

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 6, No 2

July 1989

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

July 15 - All day Field Trip to Mount Rogers. Meet at the Fine Arts Building at VWCC at 7 AM or at Sugar Grove, Mount Rogers, at 10 AM. Rich Crites is taking his class and the Jefferson Chapter is planning an overnight trip there also. Home around 8 PM. Brown bag meals and beverages. Raingear, field guides, notepads, cameras and a hand lens are recommended.

- August 12** - Field Trip along Route 600 and the Wetlands. Meet at 9 AM at the Salem Civic Center. Bag lunch. Return around 4 PM or bring two meals and take a side trip on the way home.
- August 28** - General Membership Meeting, 7 PM, Center in the Square. Dorothy C. Bliss will present "What Tree is That?: How To Identify Trees & Shrubs by Use of Keys and Other Sources and Hands-on Activities."
- September 9** - Field Trip to Fairystone Park. Meet at 9 AM near the sign at Tanglewood Mall or at 10 AM at Stanleytown Elementary School (just off Rt. 57W in Martinsville). Bring a bag lunch. Hugh Smith and Bob Tuggle will lead a geology/wildflower walk.
- September 22-24** - VNPS Annual Meeting Weekend at the Sheraton in Reston, Va. Details in the Summer VNPS Bulletin.
- October 21** - Field Trip to Rock Castle Creek Gorge. Meet at Rocky Knob Visitor Center (mile post 169, Blue Ridge Parkway) at 10 AM. Bring a bag lunch. Learn tree identification - a good opportunity to practice the skills learned during our August meeting.
- October 23** - General Membership Meeting, 7 PM, Center in the Square. Hugh Smith will present a program on rock identification.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: August 28, 1989

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

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

Speaker: Dorothy C. Bliss

Program: What Tree is That?

How to identify Trees & Shrubs by use of keys and other sources and hands-on activities.

Come and Bring a Friend

Letter From The President

by Bruce Boteler

Would you like to be able to identify the trees in your yard or neighborhood? Have you always wanted to be able to identify trees as you walked through the woods? If so, attend our meeting on August 28 for a program and workshop on *Tree Identification* by Dorothy Bliss. Later, in October, we have a field trip on trees scheduled at Rock Creek Castle Gorge where we can put our skills into practice identifying trees. Make your plans now to attend our August meeting. As well, join us for dinner at 5:45 P.M. at First Street Restaurant prior to the meeting.

I would like to thank a number of people who contribute their time and talents in many ways to make our chapter operate so well. Pam Wieringo for coordinating the newsletter. Bobby and Frieda Toler for the newsletter layout and mailings. Tom Toler for the newsletter printing. Hugh Smith for coordinating the excellent programs for our membership meetings. Bob Tuggle for organizing the Croatan overnight field trip. Dora Lee and Sam Ellington, Paul James, John and Evelyn Walke for the plant sale. Those who brought or potted plants for the sale. Ken Wieringo for managing the treasury. Judy Boteler for managing the membership and providing refreshments. Those who lead field trips and present programs. Those who serve on our board and the state board to provide the planning and direction.

Thanks to all the people who have helped to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of our chapter and our chapter's goals. We need as many people as possible to take an active role in our chapter. Plan to attend our meetings and voice your ideas. Volunteer your time and talents so your Blue Ridge Chapter may continue the excellent programs and field trips. More importantly, we need your ideas, time and talents to better address the concerns for our native plants and environment.

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Please give credit.

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Rhododendron Day

Frieda Toler

Saturday, June 10, was our 1989 Rhododendron Day. Some of those planning to attend the walk met at the Peaks of Otter Restaurant for breakfast. Everyone assembled at 10 A.M. at the Visitor Center. There were 16 members and 7 visitors.

The first stop was Onion Mountain Overlook. It rained heavily the previous week, so the blooms were not as pretty as last year but there was still a real show of *Rhododendron catawbiensis* and Mountain Laurel. A roseum azalea had a few blooms, so everyone had an opportunity to smell the fragrance. From there, the group went to Thunder Ridge to see Dutchman's Pipe in bloom. There was a stop at Floyd's Field before returning to the Peaks Picnic Area for lunch.

Well over 100 plants were identified on the walks, including Northern Jack-in-the-Pulpit, and a number of orchids, among them Puttyroot, Tubercled Rein Orchid and *Goodyera Twayblade* being the most spectacular. But all were beautiful and a welcome sight when such a nice group of people are able to enjoy such a lovely day.

Auction for Annual VNPS Meeting

Bruce Boteler

The State VNPS conducts an auction at the state meeting to raise funds. The auction items are those that are donated by members or organizations. The State VNPS annual meeting is scheduled for September 22-24. More information about the meeting is in the State VNPS newsletter dated Summer, 1989.

Please bring to the August meeting an item that you would like to donate. It would be appropriate for you to solicit an item for auction from a friend or a business. Judy Boteler will be auction chairperson for our chapter. Please call Judy at 774-4072 if you have any questions or an item to donate. Please list the value of your donation for tax purposes.

Science Museum of Western Virginia Wildflower Pilgrimage

Frieda M. Toler

The Science Museum of Western Virginia's 1989 Wildflower Pilgrimage saw many

changes and new areas for seeing wildflowers.

The 20th Annual Pilgrimage was held April 28-30, 1989. The Friday evening program, *Winning from the Start with Wildflowers* was by Mary Painter, founding president of the VNPS. A nice reception followed and those attending enjoyed the food and excitement of the events planned for Saturday and Sunday.

As usual, these two days were filled with guided wildflower walks. Experienced and knowledgeable leaders added to the field trips and the opportunity to learn by all those who attended. The afternoon workshops at the Science Museum were especially interesting and informative.

The Saturday evening box supper gave everyone a chance to exchange "flower finds" of the day and to meet the speakers for the evening program.

Bulbs, Perennials and Wildflowers for Period Gardens by John Fitzpatrick, Director of the Center for Historical Plants at Monticello, told of Thomas Jefferson's horticultural interests and focused on plants of the 18th century and the interest in them today.

The Development of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens by Dr. Robert Hebb, Director of the gardens, discussed the history of the gardens and plans for the future expansion to make Ginter Gardens a horticultural center in Virginia.

The Spring in Bloom programs of May and June extended the pilgrimage and the Discovery Tours further enlarged and expanded the museum program. It gave several months of wonderful programs and tours for varied interests and time for more to participate.

Booker T. Washington National Park

Rich Crites

On Sunday afternoon, June 4, twelve members of the Blue Ridge Chapter met at the Park to continue the floral survey. It is a transect forest with oak and Virginia pine. These are trees of abandoned fields.

After this visit, we increased the plant list to more than 170 species. The survey shows 29 species of trees, 27 shrubs and vines, 10 ferns and 110 herbaceous plants. An interesting Wahoo and wild petunia specimens were found. Also, a large population of Pink Lady's Slippers was noted. This survey is a follow-up of one made in 1986.

Fifth Annual Plant Sale

Dora Lee Ellington



May 13 we held our fifth annual plant sale, moving from Paul's hilltop to the parking area along the creek at the home of Danny and Phyllis James. Children loved playing in the creek while their parents bought plants, and trees provided shade making it a delightful spot for a sale.

We were happy that more members shared their plants and helped in many, many ways such as publicity, potting, labeling, moving plants, assisting with the sale, providing plant and cultural information, loading plants and directing traffic. There was a lot of traffic! People started arriving before 9 A.M. although the sale wasn't open to the public until 10 A.M., the first half-hour being for members only.

It has been said that 1989 is "The Year of the Wildflower" and it certainly seemed true at our sale. People were anxious to buy and buy, which they did to the sum of \$3,023.20. A great contribution to our treasury, but most important is that more people are beginning to appreciate and enjoy the use of wildflowers in their gardens.

Again, Paul James' gardens were open to visitors and enjoyed by all who visited them. Barbara James served a delicious luncheon for the workers.

Special thanks to visitors and members who bought plants and those who assisted with our sale, Malcolm and Jimmy Black, Bruce and Judy Boteler, Buddy Cash, Frank Coffey, Paul Cowins, Richard Crites, Sandra Elder, Sam and Dora Lee Ellington, Bob Eubank, Sam Gamble, W. B. Gross, Danny and Phyllis James, John James, Paul and Barbara James, Greg Lipscomb, Bunky and Dana Markham, Sally Nelson, Frank Noftsinger, Bob and Carol Sharp, Bob Tuggle, Bobby and Frieda Toler, John and Evelyn Walke, and Ken Wieringo for helping with all the things necessary for a successful sale. You made it so. Thanks to each.

The few remaining plants were donated to Roanoke County for their new park, "Happy Hollow". Thanks to Vicky Ellis for taking the plants to the park.

Let's now start thinking about the sale for 1990 and save the extra seeds, seedlings and divisions of plants you may have this year.

Now is the Time

Dora Lee Ellington

Spring is almost over and our earlier wildflowers such as Bloodroot, Trout Lily, Trillium, Twinleaf, Hepatica and Virginia Bluebells are only a fond memory. The early summer flowers, Poppy, Campions, Ox-eye Daisy, Butter-and-Eggs, Bleeding Heart, Spiderwort, Coreopsis, Queen Ann's Lace, Bowman's Root, Black-eyed Susan and many others are now making quite a show.

We are usually busy planting new plants at this time but I would have you think about collecting some seeds from your flowers

now. It is easy to sow seeds in beds, pots or around and under your plants but please save a few for our fall seed exchange.

Those seeds which have an aril (a rather soft ridge along one side) should be planted right away or put into a plastic bag with some damp (not wet) sphagnum and placed in your refrigerator until you are able to plant them. Most of the summer flower seeds can be left in a dry area until dried then cleaned and stored in any kind of dry container such as pill bottles or envelopes

but be sure to mark the names of flowers and the date on containers.

I am finding lots of seedlings of Penstemon, Bleeding Hearts, Green and Gold, Cardinal Flower, Blue Lobelia, Wood Poppy and other flowers which are growing under or around the parent plants. These are now large enough to be transplanted into trays or small pots and will be a nice size for next year's plant sale. If you are interested in transplanting some of your seedlings but need help in "how-to-do", I will be glad to demonstrate transplanting seedlings at my home. You may call me at 989-4742 if interested. Happy collecting and planting.

Blacksburg Field Trip

Frieda Toler

Members who attended the Blacksburg Area field trip on June 24 met at the Salem Civic Center. These included Paul and Lucille Cowins, Ken Wieringo, Dawn Gill, John and Evelyn Walke, Sam and Dora Lee Ellington, and Bobby and Frieda Toler. These members caravanned to the Blacksburg Ranger Station, Jefferson National Forest. The group met Walter Gross at the Station and it was decided they would go first to the Gross garden and greenhouse. He has a lathe greenhouse covered with horticulture cloth to create an outdoor greenhouse. He grows from seed, cuttings and layering. Interesting plants were Fringed Gentian and Edelweiss from Europe which he has grown from seed. He uses a sunken bath tub to grow Yellow and Red Pitcher Plants. Also, he raises peafowl and we saw them. There were two white ones.

Then the group went to Pandapas Pond for a nice walk where many plants were identified. Of special interest were Pyrola, Pipsessewa, Indian-pipe, Butterfly Weed and *Rhododendron maximum*. Lunch was eaten in the picnic area.

From there, the group went to Route 635 to the Bog Area at Interior. This was new to some and greatly enjoyed by everyone. There are some experiments being conducted by C. N. Stewart, a graduate student at Virginia Tech, concerning the Sundews. Small mesh tents are in the bog to study the plants. Some of our group walked to the bridge that crosses Stoney Creek to the Appalachian Trail. Seed of Pink Lady's Slipper and Painted Trillium were seen.

As the field trip was ending, six members of the Bibbee Nature Club from Princeton, W. Va., came by from a trip to Peters Mountain. They stopped and talked about the bog and the tents used by Mr. Stewart. Several of the members are familiar with the Bibbee Nature Club because of the Mountain Lake Wilderness study where they became acquainted with Paul Brandt.

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy Bliss

The spring wildflowers, Trilliums, Virginia Bluebells, Dutchman's Breeches, Fawn Lily and many others are only a memory but a wealth of summer and fall wildflowers await us in the field. One of the richest and most spectacular displays is found at Rakes Mill Pond on the Blue Ridge Parkway where a trip is planned for Saturday, July 22. In the open areas you can expect to find *Melanthium virginicum*, Bunchflower, *Castilleja coccinea*, Indian Paint Brush, *Lilium canadense*, Canada Lily, and perhaps *Pyrola rotundifolia*, Round-leaved Pyrola. Three of our largest ferns also occur here, *Osmunda cinnamomea*, Cinnamon Fern, *O. claytoniana*, Interrupted Fern, and *O. regalis*, the Royal Fern.

You asked for it! A special Fern Identification Trip is planned for Saturday, August 26. The group will meet at the James River Visitor Center at 10 A.M. and travel south towards the Peaks of Otter, making several stops along the way. Let us see how many ferns we can identify and check off on the Virginia Fern Checklist. Please bring fern guides and a picnic lunch. A hand lens will be helpful.

Summary of Trips

Saturday, July 22, 10 A.M. Summer Wildflowers at Rakes Mill Pond. Meet at Smartview Picnic Area on BRP, MP 154.1. Bring lunch.

Saturday, August 26, 10 A.M. Fern Identification Trip. Meet at James River Visitor Center on BRP, MP 63.6. Bring lunch and fern field guides and a hand lens.

Sunday, October 15, 2 P.M. Autumn Fruits and Flowers. Randolph-Macon Woman's College, back campus to James River. Co-sponsored by Friends of Lynchburg Streams and Valleys and Blue Ridge Chapter of VNPS. Details later.

For further details on any of the above, please contact Dorothy C. Bliss, (804) 845-5665.

Stokes Aster

by Nancy Arrington

PRINCE WILLIAM CHAPTER VNPS

Gardeners who long for English-style perennial borders, but are faced with the heat, drought and humidity of our recent

summers, should look to native plants, especially those from the Southeast.



Stokes Aster *Stokesia laevis*, native to the coastal plain from South Carolina to Florida and Louisiana, is a familiar perennial in southern gardens and has been cultivated in English gardens since 1766. Also called Cornflower Aster, it's 2-4" fluffy, light lavender-blue flowers are carried on 1-2' sturdy, well-branched stems. *Stokesia* honors Dr. Johnathan Stokes, an English botanical writer, and *laevis*, meaning smooth, refers to the narrow 7-10" leaves which form an evergreen rosette and appear in a smaller version along the purplish stem.

The rounded shape of Stokes is a good filler among tall spikey plants in the perennial bed or border. A mature plant will cover two square feet and will be literally covered with blossoms for several weeks during July. Its pale color combines beautifully with pinks and other lavenders and is a cooling color for the warm colors of daylilies, coreopsis, butterfly-weed and rudbeckias.

Stokes' native habitat along the coastal plain suggest a sunny, well-drained situation in the garden. Add sand to ordinary garden loam to insure good drainage because plants will die in a heavy, wet soil.

Flowers are attractive to bees and

butterflies and are beautiful and long-lasting in arrangements. In the garden, fading flowers are never unsightly as they quickly turn into thistly seed pods prized by arrangers.

Seed, sown about two months after flowering, can be sown any time in an outdoor bed or indoors in late winter. Germination and seedling growth are rapid. Plants spend the first year developing a strong root system and will produce a few blossoms the second year. Mature plants can be divided in spring or fall.

In addition to their beauty and ease of cultivation, an advantage to growing Stokes and other natives is their resistance to most pest and diseases, allowing us to garden without the use of environmentally harmful chemicals. Several named varieties, such as Blue Star, are available from wildflower nurseries.

Morehead City Trip

Rich and Connie Crites

On May 5-7, fourteen of our members met in Morehead City, N.C., for an excellent weekend of "Wildflower Hunting". Bob Tuggle did a tremendous job in setting up the trip and arranging for a local leader, Jeannie Kraus, from the North Carolina Maritime Museum, to be with us on Saturday morning. (Thanks, Jeannie.)

Since most of our previous trips centered on mountain areas, this trip was special because it allowed our group to see some new habitats and the typical plants found there. Among the special habitats seen were the Pocosin with its coffee-brown water, the salt marsh, the maritime forest and the sand dunes.

Some of the plants seen were Sheep Laurel, Dwarf Azalea, Bearded Grass Pink Orchid, Venus Flytrap, Sundew, Butterwort, Lyonia, Pennywort, Glasswort, Needle Grass, Cotton Grass, and Poison Oak. (We also saw Poison Ivy.) We saw the nesting hole of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker in the Longleaf Pine.

On Saturday evening the group met and "most" had a nice seafood dinner at the Sanitary Fish Market in Morehead City. Afterwards, Frank and Dawn Gill provided dessert and refreshments at their "pad".

Since the North Carolina Botanical Gardens are on the way to Morehead City, some stopped to look at wildflowers there. Again, thanks to Bob for a super weekend!