

Northern Neck Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

President's January 2024 Native Notes

Betsy Washington

Happy Winter Solstice, Holidays, and New Year!

I want to thank everyone for the wonderful turn out and the great enthusiasm at our Annual Meeting and Election in November. We all enjoyed a wonderful presentation - "Native Plants in a Public Landscape" by member, Matt Little, resident Horticulturalist at Tides Inn in Irvington. Matt discussed the challenges, rewards, and lessons learned from his career working with native plants in public landscapes. What a wonderful presentation as illustrated by the many, many enthusiastic questions from the audience afterwards. **Thank you, Matt!** And thank you Susan Titus for the delectable refreshments.



Election News! Welcome New Board of Director Officers and Members

I want to extend a very warm welcome to our new Chapter Board of Director Officers: Kevin Howe, Vice President; Porter Washington, Recording Secretary; and Anne Williams, Treasurer. I also want to welcome new Board member Barb Jones who will be serving as Co-chair of the Plant Sale Committee. And, of course, a huge thanks goes to all of the returning Board Members as listed below, for their dedication, passion, and hard work over many years. I look forward to another two years working with everyone to spread the word about our fantastic Northern Neck Native Plants to even more audiences.

And a **very special thank you to Paula Boundy** and Andy Bailey, who are stepping down from their current role on the Board. Paula has capably served as Treasurer for many years and will continue to act as advisor to our new Treasurer, Anne Williams, to insure a smooth transition. Paula has served in many capacities in our Chapter over the years including as Past President so we are fortunate that Paula will continue on the Board as an At Large Director. Andy Bailey is also stepping down as a Director at Large for a 'break year' but assures us he will be back "on Board" in the near future and will remain engaged and active in the interim! Andy has been invaluable in creating and maintaining an enhanced database of the plants being grown for our Plant Sale (a challenging and daunting task) and for Chairing the Committee to review/update our Bylaws. Andy has given us a template and many suggestions to discuss this coming year as we continue the process!

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Check out the List of Officers and Directors below and the various Committees they chair. And remember, we always need members for our committees and welcome all volunteers!

OFFICERS – Executive Committee

- President: Betsy Washington
- Vice President: Kevin Howe
- Recording Secretary: Porter Washington
- Treasurer: Ann Williams
- Corresponding Secretary: Ted Munns

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Past President: Nancy Garvey
- Horticulture/Conservation Chair: Betsy Washington
- Program/Field Trip Chair: Kevin Howe
- Hospitality Chair: Susan Titus
- Membership Chair: Ellen Clarke
- Demonstration Garden Chair: Bonita Russell
- Plant Sale Co-Chair: Barb Jones
- Plant Sale Co-Chair: Carol Martin
- Plant Sale Co-Chair: Betsy Washington
- Plant Sale Co-Chair: Pat Lust
- Webmaster: Kyle Langford
- At Large Directors:
 - Linda Gale, Outreach
 - Jeff Wainscott (Boys & Girds Club Liaison)
 - Paula Boundy
 - Pat Lust
 - Judy Lang

Raffle and Quiz: Join the Fun!

To add a little spice and floral bounty to the Annual Meeting we held a raffle and quiz for several memorable items. THIS WILL CONTINUE AT FUTURE MEETINGS & FILED TRIPS SO PLEASE JOIN US WHEN YOU CAN. The quiz question was: **How many Orchids are found in the Northern Neck? The correct answer is 21 species!** Hickory Hollow NAP hosts 12 species of orchids, two of which are globally rare, and Chilton Woods State Forest is home to 12 species. Just this past summer we added a new species to our Northern Neck count, the **Yellow Fringed Orchid, *Platanthera ciliaris***, which in fact is a new record for the entire Coastal Plain of Virginia!!!

Lucky or savvy members who came closest to the correct number went home with a **beautiful Bloodroot plant** from our member, Lucy Martin's stunning garden. We also gave away copies of Doug Tallamy's book, "*The Nature of Oaks*" and "*Nature's Best Hope*". Did you know that Oaks support more Moth and Butterfly caterpillars than any other plant? As Tallamy says, "the long-lived and mighty Oaks deliver more ecosystem services than any other tree genus ... from sequestering carbon in their tissues, roots, and into the soils to preventing erosion and encouraging infiltration of rainfall and stormwater, plus providing habitat for hundreds of species that live and depend on the leaf litter that also replenishes the soil cycle." In the mid-Atlantic Tallamy reports that Oaks support 557 caterpillar species, which are critical food for baby birds because the caterpillars are soft-bodies and full of protein. He adds, "oaks by far are the best plants to include at home if you want to support food webs." Planting natives in your own yard is "**Nature's Best Hope**"!

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Look forward to more fun and quizzes at upcoming meetings this year and hone your knowledge of the many amazing native plants in the Northern Neck and surrounds. If you want to donate a native plant-themed "gift" to the cause, please let me know!



Stunning Bloodroot in Lucy Martin's garden with Tiny Calligrapher Fly pollinator



Globally Rare Kentucky Lady Slipper Orchid found only in Hickory Hollow NAP within VA

Programs and Field Trips for 2024

Vice President (and VP for the state VNPS) Kevin Howe and I have been busy planning for upcoming Programs and Field Trips for Spring 2024. We are gathering a great line up of presenters and have tried to arrange a field trip each month. Please be aware that some dates are tentative, especially those with our early spring ephemerals which are somewhat dependent on weather for bloom dates.

The late February-early March field trip to see Bloodroot and other early spring ephemerals in bloom will be announced only a week or so beforehand so we can see them at their finest, but we do plan to go on a Saturday, probably March 2 to allow more members to attend. Please see the attached Schedule for information on locations and times of our programs. We will also send out detailed announcements and information each month. If you have any great field trip suggestions or would like to volunteer to lead a field trip, please contact Kevin or myself!

Notes on our General Meetings and Schedule: Our chapter typically does not have general meetings in December or January, nor during the summer months. However, we will have Board of Director meetings and/or Plant Sale meetings during most months and all members are welcome to attend. We are also planning some summer field trips....

Our general meetings and some field trips, in lieu of a meeting, are held on the third Thursday of each month (February – May and September – November). Meetings typically begin at noon with a Brown Bag Lunch, Light Refreshments and Social Time. The actual meeting and presentation will begin at about 12:30. I have reserved the Lancaster Community Library's large meeting room for our meetings this year unless otherwise specified on the schedule. As you can see, we will also have one or two evening Zoom meetings (February 15) to allow working members to join us and to accommodate speakers who can't take off work midday.

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Board of Directors Meetings: New this year, we have Board members who for one reason or another, cannot make in-person meetings. Therefore, we are scheduling our Board Meetings for the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm. They will be held via Zoom and all members of the Chapter are welcome to join. Look for monthly notices that will be sent to members at the beginning of each month.

Please also join us for our first Field Trip on January 1, New Year's Day to see Virginia's earliest flowering wildflower in bloom – our Skunk Cabbage, *Symplocarpus foetidus*. This is a joint field trip sponsored by our Chapter and the NN Audubon Society and it has been held for many years. We will meet at Hickory Hollow NAP at 2:00 pm and have a leisurely hike to Cabin Swamp to see the Skunk Cabbages. Learn how these intriguing plants manage to bloom and be pollinated even with snow on the ground and below freezing air temperatures.

Tentative Schedule of Meetings and Field Trips for Spring 2024

- January 1** **Field Trip:** New Year's Day walk to Cabin Swamp, Hickory Hollow NAP to see Virginia's earliest blooming wildflower 2 – 4pm.
- January 18** No program. First Board Meeting via Zoom, 7:00pm. Plant Sale meeting TBD.
- February 15** 7:00pm Zoom Program with Botanist Maeve Coker "*Native Plants and their Pollinators*".
- Feb/early Mar.** **Field Trip** to the new Heritage Park and Mascot (Middlesex Co.) for Bloodroot & more! TBA.
- March 21** Denise Greene – *The Best Native Plants for Various Growing Conditions and the Wildlife Benefits of Using Them*. Lancaster Community Library, Noon.
- April 18** Pat Lust – Program on *Habitat Gardening* (and separate Propagation Workshop for new members TBD) – Lancaster Community Library, Noon.
- Late April** **Field trip** to Rapp Refuge and Cat Point Creek – Tour new native gardens and plans for more and see amazing colonies of Pink Lady Slippers, Sundial Lupine, and more. Date TBD.
- May 16** Meeting and **Field Trip** to Hickory Hollow/Cabin Swamp to see Orchids and Spring Wildflowers in bloom. Look for updates.
- May - Aug.** We will hold monthly Plant Sale Meetings as well as several "Potting" Parties to propagate plants for the Plant Sale. Dates and Times TBD. Look for more information!
- Sept. TBD** Zoom Presentation by Betsy Washington on *Notable Plant Sale 'Gems' and Their Landscape Value* – This will be open to the public and held before the annual native plant sale.



Precocious Skunk Cabbages blooming in early January at Cabin Swamp