



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 21, No. 3

August, 2004

- August 29** **Smith Mountain Lake Picnic with Evelyn Walke.** Bring a covered dish. Evelyn will provide the meat, tea and lemonade. We will eat around 4:00 p.m. Please call Evelyn at 776-2137 by August 22 if you plan to attend.
There will be a board meeting at 2:00 p.m.
- September 25** **Fall Plant Sale at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** See article in this Newsletter for additional information. Sandra Elder, 434-525-8433.
- September 27** **General Membership Meeting.** 7:00 p.m., Center in the Square. Carol Davit will present a program on Rain Gardens.
- October 2** **VNPS Annual Meeting hosted by the Jefferson Chapter.** This year's meeting will be a one-day event held in Charlottesville. See the June VNPS Bulletin for more details.
- October 25** **General Membership Meeting.** 7:00 p.m., Center in the Square. Rich Crites will present a program on his trip to the southwestern U.S.
- November 22** **An Evening of Shared Memories.** Bring 5 to 10 of your favorite slides or photographs or a short video from the past year to share with the group. A seed exchange will follow the program. Bring a friend and come meet at 7:00 p.m., Center in the Square.

President's Letter

Butch Kelly

The Great Invasion

Are invasive plants a serious problem or are they just a minor problem? Most folks drive down the road and see green and think all is well. Those of us who observe plants and study them with care know which plants belong and which ones do not fit the natural scheme of things. Some wildflower enthusiasts think that invasives are just no problem at all or at most just localized pests.

Recently I spent a long weekend with my brother and his family in Maryland. While a lover of nature he is not a botanist or close observer of nature. When I planned the trip he said bring my weed eater along. After 9 hours of clearing the shrub layer of the woods next to his new home I learned first hand how much damage alien invasives can cause. This was a great time to teach a casual observer of nature (my brother) the danger of these dreadful plants. I was proud of my baby brother since he cleared a minimal amount of forest to build his house. This next project was to make the woods next to his house a desirable place. He wants wild flowers to grow there.

This small place was not the "garden of Eden". It was a tangle of the worst invasives I've ever seen. The only native plants in this area are the trees. There are oaks, tulip trees, hickories and some pines. The under story is a mass

of Oriental bittersweet, privet, Japanese honeysuckle, multiflora rose, Japanese stilt grass, and wine berry. The canopy is being choked by the bittersweet. The forest floor has few if any native flora. It will take several careful applications of herbicide to kill invaders. This will have to be followed by careful pulling and vigilance on his part. The invaders are just yards away waiting for an opportunity to settle in once again.

The recent weekend was a real eye opener for me. I am convinced that alien invasives are a real threat to our landscape. As I drove along the back roads of Maryland I couldn't help but notice that the state of my boyhood is being invaded by a scourge of green. We here in the Roanoke Valley should get ready for the assault and manage things now before it is too late. Anyone interested in pulling garlic mustard at Green Hill Park next spring?

HELP WANTED

JOB DESCRIPTION

Dig up seedlings and place in pots for the fall plant sale.

HOURS - 8:30 A.M. - NOON

PAY - Appreciation

BENEFITS - A warm fuzzy feeling

Apply in person at the Randolph-Macon Botanic Garden on August 7 (Rain date Aug. 14)

For more information call 525-8433 or 845-5665.

**Lynchburg Area Members
column will return in the
October issue.**

Last Weekend in April

Sandra Elder

I devoted most of this weekend to wildflowers. On Saturday, April 24th seven other people joined Dorothy Bliss and me for a tour of the Randolph-Macon Botanic Garden. Creeping Phlox, golden ragwort and wild geraniums provided beautiful splashes of pink, yellow and lavender. The eleven blooms on the yellow lady's slipper were a wonderful treat. The Botanic Garden is at its most beautiful during this time of year when adorned with spring ephemerals. In the afternoon only Lucille and Paul Cowins joined me at the Buffalo Creek Nature Area to enjoy spring ephemerals in a natural setting. The lovely Virginia Bluebells were prolific as were the blooms on the pawpaw trees.

The weather on Saturday was sunny, warm and quite pleasant. Sunday's weather was very different. It was cloudy, cool and threatening rain. On this gloomy afternoon, a girl scout troop helped Jim and me pull up garlic mustard along one section of the Terrapin Mountain Trail. The group of nine girls plus three adults barely made a dent in the spreading population of this alien invasive. However I felt the day was a success because a new group of people now better understand the problem caused by an alien invasive. We concentrated our efforts along the trail and they were able to see some of the beautiful native wildflowers this alien is choking out. There were trillium, wild ginger and cutleaf toothwort in bloom. I read in the spring issue of National Parks that garlic mustard is contributing to the demise of the West Virginia white butterfly. This butterfly lays its eggs on toothwort, a native mustard. When toothwort is not available it lays its eggs on garlic mustard. Chemicals in the garlic mustard prevent the eggs from developing properly. We pulled up thousands of garlic mustard plants near the trail but it was disheartening to see thousands more cascading down the mountainside.

Another Successful Sale

Frieda Toler

Again this year, the Plant Sale was a huge success. Buyers came early so that when the sale began at 9:00 a.m. they had chosen their plants and were ready to buy.

Some left immediately. Some who come every year lingered and visited with BRWS members for a while. There were several new members who wanted to become better acquainted and they also stayed for a visit.

But for the first time in our twenty years of plant sales, two of our members went home with their plants and returned later to serve refreshments. Kinuko and Richard Jambar live within walking distance of the college. They brought a thermos of boiling water, their Japanese tea service and served hot green tea and candy to all of us.

It was a delightful treat and we appreciated their thoughtfulness very much.

Cranberry Glades Trip

Butch Kelly

Ten members of the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society traveled to West Virginia to visit the Cranberry Glades area in the Monogahela National Forest. The trip was led by the cigar smoking (to keep the winged pests away), longtime botany professor, Rich Crites. The trip started out Saturday morning, July 10. Roadside botany was the order of the day on the way between Lewisburg and the Glades.

Our first stop was Beartown State Park. Beartown is a unique area, both geologically and botanically. Geologically, the limestone is moving downhill at the rate of 1 inch every 200 years. The trail leading through the park is a board walk. This leads through a labyrinth of boulders. The rocks are covered with many ferns, lichens and hardy woody plants. Canada mayflower is everywhere. Jack-in-the-pulpit was beginning to form its berries. Rich pointed out the lichen rock tripe which assists in the chemical breakdown of the rocks. Many flowers were found

along the road to and from the park. These included spirea, lobelia, evening primrose, and lots of viper's bugloss.

We made a quick stop at the Cranberry Glades Visitor Center. The visitor center is full of interesting displays and a great book selection. It was time to get to the Glades before it rained. The area is protected by a three quarter mile board walk through the glades itself. This area is sphagnum bog much like what you would see in Canada. The area is dominated by red spruce, alder, winterberry, and, of course, sphagnum moss. It is like stepping onto a wet mattress. Cinnamon ferns were everywhere. As we walked along the board walk we closely observed a green damsel fly, which I had never seen. Many special flowers were seen that are rare in the Appalachian Mountains. These included pitcher plant, cranberry, Labrador tea, cotton grass, monkey flower, green fringed orchid, grass pink orchid, and rose pogonia. About two thirds of the way through the board walk Rich said, "Now it is time for some belly botany". We laid on the board walk and observed sundew up close and personal.

We ate lunch in our cars, since as Professor Crites (like a barometer) said it was going to rain. It poured fairly hard, but did not deter us from moving onward with our plan to visit the Northern Boreal Forest. We drove up the scenic highway, Rt. 100, for about 6 miles. Rich led us into the deep, dark woods. The forest floor was covered with moss and club mosses. The trees were red spruce and yellow birch. I expected to see a moose any minute, but instead felt rain drops cold and big on my head, Frank Coffey, the trip photographer, tried to photograph Canada lily, but Mother Nature would not cooperate. We scurried back to the cars just in time and drove through a blinding thunder storm.

A quick stop at the visitor center and some small talk was followed by a long drive back home. All who missed this trip missed the botanical highlight of the blooming season. The total count of plants identified was 103. This is according to the botanical scribe, Betty Kelly. This trip was very interesting and informative as to the right botany and ecology of the eastern highlands of West Virginia. Any trip with Rich Crite, as the leader is a fun and informative one. Thanks Rich!

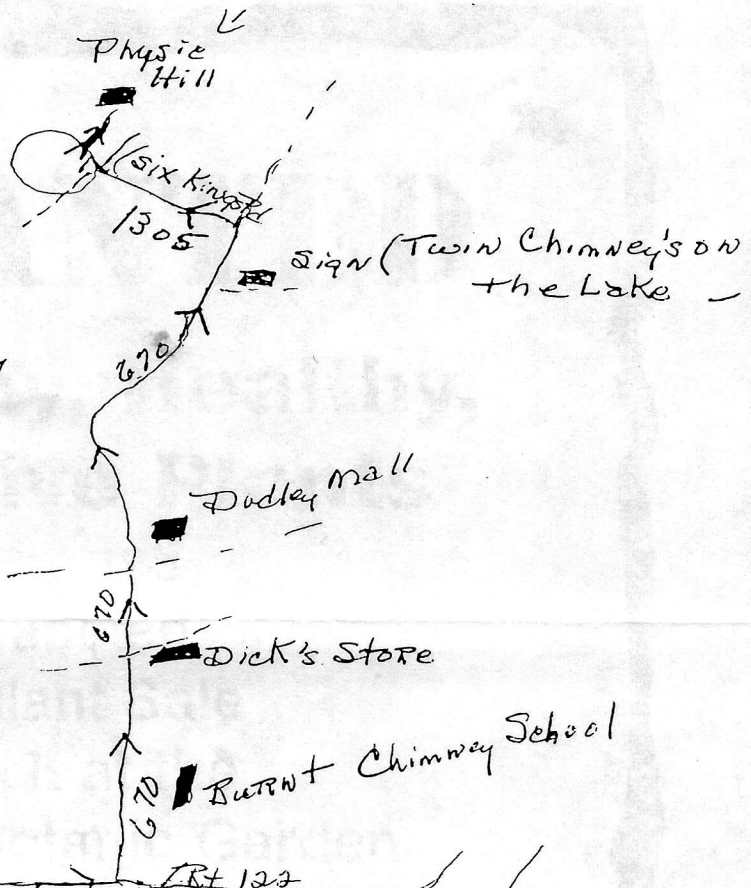
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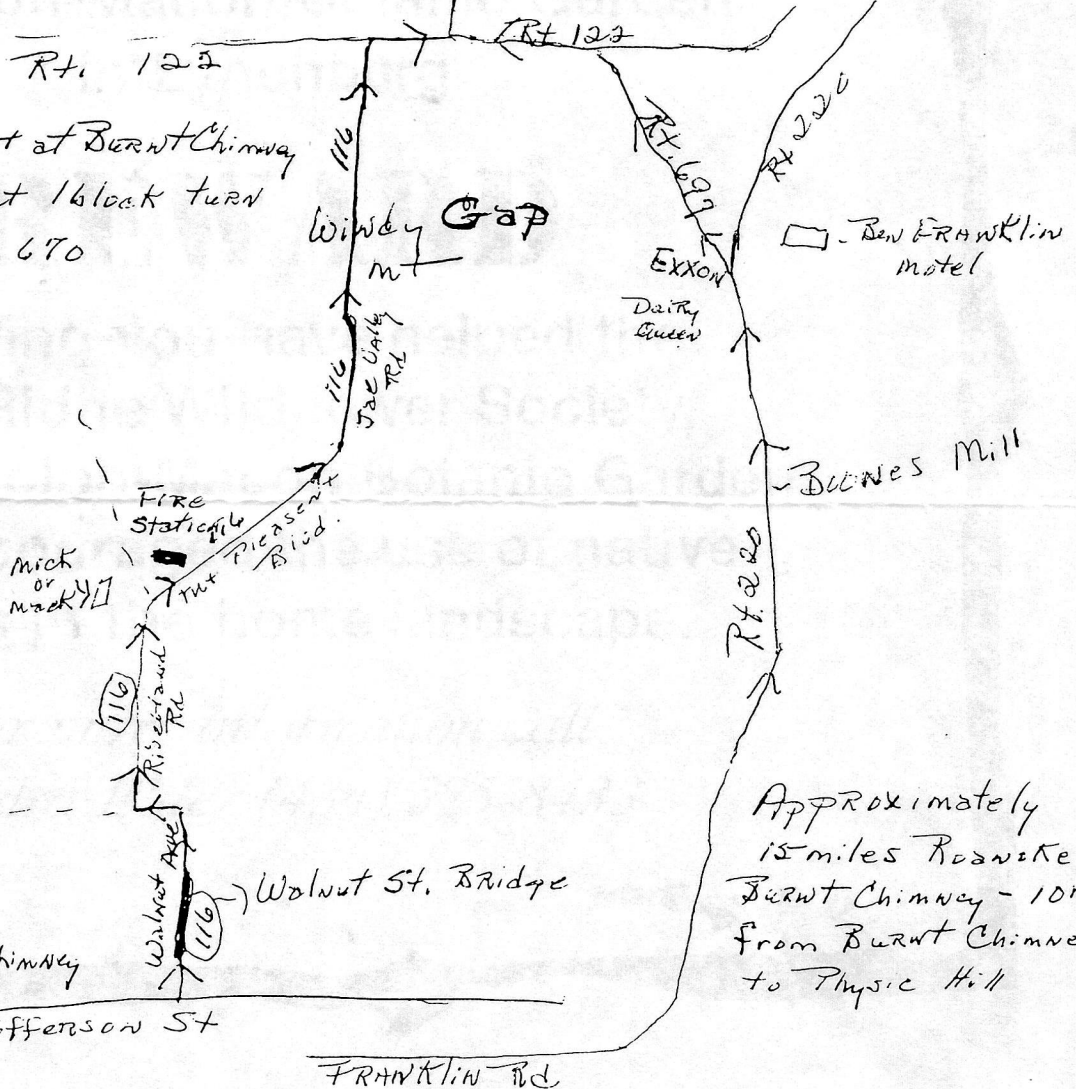
TURN Left onto 1305

(It is the first left after
(you pass the Twin Chimney Sign)

We are the second drive on
your Right. Sign Physic Hill at
driveway



TURN Right at Burnt Chimney
onto 122 - Go about 1 block turn
left onto Rt 670

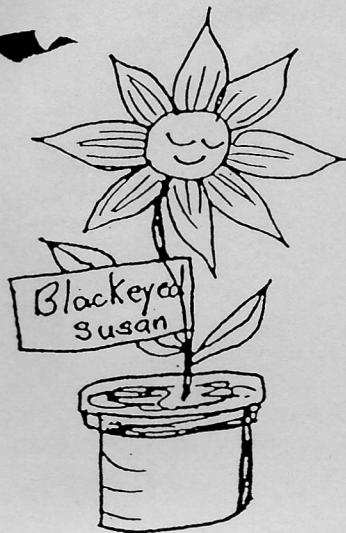


Pick up Rt. 116 at
Walnut + Jefferson
and Follow to Burnt Chimney

Approximately
15 miles Road to
Burnt Chimney - 10n
from Burnt Chimney
to Physic Hill

Jefferson St

FRANKLIN Rd



WANTED

Happy, Healthy, Native Plants

Potted and labeled
to sell at the Plant Sale
September 25th at the
Randolph-Macon Botanic Garden
in Lynchburg

REWARD

Knowing you have helped the
Blue Ridge Wildflower Society,
The Randolph-Macon Botanic Garden
and encouraged the use of native
plants in the home landscape.

*For more information call
Sandra Elder (434) 525-8433*