

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 14, No. 2

April, 1997

Schedule of Events

- April 12** Big Walk Day at Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center. The day begins with a bird walk at 8:00 A.M.; then at 10:00 there is a wildflower walk. Bring your lunch and picnic at noon. At 1:00 P.M. there will be a butterfly walk.
From Route 11 in Troutville, turn onto Stoney Battery Road beside the Bank of Botetourt. Go approximately one mile and WRNC will be on your left at #815. In keeping with the spirit of the Center, their sign is rather inconspicuous.
- April 12** Green Hill Park Field Trip. Rich Crites will be taking his class to Green Hill Park in Salem. Meet at Green Hill Park at 9 A.M.
- April 19** Lynchburg Parks & Recreation Dept. will celebrate Earth Day by tree plantings at Peaks View Park, 9:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M. Call 804-847-1640 for more information.
- April 25-27** Twenty-eighth Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage by the Science Museum of Western Virginia. Co-sponsored by the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society. Paul James will be the keynote speaker Friday evening. His program, "Great Wildflower Moments" will be presented in Hopkins Planetarium. To register or receive a brochure detailing events, please call the Museum at 342-5727. Our involvement with the Pilgrimage takes the place of our April General Membership Meeting.
- May 4** The Randolph-Macon Women's College Botanic Garden will be the focus of this Sunday evening program in Lynchburg. Meet at 7:00 P.M. in the garden to see the early spring flowers. The walk will be followed by a slide program (Room 225, Martin Science Buildings) showing the development of the garden.
- May 9-11** 14th Annual Wildflower Symposium sponsored by the Wintergreen Nature Foundation and Wintergreen Resort. The March Bulletin has an article about this year's events. You can contact Wintergreen at 800-325-2200. This event is outstanding in terms of presenters, topics, workshops and outings. If you have never attended, perhaps this could be the year.
- May 10** Big Spring Day at Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center.
- May 10** Thirteenth Annual Plant Sale at the Community Arboretum on the campus of Virginia Western Community College from 10:00 A.M. until 2:00 P.M. Members may begin purchasing at 9:00 A.M. Rain or Shine!!
The formal dedication of the Children's Garden will take place at 1:00 P.M.
- May 19** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. Program details will be announced later.
Please note the change of date to the third rather than fourth Monday of the month in order to avoid conflicts with Memorial Day plans. Also, we will be meeting in a classroom down the hallway from our regular meeting room.
An Executive Board meeting is scheduled for 6:00 P.M.
- May 24** Lady's Slipper Walk. Join us at 8:00 A.M. for breakfast at the Peaks of Otter Restaurant or meet at 10:00 at the Visitor Center. We'll go to Sunset Field and possibly Wilkerson's Gap, Powell's Gap or Thunder Ridge Shelter area. Some of these sites have limited parking areas. Carpooling from the Visitor Center is encouraged. Sam and Dora Lee Ellington, leaders.
- June 7** National Trails Day Celebration at Jefferson Park, Lynchburg, from 9:00 A.M. until 12:00 Noon. Speakers include Michael McCormick (Natural Bridge AT Club), James Douglass (Friends of Lynchburg Stream Valleys), Congressman Bob Goodlatte. There will be a variety of exhibitors. Hosted by Lynchburg City Manager Charles Church. For additional information contact Lynchburg Parks & Recreation Dept., 804-847-1640.
- June 7** Rhododendron Day on the Parkway begins with breakfast at the Peaks of Otter Restaurant. We will meet at the Visitor Center at 10:00 for the field trip. Bring your lunch.
There will be no General Membership Meeting in June.
- July 23-26** Landscaping and Native Plants will be this year's focus at the Cullowhee, NC, conference. These annual conferences draw people from around the country.
- Sept. 19-21** VNPS Annual Meeting in Williamsburg. The John Clayton Chapter will host this year's meeting.

Wildflower Pilgrimage Kickoff

Speaker: Paul James

Program: Great Wildflower Moments

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Date: April 25, 1997

Place: Hopkins Planetarium,
Center in the Square

Letter From The President

by Karen Shepard

Once again deep within the earth new life begins to stir. Trees that have stood bare against the winter sky are showing a faint hint of color. The roadsides will soon be bright with wildflowers and the woods beckon us to come explore. Spring has arrived in the Blue Ridge!

Thank goodness with the advent of spring comes the arrival of daylight saving time. What more could wildflower enthusiasts ask than more hours to be out and about?

Please check the schedule of events for upcoming activities. Instead of an April general membership meeting, the Society cosponsors The Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage with the Science Museum of Western Virginia. Please mark your calendars for this event and bring a friend! From hikes in the mountains to leisurely strolls through some of our members wonderful wildflower gardens, there is something to appeal to the naturalist in everyone.

Also, please be getting plants ready for our annual plant sale. The plants need three to four weeks in a good soil mixture to become established. Not only do we need plants but we also need members to help with other details of the sale. This is a fun activity and a great way to obtain quality plants, see old friends and make new ones.

Again a special thanks to Bobby and Frieda Toler for the excellent program presented at the March meeting. The magnitude of their trip out west was awesome and as always their slides and personal observations were outstanding.

We are fortunate to live in an area that is rich in beauty and diversity of plant life. So, get out your hiking boots, pack a lunch and enjoy!

Spring Plant Sale, 1997

by Dora Lee Ellington

Spring has sprung and it's time to be thinking about our annual wildflower plant sale. Again this year we have the good fortune to have it at the Virginia Western Community Arboretum. It will be May 10th, from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M., rain or shine. Members can buy plants at 9:00 A.M. and also will receive a ten percent discount.

It is important to pot up your plants three weeks in advance to have nice plants for sale. Besides sharing plants from your garden, we will be needing help in many different ways before, during and after the sale. Plants need to be at the Arboretum no later than 8:30 A.M. Please have them labeled.

You may have seedlings of your wildflowers that can be potted up now or three weeks before our sale in order for the plants to adjust to being moved.

We look forward to seeing you at the sale!

A Word From Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center

by Kent Summers, WRNC

"...I don't think I'm alone in missing that friendly smile, warm greeting and kind words that he always had when our paths would cross. He will long be remembered and sorely missed. Our prayers and thoughts go out to Evelyn. Due to the many selfless hours John has given to our community and Woodpecker Ridge, we will name the wildflower garden at The Sam and Dora Lee Ellington Wildflower Bridge in honor of Dr. John Walke."

Quilt Raffle Tickets

The quilted wall hanging raffled at last year's VNPS Annual Meeting was so popular the Board decided to offer a queen size quilt this year. This raffle replaced the silent auctions of former years and is the primary income-producing event for VNPS. Additional information is in the March Bulletin. Purchase price is \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. Contact Betty Kelly, 540-384-7429.

Registry Program

A slide presentation on the VNPS Registry Program has been prepared and is available for loan to all chapters. There is a commentary supplied for use by the person giving the program.

If you would like additional information or are interested in delivering the presentation to a group or organization, please contact Boleyn Dale, Route 1006, Moon, VA 23119, 804-725-5451, or e-mail: bkd @ visi.net.

Wild Beauty

The Virginia Museum of Natural History has developed a traveling photo exhibit, "Wild Beauty: America's Rare Flora". The exhibit premiers April 4 at the Museum's Va. Tech branch and will stay there until May 30. Maryl (Levine) will be the featured artist at the premier and her works will include ten Virginia species.

During its five year showing other prominent artists will be featured, including Marion Lobstein and Hal Horowitz.

The exhibit will be at the Museum's Martinsville headquarters from June 3 - July 30 and from August 2 until September 29 it will be at their branch on the UVA Campus.

To learn more about the exhibit or the Museum, visit them on the web at <http://www.bev.net/education/museum/vmnhmvl/vmnh.html> or call 540-666-8600.

Permission is hereby given to reprint. Please give credit.

Karen Shepard, President - (540) 772-2733

Pamela M. Wieringo, Editor - (540) 343-8596

P. O. Box 20385 • Roanoke, VA 24018

About The Garden

Anonymous

Have you searched for Skunk Cabbage or taken a walk in the woods this spring? Are you establishing a new garden or increasing your present garden? Depending on where you live and how you define "Spring", this season of favorites is upon us. This "About the Garden" article offers some suggestions that may be helpful to you and your garden.

- Cut back perennials that bloom late in the season and die back during the winter.
- Clear leaves and heavy debris that may be covering plants and shrubs.
- Where possible, begin a mulch pile. Save leaves & clippings.
- Remember to allow bulbs & perennials time to come up before doing too much digging. Some are slow to appear as if to say "Hi, I'm here", when they pop through the soil.
- Divide large clumps of plants. It is good for most plants and an excellent way to increase your garden.
- Share plants with a friend.
- Use ornamental grasses. Some are good for drying and can be used in winter arrangements.
- Begin a garden diary. Record bloom dates, when you planted and growing habits.
- Put a bird bath in your garden and change water often. Sit back and enjoy seeing a robin take a bath or who comes for a drink.
- Spend a day exploring nature with a child.
- Save your knees. Fill a hot water bottle with sand and use as a kneeling pad. Or use a gardening pad from any garden shop.
- Use non-toxic sprays. If you must use chemical sprays don't apply when it is windy or raining. This could damage desirable plants. Too much water run off could pollute drinking water.
- Mulch, mulch, mulch. Save your leaves in the fall. In the Spring they can be mulched with the lawn mower and are ready to use. Or allow them to decompose for a year and make your mulch later.
- Hummingbird pleasers: Penstemons, Bee Balm, Cardinal Flower, Columbine, Fire Pink, Trumpet Creeper.
- Study plant and seed catalogs. They contain good information about growing habits and needs of plants.
- Put your wildflower glasses on and observe where a plant grows in nature, then try to duplicate that habitat as closely as possible.
- Sterilize soil in your microwave oven. Set on high for about five minutes. Quick and easy.
- Landscape with plants to provide food and shelter for feathered friends.
- Take care of transplanting to avoid root disturbance or injury.
- Make a game - learn common and botanical names for plants.
- Wildflower photography is a wonderful hobby combined with wildflowering.
- Sow seeds of kindness - bring a guest to the next membership meeting or offer a member a ride.
- Enjoy the Community Arboretum at Virginia Western Community College.
- Evaluate your wildflower garden. Replace biennials and add perennials by coming to the BRWS Plant Sale Saturday, May 10.
- Have fun!
- Enjoy the beauty of your labors.



*Of all the
wonderful things in
the wonderful universe of God,
nothing seems to me
more surprising than the
planting of a seed in the blank
earth and the result thereof.
Take a Poppy seed,
for instance: it lies in
your palm, the merest
atom of matter, hardly visible,
a speck, a pin's point in bulk,
but within it is imprisoned a
spirit of beauty ineffable,
which will break its bonds
and emerge from the
dark ground and blossom
in a splendor so dazzling
as to baffle all powers
of description.*

***From An Island Garden
by Celia Thaxter - 1894***

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. John Tabb Walke, of Roanoke, passed away February 21, 1997.

After retiring as a pediatrician, John had the opportunity to develop his garden and plant collection, particularly orchids. He was an active member of the BRWS and the Blue Ridge Orchid Society and the American Orchid Society.

John was a true gentleman in the finest sense of the word and will be greatly missed. Our sympathy is extended to Evelyn and family.

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy C. Bliss

NEARLY SPRING

On a blustery cold day in mid-March, as I strolled through my yard, I noticed that the usual "weeds", bittercress, dandelions, common blue violet, Indian strawberry, gill-over-the-ground, purple dead nettle and the tiny whitlow grass were in full flower. But what of our native plants? In the wildflower garden, Greek valerian, Virginia bluebells, bleeding heart and Hepatica had all begun to flower. Our 1998 Wildflower of the year *Aquilegia canadensis*, columbine, was in bud and will soon be in bloom. Some of these flowers appear to be about two weeks earlier than usual. Spring is almost here. Just be patient.

FIRST DAY OF SPRING

On March 20th, the first official day of spring, I joined the Happy Hikers on a trip to Westvaco's Buffalo Creek, one of our registry sites. Although many buds were well developed, only a few flowers were evident. Among the latter were the blossoms of Hepatica, bloodroot, spring beauty, trout lily, early saxifrage, bluets, field pansy (alien) and spice bush. Clumps of Virginia Bluebells with their pink and blue buds gave promise of a spectacular show in a week or two. One dwarf ginseng was observed in bud and several other plants were poking up through the leaf litter. I'll check these out later to see if this special population is holding its own. The path along the creek had been improved by the construction of several wooden walkways but still showed ravages of last year's flood and storms. Several large trees were downed in the creek and the bank was deeply undercut in several places.

The hemlock grove has been severely damaged by the devastation of the woolly adelgid. Several large hemlocks were sprawled on the forest

floor and the canopy of others appeared sparse and thin. One assumes the death and deterioration of these trees are due either directly or indirectly to the activity of this insect.

NEARBY NATURE, INC.

Have you heard about the organization, Nearby Nature, Inc., established by the Coalition for a Nature Center in Central Virginia in 1996? This group is off and running with a very ambitious environmental program. Their mission as stated in their Spring 1997 Newsletter reads: "To establish a nature education center in the Greater Lynchburg area that will provide a gathering place for organizations, families, individuals, and the general public to experience and learn about the natural world around us and to promote responsible care for our environment." You may learn more about Nearby Nature, Inc., by visiting their headquarters and museum at 5928-B Fort Avenue in Lynchburg (24502) or calling (804) 237-3617.

DATES TO REMEMBER

I hope you have set aside Sunday evening, May 4, and have made plans to visit the R-MWC Botanic Garden at 7:00 P.M. Following a stroll along the paths to enjoy the spring flowers, we will view a slide program in Martin Science Building on the development of the garden.

From April 12 to 19 several of us are staying in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee for a week of exploration in the nearby Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The spring wild flowers should be at their peak. If you are interested in spending that week or part of it in or near the Smokies and would like to join the five of us, please contact me at 804-845-5665.

Paul James Keynote Speaker For Pilgrimage

We are very fortunate this year to have Paul James as our speaker for the Friday evening Wildflower Pilgrimage Kickoff. Paul was one of the original organizers of the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society and served as our first President. Our ongoing success has been, in part, a result of the solid foundation he provided our chapter.

He is Past President of the Middle Atlantic Chapter, American Rhododendron Society and the recipient of their coveted Bronze Metal. In addition to these two organizations, he maintains membership in the North American Rock Garden Society, Alpine Garden Society - England, Scottish Rock Garden Society - Scotland, The American Conifer Society and The Hardy Plant Society.

Since retiring in 1984, Paul has devoted much time in plant collecting and developing a garden in Boones Mill VA where he and his wife, Barbara, share their home with four dogs, Bud, Blossom, Joy and Karkas. Their garden now contains large collections of maples, oaks, magnolias, conifers and one of the largest private collections of rhododendrons and azaleas. Many native plants as well as rock garden plants from around the world are now being grown and evaluated in his gardens.

The James' garden is a popular spot for garden groups and has hosted groups and people from all over the world.





Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

SUPPLEMENT

JUNE, 1997

Schedule of Events

- June 21 Virginia Western Community Arboretum Work Day. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at the Garden on the Virginia Western Community College campus. Dora Lee Ellington, Coordinator.
- June 28 Parkway South Field Trip. Meet at 9:00 A.M. at Buck Mountain Overlook (Milepost 123.2) on the Parkway. We will travel south to Buffalo Mountain. Bring a lunch and we'll plan to eat at Smartview Park. Butch Kelly, leader.
- July 11 Overnight Trip to the Mount Rogers/White Top Mountain--Grayson
& 12 Highland Park areas of Virginia is being planned for Friday and Saturday. Hugh & Bunny Smith and Rich Crites have decided the following motels in Marion would serve as our base camp. The motels, phone numbers and approximate prices are:

*Best Western - 540-783-3193 (\$50 - \$62)

*Econolodge - 540-783-6031 (\$40 - \$50). This is right beside Best Western and managed by the same people.

*Virginia House Motor Inn - 540-783-5112 (\$40 - \$50). This is close to the other two motels.

All these motels are located on Route 11 near 1420 (+/-) North Main Street in Marion. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN RESERVATIONS.**

Some of us will probably go down Friday morning. The Saltville area would be interesting to visit. Let's talk about this while we are on our upcoming field trips in June. If you are not planning to spend Friday night in Marion but want to meet us Saturday morning, be at the first gas station on Route 16 (East/South) just off I-81 at 9:00 A.M. Bring picnic supplies for Saturday. We will go toward Sugar Grove and on to the other destinations.

If you have questions, call Rich, 774-4518, or the Smiths, 774-8392.