

Northern Neck Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

# NN Native Plant News

Winter 2010, Volume 7, No. 1

# The Great Richmond Tree Tour!



Sally Caskie, (photo)

More than 25 VNPS members and guests participated in a Remarkable Tree outing and picnic lunch that Hilda and Charlie Wilson organized for us when we visited Hollywood Cemetery and Maymont Park in Richmond on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

Also joining us were: Sally Anderson, President of the VNPS (above left); Nancy Hugo, co-author of *The Remarkable Trees of Virginia* and speaker at our chapter's meeting last January (above center); and Byron Carmean, State Champion Tree Expert (above right). As remarkable as the scenery: Nancy and Byron's expertise in identifying, and obvious enthusiasm for discussing, the many beautiful trees that we were able to see at the scenic Richmond sites!

# **January Outing:**

Skunk Cabbage Walk
Saturday, Jan. 9, 10:00 a.m.
Hickory Hollow Natural Area Preserve

Calling all nature lovers who are ready to get outdoors and walk in the woods. Come see *Symplocarpus foetidus*, our native plant that dares to flower amid winter's chill!

# January Speaker: Byron Carmean Virginia's Champion and Remarkable Trees Thursday, Jan. 21, noon, Wicomico Parish Church (Episcopal) Hall

"Big tree hunter" Byron Carmean, who has contributed more than 270 trees to the Virginia Big Tree Database and over 60 trees to Jeffrey Kirwan and Nancy Ross Hugo's *Remarkable Trees of Virginia* book, will share his exploits with us in January.

In 2005 Byron found a stand of "sylvan giants" in Southampton County, some of which are probably over 1000 years old! Fortunately, the state bought the land, with its its strange, twisted trees, and created the spectacular, 380-acre *Cypress Bridge Swamp Natural Area Preserve* 



Carol Hammer (photo)





Charles (*left*) and Hilda Wilson (*right*) among two of Cypress Bridge Swamp's unusual trees. Carol Hammer and Judy Lang (photos)

#### Message from the President

Hello, Everyone!

The end of a busy year has arrived. This is when we reflect on what we have accomplished over the past 12 months. Our chapter has been busier than ever before. We've sponsored informative walks, brought interesting speakers to our meetings, blazed public trails, created signage for public trails, tended public gardens in three of our four counties, set up educational exhibits at outreach events, donated books to local libraries, and held our yearly plant sale.

To those who wonder, "For what purpose is this work?" my response is that we are trying to reach out to the public around us, to help others see the beauty and importance of native plants in their own back yards and on our public lands. I am optimistic that little by little, our chapter is gaining some success.

And what about 2010? It is my hope that even more chapter members will be inspired to engage in events which demonstrate how respect for, and use of, native plants enriches all lives and all our communities. You can help by bringing a friend with you to one of our monthly talks or on one of our outings.

With that, I wish each of you a Happy New Year!

Marie F. Minor



#### VNPS 2009 Annual Meeting in Salem

The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and the New River Chapter hosted the VNPS 2009 Annual Meeting in Salem last September. Charlie and Hilda Wilson, Sally Caskie and I represented the Northern Neck Chapter at this meeting. (See my color photos on page 3.)

On the first night of the meeting, Peter Heus of Enchanter's Garden in Hinton, WV spoke about native plant propagation techniques. Peter, a most interesting speaker, demonstrated how he grows native plants by seeds, cuttings and division, and also explained sources of material for propagation. Heus collects seeds from his Kalmia latifolia (mountain laurel) and grows his own stock to sell. To see his plant offerings, visit his web site at www.enchantersgarden.com.

Saturday was a day of field trips of one's choice. The four of us opted to do the Bent Mountain Bottom Creek Gorge Preserve walk led by Jim Bush, a local resident and Master Gardener. The hike consisted of 4 miles through open meadows and mostly mixed hardwood forest. Blooming plants were few at this time of year. At one viewpoint we saw a spectacular 200 ft. waterfall, the second highest in Virginia. We saw the remains of an area formerly populated by log homes that were built in the middle of the woods. A small graveyard remained in that area as well.

It rained most of the day but we managed well as we were under a lovely canopy of hardwoods that provided some protection. At our walk's end, Jim invited us to eat lunch at his home nearby. Boxed lunches had been provided for us, and we enjoyed getting out of the rain and into the warmth indoors.

Saturday evening we attended the main event, which gave us an opportunity to meet and chat with members from many VNPS chapters. A silent auction was held to provide monies to support the ongoing Flora of Virginia Project. I was fortunate and won the bid on Gupton and Swope's (1986) Wild Orchids of the Middle Atlantic States, which is fabulous book with a lovely photo on one page opposite a description of each plant.

Our speaker after the banquet that evening was Dr. Douglas Tallamy, the author of *Bringing Nature Home*. Although we

had seen the same talk the previous week in Sandy Spencer's video at our chapter meeting, hearing it again reinforced his message about the need to conserve biodiversity. Tallamy's beautiful, original slides greatly illuminated his explanations of how insects and vertebrates depend on plants which, in turn, depend on animals, and about the choices we can make as gardeners to promote natural diversity in our own yards.

Sunday morning's outing was led by Jeff Kirwan, co-author of the *Remarkable Trees of Virginia*. We stopped at Roanoke College to see a rock elm (*Ulmus thomasi*), at Roanoke Country Club to view an American elm (*Ulmus americana*) and at Fincastle to see two, large honey locust trees (Gleditsia triacanthos). We even helped him measure one of the honey locusts!

The experience of meeting fellow enthusiasts from all over the state, of putting faces to names of people on the state board, of acquiring new information from the speakers, and of spending time hiking outdoors while learning more about native plantsall made the trip very worthwhile for me! If you've never attended a VNPS annual meeting, I'd recommend you should consider doing so sometime in the future. Carol Hammer

#### **VNPS Annual Workshop:**

At Water's Edge, Virginia's Wetland Habitats

The VNPS's Annual Workshop will be at the University of Richmond on March 6, 2010. This year's focus on the fascinating variety of wetland plant habitats found along Virginia's coastal plain will be of special interest to members of our chapter. The Virginia Natural Heritage Program's Dorothy Fields will discuss plants of the coastal plain and the nine State Natural Area Preserves that she manages on the Eastern Shore. Joe Scalf, The Nature Conservancy's Living Shoreline Project program coordinator, will talk about the initiative to replace seawalls with plant communities. The College of William and Mary's Prof. Randy Chambers will discuss the ecology of wetland environments and the spread of *Phragmites*. The keynote speaker, Prof. James Perry of William and Mary, will address the potential impact of climate change on wetland plant communities. Registration brochures will be sent out to all VNPS members in January. Space is limited so mark your calendars and plan to register early.



Photos from VNPS Annual Meeting: Clockwise from top left: Sunday's tree trip to Fincastle, VA, Honeylocust (Gleditsia triacanthos) with grave marker; Charlie & Hilda Wilson with Sally Caskie on Saturday outing with falls in background; Goldenrod (Solidago) plant on Saturday walk; Log home ruins in Bent Mountain area; Another Honeylocust in Fincastle; Sunday outing to Roanoke Country Club, American Elm (Ulmus americana); Sat. walk through woods; Center photo is of Jeff Kirwan, leader of the Sunday trip and co-author of Remarkable Trees of Virginia.

#### "Good Things" Supported by Your Chapter

Membership dues, gifts, and funds raised by the Northern Neck Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS) are used by the board to support various projects, endeavors and other "good things" to use a famous phrase. Last year our funds were spent as follows:

The VNPS encourages us to support of the *Flora of Virginia* Project (see our Fall newsletter for details). In 2009 our chapter completed its \$1000 pledge to the *Flora*, and in return we will receive a copy of the first printing. In addition, chapter members and others have given \$2000 of gifts to the *Flora* in Ann Messick's memory. However, as the *Flora* will still need funds to meet its current goal of printing by 2012, perhaps we should continue to contribute to this worthwhile project.

VNPS's current fund raiser, *Natural Treasures Hunt*, is to sponsor a Virginia Natural Heritage botanist in the field who will be revisiting the locations of uncommon or rare plants in Virginia to benefit the *Flora*. (The companion online *Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora* shows distributional records by county; see page 5.) In 2009 we supported this effort with a \$250 donation. Members may have received a similar request and may wish to contribute individually.

A new effort for our chapter is to support the attendance of one officer at the VNPS annual meeting. In 2009 we sponsored our Vice-President, Carol Hammer's participation. (see page 2 for Carol's account of the Roanoke Valley meeting; some of her photographs are in the color spread on page 3.)

We regularly donate new books to the public libraries serving our four-county area. Not surprisingly, this past year they were given copies of *Remarkable Trees of Virginia* by Jeffrey Kirwan and Nancy Ross Hugo (see front page) and *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens* by Douglas Tallamy (see page 2).

Our chapter provides maintenance costs for the Old Courthouse Demonstration Garden in Heathsville, including new or replacement native plants and mulch. We also sent \$100 to help support a native plant garden at the new fairgrounds of the State Fair of Virginia.

Finally, we donate \$250 annually to Wicomico Parish Church (Episcopal) in appreciation for the use of its facilities.

Ideas for future "good things" that we might support are welcome and will be seriously considered. Please contact me or any other member of the board with your suggestions.

Paula Boundy, Treasurer

# **February Outing:**

Naked Tree Walk
Thursday, Feb. 11, 10:00 a.m.
Menokin Historic Site

Enjoy learning how to identify trees when all their leaves are gone while ambling down the woodland trail to Cat Point Creek at a treasured historical site!

#### Budget for Nov. 2009 - October 2010 Income Interest Income 6 Membership Dues 1300 Ways & Means Plant Sale - Proceeds 3085 Ways & Means, Other - Proceeds 270 Plant Sale - Costs -1200 Plant Sale - New Member Discount -40 Ways & Means, Other - Costs -350Total Ways & Means, Net 1765 <u>1765</u> \$3071 **Total Income Expenses Church Donation** 250 **Annual Meeting** 275 Garden Maintenance 250 Gift Memberships 60 Honoraria (Speakers) 300 Hospitality 40 Library & Education 400 Newsletter 860 Office Supplies 50 Postage 20 Special Projects 460 **Total Expenses** \$2965

## February Speaker: Bill Portlock

Planting Natives Near the Bay
Thursday, Feb. 18, noon,
Wicomico Parish Church (Episcopal) Hall



Senior Educator/Naturalist for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and a former Virginia State Naturalist, Bill Portlock will explain the many advantages of native plantings in and around our bays, rivers and wetlands.

Bill is a well-known nature photographer, whose work is on permanent exhibit in many of Virginia's State Parks and at the Science Museum of Virginia in Richmond.



His studies in the Rappahannock River Bald Eagle Concentration Area is providing historical context for their recent population trends. (Tom Munson, photo)

## Updating Virginia's Native Plant Distribution Records

In 2009, Northern Neck VNPS members Tom Teeples, Earline Walker and Carol Hammer, along with Ellis Squires (all four of us are Master Naturalists) were authorized by the state to collect botanical samples for the purpose of updating the state's native plant distribution records. The focus has been on the counties within our chapter.

To understand what we are doing, type http://www.biol.vt.edu/digital atlas/ in your web browser. This is the home of the Digital Flora of Virginia website. Near the top of the page is a small search box. Type 'Rhexia' in the box (without the quote symbols) and click on 'Search'. The Digital Atlas system provides the names of all Rhexia species that are known to exist in Virginia. Then click on the link for Rhexia virginica. Now the system displays the counties of Virginia in which Virginia meadow beauty (Rhexia virginica) has been reported to reside. Notice that Northumberland County does not show the presence of this plant although, as many of you may already know, it certainly occurs here!

Using this web site, we can help fill in the Northern Neck plants that are missing in the database. For example, some Virginia meadow beauty were located on Ball's Neck Road near Shiloh School. In order to prove to the state that the plant exists there, we collected, preserved, and sent a sample of the plant to a recognized state herbarium (pictures alone are not sufficient, but may be used as supplementary materials.) The sample is called a voucher. Vouchers are accepted by herbaria at Virginia Tech, William and Mary, or George Mason Universities. Our voucher collecting group is collaborating with Tom Wieboldt at Virginia Tech. Tom is the keeper of the data base for Virginia's Digital Flora.

Recently our team went to Richmond to have four vouchers verified by Johnny Townsend, who is a state botanist in the Natural Heritage Program. We brought samples of *Ulmus sp.* (a species of elm) *Rhexia virginica, Tipularia discolor* (cranefly orchis), and what we thought was *Polygala curtissii* (Curtiss'



Johnny Townsend (*left*) Ellis Squires (*center*), Tom Teeples and Earline Walker (*both right*) examine the Northern Neck voucher specimens. Carol Hammer (photo)

milkwort). The elm was identified by Johnny as *Ulmus rubra* or slippery elm. It had been located earlier in 2009 by Tom Saunders at the Hughlett Point parking lot, and it is a new discovery for Northumberland County. Our *P. curtissii*, also found at Hughlett Point, turned out to be *P. mariana* (Maryland milkwort). The difference? They both look alike, but *P. mariana* has indeterminate blooms and *P. curtisii* does not. The other two specimens were verified as correctly identified and all are new to Northumberland County.

In continuing with our quest, we will collect Trillium pusillum (little trillium) in the spring as a new plant for Lancaster County, and watch for Saccharum giganteum (sugarcane plumegrass) in Lancaster Co. In the spring, we will also collect Listera australis (southern twayblade) at Hughlett Point. Other new plants that we have discovered but cannot yet collect are Amorpha fruticosa (false indigo) and Aplectrum hyemale (Adam and Eve orchid). These last two cannot have a voucher taken because there are not enough plants to do so. The rule is "One in 20:" there must be 20 or more plants in order to collect a voucher.

It is important to note that **collections** may not be taken from Natural Area Preserves without prior written permission from the Department of Conservation and Recreation. We have such a permit and it will be renewed for 2010. If you would like to be on the permit, please contact Tom Teeples at tandpteeps@verizon.net. or at 435-0636. If you know of plants that do exist but are not listed in a particular county and you want to help, please let one of us know. Our team will take the appropriate samples and forward them to the state for further verification. Tom Teeples

Editors' Note: In April we should see some voucher specimens when curator Beth Chambers gives us a special tour of the College of William and Mary's Herbarium.

# Late March Outing: Bloomin' Bloodroot Date to Be Announced Reggie's Woodlot

Delicate blossoms of *Sanguinaria* canadensis that poke above the leaf litter on a wooded hillside signal that spring is coming.

# March Speaker: Donna Ware Botanical Exploration in Virginia Thursday, March 18, noon, Wicomico Parish Church (Episcopal) Hall

Botanist, Dr. Donna Ware's research interests include mountain/coastal plain disjunct species, the taxonomy of North American *Valerianella* (cornsalad), and the demography of the small whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*). She is curator emerita of the William and Mary Herbarium in Williamsburg, where she served from 1969 to 1999, and where our chapter has arranged to have a tour in April (see below).



Donna was a co-author of the three editions of the *Atlas of Virginia Flora*, and helped establish the *Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora* (see page 5 of this newsletter). Currently she is working with Nancy Ross Hugo on a chapter about the history of botanical exploration in Virginia for the *Flora of Virginia* project.

In addition to being a charter member of the John Clayton Chapter of the VNPS, Donna is active in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden project.

## **April Outing:**

William and Mary Herbarium Saturday, April, 3

Carpool from Grace Episcopal Church, Kilmarnock, at 9:30 a.m.

## Chapter Directory for Members - "Soon Come"

Your board has decided to produce a Chapter Directory so that carpools can be formed for meetings and outings, and for any member who wishes to get in touch with other members for other VNPS activities. This list will be made available to members only, and on the condition that it will not be used for any kind of mass mailing. You have our assurance that we will neither sell this list nor offer it to anyone other than members of the Northern Neck Chapter of the VNPS.

Anyone wishing to have his/her email address, mail address, and/or phone number(s) omitted from this list, please contact Carol Hammer before Feb. 1, 2010 at caroljhammer@aol, or at (804) 453-5500.

We have been asked by many members to provide this information, and feel that it would be a helpful tool for the reasons stated above.

### Vignettes from the VNPS Digest No. 123

Illustration of how difficult it is to try "fixing" an ecosystem that's been damaged by human actions:

Invasive plants are advancing into Eastern forests at an alarming rate, and the rapid spread of Japanese stiltgrass, *Microstegium vimineum*, has been linked by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences' David Mortensen and his colleagues to forest road maintenance, particularly the type of dirt and stone used on local roads.

The researchers had been amazed to discover that Japanese stiltgrass only spreads quickly in habitats that are adjacent to forest roads. Apparently its seeds become mixed with the dirt and gravel, and are carried along as graders push the crushed stone to fill holes and smooth road surfaces. Perhaps their most startling finding, however, relates to the nature of the dirt and gravel on forest roads that enables invasive plants such as Japanese stiltgrass to outcompete native plants.

According to Mortensen, "The crushed limestone used to surface many forest roads and to line culverts and drains along those roads are (sic) creating ideal conditions for the invasives to spread rapidly. The high alkalinity sediment from the stone, mixed with water running off the roads during storms, eventually spills out into the forests, carrying invasive plant seeds and creating areas for them to grow quickly. The high alkalinity prevents native plants that have become adapted to acidic forest soils from growing, and invasives such as Japanese stiltgrass fill the void."

Crushed limestone is now used on many forest roads and in ditches precisely because this material leaches a highly alkaline slurry which improves the productivity and water chemistry of mountain streams, in turn benefiting wild trout and other aquatic organisms that have declined from the deleterious effects of decades of exposure to acid rain.

# Guidelines for managing the spread of invasive species in homes and communities from the Gardensmart PlantWise website at www.beplantwise.org:

Plant non-aggressive plants. Garden with ease, forget the spreading ivy's.

Look at your seed and mulch mixes. Make sure they're weed free for garden safety.

**A**void spreading invasive plants into natural areas. Protect your park, pull a bad plant.

**N**ative plants can't be beat. They stay in place with gardening grace. **T**reat those invasive plants by handpulling, spraying, spading and shading.

**W**ait to dispose of invasive plants until they are in repose. Compost or carry but just don't tarry.

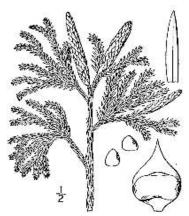
If you have a garden pond or pool, don't let the plants rule.

Seedling volunteers need management and sometimes banishment.

Every plant needs a place, put your favorite invasives in pots or a secure space.

Come to the January meeting to learn how to subscribe to the vanative plants ociety digest!

### Princess Pine, Dendrolycopodium (Lycopodium) obscurum



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. 1:45.

Another common name for this common club moss that was used in my family when I was a youth was crow's foot, although now that those family members are gone I can only wonder why. According to the *Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora*, Princess Pine, *Dendrolycopodium (Lycopodium) obscurum*, is found throughout most of Virginia. However, it may be a plant of conservation concern because of its traditional use in Christmas wreaths. Like many families, that's how mine used it, taught its use, and how I used it well into adulthood. But now I'm promoting not using it, leaving it as it is, where it is!

Where is it? Princess Pine can be found growing among damp oak leaf litter in a forest gap, or along or near a stream. Some plants even shine in the winter sun; however, summer sunlight may cause browning and death in drought. It's a colonial, evergreen, short ground cover of distinctive appearance, resembling a miniature pine stand when it has grown for years without disturbance.

If you stroke one, you'll find that it is soft to the touch. If the stroboli (cone-like spore-bearing structures) are mature, they will release a cloud of yellow spores that can take three to five years or longer to reach sexual maturity.

Spores that germinate rely on fungi for nutrition. If water is available, and fertilization is successful, eventually the familiar spore-bearing plant will develop and spread vegetatively. Club mosses are next to impossible to transplant or propagate other than by Mother Nature. When you find Princess Pine, please leave it where it is! *Paula Boundy, Horticulture Chair* 

#### References:

Cullina, W. 2008. *Native Ferns, Moss, and Grasses: From Emerald Carpet to Amber Wave, Serene and Sensuous Plants for the Garden.* Houghton Mifflin, pp. 62-65.

Virginia Botanical Associates. *Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora*. www.biol.vt.edu/digital\_atlas. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. *Plants Database*. http://plants.usda.gov.

#### We Welcome Our New Members!

Faye Andrashko, Linda Ball, Maureen Congour, Mary Ellis, Gail Gillan, Bill & Judy Gilman, Betty Gunter, Joan Hattersley, Jane Hopwood, Carol Hughitt, Barbara Kauneckas, Jim Lake & Cynthia Hudson, Lucy Martin, Amanda Moss, Stephanie McLain, Ted Munns, Bill Murphy, Dee Roe, Jane Stilmar, Cathy Wilson

#### Officers

President......Marie Minor 925-5950 mfminor@verizon.net Vice President..... Carol Hammer 453-5500 caroljhammer@aol.com Secretaries:

Recording...... Judy Burgess Corresponding Patsy Lockman Treasurer...... Paula Boundy

#### **Committee Chairs**

Other

#### **Membership Fees**

Individual: \$30 Family: \$40

Secondary: \$5 (goes 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. 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.

Email Carol Hammer if you would prefer to conserve resources and receive the newsletter via email.

#### NN Chapter of the VNPS Calendar

Jan. 9, Sat.	10:00 a.m. Skunk Cabbage Walk. Hickory Hollow Natural Area
	Preserve, Marie Minor (leader). Open to the public.
Jan. 21, Thur.	<b>Noon.</b> Byron Carmean, Virginia's Champion and Remarkable Trees Program. Wicomico Parish Church. Brown bag lunch.
Feb.11, Thur.	<b>10:00 a.m.</b> <i>Naked Tree Walk.</i> Menokin Historic Site, Charlie Kneller (leader). Open to the public.
Feb. 18, Thur.	<b>Noon.</b> Bill Portlock, Advantages of Native Plantings In and Around Our Bays, Rivers and Wetlands. Wicomico Parish Church. Brown bag lunch.
Mar. 18, Thur.	<b>Noon.</b> Dr. Donna Ware, <i>The History of Botanical Exploration in Virginia</i> . Wicomico Parish Church. Brown bag lunch.
late March– date TBA	<b>10:00 a.m.</b> <i>Bloodroot Walk.</i> Reggie Follin's Woodlot, Earline Walker (leader).
Apr.3, Sat.	<b>09:30 a.m.</b> William and Mary Herbarium Tour. Meet at Grace Episcopal Church parking lot in Kilmarnock, Carol Hammer (leader). Open to the public.

Driving directions for all field outings will be emailed to members in the week

before each outing. For more information, contact:

# Chilton Woods Botanical Surveys with Marie Minor

All members are welcome to walk with Marie in 2010 as she begins a new botanical survey season along one of the trails that our chapter has helped to make at Chilton Woods State Forest.

You will surely learn something new and possibly find something unexpected! Bring water, bug spray when necessary and, if you wish, binoculars.

Early spring survey dates and time:

Wednesday, March 10 and 24 10:00 a.m.

For information on where to meet, contact Marie at: **mfminor@verizon.net** 

or call (804)-925-5950



Northern Neck Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society P.O. Box 158 Millers Tavern, VA 23115

Note expiration date.

Please renew as needed if record is correct, or contact us if incorrect...