

THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

November 2010

Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia virginiana*)



November Meeting

Thursday November 4, 2010 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

This Month's Presentation will be:

**“Native Plants of Southwest Virginia - The Southwest Virginia VNPS
Trip, Spring 2010”**

by Larry Wilcox

Larry Wilcox is an amateur photographer who first became interested in taking pictures of aircraft after he retired and moved to Virginia Beach, VA. He has always been an outdoors man, but most of his time in the woods was in the fall and winter. His wife has been a wildflower enthusiast since her college days and he became interested in wildflowers through her. He started taking pictures of the flowers and was introduced to a whole new area of photography. Larry said, “My wife identifies the plants and I take their photo. I love to travel and really enjoy taking pictures of wildflowers wherever we find them.”

His presentation is of a trip that VNPS members took earlier this year to the Southwest corner of our state. The area visited contains many rare and unusual plants growing in diverse habitats, from wet lowlands to high mountain vistas. The surprising beauty of the area plus the richness of the plant life made this a truly unforgettable trip. A few of the plants exist no where else in Virginia

CHAPTER EVENTS

November 6 Field Trip - Pocahontas state park (Beaver Lake). Meet at 9:30AM at the parking lot. Note Pocahontas State Park charges a \$2.00 entrance/parking fee. Directions: From Chesterfield CH on Route 10 turn south (left from Chester, right from Richmond) on to Beach Rd., go 4.1 miles on Beach Rd. to State Park Rd., on the right. Turn Right on State Park Rd. and continue on State Park Rd. to Beaver Lake. For more information contact Ernest at (804) 502-6346 or ewilson611@aol.com.

December 4, 2:00 pm Chapter Christmas Party- At Ernest Wilson's house. More information in the December Newsletter.

Note: We will *not* meet at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens for December.

Welcome New Members

Ellen Bombalski

Darlene Dravagon

Tony and Ginger Pelling

Stuart Powell

Laura Fisher

Caroline Meehan

Note from our Secretary, Tom Matney:

Welcome to all our New members: *(see bottom of first page)*

Welcome and looking forward to seeing you at the meetings!

Also I would like to extend a big thank you to Dr. Horwitz for his talk on orchids from Israel. His talk was very informative and his pictures were superbly breathtaking!

I also would like to let all our member know that I have arranged to have all of our information put into the media and in the television station community calendars monthly so we can stay updated as far as cancellations due to weather or other circumstances.

Tom Matney, Secretary

Minutes of the October 7, 2010 Meeting of the Pocahontas Chapter of the VNPS

President Ernest Wilson called the meeting to order and made several announcements.

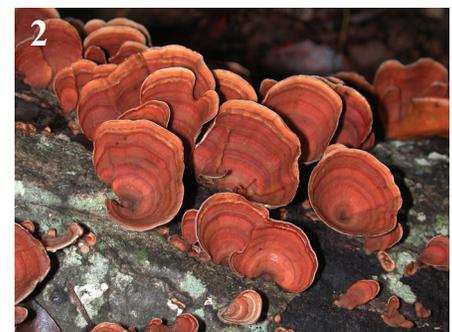
November 4th, 2010: At our November meeting, we will have Larry Wilcox will speak to us on the VNPS May trip to southwest Virginia.

November the 6th, 2010: There will be a nature walk at Pocahontas State Park lead By Dr. Ernest Wilson. Please meet at the entrance to the Beaver lake Trail Parking lot at 9:30 am. Something to look forward to!

Also, we are trying to stay abreast of information about the New Trail at Appomattox park with the Colonial Heights city council concerning the



Pocahontas State Park: 1. Along the shore of Beaver Lake. 2. Turkey tail fungus growing along the trail.



development of the paths behind Southpark mall by the Petersburg bridge. As soon as we know anything, we will keep you all informed, so hopefully, we can plan an expedition on this new trail come the spring!

Ernest Wilson has purchased land in Caroline county and he is planning to create paths for exploration trips.

Ernest wished all of us a happy and safe Thanksgiving and turned the meeting over to Hal Horwitz who gave an excellent and interesting presentation on the Orchids of Israel

The Meeting was adjourned.

Tom Matney, secretary

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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Chapter Website - pocahontaschapter-vnps.org

Groundsel Tree (*Baccharis halimifolia*)

Other common names include: Sea-myrtle, Consumptionweed, Eastern baccharis, Baccharis, Groundsel, Groundsel bush, Salt marsh-elder, Salt bush, Florida groundsel bush



Groundsel tree grows on beaches, marshes and hammocks near the shore, and various more inland sites, including ditches, old fields, and roadsides. In the Richmond area it can be seen along the side of I95 and I64.



This 6-12 ft., deciduous shrub bears gray-green, somewhat lobed, oval leaves which can be semi-persistent in winter. White to yellow flowers occur in small, dense, terminal clusters from August to November followed by silvery, plume-like achenes

Close up of leaves and flower buds.

Groundsel tree with goldenrod. Photo A. D. Lewis ⁽¹⁾

which appear in the fall on female plants and resemble silvery paintbrushes.

Apparently extending its natural range inland from the coastal plain, Groundsel Bush is the only native eastern species of the aster family reaching tree size. *Baccharis* is the ancient Greek name (derived from the god Bacchus) of a plant with fragrant roots. The Latin species name means with the leaves of *Halimus*, an old name for Saltbush, an unrelated shrub. Tolerant of saltwater spray, this handsome ornamental is one of the few eastern shrubs suitable for planting near the ocean. ⁽²⁾

Primarily recommended for natural landscapes and habitat restorations, it can also be used as an accent shrub in moist sunny areas. It is also useful in buffer plantings.

Groundsel trees as young as 3 years may produce viable seed. Because it is dioecious, male and female plants are necessary for seed production. There is no dormancy requirement for germination. It colonizes easily due to its prolific seed production and high seed germination percentage, long-range seed dispersal, shade tolerant seed production, wide adaptability to soil nutrients and salinity, survival in extreme wet soil conditions, and ability to resprout after fire.

Groundsel tree can be cultivated in a sunny location. It does not tolerate heavy clay soils but can be successfully grown in nutrient-poor soil. Its resistance to salt spray, it is useful in coastal situations. It is a fast-growing plant and will quickly regrow, even if cut back to the base, however, it can be aggressive when planted, spreading readily from seed, so caution is advisable ⁽⁴⁾.

Probably from initial introductions of groundsel tree as an ornamental into western Europe (France, Spain, and Italy) and Queensland, Australia, it has become an invasive weed, rapidly occupying open sites and encroaching



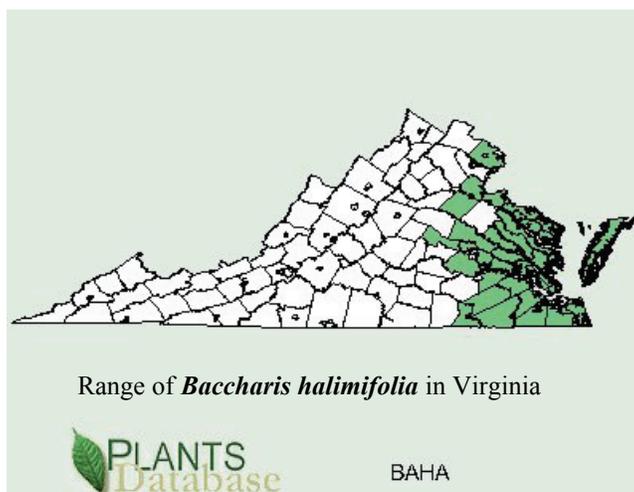
Left Flowers, Right seeds ⁽³⁾



Seeds ready to disperse in the wind. ⁽⁵⁾

into grassland and parkland. Because animals apparently find it unpalatable (the leaves and flowers contain a cardioactive glycoside), it is common to see the species growing in abundance in pastureland. Groundsel tree is toxic to livestock, causing staggering, trembling, convulsions, diarrhea, and other gastrointestinal symptoms, but this feature is less significant than the displacement of other vegetation through its rapid colonization. This native species has been regarded as an “infestation” on overgrazed rangeland in the southern United States⁽⁷⁾.

The US distribution of the groundsel tree is along the coast from Massachusetts to Texas. In Virginia it is found in the eastern third of the state, see map on right. ⁽⁶⁾. It is also found in Mexico where it closely resembles the Mexican species, *Baccharis heterophylla*. *Baccharis halimifolia* is also found in the West Indies. ⁽⁷⁾



(1) Photo taken in Mississippi by Arnold D. (A. D.) Lewis, Ph.D. (from http://www.wildflower.org/gallery/result.php?id_image=26817) (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center)

(2) http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=BAHA

(3) Susan Trammell from <http://www.regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/plantdetail.asp?tx=Bacchali>

(4) <http://www.regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/plantdetail.asp?tx=Bacchali>

(5) Shirley Denton from <http://www.regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/plantdetail.asp?tx=Bacchali>

(6) <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=BAHA>

(7) http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_baha.pdf

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