

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 27, No. 1

Spring, 2008

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- February 25** **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. The program is "**Invasive Plants**" presented by Mr. Tom Creedle. Come join us for an overview of plants that are reeking havoc in our natural world.
- March 24** **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. Mark McClain of the local Sierra Club will present a film entitled "Kilowatt Ours". Come learn how to save money and energy and be a better steward of the Earth.
- March 29** **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 12** **Lapsley's Run Field Trip**. Join leaders Butch and Betty Kelly (phone 384-7429) in visiting a new area in Botetourt County. This 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, blue bells, 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. Bring a lunch.
- April 26** **Buffalo Creek Field Trip**. Join leader Sandra Elder (phone 434 525-8433) for a close up look at one of our registry sites. This area has blue bells, dwarf ginseng, walking fern, dwarf iris, etc. It offers easy walking along a flood plain and a wooded hillside. We meet on site at 1:00 p.m. **Directions:** Take U.S. 460 east to Rt. 811 at New London. Turn right onto Rt. 811 (look for the Sheetz service station at the intersection). Follow Rt. 811 to Rt. 711; turn right onto Rt. 711 and go about 2 miles, turn left onto Rt. 24. In about 1 mile you cross Buffalo Creek. The parking lot is on the right.
- April 28** **Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. Jim Helvey of the Virginia Department of Transportation will present a program on Virginia's median and roadside flower plantings. Come learn more about this program which helps beautify our state.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

continued

- May 3** **Paul James Garden Field Trip.** Join our president Jim Bush (phone 929-4775) on a trip to one of the most beautiful gardens in Virginia. Paul James has quite an array of rhododendrons and azaleas as well as many other plants. We will follow this garden with a visit to the Cahas Knob Registry Site. Meet in the parking lot of Lowe's on U.S. 220 south of Tanglewood Mall behind the Play It Again Sports Store at 9:00 a.m. Bring lunch. Short walk.
- May 10** **Spring Wildflower Sale,** at 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.
- May 19** **General Membership Meeting,** 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. Sandra Elder, our chapter's registry site chairperson will present a program on the registry sites within our chapter area. This should be a real treat with some great photos. The Virginia Native Plant Society Registry recognizes sites that have a significant population of native plants occurring in a natural setting. The Blue Ridge Chapter has three registry sites. Buffalo Creek Natural Area near Evington, Cahas Mountain, and Rosebay Rhododendron at Altavista. Come learn what makes each of these sites so special.
- May 30** **Dedication for the Dorothy Crandall Bliss Botanic Garden** at Randolph College in Lynchburg. The dedication is from 5:30 p.m.— 6:30 p.m. Come share this special occasion with Dorothy and her friends. She has been a special member of our club. This will be one of our club's historic highlights. Directions: Take U.S. 460 east to U.S. 29 north to Main Street. Take Main Street to Rivermont Ave., and then right onto Norfolk Ave. Park in the open lots and follow signs to the Botanic Garden.
- June 7** **Rhododendron Day on the Blue Ridge Parkway.** Meet 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 eating breakfast at the Peaks of Otter Lodge at 8:00 a.m. Feel free to join us. The more folks attending the merrier it will be. We will be overlook hopping and walking will be minimal. This trip is always interesting and offers spectacular color, vistas and a great variety of botanical splendor. Bring lunch. Walking will be minimal. Rich Crites 774-4518, leader.
- June 14** **Altavista Registry Site Field Trip.** Join Sandra Elder (phone 434-525-8433) to see a very special place. Rosebay rhododendron blooms in great profusion. If lucky we should be well rewarded for our journey. Directions: Take U.S. 460 east to Lynchburg. Take the U.S. 460 bypass to U.S. 29 south. Take the Danville exit (near the Lynchburg airport). From U.S. 29 take the first Altavista exit, turn left and follow this into town. Ross Labs is on the right. Tell them you are a member of the BRWS and they will let you through the gate. Meet in the parking lot at 10:00 a.m. Bring a picnic lunch. Lunch will be followed by a tour of Avco. See www.avco.org for more info.

Letter from the President

I am looking forward to another great spring of wildflowers. It will be interesting to see what the deer have left for us to find. I hope you will join us on our walks this year. We have scheduled some trips to new places to visit. I believe everyone will enjoy these trips.

Jim Bush

Officers for 2007 - 2009

President	Jim Bush	(540) 929-4775
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

Help Wanted

Our society is in dire need of new folks to step forward and volunteer to help keep the club viable. Many of the officers and leaders have done the work for 10 years or longer. This fall a new slate of officers is due to be elected. Field trip leaders are needed. We have a great need for a person to take over the web site. It is presently out of date, but we have no one with the expertise to fulfill this task. Folks with new ideas would do wonders in helping our group move forward with a new perspective. Please, if you are willing to help in any way, contact any of the present officers listed above.

Membership List

I am in the process of printing a new membership list. This will include name, mailing address, phone and e-mail address. When you receive this list please check your current information and inform me by phone or e-mail with corrections. *Our society does not share lists or names with solicitors or other organizations.* If you have reservations about your information being given to all members, please let me know by March 1, 2008 Butch Kelly phone (540) 384-7429, e-mail butch2410@msn.com.

Botanic Garden Cleanup at Randolph College

9:00 a.m.— 11:00 a.m.

March 15 Rain date March 22

Help is needed by all. Come get dirty and make the garden beautiful for the May 30 dedication!

So You Want To Identify Wildflowers! Getting Started!

Butch Kelly

Wildflower identification can be rewarding and frustrating. It takes patience and time. The rewards are endless. Spending time outside is good for your Vitamin D intake. Discovering new haunts and seeing new places is very rewarding. Learning a new skill is something to feel good about. The best part in my mind is learning what plants and animals should be found in certain locations.

Some folks would say why talk about animals in the same breath as wildflowers. The flowers would not be here without insects and birds. There are always frogs, toads, snakes, and mammals to be on the lookout for. Many of these creatures are vital for seed dispersal and pollination.

Several items which I call "*tools of the trade*" are needed. A journal is crucial for taking notes on habitat types, location, species list, plant description, weather, date and time as well as a drawing of the plant if you are so inclined. A hand lens is real handy. Binoculars are good for watching birds and butterflies. Don't get carried away watching them; after all you are supposed to be botanizing. Binoculars can also be used as a hand lens by turning them upside down and putting the eyepiece next to the flower. A Swiss Army knife is handy for lots of uses. A camera can be valuable for keeping your flowers forever. Remember take only pictures and leave nothing but footprints.

The most important tool is the field guide. Many novices make the mistake of using a picture book guide. This can be very frustrating. Some are color keyed, which seems nice, but it is not an exact science. It is best to learn how to key flowers. While this may be exasperating at first, it will lead to more accurate plant identification. Start out simple by investing in a very basic guide for beginners and work your way up to something more professional.

If you are a true beginner it is best to get a book such as Flower Finder by May Theilgaard Watts, Published by Nature Study Guild. This book has been dubbed the "idiot key". Supposedly any idiot can use it. Another book to keep handy is the simple Golden Guide to Wildflowers from St. Martin's Press. Use these books to learn the botanical terms and plant parts which are key to identification. Remember plants have leaves, roots, stems, flowers, and seeds which can be important in identification. Pick a plant that you know and find it in the book. Study its parts and learn the names. Once you become comfortable with these books graduate to something a little more advanced. My favorite is Newcomb's Wildflower Guide, by Lawrence Newcomb, published by Little, Brown. Again study the beginning of the book carefully. Become really familiar with it. It should get "dog eared" and become a mess. This means you are progressing.

Once you have identified a plant you can follow up with a look at a book with good photos. Here are several possibilities Wildflowers of North Carolina by William S. Justice and C. Ritchie Bell. The publisher is The University of North Carolina Press. My favorite is a fairly new publication called Wildflowers of Tennessee by Jack B. Carman. It is published by Highland Rim Press. For the real botanists of the crowd, I recommend Flora of West Virginia by P. D. Strausbaugh and Earl L. Core. The publisher is West Virginia University. The granddaddy of all plant keys is Gray's Manual of Botany by M. L. Fernald, published by The American Book Company.

Spring is a great time to get out into the woods. Enjoy your botanizing and good luck.

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