

March Meeting Thursday March 5, 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

This Month's Presentation will be: *Wild Plants to Eat* by Ernest Wilson PhD

Dr. Wilson, now retired, was Professor of Life Sciences, Virginia State University 1968-1999. He authored about a dozen research papers on plant science, taught General Botany for 25 years, General Biology for 31 years, and General Microbiology for six years. He has led numerous field trips for the VNPS and other organizations and is currently vice president o the Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS.

NOTE: Blandy Experimental Farm is searching for an Ecologist at the Research Assistant Professor level. Please share this information with your colleagues or anyone else you know who might be interested. Thanks! For more information contact: David Carr Research Associate Professor, Environmental Sciences Director, Blandy Experimental Farm dec5z@virginia.edu 400 Blandy Farm Lane, Boyce VA 22620 Phone: 540-837-1758

2009 Calendar of Events

March

7

VNPS Annual Workshop: High Mountain Flora - Saturday 9:15 AM to 3:15 PM, Gottwald Center for the Sciences, University of Richmond. Keynote speaker: Elizabeth Byers, West Virginia Natural Heritage Program. Additional speakers are Chris Ludwig, Virginia Natural Heritage Program; Tom Wiebolt of Virginia Tech's Massey Herbarium; Laura Neale, President of the Virginia Wilderness Committee. See *http://www.vnps.org/events/WKSHbrochure.pdf* for more information.

Welcome New Members Nancy Farkas Richmond, VA Suzanne Jenkins Midlothian, VA 28 The United States National Arboretum announces the Lahr Native Plant Symposium and Plant Sale: "Native Plants: In Design", 8:30am-3:30pm, Administration Building You can now register either online at http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/registration.html or by mailing in a completed form. For registration information, call 202-245-4521. The 23rd annual Lahr Symposium features a group of experts from several fields who will present an array of topics exploring the use of native plants in designed landscapes. For complete program information including the schedule, speakers, and topics click here. Lunch and early admission to the Native Plant Sale included. Fee: \$85 (\$68 FONA). Registration required.Native Plant Sale 9:30am-2:00pm Arboretum Grounds near the Administration Building. The annual Friends of the National Arboretum Native Plant Sale features a collection of local native plant nurseries offering an extensive selection of plants. Many experienced growers will be present to offer expert advice. Most vendors accept cash or checks only. Free admission.

April 5

Monthly Meeting: Phil Sheridan- Meadowview long leaf pine project.

May

2 May Picnic: Huguenot Hundred Community Association property on the James River. There are 8 acres with some wooded and some open. There is a fireplace, picnic table, benches scattered about, portable potty, boat ramp, dock, and trails through the woods. More information in April.

Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter Meeting on February 5, 2009

Daune Poklis, chapter president, began the meeting by welcoming visitors and new members. Pat Brodie, membership chair, asked members to send her updated contact information. Daune advised members to go to the chapter web site (pocahontaschapter-vnps.org) for timely information on field trips. Richard Moss will keep the web site current. Vice-president Ernest Wilson discussed February dates for members to work in the James River Park butterfly garden and to help with invasive plant removal, also in the park. Those interested may

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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contact Ernest. Daune reminded us of the Maymont Flower and Garden Show (Feb. 19-22) and the Orchid Society exhibit at Strange's Florist (Feb. 19-22). The VNPS Annual Workshop takes place at the University of Richmond on March 7. As in the past, our chapter is in charge of refreshments. Daune, Judy Sheldon, Pat Brodie and Mariann Fitzpatrick will coordinate the food and beverages. Catherine Tucker offered to help with clean-up. Members need to get their registration in soon. Catherine Tucker will be a keynote speaker for the Good Gardening Symposium at Prince George High School on March 14. Registration is required. There was discussion about a location for the chapter's May picnic. E-mail Daune with suggestions.

Helen Hamilton, president of the John Clayton Chapter of VNPS, gave an engaging and informative presentation about the several tall grass prairie preserves in Kansas she visited along with a group of VNPS members last June. She began with the statement, "The prairie tolerates adversity because of diversity." She showed many photos of native plants as they appeared in the early summer, and shared information about the management of the prairies, including the managed burns that are rotated every several years. There was an opportunity for questions from the enthusiastic audience.

Respectfully submitted, Judy Sheldon, Secretary

Plants you might see in early March



Southern Twayblade Orchid (*Listera australis*). This small orchis is typically about 4 inches high and inhabit moist woodlands (and more open bogs along partially shaded margins), often growing amidst sphagnum moss or in the areas just slightly drier than where the sphagnum grows. They come up rather quickly, set seed and senesce all within the period of a month to a monthand-a-half.



Hexastylis virginica, commonly known as Virginia heartleaf - this one was in bloom in late March.



Acer rubrum (Red Maple, also known as Swamp or Soft Maple), is one of the most common and widespread deciduous trees of eastern North America. Red maple is one of the first trees to flower in the spring, generally several weeks before vegetative bud break. The flowers are small, with slender stalks, red or rarely yellowish, with petals appearing usually in February or early March. Interestingly, the species is polygamo-dioecious. Thus, some trees are entirely male, producing no seeds; some are entirely female; and some are monoecious, bearing both male and female flowers.

See http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/ silvics_manual/volume_2/acer/rubrum.htm for more information.

Skunk Cabbage (Symplocarpus foetidus) is notable for its ability to generate temperatures of up to 15-35°C



above air temperature by cyanide resistant cellular respiration in order to melt its way through frozen ground, placing it among a small group of plants exhibiting thermogenesis. Although flowering while there is still snow and ice on the ground, it is successfully pollinated by early insects that also emerge at this time. Some studies suggest that beyond allowing the plant to grow in icy soil, the heat it produces may help to spread its odor in the air. Carrion-feeding insects that are attracted by the scent may be doubly encouraged to enter the spathe because it is warmer than the surrounding air, fueling pollination.

Eastern Skunk Cabbage has contractile roots which contract after growing into the earth. This pulls the stem of the plant deeper into the mud, so that the plant in

effect grows downward, not upward. Each year, the plant grows deeper into the earth, so that older plants are practically impossible to dig up. They reproduce by hard, pea-sized seeds which fall in the mud and are carried away by animals or by floods¹.

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Skunk_Cabbage



Alder (*Alnus serrulata*) blooms in winter this picture was taken on February 26. A multiple-trunked, suckering shrub, 12-20 ft. tall commonly found at the edge of water. Flowers are purple catkins; males in drooping clusters, females in upright clusters. The fruit resembles a small, woody cone and persists until the next spring.



Trout hily (*Erythronium americanum*) is said to get its name from the speckled leaves, reminiscent of the speckled skin of a trout. It generally grows in groups of dozens to hundreds of plants and blooms from March to May. This one was in bloom on March 16. By June the above ground parts have withered away. Young plants are flowerless and have only one leaf, while older plants produce two leaves and a single flower. A plant's corm has to reach sufficient depths (10 to 20 centimeters below ground) before it will devote energy to making the additional parts

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