

THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



May 2010

May Picnic

Saturday May 8, 2010 at 11:00 AM

Bring food for yourself and to share. There will be a short field trip after lunch.

Directions: The lane to the park is between 10800 and 10820 Cherokee Road, near the intersection of Cherokee Road and Old Gun Road in Chesterfield County. There will be a pole with a hanging basket at the lane entrance (can't guarantee native plants).

1. From Chippenham Parkway (VA-150, Willey Bridge), take exit for Huguenot Road (VA -147) and go East. Turn Left on Cherokee Road (fourth street). Lane will be on right 3 miles from Huguenot Road.
2. From Huguenot Bridge, turn right on Cherokee Road (third street) and follow directions above.
3. From VA-288, take exit for Robious Road/Huguenot Trail (VA-711) and turn East. Turn left on Old Gun Road (VA-673) (fourth or fifth traffic light). Turn left on Cherokee Road, where Old Gun takes a sharp turn to right and starts up hill from river. Lane will be on left between second and third houses.

**NOTE: We will not have a meeting at Lewis Ginter this month.
Our next regular meeting will be in September.**

Chapter Events

- May 1 Ivy removal. Meet at parking lot entrance to North Branch Park off Texas Court. To reach Texas Court go out Meadow Street towards the river from Main St. At the end of Meadow St. turn left on Kansas Ave. Continue on Kansas until you reach Texas Court one block before end of Kansas Ave. Turn right on Texas Court. Go one block. Turn left into parking lot.
- May 8 Chapter Picnic - 11 AM at Huguenot Hundred Community Association between 10800 and 10820 Cherokee Road, near the intersection of Cherokee Road and Old Gun Road in Chesterfield County. Bring Food for yourself and to share. There will be a short field trip.
- June 5 10 AM Joseph Pines Field trip. Meet in the Chester Martins store parking lot (Ukrops will be gone by then) at the intersection of Route 10 and Route 1 in Chester. Contact Ernest Wilson at 804-502-6346 or 804-358-3846 to confirm in case there are changes.
- July Tentative Field trip to Big Meadows led by Catharine Tucker. Contact Ernest Wilson at 804-502-6346 or 804-358-3846 to confirm the time and meeting place.

Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS: April 1, 2010 Meeting

The meeting was opened by the president, Ernest Wilson.

Announcements: The Chapter will have a display “Trees and Butterflies” at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Children’s Garden on April 24 and 25 at the Good Green Fun and Spring Fling events. We will also have displays at a booth on May 22, Sept. 25 and October 23 and 24. Daune asked that anyone who would like to help at any of these times please contact her.

Rubyjane Robertson, Pat Brodie, Catharine Tucker, Ellen Bombalski, Bill Smyth Judy Sheldon, Mary Ann Fitzpatrick, Ernest Wilson and John Hayden were acknowledged and thanked for jobs well done at the Workshop. April 3 – Field trip to Pony Pasture to check on the status of Bluebells planted there last year. Meet in parking lot at 10:00

April 10 – Field trip on North Bank of James River Park. Contact Ernest for exact meeting place and time.

April 17- Field trip to Lee Park and Ferndale Park with lunch in Petersburg. Meet at the Chester Ukrops at 10:00

April 20 – Butterfly Garden Work Day 10:00-2:00

May 1 – Invasive removal day at James River Park. Meet at the North Bank Parking lot (Texas Court) at 10:00. Contact Ernest if you plan to participate.

May 8 – Pocahontas chapter annual picnic (Directions on page 1 of this months newsletter).

June 5 – Field trip to Joseph Pines Preserve Meet at Chester Ukrops at 9:00

Speaker: John Hayden, Botany professor at University of Richmond presented “Husk Tomatoes from Near and Far”. Husk tomatoes, also known as ‘ground cherries’ and ‘tomatillos’ other name is *Physalis pubescens*. They were known as a food source since Mesoamerica and cultivated by the Aztecs. John’s interest in the husk tomatoes and its anatomy began with a research project about anther structure and progressed to presence/quantity of the glandular and non glandular hairs on the different species and their presence as associated with the upright or horizontal position of the flower. If upright, there are fewer sticky hairs. The details of the hairs are important for identification purposes. Also of interest is the anther structure and mechanism for pollen dispersal. Crystals form in the anthers which cause them to “unzip” resulting in pollen dispersal. John questions whether these

crystals which split the anthers are also responsible for the ever present holes in the leaves. (A theory of self inflicted damage?). There is more study to be done with regards to the glandular hairs as well.

After a question and answer period. The meeting was closed.

Respectfully submitted
DP

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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The following are blooming in my yard this year: 1: Fringe tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*), 2: Cross vine (*Bignonia capreolata*), and 3&4, two ladyslippers (*Cypripedium acaule*) came up in the front yard and bloomed this year.

Richard Moss



Field trip to James River Park - Pony Pasture

Ernest Wilson

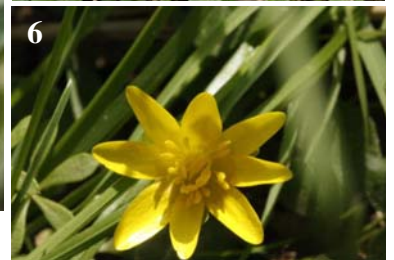
On April 3 two members of the Pocahontas group followed me for a field trip to Pony Pasture, a part of the James River Park System. We were searching for the Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) planted in this part of the park system in early winter. We eventually found them right next to the parking lot. Most of these were in bloom.

The area had been cleared by Chesapeake Bay Foundation volunteers who uprooted the invasive Asian honeysuckle shrub Amur River Honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*). This shrub is a persistent invader in James River Park especially in the Pony Pasture where it has occupied most of the land around the rapids. The Pony Pasture has more invasive than native plants.

The following weeds were observed in bloom: Purple Dead Nettle (*Lamium purpurea*), Persian Veronica (*Veronica persica*), Chickweed (*Stellaria media*), Gill-over-the-ground (*Glechoma hederacea*) and the buttercup, Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*). I mistakenly had called this Kidney-leafed Buttercup. The later is the only perennial of these weedy winter annuals. All originated in Europe and adapted to the less severe European climate. Consequently they bloom ahead of many of our natives as soon as it gets warm enough to flower.

We walked along the Pleasant Creek trail and encountered several patches of Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), and Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*). The Marsh Marigold in places was almost as frequent as the ubiquitous Common Blue Violet (*Viola sororia*) and its blue and white Confederate Violet variety. We were also surprised to see colonies of Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadensis*) in several places in the park. All were in bloom. Lastly we did find one patch of the Yellow Trout Lily (*Erythronium americanum*) along the James River trail. Many of these were in bloom. My theory about the increased vernalization caused by our cold winter may have validity after all.

Many native plants as well as exotics occur in the Pony Pasture. It is a great place to visit in the spring. Below are some pictures of plants we saw.



1 & 2 Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)

5. Paw-paw (*Asimina triloba*)

3: Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)

4 & 6: Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*)

Report on the Field Trip in Byrd Park and James River Park on April 10, 2010 - Part 1

Ernest Wilson

One other member and I went on this field trip. The meeting place was no longer accessible by car. We had to park some hundreds of feet from the entrance to Pump House Park. The bridge over the small stream arising from the spring behind Dogwood dell had been weakened by floods and was unsafe for autos to cross.

A road next to the stream goes up into the woods. We decided to walk up this road because several interesting native plants were growing in these woods.

We saw a number of small Basswood trees (*Tilia americana*) were growing near the stream. Basswood is common in the limestone areas of Virginia in the Big Valley but is virtually unknown here. The European Little Leaf Linden (*Tilia cordata*) is more common in Richmond as it is often planted as a street tree. The Boulevard is lined with it. Since many frequently planted ornamental have escaped to these woods, at first I thought that the Linden trees I found were this species but the leaves are much larger than the European species. It also forms shoots from the roots and the Little Leaf does not.

The presence of an occasional Sugar Maple suggested that a small scale cove forest once existed here as is common in the mountains west of the Big Valley. The forest is considerably degraded by the invasion of exotics but none the less the cool moist micro climate of the stream bottom might have supported such a community.

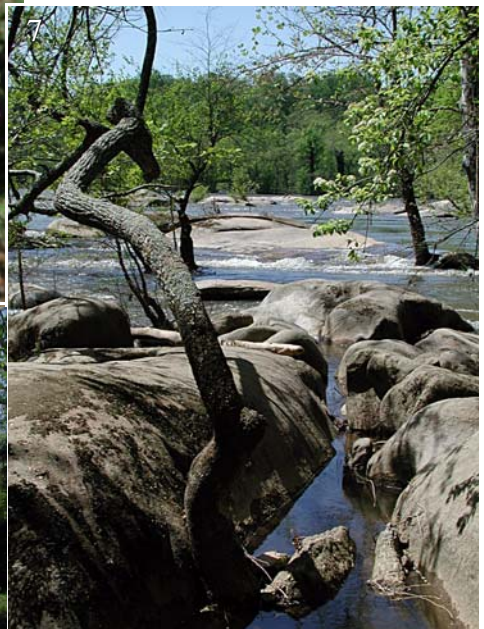
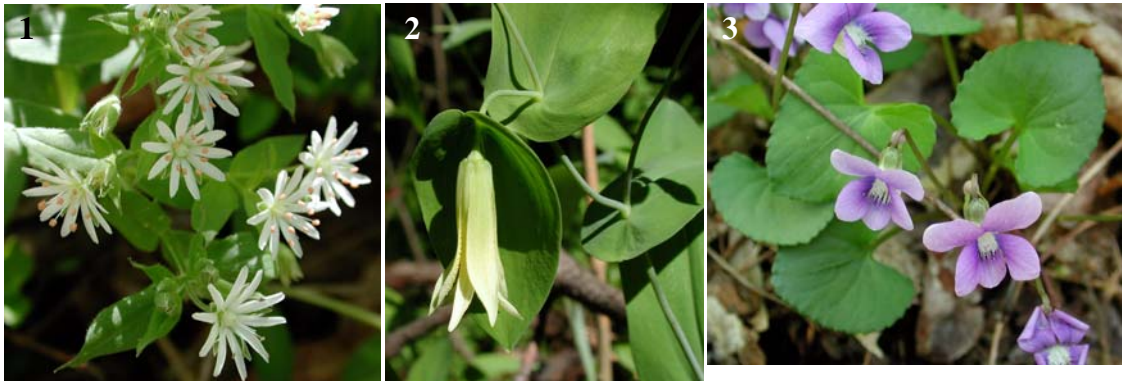
Among the exotics which flourish with vigor here are some natives: May Apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), Yellow Trout Lily (*Erythrinum americanum*), Giant Chickweed (*Stellaria pubera*)(1), Perfoliate Bellwort (*Uvularia perfoliata*)(2). There is also one small leaved purple violet(3) which may be a form of the Common Blue Violet (*Viola sororia*) or another species perhaps the Southern Wood Violet (*Viola hirsutula*). There are several species listed in Newcomb's Wildflower Guide that this plant could be. We were unable to identify it.

At the top of the hill a patch of pink flowered Wild Azalea (4) (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*) was in full beautiful bloom and quite a sight to see. Its pink and white flowers were very fragrant. There were also several redbud trees (5) (*Cercis canadensis*) in bloom.

We returned to the main road along which we found the non-native storksbill (*Erodium cicutarium*) (6), then walked to Pump House Park and through a strip of woods which had in part been cleared by the city for a water main and invaded by Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria officinalis*), then over the rail line to the river.

The Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginiana*) which we had come to see were past their prime (photos next page). The toothworts (*Dentaria laciniata*) and Trout lilies had gone entirely to seed and the Smooth Rock Cress (*Arabis laevigata*) was about to. However, Spring Beauties (*Claytonia virginica*) and the shrub, Cherry-leaved Viburnum (*Viburnum prunifolium*), were still in fine flower.

The weather was excellent and the river was beautiful having settled back into its bank. All participants enjoyed the trip including my dog Chester who took the occasion to bathe in the river several times.



7. The River 8. The Pump house

Field Trip to James River Park April 10 - part 2 pictures



1. Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)
2. Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) with caterpillar
3. Cherry leaved viburnum (*Viburnum prunifolium*)
4. Mayapple and Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginiana*)
5. Spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginiana*)
6. Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)
7. American toad (*Bufo americanus*)

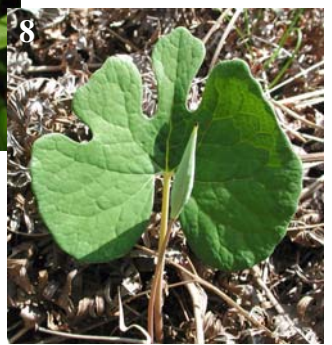
Field Trip to Lee Park and Appomattox Regional Parks, April 17

A. Lee Park



1. Pink Azalea (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*)
2. Lady's slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*)
3. White Violet
4. Birdfoot violet (*Viola pedata*)
5. Leopardbane (*Arnica acaulis*)
6. Woolly Ragwort (*Packera tomentosa*)
7. Stargrass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*)

B. Appomattox Regional Park (Ferndale)



1. Violet Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis violacea*)
2. Golden Alexanders (*Zizia aurea*)
3. Greenbrier (*Smilax* sp.)
4. Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*)
5. Eastern Bluestar (*Amsonia tabernaemontana*)
6. Trumpet Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*)
7. Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)
8. Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)
with seed pod

**Pocahontas Chapter
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