

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 13, No. 3

July, 1996

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- July 20** Augusta Springs Field Trip. Meet at the Western Sizzlin' at Daleville on US 220 at 8:00 A.M. (Breakfast is served at Western Sizzlin' at 7:00.) This is an all day trip so bring a bag lunch and perhaps extra beverages. Augusta Springs is a wetland in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest. It offers good wildlife viewing and several species of orchids are known to grow there. Bring appropriate footwear. For more information, contact Karen Shepard at 540-772-2733.
- NOTE** There will be no July General Membership Meeting.
- August 18** Fern Foray. Meet at 2:00 P.M. at the James River Visitor Center, Blue Ridge Parkway milepost 63.8. See Lynchburg Area Members column for additional information. A hand lens and a fern field guide will be helpful. Bring your supper.
- August 25** Annual Picnic. Bring a covered dish and join us at the Sheridans. Al & Vi will provide the meat, lemonade and coffee. We'll plan to eat around 5:00 or 5:30. Please call Vi at 540-721-8189 if you can attend. A map is enclosed.
- There will be a 2:00 P.M. Board Meeting at the Sheridans for planning fall events.
- September 7** Third Annual Fall Plant Sale. Peaks View Park, Lynchburg. See article in this *Newsletter*. Rain or shine!
- September 20 - 22** Annual VNPS Meeting, sponsored by the Shenandoah Chapter, will be held in Staunton. Full details and registration information are given in the *May Bulletin*.
- September 23** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. Ed Tinsler will present "Natural History of Burke's Garden in Tazewell County, VA."

AUGUSTA SPRINGS FIELD TRIP

DATE: July 20, 1996 **TIME:** 8:00 A.M.

MEETING PLACE: Western Sizzlin' at Daleville on US 220



FERN FORAY

DATE: August 18, 1996 **TIME:** 2:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: James River Visitor Center, Blue Ridge Parkway milepost 63.8

Come and Bring a Friend

Letter From The President

by Richard "Butch" Kelly

Spring has just ended and, as usual it went by much too fast. We are always saddened to see petals fall from trillium, lady slippers and wild geranium.

Don't pack away your field guides and become a couch potato. Get out the insect repellent and take to the meadows. The Blue Ridge Parkway and county roadsides abound in wildflowers. Coreopsis, black-eyed Susan, sunflower, columbine and blue-eyed grass, to name just a few, are found in great profusion. For a real challenge, try learning the grasses. If it gets too hot in the fields, take to the woods and key out some ferns.

I've found summer botanizing can be as much fun as the spring season. Have a pleasant summer and we can swap tales at the annual picnic in August.

VNPS to Auction Wall Hanging

Don't forget to purchase your tickets for the quilted wall hanging to be raffled at the VNPS Annual Meeting. The raffle will replace the auction as the fundraiser this year.

This hanging features nine wildflowers, including past and present Wildflowers of the Year. It is a combination of applique and embroidery and has been hand-quilted.

The cost is \$5 for six tickets and money can be sent to Betty Rosson, Shenandoah Chapter, 186-C Chestnut Ridge Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

Permission is hereby given to reprint.
Please give credit.

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Annual Fall Plant Sale

Sandra Elder

Our Third Annual Plant Sale in the Lynchburg area will be held on Saturday, September 7th, in Peaks View Park between 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M., rain or shine!

I am grateful to the faithful members who have furnished plants for the past two years but it sure would be nice to see more members contributing plants. As the summer progresses, be on the lookout for seedlings in your garden that you can share. Perennial wildflowers are preferred but nice cultivars will be accepted. Please label all plants.

Call Paul Cowins, 804-239-4884, in the Lynchburg area or Rich Crites, 540-774-4518 in the Roanoke area if you need pots or labels.

Plants need to be at the park by 8:30 A.M. Help is needed before the sale to transport, arrange and price the plants.

People are needed during the sale to help customers with their selection and as cashiers.

We also need empty boxes.

Make Sandra smile. Call her at 804-525-8433 and tell her you can help.

The Plant Puzzle

Neal Fletcher

Can you identify this wildflower? Unless you think you recognize the description of the plant, then use the keys found in a wildflower guide such as *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide*. Once you think you know what the plant is, then look for the answer elsewhere in this issue.

This is a plant of dry woods that blooms in the summer. It is an evergreen, nearly herbaceous perennial that is 4 to 10 inches high (rarely this tall with us). It has long, creeping underground shoots. Its dark green, thick, shining leaves are one-and-a-half to three inches long. The leaves are narrowly wedge shaped with the narrowest part toward the stem. The leaves are also sharp toothed at the broad end. The leaves have definite veins on the underside.

The white or pinkish flowers are about one half inch wide in clusters of two to five, arising from the top of the plant. Blossoms have 5 sepals and 5 petals with 10 stamens. The flowers are waxy in appearance. The anthers are colored violet and when they are mature, they are mostly inverted with two 'horns.'

The flower is replaced by a dry seed capsule.

(Answer on page 4)

Snakes Caught In Garden Netting

When using netting in the garden this summer, you may want to consider protecting snakes when choosing netting size. A number of snakes have been trapped in the mesh of plastic netting used to protect gardens and fruit trees.

The 1" x 1" and the 3/4" x 3/4" are particularly noted for trapping black and black rat snakes. One woman in Florida caught a golden rat snake in a cast net! Smaller meshes such as 1/8" x 1/8" or 1/4" x 1/4" are recommended.

Help keep our natural "critter" control agents working by using netting in which they will not become entangled.

Adapted from an article by Scott Butterworth
West Virginia Nongame Wildlife Program

Shale Barren Clematis

Dorothy Bliss

The Shale Barren trip of a few weeks ago was an outstanding learning experience. None of us were experts on the flora of this very special habitat and consequently there were many questions when we came across species new to us. One of the intriguing problems was the identity of the two species of Clematis, the Shale Barren Clematis, *C. albicoma*, and the Millsboro Clematis, also endemic to the shale barrens. We had copies of the list of special shale barren plants from the *West Virginia Flora* but there was no mention of a Millsboro Clematis. This was explained the next day when Caroline Bates and I discussed the dilemma. It was not mentioned in the *West Virginia Flora* because it only occurs in Bath County, Virginia!



Clematis albicoma is more widespread, occurring on shale barrens and slopes in western Virginia and eastern West Virginia. The Millsboro Clematis, *C. viticaulis*, can best be differentiated on the basis of the fruiting structures rather than floral characteristics. To add to the confusion, Fernald also lists a variety of *C. albicoma* as *C. coactilis*.

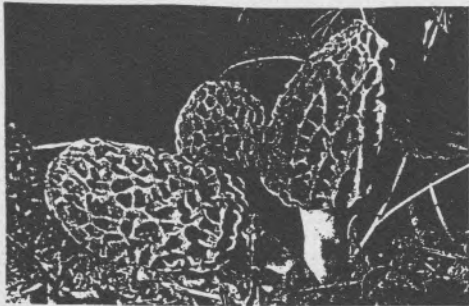
Several of us hope to visit these shale barrens later this summer when we plan to compare their fruiting structures. Of interest is a shale barren excursion scheduled as one of the many field trips offered at the Annual VNPS Meeting this September. The later flowering species, which we saw only in their leafy condition in May, should be in flower or fruit at this season.

Wildflower Hunt

Betty Kelly

Grandchildren get excited about many different things. My granddaughter, Diana, gets excited about hunting spring morels, *Morchella esculenta*, or "mushrooms" as she calls them.

Our Sunday afternoon adventure lasted three hours, so it was to our advantage that we had stopped at the grocery store and bought some snacks and a drink. They were carefully packed in my backpack along with a wildflower guide, binoculars and a hand lens. We were all set for our "wildflower hunt," as she later called our trip.



It began at the edge of our yard where the red bud and dogwood were blooming. She peeked inside the blue bird box and six eggs were waiting to hatch. Then it was off through the field to the woods.

Before our hunt was over we saw the color yellow — bellwort, cinquefoil, buttercup and black mustard. We saw the color white — wood anemone, mayapple, false solomon's seal, trailing arbutus, wild strawberry and star chickweed. We saw the color blue — bluebells and blue violet. We saw the color red — columbine. We saw the color purple — wild geranium.

Oh, yes, we found a few morels but I must mention our traveling companion, Fred. She picked him up near a log and he traveled with us on her hand, in a bag and got a bath in the creek. As we left the woods, she kissed him

farewell. That was probably the first box turtle that went on a wildflower hunt.



For The Children's Bookshelf

There's An Owl in the Shower by Jean Craighead George

What happens when a logging family unknowingly falls in love with a spotted owl? Well, it's a good lesson in tolerance and understanding that only an owlet could teach.

A favorite nature writer tells this tender story, a lighthearted and humorous look at the debate between human industry and nature conservation. Its theme will easily be transferred from the Northwest woods to our forests, rivers and streams with a little encouragement from a parent or conservation educator.

This book is well suited to be read aloud to ages 7 - 10 and the easy text makes it a good chapter book for grades three and four. It is also a book your slightly older child could enjoy reading to a younger sibling.

There's An Owl in the Shower can be ordered from the publisher, HarperCollins out of New York, by your local bookstore. Copyright date is 1995. It would make a delightful addition to your child's bookshelf.

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy C. Bliss

Comments on the erratic weather pattern of this winter and spring are frequent topics among gardeners and I know many of us can recount examples of damaged or destroyed plants in our gardens and yards. The Randolph-Macon Woman's College Botanic Garden survived the unusually low winter temperatures very well and at present there are more than 200 species of native plants that have been set out since the fall of 1994. The common purple violet has multiplied in profusion and although the terrace and upper hillside were spectacular earlier when they were in bloom and they do help prevent some erosion, they have grown so large and are in such profusion that I have decided they need to be removed. Several of us have been valiantly trying to rout them out and cover the soil with a deep layer of mulch. More volunteers are needed. If you can help, please call me at 804-845-5665.

Fringed Campion

Among the many plants donated by Paul James to the R-M.W.C. Botanic Garden was one labeled *Silene polypetala*, a plant with which I was totally unfamiliar. The showy flowers resemble our Fire Pink but their five or six petals are larger, deeply fringed and a beautiful pink in color. The plant is hairy and somewhat decumbent. But where is it found in nature? It is not listed in any of the floras I checked. However, in a publication of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, "Georgia's Protected Plants," I learned that it is an endangered plant that occurs only along the bluffs of the Flint and Appalachian Rivers. Fringed Campion is so striking in flower that I recommend it as a worthy addition to the wild flower garden. It is available in several nurseries.

Rosy Bells

At the recent Wintergreen Wildflower Symposium, I was pleasantly surprised to see a very healthy population of Rosy Bells, *Streptopus roseus*, in the Headwaters Nature Preserve. This very attractive

flower, a member of the lily family, is also known as Twisted Stalk, a name derived from the zigzag nature of the main stem and/or from the curious twist in the peduncle of each of the tiny bell-shaped nodding pink flowers that are borne beneath the leaves. Rosy Bells or Rose Mandarin occurs in 17 counties in the mountains of Virginia but we rarely encounter this species on any of our field trips and I am most familiar with it in the rich cove hardwood and spruce-fir forests of the Great Smoky Mountains. You might wish to consider participating in the symposium next spring. A great variety of wildflower and birding field trips are offered as well as several workshops, slide-lectures and other programs.

The Ghost of Juglone

Periodically I have mentioned my traumatic experience with a Black Walnut tree that graced one side of my lawn but prevented the growth of any evergreen shrubs for more than 50 feet from its base. This spring I noticed that a large clump of American Holly downslope from the walnut, which was removed more than ten years ago, were showing evidence of branch dieback and a Blue Spruce nearby had an exorbitant amount of dead needles and does not appear to be thriving. At present, Flame Azalea and Crepe Myrtle nearby are doing well. I assume that the juglone is still present in the soil. How long can it remain active?

Annual Fern Walk

Many of you have enjoyed the fern walks of the past few years. This year we are planning a trip that will begin at the James River Visitor Center at milepost 63.8 on the Blue Ridge Parkway on Sunday afternoon, August 18, at 2:00 P.M. Several fern haunts north along the Parkway will be visited and we will return to the James River to enjoy a picnic supper.

Answer to the Plant Puzzle

The mystery plant for this month is *Chimaphila umbellata*, Pipsissewa.

Did you recognize the description? If not, were you able to key it out?

Spring Field Trips Provide A Joy For Many

Butch Kelly

Since March 30, many members, guests and newcomers have enjoyed ten field trips. Some species that were considered rare and unusual were wall-rue fern, purple cliff brake fern, shale barren clematis, Kate's Mountain clover, flame azaleas, dutchman's pipe, twin leaf, whorled pogonia, prickly pear cactus and Millsboro clematis.

The field trips were enjoyed by as few as 10 and as many as 35. A new trip to Bath and Highland counties shale barrens was taken on May 4. It was a great trip and provided folks a chance to see endemic plants.

For the many members who have not attended any of the field trips thus far, you've missed some good times. Try to attend our next trip to Augusta Springs on July 20.

Address Verification

In today's mobile society the addresses on our mailing list can quickly become outdated and we frequently receive mail which has been returned to us because the forwarding order has expired. Enclosed with this *Newsletter* is an address verification form. We ask that you please complete and return it to us as soon as possible. Thank you.

Spring Plant Sale

Rich Crites

Our Twelfth Annual Plant Sale, held May 11 at the Community Arboretum was a tremendous success. We had many new purchasers along with those who have attended past sales. Along with increasing our treasury reserves, we have triggered the enthusiasm of new plant lovers.

Don't forget our fall plant sale will be in Lynchburg on September 7, so be thinking of how you can be part of that event, too.

As you know, we cannot do this without the combined efforts of our members. To all who gave so generously of yourselves and your plants, we say THANK YOU.

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PICNIC WITH THE SHERIDANS

Join us for a picnic at Smith Mountain Lake on Sunday, August 25, 1996, at the home of Al & Vi Sheridan. Bring a covered dish (vegetable, dessert, munchies) and/or soft drinks. The Sheridans will provide the meat, coffee and lemonade.

Arrive after lunch to play or sit by the lake. We'll plan to eat around 5:00 or 5:30.

Please call Vi at 540-721-8189 if you plan to attend.

There will be a Board Meeting at 2:00. We'll be planning fall events and programs. Be thinking of places and speakers.

