele Wilson, *Audubon Magazine*, July-August 2010



Pesticide-free, rain-water nourished vegetables growing in a Northern Neck garden. photo: Judy Lang

FERNS – A Native Plant Answer to Hostas

AS A CHILD I PLAYED ALONG A CREEK that flowed through the forest behind our home. Among the plants that I remember growing along its bank is the Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), which is somewhat coarse in appearance but possesses the virtue of being evergreen!

Although in lore the Christmas fern was used by the colonists for holiday greens, nowadays we let it be in favor of other evergreens. As it is very versatile in cultivation, however, I have introduced it into my ‘woodland’ garden where it receives partial shade and water only if the weather is droughty.

In the Chilton Woods State Forest here on the Northern Neck, the predominant understory of the loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) section is Christmas fern. This location indicates its preference for part shade and acidic soil. I find the view there to be calming and inspiring, with the ferns growing below the towering pines amongst the pine-needle mulch.

Christmas fern also grows under hardwood trees, and serves to catch their leaves for a natural mulch. If the trees are spaced out enough to avoid too much root competition, many native flora, such as Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), may be grown among or beneath the Christmas fern, especially if there is sufficient leaf mulch to hold moisture.



From: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database, after Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. Vol. 1: 11.

One of my favorites, the sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*; see above) is a plant with lovely leaves that also likes shady conditions with consistent moisture. (I have it near a rain barrel that has a slow leak despite my amateur plumbing attempts to plug it.) In favorable conditions, this fern will spread to create the sublime mass planting that has so much impact—but I’m still waiting to see if my conditions meet its needs.

Around the lot where I presently reside, there is a predominance of the large (to 5 ft. tall), royal fern (*Osmunda regalis* var. *spectabilis*) which is apparently able to take more sun, especially if there is sufficient moisture—again acidic leaf mulch is best to provide moisture retention. I have also been able to transplant some to my ‘woodland’ garden. The royal fern is particularly beautiful in the spring when the fiddleheads make their appearance, and then is interesting later when the reproductive fronds appear.

Another beautiful deciduous fern is the cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*) with its fertile fronds that are cat-tail like and cinnamon in color during summer. This fern is more “typical” in that it prefers some shade and wet to somewhat dry soils.

The last fern that I’ve introduced is the asplenium, or southern, lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina asplenoides*) for its lighter, lacier look is a nice contrast to the Christmas fern. I must admit I’m having trouble getting it to thrive in its shady location with moisture somewhat uneven and perhaps experiencing root competition from my American holly (*Ilex opaca*). I’m still in the process of getting enough leaf mould to lighten and enhance the soil, and combating the vole!

Next issue will feature, “How to create a garden using these ferns!”

Paula Boundy, Horticulture Chair

Simple “Gardening for a Drought” Suggestions

“We can reduce the water needs of our gardens by using drought-tolerant (native) plants. But we can also adopt the following elements of good garden planning and landscaping:

Plant in the spring and fall, giving plants a chance to get established and expand their root systems before the hottest weather and/or drought.

Water in the early morning or evening to avoid direct water loss via evaporation and preferably using alternative water sources.

Water slowly and by hand or with a soaker hose to avoid water interception by plant surfaces (a lot of water is lost this way when a sprinkler is used). Hand watering allows for closer monitoring of plants and their needs and is a very efficient method of water delivery.

Water deeply to encourage deep healthy root systems. When plants are watered shallowly, their roots develop near the soil surface. Since this zones dries out more quickly, these plants will require more frequent watering to maintain their health.

Apply mulch to help keep roots cool and moist once your plant beds are damp.

Seek better sources of water. One alternative is to store and use rainwater in rain barrels around your home...Some other sources to explore are air conditioner condensation, water from a dehumidifier, water captured while waiting for the shower to warm, or water collected from hand dishwashing.” From *Gardening for a Drought: North Carolina Native Plants to the Rescue*. North Carolina Botanical Garden.

download at <http://ncbg.unc.edu/plants-and-gardening/>

Education

Education and Outreach has had a busy spring and summer, and is planning to continue efforts to reach the Northern Neck community as often as possible this fall with an emphasis on engaging children.

Our kickoff exhibit was at the Master Gardeners' Symposium in March. In April we went to the Northumberland High School PAES plant sale followed in May with three events: a Native Plant Talk at the Wilna Tract of the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge; the RRVNWR's Hutchinson Tract's Open House; and the Menokin Music Festival. In early June we exhibited at the KIWS Rotary Kayak Festival. Finally, July 31st found us at the Invasive Species Workshop at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

Our upcoming calendar for the fall currently includes:

- Sept 11- Native Plant Sale at Wicomico Church from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. and Edwardsville Festival from 1-4 p.m.
- Sept 12 Boots, Bids and BBQ from 3-6 p.m.

We have worked hard to organize our materials so they are easier to transfer and display, and we encourage members to join our core exhibitors: Nick Ferriter, Carol Hammer, Marcia Hanson, Judy Lang, Marie Minor and Earline Walker in this fun and important outreach mission. Definitely check in at our table when you attend any of these events and see us in action!

To help, please contact:

Tanya Bohlke at tmbohlke@yahoo.com or (804) 435-8824 or Nancy Garvey at nangarvey@hotmail.com or (804) 436-8401

Welcome to Our Newest Member!

Frank Roberts, Kinsale

Nasty Invaders

While our Education and Outreach exhibitors (see left) were engaged with the public attending the well-attended Invasive Species Workshop on July 31st, I was designing this issue of your newsletter and, like so many other days this summer, I was pulling some highly invasive grasses from the so-called "wildflower meadow" that I'm trying to establish in the "field of weeds" in our front yard.



Japanese (J.) stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*, right above) has been around since last year; this summer a second invader has made its first appearance (at least that I've noticed). It has a more delicate construction than the J. stiltgrass and its leaves are strikingly different—shorter, wider and with many parallel veins (left above). Their habitats overlap, but my newest invasive seems to prefer shade. We're pretty sure we also saw it, along with J. stiltgrass, on the Turkey Neck Trail in Westmoreland State Park when we walked Paul Billings in June. And Nick Ferriter, Marie Minor and Tom Teeples found some in Chilton Woods in late July.

On the basis of some emailed photos, DCR's Johnny Townsend identified menace No. 2 as small carpgrass (*Arthraxon hispidus*), noting: "And yes it is a nasty invader, but not as bad as *Microstegium*." As *A. hispidus* is widely distributed in Virginia, but not recorded in the *Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora* as occurring here in Northumberland County, I'm pressing some plants to send to Virginia Tech for verification.

Text and photo: Judy Lang

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- Ex-President.....Nick Ferriter
 Member at Large Sally Caskie

Membership Fees

- Individual:** \$30
Family: \$40
Secondary: \$5 (goes to another chapter)

Send your check to:

VNPS Membership Chair
 Blandy Experimental Farm
 400 Blandy Lane, Unit 2
 Boyce, VA 22602

In the lower left hand corner of your check add:

"Membership, Northern Neck Chapter"

All memberships are good for one year from the month you join.
 The state office of VNPS will send you a renewal reminder.

See upper right hand corner of address label for renewal date.

Please advise us if our records are incorrect.

All but \$5.00 of any membership is tax deductible.

Please Help Us Keep in Touch with You!

Whenever your email address, phone number or postal address changes, please contact Sandra Ehlert.

Whenever you can, please carpool to our field outings and other activities.

NN Chapter of the VNPS Outings and Meetings Calendar

All Saturday Field Outings are open to the public.

Sep.11, Sat..	9:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Wicomico Parish Church Thrift Shop– <i>Native Plant Sale.</i>
Sep. 16, Thur.	Noon. Wicomico Parish Church Chapter Meeting– <i>Gardening For Wildlife.</i> Paula Boundy, <i>Virginia Master Naturalist.</i>
Sep. 23, Thur.	10:00 a.m. <i>Paula Boundy's Fall Garden.</i> Hills Quarters. Paula Boundy (leader). VNPS members only.
Oct. 2, Sat.	10:00 a.m. <i>Fruits, Nuts, Berries and Fall Foliage Walk in a Mature Hardwood Forest.</i> Voorhees Nature Preserve. Paula Boundy (leader).
Oct. 21, Thur.	Noon. Wicomico Parish Church– <i>Annual General Meeting and Activities Slide Show.</i> Lunch provided by the Board.
Oct. 23, Sat.	10:00 a.m. <i>Fall Mushroom Walk.</i> Chilton Woods State Forest. Tom Teeples (leader, <i>Virginia Master Naturalist</i>).
Nov.18 Thur.	Noon. Wicomico Parish Church Chapter Meeting– <i>Numbers in Nature.</i> Tom Teeples.

Expect more! Additional outings will be announced to our members via email. Driving directions will be emailed to members in the week before each outing. **For more information, contact:**
Joan Hattersley at hattersley4@gmail.com or 529-5467

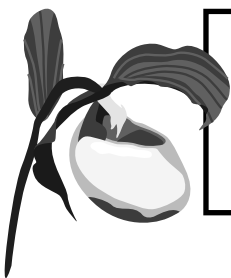
Marie Minor's Botanical Surveys in Chilton Woods

All VNPS members are welcome to walk with Marie as she botanizes the Doghouse Trail at Chilton Woods State Forest.

Bring water, bug spray when needed and, if you wish, binoculars.

Dates: Sept 8 and 22
Time: 10:00 a.m.
All rain dates will be on the following Wednesdays.

For information on where to meet, contact Marie at:
(804) 925-5950 or
mfminor@verizon.net



Northern Neck Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 158
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Note expiration date.
Please renew as needed if record is correct, or contact us if incorrect..