

BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER

OF THE

VIRGINIA WILDFLOWER PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Vol. 5, No. 2

April 1988

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR 1988

NOTE: Please take time to mark these dates on your calendar. Due to the increase in postage, we will NO LONGER be sending postcard reminders for each event.

- Apr. 23, 24 -** Science Museum has a Blue Ridge Parkway Wildflower Walk. Contact them for details. Phone 342-5710.
- Apr. 25 -** General membership meeting at 7 P.M. Bobby Toler will be teaching Wildflower Photography.
- Apr. 29 -** Science Museum of Western Virginia Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage. If you can help lead
- May 1 -** a walk, please contact us or the Science Museum.
- May 6-8 -** Trip to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.
- May 14 -** Field trip to the Peaks of Otter, led by Bobby Toler - a chance to polish the skills learned at the April meeting.
- May 21 -** Annual plant sale. Rain date is May 28.
- June 3-5 -** Shenandoah Wildlife Festival, Lexington. (This was incorrectly shown as Lynchburg in the January newsletter.)
- June 11 -** Rhododendron Day on the Parkway
- June 27 -** General Membership Meeting, 7 P.M.



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT

FOURTH ANNUAL WILDFLOWER PLANT SALE



IRIS CRISTATA

Our fourth Annual Wildflower plant sale will be Saturday May 21st, 9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. at the home of Paul James. Take Route 220 south to Franklin County line, beyond Greer Gun Shop take a right on 613, cross two bridges and look for signs. Most of our members will know the way, as we have held all our plant sales at Paul's home.

Members will have first choice of plants from 9:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. and all members will receive a 10% discount.

We have a great need for more plants. Most of you have flower gardens and will have seedlings or plants that need dividing. Please pot plants by May 7th so they will be established before our sale. If unable to dig or pot your plants please contact Dora Lee Ellington 989-4742 for help.

Assistance will be needed in parking, answering questions, selection of plants, transfer of plants to cars and checking out plants. There are many other ways you can help so if you have the time and are willing. Please call the above number. We would like to know by May 14th if possible.

We will have many of the wildflowers as sold in our previous sales plus some surprises. All plants are grown from seeds of divisions. **We do not sell Orchids or collect plants from the wild.**

Please come, bring your friends and buy, buy, buy,.

Remember this is our only fund raising project. Let's make it our best yet.

Rain date May 28th, Same Time, Same Place.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: April 25, 1988

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Multi Purpose Room - Center in the Square

Speaker: Bobby Toler will give a talk on photographing wildflowers

Come and Bring a Friend.

Letter From The President

Spring has sprung and many exciting plant activities are getting underway. Hope you have had the opportunity to get out in the field and enjoy the early spring. It does appear that some of the plants are blooming earlier than normal.

If you'll note your schedule of events for 1988, published in the January issue, you'll see there are a number of activities over the next few weeks. Those of you going to the Smoky Mountains in May should already have your motel reservations made. We will meet at Sugarlands Visitor Center in the Park at 9:00 A.M. on Saturday May 7. Also, mark the Wildflower sale date and our walk on June 11. We will need your help with these activities as we are expecting a number of non chapter people.

Rhododendron Day on the Blue Ridge Parkway Saturday June 11, 1988

The Blue Ridge Chapter of the VWPS is sponsoring an all day Rhododendron celebration in the vicinity of the Peaks of Otter. Several short walks are planned just North of the Peaks to enjoy the most magnificent display of *Rhododendron catawbiense* in our mountains.

Morning: Meet at 10:00 A.M. at Peaks of Otter Visitor Center on Blue Ridge Parkway (MP 86). Drive a few miles North along BRP, enjoying the impressive view to Onion Mountain Overlook (MP 79.7). Short loop trail underneath a canopy of Rhododendron, Azalea and Mountain Laurel. A photographer's delight.

Lunch: 12:30 Big Spring Picnic Area at Peaks of Otter. Bring a bag lunch.

Afternoon: Drive North on BRP, parking at Floyd's Field (MP 80.3). Short walk to Cornelius Creek Shelter. Close the day with a stop at Thunder Ridge Overlook (MP 74.7) and a short walk to Thunder Ridge Shelter. **Come Out and enjoy one of Nature's spectacular offerings.**

THE MAYAPPLE

by Bob & Carol Sharp

Springtime is the most wonderful season of the year for wildflower enthusiasts, and between April and June one can find a lovely wildflower, the mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), also called the mandrake. This plant may be easily overlooked as a flowering plant by those who are unfamiliar with it because its flower is very often hidden by its large umbrella-like leaves.

The mayflower is found in rich woods, thickets and open pastures. It's a large

plant, often 12-18" or more in height and almost 12" across. One large, waxy-white flower appears below the two large, dark green, deeply-lobed leaves. The flower is borne on a short stalk at the fork of the 2 leaf stems and is up to 2" in diameter with six or more pure white petals with long yellow stamens.

The first year the mayapple only has one large leaf and does not produce a flower. The fruit or "apple" is oval-shaped and matures in July. It is yellow and edible with a sweet and slightly tart taste. Some people make jelly out of the mayapple fruit.

The leaves, roots and seeds are poisonous if ingested in large quantities, but the roots were used as a cathartic by the Indians.

The rootstocks of the mayapple are used by the medical profession as Podophyllis in a topical preparation for the removal of warts.

The mayflower reproduces itself by means of an underground, perennial rhizome system, and it is quite prolific.

Unlike many wildflowers, the mayapple usually grows in large colonies which make it very easy to locate, and it is another very welcome harbinger of spring.

Plant Habitat Study Completed

A cooperative study of "Important Plant Habitats of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Roanoke to Rockfish Gap, Virginia" has recently been completed. This accompanies an earlier listing covering the Parkway from Roanoke to the Great Smokies. The study supports a 1986 species listing that names 1116 plant species found along the Blue Ridge Parkway. For more information about the study, contact the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Gypsy Moths Headed Our Way

by Ann Childress

Imagine looking out into a wooded cove in July and seeing a sight much like you see in March or early April — bare, leafless trees. That scene may be a reality this summer on the northern end of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Last summer, forested areas in the northern half of Shenandoah National Park experienced heavy damage by the gypsy moth. Over the next decade approximately one-half of the oaks in Shenandoah are expected to die due to defoliation.

Last year, gypsy moth egg cases were discovered as far south as Milepost 29 on the Blue Ridge Parkway and male gypsy moths were trapped as far south as the Peaks of Otter. Statistics indicate that trees along the first 50 miles of the Parkway may

be affected somewhat this year and will likely experience heavy damage by 1989. The larval stage of the gypsy moth feeds on more than 300 plant species. Portions of Shenandoah National Park and the George Washington National Forest will be sprayed for gypsy moth this year. All National Park and National Forest Visitor Centers in the area will have additional information about the gypsy moth and how you can help slow its spread.

The Dandelion Friend or Foe?

by Virginia Klara Nathan

My dictionary defines a wildflower as "a flowering plant that grows in a natural, uncultivated space." Loosely translated, that means any species that can survive without help from man. Dandelion certainly fits this description.

The common Dandelion, (*Taraxacum officinale*) indigenous to the Eastern Hemisphere is now a cosmopolitan plant, that is, it grows worldwide. In the U.S., it is called an alien or escapee, foreign but successfully established in wild and not-so-wild places.

For some, the first dandelion bloom signals the arrival of spring. But rather than a welcomed sight, it often triggers thoughts of a nuisance in the lawn or garden.

Though prolific and very obtrusive, dandelions aren't all bad. They have a long history of beneficial uses and have been cultivated and processed in Europe and Asia for ages. During the 17th century, dandelion was an indispensable ingredient in many ointments, salves and tonics. These cures were prescribed for all kinds of illnesses from gallstones to dropsy. Chinese medicine still employs dandelion extract as a spring tonic and digestive aid. Rich in iron, vitamins C and A, and potassium, dandelion tincture might be just what one needs to cure the winter blues.

In early America, the Pilgrims and Indians depended on "greens and grasses" for food when cultivated crops were scarce. Today, dandelion leaves are still appreciated for their tart but pleasant taste. Nearly everyone has heard that dandelion greens are edible, but in order to be palatable, they must be gathered at the right stage and from the right place. The best greens are harvested before the last spring frosts from an area where they grow freely (not from a mowed lawn). This is one wildflower I feel no guilt about collecting.

Euell Gibbons in "Stalking the Wild Asparagus" suggested digging out the plants, root and all, for a three-storied food plant. The roots when sliced, boiled and seasoned, taste like parsnips or salsify. The tender, white crown of blanched leaf stems can be eaten raw in salad, or boiled as a

cooked vegetable. The rosette of leaves above the surface, the greens, must be gathered before blooms appear to yield a tender potherb when boiled and seasoned.

Dandelions are also a component in some beverages. In some parts of England and Canada, dried dandelion leaves are used to produce beer. Mature blossoms can be fermented into wine. "Louisiana" coffee can be made from the roots after they have been dried, roasted and ground.

Whether you want to cook a gourmet dandelion dinner or irradiate the plants from your lawn, consider the dandelion's growth habits. Perennial, bunching, broad-leaf plants, dandelions become dormant each fall. Most live through the harshest of winters, popping back up with the first warm spell in spring.

Because dandelions develop deep tap roots, cutting, pulling or digging may not destroy the plants. In fact, a new circle of sprouts may grow from the severed root producing plants as vigorous as the old. Broad-leaf weed killers are the most effective way to reduce the number of plants in the yard, but because of their abundant floating seeds, there is no permanent solution.

Most of us loved dandelions as children. We honored our mothers by presenting them with numerous golden bouquets. Then we blew about fluffy, parachute-like seeds or held the seed heads aloft for the wind to disperse them. Sometimes we created fortune-telling games relating the number of seeds remaining on a stalk to the number of children or spouses we would have.

Only in later years did we learn to dislike the dandelion "weed." And I still haven't decided whether I prefer my yard with or without yellow flowers.

The Birdsfoot Violet

Burr Bronson, Watertown, Mass.

If you have problems propagating the Birdsfoot Violet then this article will be of interest to you.

The Birdsfoot Violet, or *Viola pedata*, has been of interest to me for many years, ever since I found it on the shores of Lake Walden, of Thoreau fame. Here they grew by hundreds in full sun in a soil of sand and pine humus from the forest surrounding the lake. There were none of the variety, *V. p. bicolor* here. My first sight of these was on the sunny side of a country road in Missouri, where for several miles the roadside was blue with both varieties growing together. I received permission from the road commissioner to dig a few to take back to my garden. He said that he would be glad if I took them all as they were a pest, and that in a few weeks the road scraper would scrape them off in an effort to get rid of them. Little did he know

that in cutting off the tops he actually was propagating them, as every root would soon produce a new top, and, where one grew before, a half dozen would replace it.

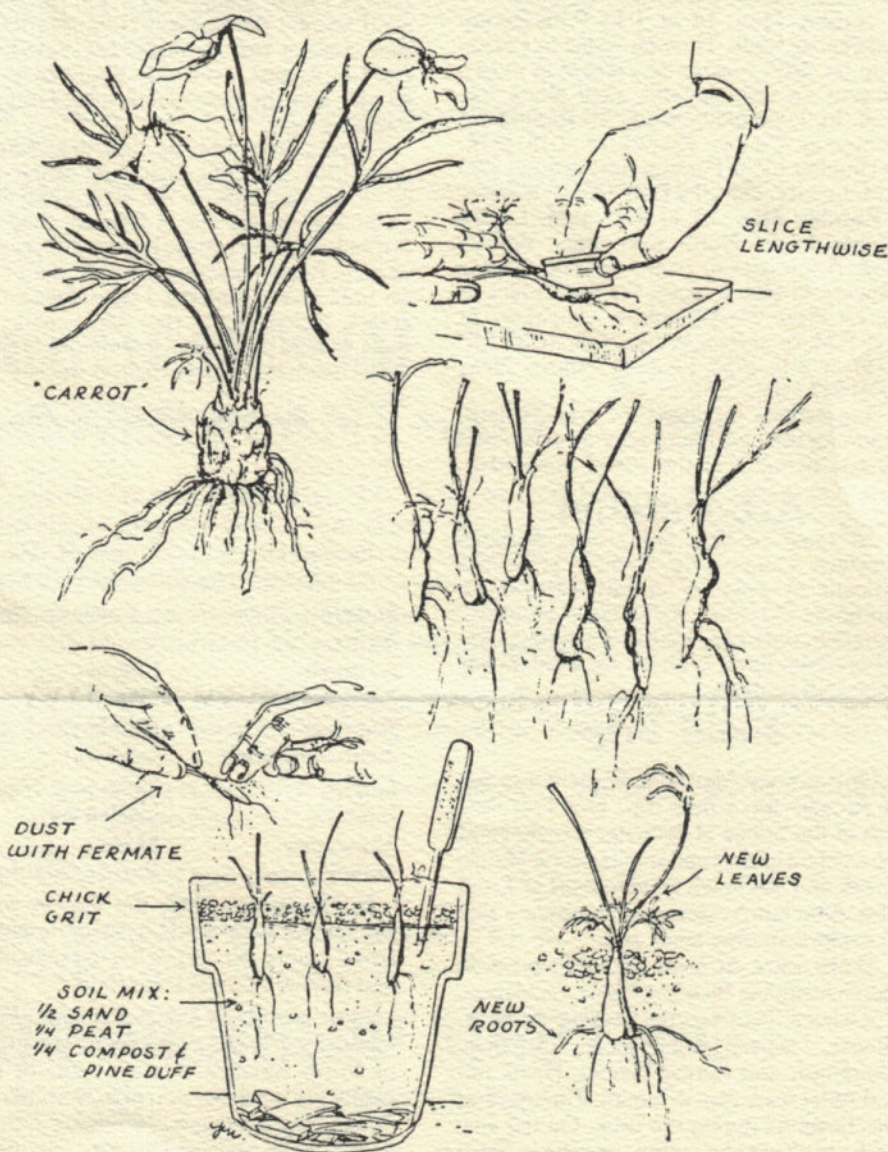
Three years ago my interest was furthered after reading in Hills' *Propagation of Alpines*, that the many color breaks and leaf forms should be propagated and made more available. On further reading in other books and rock garden journals, I found that there were all shades of blue, lilac, pink and even dark red as well as white, cream, and blue-white. I also learned that seed was rarely set, and division was the method advised. But I couldn't seem to find any cleavage for division in the carrot-type rootstock; so for some time I turned to other plants.

A few weeks later I received a copy of the official program of the 67th Annual Spring Flower Show of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. This was a fifty-page book, and included was a nine-page article, "Propagation of Wild Flowers" by Will C. Curtis of Garden in the Woods, South Sudbury Mass. Here I found the answer to dividing *Viola pedata*.

Mr. Curtis wrote in part, "Stored plants brought into the greenhouse in late winter, and forced for two weeks, can be divided almost indefinitely. Every leaf with a small scrap of basal tissue and a root will grow and produce another plant." This I found to be true, but I also found that the smaller the division the longer it took to produce a new plant of blossoming size. Having no

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AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY



A method of propagation of *Viola pedata*

Virginia Howie

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy Bliss

On the evening of March 30, 28 members and guests and eight children enjoyed and informative and interesting slide show of native and naturalized plants along Blackwater Creek presented by Aubrey Neas, Ranger/Naturalist for Lynchburg. Let's see how many of these we can recall on our April 17th trip. It's a challenge!

Saturday, April 23, 1:15 P.M. Buffalo Creek Nature Trail. Along the trail find tiny dwarf ginseng and towering virgin hemlocks. In Lynchburg meet at Forest Plaza West (near bank) at 1:15 P.M. or at Westvaco Parking Area, 2 miles West of Covington on Rt. 24 at 2:00 P.M. Leader: Jan Beyers (804) 847-7573.

Two nature walks sponsored by the Natural Bridge Appalachian Trail Club are described below. Guest are welcome.

Sunday May, 15 at 1:15 P.M. Spring Wildflower Walk. Thunder Ridge to Petites Gap on BRP. Masses of Trillium in bloom present an unforgettable sight along this trail. In Lynchburg meet at Boonsboro Shopping Center (Bank) at 1:15 P.M. or Thunder Ridge Parking Area around 2:00 P.M. Leader: Dorothy Bliss (804) 845-5665.

Sunday May, 22 at 1:15 P.M. Lady's Slipper Walk. North from Bear Wallow Gap. A fun hike to count the Pink Lady's Slippers in bloom along the trail! Meet at Forest Plaza West (Bank) in Lynchburg at 1:15 P.M. or at Bear Wallow Gap (BRP MP 90.9) at 2:15 P.M. Leaders Aubrey Neas (804) 847-1484.

Suggestions for ideas for trips or programs for the Lynchburg area are welcomed by any member of the above committee.

Arboreteum

As most of you are aware, Virginia Western Community College is in the process of creating an arboreteum on campus. At our February meeting, members voted to make a donation to the arboreteum fund. A check for \$250.00 has been sent to them.

Field Trip

On Saturday, March 26, 23 members met at Arcadia for a field trip. Our first stop was at the bridge at Jennings Creek. Next we went on to the road leading along Middle Creek and had lunch amid masses of Trout lilies. After lunch, some members were able to explore another small area.

There were at least 25 wildflowers in bloom including Bleeding Heart, Sickelpod, Cut-leaved Toothwort, Trailing Arbutus, Ginger, Halberd-leaved Violet, Hepatica, Bloodroot, and Spring Beauty. Hazel nut and Alder were also in bloom. The weather was beautiful during the walk. On the way back to Roanoke some members were caught in a severe hailstorm but it cleared within minutes to be as pleasant as the morning.

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green house, I waited until growth started in April, and then, with a single-edge razor blade, sliced the carrot-like root stick lengthwise, first in half, then in quarters, then eighths, depending on the thickness of the carrot. After dusting each cut side with Fermate powder to protect against root rot, I planted each section in a pot of soil consisting of one half sand, one quarter peat, and one quarter compost and pine duff. Pots were placed in a shaded cold frame until new growth started, and then gradually given increasing amounts of sunlight. The new plants bloomed in the following May.

Since my first attempt, I have learned many things about growing this plant. I found that they do not like dampness around the crown, which will result from too deep planting. Too avoid this I leave one-quarter inch carrot out of the ground, and place a ring of granite chick grit, or coarse sand around the collar. I have also found that division can be made any time from April to August, even with the plant in full bloom, and the new plants will bloom the following year.

Friends have told me that they cannot grow *Viola pendata*, that they winter kill, or bloom very little, or not at all. I find that, given acid, sandy soil in full sun, they will not only bloom in May, but start blooming again in August and every month from then on until heavy freezing. I now have many colors, including the rare white, and, as they require the same conditions as my dwarf heathers,, I grow them in the heather garden.

Submitted by Dora Lee Ellington

Wildflower Seed Available for Trials

Once again The Virginia Gardener has been able to obtain seed packets for home gardeners throughout the state to test in their gardens. If you are interested in growing a mixture of wildflower seed designed specifically for this part of the country and provided to us by Clyde Robbins Seed Company, please write to:

Wild Flower Seed Trials
The Virginia Gardener
Department of Horticulture
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

You will be provided with a package of seed, planting instructions, and a questionnaire to be returned to us at the end of the first growing season.

Our thanks go to Dr. Diane Relf, Editor of *The Virginia Gardener* for permission to reprint this notice which appeared in the April, 1988, issue.

It would be interesting if some of our members would take part in these trials. Besides answering the questionnaire for the *The Virginia Gardener* you could also report on the results at our fall meeting.

Think of the fun and beauty you would have.
Dora Lee Ellington

Of Note

by Virginia Klara Nathan

Federal Listing and Proposals: The following rare plants have been recently listed or proposed for listing under the U.S. Endangered Species Act:

Scientific Name	Common Name	Action	Date of Federal Register Notice
<i>Amsonia kearneyana</i>	Kearney's blue-star	proposed endangered	July 10, 1987
<i>Arenaria cumberlandensis</i>	Cumberland sandwort	proposed endangered	July 6, 1987
<i>Liatris helleri</i>	Heller's blazing star	listed threatened	December 21, 1987
<i>Marshallia mohrii</i>	Mohr's Barbara's-buttons	proposed threatened	November 19, 1987

In November 1987, the Center for Plant Conservation signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to work together to conserve rare native plants. As part of the agreement, the Center will supply seeds for long-term storage and research by the Department.

More on Wild-Collected Plants. Faith Campbell of the Natural Resources Defense Council, recently produced an update on wild-collected plants routinely sold to gardeners of North America through retail or mail order companies. For each of the following, plants are available primarily from wild rather than cultivated sources: *Galanthus elwesii*, *Leucojum aestivum*, *Narcissus triandrus albus*, *N. tazetta*, *Sternbergia lutea major*, *Erythronium* species (except "pagoda"), *Fritillaria persica* 'Adiyamen', *Trillium* species, *Cypripedium* species, particularly *C. acaule*, *Eranthis hyemalis*, and *E. cilicia*. For more information, contact Dr. Campbell at NRDC, 1350 New York Avenue, Third Floor, Washington, DC 20006.