



Northern Neck Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society

"Conserving Wild Flowers and Wild Places"

# NN Native Plant News

Winter 2012, Volume 9, No. 1

## Outreach Education

*The Education Committee works to build public support for the conservation of wild flowers and wild places.*

*Left row:* Each fall our chapter purchases books to donate to the four public libraries in the Northern Neck. This year's selection, *Native Ferns and Mosses* by William Cullina, is an informative and beautifully-photographed book with an enticing subtitle—*From Emerald Carpet to Amber Waves: Serene and Sensuous Plants for the Garden*. It will be a good resource book, especially given the growing public interest in gardening with native plants.

*Below:* Board members staff our information booth at the Northern Neck's Land Conservancy's *Boots, Bids & BBQ* at Menokin (left) in September and at the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge's *Go Wild Fall Fest* at the Hutchinson Tract in October (right).



Earline Walker



*Below:* Fun activities were available to children attending the annual *Edwardsville Festival* in September (left, bottom right) and the Hutchinson's Tract's *Fall Fest* in October (top right). Enthusiastic young gardeners were happy to go home with their very own plants after repotting small *Callicarpa americana*, American beautyberry, that Nick Ferriter had donated. The children also enjoyed coloring the chapter's new coloring booklet of local native plants designed by talented artist, Joan Hattersley.



Carol Hammer



Carol Hammer

*From top to bottom:* Board members donating Cullina's book to librarians at public libraries in Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and Hague (Westmoreland), respectively.

## Message from the President

Below is a summary of our chapter's last quarter activities. Reports like this go to the state, but I feel our members should know what their chapter is doing for them and their community. Please join us on future outings or at future meetings. Let us know if you are interested in serving on one of our committees or on our board. As always, we welcome your suggestions.

### Quarterly Report Northern Neck Chapter VNPS

Our annual plant sale was very successful. We provided a variety of plants and many different ones from prior years. With these proceeds we have purchased 4 copies for our county libraries of *Native Ferns Moss and Grasses* by William Cullina, New England Wild Flower Society. We will purchase, as soon as we can online, 4 copies of the Flora to be also given to our libraries with the bookplate in Nicky Staunton's name.

We approved at our Nov. meeting to send one child to Nature Camp and two to Forestry Camp for 2012. The children will be nominated by the Boys and Girls Club of the Northern Neck. Our education committee is working on educational planting and other native plant projects to present to them after school at the club. This was the first year that they helped at our plant sale helping customers place their purchases into the cars. Our Education Committee provided outreach at several events this fall. Although it poured and tents were impossible to set up, several members helped pick up and sort trash on Cockrell's Creek for recycling. Boots and Barbeque, an annual event that is well attended, was another successful venue. In early October, the Education Committee provided an activity repotting native *Callicarpa americana*, beautyberry, for both children and adults.

Marie Minor finished botanizing one of the trails at Chilton Woods for the year at the end of October. Also at Chilton, members of our chapter are attempting to save the native azaleas growing on a bank which were cut down by VDOT. We plan to monitor their growth and, we hope, return.

For Good Carbon Capture Day (our chapter's 350.org activity), which this year coincided with Virginia Public Lands Day, some native perennials and trees were planted at Belle Isle and Westmoreland State Parks. We continually monitor and maintain our demonstration garden located at the old courthouse in Northumberland County.

In September Rebecca Wilson, DCR, spoke to us about our Natural Area Preserves. This was followed up by a walk afterwards to Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserve. In Oct. we enjoyed hearing from Dr. Chip Morgan, current VP of the Flora of VA Project, who spoke to us on Native Ferns. He followed the talk with a walk at Chilton Woods State Forest and identified 10 or 11 species of native ferns. Almost 20 attended that walk. November's speaker was Bud Ward, an environmental journalist who spoke to us about climate change. We already have our spring line-up ready for 2012!

We regret to say two Committee Chairs have resigned and it will be hard to fill their shoes. Joan Hattersley, our Outings Chair provided us with fun and interesting outdoor activities and, with our Education Committee, produced an educational native plant coloring book for all chapters to use. She also designed our native plant sale sign for which we are most grateful. Publicity, a very important position, is being vacated by Kari Garell who provided in-depth information on our speakers to the media. She worked hard to get photos published to go along with her articles. We hope to have these positions filled as soon as possible.

Carol Hammer



### The Climate Change Communication Conundrum

At our November meeting, veteran environmental journalist, Bud Ward (right), portrayed the difficulties in educating the public to understand that about 99% of all atmospheric and climate scientists accept the evidence that human activities are currently an important driver of climate change and that the consequences of humanity's overuse of fossil fuels will be neither pleasant nor cheap.



Cathie Ward

### But Poke Power?

Wake Forest University's David Carroll has replaced silicon in solar panels with flavonoids (natural dyes) extracted from berries of the American pokeweed, *Phytolacca americana* (left). Success on a commercial scale might help supply cheap, low-power solar energy to the developing world!



Huw William

### VNPS Winter Workshop: Virginia's Ecosystems

The 2012 VNPS Winter Workshop will be held at the University of Richmond, on March 10, 9:15 - 3:15.

Speakers will present an overview of Virginia's Ecosystems. Martin Ogle of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority will be the keynote speaker with retired forester, Tom Dierauf\*, presenting forest ecology, Mike Hayslett of Sweetbrier presenting non-tidal wetland ecology and Ben Tracy of Virginia Tech speaking on ecology of grasslands.

The fee for this year has been raised to \$45. Registration will be due March 2. However, having sold out the past 3 years, folks are advised to register early.

Please encourage your chapter members to cancel if they find they cannot attend. Each year we have several no-shows who do not cancel. Thus, we have a few empty seats. Participants will be asked to include telephone contacts. If we have a wait list and if space becomes available as late as 6 PM on March 9, we will make every effort to give the seat(s) to wait listed individual(s).

From: Sally Anderson, VNPS State President

\*Tom came one May to visit his friend, our "legendary" forester Henry Bashore, and see the Kentucky lady slipper in bloom. Ed.



## Gentians, a lovely blue wildflower...



Ethan Brent

This fall considerable excitement was generated when native plant enthusiast Ethan Brent reported that blooms, previously thought to be *Gentiana clausa*, bottle or closed gentian (the flowers of which have only a narrow opening at their tops), were fully open! Every year Ethan monitors the bloom time of the plants, which grow in a roadside ditch near White Stone in Lancaster County. He often expresses his concern that our only known colony could easily be eradicated when the drainage ditches are re-worked by road maintenance crews.

To date, only *G. villosa*, the striped gentian, which has fully opening flowers, has been officially documented as occurring in Lancaster County,<sup>1</sup> but Ethan's photos were thought to more resemble *G. catesbaei*, Elliott's gentian.

Since the colony is large enough to subsample without harm, Tom Teeple sent several samples to Thomas Wieboldt at Virginia Tech's Massey Herbarium. Wieboldt, who often helps identify species that represent "new records" for the Northern Neck, has written to tell us: "After re-hydrating a flower and carefully measuring various parts, it does seem to fit *catesbaei* best...and have mapped it as so in the Digital Atlas."  
*Paula Boudny and Judy Lang*

<sup>1</sup>Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora  
(<http://vaplantatlas.org>)



Ethan Brent

### NORTHERN NECK CHAPTER Virginia Master Naturalists

To: Rick K. Myers, Stewardship Program Manager  
From: Thomas C. Teeple  
CC: Rebecca Wilson  
Date: December 28, 2011

Re: Collection Permit DNH-CBR01-11  
2011 Collections

This year, 2011, was the third year for this collection team. We have more collections to report this year.

Our team consists of Earline Walker\*, Marie Minor\*, Carol Hammer\*, Tom Saunders, Ellis Squires, Jeff Waincott\*, Glyn Surdam, Ethan Brent and Tom Teeple\*. Our 2011 collections came from several different Natural Area Preserves. The collections are described below.

Bush Mill Stream NAP: *Monotropa hypopithys*.

Hickory Hollow NAP: *Monotropa hypopithys*.

Hughlett Point NAP: *Chamaesyce polygonifolia*, *Teucrium canadense*, *Lactuca serriola*, *Strophostyles helvula*, *Symphotrichum subulatum*, *Schoenoplectus pungens*, *Spergularia salina*, *Strophostyles umbellata*, *Amorpha fruticosa*.

These specimens will be sent to Tom Wieboldt at Massey Herbarium, Virginia Tech to update the records of Virginia Digital Flora.

Tom Teeple

### *Amorpha fruticosa*: indigo bush (desert false indigo)

A new plant record for Northumberland County, *Amorpha fruticosa* (at right) was collected by the team at Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserve last May, and a specimen was preserved for the Massey Herbarium by Tom Teeple (at work below).  
*photos: Earline Walker*



From the letter sent by Tom Teeple for the "Northern Neck Collection Team" to Rick Myers, Virginia Natural Heritage Program's Natural Areas Stewardship Manager. Astericks added beside the names of NN VNPS members Ed.



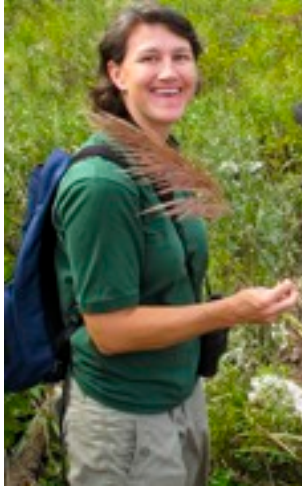
## Of Walks and Talks in the Northern Neck

### Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserve

On a bright and balmy September afternoon, following the Virginia Natural Heritage Program's Rebecca Wilson sobering (in these days of reduced state budgets) talk about the Northern Neck's Natural

Area Preserves, her guided tour of Northumberland County's Hughlett Point NAP was a special treat.

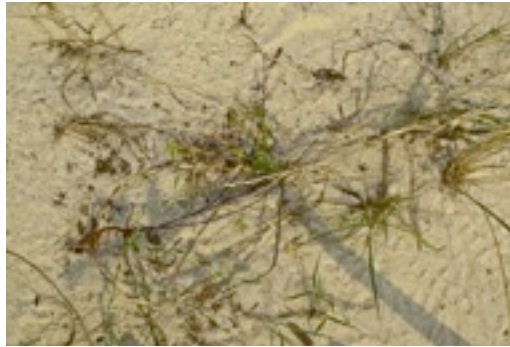
She helped us to identify many of the grasses growing along the beach as well as some of the shrubs and other plants found in bloom, including *Pluchea odorata*, saltmarsh fleabane, an erect annual with flat-topped clusters of pink-lavender, rayless flower heads. At the furthest point walked, Rebecca spotted the rare *Polygonum glaucum*, sea knotweed. Although so small to look at, we were happy to have been able to see this rare plant, along with all the other lovely species in bloom that day.



Rebecca Wilson at Hughlett Pt.



*Pluchea odorata* Rebecca Wilson



*Polygonum glaucum*



Text Carol Hammer and Judy Lang, Other Photos: Carol Hammer

### Hickory Hollow Natural Area Preserve

"Under a canopy of trees and cobalt sky, Tom Teeples...whose hobby is mycology,...is leading a mushroom walk. And although it hasn't rained during the past few days, there are plenty of mushrooms poking up through a blanket of leaves right in the parking lot." (Pam D'Angelo)

"This is not a walk to look for magic mushrooms." (Tom Teeples.)

Laughter in the background.

"Magical mushrooms. All mushrooms are magical. Right. They pop up just overnight and they grow almost anywhere." (Tom)



Samples of identified fall fungi Earline Walker

"Also magical is the variety of colors: yellow, red, purple, orange, and a grey one with dark warts called the Old Man of the Woods. The shapes range from the familiar cap and stem to those of flowers or the branches of corals. The puffball mushrooms emit a cloud of spores when Teeples taps on it...The group begins plucking samples for identification." (Pam)

"There are no mushrooms that are poisonous to the touch like poison ivy or something like that. Just don't taste them, but you can touch any of them." (Tom)

From: Virginia's Natural Heritage Program Celebrates 25 Years, by Pamela D'Angelo, 10/11/2011. To hear the rest of Pam's interview, go to: <http://ideastations.org/radio/archive/2011-10-11-virginia-s-natural-heritage-program-celebrates-25-years>



### Cat's Cove, Mundy Point

"Showers seemed to be threatening, but never produced and that lighting made the photos so true to color." Kathey Brodtman

On October 13<sup>th</sup> Master Gardener Kathy Hoffmann hosted chapter members on a tour of her gardens at Cat's Cove. Earline Walker explained to all that Kathy and her neighbor Charles have been landscaping and farming their two adjoining properties for 30 years. Kathy's garden is a mixture of natives and other plants available through nurseries. Her soil is clay and can have wet and dry conditions, and although many of the plantings were young, we found the gardens lush and in bloom, in a beautiful waterfront setting off the Yeocomico River at Mundy Point.

Paula Boundy noted the following memorable native plants: *Ilex verticillata*, Winterberry 'Sparkleberry,' for winter red berry color (see photo); *Penstemon digitalis*, Penstemon 'Husker Red' for winter foliage color; *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle' and *Hydrangea quercifolia*, oakleaf hydrangea, for fall blooms and foliage color; *Symphotrichum ericoides*, heath aster, for white fall bloom; *Callicarpa americana*, beautyberry for fall purple berries.



*Ilex verticillata* cultivar Photo: Kathey Brodtman

### Chilton Woods State Forest

Our October meeting speaker, Chip Morgan who is Vice-President of the Flora of Virginia project, showed us how to identify ferns using a dichotomous key.



Carol Hammer

For those of us who have failed to understand them in the past, he patiently explained that a dichotomous key begins with sets of two questions. First you find the pair that contains one question that broadly describes the plant you are attempting to identify. The answer to the first question sends you to a second set of questions, at which point the exercise continues until, if you have answered the questions correctly, you identify your plant.



*Botrychium virginianum*, rattlesnake fern (above); *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, southern adderstongue (above right)



His slides showed the diversity of ferns and, although not all were native to our area, the photos were exceptionally good.

Following his talk, Chip led a walk in Lancaster County's Chilton Woods State Forest, during which the keys were used to identify 10 or 11 different ferns, some of which most of us had never even previously noticed. He also showed those of us who are slow learners that hand lenses are not used by holding them a foot in front of you. Rather, they are placed close to the eye while the item to be identified is moved into focus. The weather was good and many of us learned a new vocabulary. With any luck, we have now gone beyond fronds to pinnae, pinnules, and sporangia.

Text: Jackie Ferriter and Carol Hammer; Fern Photos: Ellis Squires

### Seen Walking and Talking in Fall 2011

Kathy Hoffman (top center) and visitors to her garden at Cat's Cove.



Earline Walker

Tom Teeples (below) and fungi followers at Hickory Hollow NAP.



Earline Walker



Chip and Dahne Morgan (left) with fern walkers at Chilton Woods.



Carol Hammer



## *Hydrangea arborescens* Wild (or Smooth) Hydrangea

In April, I received the gift of a “new” native hydrangea. The landscaper who places plants in my development has used *Hydrangea quercifolia* (I don’t know the cultivar), oak-leaf hydrangea, in a few foundation plantings - usually shady. I had recently become aware of another native cultivar *Hydrangea arborescens* ‘Annabelle,’ but had not yet researched it as a possibility for my Northern Neck garden.

My gift is *Hydrangea arborescens* ‘Incrediball’™. Ah, an opportune subject for my next piece in the newsletter I decided, and proceeded to research it on the Internet. The Wayside Gardens site says that this cultivar descends from ‘Annabelle’ and was a surprise breeding result.

My container grown plant was covered with flower buds that I watched live up to the site’s description: “The blooms open a very pale shade of green to cream, maturing to pure white. Like most *Hydrangea*, they begin blooming when the warm summer weather arrives, and continue all season, often generously extending into fall. Cut the blooms for fresh or dried arrangements; they last for months indoors, their petals acquiring a lovely papery texture. Incrediball® reaches 4 to 5 feet high and wide in sun (in the north) to partial shade (farther south). A



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*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York Vol. 2: 231.

moisture lover, it should receive regular watering to grow and bloom its best. You will find it easy to grow, eager to bloom, and breathtaking in the foundation, as a hedge, or in the border. Zones 4-9.”

Further research on the Missouri Botanical Garden site told me that the species “can spread rapidly by root suckers to form colonies. Blooms on new wood, and in cold winter climates, it is perhaps best grown as an herbaceous perennial (e.g., cut back to 1-2' from the ground in late winter).”

In Missouri, this native, deciduous shrub is typically found on wooded slopes, ravines, along streams and at the base of bluffs, where it has a rounded habit and may reach 10' in height. In cultivation, it is frequently cut back hard in late winter, but will rapidly grow 3-5' tall in a single growing season. Features clusters of fertile flowers (few if any showy sterile flowers to give a lacecap effect) arranged in symmetrical, rounded heads (corymbs) which typically grow 4-6" across. Oval, serrate, dark green leaves (to 8" long). A moisture lover, it should receive regular watering to grow and bloom its best. Native Americans formerly used the roots of this species for various medicinal purposes...No serious insect or disease problems.”

However, “many species of *Hydrangea*, including this one, are susceptible to a number of diseases including bud blight, bacterial wilt, leaf spot, rust and powdery mildew. Watch for aphids, mites, scale and nematodes.” Finally, it is the larval host of the *Hydrangea* sphinx moth and is native to most counties in Virginia.

So, after my plant finished blooming, I found a prominent place in a partly sunny spot, where I can easily supplement its moisture if need be, and planted it.

*Paula Boundy Horticulture Chair*

## September's Native Plant Sale

*Scene One.* September 9, 2011, a Friday morning. The heavens open above the lawn of the Wicomico Parish Church Thrift Shop. About half of the adults present, grabbing marking pens and plastic slivers, rapidly exit south into the Church Hall where they reassemble and continue writing labels. Helpers remaining outside to accept the jumble of arriving plants are deluged. *Heard Offsite:* “It looks like a wet tee-shirt competition for grannies.” There are no photos.

*Scene Two.* The following morning. Same location. Sun, glorious sun, and lacking punishing heat. The perfect weather for a native plant sale in the Northern Neck! The local boy scout troop having unfortunately recently disbanded, the Boys & Girls Club of the Northern Neck has sent substitutes who perform to much acclaim in the “junior helpers” role.

Set-up (below, after downpour) and sale (at right)



*Text: Judy Lang; Photos: Carol Hammer*



