



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 10, No 1

January, 1993

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- February 6** The Seasons Renewed Field Trip. Meet at the Peaks of Otter Restaurant for breakfast at 8:00 A.M. or at the Visitor Center at 10:00 A.M., weather permitting. We'll search for signs of Spring—Speedwell, Skunk Cabbage, flowering shrubs, leaves of the Cranefly and Puttyroot orchids and other early blooms or “promises” to be fulfilled as the seasons unfold. Paul Cowins, leader.
- February 13** VNPS Winter Workshop at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens in Richmond. Additional details elsewhere in this Newsletter.
- February 22** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. Bill Hunley will present “Native Plants and Wildlife”.
- March 19** Friday Evening Program, 7:30 P.M., Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Martin Science Building, Room 225. Program to be announced.
- March 20** Arcadia Field Trip. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the Peaks of Otter Restaurant for breakfast or at 10:00 A.M. at Arcadia by the bridge over Jennings Creek on Route 614. Bring a bag lunch. This area is rich in early spring wildflowers.
- March 22** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. Bobby & Frieda Toler will present a program on Native Orchids.
- April 4** Appomattox Field Trip. Meet at 10:00 A.M. at the picnic area on Route 24 by the Appomattox river. A map will be available at the March General Membership Meeting. Frank Coffey, leader.
- April 10** Identification of Woody Plants Workshop. Randolph-Macon Woman's College, from 2:00-5:00 P.M. Bring a hand lens. Taught by Dorothy Bliss and Nancy Cowden. See the Lynchburg Area column for additional details on this and the following workshop.
- April 17** Identification of Spring Flowering Plants Workshop. Randolph-Macon Woman's College, 2:00-5:00 P.M. Additional details in the Lynchburg Area column.
- April 18** Sweet Annie's Hollow Field Trip. Meet at 2:00 P.M. at Cahas Knob Overlook, Blue Ridge Parkway, milepost 139. We will then walk to the Hollow at milepost 138.5. Butch Kelly, leader.
- April 23, 24 & 25** Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage by the Science Museum of Western Virginia. For a listing of events, contact them at (703) 342-5710. Cosponsored by the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society.
- May 2** Bent Mountain Field Trip to visit Carol Whiteside's property. Details will come later.
- May 8** Ninth Annual Plant Sale. Virginia Western Community Arboretum on the campus of Virginia Western Community College, from 10:00 A.M. until 2:00 P.M. Rain date is May 15. This will be in conjunction with several other functions at the Arboretum. Rich Crites, coordinator.
- May 22** Field trip to Curtis Downey's place at Smith Mountain Lake. Details will be announced.
- May 24** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. Duncan Porter, Professor of Botany at Virginia Tech, will present “Rare and Endangered Species of Virginia.” Many of Virginia's endangered plants are aquatic, so these will be of special interest to some of our members.
- June 12** Rhododendrons, Music and a Picnic. Our annual Rhododendron Day will begin with breakfast at the Peaks of Otter Restaurant at 8:00 A.M. or meet at 10:00 A.M. at the Visitor Center. Bring a bag lunch; we'll plan to eat at the picnic area around 1:00 P.M. Frank Coffey will provide entertainment for us.

Letter From The President

by Frank W. Coffey

Our first board meeting of 1993 was held on Sunday afternoon, January 17th. We discussed some ideas for projects and scheduled some interesting programs and field trips. Please see the schedule of events in this Newsletter.

All members are encouraged to make suggestions about programs, field trips, or anything that is of interest to our society. This can be done verbally, through the suggestion box at meetings or by contacting any officer or board member at home.

Bruce Boteler, Membership Chairperson, reports a membership of 199 as of January 5, 1993. This is an increase of about ten members from the October, 1992, list. Let us resolve to strengthen our chapter and state societies this year by continuing to seek new members and by getting more of our members actively involved in activities.

I ask for your support as we all work together to share our joy and love of wildflowers.

Permission is hereby given to reprint.
Please give credit.

Frank W. Coffey, President
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(703) 343-8596

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VNPS Winter Workshop

This year's VNPS Winter Workshop, "Landscaping With Native Plants", is cosponsored by the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. It will be held Saturday, February 13th at the University of Richmond, Main Auditorium, Gottwald Science Center, from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. There is a \$40 fee for members of either organization and lunch is included.

Topics and speakers are:

"Why Use Natives" by Darrel Morrison, professor of the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia.

"Building the Framework of a Native Garden" by Dr. Alex Niemiera, assistant professor of horticulture at Virginia Tech.

"Sunny Natives for the Landscape" by Kim Hawks, founder and principal of Niche Gardens in Chapel Hill, N. C.

"Gardening in the Woods" by Jan Midgley, program chair for the Landscaping with Native Plants Symposium in Cullowhee, N. C.

The last hour of the forum will include a full panel discussion. The registration deadline is February 8th.

Brochures were mailed to chapter members several weeks ago. If you did not receive one or would like additional information, contact the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, (804) 262-9887.

FOR THE BOOKSHELF

Atlas of the Virginia Flora

The third edition of the *Atlas of the Virginia Flora* by Harvill, Bradley, Stevens, et al, is available for \$11 (\$12.48 with mailing) from Virginia Botanical Associates, Route 6, Box 130, Farmville, Virginia, 23901, or by calling Sarah Kretovitz at (804) 767-2474 (H) or (804) 561-2411 (W).

Eyewitness Explorers

There are currently four titles in this new series of children's books from Dorling Kindersley; *Flowers, Birds, Insects* and *Weather*. They help answer those "Why..." and "How come..." questions which often stump adults. They are also a junior level field guide to different areas of the natural world. They are filled with photographs and explanatory artwork which will likely stimulate interest in these areas. A book to which they will often return.

Current plans are to add eight titles a year to the series, covering wildlife, science and technology.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: February 22, 1993 **TIME:** 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Fifth Floor, Center in the Square

SPEAKER & PROGRAM

Bill Hunley — Native Plants and Wildlife

Come and Bring a Friend

Williamsburg at Christmas

Dorothy C. Bliss

A group of us had the pleasure of strolling down the Duke of Gloucester Street in Williamsburg this past month to enjoy the Christmas decoration. Nearly every window had its single candle (electric today) and the doors and balconies were festive with beautiful wreaths and garlands. I was impressed by their (required) use of natural materials that would have been available in the 1700's. No tinsel or artificial ornaments! Instead, white pine, evergreen magnolia, boxwood and holly leaves with cones, fruits, nuts and berries were fashioned into colorful and dramatic displays. Although in the 18th century the oranges, lemons and limes and, perhaps, the apples would have been too precious to be used on outside displays, a concession was made to allow their use today. I was heartened to see that none of the Club Mosses, *Lycopodium spp.* nor Galax, *G. aphylla*, which have been and still are used in some areas for Christmas decorations, were evident but all materials were expendable and would have been approved by our own Native Plant Society.

Along the street, bonfires added a welcome source of warmth and a nostalgic air reminiscent of earlier times. The drum and fife corp marching down the street, the Christmas carols sung by the William and Mary Singers and the mugs of hot apple cider all made this a memorable moment from the past.

1993-94 Officers

President	Frank Coffey (804) 332-5757
Vice President	Bob Eubank (804) 239-9756
Vice Pres. Elect	Richard "Butch" Kelly (703) 384-7429
Secretary	Frieda Toler (703) 366-0239
Treasurer & Editor	Pam Wieringo (703) 343-8596

Save Something on Your Taxes Help Protect Virginia's Natural Heritage

Virginians, you can help preserve our threatened natural heritage by designating all or a portion of your state income tax return to the **Open Space Recreation and Conservation Fund**. Your contribution to the fund is tax deductible. Donations will be used to purchase and manage habitats for endangered species and to develop public access to state natural area preserves. Twenty-five percent of the fund is used to provide grants to Virginia localities for open space protection and recreation.

Last year, contributions to this fund were used to purchase the Bush Mill Stream Natural Area Preserve in Northumberland County. The quiet waters on this 105 acre natural area are home and resting areas for an abundance of waterfowl and wading birds, including colonial nesting birds and raptors.

Any individual eligible to receive a Virginia Income Tax refund may designate all or a portion of that refund for the Open Space Recreation and Conservation Fund. The contribution from your refund can be entered on the bottom of the state income tax form.

It's Planting Time, Again

Our chapter plant sale is scheduled for May 8 at the Virginia Western Community College. That means it's time to start thinking about which plants you would like to grow for the sale. It seems early, but most seeds need to be planted in February to allow time for the seedlings to become large enough for us to sell.

As you are planning your spring gardening, you might also look at the perennials you have which need dividing. If you expect to have more divisions than you need, consider contributing the excess to our sale.

We need the help of everyone for a successful sale. If we each do a little, no one is overburdened.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation has identified over 700 natural areas across the state that need protection. We cannot recreate a natural area once lost and these sites become more threatened every day. Your donations from previous years are being used to buy natural areas across Virginia before they are lost forever.

This year, make a real difference! Donate to the Open Space Recreation and Conservation Fund through your Virginia Income Tax return and help save a natural area. The value of your gift may be taken as an itemized deduction on next year's Federal Income Tax return.

Direct donations can be made by sending checks made out to the Open Space Recreation and Conservation Fund, Department of Conservation and Recreation, P. O. Box 721, Richmond, Virginia, 23206-0721. Your children's children will thank you.

Larry Smith
Division of Natural Heritage
Dept. of Conservation & Recreation
Commonwealth of Virginia

Board of Directors 1993-94

In addition to the officers, the following people are on our Chapter Board.

Chairs:

Bruce Boteler (703) 774-4072	Public Relations & Membership
Rich Crites (703) 774-4518	Propagation
Sandra Elder (804) 525-8433	Site Registrar
Frieda Toler (703) 366-0239	Historian

Also serving:

Judy Boteler, Paul & Lucille Cowins, Curtis Downey, Sam & Dora Lee Ellington, Bill Hunley, Paul James, Al & Vi Sheridan, Hugh & Bunny Smith, Bobby Toler and Carol Whiteside.

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy C. Bliss

FUN AND GAMES

Only a few plants in our area are brave enough to bloom in the winter months and most of these are introduced. Among some common shrubs in flower in January are Winter Flowering Jasmine, *Jasminum nudiflorum*, Winter Flowering Honey-suckle, *Lonicera fragrantissima*, and Pussy Willow, *Salix discolor*. The native Skunk Cabbage, *Symplocarpus foetidus*, will follow soon.

Are you aware that the common dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale*, can be found blooming every month of the year? Each year I would challenge my students to discover a flowering plant and without fail, each month a golden bloom would be found in some secluded area. Try it! It is fun.

WORKSHOPS

It may be cold and blustery outside now but with spring there are several interesting programs planned. Nancy Cowden and I are sponsoring an identification workshop to be held in the Martin Science Building at Randolph-Macon Woman's College on the afternoons of April 10th and 17th from 2-5:00 P.M. We encourage any age group to participate. Refreshments will be served.

As you gain expertise in the use of keys, you will find the field trips more interesting as well as challenging to actually key out the plants you encounter along the trails.

On the first Saturday the emphasis will be on the identification of woody plants, teaching you the basic parts and structures of trees and shrubs and the use of dichotomous keys in their identification. Bring in any woody materials from your yard and we will show you how to identify them. We hope! Weather permitting, there may be a short field trip. Keys and other identification materials will be furnished.

The second workshop on April 17th, will involve the identification of flowering plants. Specimens of early spring flowers will be available for hands-on experience in using the keys in *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide*. Copies of this are available in most bookstores.

SPRING ACTIVITIES

March 19, Friday Evening, 7:30 P.M., R-M.W.C., Martin Science Building, Room 225. Program to be announced.

(Continued in column 2)

Native Orchid Program Synopsis

Nancy Cowden

[For those unable to attend the December 3, slide show, "Native Orchids of Northeastern North America", Dr. Cowden has offered us this summary.]

Traditionally, when most people think of orchids, the vision of some exotic-looking corsage comes to mind. For those of us interested in the study of native wildflowers, we know that many orchids are generally much smaller than the *Cattleyas* and *Cymbidiums* so characteristic of Easter and Mother's Day.

At some point in every wildflower enthusiast's life, there comes a need to indoctrinate others and impress them with one's knowledge. What could be better than showing off to a friend by pointing out some of the orchids to be found in this area? Lady's slipper orchids (*Cypripedium* species), rattlesnake plantains (*Goodyera* species), and lady's tresses (*Spirantes* species) all provide opportunities to display your knowledge with little chance of being wrong about identities.

If you are feeling particularly confident and know the right places to look, fringed orchids (*Platanthera* species) can also be shown off to friends. But, beware, the fringed orchids that initially appear simple to identify may prove truly challenging. Members of the orange-fringed orchid group are orange, yellow or white in color, depending upon the species. Their flowers also vary in size, differing from one species to the next. So, you may be looking at an orange-flowered plant, but it may be *Platanthera ciliaris* (the orange fringed orchid), *P. cristata* (the crested orange fringed orchid) or *P. chapmanii* (Chapman's fringed orchid); you make the identification on the basis of flower size. Yellow fringed orchids include *Platanthera integra* (the yellow fringed orchid) or the recently named *P. pallida* (the yellow-fringed orchid).

Spring Activities

(Continued from column 1)

April 10, 2:00-5:00 P.M. Workshop. Identification of Woody Plants, R-M.W.C., Martin Science Building, Room 205. Bring hand lens and woody specimens from your yard.

April 17, 2:00-5:00 P.M. Workshop. Identification of Spring Flowering Plants, R-M.W.C., Martin Science Building, Room 205. Bring hand lens and *Newcomb's Field Guide*.

White-flowered members of this group include *Platanthera blephariglottis* (the white fringed orchid) and *P. integrilabia* (the white fringed orchid). Confusing?? Absolutely, and even to those people who study these plants on a regular basis. Even worse, some of these plants are known to form natural hybrids which have intermediate colors and flower sizes between those of their parents.

If you take your friend into the Piedmont and mountainous regions of the eastern United States, you will be faced with a similar situation. Here are fringed orchids that belong to a group producing purple or white flowers, again, differing in the size of the flowers they produce.

So, what should you do in order to impress your wildflower-loving friends and maintain your senses while looking at fringed orchids? My advice is this: enjoy them, appreciate the wide variety of color and forms to be seen, and stick to common names whenever possible. If this doesn't satisfy your friend, regale him or her with the knowledge that orchids are the largest family of plants on earth (over 20,000 different species), that they grow on every continent except Antarctica and the Arctic, and that all species are rare and worthy of protection, including the ones we encounter in this part of the world.

[Some field guides and less technical reference books may have these species listed as *Habenaria*.

—Ed. note.]

Membership Renewal

Our mailing labels now show membership expiration dates. Please take a moment to check yours. If your membership has expired or is about to do so, please renew now! **Remember, dues increased June 1, 1992, and the "Senior" category has been eliminated.** Checks may be made payable to VNPS and mailed to P. O. Box 844, Annandale, VA 22003. If you wish to make an additional donation, please indicate if it is for the State treasury or for our Chapter.

Recent renewals may not yet be reflected on the labels.