

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 11, No. 2

April, 1994

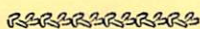
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WILDFLOWER PILGRIMAGE

DATE & TIME: April 22, 1994, 7:30 P.M. SPEAKER: C. Ritchie Bell

PROGRAM: Spring Wildflowers of the Eastern Deciduous Forests

PLACE: Hopkins Planetarium, Fourth Floor, Center in the Square



DATE & TIME: April 29, 1994, 7:30 P.M. SPEAKER: Thomas H. Krakauer

PROGRAM: Wildflower Pilgrimages Past: Images of the Early Years

PLACE: Whitman Auditorium, Virginia Western Community College

April 22-24 &
April 29-May 1

Twenty-fifth Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage by the Science Museum of Western Virginia; cosponsored by the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society. Friday evening, the 22nd, Ritchie Bell will be the special speaker. Tom Krakauer, founder of the Pilgrimage, will speak Friday the 29th. Additional information in this Newsletter.

There will be NO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING IN APRIL due to our involvement with the Pilgrimage.

April 23

Earth Day at Explore Park from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. BRWS will be participating. Additional information in this Newsletter.

May 14

Tenth 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. Members may begin purchasing at 9:00 A.M. Rain or shine!

May 21

Bottom Creek Gorge Field Trip. Details will follow.

May 23

General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square.

June 11

Rhododendron Day on the Parkway. 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 your lunch.

June 18

Altavista Field Trip to our newest Registry site, recognized for its stands of Rosebay Rhododendron. Limited to 15 people. Sandra Elder, leader.

TENTH ANNUAL PLANT SALE

DATE: May 14, 1994

TIME: 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

PLACE: Virginia Western Community Arboretum

Come and Bring a Friend Rain or Shine

The Eye-Catching Pinks

When spring comes, the local wildflower enthusiast heads to the woods, waysides, meadows and gardens to enjoy the wonderful array of plants here in the eastern United States. The first to come to mind is skunk cabbage which has been known to begin blooming in February or even in January after a mild winter. Trout lily, harbinger-of-spring, hepatica, ginger and many more are also to be found in the early spring.

There is a family of flowers that can be found growing from spring through summer and early autumn. This is *Caryophyllaceae* or the Pinks. Catchfly is a common name used to describe these flowers. The stem has a sticky sap and is sticky to the touch. Crawling pollinators pollinate the flowers while getting the nectar.

Firepink, *Silene virginica*, with bright red flowers, grows in open woods and on rocky slopes. It has five notched petals and ten stamens. The leaves are entire, lanceolate and are opposite on a slender stem.

Round-leaf catchfly, *Silene rotundifolia*, is also bright red and closely resembles firepink. The leaves are rounder and the petals are more deeply notched. This is more common in North Carolina than in Virginia. Royal catchfly, *Silene regia*, is another red *Silene* that resembles firepink. The five petals are unnotched or only slightly notched and the leaves are rounded at the base. It is more common in the prairies of Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.



S. virginica



S. rotundifolia

Ragged Robin, *Lychnis flos-cuculi* has four very deeply cut narrow petals giving it a very ragged appearance. The petals are deep pink and occasionally white. Wild pink, *Silene caroliniana*, has wedge shaped, dark pink petals. It, too, is sticky to the touch.

Starry campion, *Silene stellata*, has five white petals that have the appearance of having been fringed. The leaves are usually in whorls of four.

Bladder campion, *Silene cucubalus*, has an inflated and veined calyx which resembles a melon. The five white petals are deeply notched. Bladder campion is common along roadsides and in fields.

Habitat and elevation are important. For instance, firepink may bloom along the creek in Arcadia in April and then be found in full bloom in July on Poor Mountain.

Plants in the Pinks family include chickweed, soapwort or bouncing bet, deptfort pink and many more.

Firepinks are stunning reds and the campions are usually white but all are for the finding and enjoying.

Science Museum of Western Virginia

Miriam Langner, Program Coordinator

In the early 1970's, the Science Museum Association of Roanoke put together the very first collections of what was later to be known as the Science Museum of Western Virginia. Space was allotted to the Association by the Art Museum in the Carriage House of their Cherry Hill facility. Dioramas and other educational materials donated by Grace A. Smythe became a mini museum in that space in 1973 and were the basis for small exhibits available for classroom use.

As the Association became more established, it sought state funding for a home of its own and became part of the proposed State Museum system. When the state budget allowed funding for only the Richmond facility, the Science Museum Association continued its search for suitable housing in the Roanoke area as an independent entity.

Thanks to the cooperation of Roanoke City, the Science Museum Association adopted the Tinker Creek School Building as its new home and founded the Roanoke Valley Science Museum in 1976. Dr. Thomas Krakauer served as the first Executive Director; the Education Directorship was filled first by Carole Massart and then by Bernice Smith.

Converting the old school building into a museum was the combined effort of students of Architecture from Virginia Tech and countless volunteers. Three exhibit halls were fashioned, featuring biology, physical science and oceanography.

After almost a decade in existence, the Science Museum realized it would need more space to accommodate exhibits and collections, so it became one of a group of cultural attractions to be housed in the

Center In The Square building in downtown Roanoke, opening its doors in December of 1983.

1995 will mark the 25th anniversary of the Science Museum and we plan to celebrate its diverse past and its exciting future.

The Science Museum may be reached at 703-342-5710.

Plant Sale Reminder

If any of you have pots, particularly 4" ones, you are willing to donate to our fall plant sale, please contact Rich Crites, 703-774-4518, or Paul Cowins, 804-239-4884.

As you thin or divide plants this spring and summer, be thinking of what you might like to share for our sale.

Letter From The President

by Frank W. Coffey

After experiencing a severe winter filled with the worst ice storms in a decade it is a real relief to find signs of spring about. Though the calendar says spring is really here, I'm not sure I trust it. I'm more inclined to look for signs like the two white crocuses that annually greet spring beneath our balcony. They first peeped through a bed of periwinkle and ivy last week and were in full bloom by the weekend. The daffodils, grape hyacinths and shadblow beginning to bloom near our house let me know spring is here.

Near Bob Eubank's house at Timberlake, the skunk cabbage is now a leafy green plant. Virginia Bluebells are approaching bloom and crocuses and some varieties of iris are in full bloom. Spring comes a little early at Bob's house. By the time you read this edition of our newsletter, many members and guests will have visited one of my favorite spots, Arcadia. This area will surely reveal bloodroot, trout lily, spring beauty, hepatica, birdfoot violet and other early spring wildflowers.

All of this wonderful activity in the natural world reminds us of germinating seeds, dividing, and potting plants. Please set aside plants for our Spring Plant Sale scheduled for Saturday, May 14. Remember, this year marks the **Tenth Anniversary** of our Blue Ridge Chapter and we want to all join together to make this year's sale a huge success. You may donate such items as books, gardening tools or supplies, and any other appropriate items. Rich Crites, our Spring Plant Sale chairperson will be providing further information.

(Continued on page 4)

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Please give credit.

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Virginia Native Plant Society T-Shirts

The VNPS Board of Directors approved the use of a VNPS logo on a T-shirt designed and produced by High Peak Sportswear, Inc. of Lynchburg, VA. The sale of this shirt by chapters can help promote wildflowers, give our organization added visibility and provide an opportunity for chapters and the VNPS to earn funds.

Individual chapters will receive 60% of sales profits and the VNPS will receive 40%. All sales must include the 4.5% Virginia sales tax. The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society has a few shirts for sale now and will be ordering more shortly. We plan to have shirts available for sale at meetings and events. Members may order shirts of a particular size or style if we do not have what they need.

The T-shirt is available in short or long sleeves and a sweat shirt is available. The costs, profits, sales tax and selling price will be as follows:

	COST	VNPS	CHAPTER	S. TAX	PRICE
S/S T-Shirt	\$ 6.75	\$ 2.50	\$ 3.75	\$.59	\$13.59
L/S T-Shirt	9.50	2.20	3.30	.68	15.68
Sweat Shirt	10.75	4.10	6.15	.95	21.95

If shirts are mailed to members, then postage and handling must be charged. Contact Frank Coffey at P. O. Box 137, Concord, VA 24538, 804-332-5757. Support the Society and promote wildflowers by purchasing a "Virginia Native Plant Society" T-shirt or sweatshirt.

Wildflower Pilgrimage Guest Speakers

Dr. T. Krakauer

Thomas H. Krakauer was born and raised in Buffalo, New York. He graduated from the University of Rochester with an B.A. in Biology, received his Masters in Biology from the University of Miami and his Ph.D. from the University of Florida.

Dr. Krakauer was an assistant professor of Biology at Hollins College from 1970-1974. He was the founding Executive Director of the Roanoke Valley Science Museum and was with them from 1974-1985. He began work as the Executive Director of the North Carolina Museum of Life and Science in May, 1985.

He currently serves on the Boards of the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC), Science-North Carolina, the Triangle Land Conservancy, the Durham Rotary Club and on the Public Education Task Force of the Durham Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Krakauer is married and the father of a son. His wife, Janet, is a biologist and educator at the Duke School for Children.

Dr. C. R. Bell

Founder of Laurel Hill Press and Director Emeritus of North Carolina Botanical Garden, Dr. Ritchie Bell received his B.A. & M.A. from UNC at Chapel Hill and his Ph.D. in botany at the University of California, Berkeley. He later returned to teach in Chapel Hill.

Dr. Bell's special interest in chromosomal structure and cellular relationships has led to a long list of scientific publications in plant genetics, evolution and reproduction biology.

Among his more familiar publications are *Wild Flowers of North Carolina*, *Florida Wildflowers & Roadside Plants* and, with A. E. Radford & H. E. Ahles, *Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas*.

Appointed Director of the NCBG in 1961, he expanded its reputation as a research and education center in conservation and native plant horticulture.

He and his wife, Anne Lindsey, are currently producing a series of natural history videos geared to teaching as they entertain the viewer.

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy C. Bliss

Spring. I knew spring had arrived when I wandered around my yard a few weeks ago and saw the Bittercress, *Cardamine hirsuta*, and Purple Henbit, *Lamium purpureum*, in bloom and clumps of Field Garlic, *Allium vineale*, scattered through the lawn. What do all of these have in common and why are they troublesome weeds? All are alien or introduced plants, and, like many non-natives, are invasive when introduced in America.

This brings up the question, what do we mean by the term "native"? There are various definitions but the one that is generally accepted is that those plants that were already established in the New World when the first European settlers arrived are considered native and the terms alien, introduced and exotic refer to plants that have entered this country either intentionally or accidentally since that time.

Lynchburg Meeting. Our March 18, 1994, program at Randolph-Macon Woman's College will stand out in our memories as the one that was almost cancelled because of power failure. A violent thunder and lightning storm late in the afternoon of that day plunged the R-MWC campus into darkness. As we gathered in the hallway of Martin Science building, lighted only by the emergency exit signs, we debated our options. Meanwhile, Dr. Cowden discovered that there was emergency power in Main Hall and a room available for our use. After posting a sign on the door indicating the location change, everyone trudged up the hill to Main Hall where we found that room was in darkness but there was a working electrical outlet for the projector! Undaunted, we proceeded with the introductory program using the available flashlights for checking notes. There followed one of our outstanding programs, an excellent illustrated talk by Dr. Nancy Cowden on the Forests of Costa Rica.

Winter Storms. The severe ice storms of the past winter have wrecked havoc on our forests. Many of our mountain trails are impassable with fallen trees and sections of the BRP are still closed to traffic. We may encounter inconveniences on our spring wildflower walks from blowdowns,

etc., but even more devastating is the long term effect on the forest itself. Some areas may not recover for many years. With the opening up of many formerly densely canopied areas there may be many changes in the understory such as elimination of Rhododendrons which require shade. With much downed timber there will undoubtedly be an increased fire hazard and insect damage. Although there may be fewer suitable trees for nesting sites, woodpeckers should find an abundant food supply in the coming years. Opportunistic species such as many of the invasive aliens may find a greater foothold in these disturbed areas. Ferns and shade-loving plants on the forest floor may also diminish in number or even be wiped out. Populations of insects, birds and especially amphibians may also be affected resulting in either a decrease or increase in numbers. Whatever the ensuing outcome, there will be major changes in our forest ecosystems.

I would like to recommend the article "Aliens Among Us" by Glenn Scherer in the March/April 1994 Appalachian Trailway news. For those of you who are not members of the Appalachian Trail Conference, you can probably find a copy of this newsletter in your public library. The article gives a clear but grim view of the devastation that is occurring in our forests by invasive plants and animals. It is well worth reading.

EARTH DAY

Celebrate Earth Day at Virginia's Explore Park Saturday, April 23, from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Guest speakers, conservation-oriented exhibitors and workshops, nature crafts for children, interpretive hikes and music by local musicians. Bring a picnic lunch and stay the day! Admission is free but parking is limited so carpool if you can. Commemorative "door" prizes for carloads of four or more people. For more information, call Ginny Laubinger at 344-3190.

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April 27-30—Wildflower Pilgrimage in Great Smokey Mountains, TN, 615-436-1262.

May 6-8—BotSoc Wildflower Pilgrimage, Georgia; 404-634-7893 or 404-463-4227.

May 7-8—Garden Fair by Friends of State Arboretum of VA, Blandy (Sounds great!), 703-837-1758.

May 13-15—Wintergreen Wildflower Symposium, 800-325-2200.

President's Letter

(Continued)

Ted Scott, VNPS Conservation Chair, recently informed the VNPS board about *Seed Germination Theory and Practice*. This is a wonderful book only available from Dr. Norman Deno, it's author. Dr. Deno is a retired professor of organic chemistry at Penn State University. To receive your copy, send \$20.00 to

Dr. Norman Deno
139 Lenore Drive
State College, PA 16801

Ted stated much of what is reported in this book is new and fascinating. He gave a copy to a friend who is in charge of all greenhouse production at Longwood Gardens and he said it was the best thing on the subject he had ever seen.

Thanks once again for everyone's continued support of our projects and programs. Your willingness to freely share your knowledge, skills, energies and time make it possible for the Society to operate smoothly and successfully.

Scholarship Recipients

Rich Crites

Kenny Dyer. Kenny received his Associate Degree in landscape/ornamental horticulture from Virginia Western in the summer of 1993. He is currently taking courses to transfer to Va. Tech in the fall of 1994, where he will pursue a degree in horticulture and education. He currently has a GPA of 3.7. Kenny's goal is to teach ornamental landscaping at the community college level. Kenny plans to take the Plant Life of Virginia class this summer.

Bryan Wilhelmi. Bryan says he is a horticulturist and plant enthusiast from deep in his soul. He plans to extend his interest and devotion through educating others about their plant world. Bryan plans to complete his science degree in the fall of 1994. He currently has a 3.7 GPA. He hopes to transfer to NC State or Univ. of GA to complete his four-year degree. He intends to pursue graduate work and teach at the college level. He wants to make a difference in the way we view our plant life and the environment of the world. Bryan took my Plant Life of Virginia class last summer and identified all 80 plants on the final exam.