



BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER

OF THE

VIRGINIA WILDFLOWER PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Vol. 5, No. 3

June 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.

- June 27-** General Membership Meeting, 7 P.M., Center in the Square.
- July 23,24 -** Annual State Wildflower Field Trip. Details in this newsletter.
- August 13 -** Field trip to White Rock Campground. Meet at 9:30 A.M. at Orange Market, Hanging Rock - Bring a lunch.
- August 22 -** General Membership meeting, 7 P.M., Center in the Square.
- Sept. 10 -** Field trip, Otter Lake area - Meet at 10 A.M. at James River Visitor Center. Bring a lunch.
- Sept. 23-25 -** Annual State Meeting, Massanutten Village Resort. Details will come from Annendale.

OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL PLANT SALE

by Dora Lee Ellington

Our fourth plant sale was the best yet. We collected **\$2,576.43**. All plants sold for 1, 2 or 3 dollars. Members received a 10% discount and had first choice from 9:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. There were many, many visitors and a number had been to our previous sales. It made us feel especially good when they reported that the plants bought from us were doing nicely. We were very pleased that more members shared plants from their gardens this year.

Paul James's lovely gardens were enjoyed by visitors and members and the workers were treated to a delicious luncheon prepared by Barbara James.

Our special thanks to visitors and members who brought plants and those who helped with our sale: Walter and Barbara Bell, Malcolm and Jimmie Black, Bruce and Judy Boteler, Buddy and Hazel Cash, Richard Crites, Sandra Elder, Sam and Dora Lee Ellington, Bob Eubank, Sam Gamble, W. D. Gross, Paul and Barbara James, Greg Lipscomb, Gail MacFarland, Virginia Nathan, Frank Noftsinger, Mary Rice, Bob and Carol Sharp, Bobby and Frieda Toler, Sharon Vest, John and Evelyn Walke and Ken and Pam Wieringo.

Flower seeds are maturing now and it is a good time to gather and plant for next year's sale. Only a few plants were left to carry over for next year and your help is needed in order to have another successful sale.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: June 27, 1988 **TIME:** 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Multi Purpose Room - Center in the Square

Program: Slides from the trip to the Smokies

Come and Bring a Friend.

Letter From The President

by Rich Crites

The hot dry days of summer are just around the corner. Certainly most of the early flowers that we associate with springtime have completed their flowering, even in the higher elevations, and are now forming fruits and seeds. You may want to mark these plants so you can get some seeds later. Our spring outings and plant sale have been very successful. I wish to thank all of you who have represented the Blue Ridge Chapter at various activities - leaders, speakers, and planners - and especially the plant propagation group who spent many hours planting seeds, transplanting plants, watering and then tagging them for the sale. **A BIG SHOWY LADY'S SLIPPER to each of you!**

I would encourage you to make a note of the upcoming activities and make plans to attend them.



Review of Westvaco Field Trip

by Sandra Elder

On April 23rd. a small group of Lynchburg area members enjoyed a pleasant spring afternoon field trip in the Westvaco Buffalo Creek area.

In the large open field the flowers we found in bloom included field pansies, corn salad, wild strawberries and bulbous buttercups.

Along the river bank, there were Virginia Bluebells and Saxifrage in bloom.

In the woods, we saw large groups of May Apple, Spring Beauty, Dwarf Crested Iris and Dwarf Ginseng.

In the cool moist hemlock grove we found the blooms of Ginger, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Shrub Yellow Root and Paw-paw.

Rhododendron Day Review

by Ken Wieringo



A cool morning encouraged a sizable group of members and non-members to meet Saturday, June 11, at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center for our Rhododendron Day. Rich Crites, our Chapter President, suggested we go North to Onion Mountain Overlook for the first stop of the day. Upon arrival, Dot Bliss suggested we split into two smaller groups and take about an hour to look along the short trail and the roadsides. There was *Rhododendron catawbiense* in abundance, varying in shades from very light (almost white) to dark lavender. Also, a few blooms of *R. roseum*, which has a pungent fragrance of cloves, were still in evidence but on the wane. Once sniffed, it is always remembered. Numerous other species were in bloom, notably Mountain Laurel (*Kalmias*), Yarrow and King Devil. We also found Fly Poison, Wild Quinine and Sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*).

Around 11:30 A.M., we drove to Floyd's Field, where two native Virginia orchids were found, Twayblade (*Liparis lilifolia*), and Puttyroot (*Aplectrum hyemale*). There were Virginia waterleaf and a number of ferns, under a forest canopy. A slow-moving stream spread to become a bog farther along and there we found Marsh Marigold foliage.

We then motored back to the Peaks' Big Spring picnic grounds where we found tables and had lunch. After eating, a short walk around a portion of Abbott Lake (by the Lodge) revealed a treasure-trove of Tubercled Rein Orchids, (*Platanthera flava*), the Northern Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema stewardsonii*).

We decided to return to Floyd's Field to park and walk the opposite side, going down to the A.T.'s Cornelius

Shelter. A small, wide stream ran down the mountainside and the trail wound around and down toward the A.T. main trail. As we walked, we found Star flower, Yellow Star grass and White Clintonia in bloom along with the promise of Four-leaved Milkweed, Galax, False Hellebore, and Dwarf Rattlesnake Orchid. In the lower area of the stream, growing on a moss-covered conifer root were some fine specimens of Mushrooms (*Ganoderma tsugae*), a polypore or conk, in various stages of its life.

While at the Cornelius Creek Shelter, we met a Trail thru-hiker called Cool Breezes (his trail name) who was halfway from Georgia to Maine. He had hiked the trail in its entirety once before, ten years ago.

To wind up the day, we decided to drive on to Thunder Ridge which is near Apple Orchard Mountain, the highest point on the Parkway in Virginia, at 3950 feet. Upon arriving, we found an abundance of Dutchman's Pipe in bloom. Also blooming were Indian Cumber Root, Meadow Rue, and Bush Honeysuckle (*Diervilla sessilifolia*). Notable varieties of trees included Mountain Ash, Mountain Holly, Mountain Elderberry, and Carolina Hemlock.

The day was beautiful, the sky clear with very little haze. The overlook at Thunder Ridge yielded a fine view of Natural Bridge, though better seen with binoculars, farm lands of the Big Valley and other scenic views. With evening approaching, we said our goodbys and left for home, having learned some things (as how to tell Blueberry from Huckleberry by the leaf) and having had a wonderful day of fellowship and sightseeing.

**Annual
VWPS Wildflower
Field Trip
July 23 - 24, 1988**

A week-end Summer Excursion is planned for late July to visit a mountain meadow along the Blue Ridge Parkway and a woodland ravine in Lynchburg in the Blackwater Creek Natural Area. The following schedule has been planned for the weekend:

Sat. July 23, 1988

10:00 AM Meet at Smart View Recreation Area at MP 154.1 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Loop trail around area through deciduous woods.

12:00 Picnic lunch at Smart View.

2:00 PM Rakes Mill Pond, MP 162.4. Wander over open meadows rich in summer wildflowers and ferns. Here are found three species of *Osmunda* (fern), *Melanthium virginicum* (Bunchflower), *Castilleja coccinea* (Indian paint brush), *Lilium superbum* (Turk's cap lily), *Conium uncinatum* (Monkshood), and a wealth of other flowers. You may need boots for this area.

5:00 PM Picnic Supper at Smart View. Drinks and dessert furnished by Blue Ridge Chapter.

Sunday July 24, 1988

10:00 AM Lynchburg. Blackwater Creek Nature Trail in Lynchburg at Ruskin Freer Nature Preserve. Meet at end of Thompson Drive near Lynchburg Hospital on Tates Spring Road. Discover many ferns and mid-summer wild flowers on rocky cliffs and along creek banks. Those who wish may enjoy their picnic lunch at Blackwater Creek Athletic Area off Monticello Avenue.

If you wish further information contact Dorothy C. Bliss (804) 845-5665 or Richard Crites (703) 774-4518.

Trip to the Great Smokies

by Laura Bliss

This year the annual wildflower trip to the Great Smokies on May 7-10 was made by nine from Roanoke and six from the Lynchburg area: Rich and Connie Crites, Frieda and Bobby Toler, Mr. and Mrs. Huybrecht with two daughters and a friend, Dot and Laura Bliss, Helen Beard, Elizabeth Sprague and Carolyn Bates (Sweet Briar), and Beth Crichton (visiting zoologist from Australia). Some of the Lynchburg group arrived in the Smokies in time to catch the last showing of George Beatty's revised slide shows entitled *Wildflower Symphony*, including four half-hour programs of his excellent pictures set to music and dedicated to the memory of his late wife, Alice Beatty. A trip to Cades Cove that first day produced numerous sightings of Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*), as well as the first herds of what became a total of twelve deer seen on the trip. After the arrival of three botanists (professional and amateur) on Thursday night, the Friday itinerary included a visit to the Sugarlands Visitor Center, a search for yellow lady's slippers, yellow trillium (*Trillium luteum*), and Little Brown Jugs (a species of wild ginger) on the Ash Hopper Trail, and an extended hike along the trail at Elkmont, where the yellow trillium was very abundant, as well as showy orchises and several interesting violets.

The large Roanoke delegation reached the park on Friday afternoon and set out at once to explore the Ash Hopper Trail. Saturday the entire group collected to do the Big Locust Trail from the Chimney Tops Picnic Grounds. The route covers a rich area, but the botanists noted that the most interesting flora were past their prime, an indication that the spring pilgrimage schedule did not quite correspond to Nature's calendar. After the usual picnic at the big amphitheater, the convoy proceeded toward Newfound

Gap and Clingman's Dome, with several stops to identify the masses of white fringed phacelia (*Phacelia fimbriata*) beyond the gap on the road to Clingman's Dome. Most exciting to many was the nearby halt to watch a mother bear and her two year-old cubs, protected from admirers by a sturdy wire fence. Tender May Apples seemed to be relished by the bear family. After observations on the sad state of the Fraser fir trees and red spruce owing to the wooly aphids and air pollution at the Clingman's Dome parking area . . . and at the top by some . . . the entourage descended to Gatlinburg. Sunday the several groups did their own thing. Some paid their annual visit to Noah ("Bud") Ogle's Place, where the advanced season was very noticeable on the Junglebrook Trail. The Roaring Fork Motor Nature Trail was an easy concluding trip. Others (the Tolers and Crites) sought wildflowers in different places that last day before driving back to Virginia.

Alice Beatty

In April 1987, Blue Ridge Chapter members had the pleasure of meeting George and Alice Beatty when they presented a program about the "Travels of Linnaeus" and again in May at the field trip to the Great Smoky Mountains. We are saddened to learn of the death of Alice last November.

In this brief period that she touched our lives, we will remember her by her love of music, poetry, books and a deep regard for the wonders of Nature.

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy Bliss

More than 45 members and friends of the Blue Ridge Chapter of VWPS and the Friends of Lynchburg Stream Valleys enjoyed a pleasant spring wildflower walk along Blackwater Creek in Lynchburg on April 17. Among the flowers noted were a few late flowering Fawn Lilies (*Erythronium americanum*), Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), Blood Root (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), and Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*). The latter was not found last year. Among the conspicuous flowers were Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*), Wild Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), Foam Flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), and May Apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*).

There was no evidence of the Green Dragon (*Arisaema dracontium*), but some of us will search for it later in May.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, a walk is scheduled around the Otter Lake area. Bring a lunch and meet at 10 AM at the James River Visitor Center (mp 63.6 BRP).

We hope to schedule more walks and evening programs this fall in the Lynchburg area. Suggestions and ideas?

BERGAMOT

Shaggy, Disheveled, Ragged and Untidy. All describe the pom-pom type flowers of those *Monarda* species most commonly referred to as Bergamot. These aromatic herbs are members of the mint family and therefore, have the distinctive square stems. There are 17 species of *Monarda* in the United States and they are generally considered to be native North American plants. They are sturdy and branching, growing from 2-4' tall with pairs of stalked, lance shaped leaves ranging from 2-6" in length. Most are sharply toothed and surprisingly thin for such

a stout-appearing plant. The species discussed here all have solitary, terminal flowers on each major branch with flowerheads being an average 3" across. The corolla consists of a cluster or whorl of blooms, each having five petals; the two upper form a narrow lip arching over the lower lip which is formed from the three remaining petals and is either spreading or deflexed. The lower lip is frequently notched in the center. There are two stamens rising under the upper lip and usually surpassing it. The calyx is five toothed, its color varying with the species. The bract color is also variable with the species.

Most *Monardas* have some degree of hairiness on one or more plant parts. Research has shown it will be more pronounced in cooler climates. Farther to the south, where weather is milder, many species will be completely smooth.

There are few wildflowers as showy as *Monarda didyma* or Beebalm. It has been described as bright crimson, vivid scarlet or vermilion. The calyx is tipped with red and the bracts are red at their base. The leaves of *Monarda didyma* are bearded along the principal veins on the underside but smooth or sparsely haired above. The intense color is made more spectacular by the rich, dark green foliage often found in the moist, shady woods and thickets it prefers. As you might imagine, it is a favorite of hummingbirds and is an old-fashioned garden plant. The Oswego Indians are said to have made a tea-like decoction from the blooms, giving rise to another of its names, Oswego Tea. It is common in most of the eastern mountains except the Virginia Blue Ridge.

In contrast to the brilliant *Monarda didyma* is the dull yellowish-white or pinkish-white bloomhead of *Monarda clinopodia*. The name of Dotted Monarda is evidenced by the dark spots on the blooms. The calyx is light green and bearded in the throat with other areas being smooth or finely pubescent. Bracts may be green, white or a combination. This species may be a branched plant or a single stem bearing one bloomhead. Also known as Basil Balm, it may be smooth or slightly hairy along the stem. It grows in either dry or moist woods. A deep, rose-red or red-purple bloom distinguishes Purple

Bergamot or *Monarda media*. Closer examination shows a soft pubescence of the corolla. The tip of the upper lip is often bearded and the calyx is usually purple and may be smooth or haired. The bracts are a conspicuous purple also. Lower leaves on this species are wider than other Bergamots, often being twice as wide as they are long. The stalk may be smooth or lightly haired. *Monarda media* grows well in rich, moist woods or thickets and is often cultivated. It may have begun as a hybrid of *Monarda didyma* and *Monarda fistulosa*.

Wild Bergamot, or *Monarda fistulosa*, has a lavender to pink bloom. The upper lip of the blossom will be slightly hairy while the throat of the calyx will be densely covered with fine erect white hairs (villous or villose). A pink tinge shows on the bracts. Leaves of Wild Bergamot are a gray-green and firmer than on other Bergamots. Plant stems are distinctly hairy. It grows in dry or upland woods and thickets or in clearings.

Earl Grey, the favorite for afternoon teas, gets its distinctive flavor from Wild Bergamot, which is now grown commercially. In addition to its flavor, this tea is said to be beneficial to the nerves and to act as a stomach tonic. Bergamots are easily grown in the garden, although they suffer during drought. They spread by underground stems to form large clumps. This rapid surface spread causes the plants to quickly lose their vigor. Every two or three years it is necessary to divide the clumps. It is best, when dividing, to discard all older roots and use only the youngest. These will be around the outer edges, not scattered through the clump as with some plants. When replanting, set the roots more deeply than they were growing. Propagation is more satisfactory by division or cuttings than by seeds. However the seeds, which are smooth, oblong nutlets approximately 1/2" long and 1/8" in diameter, will germinate if you prefer this method.

Bergamots bloom from late June through early September and any one species in a given location, may bloom anywhere during that time. The result of this irregularity is that we find them more by good fortune than by design. For some unexplained reason, in a garden their bloom time is more predictable.