



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 12, No. 3

July, 1995

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

July 15

Cold Mountain Field Trip. Meet at the K-Mart on Route 29 in Madison Heights at 9:00 A.M. or at Hamm's Store on Routes 60 & 634 at 9:30. Bring a lunch you can carry up the mountain. We will stop along F.S. Road 48 to see Turk's Cap Lilies, Green-Headed Coneflowers, New York Ironweed and many other plants that thrive in the open meadows.

From the parking area at Hog Camp Gap we will climb 522 feet in 1.4 miles on the Appalachian Trail to reach the 4,022 foot summit of Cold Mountain. The top of Cold is open, providing beautiful vistas and wildflowers. For more information, call Sandra Elder, 804-525-8433.

July 24

General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. If you are interested in the world of butterflies, come and enjoy Mike Donahue's presentation "Butterflies of the Roanoke and Botetourt Area".

August 13

Picnic at Smith Mountain Lake at the home of Al & Vi Sheridan. The Sheridans will provide hamburgers, buns, tea and coffee. Bring a covered dish (vegetables, salads, desserts, munchies) and soft drinks. Arrive after lunch to play or sit by the lake. We'll plan to eat around 5:00 or 5:30. A map is enclosed. **Please call Vi at 703-721-8189 if you plan to attend.**

August 20

Fern Foray. Meet at 2:00 P.M. at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center. A hand lens and a field guide such as Peterson's are recommended. We hope to find several orchids as well as late summer flowers. Bring your supper and we'll picnic at the Big Springs Picnic area.

Sept 15-17

VNPS Annual Meeting, hosted by the Pocahontas Chapter, will be held in Williamsburg. Details in the *State Bulletin*. Remember to donate items for the auction.

September 23

Fall Plant Sale at Peaks View Park, Lynchburg, 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. Rain or Shine! Please see article in this issue.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

PROGRAM: Butterflies of the Roanoke and Botetourt Area

SPEAKER: Mike Donahue

DATE: July 24, 1995

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Fifth Floor, Center in the Square, 7:00 P.M.

Come and Bring a Friend

Letter From The President

by Richard "Butch" Kelly

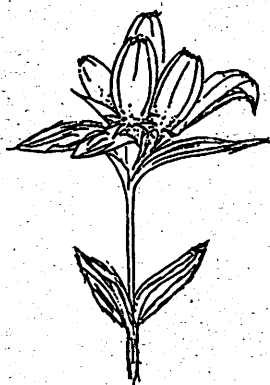
Spring has been a very busy time for all of us. I'm sure none of us had enough time for botanizing. There are several topics we need to focus on during the coming months.

The VNPS is looking for candidates to serve on the board. The positions open are first vice president, education chair and recording secretary. If you are interested or have suggestions, please let me know.

The VNPS Annual Meeting is set for September 15 through 17 in Williamsburg. Please make reservations so we can have a good showing. See your state *Bulletin* for details.

Nominations for Wildflower of the Year are being taken. If you have thoughts on this, call me at 703-384-7429 with your suggestions. Flowers which have been chosen in the past are bluebell, mountain laurel, bergamot, ironweed and cardinal flower. Consider how it would look on a tee-shirt as well as its range (as wide as possible) and habitat.

It looks like a busy summer ahead. Don't forget our program on July 24 and the annual picnic on August 13 at the Sheridans.



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Please give credit.

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Rededication of Black Water Creek Nature Area

Dot Bliss

This area, one of our Registry sites, was set aside as a nature area 25 years ago by Westvaco who has made many improvements in the ensuing years. Their new Wildflower Brochure recognizes this area as a VNPS Registered Site.

On May 23rd around 200 people including more than 20 from the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society participated in the ceremony which included an excellent luncheon with music by Frank Coffey and a brief address by Virginia's First Lady Allen who emphasized the economic and environmental significance of areas such as Buffalo Creek. Sen. Charles Hawkins of Chatham stressed the importance of streams and forests for the enjoyment of future generations. Our VNPS Site

Registry Program was recognized by Trenor Hypes, Westvaco Area Superintendent. A plaque describing the area as a VNPS Registry Site has been installed near the entrance of the creek trail. Following a ribbon cutting ceremony several groups under the leadership of VNPS members conducted trips along the creek trail.

Although most of the early spring flowers were no longer conspicuous, the yellow foliage and fruits of dwarf ginseng dotted the stream banks. This population continues to spread further along the margins of the creek. Masses of mountain laurel in full bloom covered the rocky prominences near the hemlock grove which is now showing ravages of the woolly adelgid.

Smokies Field Trip

The first weekend of May was a return to wonderland for some of us and a new, exciting adventure for others. It was the BRWS field trip to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The twenty-three members that assembled at the Johnson Inn were treated to a variety of events to please everyone.

Although most agreed that spring came to Tennessee early this year and the early flowers such as *Trillium grandiflorum* and silverbells were past their prime, there were fringe tree and *Trillium luteum* to take their place. Kelsey's locust at Sugarlands Visitor Center, wild ginger with the extended calyx, Frasier fir or she-balsam and red spruce or he-balsam were new to most of the members. The phacelia and spring-beauty were especially lovely. Some saw painted trillium while others saw puttyroot orchids.

On Saturday, stops along the way to Clingmans Dome included Sugarlands Valley at an elevation of 2000 feet, Chimneys, Buckeye Trail, Newfound Gap on the Tennessee state line at 5048 feet, old Indian Gap Road Overlook and finally Clingmans Dome at 6643 feet. These yielded a great variety of plants and spectacular views. Sunday morning the group went to Ogle Trail for yet another treat. Near the end of the trail, *Trillium vaseyi* was in spectacular bloom.

The trip was for bird watchers, too. In the flower bed at the motel, a mallard duck was nesting and after a quick call to the motel on May 27, they reported she has eleven ducklings that are doing quite well. Along every trail could be heard and seen several warblers, towhees, winter wrens, indigo buntings and an ovenbird.

If this was not enough, there were wonderful stores for shopping and "just looking" as some of us did, good food and a street rods meeting in Pigeon Forge that gave us interesting old cars to see.

There was one mishap on the trip. As Dorothy Bliss, leader for the weekend, was parking at the Motel, the transmission in her car went out. This meant she had to stay two extra days while the car was being repaired. We regret this happened. We also thank her for making this a memorable weekend for all of us.

Bottle Gentian For the Garden

Nancy Arrington, Propagation Chair
Prince William Wildflower Society

Like most gentians, the closed gentian, *Gentiana clausa*) is difficult to cultivate. However, a similar species, the beautiful bottle gentian, *G. andrewsii*, also called closed gentian, is easy to grow and is the species most commonly offered by nurseries.

Gentians are named for a second century B.C. king, Gentius, credited with discovery of the plant's medicinal properties, and *andrewsii* honors Henry C. Andrews, an early nineteenth century English botanical artist and engraver.

Bottle gentian's native range is Canada south through New England into the mountains of North Carolina. Although it is not listed in the current edition of the *Atlas of World Flora* it was documented in Augusta County in the second edition. [It has also been reported though not documented in the Blue Ridge Mountains area.]

This hardy perennial forms a clump of leafy stems that are twelve to eighteen inches tall. Dark green two- to three-inch long lanceolate leaves appear in whorls along the length of the stem. Clusters of inch-long, slender blue flowers that never open appear in the upper leaf axils in late August. A mature clump, two feet across and covered with hundreds of flowers that

Hal Bruce called a "deep, true, soul-satisfying blue," is a very showy accent in the late summer garden during the lull before fall's burst of color.

In the wild bottle gentian grows in wet, sunny meadows and thickets, and along woodland streams. It is adaptable under cultivation and will grow well in neutral to slightly acid humus-rich soil that doesn't dry out. It will need two to four hours of sun to bloom well, and can take more sun as long as the soil stays moist. Marie Sperka recommends dividing and transplanting in the fall and says plants should never be moved after spring growth is a few inches tall.

Good garden companions include cardinal flower, turtlehead, culver's root, *Veronicastrum virginicum*, and, if the soil is wet enough, cinnamon and royal ferns. In my garden, a large clump of bottle gentian blooms with sweet autumn clematis and Japanese anemones — a beautiful combination in late August and early September.

Gentian seed needs a 90-day moist cold period for germination and can be sown in pots or flats and left outdoors through the winter.

Wild News, January-February, 1994
The Prince William Wildflower Society

Staton Creek Wildflower Walk

Quintin C. McClellan

Turnout for this trip was excellent (19); in fact, participants outnumbered plants in flower by more than 2 to 1. Well, we all know that the reverse of this ratio is always better, but despite the low number of plants actually in flower the trip couldn't have come on a better day. I would have guessed that old man winter would have released these mountains from their sleep by now, but Staton Creek was still "dormant" for the most part.

However, further down the mountain where Staton Creek flows into the Pedlar River, we found some walking trails that followed the creek down along Route 605. There we were greeted with one of my favorite wildflowers, bloodroot. Over 25 species of wild flowers were recognized, only a fraction of which were in flower. Some of the other more interesting wildflowers we encountered that were actually in flower were trillium, marsh marigold, round leaved yellow violet, spring beauty, dutchman's breeches, and star chickweed. Also seen were scouring rush, resurrection and marginal wood ferns, rue anemone, bellwort and gill-over-the-ground.

A picnic supper gave everyone an opportunity to share recent sightings. A big thanks goes out to all who participated.



FALL PLANT SALE

Sandra Elder



Our second plant sale in the Lynchburg area will be held on Saturday, September 23 in Peaks View Park between 10:00 A.M. and 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 entering Lynchburg on Route 460, take the North 501 exit. Follow Route 501 North to the Peaks View Park exit.

I hope all members with wildflower gardens will have something to share. Any number of plants, great or small, will be appreciated. **PLEASE LABEL ALL PLANTS.** Call Paul Cowins, 804-239-4884, if you need pots or labels. Plants need to be at the Park by 8:30 A.M.

If you don't have plants to share, you can help in other ways. Encourage friends to come to the sale. Come early and help with transporting, arranging and pricing plants. During the sale, be available to help people with their selections.

If you have questions or would like to help at the sale, call Sandra Elder, 804-525-8433.

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy C. Bliss

Spring is always beautiful in Virginia but in spite of—perhaps because of—an early drouth this has been one of the most spectacular spring flower shows I can remember. The fragrant early azalea, pinxter flower and flame azalea were followed by masses of mountain laurel and now even before June has arrived, the Catawba rhododendron is already bursting into bloom along the Parkway.

The R.-M. W. C. Botanic Garden

Nearly all the fall plantings survived the winter months and with several hundred specimens set out this spring, the garden is rapidly taking shape. My thank you is extended to Paul James for his generous donation of many spring flowers and shrubs. His gift of a very large *Franklenia* will be dedicated to the memory of Franklin F. Flint, a former member of our chapter and biology professor at Randolph-Macon Woman's College.

In April the garden showed future promise in the colorful blooms of many spring flowers including the three Carolina rhododendron specimens. Now, the first of June, several of the mountain laurels, with deep pink flowers, and sweet shrub, *Itea virginica*, with cascades of white blooms are focal points of interest.

The garden adjoining the R.-M. W. C. greenhouse on Norfolk Avenue is open to the public during daylight hours. When you are in the area, please stop by and enjoy this wild flower setting.

Rosebay

Rhododendron Site

This site is now owned by the Ross Laboratories in Altavista. The property was formerly owned by Ruth and Frank Knight who because of health problems decided to sell their farm. I have been in communication with the Ross Lab plant manager and look forward to a cooperative and amicable association with the new owners. Sandra Elder, our chapter Registrar, and I expect to meet with him next week. I do not foresee any problems with our

relationship and expect that, with permission, we will be allowed to lead field trips in the area as long as they receive notice beforehand.

Fern Foray

It is back by popular demand! I have been asked to schedule another fern trip and so, on Sunday afternoon, at 2:00 on August 20, let's meet at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center and scout several of the trails in the area. In addition to ferns there should be several orchids and other late summer flowers around Abbot Lake. Following our walk, plan to enjoy a picnic at the Big Springs Picnic area.

Eleventh Plant Sale

Rich Crites

Our Eleventh Annual Plant Sale, held May 13 at the Community Arboretum, was a tremendous success. We had many new purchasers along with those who have attended past sales. Along with adding to our treasury, we have fired the enthusiasm of new plant lovers.

Don't forget our fall sale will be in September, so be thinking of how you can be part of that event, too.

As you know, we cannot do this without the combined efforts of our members. To all who gave so generously of yourselves and your plants, we say THANK YOU.

Buffalo Creek Nature Trail

Carolyn Bates

The weather was perfect for the March 26 field trip to Buffalo Creek, a VNPS Registry site. The good day and the fact that a number of participants in the Lynchburg Park's Master Naturalist Program joined us gave us a record crowd. It was thus necessary to break up into smaller groups. Dorothy Bliss, leader of the trip, pressed State President Frank Coffey, Dora Lee Ellington and me into helping out.

As we approached the trail, we were greeted by the aliens—many field pansies, *Viola rafinesquii*, henbit,

Lamium amplexicaule, and purple dead nettle, *Lamium purpureum*.

Soon after we reached Buffalo Creek, we began to see bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, Virginia spring beauty, *Claytonia virginica*, and bluets, *Houstonia caerulea*, in abundance. Later there were many trout lilies, *Erythronium umbilicatum*, a number of which were already fading, and much spicebush, *Lindera benzoin*. Cutleaf toothwort, *Dentaria laciniata*, and star chickweed, *Stellaria pubera*, appeared from time to time and careful attention to the side of the trail was rewarded by the discovery of a few rue anemones, *Anemonella thalictroides*, and round-lobed hepaticas, *Hepatica americana*, as well as common blue violets, *Viola papilionacea*. A single shrubby yellowroot, *Xanthorrhiza simplicissima*, in full bloom, anchored the end of the trail.

The Virginia bluebells, *Mertensia virginica*, for which the area is well known, were in bud, mostly still pink but showing a little blue. At least one early saxifrage, *Saxifraga virginensis*, was also in bud. Much searching of the bank known to be a site for dwarf ginseng, *Panax trifolius*, produced many tiny plants, some already showing miniscule buds.

One area was carpeted with clubmoss, *Lycopodium* spp. In addition to Christmas fern, *Polystichum acrostichoides*, and common polypody, *Polypodium virginianum*, we were pleased to find the walking fern, *Camptosorus rhizophyllus*, on the rocky cliff near the end of the trail.

May apples, *Podophyllum peltatum*, were just pushing up through the ground and the presence of other plants gave promise of later bloom—partridge berry, *Mitchella repens*, heartleaf, *Hexastylis heterophylla*, puttyroot, *Aplectrum hymemale*, cranefly orchid, *Tipularia discolor*, rattlesnake plantain, *Goodyera pubescens*, rattlesnake weed, *Hieracium venosum*, beechdrops, *Epifagus virginiana*, wild hydrangea, *Hydrangea arborescens*, spotted wintergreen, *Chimaphila umbellata*, etc.

Westvaco, which owns this tract, has provided helpful labels for many of the representative trees along the trail.