



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Spring 2021 VOL 42, No. 1

President's Pick



American beautyberry

(*Callicarpa americana*)

See the article on page 7

Inside this issue

Page

- 2 BRWS & VNPS information
- 3 President's Message
- 4 Meet A Member:
Linda Ardrey
- 5 Schedule of upcoming events
- 6 Plant sale information
Carilion backs restoration efforts in Roanoke
- 7 President's Pick

Goodbye winter!

Full schedule of Zoom and face-to-face presentations starting this month should help us feel more normal

Yes, it's been a long, lonely year for the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society. No meetings, no speakers, no wildflower walks and little camaraderie save for a (quite successful) plant sale in July. And while we're still in the midst of a pandemic, a promise of a partial return to normalcy is on its way!

Here are some highlights of upcoming events. (Details on Page 5.):

On Monday, Feb. 22, we will have our first Zoom meeting. Mike Hayslett, the local expert on vernal ponds in our area, will speak about this unique ecosystem and its inhabitants.

There will be two Zoom meetings in March. The first, on March 22, will feature Ian Caton, owner of Wood Thrush Native Nursery in Floyd, on spring ephemerals.

At the second meeting, on Tuesday, March 30, we'll have the special opportunity to hear John Magee, well-known native landscaper and podcast host.

In April, Ben Kessler, BRWS member and nursery manager at Little Bluestem Nursery in Ivy, Va., will speak about his company's efforts to use native plants to restore sustainable landscapes.

Our May meeting will be in-person! Bill West, Urban Forestry Coordinator for Roanoke City, will join us at the Mill Mountain Wildflower Garden to talk about the trees there and those of our mountain region.

In-person wildflower walks return

Here's how to attend our Zoom meetings

RSVP for the meeting or talk by emailing Rebecca Ross at wingsross@aol.com

1. Download the Zoom app on whatever device you are using
2. On the day of or the day before the meeting, an email will be sent to you with the Zoom link.
3. Click the Zoom link that was sent to you about 5 minutes before the meeting
4. You will automatically be entered into the meeting after clicking the link

Immediately mute yourself

For additional help, see youtube video with more details at:

<https://youtu.be/mbbYqjurgeo>

in April and May! Members will "lead" a self-guided walk at Green Hill Park in April.

Our new president, Jessica Fleming, will be leading a walk at Bottom Creek Gorge in May, and Jonah Metzgar from the VT Herbarium will take us out to see ferns in June.

See the complete calendar of activities on Page 5 for a more complete description of our planned events.

BRWS MEETINGS

7 p.m., fourth Monday of the month (unless changed)
Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs headquarters
3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA

In normal times, we meet in person in September, October, November, February, March, April and May unless Roanoke County Schools are closed for inclement weather. This year we are having a mixture of virtual and in-person meetings because of COVID-19 precautions.

Virginia Native Plant Society

Website: www.vnps.org

The Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS), founded in 1982 as the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society, is a nonprofit organization of individuals who share an interest in Virginia's native plants and habitats. The Society and its chapters seek to further the appreciation and conservation of this priceless heritage.

Our Mission: The Virginia Native Plant Society is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the native plants of Virginia and their habitats, to sustain for generations to come the integrity of the Commonwealth's rich natural heritage of ecosystems and biodiversity for purposes of enjoyment, enlightenment, sustainable use, and our own very survival. To this end, we advocate and follow practices that will conserve our natural endowment, and we discourage and combat practices that will endanger or destroy it. We are committed to do all we can to slow the accelerating conversion of natural landscape to built and planted landscape and to reduce its damage to natural ecosystems.

Our Purpose and Services

State Level:

- Working for measures to protect endangered plant species, and preserve habitats and plant communities of special interest
- Learning and teaching about native plants and their special needs
- Encouraging the appropriate use of nursery or home propagated native plants in public landscapes and private gardens
- Assisting in writing and updating Flora of Virginia
- Providing money for graduate botanical research
- Working with nurseries to protect native species
- Offering a spring workshop on timely botanical subjects
- Offering field trips state wide and some in surrounding states
- Conducting the annual meeting with speakers and field trips provided

Local level, Blue Ridge Chapter:

Counties of: Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Roanoke **Cities of:** Roanoke, Salem and Lynchburg

- To present meetings in spring and fall that offer informative programs concerning a variety of areas and plants they support
- To lead free field trips to a wide variety of local habitats spring through fall
- To conduct an annual native plant sale in May at VA Western Arboretum
- To provide outreach to public groups in the way of speakers and guided walks
- To donate money to local conservation needs

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs
3460 Colonial Ave. SW,
Roanoke, VA 24018

Officers

President

Jessica Fleming..... ((203) 240-3425
jafleming@onehealthhealing.com

Vice President

Marilyn Lerch..... (540) 797-9188
marilynlerch@yahoo.com

Secretary

Linda Ardrey..... (434) 996-3520
linda.ardrey@gmail.com

Treasurer

Kathy Sink..... (540) 774-8950
kathysink@cox.net

Past President

Ellen Holtman..... (540) 389-1514
eholtman@comcast.net

Committee chairs

Field Trips, Programs

Ellen Holtman..... (540) 389-1514
eholtman@comcast.net

Rebecca Ross(540) 345-8353
wingsross@aol.com

Garden Coordinator

Linda Harrison..... (540) 343-2783
lindaharrison29@hotmail.com

Historian

Betty Kelly..... (540) 384-7429
bettykelly918@gmail.com

Membership

Terry Lauver..... (540) 685-4173
tl1945@cox.net

Newsletter

Roger Holtman..... (540) 389-1514
roger.holtman@comcast.net

The BRWS Newsletter is published three times annually: spring, summer and fall. Photos and articles for publication are welcome (and encouraged) and may be sent electronically (preferred), by mail or delivered in person.

Thank you!

Roger Holtman, Editor
208 Taylor Ave., Salem, VA 24153
roger.holtman@comcast.net
540.389.1514

Message from the president

Hello wonderful BRWS members and happy 2021! We have been blessed with snow this winter season, hopefully enough for our native insects to stay covered and seeds to stratify. The mountains are currently snow-capped and a feast for the eyes here in the Blue Ridge.

We are deeply excited for the spring season. As the ground warms up and the sun starts to shine, I know many of us will be hunkering down getting seeds into pots and garden plans sketched. My personal goal is to turn Roanoke Memorial Hospital's parking lot into a pollinator habitat. Together we can capitalize on the pandemic as an opportunity to "make lemonade" by dedicating more time to our gardens and getting technologically savvy as we navigate learning via Zoom!

We are so lucky to have a multitude of talks and walks this year led by intellectuals, gardeners, and ecologists, all making a huge impact in both their communities and backyards! In February, we have Mike Hayslett teaching us about vernal ponds. In March, Ian Caton with Woodthrush Nursery will open our eyes to spring ephemerals and John Magee will teach us more ways we can incorporate native landscaping into our repertoire! In April we have Ben Kessler from Little Bluestem Nursery doing an info session on some of his favorite native plants. And stay tuned for our plant walks coming up, including urban forestry and a tree walk with Bill West in May. Our goal is to



get everybody outside and hands-on as much as possible, while staying safe and free from COVID.

We are thrilled to note too that the House Joint Resolution (HJ 527) was approved by the Virginia House of Delegates and will go to the Senate for a vote! Our forests need as much protection from invasive species as they can get. This bill will help protect pristine forests in existence and mitigate damage from invasive species that already has been inflicted.

At BRWS, we are hoping to make headway with other advocacy and outreach projects throughout the course of the year, including participating in Earth Day celebrations. One

way you can get involved and make a difference is to watch our Zoom meetings and learn how to tailor your garden to habitat restoration and beauty. Maybe we could even get a few more backyards registered as habitats this year!

Lastly, we want to thank Terry Lauver, our wonderful Membership Chair, for all of his dedication and hard work. Terry will be "retiring" from his position in May and Jennifer McCarthy will be joining us under Terry's tutelage to

welcome new members and maintain our membership rolls.

Also, Lindsay Caplan will be helping with advocacy and community outreach, a new position here at BRWS.

We look forward to seeing you all at our Zoom meetings and walks. For now, stay warm, stay healthy and keep your eyes peeled for little flowers blooming as winter winds its way down. And if you get a chance to plant American beautyberry this spring, your local wildlife will thank you and so will we!

May joy, peace and wildflowers surround you.

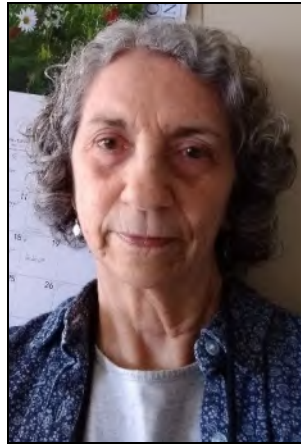
—Jessica



Welcome new members!

Craig Turner, Dunkirk, MD
 Laura Gayton, Blacksburg, VA
 Joseph Geraci, Alexandria, VA
 Sara & Tom Hurley, Earlysville, VA
 Su Kim, Alexandria, VA
 Diane King, Remington, VA
 Josef Uyeda, Blacksburg, VA
 Wayne Wilcox, Salem, VA
 Nalini Ayya, Charlottesville, VA
 Briana Bennett, Roanoke, VA
 Zack Galluppi, Roanoke, VA
 Lisa Seymour, Waynesboro, VA
 Kaye Moomaw, Lynchburg, VA
 Michael Ortiz, Alexandria, VA
 Toine Wyckoff, Charlottesville, VA
 Joseph Bock, Henrico, VA
 Heidi Baird, Roanoke, VA
 Lindsay Caplan, Roanoke, VA
 Catherine Cox, Henrico, VA
 James Francis, Roanoke, VA
 Ami Mason, Leesburg, VA
 Vickie Bibee, Roanoke, VA
 Alexander Breakell, Roanoke, VA
 Kirk Chamberlain, Wytheville, VA
 Danielle Clark, Round Hill, VA
 Diane Hill, Falls Church, VA
 Kinsey Price, Roanoke, VA
 Sunshine Williams, Bumpass, VA

In normal times, our next (summer) newsletter would be published in late May. The effect of the pandemic on our summer activities might affect the date.



Meet a member

Linda Ardrey

I was born in Missouri where my father was stationed during WWII. My mother was ninth of 10 children of Italian immigrants who ran a pizza place in Little Italy, New York City. My father's ancestors came to this country in the 1600s. I am one of 23 first cousins and, having no siblings, my extended family is very important to me. Soon after the end of the war my parents moved us to New York. I was

very fortunate to grow up in a close-knit neighborhood within the city limits in Queens. There I had the best of both worlds – suburban enough to ride our bikes and ice-skate on a local pond (I was a tomboy) but close enough to Manhattan to appreciate the museums and other cultural opportunities available there.

My neighborhood high school was well-integrated and there was no racial strife. I went to Wagner College, a Lutheran-affiliated school on Staten Island and obtained a degree in biology. A year or two after graduation I left my lab job and switched to computer programming, a new field at the time, since I was allergic to the lab animals. I then lived and worked in Manhattan for about 10 years, taking advantage of the easy access to nature in the areas north of the city.

I had always loved spending time outdoors, especially being in the woods, and decided to change careers. I was accepted into the Student-Horticulturist program at the New York Botanical Garden where I spent two whirlwind years -- very different from what I was used to in the city. Upon completion, I worked in the field for another two years.

By this time I had gotten married and, since my husband was very interested in farming, we came to Virginia (Charlottesville area) for a longer growing season. My two children were born and I was, briefly, a stay-at-home mom. Then suddenly I found myself a single mom and had to support myself and the kids.

As a result, after upgrading my skills, I went back to computer programming. I did this for another eighteen years while raising my kids and getting out into the woods when possible.

My daughter has been a nun at a Russian Orthodox monastery in Arizona since 1999. My son is happily married and is a service technician for Robertson Electric in Charlottesville.

I joined the Jefferson chapter of VNPS in 1987 and was active in chapter activities for a few years until PTA meetings and other kid-oriented activities intervened. I retired at full- retirement age in 2008 and came to Roanoke in 2011. I have lived in the Independent Living section of Brandon Oaks retirement community since 2014 and am grateful that I will be taken care of when necessary in the future.

My favorite native plants are any kind of Gentian and trailing arbutus (*Epigaea repens*).

A full schedule of meetings, presentations and walks for spring

Each of our speakers is familiar with Zoom, so we don't expect to have any technical difficulty. Something might crop up, though, so please be patient while we fix it.

Meeting Monday, Feb. 22

7:00 p.m.

Zoom meeting with Mike Hayslett, Naturalist-In-Residence at Sweet Briar College. Mike will speak on vernal ponds, important and unique aquatic ecosystems, each including a short-lived pond or pool and a rich mix of a few species that can't live anywhere else. Mike has studied vernal ponds for many years and many miles and he is surely one of only a few people who has waded in three feet of water in the middle of the night in Virginia's late winter! Join us via Zoom link and learn more.

Meeting Monday, March 22

7:00 p.m.

Zoom meeting with Ian Caton, owner/operator with his wife Elizabeth of Wood Thrush Native Nursery in Floyd. He is a popular speaker in the area and a lifelong lover of natives. He also is a successful propagator of our favorite plants using



ing seeds and cuttings and has provided many plants we have sold at our May sales. His topic is our beautiful "Spring Ephemerals," so prepare for pretty pictures and lots of new information to help you enjoy your first foray of the year.

Meeting Monday, April 26,

7:00 p.m.

Zoom meeting: Ben Kessler is nursery manager at Little Bluestem Nursery in Ivy, Va., and he also is, notably, a member of our chapter. Ben will show us the landscaping beds at the nursery and talk about cultivation practices at the farm and at his nursery. He will allow time for your questions on gardening with wildflowers, and he hopes you will have some! If you know of a topic you'd like to ask about, send questions to Ellen or Jessica and we will forward them so he can prepare. Enjoy his pictures for now, but we hope to visit Ben's beautiful Little Bluestem and the surrounding Farfield Farm as a group when we can safely carpool!

Monday, April 12

Field Trip: "Trillium Trail on Your Own" at Green Hill Park.

Ellen, Rebecca and Linda will "lead" a socially-distanced walk on this favorite hillside of spring ephemerals in Roanoke County. They will post ahead of time a series of flags along Pawpaw Trail and a hand-out will offer information about the flowers near each flag. It's a Covid-era experiment! You might want to come early and have a picnic by the river with others from your pod. It might be muddy, so wear appropriate shoes. A field guide would be helpful.

Rain date! In case of a hard rain we will postpone the walk till Wednesday, April 14, same time and place.

Meet: Sign in at the picnic pavilion at the end of the road in Green Hill Park. You may head up the trail any time between 1:00 and 3:00. Leaders will be on site until 4:00.

Leaders: Rebecca Ross, Linda Ardrey, Ellen Holtman

Contact: Ellen Holtman at 389-1514

Saturday, May 15, Plant Sale at Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs!

All hands on deck! See the article on page 6.



Meeting Monday, May 24

7:00 p.m. In-person and outdoors with Bill West, Urban Forestry Coordinator for Roanoke City. Meet him at Mill Mountain Wildflower Garden to learn about trees of our area. The Mill Mountain Garden Club maintains the garden, and a member will join us to talk about their work. Park and sign in near the Discovery Center and please wear a mask.

Coming soon ...

More information will be available as these events approach. Watch for an email.

May 30

Bottom Creek Gorge Walk

Leader: Jessica Fleming

June 5

Jordan Metzgar from VT herbarium will lead a fern walk.

Special Event! Tuesday, March 30 7:00 p.m. on Zoom

John Magee is a well-known landscaper in Northern Virginia. His company, Magee Designs, regularly uses native plants in the landscape and specializes in sustainable landscaping and eco-friendly designs for public and private buildings. (The design samples on the company website are fabulous!) He has served on the Board of Directors of VNPS since 2014 and is a well-known host of "The Native Plant Podcast." This should be an excellent event — invite your friends!

BRWS annual plant sale is on tap for May

The Blue Ridge Wildflower Club's annual plant sale will bloom this year on Saturday, May 15, at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Avenue on the grass behind back parking lot.

The sale will be open to the public from 9 a.m. until noon.

Because of the pandemic, we ordered larger plants that won't need repotting, so we will not have a potting party this year.

Again, because of the pandemic restrictions, we chose to have it at the Garden Club instead of the usual location above the arboretum at Virginia Western Community College.

Accompanying this story is a listing of some of the plants that we have ordered. There is a heavy emphasis on sun-loving, pollinator plants because our little friends need all the help we can give them.

We also have some shade plants but we need more. Any and all shade loving spring ephemerals and woodland ferns that you can donate would be greatly appreciated.

As the time gets closer, we will send out an email asking for volunteers and give more specifics about the times.

If you have any questions or know of plants that you can donate, please don't hesitate to contact Michael Belcher at 989-6384 or at michael.belcher@roanoke.com.



Plants ordered:

Canada Anemone
Red Milkweed
Butterflyweed
Whorled Milkweed
Joe Pye Weed
Goldenrod
New England Aster
SkyBlue Aster
Heath Aster
Woodland Aster
Blue False Indigo
Cream False Indigo
White False Indigo
Red Beebalm
Woodland Bergamot
Mountain Mint
Tall bellflower
White turtlehead
Harebell
Mistflower
Lanceleaf Coreopsis
Purple Coneflower
Pale Coneflower
Yellow Coneflower
Wild Geranium
Virginia Waterleaf
Blazingstar
Cardinal Flower
Great Blue Lobelia
Jacob's ladder
Fire pink
Spiderwort
New Jersey Tea
Wild Quinine

Some plants that we need donated:

Mayapple
Bloodroot
Twinleaf
Jack in the pulpit
Any variety of trilliums
Bluebells
Columbines
Allegheny Spurge
Woodland ferns
Wild Ginger
(Herbaceous and or shuttleworth varieties)
Woodpoppy/
Celandine
Bleeding Heart
Native Clematis/
Virgin's Bower
Beautyberry bushes
Hearts-a-bustin bushes
Witchhazel bushes
Red twig dogwood bushes
Buttonbush
Sweetshrub/Carolina
Allspice bushes
And ...
Any others that you can think of and spare for the sale.

Carilion backs habitat restoration efforts in Roanoke

Carilion Clinic gladly picked up the baton when offered the opportunity to support and donate to native Blue Ridge habitat restoration efforts on its Roanoke Memorial Hospital property this year.

Carilion's Sustainability Committee enthusiastically supported the idea of helping native pollinators, birds and insect populations. With shovels, sun hats, gardening gloves and native seeds, the Sustainability Committee was led by Jessica Fleming with the goal of transforming its grounds from a kudzu forest to a pollinator habitat.

Seeds were sown in the fall with the hope that winter stratification would bring new life to the hospital grounds in the spring. Many native Blue Ridge species were planted, including black-eyed Susans, eastern redbud, purple coneflower and bee balm. Stay tuned on the BRWS Facebook page to see the results of fall seed planting!

Carilion is very motivated to lessen its impact on the environment and strongly prioritizes sustainability-oriented projects. With the new cardiology, emergency, and behavioral health hospital under construction, Carilion may be interested in incorporating native plants into their professional landscaping. We encourage members to contact BRWS president Jessica Fleming at jafleming@onehealthhealing.com if they are knowledgeable in native landscaping for professional and public buildings. Volunteers may be needed for spring additions and further habitat restoration on the grounds, too! If interested, please contact Jessica Fleming at the email address listed above.

BRWS members Ellen Holtman, Butch Kelly and Michael Belcher were instrumental in supporting the project by providing seeds, information packets and books to guide the event.

American beautyberry: Big, beautiful and useful

American beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) is a native shrub of the southeastern United States that is easy to maintain and extremely valuable to habitat restoration. Its five- to eight-foot branches grow in a loose arching habit and boast dainty pink blooms in the spring.

President's Pick

The serrate leaves are oppositely arranged and deciduous. In the fall,

branches don beautiful amethyst (or white) colored berry clusters that are retained, even as the leaves fall.

American beautyberry can survive in clay soil, wet soil, well-draining soil, part shade – it will grow on just about any site. It may lose its foliage during periods of long summer drought. Beautyberry is shade-tolerant but will produce more flowers and berries if planted in full sun. It is known for being easy to grow but difficult to germinate from seed. Because it can tolerate shade in the understory, beautyberry provides valuable habitat for quail, rabbits and other ground-dwelling critters. Even more importantly, its berries hang on into the early months of winter, which is why it is such a valuable food source for birds, raccoons, opossums and deer.

Humans can use American beautyberry too. The berries can be



The long branches of the beautyberry have an arching habit

made into jam. Leaves were used by native populations as mosquito repellant. To encourage more berries to grow, the plant should be pruned in February. The coming spring, flowers and berries will preferentially appear on new growth. In other words, American beautyberry has adapted to living in deer territory – it thrives after being

browsed.

Beautyberry is native from Virginia to Arkansas and Florida to Texas. It is a heat-tolerant, cold-tolerant, drought-tolerant, beautiful shrub that brings a variety of birds, pollinators and critters to any backyard habitat.



Berries provide food for birds and other critters



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society
Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs
3460 Colonial Ave. SW
Roanoke, VA 24018

Membership ☐ **New** ☐ **Renewal**

Name(s) _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

Membership dues:

- ☐ Individual \$30 ☐ Family \$40 ☐ Student \$15
☐ Life \$500 ☐ Patron \$50 ☐ Sustaining \$100
☐ Associate \$40. Organization _____
(Also, please name your delegate above.)
☐ Additional, nonvoting chapter memberships, \$5 each.
Chapter _____

Please enroll me as:

- ☐ Member of **Blue Ridge Wildflower Society** Chapter
☐ Member at Large (no local chapter affiliation)
☐ Gift Membership. Please send a card in my name: _____

I wish to make an additional contribution to:

- ☐ Chapter. Amount _____
☐ State office of VNPS. Amount _____

Credit card payments:

- ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover
Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Amount: _____

Date: _____

Signature _____

- ☐ Do not list me in the chapter directory.
VNPS does not exchange member information with
other organizations.

**Please make your check out to VNPS
and mail it to:**

Memberships
Virginia Native Plant Society
400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit #2
Boyce, VA 22620

For Office use only
Check No. _____
Date rec'd _____
Amount rec'd _____