

# Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE  
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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June, 2008

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**June 27 & 28 Saltville-Mt. Rogers Field Trip.** Join Rich Crites for a look at some of Virginia's most interesting and diverse habitats. We will see rare plants and stunning scenery. Come beat the heat in Virginia's highlands. Remember 100 feet of elevation gain is equal to a 200 mile journey north. This should make for an interesting trip. The trip will include a jaunt to Saltville west of Marion on Friday afternoon. Mt. Rogers will be explored on Saturday morning. Reserve a room at the Best Western Motel in Marion, VA (276) 783-3193. Ask for the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society group rate. It includes a buffet breakfast on Saturday. The group will meet at 3:00 p.m. at the motel on Friday to travel to Saltville. We will visit the salt flats and the Museum of the Middle Appalachians. On Saturday we will travel to Mt. Rogers. Departure time from the motel is 9:00 a.m. This will include a stop at the U.S. Forest Service visitor center, and will be followed by a close up look at White Top (the highest mountain road east of the Mississippi). There we should see Mt. oxalis, crab apple, red spruce and three toothed cinquefoil among others. Grayson Highlands State Park will also be explored. Walking will be minimal.

Directions to the motel: Take I81 south to Exit 47. Turn left onto Main Street and go about 1 mile, and the Best Western is on the left. Trip leader Rich Crites (540) 774-4518

**July 12 Blue Ridge Parkway South Field Trip.** Join Butch Kelly for a mid-summer look at wildflowers and immerse yourselves in the pastoral setting that borders the Parkway. We will look for summer composites and wetland flowers. Bring your bug spray and long britches. Some brief walking in tall grass. The trip will include lunch at the Mabry Mill Restaurant. We will meet at 8:30 A.M. in the Lowe's parking lot off U.S. 220 below Tanglewood Mall. Meet behind the Play It Again Store. Trip leader Butch Kelly (540) 384-7429.

**August 23 Annual Picnic and Board Meeting.** Our picnic will be at the home of Jim and Rosemary Bush. There will be a **board meeting** at 10 am and the picnic will start at noon. Hot dogs, hamburgers and drinks will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Directions: RT 221S top of Bent Mountain. Right at Mexican Restaurant (RT 612). Left at stop sign onto Tinsley Lane. Right on Bottom Creek Rd for 1.1 miles. Watch for sign at driveway. Hope to see all of you there rain or shine. Contact: Jim Bush (540) 929-4775.

From the President's Desk:

VNPS Wildflower for 2009 is the Skunk Cabbage.

I want to thank all who participated in our plant sale. It was a huge success. Also, we have had a lot of participation in our field trips. Our last one for this Spring will be June 14 to the Altavista Registry Site (see the spring newsletter for details). A big thank you to those who were willing to lead these walks.

We finally have our web site straightened out. It is currently under construction until our next newsletter. The web site is [members.tripod.com/blueridgewildflowersociety](http://members.tripod.com/blueridgewildflowersociety). Also we have an e-mail address. [BlueRidgeWildflowerSociety@gmail.com](mailto:BlueRidgeWildflowerSociety@gmail.com)

## **Dorothy Bliss Honored at Randolph College on May 30**

Below in an article that was published in the Lynchburg paper by our member Thelma Dalmás.

### **Naturally Speaking - May 21, 2008**

Among the many attractions in Lynchburg, there may be a few that have "slipped under the radar". If you have never visited the botanic garden on the grounds at Randolph College, you are missing a real treat. This garden features native plants and provides a wonderful opportunity to see some of our most beautiful wildflowers.

This botanic jewel in the center of the city is the result of both the wisdom and hard work of Dorothy Crandall Bliss. Dr. Bliss, is a native of Rhode Island, began teaching in 1949 at what was then Randolph-Macon Women's College and retired from the Biology Department in 1983. After retirement, her interest in the newly established Virginia Native Plant Society (founded in 1982) was a factor in promoting her dream in developing a wildflower garden on campus. Established in 1994, the garden is a real asset both to the college community and the public. The use of this picturesque spot is easily incorporated by the science faculty across the curriculum. It provides ecology, chemistry, botany and zoology students with an opportunity to investigate a variety of conditions within a living laboratory. Of course, the garden is open to anyone who would simply like to learn more about our native plants. The specimens are labeled which is helpful to those who are trying to develop identification skills. As might be expected, early spring is probably the best time to take a stroll, but you will always find some color there, even if it is only bright berries against a winter landscape.

By mid April the lovely Virginia bluebells take center stage along with the fragile blossoms of the rare twinflower. By the end of the month, you can look for shooting star, trillium, and golden ragwort. I took a walk through the garden early this week and found very nice stands of spiderwort and columbine. The delicate flowers of the fringe tree were really spectacular.

At the end of the month, Randolph College will honor the person who made all of this possible by renaming the site the Dorothy Crandall Bliss Botanic Garden. It is certainly a fitting tribute to her dedication and efforts over the years that resulted in a real treasure for us all. Take a few minutes for a visit to refresh your senses. The garden is next to the Martin Science Building and the easiest access is from Norfolk Avenue. I guarantee that you will plan a return trip.

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