

# THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



*October 2011*

## **October Meeting Canceled!!**

**Lewis Ginter is having a major concert on October 6th, the day and time of our meeting.**

Although Lewis Ginter volunteered to make arrangements to accommodate us, parking will be difficult and once the lot is full no one else will be admitted. Since the parking lot is expected to fill up early, many of our members who arrive at the usual time will probably be turned away, thus it was decided to postpone Leonard Atkins' talk and cancel the meeting.

Please note we have two field trips in October, one to Ivy Creek Park in Charlottesville and the other to Crabtree Falls in Nelson county.

We normally have our chapter election of officers in October but Hurricane Isabel caused problems so the election will be delayed. Since we will not be meeting this month, we plan to announce the slate of officers in November at the chapter meeting then send out ballots by mail after the meeting, and announce the results in the December newsletter. If you would like to volunteer to serve as an officer please notify Daune Poklis, our membership chair at 804) 741-7838 or [daune@poklis.org](mailto:daune@poklis.org). We especially need someone to fill the position of Vice President.

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## **Pocahontas Chapter Fall 2011 Event Calendar**

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| October 15  | Field trip to Ivy Creek Park, Charlottesville. Meet at the park and ride lot on Parham Rd. at 9AM. Ivy Creek Nature Preserve is 215-acre preserve bordering the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir and is a mix of upland woods, pine stands, open fields, streams, and two miles of shoreline. Its rolling hills and diverse habitats make the Ivy Creek Natural Area an ideal site to learn about the rich natural history characteristic of Central Virginia. Sporting activities and pets are prohibited. See <a href="http://ivycreekfoundation.org/ivycreek.html">http://ivycreekfoundation.org/ivycreek.html</a> for more information. |
| October 19  | Field trip to Crabtree Falls. Meet at the park and ride lot on Parham Rd. at 8AM. Crabtree Falls is arguably the most beautiful set of waterfalls in Virginia. Billed as the tallest waterfalls east of the Mississippi, Crabtree Falls is a must see for anyone who lives in the mid-Atlantic region. The trail though well maintained is steep in places so bring sturdy shoes something to eat and water to drink. See <a href="http://www.hikingupward.com/gwnf/crabtreefalls/">http://www.hikingupward.com/gwnf/crabtreefalls/</a> . for more information.   |
| November 3  | Chapter meeting at Lewis Ginter. 7:00PM. Members of the Pocahontas Group of the Virginia Master Naturalists will talk on their programs.  |
| November 5  | Field trip to the Appomattox River Park on the north side of the river below Brasfield Dam. Meet at 10AM at the Martin's parking lot in Chester.  |
| November 12 | Field trip to Forest Hill Park in Richmond. Meet at 10:00 AM at the Reddy Creek parking lot James river Park.   |

For more information about departure time and meeting place for Field Trips, contact Ernest Wilson at (804) 502-6346 or ewilson611@aol.com

## Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS meeting September 1, 2011

**Announcements:** The 2012 meeting of the Virginia Native Plant Society will be in Richmond with our chapter as host. We have already formed a committee to plan for this but we will need many volunteers to help with this meeting.

At the Friday board meeting of the state VNPS it was announced that the new VNPS web site is under construction for the state on which the various chapters can also construct their own web sites easily.

Dr. Wilson opened the meeting with greetings and then gave a slide presentation of his summer Kansas Prairie trip. The photography was excellent (as usual) and everyone enjoyed the talk. It sounded like a very worthwhile trip.

State Meeting: The State Meeting in Manassas was a really grand experience for myself and everyone there. The walks we went on in Woodbridge were very interesting. We saw gamma grasses and many other wildflowers and some eagles flying above us. I thoroughly enjoyed the trip. The talk we had Saturday night was excellent, about inclusion of green spaces in urban developments.

The next chapter meeting will be October the 6th. Our speaker will be Leonard Adkins and the topic will be "Wildflowers in the Appalachian Region". I'm sure we will all get a lot of information from him. Look forward to seeing you all there. If anyone has anything to add to the minutes or newsletters, please don't hesitate to call me or e-mail me. Thanks everyone!

Perry Thomas, secretary

### Field Trip Report:

#### Ernest Wilson

On Saturday, September 10, 2011 six members enjoyed a trip to two local parks. Originally we were scheduled to go to Point of Rocks Park but when we got there, we found that the natural area was closed due to storm damage. We walked around the picnic area and down one of the woodland paths. A bridge across one of the ravines had almost washed out and was closed so we had to go back.

We then decided to go to Henricus Park and walk in the conservation area behind the Visitor center. This was quite interesting for we were able to see many wildflowers and grasses in bloom. The ditches along the entrance road were full of Tickseed Sunflowers (*Bidens sp.*) with bright yellow flowers. September roadsides are always enlivened by their blooms. Two species of Wingstems were just starting bloom. The narrow leaved *Verbesina alternifolia* (Left below) and the wide leaved *V. occidentalis* (Right below).

#### 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** ..... Ernest Wilson  
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**Vice President** ..... OPEN

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Two kinds of White flowered Thoroughworts were also in bloom along the path. The Tall Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium altissimum*) with wide lanceolate leaves was the most common. The narrow leaved Hyssop-leaved Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium hyssopifolium*) was also found.

I thought I detected two species of Virgin Bower whose flowers are much alike. The native *Clematis virginiana* has leaves divided into three parts while the Japanese *C. ternifolia* has five parts to its leaves. Both are present in the park climbing trees and scrambling over the meadow grass loaded at this season with hundreds of small white flowers. The effect is quite beautiful. The Japanese species is very invasive. It is found all over the city of Richmond so much so that I was surprised to find the native one here. I thought we only had the invasive. Upon further investigation, I determined that only the invasive was present here too. The Japanese plant also often has three parts to its leaves next to its blooming nodes. This caused the misidentification. Looking further down the stem at non blooming nodes the vine has the five leaflets shown by *C. ternifolia*.

A lovely purple flowered Beggar Tick was blooming at the entrance to a side path (1). This proved to be the Showy Beggar Tick (*Desmodium canadense*). One surprise was the presence of American Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*) at one of the observation points. We hadn't visited this point on our Saturday trip but on Monday, September 12, I went back to investigate the Clematis and found the lotus. We should plan to have a field trip here to see the plant when it is in bloom.



Fall is the season of harvest. We were able to taste two kinds of wild grapes: the Muscadine (*Vitis rotundifolia*) and the Riverbank Grape (*V. riparia*) (2). Only the Muscadine found favor. We observed also a small pawpaw fruit. No one tried it because we thought it might not have had enough time to grow big and would be green.

Lining the path to the dock were many Winterberry Hollies (3) whose berries were just ripening. Unlike the familiar *Ilex opaca*, *I. verticillata* is deciduous. Like all hollies the berries are not good to eat but *I. verticillata* puts on a good show when in fruit. Birds eat the berries which often produce diarrhea when consumed. *I. opaca* is present in the park in the more upland areas. It does not flourish in the swampy areas favored by Winterberry.



The nearby marsh was rich in blooming Wild Rice (*Zizania aquatica*). An Osprey took off and on observing the marsh for a view of this bird a considerable number of pink flowered plants were seen on an island in the marsh some distance away. These were identified as Seaside Mallows (*Kosteletzkya virginica*)

after close viewing through binoculars. At the edge of the marsh was a large patch of Virginia dayflower (*Commelina virginica*) (4) and along the trail several sensitive partridge pea (*Chamaecrista nictitans*) plants (5).



This marsh is full of edible plants. Besides the ubiquitous Wild Rice, the edge is full of Tuckahoe (*Peltandra virginica*) whose rhizomes were a favored food of the Indians. Surely there must be aboriginal sites in the park. The lotus may have been planted by them also since it has edible roots and seeds.

The woods were full of mushrooms. They had popped up after all the rain. The mushrooms are actually fruiting bodies of the hair-like underground mycelia which are still in the soil after the above ground mushroom had disappeared. Little mushrooms had formed underground and when it rained they absorbed water and enlarged breaking out of the soil and appearing suddenly as if by magic.

There were many Amanitas and Russulas including the beautiful Caesar Amanita which is the one edible in a genus full of highly poisonous species. These are all symbionts on the roots of trees helping the roots absorb minerals and water from the soil and being fed sugars by the roots.



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