



# Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE  
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 30 No. 1

Spring, 2009

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- February 23**      **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. The program is "**Wildflowers of the Kansas Prairie**" by Larry Wilcox. This should be *an outstanding* program. Larry has presented programs throughout the state. He has published his photos as well. This program covers the 2008 "VNPS Tall Grass Prairie Trip. Butch and Betty Kelly took this trip and it was simply beautiful. Larry is traveling from the coast of VA so let's have a good turnout. This should be one of our highlight programs of the year.
- March 7**      **Work Day in the Dorothy Crandall Bliss Botanic Garden at Randolph College.** 2—4 p.m. Contact Sandra Elder at 434-525-8433. Rain Date March 14.
- March 23**      **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. Join society members for a prelude program on "**Wetlands and their Inhabitants**" presented by Virginia Western Community College Biology Professor Toni Pepin. Toni will share her knowledge about one of the most neglected areas of the natural world. She also said she would be willing to lead us on a summer or fall field trip to some local wetlands. This program should be a good way to get ready for the field trip.
- March 28**      **Arcadia Field Trip.** Join leader Virginia Western Biology Professor Rich Crites (phone 774-4518) for a look at the early spring ephemerals. We will see blood root, birds foot violet, toothwort, etc. There are a large variety of habitats to see and a large selection of plants. Rich always finds something unexpected. Bring a lunch and a layer of clothes. This will be easy walking. Meet at 10:00 a.m. **Directions:** Take I81 to the Arcadia Exit north of Buchanan. Pass over the James River and through the village of Arcadia. After crossing the bridge over Jennings Creek park on the right at the first pull off.
- April 11**      **Lapsley's Run Field Trip.** Join leader Rich Crites (774-4518) in visiting this area in Botetourt County. This trip was new last year and proved to be one of the best trips of the spring. The area offers some of the best early spring flower displays around. If the season is true to form we should see the forest floor covered with twin leaf, toothwort, bluebells, trout lilies etc. A bonus is a beautiful waterfall. Don't miss this new site and bring your camera. There will be little walking. The flowers are right beside the car. Due to limited parking we need to car pool. We will meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Botetourt Commons next to the Bojangles off U.S. 220 north of Daleville.
- April 29**      **Blue Ridge Parkway Walk & Membership Meeting.** 6:00 p.m. We are trying something a little unique for the society. Instead of having a traditional meeting we will meet at the Roanoke River Parking area at milepost 115 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. If there is business to discuss we will cover it quickly, but what a way to have a meeting. We will be right in the thick of a beautiful forest. *Note this is a Wednesday evening.*

## Calendar of Events Continued

- May 9**                    **Spring Wildflower Sale**, Virginia Western Community College. The sale will be from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. It will be held in the parking lot behind the greenhouse above the arboretum. If you have plants to donate be there by 8:30 a.m. This is our only fund raiser so spread the word.
- May 18**                    **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. Summer is the season for insect activity. Join us for a look at "Pollination". We will look at how color, plant shape, and scent are important in pollination. Self pollination and cross pollination will also be looked at.
- May 23**                    **Lapsley's Run—Roaring Run Field Trip**. Join Butch Kelly (384-7429) for a day long field trip back to Lapsley's Run and on to Roaring Run Furnace in the Jefferson National Forest. Due to the diversity in locations we should see a wide variety of plants including some shale barren species. The trip includes a nice stream and picturesque waterfalls. This could be a warm trip since some of it is in the open as well as the forest. Bring water, sunscreen, rain gear and lunch. Due to limited parking we will need to car pool. We will meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Botetourt Commons next to the Bojangles off U.S. 220 north of Daleville.
- June 6**                    **Rhododendron Day on the Blue Ridge Parkway**. Meet leader Rudy Albert (774-2279) at the parking lot at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center at 10:00 a.m. Some folks may want to join the early birds for breakfast at the Peaks of Otter Lodge at 8:00 a.m. We will be overlook hopping, so walking will be minimal. This trip is

### Letter From the President

Here we are in early February with less than two months from the spring equinox and the official first day of spring. Some of the buds on some trees and shrubs are beginning to show slight swelling as spring activities begin to stir. If one can find a south facing wall with a warm sun and away from the cold wind, one might begin to see a few ground plants already blooming. Also, I've noticed the longer photoperiods already have the squirrels all excited about producing another brood this year.

This time of year can't help but start the minds of naturalists to start thinking about what exciting new things might be seen this year. My uncle, a biology professor, once told me, "there is no reason for a botanist to be bored", because plants flower and their locations, hues of colors, size and abundance are changing from day to day. Sam Ellington always said, "that's the most beautiful thing I've seen", as different flowers were seen on our trips. Sam had it right!!! There is something special about seeing "old friends" and meeting "new flowers" every time we are outside. This especially true in today's world when we see and hear a lot of bad news and see our security blankets fade each month we receive our statements from our brokers. "The roots of our raising runs deep" when we can go out and meet our friends.

Please note the schedule of events in the newsletter. Mark your calendars now so you can participate in meetings and field trips. Do note we are co-hosting the VNPS annual fall state meeting with our the New River Valley Chapter. We will be needing individuals to help with this activity. Let's have a good year!

**Rich**

### **Officers for 2009 - 2010**

President	Rich Crites	(540) 774-4518
Vice President	Rudy Albert	(540) 774-2279
Treasurer	Rosemary Ellis	(540) 989-1683
Secretary	Marcia Albert	(540)-774-2279
Historian	Betty Kelly	(540) 384-7429

### **An Interesting Web Site**

If interested in traveling and or just looking at flowers take a look at the following web site: [www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers](http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers). This site covers where in the U.S. Forest Service lands can you locate wildflowers as well as all kinds of activities. Check it out.

### **Newsletter and Saving Money!**

In order to save money for the society it has been discussed and decided that we send out the newsletter via e-mail to as many members as possible. This will save money on paper, copying, and postage. Presently we have over one hundred members, but only 24 have shared an e-mail address with the society. If you have an e-mail address, please send it to the newsletter editor Butch Kelly at [butch2410@msn.com](mailto:butch2410@msn.com). If you don't have e-mail, let it be known the next time you renew your membership. Thanks Butch Kelly

### **Virginia Cooperative Extension Opportunity**

#### **PRUNING YOUNG TREES**

**A free presentation is being offered by the VA Cooperative Extension, Roanoke 3738  
Brambleton Ave SW, Roanoke, VA 24018**

**Choose From the following dates:**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2009, 10-11:30 a.m. or Friday, February 20, 2009, 6-7 p.m.**

#### **Location**

**The Brambleton Center, Room 16, 3738 Brambleton Ave, SW, Roanoke, VA  
Roanoke County Parks and Recreation Building  
Pre-Registration at (540)772-7524**

## Blue Ridge and New River Chapters to Host VNPS Annual Meeting

Our chapter has been asked to co-host the VNPS annual meeting this year along with the New River Chapter. The event will take place at the Salem Civic Center on the week end of September 25-27, 2009. Doug Tallamy, an ecologist at the University of Delaware, will be the featured speaker on Saturday night, September 26. Doug is the author of the book Bringing Nature Home. Walks and other events are still in the planning stages. We will need folks to volunteer with registration and help lead walks. There will be more information coming soon. It should be an exciting time.

**Featured Flower**  
**Skunk Cabbage**  
**(*Symplocarpus foetidus*)**  
**by Betty Kelly**

This plant is known as the “hermit of the bog” because of its offensive smell. It is also known as “dump foot cabbage” or “polecat weed”. It grows up through the old dry leaves of winter at a time when we are pining for some sign of spring.

The green spathe will push up through the snow covered swamps and marshy areas. The temperature of the plant can be as much as 27 degrees warmer than the outside air within the buds of the plant itself. The heat assists in protecting the flower and strengthens the odor which helps draw in pollinators, such as the carrion fly.

American Indians smelled the leaves as a cure for headaches. They made salve from the raw root for the pain and swelling of rheumatism. Cough medicine was made from the boiled root of the plant. These are only a few of the past uses of a plant whose root once was thought to be toxic. Eating the leaves causes burning and inflammation so heed caution as use of skunk cabbage is not recommended.

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