

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 11, No. 3

July, 1994

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- July 23** Virginia Tech Arboretum Field Trip. Meet at the Arboretum at 11:00 A.M. Dr. Robert Lyons, Professor of Horticulture, VPI, will be our guide.
- July 25** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. Special guest Jocelyn Arundel Sladen, from the Piedmont Chapter, will present "Hedgerows".
- August 22** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. Bobby & Frieda Toler will present, "Ten Years of the Blue Ridge Chapter".
- September 17** Fall Plant Sale at Peaks View Park, Lynchburg, 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. Rain or shine! Peaks View Park is off the Lynchburg Expressway extension which is Route 501. From Bedford or Roanoke on Route 221, turn left at the intersection of Routes 221 and 501 then left again at the next traffic light. Take the first exit and follow the signs to Peaks View Park. If you are entering Lynchburg on Route 460, take the North 501 exit. Follow Route 501 North to the Peaks View Park Exit.
- September 23** VNPS Annual Meeting in Charlottesville, hosted by the Jefferson Chapter. Additional information will be forwarded by VNPS. **PLEASE REMEMBER TO DONATE ITEMS FOR THE AUCTION.**
- 24, 25**
- September 26** General Membership Meeting. 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. Dr. Robert Lyons will present "Butterflies and Plants."

FALL PLANT SALE

Sandra Elder

On Saturday, September 17th we will have a plant sale at Peaks View Park in Lynchburg. It will be a Kaleidoscope event with the publicity that provides. The sale will be held at the small pavilion providing protection from sun or rain for plants and people.

Start thinking about the plants you can contribute. Get them in pots at least a month before the sale. PLEASE HAVE THEM LABELED. If you need pots or labels, call Paul Cowins, 804-239-4884. We will also be selling T-shirts and patches. Lucille Cowins will serve as head cashier. If you can help her, please let her know.

I would appreciate your calling one or two weeks before the sale to let me know what you plan to bring. The number is 804-525-8433.

Please get your plants there between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. The sale will be between 10:00 and 2:00. Members furnishing labeled plants to sell may begin purchasing before 10:00 A.M.

I hope I can count on you to help make this plant sale a success.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: July 25, 1994

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: Hedgerows

SPEAKER: Jocelyn Arundel Sladen

PLACE: Fifth Floor, Center in the Square

Come and Bring a Friend



Our Wildflowers of Virginia T-shirt features Pasture Rose, Bloodroot, Black-eyed Susan, White Trillium and Cardinal flower. For information, call Frank Coffey, 804-332-5757.

Letter From The President

by Frank W. Coffey

Very early on Saturday morning, April 9th, Sandra Elder, my wife Anne and I set out for Theodore Roosevelt Island. It was a beautiful morning and we enjoyed the drive and, of course, the conversation. I was not sure how the Island would look now. I still remember the continuous tangle of English ivy, *Hedera helix*, that had greeted VNPS on our earlier visit in October.

We arrived in the parking lot at about 9:15 and walked across the footbridge to the entrance where I had worked viciously with my weedeater in October. We had time for a short check of the work sites established in the fall before we began our new attack. We found Dutchman's Breeches, *Dicentra cucullaria*, Squirrel Corn, *Dicentra canadensis*, Spring beauty, *Claytonia virginica*, and lots and lots of trout lilies, *Erythronium americanum*. It was quite encouraging to find these and other native plants doing so well.

With excitement from this nice greeting, we began our morning work. The members and volunteers were divided into small groups to continue the removal of the invasives, conduct surveys of natives and other plants, and to identify Tree of Heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*, for later removal.

Members of Potomac, Piedmont, Prince William, Jefferson and Blue Ridge chapters of VNPS were represented. This work session was organized by Mary Ann Gibbons, Nancy Luria and Dan Sealy. Carol Disalvo, who is certified in integrated pest management, aided in the sponge application of glyphosate to cuttings of ivy and multiflora rose. All work was carefully monitored and documented by the National Park Service. We were also joined in our work efforts by representatives of the Nature Conservancy, Potomac Conservancy, and Fairfax Audubon Society.

Marion Lobstein led a very interesting and informative afternoon tour of the entire island. A muskrat performed for us in the marsh area and we were able to see bluebells, *Mertensia virginica*, Lesser Celandine, *Ranunculus ficaria*, poppies, *Papaveraceae*, old maid, *Vinca roseum*, arum roots, *Araceae*, horsetail sprouts, *Equisetaceae*, and Bald cypress knees, *Taxodium distichum*.

Mary Ann and Jack Gibbons very graciously provided overnight hospitality and breakfast for us in their beautiful and unique home. Their home is Japanese inspired with a fish pond with huge gold fish in the front yard, a stream that runs under the house and rock gardens and other ponds out back. Thanks again, Mary Ann and Jack.

I hope that some time every VNPS member can find time to visit Roosevelt Island. The entire island is most impressive and this project provided a wonderful opportunity for all of us to make a real and very visible difference for wildflowers and conservation.

The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society, a chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, was represented at Roanoke's Explore Park at its Earth Day celebration on Saturday, April 23. Al & Vi Sheridan and I manned a display at the park from 10:00 till 4:00. We had Bobby Toler's beautiful wildflower photographs on display and passed out literature and information. The day was really nice and a lot of interesting people came by for a short visit.

There was a lot of interest in our T-shirt and plant sale. Thanks, Al and Vi, for making this such a wonderful day.

And finally, thanks to all of our wonderful Blue Ridge members and friends for making our Tenth Annual Plant Sale the largest ever!

The Rosebay Rhododendron Site

Dorothy C. Bliss

The Rosebay Rhododendron site in Campbell County is the newest of our seven VNPS Registry Sites. On May 24, 1994, a plaque honoring Mr. & Mrs. Knight, the owners of this unique community, was presented to them in a brief ceremony on the lawn in front of their home.

This very special grove of Rosebay Rhododendron, *R. maximum*, and its associated plants was nearly destroyed this past year by a proposed sewer line that would have cut through the grove in several places. With the dedication and diligence of the owners and others in opposing these plans, this interesting and unusual group of plants for the Piedmont has been saved from destruction. In fact, the sewer line is now scheduled to be placed along the road and will not cut across any private property.

Dr. Ruskin Freer visited and was aware of the special nature of this area in the '60's. This past fall (1993) an article in the Lynchburg News and Advance by Thelma Dalmás came to the attention of our Blue Ridge Wildflower Society. Following this, the efforts of Dr. Gwynn Ramsey, Sandra Elder and myself, along with the continued involvement of the owners, resulted in securing this property from encroachment.

This Rhododendron community occupies a ravine that extends along a creek for more than an eighth of a mile and here the microclimate bordering the stream supports several rare and interesting plants—plants that generally occur outside this area. The Rosebay Rhododendron is here at its easternmost distribution as it is normally a plant of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In 1967, Dr. Ruskin Freer, formerly a botanist at Lynchburg College, found a thriving population of featherbells, *Stenanthium gramineum*, that was not previously known from the Piedmont

Hats off to Rich Crites and all of his helpers for doing such a superb job in the operating and management of our sale. Also, we really appreciate Virginia Western Community College's cooperation in providing such an attractive and ideal spot for our sale.

Province of Virginia. Many of these were destroyed when Route 29 Bypass was constructed and the stream flow diverted to a culvert under the highway. Also found here is the chain fern, *Lorinseria areolata*, which is most common in Eastern Virginia. The clubmoss, Princess pine, *Lycopodium obscurum*, a more northern plant, grows in a large colony adjacent to the highway culvert and embankment area. Two plants recently discovered by Dr. Gwynn Ramsey, Professor of Biology at Lynchburg College, and Charles Stevens were a goldenrod, *Solidago patula*, rare for this far north, and the relatively uncommon gentian, *Gentiana saponaria*. All of these plants are seldom found on the Piedmont and here are disjunct from their usual geographical range.

Following the presentation of the plaque, the group, including among others, Dr. Ramsey, Dr. Nancy Cowden, Bob Eubank, Sandra Elder and myself, walked the length of the Rhododendron community. A floristic list of the plants that were encountered included thriving populations of skunk cabbage, Princess pine, chain fern and a half dozen or more groups of featherbells. A trip in mid-summer is planned for further research.

The VNPS considered this area significant botanically that ten acres along the stream have now been placed in its Site Registry Program, joining our chapter's Buffalo Creek and Cahas Mountain sites. This registered site includes the entire Rhododendron community and sufficient land and canopy trees to assure its continued health. There are few places so special as this ravine and its important plant associations and the VNPS hopes the registering of this property as one of Virginia's Native Plant Sites will aid in preserving its special features.

Our Evergreen Rhododendrons

With the recent registration of the Rosebay Rhododendron site in Campbell County, I thought it appropriate that we take a closer look at these ericaceous shrubs. In our area there are two species of evergreen Rhododendrons with a third species found only in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee. The native deciduous members of this genus are referred to as Azaleas and are not included in this article.

Our earliest flowering Rhododendron is *R. catawbiense*, which is commonly called Purple Laurel, Mountain Rosebay or Catawba Rhododendron, the latter name derived from the Catawba River in North Carolina. This shrub or small tree may attain a height of 8 meters or more and a diameter of 24 centimeters. Large populations occur in our mountains with magnificent displays of flowers in June along the Blue Ridge Parkway near Onion Mountain Overlook while from mid to late May the area north of the James River is colorful with the blooms of this Rhododendron and several Azaleas and Mountain Laurel.

The showy clusters of flowers are rose to lilac and occasionally white. The leaves, dark green above and paler beneath, are rounded at the base and apex. Dense almost impenetrable thickets of this and other ericaceous plants cover many of the rocky spurs in the Southern Appalachians and are known locally as "Laurel Slicks" or "Laurel Hells". Although this shrub is endemic to the Southern Appalachians, reaching its northernmost limits in West Virginia, it is hardy much further north. It is frequently cultivated and is used in the development of hybrids with more tender exotics.

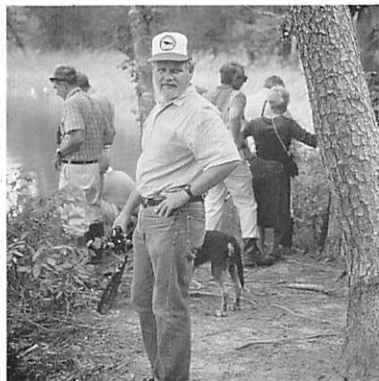
Also in our mountains is *R. maximum*, Great Laurel or Rosebay which occurs from Alabama and Georgia to Nova Scotia and New England. The flowers appear from June through July and are rose pink and white or all white in forma *albuma* or deep pink to purple in forma *purpureum*. The blooms are greenish in the throat and spotted with yellow or red. The large leathery evergreen leaves are pale beneath and acute at each end. This shrub or straggling tree may reach 10 meters

Continued on page 7

BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER



President #3, Bruce Boteler, and Judy Boteler



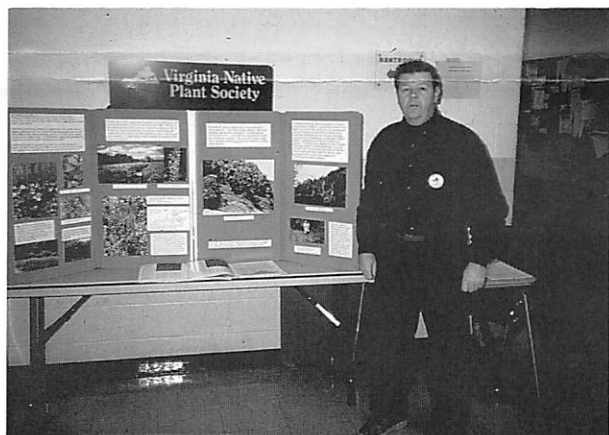
Bob Eubank
Member of Board of Directors



President #4, Hugh Smith, and
Bunny Smith, Plant Sale Cashier



Autumn Walk, October 15, 1989, along the Alpine Trail in Rivermont Park in Lynchburg



President-elect, Butch Kelly



Frieda Toler, current Secretary and Historian, and
Bobby Toler, Photographer; Charter Members

Over the past ten years, there have been many field trips, surveys, rescues, plant sales and informative programs. A big "Thank You" to the ones who participated in each of these activities. Also, we owe the leaders and planners of these events a big debt of gratitude. The wonderful cooperation of our members has made this Chapter a great success. Looking forward to the next ten years.



Morehead City, N.C. Field Trip, May 5—7, 1987



Dorothy Bliss and Laura Bliss
Lynchburg leaders



Buffalo Creek Field Trip, March 14, 1987



Earth Day, April 21, 1990, Chessie Nature Trail

TEN YEARS OF THE BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER



Charter Meeting Notice

PETITION FOR CHAPTER AFFILIATION
THE VIRGINIA WILDFLOWER PRESERVATION SOCIETY

I. CHAPTER NAME:
a. Please indicate your group's proposed chapter designation:
BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER
b. If applicant represents an established organization, please indicate present designation: _____

II. MEMBERSHIPS AND OFFICERS
a. Please attach a list of applicant's full membership, including names, addresses, telephone numbers, and their membership classification, at a meeting of each officer who has been duly elected, asterisk (*) that officer who shall receive all future correspondence from the VWPS.
* Paul S. James, President
Richard W. Crites, Corresponding Secretary
1st Vice President, Frieda Toler
Recording Secretary, Sam Ellington
Treasurer, _____
Other Officers/Committee Chairmen (continue on reverse, if necessary): _____

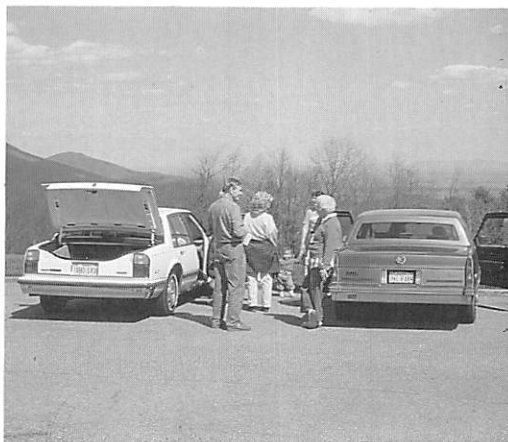
III. CHAPTER AREA
Please designate the proposed perimeter of the geographic area which the applicant chapter would cover: Allegheny, Ashurst, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Carroll, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Henry, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Roanoke & Rockbridge
b. Please attach confirmed copies of chapter by-laws and/or standing rules for review and conformance with Society's governing documents.

IV. BY-LAWS
I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the foregoing information and attached documents accurately represent the constitution and purposes of my applicant organization.
August 10, 1984
Date
Paul S. James, President
Completed petition and attached documents should be submitted to: Corresponding Secretary, c/o VWPS, P. O. Box 844, Annandale, VA 22010.

Petition for Chapter Affiliation



Trillium grandiflorum
Chapter flower



Virginia Nathan, third from left
former VNPS Bulletin Editor



Frank Coffey, President #5,
current BRWS President



Plant Identification Workshop, April, 1993
Dorothy Bliss and Nancy Cowden, standing, leaders



Peaks of Otter, a Field Trip Favorite
Va. Association of Science Teachers, October, 1987

TEN YEARS OF THE B



President #1, Paul James, center, with Sam Ellington and Bobby Toler



Sandra Elder, say "Cheese"



President #2, Rich Crites and Connie Crites



John Walke, right; Project to save *Cypripedium reginae* Showy Lady's Slipper Greenbrier Co., WV



Sam Ellington, first BRWS treasurer, and Dora Lee Ellington, the "Seed Lady" Charter Members



Pandapas Pond Field Trip, August 12, 1989



Nicky Staunton, second front row, current President, VNPS

In preparing this special edition of the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society *Newsletter*, there were several things that were always obvious. This is a group that is genuinely dedicated to the success of the Chapter and reaching the goals of preservation and conservation. Through the years, we have become friends, shared the good times and the bad. We have laughed with each other and shared a few tears. Each event has brought us a better understanding of our purpose and the friendship we share.

OUR EVERGREEN RHODODENDRONS — Continued from page 2

in height and is found in swamps and pond margins in its northern range and chiefly in the mountains in the south where it often forms dense almost impenetrable thickets.

In both this species and the Catawba Rhododendron, the leaves react to drouth and freezing by rolling into a tight ball and bending downward. This is a protective mechanism that prevents loss of moisture from the pores on the lower non-waxy surface while leaving the upper waxy surface exposed to the

elements. In 1903, the Rosebay was voted by the pupils in the West Virginia public schools as the State Flower of West Virginia.

A third evergreen species, *R. carolinianum* (*R. minus*), occurs in the mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee and is much smaller in habit, 1-2 meters high and wide with dense foliage. The leaves are only 5-8 cm long and rusty or scaly beneath. The flowers, appearing in May at lower elevations and in July at higher elevations, are rose-purple in color with only a few in a cluster. In rocky exposed areas,

especially on Cliff Top (Mt. LeConte) and Charlie's Bunion in the Great Smoky Mountains, this shrub assumes a straggling dwarf habit.

From early May to late July, one or more of these three showy heaths can be found in bloom in our Southern Appalachians. Excellent specimens of the Carolina Rhododendron along with several species of Azaleas have been planted at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center and were in flower in early May of this year.



North Carolina Botanical Garden at Chapel Hill, N.C. Field Trip, September 8, 1990.
Pam Wieringo, third, front row, *Newsletter* Editor and current Treasurer



Cold Mountain Field Trip, July 13, 1991



Belly Botany: Rich Crites and Bobby Toler
Cranberry Glades, West Virginia



Evelyn Walke and Frieda Toler,
Cashiers for Plant Sales



Eighth Annual Plant Sale, May 9, 1992
Community Arboretum at Virginia Western



Carol Whiteside, third from left
Plant Sale Cashier



Karen Shepard and Gale Updike
Plant Sale Cashiers, 1994

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy C. Bliss

Invasives in the Smokies. Over 300 species of exotics have been recorded for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and with a special grant the Park Service is hoping to eradicate some of the most troublesome species that are smothering the native flora, including some federally threatened species. During the next several years they plan to launch an aggressive campaign against kudzu, mimosa, Oriental bittersweet, wisteria, princess tree and perhaps some other invasives. I will be interested in following the results.

Sessile Trilliums. On our April 16th field trip to Glen Maury Park, while rambling across a slope, we encountered a group of Trilliums with dark red erect flowers and mottled leaves. This was *Trillium sessile*, known as toadshade, sessile or toad trillium. The following week I saw this species in the Smokies and a few days later, in a wildflower garden in Lynchburg, I came across the same species. Some friends also reported seeing it growing on the Chessie Trail. Although not rare, occurring in 29 counties in the state, I had not seen this Trillium for several years until this spring!

Bearwallow Gap. In mid-May, I had the pleasure of a walk along the Appalachian Trail from Bearwallow Gap (Route 43) just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Catawba Rhododendrons and rose Azaleas were at their peak. This is a favorite ladyslipper hike of the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club of Lynchburg, a "fun" hike in which the number of pink ladyslippers that are near the trail are counted each year. This year's total was 140 but through the years the numbers have varied from less than 100 to over 200. Each bend in the trail revealed vistas of spectacular masses of Rhododendron and Azalea in flower, their beauty enhanced by the haunting clove-like fragrance of the rose Azalea. Wouldn't this be a nice walk for one of our 1995 spring field trips?

The GSMNP WF Pilgrimage. The last weekend in April I participated in the Great Smoky Mountains 44th Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage. The rich variety of spring flowers in these mountains is unsurpassed in America. Because of the crowds during the Pilgrimage and because this weekend usually conflicts with our own spring Pilgrimage, I would like us to consider a several-days trip to the Smokies in the spring of '95 in early May. Wouldn't you like to see five or more species of Trillium, masses of fringed Phacelia and spring beauty growing in the shade of a beautiful silverbell tree in flower?

Highlights From Victory Gardening Galore

Bob Eubank

The programs presented by Lucinda Mays and Jim Wilson on April 9 at Virginia Western Community College were outstanding. The morning sessions had a full house to hear "Gardening to Attract Native Butterflies" by Lucinda and "Landscaping With Wildflowers" by Jim. The afternoon sessions retained many of the morning crowd but more herb society folks were present to hear Jim talk about "Herbs for Kitchen Use and Landscaping" and Lucinda on "Plants for Color in Southern Garden Designs."

Lucinda started the morning with her "Gardening to Attract Butterflies" and presented much documented information from Calloway Gardens using her own research as well as that of others. She explained that 70 to 150 native butterflies can be attracted to home gardens by using the proper plants and eliminating the use of pesticides.

She said tropical and native butterflies like similar plants and also have similar behavior patterns. She also advised people not to use only one book for information but to read as many as possible to learn what others have learned about butterflies.

She suggested that those developing butterfly gardens should remember they require sun and choose plants based on color, especially those with yellow, purple and red single-bloom flowers. Other things to keep in mind are to plan for continuous bloom, to keep damp areas for water and minerals and to use stones for basking areas and, again, to avoid the use of pesticides.

Jim's "Landscaping with Wildflowers" was great, as usual, informing those present on the uses of wildflowers, how to grow them, and most of all, encouraging everyone to purchase nursery propagated wildflowers instead of digging them from the wild. He made sure everyone there understood the difference between nursery propagated and nursery grown wildflowers because those labeled grown were probably collected from the wild, rather than actually propagated at the nursery.

He said gardening is a lifestyle and suggested people stop fighting Mother Nature and cooperate with her. He advised using wildflowers in drifts as nature does and watching butterflies and bees do their jobs pollinating. He also suggested plants for attracting butterflies and bees.

In his "Herbs for Kitchen Use and Landscaping", he gave a brief history lesson about herbs and said that from 1983-1990 he and his wife grew herbs for restaurants

in two 100-foot greenhouses and stopped when his lecture tours kept him away so long. He had many slides of formal gardens and knot gardens. He ended his talk by passing around many potted herbs for people to smell and observe.

Lucinda's "Plants for Color in Southern Garden Designs" was just as informative as her morning talk, using data from her own research. She explained how designs are very personal and advised the use of plants that will grow best in the site as well as consideration of its weather conditions because they are very important. She urges gardeners to always use compost.

She explained how butterflies, bees and people all respond to color and it can be used to draw attention either away from or to an area. Blue, red and yellow are the three primary colors to use. Gardeners should think of a color wheel when planting and remember that the closer the colors are on the color wheel the more restful they appear in the garden. For example, use gray-green for a cool look in hot summer months and purple and yellow together to make the yellow stand out. She also explained the use of texture.

This was a very informative day and I know everyone there enjoyed all the lectures.

Permission is hereby given to reprint.
Please give credit.

Frank W. Coffey, President
(804) 332-5757

Pamela M. Wieringo, Editor
(703) 343-8596

P. O. Box 20385, Roanoke, VA 24018

Tenth Plant Sale

Rich Crites

On May 14, at the Community Arboretum, we held our Tenth Annual Plant Sale and it was a tremendous success. It was a pleasure to see many new faces along with the "regulars".

As our fall sale approaches, I'd like to encourage you to be making plans both to contribute plants and to help at the sale.

Successful sales can only occur with your help. A special T-H-A-N-K-Y-O-U to all who contributed so generously of your plants, your time, talents and your labor.

* * * * *

A special THANK YOU to Bobby & Frieda Toler for the fine work they have done in preparing the "Memories" section in this issue of the *Newsletter*. Much time and thought as well as layout work went into it.