

Northern Neck Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

NN Native Plant News

Spring 2008, Volume 5, No. 2

Recent Field Outings:

what you missed if you didn't go!



January 24: Shivering during the Virginia Dept. of Forestry's Naked Tree Walk at Belle Isle State Park, Lancaster Co. ~Carol Hammer, photo



March 10: Paula Boundy, and Patsy Lockman examine chilly grasses at the Bethel Natural Area Preserve in Mathews Co. ~Carol Hammer, photo



March 10: At Reggie and Ann Follin's woods in Nomini, Westmoreland Co., to view abundant stands of bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) and dig up the many spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) that were generously donated for our September plant sale. Shown at work are Paula Boundy, Sally Caskie, Patsy Lockman and Nick Ferriter.

~Earline Walker, photo

Dirr's Classic Landscape Manual Donated to County Libraries



In March, our chapter donated the *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* by Michael A. Dirr to four Northern Neck County Libraries. The book will be made available for general circulation if the library already has one for reference. Education is one of the primary goals of the VNPS and supplementing local public libraries is becoming a yearly program for our chapter. The following members presented the manual on behalf of our chapter: Jackie Ferriter to Lindsay Gardner, Director, Lancaster Community Library (left photo); Jane Peterson to Jayne McQuade, Director, Northumberland Public Library; Kathryn Murray to Carolyn Loritsch, RCC Library Technical Services Manager (right photo); and Sally Caskie to Myrtle Thompson and Bonnie Lewis of the Newton Memorial Branch of the Central Rappahannock Regional Library in Hague.

~Text and photos by Carol Hammer

Northern Neck Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

Message from the President

The last regular meeting of Spring 2008, on Thursday, April 17, will feature our own Audrey Brainard describing the incredible annual migration of a family of monarch butterflies—in honor of which Carol Hammer has assembled a stunning array of photos.

Although this newsletter is too late to remind you of the Virginia bluebells walk in Hilda Wilson's hillside garden on April 5th, the schedule of our remaining field outings for the spring and early summer is prominently positioned on its back cover.

There's a waiting listing for the Dragon Run kayak outing with Teta Kain. If you are signed up for this incredibly popular activity and need to cancel, please let me know as far in advance as possible to give someone else a chance to go.

We can all be proud of the accomplishments of our young chapter—for the great quality of its meetings and field outings, educational outreach, native plantings and invasive plant control projects, and that our plant sale is now an established, near-professional event.

To continue to grow, however, we need more help from our members. The following vacancies are available on our Board:

Ways and Means - Currently we are running the plant sale by means of a very loose committee. We need some volunteers to help with the production, acquisition and maintenance of plants over the summer months, and others to help organize and execute the logistics of the sale. Thus opportunity abounds for everyone to contribute, even those who are convinced their thumb is any shade other than green!

Corresponding Secretary - Interacts with our speakers to ensure they know where to come and figures out their mileage if reimbursement is required; arranges their lunch, and writes a thank-you note after the meeting. A fun way to put to good use those old floral stationary cards one rarely uses now that email is so ubiquitous.

In addition to our chapter's vacancies, the State (Virginia Native Plant Society) has positions to fill, in particular they need a Treasurer. We cannot function as an organization without our members' participation. Please consider volunteering for one of these jobs by contacting me at: **ferriter@aol.com** or **(804) 462-6242**.

~Nick Ferriter, April 2008

Spring Plantings at Belle Isle *mark your calendars!*

Once again the Friends of Belle Isle and our NN chapter will help Paul Billings, State District Resource Specialist, plant natives in Belle Isle State Park. This activity started in the spring of 2004 when Ann Messick, Paul and eight helpers planted close to 550 wildflower seedlings near the park's entrance gate. Those black-eyed Susan (*Rhudebeckia hirta*), blazing star (*Liatris*), mistflower (*Conoclinium coelestinum*), New England aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*), among others, along with little bluestem grass (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), are now well established – in a “survival of the fittest” sense.

Since then we have planted thousands of flowers, and dozens of shrubs and trees, around the park. This year Paul intends to continue the roadside flower planting, and add many native shrubs around the new visitors center. All of this will require support from us and the Friends because, as we all know: **Many hands make light work.**

Work parties will commence on April 7 and finish by mid May. Please plan to come help with at least one planting session. Firm dates will depend on weather and plant deliveries, so keep an eye out for email announcements.

Future fun: Charlene Talcott is providing signs to identify all of the plants we have put in the ground over the years. This activity will need to wait until the plants are in bloom and easily identified, and Charlene has procured the signs!

~Nick Ferriter

Conservation, Education, and Horticulture News

In February, Judy Lang dispensed information about invasive alien plants, and learned a lot about local farming constraints, at the farmers' **Winter Crop Conference** in Warsaw.

Judy Burgess and Nick Ferriter, helped by Paula Boundy, handed out brochures, and answered many questions at the Master Gardeners **Living Shorelines: Conservation Landscaping for Waterfront Property** workshop in White Stone in March.

Heathsville Old Courthouse Demonstration Garden *needs weeding and watering!*

Calling Northumberland Co. members! Now that spring is here, the weeds in our native plant garden are re-energized. To help us maintain its beauty for county employees and the public, please contact Mary Kier at: **mpkier@gmail.com** or **(804) 529-6071**.

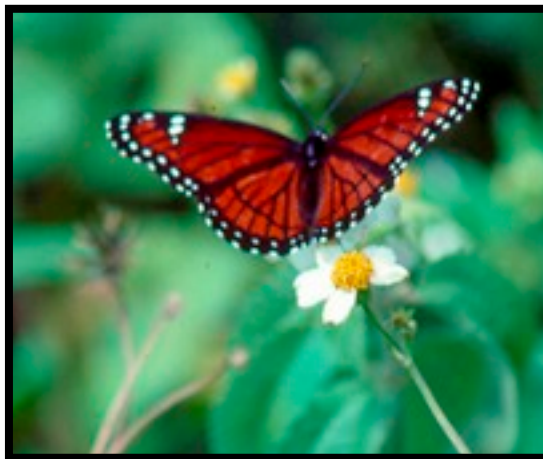
~Judy Lang and Judy Burgess

Book Review *Bringing Nature Home* *How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*

By Douglas W. Tallamy
2007, Timber Press, Inc., Portland, Oregon
Available from Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock, VA
Catalogue No. 639.9 Tallamy

“A must-read for native plant enthusiasts and conservationists.”
Bring back native plants and bring back insects, birds and other wildlife. Mr. Tallamy makes his case with scientific evidence, offers suggestions for remedies, and he includes wonderful color plates/photos, plant lists, and charts of host plants for butterflies and showy moths.

~Paula Boundy



**Butterfly beauties that
are seen in the Northern Neck**

Clockwise from top left:

Tiger swallowtail (m) *Papilio glaucus**

Viceroy *Basilarchia archippus**

Great spangled fritillary *Speyeria cybele**

Zebra swallowtail *Eurytides marcellus**

Eastern black swallowtail *Papilio polyxenes* (m)†

Red spotted purple *Basilarchia astyanax**

Red admiral (on wood) *Vanessa atalanta**

Variegated fritillary *Euptoieta claudia**

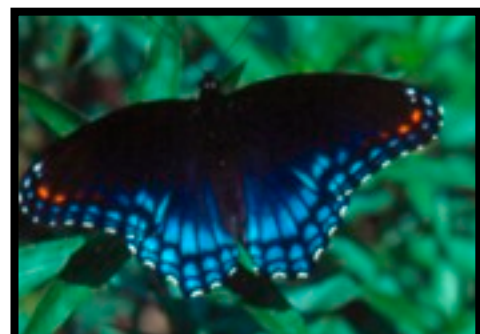
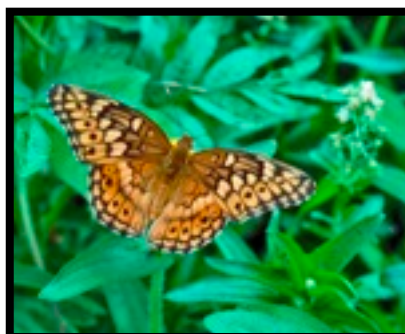
Mourning cloak *Nymphalis antiopa**

Monarch *Danaus plexippus*

Buckeye (on screen) *Junonia coenia*†

* = photo by Ann Messick

† = photo by Carol Hammer



Northern Neck Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

Fact Sheet for Burgess “Green House” *How to Live Comfortably Using Sustainable Energy Sources*

Modular Construction, built in 2007 by Excel Homes (excelhomes.com). Local contractor Darrin N. Smith of Ophelia. Local materials used when possible. Pine floorboards came from Pennsylvania.

House faces directly south. Basic house is 2500 sq ft plus garage. Walls are 6” thick. House was completely wrapped at factory with Styrofoam. Windows and doors are low E, Peachtree thermopane to let light in, reflect heat and UV in summer, and keep heat inside in winter.

Heat AC is a geothermal heat pump in conditioned crawl space. No ductwork needed. South-facing windows heat house during day in winter. Fans force hot air into crawl space. Hot air in crawl space rises after sun goes down.



Geothermal unit in conditioned crawl space.

Summer sun is overhead so doesn't shine in the south-facing windows. Solar shades used to filter sunlight. Deciduous trees planted on east and west side of house to shade windows in summer.

Rain barrels capture water coming from the high peaks of the roof. Solar panel heats all domestic hot water.

All light bulbs are florescent. All Energy Star appliances, convection oven, induction cook top.



Induction cooktop is as fast as gas, and 30-40% more efficient than conventional electric.

Wind Turbine is 3.7 kw SkyStream that produces 1.8 kw electricity and turns when winds reach 7 miles per hour. It's hooked to the electric meter which runs slower or backward. Cost payback calculated at 12 years.

Electric bill runs \$100.00 per month without using wind turbine. We tried for payback on all improvements of no more than 15 years (our lifetime!).



Judy Burgess demonstrates the wind turbine's blades.

“When we moved to the Northern Neck five years ago, we planned to add a small addition to an existing, 150-year old farmhouse. After architects, contractors, house movers, the health department and our kids gave us advice, we were ready to buy an RV and never settle anywhere.

From the start we wanted to take advantage of a southern exposure. When we couldn't practically (and inexpensively) add rooms to the old house and didn't want to tear it down, it followed that the house had to be moved. Then we could put in place ideas Gordon had had since our first foray into renewable energy—a rooftop solar panel for domestic hot water in 1983.

Gordon's first choice would have been a concrete house. We chose modular construction for timeliness and cost, but used concrete blocks for the footers and had the entire house wrapped with Styrofoam.

Generating electricity using a wind turbine has been the biggest challenge. We needed approval of the Board of Supervisors (they had turned down two previous applications), and we needed enough wind to justify the cost of the turbine. Now that we have Board approval, a grant from Virginia, and wind, we just need the turbine software improved so it will work all the time.”

*~Gordon and Judy Burgess,
with photos by Carol Hammer*

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Asclepias tuberosa, the Beautiful Butterfly Weed



Butterfly weed, (*Asclepias tuberosa*), of the milkweed family (Asclepiadaceae), is sometimes called orange milkweed although it has no milky sap. This inedible, multi-stemmed, herbaceous perennial plant grows to about 24 inches high and wide. It has dark green, alternate, narrow leaves on a hairy stem with flat-topped clusters of tiny, bright orange flowers having 5 regular parts.

Blooms first appear in early summer and, if dead-headed, may continue into late summer. After bloom, a pod forms that is filled with tiny seeds, each with a tuft of silky hairs. When the pod opens, the seeds become airborne. Indigenous to the Northern Neck of Virginia, and with a wide range of nativity in North America, this “weed” is a good garden plant providing it gets sun and excellent drainage in sand, loam, clay or limestone.

Once established it is drought tolerant and long lived. Generally butterfly weed is best started from fresh seed that is planted where the weed will stay. It has a deep tap root and is difficult to transplant, although well-established gallon-sized container-grown plants can be successfully planted with careful handling.

Leave the old stems standing through the winter, or mark the locations of the plants, as they are late to sprout new growth in spring. In nature, butterfly weed occurs in a scattered pattern of single plants, so try to intermix them with other native beauties like black-eyed Susan (*Rhudbeckia hirta*), goldenrods (*Solidago* spp.), asters (*Symphotrichum* spp.), Stokes’ aster (*Stokesia laevis*), and native grasses. Companionable shrubs for low, medium and high natural landscapes are lowbush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), and winged (*Rhus copallinum*), smooth (*R. glabra*), or staghorn, (*R. typhina*) sumac, respectively.

An entire range of insects, both “good” and “bad,” live off milkweeds. Although not favored by deer, it is an unfortunate favorite of aphids (which are a favorite of lady bug beetles). Best of all, monarch, queen, and grey hairstreak butterflies all use butterfly weeds as a larval host, and other butterflies as well come for its nectar!

References

www.wildflower.org (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Native Plant Information Network hosted by the University of Texas at Austin)
www.plants.usda.gov
www.2bnthewild.com/plants/H166.htm
www.monarchwatch.org is another great site!

~Paula Boundy

Officers

President..... Nick Ferriter (804) 462-6242 ferriter@aol.com
Vice President..... Earline Walker
Secretaries:
Recording..... Pam Collins
Corresponding OPEN
Treasurer..... Judy Burgess

Committee Chairs

Conservation..... Paula Boundy
Education..... Judy Lang (804) 453-6605 jlang@riposi.net
Horticulture..... Paula Boundy
Membership..... Tom Ryals
Newsletter..... Carol Hammer (804) 453-5500 caroljhammer@aol.com
..... Judy Lang
Nominating..... Jane Peterson
..... Nick Ferriter, Tanya Bohlke
Programs..... Earline Walker (speakers)
..... Sally Caskie (field outings)
Publicity..... Judy Lang (temporary)
Ways & Means.... OPEN

Other

Second VP for Life.. Ann Messick
Ex-President..... Judy Lang
Member at Large Patsy Lockman

Membership Fees

Individual: \$30
Family: \$40
Secondary: \$5 (to other chapters)

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, and please advise us if our records are incorrect.

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

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Calendar

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| April 12, Sat. | 10 am: Hickory Hollow Nature Preserve–VNPS Spring ephemerals walk with NN Chapter founder, Ann Messick |
| April 17, Thu. | Noon: Wicomico Parish Church–Audrey Brainard’s monarch butterfly VNPS talk |
| April 19, Sat. Earth Day! | 10 am: Westmoreland Park–Earth Day Celebration 9 am: Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge–help monitor year-old, native hardwood saplings |
| April 24, Thur. | 10 am: Menokin National Historic Landmark–VNPS Scavenger Hunt/Plant ID and Marker Placement |
| April 26, Sat. | 9 am: John Clayton Chapter’s Plant Sale, Williamsburg–contact Paula Boundy: paula.boundy@cablefirst.net or (804) 435-3685 |
| May 8, Thur. or TBA | 10 am: Chilton Woods–VNPS Showy Orchis walk with NN Chapter President, Nick Ferriter |
| May 24, Sat. | 10 am: Hickory Hollow Nature Preserve–VNPS Kentucky yellow lady slipper walk with Ann Messick |
| May 29, Thur. | 10 am: Stratford Hall, Westmoreland Co.– VNPS wildflowers walk with former VNPS state president, Marie Minor |
| June 7, Sat. | 10 am: Anne and John Olsen’s Native Plant Garden–VNPS tour and native plant exchange |
| June, TBA | TBA: Warsaw–VNPS walk for regrowth of clearcut and power-line easement |
| expect more! | Additional outings will be announced to members via email |

Plus

Marie Minor will lead Botanical Walks at the Wilna Tract of the Rappahannock River Valley NWR on:

Wed., April 2, 9, 23 @ 10 am
 Wed., May 7, 21, 28 @ 10 am
 Wed., June 4, 18, 25 @ 9 am
 Wed., July, 2, 9, 23 @ 9 am
 Wed., August 6, 20, 27 @ 9 am
 All members are welcome!

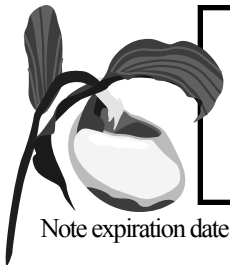
For more information about field outings, or driving directions, contact Sally Caskie at:

caskie@rivnet.net or (804) 472-5128

For assistance in locating a “VNPS carpool neighbor,” contact

Judy Lang at:

jlang@riposi.net or (804) 453-6605



Northern Neck Chapter
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 P.O. Box 233
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Note expiration date and please renew as needed if record is correct.