

THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

October 2004

Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia*)



OCTOBER MEETING “Flowers, Insects, and Pollination” by Art Evans

Thursday, October 7, 2004 at 7:00 PM
Breakout Room in the Education and Library Complex
of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

Dr. Evans received his bachelor's degree (1981) in entomology and masters degree (1984) in biology. He then spent three years in South Africa (1985-88) where he attended the University of Pretoria and earned his doctoral degree (1988) in entomology. He has published 20 scientific papers on the systematics, biology and identification of scarab beetles, as well as over 100 popular articles and books on insects and spiders.

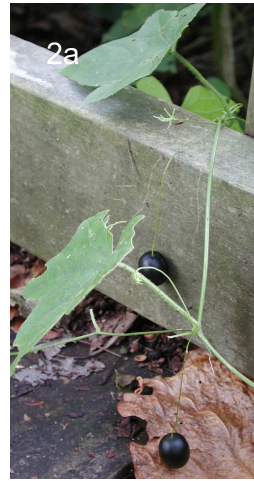
Dr. Evans is currently a Research Associate in the Entomology Department, Smithsonian Institution and the Department of Recent Invertebrates, Virginia Natural History Museum. For the past 4 years he has lived in Richmond, working as an independent researcher, freelance writer, and photographer, popularizing insects and spiders in books, magazines and newspapers. His current research projects include documenting the beetles of Virginia. He is a regular contributor writer and photographer for the Richmond Times-Dispatch and Reptiles Magazine. He was the coordinator of the Virginia BioBlitz in 2003, a volunteer project that brings together Virginia scientists, naturalists, and students to survey the plants and animals of Virginia. He was also the project manager of the first annual Richmond Insect Fair, an educational event celebrating all aspects of insects and entomology held at the 17th Street Market in June, 2003.

CHAPTER NEWS

Cumberland Marsh Field Trip

On September 4, 2004 Dean Walton lead field trip to Cumberland Marsh on the Pamunkey River in New Kent county. This preserve is a mixture of freshwater tidal marsh and wooded upland and has a short boardwalk to an observation deck over the marsh and trails through the wooded uplands bordering the marsh. Following are some photographs taken from the trip.

1. View from the observation deck
2. Along the boardwalk - Creeping Cucumber or Guadeloupe cucumber (*Melothria pendula*)
a. vine with fruit; b. flower
3. Virginia Dayflower (*Commelina virginica*) growing along the bank down to the marsh
4. Field trip members walking along the trail.
5. Yellow Passionflower (*Passiflora Lutea*) growing along with wild grapes.
6. Spurred butterfly pea (*Centrosema virginianum*) growing further along the trail in an open area.
7. Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) found at the edge of the marsh
8. Carolina Elephant's Foot (*Elephantopus carolinianus*) in a relatively dry open area along the trail.
9. A stand of devil's walking sticks (*Aralia spinosa*) with purple fruit.



Native Plant of the Month

Dog Fennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*)

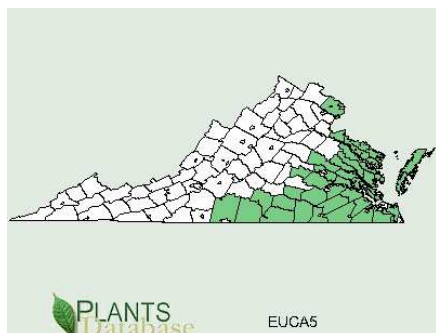


Dog fennel is a plant of roadsides and waste fields and is a short lived summer perennial growing 3-9 feet tall. The leaves are fragrant and divided into thread-like segments which give it a fern like appearance. The stems are hairy and reddish in color. Flowers appear in the late summer and are numerous, small and white with a pink tinge. In the fall the entire plant may turn a light reddish purple color. The plant spreads by seeds or regrowth from the woody base. It is found from Massachusetts to Florida and west to Texas.

Dog fennel can be an aggressive perennial and can be “particularly troublesome in unimproved or overgrazed pastures where it adds to the decline of forage yield and quality. Although generally considered to be only unsightly, the leaves contain low levels of the toxin tremitol, which causes dehydration when ingested by cattle. Cattle do not normally feed on dog fennel, but it may be eaten when more suitable forages are lacking.” (1) It also is cultivated in gardens under the name of “Elegant Feather” and is described by one source as: “This unusual perennial, the very definition of “fine textured”, is an elegant addition to the garden with willowy, relaxed needlelike leaves, which cloak upright and branched, fuzzy white clumping stems. Bright green new growth gains hints of red in maturity, and pink-tinged white flowers top the stems in late summer.” (2)

References

1. http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/BODY_AG233
2. <http://www.diggingdog.com/pages2/plantpages.php/P-0750>



Eupatorium capillifolium
Range in Virginia from
USDA, NRCS. 2004. The
PLANTS Database, Version 3.5
(<http://plants.usda.gov>). National
Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge,
LA 70874-4490 USA.



Insect enjoying dog fennel flowers

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

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____ **Individual**\$30.00 ____ **Sustaining**\$100.00

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____ **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 _____

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