



# Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE  
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 13, No. 4

October, 1996

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### October 13

The Orlando E. White Arboretum VNPS Field Trip. This trip to the Blandy Experimental Farm at the State Arboretum of Virginia is to be led by Arboretum director Dr. Ed Connor. Meet us 10:30 A.M. at the Arboretum located on U.S. 50 in the Shenandoah Valley. Bring your lunch. For additional information, refer to your August *Bulletin*. If you can join us for this trip, call Bob Eubank, 804-239-9756 (feel free to leave a message if he is not at home) or drop him a note at 1162 Timberlake Drive, Lynchburg, VA 24502.

### October 28

General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. "Fall Fruit, Flowers and Nuts" will be presented by Dorothy Bliss and Carolyn Bates.

### November 2

Fall Fruit and Nut Walk at Bottom Creek Gorge. Meet at the Bent Mountain Post Office off U.S. 221 (about 10-12 miles south of Cave Spring Corners) at 10:00 A.M. Mike Donahue will be the leader, 540-427-0853.

### November 25

An Evening of Shared Memories. This is our time of sharing slides and photographs from the past year, so bring five to ten of your favorites for the enjoyment of the group. Meet at 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. A seed exchange will follow.

### December 6

Friday Evening Program at 7:30 in Martin Science Building, Randolph-Macon Women's College in Lynchburg. Come and bring a friend.

### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DATE: October 28, 1996      TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PROGRAM: Fall Fruit, Flowers and Nuts

SPEAKERS: Dorothy C. Bliss and Carolyn Bates

PLACE: Fifth Floor, Center in the Square



### FALL FRUIT AND NUT WALK

DATE: November 2, 1996      TIME: 10:00 A.M.

MEETING PLACE: Bent Mountain Post Office

## Letter From The President

by Richard "Butch" Kelly

This final letter from me as president comes with sadness and joy. I have enjoyed serving as the BRWS President. It has been an honor to serve you.

Over the past two years I have gotten to know many of you on a first name basis. I appreciate all the help everyone has given me. Many of you have worked very hard at leading walks and working plant sales, etc.

I am especially grateful to Hugh and Bunny Smith and Bob and Carol Whiteside for hosting the winter board meetings. My wife, Betty, deserves a prize for enduring my frustrations and finding things I have misplaced. My greatest thanks go to Pam Wieringo for the splendid job she has done as treasurer. This is always the toughest job in any organization. Ours is no exception. As well as handling that job she does a superb job of putting together our *Newsletter*. Thanks to everyone for making my job easy.

I am saddened that as of this writing we have no one to accept the job as First Vice President. With a membership of over 200 this is troubling. At best someone will come forward and at worst come November, 1998, the Society will dissolve. After twelve successful years this would be tragic.

On a more positive note the Society will be in very capable hands over the next two years. Karen Shepard is a very enthusiastic member. She seems to never run out of energy or ideas.

Again, thanks to everyone for the opportunity to serve as President over the last two years.

Permission is hereby given to reprint.  
Please give credit.

Richard J. "Butch" Kelly, President  
(540) 384-7429

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

P. O. Box 20385  
Roanoke, VA 24018

## Visits to the Rosebay Rhododendron Registry Site

by Sandra Elder

On Thursday, June 13, eight BRWS members visited our registry site in Altavista, now owned by Ross Laboratories. We found very few blossoms on the Rosebay Rhododendron, *Rhododendron maximum*, although there were a few more buds yet to open. We will plan our visit on a later date next year. Some of the rhododendron growing close to the creek died as a result of high water during the flood in the summer of 1995. The plant that suffered the most as a result of the flood was a Lycopodium, tree club moss or ground pine. Their population was drastically reduced. The ferns in the area continue to thrive.

On Monday, August 19, a small group returned to Altavista. At that time, Dorothy Bliss presented a Registry Site

Plaque to Dennis Janiak of Ross Laboratories.

We then went in search of the featherbells, *Stenanthium gramineum*, that grow on the west side of the bypass and upstream from the Rosebay site. A large population was found but only three plants had produced blooms. These had already begun to set seeds.

It was on that site in 1967 that botanist Dr. Ruskin Freer recorded finding this plant for the first time in the Piedmont province of Virginia. The foliage of featherbells has been found on the Registry Site. Hopefully their number will increase and they will one day produce flowers. We will plan future trips in early August to check on their progress.

## Cicada Killer Wasp

by Dorothy C. Bliss



A few weeks ago while clearing weeds on the hillside at the R-M.W.C. Botanic Garden, we noted some very large wasps with black bodies marked with yellow across the thorax and lower segments of the abdomen. These wasps were flying around several holes in the soil. They appeared so threatening we gave them a wide berth and decided to do our weeding in the lower part of the garden. I contacted Dr. Shedd who through World Wide Web was able to get detailed information on this insect.

The female wasps sting their prey (cicadas) which are dragged to one of their cells in their burrows and placed next to an egg. The paralyzed cicadas are utilized as food for the developing larva which over-winters as a mature larva within a brown leathery cocoon. Dr. Shedd mentioned that he had observed these wasps dragging the stunned cicada into a shrub or tree and then gliding through the air with their immobile prey to the mouth of their burrow in the soil. The female wasps are not aggressive and rarely sting unless disturbed. The sting according to one of my insect books is considered very virulent. The male wasps, however, defend the nesting sites and may appear menacing but have no sting.

At present there are more than 50 burrows on the hillside which are very conspicuous by the fresh mounds of soil around the openings. Soon the adult Cicada Killers will be gone as they do not live over winter. Using some of the information in the Fact Sheets we hope to eliminate the new crop of developing wasps while they are still in the ground.

Information for this article was extracted from the Ohio State Extension Fact Sheet, "Cicada Killer Wasp" by William F. Lyon.

### 1997-98 Officers

President Karen Shepard  
(540) 772-2733  
(540) 857-7919

First Vice Pres.

Second Vice Pres. Carol Whiteside  
(540) 774-2143

Secretary Betty Kelly  
(540) 384-7429  
(540) 561-8046

Treasurer & Editor Pam Wieringo  
(540) 343-8596  
(540) 772-3660

# The Sheridan's Picnic Sunday, August 25, 1996

by Carol L. Whiteside

Although the day started off dreary it turned into a pleasantly beautiful afternoon. All of the expected board members arrived early enough to admire the Sheridan's magnificent landscaping before we began (promptly at 2:00 P.M.) our last board meeting of the year. The meeting was thorough and swift, in true Butch Kelly style, which is always greatly appreciated by everyone.

Al and Vi must love to entertain because they are very organized and wonderful at making us feel comfortable and welcome. Nestled in the woods and located in a private cove of Smith Mountain Lake, their home is all on one long level consisting of lots of glass and wood, unusual yet beneficial architectural angles and gloriously high ceilings, allowing the walls to be covered with handmade quilts even above the doorways. Their home decor is a great 1950's color and texture collection of furnishings, but convenient and up-to-date for the quickly approaching twenty-first century. The plant room where they start seedlings is economical yet state-of-the-art.

Whether roaming their garden walkways on our own or with the

Sheridan's guidance, we all received marvelous gardening ideas. Al's toy (a bulldozer) made it possible to move rocks and boulders into place. A falling stream flows into a lovely pond surrounded by lush plantings. Among the abundant wildflowers we were particularly taken with the natural use of Joe-Pye Weed which was in bloom.

While seated throughout their spacious, terraced decks, we enjoyed the lake view as we ate. How is it that Pot Luck always seems to provide the right blend of casseroles, beans, salads, vegetables and (best of all) desserts! Many thanks to Al and Vi for everything, especially the delicious barbeque, fresh lemonade and warm hospitality. I am proud to say that I received so many requests for my Fruit Chicken Salad recipe that Pam promised to print it in the newsletter. I hope you can use it; please enjoy!

If you weren't able to be present this year (and the Sheridan's invite us back next year), please plan to attend. You will love the peaceful serenity of their gardens and home and will relax with delightful company.

## Otter Creek Revisited

by Dorothy C. Bliss

On August 18 a group of twenty enjoyed the fern walk around Otter Creek Lake. Seventeen ferns and fern allies were encountered with the most common of these the New York or Tapering Fern, *Thelypteris noveboracensis*, and the Christmas Fern, *Polystichum acrostichoides*. In a few places the forest floor was covered with mats of the clubmoss, Crowfoot, *Lycopodium flabelliforme*. The most interesting fern was the Lobed Spleenwort, *Asplenium pinnatifidum*, with its deeply lobed evergreen fronds that taper into long tail-like extensions. This fern occurs in most of our mountain counties but because it grows in deep rock crevices, it is generally overlooked. Research has shown that this tetraploid spleenwort originated as a hybrid between the Mountain Spleenwort, *Asplenium montanum*, and the Walking Fern, *Camptosorus rhizophyllus*. In previous years we have observed the Mountain Spleenwort on the same rocky shelf (not seen this year) but we have never encountered the Walking Fern here.

Among the fall flowers in bloom were the Cardinal Flower, Joe-Pye Weed, Wingstem, Yellow Passion Flower and the white flowers of Virgin's Bower cascading over a rotting stump.

A fitting climax to the afternoon was a pleasant picnic on the banks of the James River.

## Fruit Chicken Salad

by Carol L. Whiteside

### DRESSING

2 Tbs. Oil  
2 Tbs. Vinegar  
2 Tbs. Orange Juice  
1 Tsp. Salt  
1½ Cups Mayonnaise

### SALAD

3 Cups Wild Rice, cooked  
5 Cups Chicken or Turkey, cooked and cubed  
1 Can Pineapple Tidbits, drained (13½ oz.)  
1 Can Mandarin Oranges, drained (11 oz.)  
1 Cup Almonds, sliced  
1½ Cups Grapes  
1½ Cups Celery, diced

Mix the dressing and set aside. Combine salad ingredients. Lightly toss together. Cover and chill.

## Membership Dues

Our current membership dues are as follows:

Individual	\$ 15.00
Family	25.00
Patron	50.00
Student	10.00
Sustaining	100.00
Life	400.00
Associate (Group)	40.00

Associates need to designate a delegate.

Please check your mailing label for current expiration date and renew at the appropriate time. If you wish to make an additional donation, please indicate if it is the State treasury or for our Blue Ridge Chapter. All nondesignated donations go to VNPS. Checks should be made payable to VNPS and sent to P. O. Box 844, Annandale, VA 22003.

## Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy C. Bliss

### R-MWC BOTANIC GARDEN

It has been a special delight this fall to watch the developing flowers of several of the asters and goldenrods, previously known only as to genus which can now be labeled as to species. Two of the clumps of New England Aster with their bright pink flowers can now be classified as *forma roseus*. The garden has been colorful with asters, goldenrods, white and pink Boltonia, Black-eyed Susans and three species of Coreopsis. The Franklinia tree has been a continued source of beauty during August and September with its showy white flowers.

The pink and white species of Turtlehead have been blooming continuously for the past month. Did you know that these flowers are also called Snakehead? The white or pink tinged species, *Chelone glabra*, occurs in nearly all counties in Virginia and the Pink Turtlehead, *C. lyoni*, is found in the mountains of Virginia and southward. Further north it frequently escapes from cultivation. This latter information is from *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Wildflowers*. However, the Pink Turtlehead is not included in the *Virginia Atlas*. A few mornings ago under some sprawling asters we discovered the deep blue flowers of the Bottle Gentian, *Gentiana andrewsii*. These flowers quickly fade to shades of brown or lavender. This gentian is not included in the *Virginia Atlas* but is found throughout West Virginia. Why not Virginia?

### HURRICANE FRAN

"Fran" did no serious damage to the garden but the paths and beds are littered with leaves and branches, especially those of the China Fir. A beautiful tree but a messy one! Some larger branches of the Ash tree and Ginkgo fell near the pools but did little damage. We hope to have a clean-up day as soon as the rain stops!

### EVENING PROGRAM

An evening meeting will be held in Martin Science Building on Randolph-Macon Woman's College Campus on Friday evening, December 6 at 7:30. Come and bring a friend or two. Program will be announced later.

## Augusta Springs Walk

by Butch Kelly

Fifteen folks traveled to Augusta County the warm, sunny Saturday of July 20. We were treated to a wetland nestled at the foot of the Allegheny mountains. The area includes forest, meadow, pond and a boardwalk.

Over thirty plants were observed. Included were Yellow Rosinweed, Lobelia, Sensitive Fern, Monkey Flower and Indian Mallow.

The drive to and from was delightful. Perhaps a spring trip there would be interesting.

## Lynchburg Plant Sale

by Sandra Elder

Hurricane Fran roared through Lynchburg thirty six hours before the plant sale. The city park where the sale was to be held was closed due to high water. We thought the sale would have to be canceled. Andy Reeder, Parks Manager and Chief Naturalist, came to our rescue and let us have the sale beside the Parks and Recreation Department. B.R.W.S. members helping with the sale were informed of the location change. A number of T.V. and radio stations were also asked to announce the change. Kathy Beckner and Jim Elder stayed at the entrance to Peaks View Park and directed people to the new location.

Thanks to the following people for their help: Betty and Butch Kelly, Frieda and Bobby Toler, Lucille and Paul Cowins, Dorothy Bliss, Rich Crites, Dora Lee Ellington and Bob Eubank. Thanks also to everyone who donated plants.

Considering the circumstances we had a successful sale. It was especially gratifying to hear people say they came back this year because the plants they purchased at our sale last year had done so well.

## Tomatoe Faire

by Sandra Elder

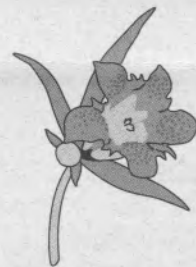
The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society was invited to participate in the "Tomatoe Faire" held at the Lynchburg City Market on August 3rd.

This celebration commemorates "The Legend of the Love Apple." Tomatoes, thought to be aphrodisiacs, were once called love apples, the legend took place in the yard of the Miller-Claytor house. Thomas Jefferson is said to have eaten a tomato from its garden to prove to the owner's child that tomatoes were not poisonous. Many people thought tomatoes were poisonous because the flowers resembled those of the deadly nightshade.

The "Tomatoe Faire" featured judged produce, flower and floral designs as well as food (tomato sandwiches), musical entertainment and exhibitors. Other exhibitors included Master Gardeners and Zephyr Enterprises, a nursery in Arrington VA that sells native wildflowers.

This event produced an excellent opportunity for us to advertise our society and the fall plant sale. We also sold tee shirts.

Thanks to Bobby and Frieda Toler for the nice display of wildflower photography, Karen Shepard, Bob Eubank and Butch Kelly for providing tee shirts and brochures and Dorothy Bliss and Janet Cofer for giving of their time to make the day a success.



## Seed Exchange

There will be a seed exchange at the November General Membership Meeting. If you have extra seeds you would like to share with other members, please bring them to the meeting. All seeds need to have the containers clearly labeled; common names are sufficient. Fall is a good time to sow wildflower seeds and this is an excellent opportunity to increase the variety in your or a friend's garden at no expense. If you have not been growing wildflowers, this is a good time to try some of the more easily grown varieties.