BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER
OF THE
VIRGINIA WILDFLOWER PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Vol. 2, No 4 November 1985

WILDFLOWER PLANT SALE

by Dora Lee Ellington

Our first wildflower plant sale was held on August 24th at the home of Paul James. Invitations had been sent only to members and their guests.

We awakened to a very cloudy day with a forecast of rain. Would all our work be for naught? We would just have to wait and see.

Everything is ready, the plants are labeled with names and prices. The waiting is hard. At 9:30 A.M. cars begin arriving and the rain is holding off, except for a few sprinkles. The plants sell and sell for a total of $909 to approximately 86 people.

Thanks to all members who helped make our sale such a success - the propagation committee, those who donated plants or pots, bought plants or helped with the sale! Special thanks to Paul and Barbara James, Walter and Barbara Bell, Bobby and Frieda Toler, John and Evelyn Walke, Dana and Bunky Markham, Tom Toler, Frank Noftsinger, Rich Crites, Gail MacFarland, Sharon Vest, Ken and Pam Wieringo, Sam and Dora Lee Ellington.

Already plans are underway for our Spring Plant Sale.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: November 7, 1985 TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: 3rd Floor Multi-Purpose Room - Center in the Square

PROGRAM: Dennis Danner, Resident Biologist of the Jefferson National Forest, stationed in Roanoke. He is responsible for sensitive plants within the Jefferson National Forest. His slide presentation is entitled "Jefferson National Forest Land Management Plan".

PLEASE ATTEND AND BRING A FRIEND

LETTER FROM CHAPTER PRESIDENT

by Paul James

I am happy to report that we now have our committees formed and already some have had their first meeting and the balance have theirs scheduled. Many, many thanks to those who have accepted jobs with these committees and I hope each of our members will support their efforts in any way they possibly can. If you would like to help please give us a call.

Work continues on the Blue Ridge Parkway project and we hope to have a complete update for you at the next membership meeting and the first report ready to present to the Parkway by late November.

For those of you who have renewed your membership, we thank you and hope everyone else will do so now! Our last field trip was a little on the wet side but those who came made the event enjoyable. Still more to come this year and Fall is a great time to get our. Please come and join us -- I know you will enjoy yourself.

CHESTNUT RIDGE LOOP TRAIL

by Richard Crites

Our chapter has been given permission by The Blue Ridge Parkway to survey the Chestnut Ridge and Roanoke Mountain Campground Loop Trail. Various ideas have been discussed concerning this project, but obviously it is a great opportunity for us to provide a show spot for the interested hikers. Not only do we want to know what kinds of plants are there now, but we want to increase the variety by using seeds and plantings of species that normally would be found in the habitats along the trails. Most of the forest is typical mesic oak forest with some scattered areas of pines. Some open areas have allowed for honeysuckle, tree of heaven, and other weedy species to get started. Since the trails go around the mountain, there are various light exposures along with different degrees of slope providing for varied habitats. An initial survey of the trail on Chestnut Ridge contained approximately 155 different kinds of plants. A more detailed survey in the different seasons will be needed.

As the project gets underway and develops with surveys, planting and specimen maintenance, we hope you can find time to help and give us your ideas.

RECOVERY UNDER WAY FOR SMALL WHORLED POGONIA

The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) approved a recovery plan on Jan. 16, 1985, to protect and conserve the Endangered small whorled pogonia *(Isotria medeoloides)*. This species, one of only two orchid species in the genus *Isotria* found in North America, will now have a chance to remain a self-sustaining member of the plant world.

The small whorled pogonia is an inconspicuous, slender plant ranging in size from 9.5-25 cm. (4-10 in.) tall with hairy roots. Five or six leaves form a whorl at the top of its pale, dusty green stem which terminates with one or two yellow-green flowers. This species is currently found at scattered sites from Ontario, Canada, and Maine in the north, south along the eastern seaboard to South Carolina and possibly Georgia, and west to Illinois.

Although widespread, *Isotria medeoloides* is very localized in distribution and is rare in all parts of its range. Because this plant has physical characteristics that are somewhat similar to several other plants when not in bloom, and, since it also occupies an unspecialized habitat, it could easily go unnoticed.

I. medeoloides is considered the rarest orchid east of the Mississippi River, exclusive of Florida. When the species was listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act on Sept. 10, 1982, approximately 18 populations (sites) were known to exist, totalling about 600 surviving individuals. In the past 2 years, several large colonies have been discovered and, at the end of the 1984 field season, status survey results brought the known population totals to 33 populations with at least 2,500 individual plants. Despite the rise in known population numbers over the last several years, in some areas plant numbers are as low as one individual.

The small whorled pogonia faces threats from two major causes—collecting and habitat destruction. At the time the species was proposed for listing (Sept., 1980) herbarium collections accounted for more plants than were known to exist in the wild. This species has always been popular with wildflower enthusiasts and will probably continue to be susceptible to taking. Under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act there is a prohibition on the taking of *I. medeoloides* from Federal lands. (Currently the only plants known on Federal lands are at Nantahala National Forest, Sumter National Forest, and Fort A.P. Hill near Bowling Green). However, the States of Michigan, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Illinois, along with the Canadian government, also have officially listed the small whorled pogonia as endangered under their own laws, giving it further protection.

Destruction of habitat through construction and the inadvertent loss of additional plant populations are other serious concerns. Some of the historical pogonia sites under private ownership have been lost to development and the trend toward habitat alteration is expected to continue, increasing the urgency of locating and protecting as many extant populations as possible. Conserving the species will require that some habitat protection strategies be developed.

The overall objective of the recovery plan for *I. medeoloides* is to establish or locate 30 populations of at least 20 individuals each. These populations must be protected from taking and habitat alteration, and they must demonstrate long-term reproductive viability. They should be distributed throughout the species' historical range; however, at least 15 populations should be found or established in New England, a region that currently appears to include a major segment of the species' total population.

The high number of plants presently in New England makes the area more conducive to the extensive field research that is needed to understand the species' biology and to assist in its recovery. Intensive efforts are being made to locate any additional existing populations of the small whorled pogonia not currently known to exist.

Existing populations should be protected while areas are surveyed to identify new sites. Protection of the remaining populations of the small whorled pogonia can be accomplished by such methods as habitat acquisition easements and cooperative agreements with landowners. For a species of such a wide range, landowner and general public awareness is probably the most efficient way to afford this plant immediate and maximum protection. To further facilitate recovery for the pogonia, cooperation between State and Federal agencies should be increased as some populations are under U.S. Forest Service jurisdiction, while others are protected by various State laws.

The variation in most known habitat sites makes it difficult to identify other possible areas. To help minimize this problem, common factors of existing sites are being assessed, current populations are being monitored, and demographic studies are being conducted.

An important step toward recovery, specific management plans, should be developed initially for all populations of the small whorled pogonia in excess of 100 plants. These plans should identify and discuss the implementation of actions needed to monitor the sites and/or provide the protection needed to bring about viable, self-sustaining populations. Once the management plans are put into effect for sites containing the larger populations, similar ones should be developed for the other sites. At the present time, management needs and recovery efforts cannot be properly addressed without adequate data on species biology. Studies must also be conducted to determine the association between mycorrhizal fungi and the small whorled pogonia.

Excerpt from Endangered Species Technical Bulletin Vol. X No. 6 (1985)

BLACK-EYED SUSAN

by Bob Tuggle

One can hardly ride Virginia's roads in the summer without seeing in abundance Black-eyed Susans - Ambassadors from the kingdom of the weeds. *Rudbeckia hirta,* the more common of the species in our area, ranges throughout the Eastern states where it is native. Most flower gardens contain one or another of the hybrid forms of this yellow and brown wildflower.

Rudbeckias are biennial with the plants blooming most during the second year. In the wild, the plants are highly polymorphic varying in leaf size and shape and in flowering period. Like their cousins the sunflowers, they are monotropic, the inflorescence following the sun as it moves through the sky.

Cultivation can be accomplished in several ways. *Rudbeckia* spreads by sending out basal sprouts during the winter season. These grow into rosettes which can be easily transplanted by hand. Laying a stem horizontally on the ground will cause new growth at each leaf axil. Covering the parent stem with soil will result in roots at the new growth. Cut on both sides of the new plant to separate it from the parent and transplant.

Seeds are the best method for planting larger areas. They are best collected about a month after flowering. Break a seed head apart, if it breaks easily and the nutlets inside are dark they are ready to harvest. Mixed with the seed are lots of husks or chaff which is hard to remove. A fine sieve can be used to separate the seed from the unwanted material. In a lot of applications only minimum cleaning is necessary; just plant the chaff with the seed. Seeds should be dried and kept in the refrigerator until planting time. Sowing can be in any season. *Rudbeckia* does best in poor soil. Their tendency to spread can be controlled by removing the seedheads before they mature.

Black-eyed Susans are also known as Yellow Daisy, Brown Betty, Golden Glow, and Coneflower amoung other names. The name *Rudbeckia* is after Prof. Olaf Rudbeck, a forerunner of Linnaeus.

A few references list *Rudbeckia* as an herbal remedy, specifically as a diuretic, tonic or balsamic. Also it is mentioned to have been used by the Seminoles to treat headaches. Another source describes the plants as being poisonous to livestock.

Bob Tuggle, is a member of the Blue Ridge Chapter Board of Directors.

NEW MEMBERS

Curtis & Carlene Downey
Pagan Isle, Box 37
Hardy, Virginia 24101

George H. Fenwick
The Nature Conservancy
619-B E. High Street
Charlottesville, Virginia 22209

Frank & Dawn Gill
3512 Winding Way Road, S.W.
Roanoke, Virginia 24015

Chris Griffin
105 Mill Lane
Lynchburg, Virginia 24503

Leah Gropen
5016 Wedgewood Road
Lynchburg, Virginia 24503

Kay E. Harris
116 Hillview Drive
Lynchburg, Virginia 24502

Lynda Kreitz
800-B Weeping Willow Drive
Lynchburg, Virginia 24501

Dorothy R. Mahoney
1865 Elbert Drive, S.W.
Roanoke, Virginia 24018

Virginia Klara Nathan
Route 1, Box 209
Pilot, Virginia 24138

Christine Norcross
1516 Hampton Avenue, S.W.
Roanoke, Virginia 24015

Gertrude Pryor
Old Stage Road
Sweet Briar, Virginia 24595

Dr. Gwynn W. Ramsey
1218 Charldon Road.
Lynchburg, Virginia 24501

This is a total of 148 members.

AUGUST FIELD TRIP

by Frieda Toler

Some of you may remember that August 24, 1985 was a foggy, rainy day. Those of us who attended the field trip would like to forget. The beautiful trip planned for Rakes Mill Pond was cancelled. Instead of going home to the various and sundry Saturday chores we decided to walk the Chestnut Ridge loop trail.

The Blue Ridge Chapter has been given the opportunity to survey the plants and the trail. So this walk gave us an idea of the terrain and some of the trees and plants that are there.

For more information about this project, read the "Chestnut Ridge Loop Trail" article in the newsletter.

STATE BOARD MEETING & AUCTION

by Paul James

The State Board of Directors Meeting and Gala Auction was held September 14 & 15, 1985 at Wintergreen Resort. The Board Meeting was Saturday and Board Members were invited to a dinner that evening to honor State President Mary Painter.

On Sunday, Doug Coleman, resident naturalist led a nature walk on the Wintergreen property. Ken Moore of the North Carolina Botanical Garden was the guest speaker for Sunday's program. The Auction followed and everyone enjoyed bidding on items donated by chapter members.

Many thanks to our Blue Ridge Chapter members who gave so generously for this event.

LYNNE KUNZE

On Sept. 5, 1985 Lynne Kunze, a well known naturalist in the Roanoke area, passed away. Having taught biology at Virginia Western Community College for 16 years, Lynne was also active in several science related organizations including The Roanoke Valley Science Museum, The Bird Club and the VWPS. She will be greatly missed by those who knew and worked with her.

COMMITTEES FOR 1986

PROPAGATION
John Walke
Paul James
Sam & Dora Lee Ellington
Walter & Barbara Bell
Gail MacFarland
Bobby Toler

PUBLICATIONS
Bernice Y. Smith
Sharon Vest
Michael L. Bentley
John & Diana Goodhart
Virginia Nathan

HOSPITALITY
Bruce & Judy Boteler
George & Pat Lazan
Carol Hawkins
Gail MacFarland

PLANT RESCUE
Bill Hundley
Sam Ellington
John Walke
Paul James
Ed Tingler
Dean Abbott
David Jenkins
Jean Emery
Gail MacFarland
Mike Donahue
Sharon Vest
Robert & Carol Sharp

EDUCATION & PROGRAM
Jane & Bill Haddad
Rich Crites
Dorothy Bliss
Bobby & Frieda Toler

MEMBERSHIP
Robert & Carol Sharp
Gail MacFarland
Pat Tarplee
Loueen Leonard
Bruce & Judy Boteler

COUNTIES INCLUDED IN THE BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER

Alleghany
Amherst
Bedford
Botetourt
Campbell
Carroll
Craig
Floyd
Franklin
Giles
Henry
Montgomery
Patrick
Pulaski
Roanoke
Rockbridge

We are looking forward to having representation in each of these areas.