



BLUE RIDGE CHAPTER

OF THE

VIRGINIA WILDFLOWER PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Vol. 5, No 4

October 1988

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

November 5 - Field trip to the Peaks of Otter. Meet at the Visitors Center at 9:00 A.M. for breakfast in the Lodge or at 10:30 A.M. for a nature walk. (Saturday breakfast buffet is \$4.55.)

* * * - There will be no meeting in December.

February 27 - General membership meeting.

NAME CHANGE FOR VWPS

At the Annual VWPS Meeting on September 24, 1988, the votes were tallied to leave the name of this organization the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society or change it to be Virginia Native Plant Society. The reasons for or against have been detailed in the VWPS Bulletin, which all members should receive.

By a seventy-five percent vote in favor of a change, the new name, **Virginia Native Plant Society** will become effective November 1, 1988.

Each Chapter is to decide how it will be titled. Listed below are several suggestions from the Board of Directors.

Blue Ridge Wildflower Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society A Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Blue Ridge Chapter Virginia Native Plant Society

The board asks for suggestions from the membership. This will be discussed at the October 24, 1988, General Membership Meeting and a vote will be taken.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: October 24, 1988

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Hopkins Planetarium, 4th Floor Center in the Square

Program: "Chapter Memories" - Slide history of the BRC, 1987-88

Come and Bring a Friend

Letter From The President

by Bruce Boteler

As your new president, I am looking forward to the upcoming year of our VWPS Chapter. We have certainly enjoyed many fine activities and programs in the past year. I would like to thank the officers and board members who provided leadership and direction to our Chapter. I would particularly like to thank Rich Crites for his leadership as president.

A list of new officers for our Chapter is provided in this Newsletter.

As president, I would urge you to contact me or any of the officers regarding suggestions for our Chapter programs, events, or direction. In my opinion, the success of our Chapter has come from the active participation of some of our members. To continue the success, we need the active participation from many of you.

I am looking forward to an enjoyable year.

Open House Mountain Lake Biological Station

by Frieda Toler

Our apologies to the BRC membership that notices were not sent about the July 31, 1988, Open House at the Mountain Lake Biological Station. The invitation was received and announced at the VWPS State Field Trip at Rakes Mill Pond and Smartview and only those who attended that event were aware of the open house.

Ten members of the chapter attended. Classrooms were open, showing displays, projects and experiments by the students. Burns Garden at one of the cottages, which has many ferns and wildflowers, was open to the guests. A pamphlet of the self-guided nature trail listed plants along the path. Slides of wildflowers and birds in the Mountain Lake area were shown in the auditorium. Refreshments were served at Walton Pavilion. Many of the wildflowers had bloomed and were beginning to set seed.

It was a delightful day to enjoy the open house and take a leisurely stroll around the station.

Annual State Field Trip

by Sharon Vest

A steady drizzle and dense patches of fog did not deter the 19 members and guests of the Blue Ridge Chapter from arriving at Smartview Park on the Blue Ridge Parkway for the first State-sponsored walk hosted by the Blue Ridge Chapter and open to all State members.

The drizzle persisted during the morning walk over the Smartview Loop Trail but dwindled during the picnic lunch and stopped completely by the time everyone reached Rakes Mill Pond for the afternoon.

Outstanding among the mid-summer flowers were the Turk's Cap Lilies that were blooming well and patches of Butterfly Weed that brightened the roadsides.

Ken Wieringo identified young Cedar Waxwings and Jessica Vest spotted a grey fox, as identified by Bill Hunley. Bill also discovered a beaver dam behind the screen of shrubs that framed the Turk's Cap Lilies.

A short drive farther south on the Parkway, Dora Lee Ellington's wish was granted when she found a Green Adder's Mouth Orchid for the group to examine.

Return to Smartview Park meant a picnic supper with apple cobbler, blueberry cobbler and lemonade for dessert, courtesy of the Blue Ridge Chapter.

A short business meeting and final goodbyes ended an enjoyable day.

(Lynchburg was the setting for our Sunday activities and they are reviewed with the Lynchburg Area News.)

Annual VWPS Meeting

by Frieda Toler

The Annual State Meeting and Auction of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society was held September 23, 24 & 25, 1988, at the Ski Lodge, Massanutten Resort, near Harrisonburg.

Friday evening exhibits from each chapter were put on display. Old friends and new alike greeted each other, and about 8:30 P.M., a slide presentation of favorite plants of the Shenandoah Valley, by Dr. Elwood Fisher, James Madison University botanist, was enjoyed by everyone.

Saturday was rainy and foggy but that did not discourage any of the members from

participating in the field trips to Reddish Knob, Pocosin area of Shenandoah National Park, High Top, the trails of Massanutten or the canoe trip on the South Fork of the Shenandoah.

About 5:00 P.M., bidding for the auction began, followed by the annual meeting and reception. One very important action confirmed by the affirmative votes was the **change of the name of this organization**. There has been much discussion for about a year of the advantages and disadvantages of changing the name. When the votes were counted, it was agreed the new name will be the **Virginia Native Plant Society**. (An article elsewhere in this Newsletter will explain in more detail the name change.)

After the business meeting, a Pig Roast and buffet dinner was served. Following the meal, Elaine Houg showed "What's It" slides for each person to try to identify. George Beatty was the featured speaker, presenting a wide-screen, multi-projector program, "Travels with Linnaeus in Lapland."

Activities were planned for Sunday but the weather was not too agreeable.

Thirteen members of the Blue Ridge Chapter attended the annual meeting, including Paul & Lucille Cowins, Ken & Pam Wieringo, Rich & Connie Crites, Dorothy Bliss, Mr. & Mrs. William Burroughs, Carolyn Bates, Elizabeth Sprague and Bobby & Frieda Toler.

Field Trip

Wet feet are a small price to pay for the chance to see those wildflowers unique to bogs. On August 13, a handful of members had that opportunity during our trip to White Rocks Campground. The campground showed few plants in bloom. However, a side stop at a bog in Interior, Jefferson National Forest, yielded Sundews, the Yellow Fringed Orchis and Grass of Parnassus as well as a number of fern allies.

The roadsides were brilliant with Cardinal Flowers and the variety of "yellow composites" showed how few we can accurately identify. We also found the Purple Fringeless Orchis, Biennial Gaura, and Square-stemmed Monkey Flower, along with those blooms more frequently seen during August.

If you missed this trip, plan to attend our next one. You won't be disappointed.

SWAMP FERVOR

by Bob Tuggle

Opportunities do arise. Such was the case three years ago when a friend from the Raleigh, N.C. area finished a presentation to the Rockingham County, N.C., Naturalists Club on carnivorous plants. Craig Moretz, having brought a couple of dozen home-grown specimens to give to the group, was faced with a smaller than expected crowd and lamented having to carry the remainder of his plants back home. Well...no reason for him to do that. Shortly, I was the proud owner of 10 Pitcher Plants, being the *Sarracenia flava*, *purpurea* and *rubra*, and three Sundews, two *Drosera intermedias* and one *D. capillaris*. I sequestered info on how to make my new bog plants happy and then listened to Craig's tales of adventures among the Pitchers.



Mr. Moretz's recipe was simple: Use only long fiber sphagnum moss, no fertilizer, no food or other additives. He suggested using a raised bed lined with a heavy black plastic to prevent seepage and to allow moisture to be retained in the bed. Saturate the bed with water then allow it to dry before saturating it again.

Following the above, with slight modifications, worked. Being manifested with a small amount of back yard and a large amount of laziness, I bought a plastic dishpan and placed it in a hole I dug in the yard. Using the long fiber sphagnum for a planting medium, I planted a portion of the plants. Let's call this first dishpan full Bog "A".

Having more plants but being out of sphagnum, I planted a second dishpan and filled it with potting soil. In it, I also planted Pitchers. This will be Bog "B". Out of necessity, holes were punched in the bottoms of the dishpans to achieve some drainage.

Later, seeing a need for a third swamp but having neither the sphagnum or a dishpan, I dug a dishpan-sized hole in my red clay back yard, lined it with a black

plastic garbage bag and filled it with potting soil. In this, I planted Forget-me-nots and a couple of Cattails. This is Bog "C".

After three years, several things are obvious. Sphagnum is better than potting soil for the Pitchers. The *S. flava*'s in sphagnum are 30 inches tall, the *S. flava*'s in potting soil are only 12 inches tall. The potting soil was not sterilized. I had Elder, Marsh Pennywort, Pickerelweed and a beautiful sedge, all volunteer. The sedge lasted a year then died of its own accord. I enjoy the specimen Pickerelweed but pulled the Elder. The Marsh Pennywort I made the mistake of watching for a year and now, despite eradication efforts, it continues to pop up outside the bogs. The Cattails and Forget-me-nots are seemingly happy. I have since added Cinnamon Fern, a Mallow and Water Willow. All are thriving.

A few notes on Pitchers. Each leaf is made of a tube and a wing; the wing running the length of the tube. The health of each plant can be roughly ascertained by the relative sizes of the tube and the wing. Each tube should be much larger than the wing. Perhaps a large wing would indicate a lot of nutrients in the soil. This would either cause the leaf to grow too fast to allow formation of a good pitcher or would cause the plant to determine that a large pitcher was not needed due to the amount of nutrients available to the roots. The pitchers are constructed so they will tip over when they contain too much water. Also, notice that all of the species have some type of cover for the pitcher. The cover could be dual purpose, preventing too much moisture from entering (or preventing too much evaporation during drought) and channeling the prey toward the pitcher.

It's fun in the winter when botanizing is scarce, to take the dead leaves of the pitcher and split them to marvel at the number and type of insects in each.

Lastly, never remove a Pitcher from the wild. There are carnivorous plant societies and nurseries where the plants can be obtained and seeds are usually available from the North Carolina Botanical Gardens.

For additional information, write to the Carnivorous Plant Society, Fullerton Arboretum, California State University, Fullerton, California, 92634.

Of Note

by Virginia Klara Nathan

The Legacy Continues. Lady Bird Johnson has a long history of working toward the beautification of America and preservation of its wildflowers. Five years ago, she founded the National Wildflower

Research Center in Austin, Texas, using donations of money and land. This year she celebrated her 75th birthday by stating she would like nothing better than to see the Center solidly endowed and funded. She and Carlton B. Lees, noted author, have written a book, *Wildflowers Across America*, with all royalties having been assigned to that cause. The book is available through local bookstores or may be ordered from National Wildflower Research Center, 2600 F.M. 973 North, Dept. FG, Austin, Tx., 78725. Anyone interested in becoming a member may contact the Center at this same address.

Illegal Collecting. The National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) has just published a brochure describing the continued overexploitation of wildflowers that are offered for sale by many mail-order catalogs, nurseries and garden centers. The brochure gives some good advice and places to contact for a list of nurseries that propagate the plants they sell.

Although the NRDC does not know the exact size of the trade in wildflowers, they do believe it is quite large and involves hundreds of species. Wildflowers offered for sale by general purpose catalogs are particularly likely to have been collected rather than propagated because these outlets must buy their merchandise in wholesale quantities from a variety of suppliers. They cite the example of the Pink Ladyslipper, *Cypripedium acaule*, where a Michigan couple supplied up to 100,000 orchids per year to retailers--all wild-collected in their area.

Other plants often overcollected are the large Trillium, *Trillium grandiflorum*, Fairy Candles, *Cimicifuga* spp., and Bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadensis*.

The address is NRDC, 1350 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20005.

Along this same vein, the April, 1988, *Southern Living* contained an article "Saving Southern Wildflowers" which included advice from Mary Pockman (with mention of VWPS) on ways to tell if plants are nursery cultivated or collected from the wild. As wildflower gardening increases in popularity, this article may raise public awareness of the fragility of our flora and the need for caution.

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy Bliss

The following information of is especial interest to VWPS members in the Lynchburg area.

Nov. 2, 7:30 P.M. A program entitled **Autumn Fruits and Flowers** will be presented at Randolph Macon Woman's College, Martin Science Building, Room 225. Come and bring a friend to share your enjoyment.

Among the interesting finds on our July 24, Sunday morning walk along Blackwater Creek were the fruits (green) of the Green Dragon, a relative of the Jack-in-the-pulpit. This section of the trail was bordered with impressive displays of Silver Glade Fern, Maidenhair Fern, New York Fern and the Christmas Fern.

Come out and enjoy the autumn wildflowers. For information contact Dot Bliss (804)845-5665.

A Fall Walk Along Otter Creek

by Dorothy Bliss

On the morning of Sept. 10, 18 members and friends of the Blue Ridge Chapter of VWPS enjoyed a very pleasant walk along Otter Creek from the James River Visitor Center to Otter Creek Lake. The weather was ideal and fall flowers were blooming in profusion and confusion. Members offered salient distinctions between Crown Beard, *Verbesina occidentalis*, and Wingstem, *Actinomeris alternifolia*, but after struggling with numerous flower guides, some of the sunflowers and goldenrods were left nameless. Even the species of *Spiranthes*, Ladies Tresses, remained elusive. Otter Creek furnished an ideal habitat for Yellow Root, *Xanthorrhiza simplicissima*, which was still in bloom with conspicuous drooping clusters of yellow flowers. Several specimens of the Cardinal Flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*, produced splashes of brilliant color along the margins of the creek.

One of the most common shrubs or small trees along the trail was Pawpaw, *Asimina triloba*, it's strange fruits still

green and hard. These banana-like fruits are sweet and aromatic when fully ripe. Several spring flowering plants were conspicuous with their red berries, among them Spice Bush, *Lindera benzoin*, Partridge Berry, *Mitchella repens* and Solomon's Plume or False Solomon's Seal, *Smilacina racemosa*. Summer flower stalks with their greenish fruits were still evident, rising from the rosette of white-veined leaves of the Rattlesnake Orchid, *Goodyera pubescens*.

Along the Parkway, a specimen of Hercules' Club or Devil's Walking Stick, *Aralia spinosa*, was noted. It was photographed as Rich Crites cautiously supported the huge flower stalk with his walking stick.

The area was rich not only in a variety of wildflowers but numerous ferns, including Black Stem Spleenwort, *Asplenium resiliens*, and two species of Grape Ferns, *Botrychium*, along with mushrooms and other fungi, were frequently encountered in the rich damp soil and rocky outcroppings. A small brown watersnake was observed as it lay basking in the sun.

Lunch was enjoyed at the picnic area overlooking the James River and after a brief business meeting, the group reluctantly brought the field trip to a close.

THANKS

Thanks to Ken and Pam Wieringo who WORK in preparing a nice newsletter for all the members. Often they are too modest to give themselves credit for articles they write. All the time spent proofreading, editing etc. goes unnoticed. We owe them much for their help. Pam's article on Bergomont that appeared in the June BRC newsletter was printed, with her permission, in the Williamson Road Action Forum newsletter in August.

Apology

Dora Lee Ellington

Bob Tuggles's name was left off the list of helpers for the May Wildflower Sale. The Twinleaf plants he donated were very popular and sold well. Belated thanks, Bob, and I hope we

can count on your help again at our plant sale next year.

Membership Renewal

October is the month we renew memberships. You may send the money to the Chapter or to VWPS. Either way, you will be in good standing for the coming year.

1989-90 Officers

President	Bruce Boteler 774-4072/981-9453
Vice President	Hugh Smith 774-8392
Treasurer	Ken Wieringo 343-8596
Secretary	Alice Hanawalt 721-3441
Editor	Pam Wieringo 343-8596

Spring Plant Sale

by Dora Lee Ellington

Be sure to remember our spring plant sale as seeds ripen this fall in your garden or along roadsides. Carry a supply of bags or envelopes so each type can be easily labeled with date, name of plant and other important information such as dry, wet, shady or sunny location. Also, if some of your plants need dividing, now would be the time to pot them for overwintering.

We need your help in order to make these sales successful. If you have questions concerning proper handling of seeds or potted plants, contact Sam or me.

NANCY ADAMS

On October 15, 1988, Nancy Adams of Roanoke, Virginia, passed away. She was a member of the Mill Mountain Garden Club as well as a member of the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society.