

Welcome New Members

Gloria S. Parry of Roanoke
Dick Hendrix of Huddleston
Bradley Newman of Roanoke



Wildflower Club Officers

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Letter from the president

By Lou Greiner

Greetings, Flower Followers!
 Finally, it is spring!

Locally, some of us have seen some early flowers at Arcadia (trout lilies galore), and Green Hill Park (Trillium, grandiflorum), round-lobed and sharp-lobed hepatica, Virginia bluebells).

The recent trip to Blake Preserve was well attended and packed with surprises. The lecture by author, beekeeper Gunther Hauk was enlightening. We will see his

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A large flowered trillium in blushing pink.
 — Photo courtesy of Wes Siegrist

Saturday, May 4

Time: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.,

Leader: Butch Kelly

Contact: 384-7429

Meet: Cave Spring Middle School off U.S. 221/ Brambleton Ave.

Saturday, May 11

Time: 9 - noon

Leaders: Rudy Albert

(774-2279) and Marshall Daniels (721-8304)

Location: Parking lot above the arboretum at VA Western Community College

Monday, May 20

Time: 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Leader: Ellen Holtman

Contact: 389-1514

Meet: Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Ave.

Field Trip: Rock Castle Gorge

Rock Castle Gorge is in the Rocky Knob Area of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The trail is very flat on an old road bed running parallel to Rock Castle Creek. It is a very rich cove hardwood forest with lots of photo opportunities of forest, flowers, water and history. There is an old CCC camp and an old house along the trail. There is one place where we will cross the creek, so wear sturdy shoes. Total walking distance will be about 2 miles. Bring rain gear, snack, bug repellent and water. We will have lunch at Tuggles Gap Restaurant.

Wildflower Sale

This is the club's only fundraiser. Each year the stock of plants varies, but we usually have more than 60 species to sell, including trilliums, phlox, bleeding heart spring beauty, spiderwort, jack-in-the-pulpits and native ferns. Besides being more beneficial to wildlife than non-native species, many of these plants have evolved to grow in shady areas, to be more resilient to insect damage and to be more tolerant of drought and poor soil.

Club Meeting: Tropical Butterfly Exhibit Coming to Center in the Square

Derek Kellogg is the Lead Animal Specialist at the Science Museum of Western VA. Presently Derek has been assigned the task of running the new butterfly exhibit at Center in the Square. Derek will describe how a butterfly exhibit works, and what butterflies need. He will describe some of the interactions of butterflies and the plants in the upcoming exhibit. This program will be presented very close to the time of the grand opening of the exhibit. There are only about 60 butterfly exhibits in the entire country, so Roanoke is fortunate to be getting this display.

Saturday, June 8

Time: 9 a.m. - noon

Leader: Rudy Albert

Contact: 774-2279

Meet: Peaks of Otter Visitor Center at milepost 86 on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Saturday, June 15

Time: 9 a.m. -

Leader: Ellen Holtman
(389-1514)
and Rebecca Ross
345-8353

Meet: Cave Spring Middle School off U.S. 221/
Brambleton Ave.

Saturday, July 27

Time: 9 a.m.

Leader: Jim Bush
929-4775
and
Michael Belcher
989-6384

Meet: Cave Spring Middle School off U.S. 221/Brambleton Ave.

Rhododendron Day on the Blue Ridge Parkway

Early June is the peak time to view stunning displays of Catawba rhododendron. Besides viewing the rhodos we should see many other species and perhaps some we missed earlier in the spring since this takes us up to 4000 feet in elevation. We will, also, be able to see some stunning vistas into the valleys below. Bring rain gear, water, bug repellent and a bag lunch. There will be little walking.

Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary

We will carpool 32 miles to the sanctuary. Dr. Gunther Hauk, the founder of the sanctuary and the speaker at our April 22 meeting, will give us a tour of his facility. We will see a beautiful display of flowers planted just for bees and learn about what the sanctuary team is doing to protect, strengthen and heal the honeybees. Bring a lunch to enjoy on the 25 acre grounds. Those who are interested are invited to stay after lunch and help with some of the flower beds, so bring work gloves if you can stay. Bring rain gear, bug repellent, and water. Housekeeping details: Dark colors and some perfumes agitate bees, so it is best to wear light colored clothing and avoid strongly-scented products. The Sanctuary does not have indoor facilities, but one comfort station is available for visitor use. For more information about the sanctuary go to www.spikenardfarm.org.

Butterflies, Hummingbirds and Wildflowers on Bent and Poor mountains/Picnic at the Austins

Summer is the time of much natural activity. This field trip will look at birds, butterflies and wildflowers. We will climb up Poor Mt. and look at nature in all its splendor. We should see butterfly weed, black-eyed Susans, Canada mayflower, and many others. Bring sun screen, rain gear, bug repellent and water. There will be very little walking.

The field trip will be followed by a picnic cookout at Allen and Robin Austin's. The Austin's have a wonderful garden and unbelievable numbers of hummingbirds. The Austin's have been kind enough to share with us the use of their home and garden. They will be furnishing hot dogs and hamburgers. You can bring a covered dish. Bring a lawn chair. Contact Michael Belcher by Wednesday, July 24 if you plan to attend.

Sunday, August 11

Time: 1 p.m.

Location: Walrond Park

Leader: Lou Greiner

Contact: 774-3975

Saturday, August 31

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Bill Hunley

Contact: 774-2397,

Meet: Orange Market Park
and Ride off Thompson
Memorial Boulevard
Take Exit 141 off I-81 and
drive north to Va.311/
Thompson Memorial Boule-
vard and Va. 419.

Turn left at the light and the
park and ride is on the left in
front of the Orange Market.

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society's Annual Picnic

If you haven't been there before, there will be signs directing you. The picnic pavilion is covered. This year we will be having our picnic with the Roanoke Valley Bird Club. The BRWS will be providing barbeque and the bird club will provide fried chicken. Bring a covered dish. Beverages, plates and eating utensils will be provided. We will conclude our festivities with a walk around the wetland and see what wildflowers and feathered friends share the habitat. This a good opportunity to meet new folks and renew old friendships.

Directions: I-81 to exit 146 (Hollins Exit).

Take Plantation Road about .5 miles.

Turn right onto Walrond Drive.

Drive about .25 miles. The park is on the right. Look for the picnic pavilion.

Field Trip: "Birds and Botany at Fenwick Mines"

Join Bill Hunley for a walk with the Roanoke Valley Bird Club to take a look at birds and wildflowers of roadside, board walk and meadows. Fenwick Mines offers woodland and wetland habitats. Bill is one of the best naturalists in the Roanoke area. It is always a treat to be in the field with him. Look to see many bird species including fall migrating warblers, sparrows and many others. Wildflowers include cardinal flower, blue lobelia, spirea, asters and monkey flower. Walking will be approximately 1.5 miles. The area is flat with some trail, gravel road and board walk surfaces. Bring bug repellent, rain gear, lunch and binoculars.

Note: When carpooling on any of the field trips, please help with the cost of fuel for the driver.

Eat the Aliens

Fighting Invasive Species one Bite at a Time

By Ellen Holtman, vice president

Invasive species are one of the leading causes of loss of biodiversity, and a recent Roanoke College event revealed a new approach to controlling them-- harvesting them for food!

Joe Roman, visiting conservation biologist, noted that foraging for wild foods has become so popular that some native plants, such as ramps, are being overharvested. He reminded us that with invasive species, this is not a concern. "The goal here isn't sustainability."

Roman and his collaborator, poet Debora Greger, have worked together on several very successful projects, including last year's Rachel Carson Environmental Book Award winner "Listed: Dispatches from America's Endangered Species Act." On April 4 and 5 the two discussed their new collaboration, an investigation of ways in which problem plants and animals can be eaten, and they offer recipes for "alien entrees" such as

- garlic mustard pesto
- burdock root with carrots and soy sauce
- Japanese knotweed pie
- Traveler's Joy, a salad with amaranth, purslane, and chickweed
- slow-cooked nutria
- Asian carp fajitas

- soft-shell green crab
- kudzu sorbet, and
- lionfish sushimi.

Many invasive species were brought to the United States for the pet or aquarium trade or for plant nurseries, while others such as crabs, snails, and seaweed, were brought in accidentally in ship's ballast. The big rodents called nutria were brought to Louisiana from South America in the 1800s for fur and later promoted to control water hyacinth (another invasive species). They are now destroying marshes along waterways as far north as Virginia. Designers in Louisiana are again showing nutria fur, calling it "righteous fur." And Marsh Dog is a nutria-based dog food.

Roman and Greger have discovered recipes collected by Martha Washington which indicate the Father of Our Country often ate "weeds." And they have found many fine restaurants that present beautifully prepared local invasive aliens such as mute swans and Northern Snakehead fish. Crayfish are not native to Arizona, and they have decimated waterways there; the Game and Fish Department encourages harvesting by offering cooking tips. They use the slogan "Thousands of Cajuns can't be wrong."

Joe Roman's website is full of ideas, interesting stories, and recipes. Go to eattheinvasives.org, and Bon Appetit!

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farm in June. Don't miss the rest of the flowers of summer and early fall!

Our only fundraiser is May 11. This is our Wildflower Sale at Virginia Western Community College.

My note would not be complete without a thank you to Butch and Betty Kelly. They were the planners and leaders for the VNPS trip to the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. And great it was!

Waterfalls seemed to be around every bend. Views of the river were plentiful and so were the flowers. Because of the rainfall and location, the Smokies' spring is earlier and more abundant!

Some areas had carpets of phacelias. I saw my first yellow trillium (*Trillium luteum*). There were many large colonies.

Also, we saw a few Catesby's trilliums, named after early naturalist Mark Catesby, noted for his discoveries in the Virginia Tidewater area. Many, many more mosses, ferns and flowers are still swimming in our memories.

A good group from our chapter was there to experience this, and I'm sure, like John and I, will return! If you go with Butch, take your best hiking shoes! (Mine fell apart!) Luckily I had a spare.

Hope we see you at some of the walks and plant sale!

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

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