

# THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

January 2004

Spiderwort  
(*Tradescantia virginiana*)



## JANUARY MEETING

### “The Arctic”

by John M. Roberts

Thursday, January 8, 2004 at 7:00 PM

Breakout Room in the Education and Library Complex  
of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

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Our speaker for January has made five trips to the North American arctic, including: 1. Sea kayaking by Ellesmere Island at 80 degrees North latitude, where lichens almost glow on the rocks, 2. A visit to Point Barrow, a rare site where Snowy Owls nest, 3. The Firth River where caribou migrate and wolves follow, 4. To Pond’s Inlet and Koluctoo Bay with verdant tundra and Narwhals gathering, and to 5. Northern Labrador where fin whales feed, and the northern lights become extravagant. Another boreal forest trip led through a Pleistocene ice free corridor for animal and human migration.

Drawing on his trips, and on readings from such scientists as E. C. Pielou, Tim Flannery, and Page Burt, John will look at the changing arctic and its wildlife as viewed from kayak, raft, on foot and on belly. There will be some emphasis on flora, but also birds, mammals, and insects, and a little geology and weather.

If you’d like to hear more about travelling, nature book in hand, to these remote areas, come bring a spirit of adventure and wonder for the world of the tundra.

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## CHAPTER NEWS

**NOTE:** The January meeting will be held in the Education and Library Complex on **Thursday January 8**, because the first Thursday of January falls on New Years Day

The Annual Workshop will be held at Lewis Ginter on Saturday March 6. More later.

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## HAVE YOU NOTICED?

by Robert Wright

In my seasonal fall ramblings through the backwoods, stream bottoms and waste areas of the Metro Richmond area, I have noticed many new populations of problem weeds and invasive exotics that seem to be getting a firm foothold in the Richmond area. I am wondering if others have noticed this alarming trend? Growing up in Richmond and getting an early dose of field botany when only 11, I can say with comfortable certainty that many of these pestiferous plants are relatively “new” to Richmond, and most decidedly their population size and spread to new habitats (where just a few years ago they were not present) have me worried. Among these documented invasive plants are:

- **Mile-a-minute (*Polygonum perfoliatum*).** I have noticed it well established now along railroads and around debris piles (where yard clippings are discarded). It also comes in from commercial nursery plant pots, so be on the lookout. It has “shown up” in the last four years, and it is a really huge problem in our parklands, along highways, and in riparian zones.



- **Porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*)**. I have documented this grape-like vine with its pink, then bluish-black fruits all over our City parks, including Bryan, Byrd, and Forest Hill Parks. It is spreading rapidly in south Richmond (due to birds' dispersal), and is in the Reedy Creek and Jordan's Branch system and elsewhere. I have seen it clambering out of a clogged convenience store gutter downspout on German School Road! This plant is clearly a serious threat to area parks.



- **Purple bladderpod (*Sesbania punicea*)**. The newest arrival (from South America), was spotted on a drive from Chester underneath the Pocahontas Parkway (I-895) fly over at Chippenham/I-95 interchange. The area was a construction zone equipment staging area- doubtlessly these plants are castaways from the out-of-state contractor's entourage. Hopefully, this "outbreak" will be short-lived, and it won't last but a single season.



- **Musk thistle (*Cirsium nutans*)**. Showing up along Chippenham Parkway, Parham Road and elsewhere. It is being spread by commercial mowing contractors without a doubt. Newly observed since 1995. I have some "tamed" specimens in my yard, but always cut off the dying heads before fruit set to prevent spread. Those of you west of Richmond may see it quite a bit in fields in Goochland, Powhatan and beyond.



- **Cut-leaf teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus*)**. Showing up on major highway routes around the City, especially on the Hanover boundary. The plant is being spread by contract mowers again. First seen in 2000.

For more information on exotics and alien invasives, consult the VNPS website links at: <http://www.vnps.org/links.htm#invasive>.



I've noticed this menace. Have you? Next time - some interesting botanical novelties from Richmond.

Submitted by  
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Chapter Natural Areas Registrar  
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## The Pocahontas Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

serves the counties of: Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King William, New Kent, Powhatan and the cities of Ashland, Hopewell, Petersburg, and Richmond. It meets the first Thursday of September through April at 7:00 PM in the Education and Library Complex of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, unless otherwise stated.

### Chapter Officers

President	Dean Walton
Vice President	-
Secretary	Peggy Furqueron
Treasurer	Bucci Zeugner
Membership Chair	Pat Brodie

Address all correspondence to  
Richard Moss, Editor  
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Chester VA 23831  
[mossrd@mindspring.com](mailto:mossrd@mindspring.com)

## MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2003 MEETING

Dean Walton, president, opened the meeting and welcomed guests.

**Old Business:** Frances Melton said that three years ago a sign was approved to be placed on the Nature Trail that the society had planted at J. Sergeant Reynolds. Hugh Rooney gave the sign to Frances and said we can put it up on the trail. Unfortunately the trail has not been kept up. The sign has the VNPS logo and our chapter name on it. Frances has the plan diagram for what the society did at the site. Duane Polklis asked what our commitment will be at the site. Dean said that he would visit the site, talk to the new biology professor who has taken over when Hugh Rooney retired, and will write up a report for the newsletter. We will then discuss it at the next meeting.

**New Business:** Richard Moss, the editor of the newsletter, asked if people have received their e-mail version of the newsletter. He wanted to know which format worked the best. Please call him if any one did not receive their newsletter. Dean Walton made a motion to name the newsletter. Several suggestions were Spiderwort and the Flower Press. Noreen Cullen suggested adding the VNPS logo to the newsletter. Names for the newsletter will appear in the newsletter and then we can decide at the next meeting on a name. Let Richard know about events that other clubs may be having. Because of our 501c status we can not advertise except for events that we are sponsoring. Noreen suggested that we send newsletters to the public libraries, DCR, Nature Center, etc., as a form of outreach for our club. Richard estimated that it would involve another 50 copies. Old copies of the newsletters could be taken to the Rockwood Nature Center and given away as another form of outreach for the club.

The January meeting will be Jan. 8.

**Program:** Phil Sheridan gave a very interesting and informative lecture on native insectivorous plants. He had lots of beautiful slides to illustrate his talk. He explained the work that the Meadowview Biological Research Station is doing in restoring these plants to their natural ranges.

Meeting adjourned.

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## NATIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH

### Spotted Wintergreen (*Chimaphila Maculata*)

and

### Pipsissewa (*Chimaphila umbellata*)

Both of these closely related plants are moderately shade tolerant, evergreen perennials growing to a maximum height of about 10 inches and found in coniferous and hardwood forests. Pipsissewa (*C. umbellata*) is very similar to *C. maculata* except it does not have the stripe on the leaves and the flowers are more upright.

#### Spotted Wintergreen (*Pyrolaceae Chimaphila maculata*)

**Common Names:** Spotted wintergreen, dragon's tongue, pepsissewa, ratsbane, rheumatism root, spotted pipsissewa, wild arsenic, wintergreen.

**Description:** Flowers are about 3/4 inch in size, flesh-colored, with violet pollen sacs. The leaves are alternate but appear whorled, evergreen, thickened, lance shaped with sharp serrations, one and a half to three inches long, and dark blue-green with conspicuous white stripes along veins. The flowering period is May to June. The dried leaves are slightly astringent, and the plant has been employed as a tonic and diuretic.



#### Pipsissewa (*Pyrolaceae Chimaphila umbellata*)

**Common Names:** Prince's pine, pipsissewa, waxflower, wintergreen.

**Description:** Prince's pine is a common understory species in many habitat types throughout its range but often does not reach dominance. It is found in coniferous and mixed forests with numerous tree species. The leaves alternate but appear whorled, are evergreen, thickened, lance shaped with sharp serrations, 1 to 3 inches long, shiny dark green above, green below. The flowers are white (may be pink), 5 petals, 3/4 inch across, appearing in a small group at the end of a terminal spike in summer. The fruit is a dry brown capsule persistent through the winter.

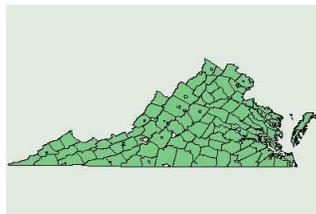
Historically, prince's pine roots and leaves were boiled and the infusion was ingested as a treatment for tuberculosis and long-lasting colds. The leaves were also used as an astringent and can also be used as an ingredient in root beer. Pipsissewa was listed in the US Pharmacopoeia from 1820 to 1916. Native Americans of various tribes had a number of uses for the plant. A leaf tea was used it for rheumatism, as a diuretic, sudorific, for kidney and urinary complaints, for stomach problems, and as a tonic. It has also been used to flavor other medicine. The leaves were applied externally on wounds and sores. However, in some people, the crushed leaves of both *C. maculata* and *C. umbellata* can produce skin irritation.



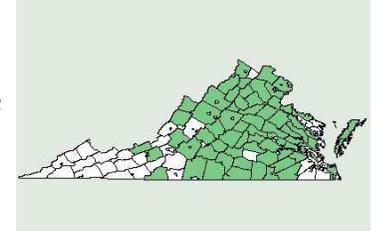
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#### Range in Virginia: *Chimaphila umbellata*

(Source: USDA, NRCS. 2003. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.5 (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA)



#### *Chimaphila maculata*



# Virginia Native Plant Society Membership Application

## Pocahontas Chapter

**Make Check payable to VNPS and Mail to:**

**Membership Chair, Blandy Experimental Farm, 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit 2, Boyce, VA 22620**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

___ Individual	\$30.00	___ Sustaining	\$100.00
___ Family	\$40.00	___ Life	\$500.00
___ Student	\$15.00	___ Associate Groups	\$40.00
___ Patron	\$50.00	(Garden Clubs, etc.)	

**I wish to make an additional contribution to \_\_\_ VNPS or \_\_\_ The Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS in the amount of:**

\_\_\_ \$10    \_\_\_ \$20    \_\_\_ \$50    \_\_\_ \$100    Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Pocahontas Chapter  
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