

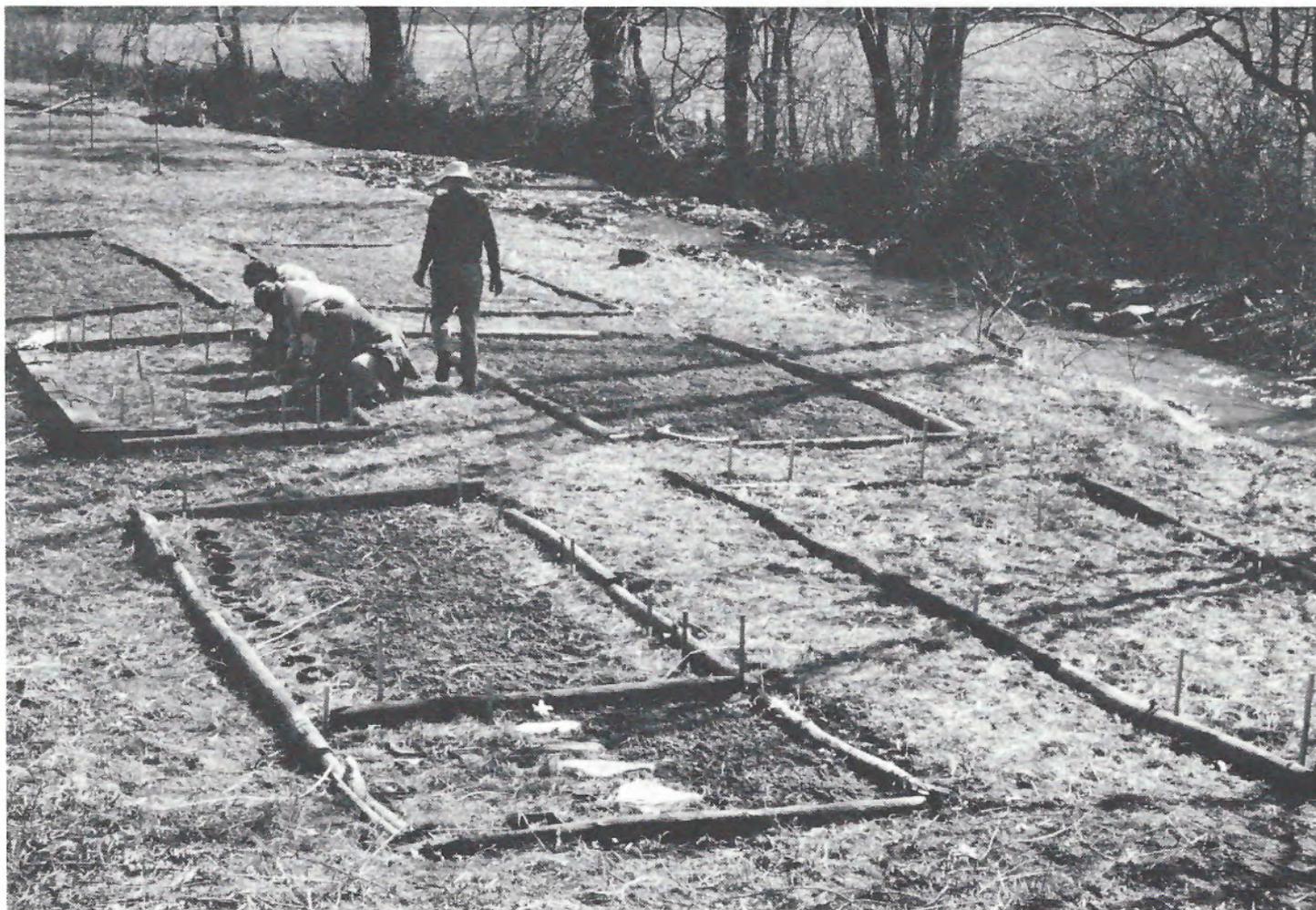
# BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER

## OF THE VIRGINIA WILDFLOWER PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Vol. 2, No. 2

May 1985

### PROPAGATION LAND



Paul James has generously allowed the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation to use an area of his land on the Maggadee Creek for propagation of plants. Members who have wildflower seed, extra plants from their yard or cuttings are asked to share them with the chapter. Several of the members are shown "inspecting" the plants that are already in the beds.

#### MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**Date:** May 2, 1985

**Time:** 7:30 P.M.

**Place:** Multipurpose Room, Center in the Square.

## IMPORTANT

### NEW ADDRESS

The new mailing address for our chapter is as follows:

Blue Ridge Chapter / VWPS  
c/o Paul James  
Route 2  
Boones Mill, Virginia 24065

## LETTER FROM CHAPTER PRESIDENT

by Paul James

In our last newsletter we announced that spring was coming and I'm happy to report we were right, it's here and with it all the glories of springtime. I hope that each of you will take time to get out and see as many of the early wildflowers as possible.

Our first field trip was a real treat and we were surprised to see as many things in bloom as we did. We hope more of you will come and join us on our next one. It's a great way to spend a day and a good way to meet our membership.

Slowly but surely we are getting our chapter organized and are in the process of putting together our various committees. We will be contacting our members according to the information gathered in our questionnaire. If you have special talent or want to help in any specific area, please let me know. We need the input of everyone.

If you have not made your plans to attend the Wildflower Pilgrimage, please do so today and attend as many of the functions as you possibly can. We are expecting members from our other chapters to attend and we need to be present to make them welcome. We will also be the host for the next state board meeting to be held in June. Most of the state officers will be here and it will be a good time to show off our beautiful area.

John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club once described spring as quick-growing bloom days when sap flows fast like the swelling streams. Rising from the dead, the work of the year is pushed on with enthusiasm as if never done before, as if all God's glory depended upon it; inspiring every plant, bird, and stream to sing with youth's exuberance, painting flower petals, making leaf patterns, weaving a fresh roof-all symbols of eternal love. Like us in the spring of our development, let us look forward to the future and enjoy the beauty at hand.

## VIOLETS

by Sharom M. Vest

Violets —

—A small hand clutching a purple bouquet with "too short" stems

—Candied - a lavender vision at morning tea

—Crinkly-dried in lace in the corner of a drawer

—A purple carpet on a surry hillside; in a shady cove; along the path; by the spring

—Alone-proclaiming faithfulness, modesty or rural happiness in the language of flowers.



The Violet family *Violaceae* is represented by 22 genera and 900 species throughout the world. North America has only 2 genera, 1 *Viola* and 2 *Hybanthus* (green), encompassing 80 species, 52 of which are common to the Northeastern-Northcentral United States.

A wide variety of climate and soil conditions suits the violet from the hot, dry and rocky to the cool, wet and marshy.

Flower form is that of 5 petals the lower 3 of which are generally larger than the upper 2 and often extend to a spur. Many species have bearded lateral petals. The flower color variations are wide spread - white, yellow, blue, purple, green; with or without contrasting markings; bicolor and multicolor. The club-like pistil is so distinctive as to be the deciding characteristic that being the green-flowered *Hybanthus* into the *Violaceae*.

Leaf shape can be lancet, cordate, halberd or finely segmented so as to resemble a bird's foot; hence the common name "Birdfoot Violet" *Viola pendata*.

Stems can be smooth, as with the Smooth Yellow *Viola pensylvanica*, or hairy as seen on the Downy Yellow *Viola pubescens*.

Further differentiation comes from the fact that some violets bear leaves and flowers on the same stalk so as to be "stemmed" while others have leaves and flowers on separate stalks and are called "stemless". An example of "stemmed" is the Long-spurred *Viola rostrata* and the "stemless" is Northern Blue *Viola septentrionalis*.

The Common Blue *Viola papilionacea* of which the bicolor Confederate var. *albiflora*, is a variation has the interesting trait of bearing closed flowers resembling buds at or below ground level *cleistogamus*. These flowers are self-fertile so as to insure seed production.

Violet leaves are high in vitamins A and C and can be used fresh in salads or as cooked greens. The flowers make mild-flavored candies and jellies.

The Dogtooth Violet *Erythronium americanum* is in fact a member of the Lily family (*Liliaceae*) and better suited by its common name Trout Lilly.

Such is the diversity of memories and forms invoked by the simple name - violet.

## LEATHERWOOD

by Dorothy C. Bliss

An interesting shrub, new to most of us on the March 16 Spring Wildflower Walk, is deserving of a few notes. Several specimens of this shrub were found growing near the trail above Little Cove Creek near Arcidia. Leatherwood or Leatherbark occurring in rich woods from Eastern Canada to Northern Florida and Louisiana, is scattered throughout our Blue Ridge Mountains. The scientific name, *Dirca palustris*, refers to the mythological Dirce, wife of Lycus, who after her brutal murder, changed into the fountain, Dirce. The cultivated Daphne and the native *Dirca* belong to the same family, *Thymelaeaceae*.

Leatherwood blooms in April with inconspicuous clusters of light yellow flowers that appear before the leaves. The fruit is a yellow to red drupe that falls early and is seldom seen. Propagation is by seeds or cuttings. Leatherwood, a much branched shrub that may attain a height of 10 feet, produces peculiarly jointed stems that are very flexible. The wood is brittle and easily broken but the bark is tough and fibrous and noted for its tenacity.

These fibers were used by the Indians for bowstrings, fish lines and basquetry. The bark when taken internally produces violent vomiting. It may also produce a skin irritation when applied externally. One reference recommended this shrub for cultivation but I believe one should be cautious in using it as an ornamental because of the possibility of dermatitis in some individuals. From various sources.

## RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD AND GARDENS

by Mike Donahue

The backyard gardener who enjoys an occasional avian visitor may want to include flowers that entice the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. To encourage feeding all summer, choose bright colored flowers, preferably with tube or funnel shapes. Select a series of plants that will bloom from mid-April through mid-September. If you're lucky maybe the birds will nest nearby.

To lead the Ruby-throat to your area, choose some of his favorite flowers. Often the requirement of attracting hummingbirds is not the special feeders but just flowers. Try to plant each type of flower in groups or clusters. This creates a more noticeable, showy effect. These flowers contain nectar as well as small insects for a balanced diet.

Hummingbirds respond well to the color red, but are also drawn to orange, yellow, blue and even white. Some attractive red flowers include Bee Balm (Monarda), Cardinal flower, Wild Columbine, Trumpet Creeper, Woodbine and Marshmallow. Other striking flowers include Jewelweed, Larkspur, Lupine, Penstemon, Day Lilies, Yucca, Morning Glories, and even Japanese Honeysuckle. Some trees work as attractors such as Mimosa, Horse Chestnut and Buckeye.

If your space will allow, try to include a few non-wild flowers. Fine examples include Azalea, Red Hot Poker, Fuchsia, Begonia, Geranium, Scarlet Sage, Salvia, Coral Bells and Hollyhocks.

With this wide selection of beautiful flowers, you can't be disappointed if a hummingbird does not take up residence. I'm sure you will enjoy the display.

## POTTING UP

We are asking all our members to bring flower pots to the May 2, 1985 membership meeting or get them to the Propagation Committee because they need them. Hopefully all rooted plants can be put in pots and the pot put in the ground at the propagation land. Especially needed are 3 inch pots for seedlings. Also needed are plastic trays if you have any to spare.

## MEMBERS PLANT EXCHANGE

Most of us have spare plants in our garden and I've always heard plants grow better when you share them with others. So let's have a plant exchange at the May 2 Membership Meeting. Bring your plants, potted in styrofoam cups if you like, to the meeting and share them with others. Please have each one labeled. Any extras we can save for the propagation beds.

The Blue Ridge Chapter has \$683.91 in the Treasury.

## MARCH FIELD TRIP

On Saturday March 16, 1985, twenty-five eager members went to Arcadia for the first field trip of the year. We met at the Tanglewood DMV office. The first stop was at the bridge at Jennings Creek. The second stop was a logging road on Rt. 614 - Powell's Gap. Picnic lunch was eaten the Middle Creek shelter. Some of the plants in bloom were Early Saxifrage, Trout Lily, Hepatica, Golden Alexander, Bleeding Heart, Trailing Arbutus, Cut-leaf Toothwort, Hazel Nut and Alder, also a number of ferns were identified. It was nice to see leatherwood since it is not common in our area.

## APRIL FIELD TRIP

The second field trip of 1985 was April 13. The twenty three people who attended would surely agree it was a most enjoyable day. The group was invited to the Falls Ridge Conservancy by Bill Bradley and Steve Croy. Many of the same wildflowers seen at Arcadia in March were still in bloom at Falls Ridge because of the different habitat and higher elevation. The cut leaf toothwort was at its peak and was just beautiful all along the road. Add to the March list Corydalis, Spicebush, Grandiflorum trillium, Twinleaf, Miterwort, Columbine, Dutchman's-breeches, Vetch, several different Violets, Spring Beauty and many more.

The few who ate picnic lunch at the Roanoke River side of the Ironto Rest Area on I-81 saw a beautiful display of blue bells.

## NEW MEMBERS

Michael L. Bently  
413 Mountain Ave., S. W.  
Roanoke, Virginia 24016

Dr. Laura Bliss  
203 Rowland Drive  
Lynchburg, Virginia 24503

Bruce & Judy Boteler  
1825 Pelham Drive  
Roanoke, Virginia 24018

Betty Boxley  
3380 Peakwood Drive  
Roanoke, Virginia 24014

Paul & Eleanor Case  
Route 3, Box 24A  
Bedford, Virginia 24523

Jean A. Emery  
3633 Colony Lane, S.W.  
Roanoke, Virginia 24018

John & Diana Goodhart  
111 Church Street  
Rocky Mount, Virginia 24151

M. Gweneth Humphreys  
1824 Clayton Ave.  
Lynchburg, Virginia 24503

Hugh & Bernice Smith  
4363 Kirkwood Drive, S.W.  
Roanoke, Virginia 24018

James N. Tuggle  
903 N. Daniels Creek Road  
Collinsville, Virginia 24078

Ken & Pam Wieringo  
2740 Derwent Drive, S.W.  
Roanoke, Virginia 24015-2620

## RECOMMENDED READING

1. **A FIELD GUIDE TO WILD-FLOWERS** of Northeastern and North-Central North America. Roger Tory Peterson and Margaret McKenny. Excellent field guide with 1344 drawings of flowers by Peterson. Conveniently coded by color.

2. **NEWCOMB'S WILDFLOWER GUIDE** by Lawrence Newcomb. This guide takes the guess work out of wildflower identification for the nature lover with no formal botanical training. Easy identification of 1375 wildflowers, shrubs and vines of the Northeastern United States.

3. **FIELD GUIDE TO MISSOURI FERNS** by James S. Key. Missouri Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102. An excellent fern guide with easy to identify illustrations, and Aspleniums not found in most guides. Easy to carry in field and applicable to our area.

4. **GROWING AND PROPAGATING WILDFLOWERS** by Harry Phillips, Curator, North Carolina Botanical Garden. A new book on propagating wildflowers and comes highly recommended. Available in soft cover editions in local book stores in late April.

## NATIVE PLANT AND SEED SOURCES

There are many nurseries that sell wildflowers and it is a wonderful way for everyone to add plants to their gardens. Since we are members of a wildflower preservation society, it is vital we stress the importance of buying plants from nurseries that **do not** collect plants from the wild and sell them. Listed below are a few who grow their plants from seed or from cuttings. If any members would like a more complete list, it is available for the asking.

Natural Gardens  
113 Jaster Lane  
Oak Ridge, Tenn. 37830

Appalachian Wildflower Nursery  
Rt. 1 - Box 275A  
Reedsville, Pa. 17084

Mid-Atlantic Wildflowers  
Star Route Box 226  
Gloucester Point, Va. 23062

Garden Place  
6780 Heisley Rd.  
Mentor, Ohio 44060

Woodlanders  
1128 Colleton Ave.  
Aiken, S.C. 29108  
We-Du Nurseries  
Route 5 Box 724  
Marion, N.C. 28752

Sperka's Woodland Acres Nursery  
Rt. 2  
Crivitz, Wisconsin 54114  
(specializing in rarities and oddities)

Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery  
2825 Cummings Rd.  
Medford, Oregon 97501

### SEED

N. Carolina Botanical Garden  
UNC-CH-Totten Center 457A  
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514  
*(list may be obtained by writing -send self addressed stamped envelope with your request.)*

### NEXT FIELD TRIP MAY 4, 1985 THUNDER RIDGE Blue Ridge Parkway

Meet at milepost 74.7  
9:30 a.m.  
bring your lunch

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 1985

April 26-28	Sixteenth Annual Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage Sponsored by the Roanoke Valley Science Museum
May 2	General Membership Meeting Multipurpose Room, Center in the Square
June 1	State Board of Director's Meeting Hosted by Blue Ridge Chapter
June 6	Blue Ridge Chapter Board of Director's Meeting
July	Newsletter
August 1	General Membership Meeting Multipurpose Room, Center in the Square
September 5	Board of Director's Meeting
October 3	Committees will meet
November 7	General Membership Meeting Multipurpose Room, Center in the Square.