



# THE POCAHONTAS CHAPTER OF THE VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

May 2016

## Annual Picnic at Three Lakes Park Shelter 2, 400 Sausiluta Drive Henrico VA Sunday May 1, 2016

**Gather at 1, Dine at 1:30, Stroll at 2:30, Plant Swap at 4:30.**

**Bring a dish to share.**

Note: There will not be a meeting at Lewis Ginter in May, We will next meet in September.

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### Chapter Events:

"Privet Pulls" Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden April to June 2016

There is now hardwood mulch available to spread on the Japanese Stiltgrass infested areas; I am hoping we can distribute it in the next couple of work days.

Tue. May 3 9 am - 11:30 am

Sun. May 15 10 am - 12:30 pm

Tue. June 7 9 am - 11:30 am

Sun. June 12 10 am - 12:30 pm

Meet at the Admission Hall and bring your favorite small tools, dress for the weather outside, hat, gloves etc. Please notify leader so we can notify you in the event of cancellation for bad weather. Many thanks in advance for your assistance, see you in the Garden! Any questions please contact Beth Farmer at [beth16085@hotmail.com](mailto:beth16085@hotmail.com) or Caroline Meehan at [cjrtmeehan@juno.com](mailto:cjrtmeehan@juno.com)

### Chapter Facebook Page

Our Facebook page is up and active! Many of you have "liked" it. Please share it with your Facebook friends; you can do this by finding the "share" option and doing so on your own timeline, on a friend's timeline, in a private message, or in a group. If you need help with this, feel free to contact me and I can send you a tutorial that will walk you step-by-step through the process. It would be especially helpful to share our new page in any Facebook groups which you may participate in, for example, garden clubs and swaps, master gardener groups, master naturalist groups, local and wildlife enthusiasts, etc. I also encourage you to engage with the page by liking, commenting on, or sharing posts, events, photos, etc. Doing so will boost the visibility of our content in others' news feeds. Most of all, I need your contributions—photos you've taken, observations of what's blooming on your property or on your travels, media stories about conservation efforts, etc. If you prefer, you can share with me through email at [db.robinson@comcast.net](mailto:db.robinson@comcast.net), and I will post the content on the page. Thanks for your support!

<https://www.facebook.com/PocahontasVNPS/>

Dabney Robinson, [Db.robinson@comcast.net](mailto:Db.robinson@comcast.net)

### President's Message

Hi all, this is an article I wrote about our visit to Dorey. If you are not joining us, you are missing out :) Hope to see a good turn out Sunday May 1 at the picnic.

It was a sunny blue sky and a cool breeze, that greeted the 6 folks that meet up to explore the woods of Dorey Park. This is a hardwood forest, oaks, hickories, poplars, and gums, with understory of dogwoods, various blueberries, sassafras and a kalmia or two and the random pines and cedars with hollies galore. The charming blossoms of Bluets, *Houstonia caerulea*, awaited

us as we crossed the road to the trailhead. The pale blue flowers fluttered in the wind, giving credence to the common name quaking ladies. Just inside the wood, we found the unfurling bright green leaves of Pink Lady's Slippers, *Cypripedium acaule*. As we progressed around the curve, we were delighted to find them in bloom, scattered around the forest floor, ranging from pale pink to a deeper pink, as they matured. I took the group down a little path, connecting the gravel path down to the rougher bike path to view the swamp cabbage and the plethora of unfurling fern leaves, ranging from lime green fiddleheads to burnished red foliage. The bright but deep green large leaves of the skunk cabbage stretched out as far as you could see, reminding one of hostas almost. We passed around a leaf to smell, but agreed it was not really all that skunky, maybe due to the chill in the air? We doubled back, passing several Sweetbays, *Magnolia virginiana* and impressive stands of Summersweet, *Clethra alnifolia*, both saving their blooms and heady fragrance for later in the season. As we continued on from the "front woods" to the "back woods" via the creek and pipeline swath, we heard the unique song of a chuck-will's widow, a nocturnal bird of the nightjar family, related to the whippoorwill. Recording from Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVUTuWfm7oA> We stood in listened for a moment, laughing as a rooster from a neighboring farm seemed to be answering him. Was he fussing about us, the intruders? After pausing by the creek, to listen to its song and looking for the shoots of the goldenrod, joeype and boneset that summer will bring, we continued in the "back woods". We took the gravel "high road" hoping to find pink Pinxterbloom azalea in bloom, and we did! Some of the blooms were still tightly held, others showed their glory and the highest had been "burned" by the latest round of cold weather. Yellow Tiger Swallowtails flitted nearby, seeking out their sweet nectar. As we started the trek back to the parking lot, we stopped to admire the baby leaves of the *Sassafras albidum* and pointed out their bright yellow blooms, which were fading. They were just leafing out, the soft green appearing silvery, and so very soft to the touch. Although still thumbnail sized, we did find its three leaves, oval, mitten and flame/ghost. One member pointed out if you scratch the bark, it smells of gin and tonic



**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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with a lemony twist. As we neared the Frisbee course, we doubled back down near the creek, to see the last blossoms of the wild evergreen ginger, *Hexastylis virginica*. While small in size and hidden by the leaves, the brownish reddish triangle flowers are a real treat to see. There was a mystery of the day, blue/green foliage, reminiscent of Solomon seals but smaller, small BB sized buds dangling, sometime in pairs, sometime single, maybe a hint of yellow. We left unsure of what it was, maybe immature Solomon seal, maybe false Solomon seal, maybe Bellworts? As we exited the forest and crossed the mowed lawn that encircled the pond, we debated the color of the "other" Bluets, *Houstonia pusilla*, even smaller in stature, much more purple to me, with a red eye. I think they should be called "purplets". As I watched the other park goers scattered about, on picnics, enjoying the dog park, fishing and heard the peals of laughter from the playground, I pondered how many of them knew the treasures of the forest we had seen.



Photos Dabney Robinson, Leslie Allanson  
Leslie Allanson

## Minutes of the Pocahontas Chapter, VNPS Meeting, April 7, 2016

**Welcome:** Leslie Allanson called the meeting to order with 32 persons present.

**Program:** Dabney Robinson introduced Dr. John Hayden, professor at the University of Richmond since 1980 and Botany Chair of the Virginia Native Plant Society. His topic was “Plants Do the Strangest Things: Pollination Mechanism in the Underground Flowers of *Commelina benghalensis*.” October 19, 2012, Dr. Hayden found *Commelina benghalensis* growing on the University of Richmond campus. It is listed as a federally noxious weed, resistant to glyphosate. At that time, the plant was not known in Virginia. The plant’s rhizomes bear subterranean cleistogamous flowers. By what mechanism, then, are these flowers pollinated? With the assistance of his student, Camille Fagan, Dr. Hayden researched how the style grows in a coiled shape in the tight flower bud. The elongating style smashes the anthers, leading to pollination. The result is one large and two small seeds. The plant’s above-ground flowers use a different process with different seed results. This research was accepted for publication in *Weed Science*. The following portion of the program focused on some other plants with strange pollination processes. Perhaps the most unusual example focused on how wind pollination is possible in a plant with an underground flower. The *Alexgeorgea* is found in desert areas of Australia. Its male plant has flowers above ground, while only the style and stigma of the subterranean female flowers appear above ground. This allows for pollination. When asked the reason for these strange processes, Dr. Hayden indicated that they provide a bet-hedging strategy for the survival of each plant.

Following the program, Dr. Hayden provided an overview of the digitization process of the University of Richmond’s herbarium and indicated a need for volunteers to assist during mid-June through July. Members were encouraged to sign up to help.

**Business Meeting:** The Outreach/Education Committee presented native plants to new members and guests.

Announcements included the following:

1. Privet Pulls at Ginter - May 3 and June 7, 9-11:30 a.m. and April 17, May 15, and June 12, 10-12:30 p.m.
2. Dorey Park Strolls - April 10 and April 24, 1:45 p.m.
3. Annual Picnic - Three Lakes Park - May 1, 1 p.m. Plant swap is included.

A donation of \$150 will be sent to the Ginter Library for books as part of the Memo of Understanding with the garden. Janet Woody, Ginter’s librarian, will share a list of the books with members. Janet is currently seeking estimates for the reprinting of Louise Burke’s *Discover the Native Trees of the Richmond Area*, a project with which the chapter has agreed to assist.

Richard Moss, treasurer, reported a balance of \$4,759.

Dabney Robinson, membership chair, announced that the chapter has 117 members.

**Field Trips:** Robert Wright led a field trip to Larus Park on April 2. Additional information is on Facebook. Leslie and Richard led a nature walk at Pocahontas Park on March 24. Robert may announce another field trip this month.

**Project Reports:** Leslie and Catharine Tucker will meet with the James River Park Invasives Removal Task Force later this month.

The Outreach/Education Committee has met and will provide items for guests and new members.

Leslie and Joy Antrim continue to work with Henrico County to promote the use of native plantings. Leslie encouraged members to work with additional counties and the City of Richmond. She will assist members in their efforts.

Grace Chapman Elton, Ginter’s horticultural director, will have a list of native plants available for use. *The Flora of Virginia* was used for selecting plantings in Ginter’s new native plant garden.

Mauro Correa has an abundance of May apple plants and offered them to interested members.

**Next Meeting:** The annual picnic, May 1, will be held in place of a May meeting. Regular meetings will resume in September.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Caperton, Secretary

### “In Search Of”: Botanical Adventures of a Plant Detective

**This month’s target:** *Dryopteris marginalis* (L. Gray) Marginal Wood Fern

In October 1946, a retired C&P telephone engineer, W. W. Hopkins, collected the marginal wood fern “on a moist bank of branch near Granite”, and placed the specimen in the State Herbarium at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPISU) in Blacksburg, now called the Massey Herbarium at Virginia Tech. Granite is the shortened



form of “Granite Station” a mapped placename for the geographic region around the Southern Railroad crossing of the tracks on Forest Hill Avenue in South Richmond (formerly in Chesterfield County prior to 1970 annexation). The area was famous for granite quarrying (see “In Search Of ... *Dryodesma rupestre*”, December 2015 Chapter newsletter) which historically supported rock-loving flora. Some of these still remain today. It is possible that this fern still persist in that region at Granite Station”

On August 12, 1986, I found this rather uncommon fern on a disturbed wooded slope on the south side of the Boulevard “Nickel” Bridge and on the east “downstream” side of the bridge. It was growing as a single clump in a severely eroded area where a soil slump had occurred. Now, the area is crisscrossed with bike trails, and there is fear that the station for the marginal woodfern is destroyed. The specimen (#1006), was placed in the VCU herbarium, now at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden.

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[<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=marginal+woodfern&view=detailv2&&id=D4546636709C2C592747CF352820148CA7157E0D&selectedIndex=10&ccid=s%2bh4pcS6&simid=608045307111999763&thid=OIP.Mb3e878a5c4ba886f6a3e7279f2837304o0&ajaxhist=0>].

Catherine Tucker visited Henricus Historical Park on the 23rd of April and took this picture of Cross-vine (*Bignonia capreolata*).



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