

Native News

Newsletter of the Maryland Native Plant Society

November/December 2008

Volume 8 Number 6

Inside This Issue:

President's Letter
Page 2

~

MNPS Contacts
Page 2

~

Autumn Field Trips
Page 3

~

Wildflower in Focus
Page 5

Upcoming Monthly Meetings

“Travilah Serpentine Barrens: A Globally Rare Natural Community”

Tuesday, November 25, 7:30 pm
White Oak Library – Large Meeting Room

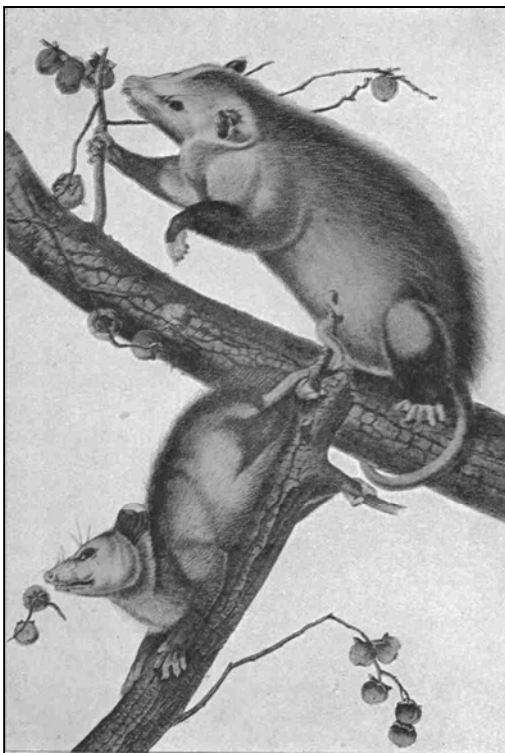
Join Carole Bergmann, M-NCPPC Forest Ecologist and MNPS past president, for a presentation on one of Maryland's rarest natural communities. The Travilah Serpentine Barrens in Montgomery County is probably the largest and best remaining example of the globally rare Ultramafic Woodlands community in the mid-Atlantic region. "These naturally rare woodlands are only known from scattered locations in the mountains and piedmont of Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania." (Virginia DCR, Division of Natural Heritage). The woodlands at the Travilah site occur on fairly flat to gently rolling, rocky uplands and are underlain closely by ultramafic rock, which produces a shallow, very dry soil high in magnesium and iron that can inhibit plant growth. Oaks, hickories, short leaf pine, and various ericads thrive in these conditions, comprising a "flatwoods" intermixed with grassy glades and colonies of plants such as Leonard's skullcap and wild crabapple.

“Annual Holiday Social & Members Share Night” Plus Annual MNPS Business Meeting

Tuesday, December 16, 7:00 pm
White Oak Library – Large Meeting Room

Please bring a PowerPoint presentation (on a disc or portable drive) or slides to share or photos to display to the group. A slide projector (Vivitar) and carousels will be available. Do share the images or stories of your local or distant adventures experienced within the past year. Also being an annual business meeting, our 2008 election results will be announced. Please bring holiday cookies to share. Beverages will be provided. Please also consider joining us early (6:00) for the *Native News* mailing party!

Directions: Exit the Washington Beltway at New Hampshire Ave (exit 28). Go north about 2 miles. The library is the first building on the right, once you have passed under Route 29, just after the Sears store.



Opossums in a persimmon tree

The Maryland Native Plant Society's mission is to promote awareness, appreciation, and conservation of Maryland's native plants and their habitats. We pursue our mission through education, research, advocacy, and service activities.

Autumn Field Trips

Civil War Fort Sites in the Washington, D.C.

Region (76th in Series) – Fort Dupont Connector

Leaders: Mary Pat Rowan and Lou Aronica

Date: Sunday, November 2 **Time:** 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

We will return again to a different spot on the Fort Dupont Connector. This spot is located south of Fort Dupont. It will be an exercise, as always, in plant identification as well as geology guesswork.

Directions: Take Pennsylvania Ave SE to Branch Ave SE and turn south (right turn from the city) on Branch. The first street on your right is Park Drive. Turn right on Park Drive and park on the street there about where 32nd Place comes into Park Drive.

Bring: Water and lunch.

Note: Easy to moderate walk. Light drizzle is fine but cancelled if pouring rain.

Contact: Mary Pat Rowan blair-rowan@starpower.net or 202-526-8821.

Civil War Fort Sites in the Washington, D.C.

Region (77th in Series) – Fort Chaplin

Leaders: Mary Pat Rowan and Lou Aronica

Date: Sunday, December 7 **Time:** 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

We will return to Ft. Chaplin, this time to observe an autumn woodland.

Directions: Meet on East Capital Street at 41st Street NE in Washington, D.C. Traveling east on Benning Road from Minnesota Ave NE go all the way to where Benning curves to the right and intersects with East Capital Street. Take a right on East Capital and head west a few blocks until you get to 41st Street NE on your right. Take a right and park on 41st or park on East Capital.

Bring: Water and lunch.

Note: Easy to moderate walk. Light drizzle or snow is fine but cancelled if pouring rain.

Contact: Mary Pat Rowan blair-rowan@starpower.net or 202-526-8821.



Rock Creek Park, Boundary Bridge

Leader: Melanie Choukas-Bradley (author, *City of Trees*)

Date: Saturday, December 13 **Time:** 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Leave holiday stress at home and explore some of the most magnificent woodlands of the Washington, D.C. area. We'll walk along a scenic stretch of Rock Creek beginning at Boundary Bridge on the Maryland-D.C. line. Sycamore, ashes, maples, American elm, ironwood, river birch, black walnut, bitternut hickory, tulip-tree, and bladdernut are among the woody plants we'll encounter, many of them large specimens. We'll pass a skunk cabbage swamp and switchback into an upland forest where extremely old oaks grow. If it's warm enough, we'll picnic on a dramatic rocky ledge crowned with American beech, witch-hazel (probably still blooming), pinxter, mountain laurel, striped wintergreen, and partridgeberry. We'll also see butternut and hop-hornbeam on the hike.

Directions: From the Beltway (I-495) take Connecticut Avenue south. Turn left on East-West Highway (east), turn right on Beach Drive (south) and take Beach Drive to the District line where the Rock Creek Park gate blocks the road on weekends. Park in the parking lot at the gate or along the road.

Weather: Trip will be cancelled if weather is hazardous or miserable (such as heavy cold rain). Weather questions: 301-502-7410.

Contact: Trip leader, Melanie Choukas-Bradley, would like to know if you're planning to come (choukas@erols.com; 301-652-8799 or cell: 301-502-7410).



Butternut
(*Juglans cinerea*)

Native News

Winter Solstice Walk at Chapman Forest, Charles County

Leader: Rod Simmons

Date: Sunday, December 21 **Time:** 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

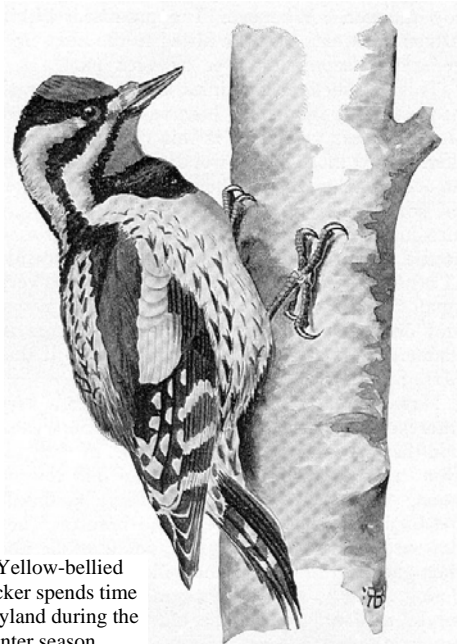
The old-age section of Chapman Forest is always a great place to celebrate the winter season and see a remarkable diversity of native trees. We will mainly walk the lowland areas along the Potomac River below the ravines and bluffs from historic Mount Aventine to Glymont. This area along the river is a fascinating and regionally unique meeting ground for plants with a primary range in the inner piedmont and mountains and those of the coastal plain. Along the way we will see many species of oaks, including ancient pagoda, chinquapin, and northern red oaks, 4 hickory species, 2 hackberry species, basswood, white and pumpkin ash, ancient sassafras, Virginia hop-hornbeam, bladdernut, wafer ash, southern bayberry, and many others. We will also look for butternut and Shumard's oak. We should see a variety of birds such as red-headed woodpecker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, hermit thrush, wood duck, and bald eagle.

Directions: Take Indian Head Highway (Rt. 210) south from Capital Beltway (495). Proceed south on Rt. 210 for app. 15 miles. Continue on Rt. 210 past Bryans Road intersection (McDonald's, Burger King, and shopping center on right) and start looking for Chapman Landing Road on right. Take half right on Chapman Landing Road and proceed a couple of miles to entrance to Mount Aventine on right. Park and meet in parking lot.

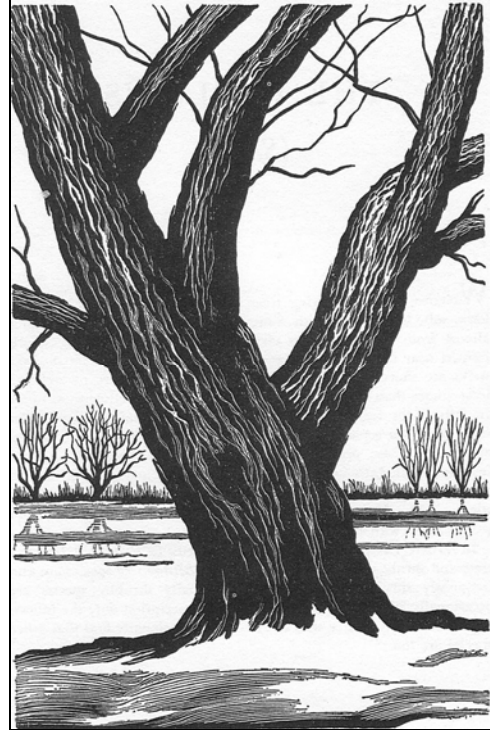
Bring: Wear sturdy shoes. Bring lunch, snacks, and water.

Note: Moderate walk, mostly on trails. Cancelled in the event of pouring rain, sleet, or snow.

Contact: Rod cecropia13@msn.com.



The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker spends time in Maryland during the winter season.



Civil War Fort Sites in the Washington, D.C. Region (78th in Series) – Bald Eagle Hill

Leaders: Mary Pat Rowan and Lou Aronica

Date: Sunday, January 4 **Time:** 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

We will return to Bald Eagle Hill, located at the extreme southeastern edge of the District of Columbia. Bald Eagle Hill is not a Civil War Fort but is part of the preserved corridor that connects the Fort Circle to Oxon Cove. This site includes both upland forest and streamside vegetation.

Directions: From the north, take the Anacostia Freeway (I-95) south to the South Capital Street exit. Proceed about one mile to First Street SE and turn right (just after Galveston St). Soon after, make a right onto Joliet Street. Proceed up the hill about 2 blocks and park on the street in front of the Bald Eagle Recreation Center.

Bring: Water and lunch.

Note: Easy to moderate walk. Light drizzle or snow is fine but cancelled if pouring rain.

Contact: Mary Pat Rowan blair-rowan@starpower.net or 202-526-8821.

Native News Deadlines:

Nov 25	January/February Winter Issue
Jan 25	March/April Early Spring Issue
March 25	May/June Late Spring Issue
May 25	July/August Summer Issue
July 25	September/October Early Autumn Issue
Sept 25	November/December Late Autumn/Holidays Issue

Last 2008 Mailing Party Date (preceding regular Monthly Meetings at White Oak Library):

Tuesday, December 16 at 6:00 pm

~ Wildflower in Focus ~

GREAT BLUE LOBELIA (GREAT LOBELIA)

Lobelia siphilitica L.

Bluebell or Bellflower Family
(Campanulaceae)

Some taxonomists place this plant in the
separate Lobelia Family (Lobeliaceae)

Written by
Melanie Choukas-Bradley

Illustration by
Tina Thieme Brown



BLUE LOBELIA - LOBELIA SIPHILATICA

Great blue lobelia blooms along Maryland streams, rivers, and ponds from late summer through autumn. Like the related cardinal flower (*L. cardinalis*), great blue lobelia is a wildflower of uncommon beauty. Native Americans used the root of this plant to treat syphilis – giving rise to the Latin name: *Lobelia siphilitica*. **Flowers:** Deep sapphire or violet, irregular, two-lipped, the upper lip two-lobed, the lower lip three-lobed. Lips are joined to form a tube, which is striped white on its lower side. Flowers $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1" long, in a dense upright raceme. **Leaves:** Alternate, simple, lanceolate – elliptic, oblong or oblanceolate, shallowly and irregularly toothed, sessile, 2 - 5" long. **Height:** 1 - 3'. **Habitat and Range:** Swamps, springs, streambanks, riverbanks, pondsides, and wet ground; Maine to Manitoba and Colorado, south to North Carolina and Texas. **Herbal Lore:** As well as employing the root as a syphilis treatment, Native Americans used the leaves of this plant to treat a number of internal ailments, including coughs, croup, worms, and nosebleeds. The leaves were also used as poultices for persistent sores. **Similar Species:** There are several other members of the *Lobelia* genus indigenous to Maryland. See Brown & Brown's *Herbaceous Plants of Maryland*. **Blooming Time:** August – November. **Locations:** Wet areas along Mount Ephraim Road, Sugarloaf Mountain; C&O Canal; Rock Creek Regional Park; Soldiers Delight. See *Finding Wildflowers in the Washington-Baltimore Area* (Fleming, Lobstein & Tufty) for more locations.

“Wildflower in Focus” is adapted from *An Illustrated Guide to Eastern Woodland Wildflowers and Trees: 350 Plants Observed at Sugarloaf Mountain, Maryland* (Choukas-Bradley and Brown, University of Virginia Press, 2004, 2008).



Maryland Native Plant Society

P.O. Box 4877
Silver Spring, MD 20914

Dated Material:
Please Deliver Promptly

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SILVER SPRING, MD
PERMIT NO. 3567

Membership is for 12 months.
We thank you for your support!

Name 1 _____

Name 2 _____

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ **Zip Code** _____

(Your county is the basis of your local chapter affiliation. Please include.)

County _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Please do not list me in your membership directory.

Please do not send me monthly Society announcements by e-mail in addition to post.

If you are a business you can be included on the MNPS providers list.

Please indicate the name of your business and what type of business it is:

Business's name _____

Native plant propagator or grower

Native plant supplier

Native plant landscape professional

Please make checks payable to the Maryland Native Plant Society and mail to:

Maryland Native Plant Society; P.O. Box 4877; Silver Spring, MD 20914

The Maryland Native Plant Society is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible. V8N6N/D08

Membership Dues:

Individual: \$25.00/year

Double: \$35.00/year

Student/limited income: \$15.00/year

Lifetime: \$250.00

Organization: \$50.00/year

Additional Donation _____

Total Enclosed _____

Please Check: New Renewal