

THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

December 2008



Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia virginiana*)

December Meeting

Thursday December 4, 2008 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 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:

**“A visit to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center”
by Pat Brodie**

Imagine a place where everything is in its place...a place where the gardens, trails and architecture celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the Texas Hill country...a place where people reconnect with the land and learn to appreciate the natural beauty, economic value and environmental necessity of native plants. This place is The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas. More than 20 years ago, Lady Bird Johnson dedicated herself to protecting and preserving North America's native plants and natural landscapes from backyards to roadsides to wide, grand vistas. Every day, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's horticulture, restoration, conservation and education programs bring life to Mrs. Johnson's vision in its gardens and grounds with projects across the country. This program will tell you about how it all came to be and then show you what the center looks like today.

NOTE: Traditionally, our chapter has refreshments at the December meeting. Please bring a finger food or beverage to share. Don't limit yourselves to sweets!!

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

NOTE: Due to a formatting error in the November Newsletter a significant portion of the October minutes vanished. They are printed in their entirety below:

Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter for the October 2, 2008, Meeting

Richard Moss had the new web site he created for the chapter on his laptop for members to view before and after the meeting. Daune Poklis, chapter president, began the meeting reminding members to read the list of October field trips as listed in the newsletter. Those planning to attend need to contact Ernest in order to arrange a car pool. Ernest's cell phone and e-mail are listed in the newsletter. Information on Crabtree Falls was on the resource table. She suggested anyone interested in the demonstration of rain gardens, provided by the U.S. Botanical Garden on the Washington Mall, go to the Garden web site. Pat Brodie, membership chair, again asked if someone would volunteer to handle the membership duties. She has assumed this responsibility for several years and would like someone else to take on this position. She stated that we have 10-12 new members. Richard Moss, currently editing the newsletter, said he had received 35 ballots in the mail. All voted in favor of the slate of officers. He reported that the new web page enables links to chapter newsletters of 2005 through 2008, as well as to photos from recent field trips. The web site address is Pocahontas.chapter-VNPS.org. In the future he plans to add plant lists according to each season for each park or field trip area we visit. Ernest Wilson, vice-president, reported on the upcoming field trips (see Calendar of Events in newsletter).

Daune introduced the evening's speaker, Sheila Hayden, who has a graduate degree in Botany and is an adjunct faculty member at John Tyler Community College. Her topic was The Strange and Wonderful World of Slime Molds. Her interest in slime molds is actually a hobby. These organisms present a whole different world we do not usually see unless we are looking for them. Myxomycetes used to be considered kin to fungi. They are now considered to be a different group of organisms, neither plant nor animal. They are usually more noticeable after rain. The plasmodia stage appears as a mass of protoplasm that consumes bacteria, yeast and bits of organic matter. It looks like a giant amoeba-like cell. The sclerotium stage is when the slime dries-out and little structures appear in different forms and colors containing the spores. The three spore bearing

structures that may appear on different types of myxos are: stipes, sessile balls, and puffed-up flat structures. She had many photos of the different types of spore-bearing structures. In the field, you look for myxomycetes on rotting logs, leaf debris, grass and on soil. It also appears on mulch. Sheila became interested in these organisms while investigating a storage cabinet in the University of Richmond Herbarium while working with her husband, John Hayden. Professor John Smart had collected those myxomycetes. The reference "bible" she uses is The Myxomycetes, by Martin and Alexopoulos. The presentation stimulated members to ask many questions. Some Myxos appear only in spring, some appear only in fall, and some appear at any season. The majority are cosmopolitan, growing anywhere, although some are specific to habitat, such as at the edge of a glacier. A wet climate is the most important factor. Sheila had samples available for us to look at under dissecting microscopes. She will lead a field trip on October 18 in Pocahontas State Park, where we will search for Myxomycetes. After being dazzled by the strange and wonderful world of slime molds, we enjoyed eating birthday cake in celebration of Ernest Wilson's birthday.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Sheldon, chapter 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.

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Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter for the November 6, 2008, Meeting

Daune Poklis, chapter president, began the meeting by greeting and introducing the seven visitors. An e-mail will be sent to members about the field trip to the Rice Center on November 20. Members were asked to contact Daune or Ernest if planning to car pool. New treasurer Richard Moss reported that the chapter has a total of \$4,786.25 in the Davenport account. Daune reported that last summer's Powhatan Indian program reached over 300 children. In the spring, the chapter will be involved with butterfly programs in the Children's Garden. Ernest Wilson, vice-president, asked members to check the chapter web site where there is a link to the Rice Center which includes the driving directions. Daune introduced the speakers, Molly Dellinger-Wray and Betsy Slade, both of whom serve on the board of directors of the Friends of James River Park. Their talk was entitled, James River Park: A Little Bit of Wilderness in the Heart of the City. The Friends began about six years ago and serves as an advocate for the Park. They discussed how the park is used by the public, and contributions made by the Friends, such as, upgrading kiosks, buying new equipment, managing parking at Pony Pasture on weekends, and paying for park signs. Friends believe strongly that the Park should remain a "Wilderness," and has asked the city to make a conservation easement so that the park can never be developed. This proposal is in process, and Friends have established a Protection and Preservation Trust to act on any violation of the easement. Molly and Betsy listed ways the chapter members can help the Park: by joining the Friends, supporting hearings on easement conservation, collecting trash when visiting the park, donating to the Trust, doing an inventory of plants including invasives and how to get rid of them. Members asked questions and enjoyed the lively presentation.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Sheldon, Secretary

Field Trip to the VCU Rice Center, Charles City County, VA, November 20, 2008

Fourteen people participated in this interesting and informative field trip. We were the first organization to get a tour of the newly opened VCU Rice Center which includes the \$2.6 million research and education building and a 343-acre living laboratory on the James River. Rapidly renewable products were used when possible in construction of the building, including sorghum paneling, recycled steel and gypsum board. Seventy-five percent of the construction waste materials were diverted from landfills by recycling.

VCU Life Sciences uses the property for research, education and outreach activities, many of which focus on large rivers and their riparian landscapes.



The 4,900-square-foot Walter L. Rice Education Building (Exterior above, interior to left) houses lecture and laboratory rooms for classes, a conference room and administrative offices as well as an outdoor classroom pavilion.

The building incorporates features such as geothermal heating and cooling, solar electrical power generation and advanced water recycling and wastewater treatment systems. It relies on rain gardens to collect and treat storm water runoff, and a vegetated roof system to reduce heat island effects and storm water runoff. Energy consumption is reduced by many features, including geothermal heating and cooling; high-efficiency interior and exterior lighting; high insulation levels that rely on soy-based products and recycled denim; and ventilation via operable windows.





Above: Side view of the Walter L. Rice Education Building, showing the section housing office space and laboratories. The plantings are of native plants; inkberry holly, dwarf switch grass and Virginia willow.

Right: Cisterns used to collect water from the roof of the center.



Above: In the 1920's this creek was dammed, creating a lake. Several years ago a storm breached the dam, and the lake drained creating a potential wetland. Note the tree stump remains from when the lake was created. The Rice Center plans to remove more of the dam, replant native wetland species and study the regeneration of the wetland.

Rice Center information from: <http://www.news.vcu.edu/news.aspx?v=detail&nid=2664>
See also: <http://www.vcu.edu/rice/>
Photos: Courtesy Ernest Wilson

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