

THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

January 2009

Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia virginiana*)



January Meeting

Thursday January 8, 2009 at 7:00 PM

at the Education and Library Complex of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Classroom 2

The room is available at 6:30, come early and Socialize

NOTE: Due to Garden Fest at LGBG we are requested to come in through the main entrance and enter the Education Library Complex building from the garden entrance. That way, we won't be bumping into private party people.

**This Month's Presentation will be: *Introduction to Virginia Grasses*
by John Hayden, PhD**

Despite their importance in nature, agriculture, and our daily lives, grasses are often overlooked and poorly understood by even the most dedicated plant enthusiasts. In this illustrated presentation, Dr. W. John Hayden, botanist at the University of Richmond and Botany Chair for the Virginia Native Plant Society, will provide an introduction to these essential plants. The talk will first describe the grass plant in general, from overall habit to the intricacy of spikelets and florets, followed by a survey of Virginia grasses providing clues for recognition of distinctive species. The survey will be organized by ecological and structural characteristics and will also touch upon a wide variety of topics of general interest and natural history.

2009 Calendar of Events

Contact Ernest Wilson at (804) 502-6346 or by e-mail at ernest_3@msn.com for more information about Field Trips.

January

8 **Monthly Meeting:** John Hayden "Introduction to Virginia Native Grasses"

February

5 **Monthly Meeting:** Helen Hamilton "The Tall Grass Prairie"

March

5 **Monthly Meeting:** Phil Sheridan- Meadowview long leaf pine project

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Winter and Spring field Trips will be added after the Board meets in January. If anyone has suggestions please contact Daune Poklis or Ernest Wilson by the second week in January.

Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter Meeting on December 4, 2008

Due to the Christmas holiday, there was a very abbreviated business meeting. President Daune Poklis gave a brief treasurer's report stating we had \$4786 in our account at the end of November. Daune also reported the board would be meeting in the middle of January to plan field trips for the rest of the year and requested if anyone has suggestions please contact her or Ernest Wilson by the second week in January. Pat Brodie was our speaker and described her trip to the Lady Bird Wildflower Center in Austin, TX. Besides being a fascinating place to visit, the wildflower center has website at <http://www.wildflower.org/> describing the center and also allows one to search for native plant information by plant trails or names and browse through the center's collection of over 23,000 native plant images. After the speaker, we all enjoyed holiday refreshments brought by our members.

Native Plants in Winter by Richard Moss

This month I thought I would explore the woods back of my house and see what easily identified native plants I could find. Following is a selection of what I found.

Devils Walking Stick (*Aralia Spinosa*), a member of the Ginseng family, sends up a loose colony of spiny ash gray stems from a rhizomatous root system. Mature specimens may grow to 20 ft. or more and develop a few branches, but younger plants have just a single naked stem with all the leaves clustered at the top. The stems are ringed with distinctive semicircular leaf scars which are lined with sharp toothlike spines. In summer, even the leaves have spines. Photo 1 shows the large terminal bud and large leaf scar surrounded by spines. Photo 2 shows the remains of the fruit on a larger branching plant.



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

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River birch (*Betula nigra*) can be a large deciduous tree, growing 90 feet in height and spreading 30 to 50 feet, and when situated in moist areas can be long-lived. The bark, on young trees and branches, is reddish to pinkish brown and peels off in papery strips (photo 3). As the tree matures the bark becomes ridged and deepens to dark brown (photo 4).





5. American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*) is a slow-growing, deciduous, small to medium-sized, understory tree typically found in rich moist woods growing to 20-35 feet. The smooth, gray trunk and larger branches of the mature tree exhibit a distinctive muscle-like fluting that has given rise to another common name, musclewood, for this tree.



6. Virginia heartleaf (*Hexastylis virginica*), also known as little brown jug for its small jug-like flowers (inset) which appear in early spring. The leaves and roots smell like ginger, giving it another common name of wild ginger.



7. Crane fly orchid (*Tipularia discolor*) - The leaves which often have purple undersides appear in early fall and persist until mid spring when they die. In early summer, flower stalks with small greenish maroon flowers appear (7A).



8. Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*) is an evergreen creeping vine which has small twin white flowers in the spring (inset), which fuse to produce a single red berry, one of which is shown in the upper left of the photo.



9. Tree ground pine (*Lycopodium obscurum*), a clubmoss, is distinguished from running clubmosses such as running cedar by its individual, bushy form and deeply buried horizontal stem.



10. Strawberry bush or Hearts-A-Bustin, (*Euonymus americanus*) is a shade loving shrub growing up to 10 feet. In winter it can be identified by its opposite green branches and twigs and, except for old plants, a smooth green trunk (photo 11). It is deciduous with the leaves turning pale

pink or even white in the fall. However, young plants as in photo 10 taken Jan. 3, can be evergreen. Photo 12 shows the spectacular orange and red fruit in the fall with the inset showing the small inconspicuous flowers produced in the spring.



13. Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) is an evergreen fern often found in shaded north or east facing slopes in humus rich soil. The old fronds die in the spring as new fronds begin to uncoil. Christmas fern fronds were once extensively collected for Christmas decorations but the practice seems to have died out after the introduction of plastic fern fronds.



14. Sweetbay Magnolia, (*Magnolia virginiana*) is a medium size, often multi-trunked, semi-evergreen tree. The leaves are fragrant, shiny green above and silvery green below. In winter the leaves often change to tan before falling. The flowers (14A) appear in May - June, are relatively large, white and very fragrant.



15. Striped Wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*) is an evergreen, perennial, woody herb, which can reach 10 inches in height. In spring it produces 2 white flowers (inset).

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