



Shenandoah Chapter
Shenandoah Chapter
Virginia Native Plant Society
February, 2008

Mission Statement:

We are a conservation organization dedicated to conserve Virginia's native plants and their ecosystems through education, advocacy and activities that promote appreciation, stewardship and appropriate use.

Next Meeting: February 14 2008 7:30: Speaker: Our speaker will be Wendy Cass of the Shenandoah National Park who will speak on the Shenandoah National Park Rock Outcrop Stewardship Program. If you have not heard about this you might be fascinated at what botanical treasures have been found on these rock outcroppings.

Place: Plecker 128 Blue Ridge Community College

Calendar:

March 8, 2008 VNPS Workshop about Native Orchids, Richmond VA check website for details

April 26-27 Field Sketching with Lara Call Gastinger. See details below

April 26, Riverfest in Waynesboro and location for our **annual plant sale**. Please contact Anneli Tattersall for more info or to help 540-322-1146, abtattersall@adelphia.net

Announcements:

Field Sketching with Lara Call Gastinger

Saturday, April 26 – Sunday, April, 27

Join botanical artist Lara Call Gastinger and Flower Camp Director Nancy Ross Hugo for two days of observing, sketching, and painting wildflowers, ferns, and trees at Flower Camp, near Howardsville, Virginia. The widely acclaimed illustrator of the *Flora of Virginia*, Lara will help you observe plants more carefully, render them more accurately, and record them more expressively. Participants will be focusing on phenomena unique to the fourth week of April and practicing techniques that help turn even a quick sketch into a valuable botanical record. Using mixed media, even non-artists can learn to create pages illustrating “the story of a day outdoors” at this workshop, and teachers will learn new ways to approach field studies. Rendering trees will be a new wrinkle for artists who have studied with Lara before.

Tuition of \$325 includes three meals (lunch Saturday through brunch Sunday), one night's lodging, instruction, and most materials. Participants wishing to arrive Friday night may do so for an additional \$50, which includes light breakfast and a Friday evening sneak preview of *Remarkable Trees of Virginia*, Nancy's forthcoming book.

Ten percent of each tuition will be donated to the Flora of Virginia Project.

Wildflowers of the Shenandoah Valley

Identify the first wildflowers of spring. Learn many interesting facts such as why Skunk Cabbage melts snow and what wildflower the Indians used as a salt substitute. From hepatica to violets, learn about the spring beauty all around us on the beautiful rocky slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains. All classes, except the first one, will be hands-on in the field.

62224, \$50

Three Wednesdays, April 23-May 7, 6-8 pm

BRCC Weyers Cave Plecker Center P126C

Instructor: Diane Holsinger

An open invitation: All members and prospective members of the Shenandoah Chapter of VNPS are invited to become more involved with Chapter functions, projects and newsletters. No experience is necessary; only enthusiasm and ideas coupled with action is required. Knowledge of plants would be wonderful but certainly not necessary as we are all students. Time commitment is whatever works for you. This is a volunteer organization and as such we are as good as the people who commit their time. We have a lot of very talented and dedicated people in this group which accounts for the excellent field trips, interesting meetings, successful plant sales, plant surveys in the GW National Forest and conservation projects that we have enjoyed in the past.

Please consider: submitting an article(s) to the newsletter, attending board meetings which are open to everyone, helping with the plant sale or leading a field trip. Please contact any board member listed below to become more involved. Thanks

Chapter Officers

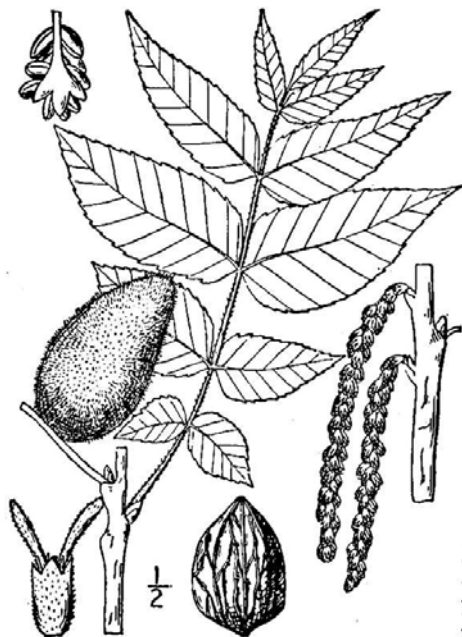
President	vacant		
Vice President	Michael Seth	540-438-1301	sethmj@jmu.edu
Treasurer	Chuck Auckerman	540- 828-2065	ChuckAuckerman@aol.com
Hospitality	Lib Kyger	540-828-6252	kyger@Bridgewater.edu
Newsletter/ Website	Elaine Smith	540-298-0773	smithes6@juno.com
Membership	Bea Woody	540-289-6106	beawoody@hotmail.com
Conservation/ Education	Chris Bowlen	540-289-6801	bowlenchris@comcast.net

Native Plant Profile

Butternut (*Juglans cinerea* L.). Also know as white walnut. From “Common Forest Trees of Virginia and How to Know Them,” come the bare bones about this intriguing, vanishing tree:

“The white walnut, usually called butternut in the North, is a smaller tree than the black walnut, though in the highlands and where it attains its best development, it reaches a height of 70 feet and a diameter of 3 feet. The trunk is usually forked or crooked, and this makes it less desirable for saw timber. The bark differs from that of the black walnut in being light gray on branches and on the trunk of small trees, becoming darker on large trees. The tree may also be distinguished from black walnut (*juglans nigra* L.) by the velvet collars just above the scars left by last year’s leaves. The compound leaves are 15 to 30 inches long, with 11 to 17 sharply pointed, oblong, finely toothed leaflets 2 to 3 inches long.

Flowers are of two kinds on the same tree, the male in long yellow-green catkins, the female is distinguished by...conspicuous,



red-fringed stigmas. The fruit is a nut enclosed in an oblong, somewhat pointed, yellowish green husk, about 2 inches long, which is covered with rusty, sticky hairs. The nut has a rough, grooved shell and an oily, edible kernel.

The wood is light, soft, not strong, coarse-grained, light brown, and takes a good polish. It is used for interior finish of houses and for furniture. A yellow or orange dye can be made from the husks of the nuts.”

DIFFERENCES. Other sources wax more eloquent on this sparse and sparsely appreciated tree. Unlike its fellow blight sufferer, the American chestnut, butternut rarely is more than an “occasional component of forest stands.” Its leaves are much stickier and more hairy than the black walnut, and the “same rust-colored, sticky pubescence that covers leaf petioles and young branchlets in their first years’ growth is especially noticeable on the nut husks.”

The kernels of the nuts are extremely oily and sweet, but with a tendency to turn rancid quickly. (Cold storage is needed and it is reported that “nuts in the shell will keep a year or more under cool, ventilated conditions.”) If you pick up a nut, it will stain your hand, just like a black walnut.

HISTORY and USES. Native Americans extracted oil from crushed butternuts by boiling them in water, and used the inner bark extensively for dyes. During the Civil War, backwoods Confederate troops were sometimes dressed in homespun uniforms of butternut-dyed cloth, hence their nickname of “butternuts.” In New England the flavorful kernels are still combined with maple sugar in candy. The nuts reportedly make a fine syrup as well, but it takes considerably more sap—and longer boiling—to render syrup than from a maple. Roger Williams mentioned that the English used butternuts for “making an excellent beere both for taste, strength, and color.” Butternut shells found at the Newfoundland site (from around 1,000 A.D.) of the Vikings of L’Anse aux Meadows most likely were brought back from forays of the coastlines of current-day New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Butternuts also are an important food for wildlife, as many mammals eat the nuts. Butternuts contribute significantly to forest biodiversity, especially in their northernmost ranges where black walnuts do not grow.

Like black walnut wood, butternut accepts a high polish, is easily worked, and is rot resistant: It “stays put” and doesn’t warp or crack.

The extraordinary lightness of the wood combined with its lustrous qualities made it a popular choice for church altars, panels, and other decorative cabinetry. Peattie notes that “the paneling of the Chicago Board of Trade grill is veneered in perfectly matched half-panels” and it was used often in paneling for early 20th century luxury ships and ocean liners.

In Virginia, butternut has been documented in over 60 counties (Digital Atlas of Virginia) with occurrences mostly in the Piedmont and mountains; rarely in the Tidewater. In more southern climates, such as Georgia and Alabama, butternuts are found exclusively in the mountains. The canker (*Sirococcus clavignenti-juglandacearum*) has devastated butternuts not only in Vermont, but over a 21-state area. This virulent disease has never been found outside of North America, although it is believed to have been imported from elsewhere.

Sources: Edward Goodell, “Walnuts for the Northeast,” *Arnoldia* 44:1-19 (1984); Michael A. Dirr, *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, 5th edition, Champaign: Stipes Publishing LLC, 1998. Virginia Department of Forestry, *Common Forest Trees of Virginia: How to Know Them*, Charlottesville: Department of Forestry, rev 2002. Donald Culross Peattie, *A Natural History of Trees of Eastern and Central North America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin (1991). Murray Carpenter, “Scientists Work to Protect a Little-Known Tree from an Insidious Disease,” *New York Times*, November 28, 2006 edition.

Drawing: Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. Vol. 1: 579.

Corn gluten meal (CGM)

By Lisa Gray

Corn gluten meal (CGM) applied to the lawn or garden as a pre-emergent herbicide and nitrogen source is a great organic alternative to chemical products. I started using it about 10 years ago when Gardens Alive catalog first marketed it in 1994 as a product by the name of A-Maizing Lawn (now called WOW Plus). It contains 78% CGM with the remainder ingredients being bone meal, molasses, and soybean hulls to give it an N-P-K ratio of 8-1-1.

After moving in 1998 to a larger lot in Virginia, the Gardens Alive product was too expensive. Luckily corn gluten meal is used to feed livestock and is available at the Augusta Co-Operative Farm Bureau in Staunton. The price varies but it is generally five dollars or less for a 50 pound bag, so I fertilize and weed-treat my 15,000 square foot lawn for a mere \$30. If you prefer a commercial product, there are others now available besides WOW Plus. Cockadoodle Doo Organic Weed Control is one of them.

The N-P-K ratio for corn gluten meal is 9-1-0 and the recommended application rate for weed control is 10-20 pounds/1000 square feet. This yields approximately 1-2 lb N/1000 square feet. It is best applied a few weeks before weed germination or when the forsythia blooms. It should be watered in if there is no rain. I must warn you that your yard will smell like a barn but the sprinkling should take care of that. If you have an irrigation system, keep the lawn on the dry side during the spring germination period. An early fall application can also be made at the same rate to control fall germinating weeds. Research has found that weed control gets better with subsequent annual or biannual treatments.

I have generally applied CGM in the spring at 10-12 lb/1000 square feet. When I discovered that CGM actually has quite a bit of nitrogen, I stopped using any additional fertilizer in the spring. Last spring we increased the rate to 20 lb/1000 square feet and my husband felt we had better weed control. CGM does not kill pre-existing perennial weeds such as dandelion or clover. We do have quite a bit of clover but it doesn't bother me. I would say the dandelion incidence is low but the CGM has kept it from increasing. I had my soil tested last summer and it indicated that I had adequate potassium and phosphorus so I decided to use only CGM for the fall application with no additional fertilizer. I will see how it does this summer and re-evaluate. I have also sprinkled CGM on my flower bed and I feel it has helped with weed control. Remember not to use it if you plan to sow grass or other seeds.

WANTED: Newsletter articles.

Contact Elaine Smith if you want to include anything in YOUR newsletter.

Anything is welcome, even just a few lines!