

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 10, No 3

July, 1993

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- August 21** Fern Foray. Meet at 2:00 P.M. at the James River Visitor Center, Blue Ridge Parkway milepost 63.8. Bring your supper. A fern field guide and a magnifying lens would be helpful. See Lynchburg Area News column for additional information. Dot Bliss, leader.
- August 23** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. Dr. Gwynn Ramsey will present "The Importance of Conserving the Desert Biome." This program includes birds, plants, landscapes, etc., from several deserts as well as what's happening to our deserts and in our Congress. Also, please remember to bring items (except plants) for the VNPS auction.
- September 17-19** VNPS Annual Meeting in Manassas, sponsored by the Prince William chapter. Additional information will be in the next *Bulletin*. See the President's Letter on page 2 of this *Newsletter* for information concerning the auction.
- September 18** Science Museum of Western Virginia Wildlife Festival, featuring exhibits and lectures. Our Blue Ridge chapter will have a display. For additional information, contact them at 703-342-5710.
- September 27** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square.
- October 23** Fall Foliage at the Peaks. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the Peaks Restaurant for breakfast or at 10:00 A.M. at the Visitor Center for our field trip. Bring a bag lunch.
- October 25** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. Bobby & Frieda Toler will present a program on their trip to Alaska. A seed exchange will follow the program, so please bring any extra seeds you are willing to share.
- November 22** An Evening of Shared Memories. Members are invited to bring 5-10 of their favorite slides to show during this General Membership Meeting. A reception will follow.

FERN FORAY

DATE: August 21, 1993 **TIME:** 2:00 P.M.

PLACE: James River Visitor Center

LEADER: Dorothy C. Bliss



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: August 23, 1993 **TIME:** 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Fifth Floor, Center in the Square

SPEAKER & PROGRAM

Dr. Gwynn Ramsey — The Importance of Conserving the Desert Biome

Remember to bring auction items

Letter From The President

by Frank W. Coffey

During our May General Membership Meeting we discussed some possible Blue Ridge Wildflower Society trips. Some would involve bus transportation while transportation for others would be private. We did an informal survey of the members present and eleven members were interested in an overnight trip to "Longwood Gardens", while eight were interested in a one-day trip there. Ten members were interested in an overnight trip to Cranberry Glades. This trip was tentatively planned for July 10 & 11 and details were confirmed in the June Newsletter Supplement. Nine members expressed an interest in visiting Gatlinburg, Tennessee, during the Wildflower Pilgrimage in the spring of 1994. If any member has an interest in any of these trips or has other suggestions, please let an officer or board member know so formal plans can be made.

"Invasive Exotic Plants: Contemporary Issues and Options", scheduled to be held at Virginia Tech on August 12 & 13, has been cancelled with hopes of rescheduling in the spring. This seminar was developed to present a balanced view of issues related to invasive exotic plants, including control measures, impact on native ecosystem diversity, alternative plants for ornamental purposes, and the impact on the nursery industry. We'll let you know when we hear from them.

I hope that many of our members will be able to attend the VNPS Annual Meeting in Manassas September 17-19. Our host chapter, the Prince William Wildflower Society, is working hard to provide a wide variety of activities for all to enjoy. Our first "Live Auction" will take place during the Saturday night festivities and everyone needs to make contributions for this event as well as the traditional "Silent Auction." Please be thinking about what you can contribute. Auction items, with the exception of plants, may be brought to the August General Membership Meeting. If you plan to contribute plants, let me know and arrangements can be made for someone to get them to the auction.

APPOMATTOX FIELD TRIP

Carolyn C. Bates

Despite the weatherman's prediction of cloudy weather with possible showers, the sun shone on the 15 people who assembled at the picnic area by the Appomattox River on Route 24 for the Appomattox Field Trip. Four others had come for an earlier walk and stayed to greet us and give us a preview of the area.

With Frank Coffey leading and Dorothy Bliss providing botanical expertise, we started at the site of Lee's Headquarters and proceeded down the nature trail, which soon crosses the Appomattox River and in general parallels Plain Run Branch of the River. We were interested to see that a number of the trees along the path were labeled.

A patch of Bluets, *Houstonia caerulea*, gave the first significant bloom. A little later in a meadow-like area we were to discover, mixed in with a display of Field Pansy, *Viola rafinesquii*, another *Houstonia* or *Hedyotis*, which was smaller and light purple in color, with an eye of deep violet or dark red. This was probably the Star Violet, *Houstonia pusilla*, according to the *Virginia Atlas*; *Hedyotis crassifolia*, according to *Kartesz and Kartesz*; or, *Houstonia minima*, in the *Audubon Guide*.

After crossing the river, we came to a very floral area with Bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, emerging Mayapple plants, *Podophyllum peltatum*, Hepatica, *Hepatica americana*, and Rue Anemone, *Thalictrum thalictroides*, in an unusual rosy lavender shade instead of the usual white.

The wooded areas had several ferns and clubmosses, including Shining Clubmoss, *Lycopodium lucidulum*.

Masses of Periwinkle, *Vinca minor*, and Day Lily, *Hemerocallis fulva*, indicated the existence of long-ago home sites.

Leaves of three small orchids gave promise of bloom to come later in the year: Puttyroot, *Aplectrum hyemale*, Crane-fly Orchid, *Tipularia discolor*, and Rattlesnake Orchid, *Goodyera pubescens*.

Of course, there were other inconspicuous plants in bloom—mustards, mints, chickweeds, etc.

At the end of the walk many headed for home, but six of us had a pleasant picnic at a table near the Appomattox River.

WILDFLOWER WEEKEND

Frieda M. Toler

The Science Museum of Western Virginia presented the Twenty-fourth Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage April 23-25, 1993. It began Friday evening at Virginia Western Community College's Whitman Auditorium. Heather Winkler, Chairperson of the Steering Committee from the Museum, gave a warm welcome to those who attended the event.

Rich Crites, Associate Professor of Biology at VWCC, also welcomed everyone and then introduced the speaker of the evening, Bill Hunley. His slide-lecture program was "Native Plants and Wildlife" and described how plants, animals and birds are dependent on each other for survival.

Bill is a graduate of Virginia Western Community College and Virginia Tech with degrees in forestry, biology and science education. He is the Middle School Coordinator for the Roanoke Community School. He is a member of the Virginia Native Plant Society and the Blue Ridge Chapter, the Roanoke Bird Club, the Virginia Herpetological Society, and the Virginia Natural History Association.

Following the program, there was a reception and time to register for the weekend wildflower and bird walks.

Thanks to Bill for a most interesting and informative program. Also, thanks to the BRWS members who served on the Steering Committee, including Sam Ellington, Rich Crites and Bobby Toler, to Hugh & Bunny Smith for all their help and knowledge from planning previous pilgrimages and to the many members who were leaders for the various events.

It was a perfect weekend to enjoy the spring trees, shrubs and flowers that were in bloom. Spring was a little late this year but that did not deter our appreciation of the Appalachian beauty that surrounds us in great abundance.

Permission is hereby given to reprint.
Please give credit.

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Perennial Seed

John K. Arbogast
Roanoke City Extension Agent

As we enter the last months of summer, the thought of doing another seed sowing of flowers is far from the minds of most gardeners. Flowers, after all, are either started from seeds indoors or bought in packs in spring, right? Not necessarily, where herbaceous perennials are concerned. In fact, fall seeding can be used to great advantage by the home gardener.

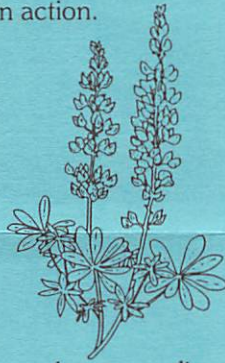
Herbaceous perennials differ from annuals in their ability to withstand the winter and return each year from the same roots. Many of them are not just withstanding adverse conditions, but have evolved to require them. Perennials drop seeds at different times throughout the growing season, depending upon the species. The fate of those seeds usually follows one of two directions. With some species, the seeds may remain in the soil throughout the winter and germinate in spring. Other species produce seeds that germinate shortly after falling to the ground. The seedling grows several leaves before the onset of winter, but does not flower. Those seeds that wait until spring to germinate generally require cold, moist conditions of winter to erode the seed coat and allow development of the interior seedling.



On the other hand, the perennial seeds that germinate readily after release from the pod often need the cold winter temperatures to stimulate the formation of a flower; without the cold, only leaves are produced.

Many cultivated perennials are easily started from seeds in August. However, seed propagation will not yield identical offspring; do not expect dozens of

seedlings that all bloom simultaneously with the same plant shape and flower appearance. Expect, instead, to save money compared to purchasing plants from division and enjoy witnessing plant genetics in action.



Seeds can be sown directly into a prepared bed. Clear the space of weeds, old mulch, and any overhanging foliage of neighboring plants. Sow the seeds generously to compensate for the unpredictable germination percentage sometimes found in perennials, and thin out afterwards. Maintain frequent irrigation until seeds have germinated and seedlings become established.

Work carefully around the new plants during fall maintenance. Seeds also may be started in seed packs or in a shaded cold frame and transplanted in late August and September. Protect the seedlings with a light mulch to enhance winter survival. Here are a few species worth trying: Shasta daisy, *Chrysanthemum x superbum*, Purple coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*, Cardinal flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*, Lupine, *Lupinus x polyphyllus*, Oriental poppy, *Papaver orientalis*, and Columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*, A. 'McKanas Giants'.

The information given herein is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Virginia Cooperative Extension Service is implied.

Written for the August 1, 1993, issue of "The Forum" and used here, with permission, at the suggestion of Dora Lee Ellington.

Propagation of Twinleaf

Jeffersonia diphylla

Twinleaf, also called rheumatism root, makes a lovely garden plant and is easily propagated by division. It likes areas of light to moderate shade. If the soil is acidic, dust the area at the base of plants with agricultural lime once a year. Twinleaf also likes a rich soil with plenty of compost and regular watering during dry periods.

At the end of the growing season or when the leaves begin to yellow, lift mature plants from the garden and completely remove the soil from the root mass. Select the largest plants for division, as the stubby rhizome is crowded with buds and the larger plants are much easier to divide. Using a razor blade or sharp knife, cut the rhizome into pieces that include two or more buds and as many roots as possible. If the rhizome divisions are too small, they may have too few roots to establish themselves. Replant the divisions, positioning the rhizomes a half-inch below the surface of the soil, and water thoroughly.

Twinleaf seedlings are slow growing and may take four to five years to develop into flowering sized plants. Dividing the rhizomes and replanting will give you blooming plants the following spring.

[Based on information provided by Harry R. Phillips in his book *Growing and Propagating Wild Flowers*.]

Dora Lee Ellington

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy C. Bliss

Summer Invasives

Lucy Braun, who wrote a definitive book on the eastern Deciduous Forest, described this time of year as the "Summer Green Aspect" and truly our woods and roadsides show a preponderance of green color but many flowers are scattered in the more open areas. Conspicuous among the flowers in bloom along the Blue Ridge Parkway in June and July was spiderwort, *Tradescantia virginiana*, with its great variation of color from white through many shades of pink, lavender and bluish-purple. Masses of goat's beard and bowman's root or Indian physic displayed large clumps of white flowers, especially along the rocky roadbanks. Black-eyed Susans, fleabane daisies and wild carrot, all more or less invasive, were much in evidence in open fields and roadsides.

Another Invasive

We are all aware of the destructive effect of Dutch elm disease on populations of the American elm, *Ulmus americana*, a stately tree that once was common in our woods and frequently graced the driveways and lawns of our homes and was an excellent roadside tree. The Chestnut blight which wiped out the American chestnut, *Castanea dentata*, was another introduction from Europe. A recent exotic species that is wreaking havoc in our Eastern forests is an insect, the woolly adelgid. This insect, related to the aphids, was first discovered in Virginia 40 years ago and now is widespread in the State. Many of our hemlocks are in decline or have died.

The adelgid is easily spotted by the white tufts of "wool" that appear to coat the branches. Infested trees show signs of decline and usually die within a year or so. There are controls for this pest that may be effective on individual hemlocks in yards or parks but at present there are no practical remedies to save these magnificent trees in our forests. The VNPS is applying for a grant that would enable our Society and the National Park Service to print and distribute copies of an educational leaflet on this problem.

This is another example of the destructive effect of an alien or introduced species on the population of a native species. Will the hemlock disappear from our forest canopy? Only time and research will tell.

Fern Foray

This August we are again planning a field trip with special emphasis on the identification of ferns and fern relatives. We plan to walk around the Otter Creek Lake and along the Trail of Trees. Three years ago we found more than 20 species in this area. Following our walk, we will gather for a picnic on the banks of the James River.

Fern Field Trip

August 21, Saturday, 2:00 P.M. Meet at the James River Visitor Center, BRP M.P. 63.8. A hand lens and a Fern Field Guide such as Peterson's will be helpful. Fern checklists will be available for \$1.00. For further details, please contact me at 804-845-5665.

ANNUAL WILDFLOWER SALE

Rich Crites

The ninth annual wildflower sale held on May 8 at the Community Arboretum was a huge success. Not only did we add to our treasury, but more importantly, we have new plant enthusiasts. It was interesting to look at the crowd—many old-timers but also several new plant lovers.

As usual, a **B-I-G "Thank You"** to all who helped in any way. You made it happen!

IN APPRECIATION

The family of Reverend Thomas Toler would like to thank the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society for the contribution in his memory to the American Cancer Society.

He gave so much and helped so many people.

We appreciate this gift that will also be used to help others.

Bobby & Frieda Toler
Virginia Meloy

RHODODENDRON DAY

About 45 people enjoyed lovely weather during our annual Rhododendron Day field trip. We split into three groups to facilitate communication between members. Dot Bliss and Sam & Dora Lee Ellington led groups and Rich Crites led a group which included some of his students. There were visits to Onion Mountain, Floyd's Field and Thunder Ridge.

It was somewhat disappointing to see the Rhododendrons; they had the poorest display we have seen in recent years, perhaps due to last year's drought. However, the Kalmias were in excellent bloom all along the Parkway. We hope next year will be better for the Rhodos.

Many other plants were in good bloom, including spiderwort, *Tradescantia virginiana*, summer bluets, *Houstonia longifolia*, Bowman's root or Fawn's Breath, *Gillenia trifoliata*, fly poison, *Amianthium muscaetoxicum*, lily-of-the-valley, *Convallaria montana*, Huckleberries, *Gaylussacia baccata*, blueberry, *Vaccinium vacillans*, and deerberry, *V. stamineum*.

Several edible fruits were seen, including gooseberries and grapes. The fruit capsules of Witch Hazel, *Hamamelis virginiana* were also noted.

Mountain Ash, *Sorbus americana*, was in bloom and hydrangeas, *H. arborescens*, were coming into bloom. The minnie-bush, *Menziesia pilosa*, hemlocks, chestnut sprouts, and the Northern red oak were observed.

The parasitic cancer root, *Conopholis americana*, several ferns, including Ebony spleenwort, *Asplenium platyneuron*, and several lichens, including Rock tripe, *Umbilicaria*, toad skin, *Gyrophora*, and Reindeer moss, *Cladonia*, added diversity to our findings.

The highlight of our picnic, was the music provided by Frank Coffey and his guitarist, Greg Serris. Frank is a professional musician as well as teacher, and we appreciate his willingness to perform for us. Altogether a delightful day. Please try to join us next year for this event.