

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 13, No. 2

April, 1996

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- April 20** Buffalo Creek Field Trip. Meet at 10:00 A.M. at the Nature trail which is two miles east of Evington, near the Bedford-Campbell County line. This property, owned by Westvaco, is one of our VNPS Registry sites and is noted for the diversity of its flora.
- April 26-28** Twenty-seventh Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage by the Science Museum of Western Virginia. Cosponsored by the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society. Our involvement with this event takes the place of our April General Membership Meeting. Contact the Science Museum for additional information.
- May 4** Shale Barrens Field Trip. Meet at 8:00 A.M. at Western Sizzlin' in Daleville along US 220. Or, get an early start with breakfast at Western Sizzlin' at 7:00 A.M. Bring your lunch and we will eat along the trail. Easy to moderate walking. This will be an all day trip. We will see two of the best shale areas in the state. Contact Butch Kelly at 540-384-7429 for additional information.
- May 11** Twelfth 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!
- May 20** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. 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. Come join Elwood Fisher for a program on edible and medicinal plants. Elwood is a retired biology professor from James Madison University. He grew up using many of these plants.
- May 25** Sweet Annie Hollow and Smart View Field Trip. Join us for a day on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Flame azalea should be at its peak. We will be looking for lady slippers and Indian paintbrush. Meet at 10:00 A.M. at the Cahas Mountain Overlook at milepost 139 on the Parkway. Bring your lunch. We will picnic at Smart View Picnic Area at milepost 154. Contact Butch Kelly for information.
- June 8** Rhododendron Day on the Parkway. Our annual Rhododendron Day will begin with breakfast at the Peaks of Otter Restaurant at 8:00 A.M. or join us at 10:00 A.M. at the Visitor Center for the field trip. Bring your lunch.
- June 15** Field Trip to the Kellys' at Catawba. Join Butch and Betty for a woodland walk. Meet at the Kellys' at 10:00 A.M. Bring a bag lunch. Bring binoculars. Bring a plant if you have any to spare.
From Roanoke-Salem, take I-81 to Exit 141 then take Route 311 at Hanging Rock. Just past the Homeplace (Restaurant) turn left onto Route 785 (Blacksburg Road), go 9 miles and turn right onto Route 650 (Gravel Hill Road). Go about a mile up a steep hill. At the crest, turn right at the BRWS sign and follow the signs up the driveway.
- June 24** General Membership Meeting, 7:00 P.M., Center in the Square. The program is on Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center. This area, which we support both with our time and financially, offers much to enjoy. Come see what you've been missing.
- 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. Several species of orchids are known to grow there. Bring appropriate footwear. For more information, contact Karen Shepard at 540-772-2723.
- 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. More details and a map will be sent later. There will be a Board Meeting at 2:00 for planning fall events.

Letter From The President

by Richard "Butch" Kelly

Spring is finally here. I, for one, thought we were doomed to *endless* winter. Our floral friends have great *resilience*. On March 21, Betty and I walked the horse trail around Roanoke Mountain campground. Our purpose was exercise. Low and behold, we saw Bloodroot and Purple Violet. This got us in the mood to seek out more spring majesty.

Our Society has a vast array of field trips planned this spring. Let's get out into the field and enjoy nature's vernal splendor. Our newest field trip will be to the shale barrens in Bath and Highland counties on May 4.

The Wildflower Pilgrimage is coming up as you well know. If you participate in a walk and the leader has a large group, ask him or her quietly if they would like some help. Attempting to lead 30-40 people alone can be very trying.

Our spring plant sale is on May 11 at Virginia Western. The more people we have the smoother things will go. Even if you have no plants to sell you can still help guide people, sell shirts or one of many other jobs.

Most important, get out and enjoy the flowers and forget about snow and cold.

* * * * *

Another garden
Beckons spring
'Twixt and 'tween
Uncertain weather

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

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Now is the time to begin potting your plants. They need three to four weeks to become established before the sale. As you thin or divide your garden plantings, be thinking of what you might like to share for our sale. If you need pots or have questions, contact Rich Crites, 540-774-4518, or Paul Cowins, 804-239-4884.

All plants need to be at the Arboretum no later than 8:30 A.M.
PLEASE HAVE THEM LABELED.

Although taxonomic names are preferable, they are certainly not necessary. However, please at least have the common names.

This is an excellent opportunity to not only share what you have but also to purchase plants for yourself or for friends.

Remember, our sale takes place **rain or shine**, so don't let cloudy skies or a sprinkle deter you from attending or from bringing your plants.

Your help is needed, whether donating plants, helping with arranging and pricing prior to the sale or helping people make their selections and carry those selections to their vehicles during the sale. **We need you.**

Invaded By the Best

Anonymous

Forty-one members and guests attended the BRWS General Membership Meeting on March 25, 1995. Ordinarily little mention is made of these meetings in the *Newsletter*, but this was no ordinary meeting. The guest speaker was Ted Scott, Chairman of Conservation for VNPS. He discussed, in a slide presentation, the invasive plants that need to be a concern of this organization.

The following is a quote, in part, from a note to the Tolers and to the BRWS.

"Last night everyone was very kindly thanking me for coming to the meeting, etc., when, in reality, I am the one who, I know, got the most pleasure out of the whole affair. Seeing old friends again, meeting your club members of whom I had heard so much but had never met, all made the whole time very special indeed, so I thank you for a very special and delightful time. I was much impressed by your club and its program. One of the aspects of my job which I have enjoyed the most has been the opportunity it has afforded me to get around to our different chapters; and I assure you that Blue Ridge is one of our very few "best" in my judgement."

(Continued in col. 3)

Two Receive Scholarships

Two students were honored at our March General Membership Meeting as recipients of our BRWS Scholarships.

Kimberly Webster, from Pulaski, will graduate from Virginia Western in May with a degree in horticulture. She is particularly interested in landscape horticulture and we hope she will find ways to use our native wildflowers in her landscaping.

Michael Donahue is also finishing at Virginia Western this year. Mike is a naturalist who has published brochures with checklists for both birds and butterflies in the Roanoke County area for the Roanoke Department of Parks and Recreation. This is the second year Mike has received our scholarship and when his name was mentioned at the Board Meeting, the positive response was overwhelmingly in his favor.

We are pleased to be able to offer these scholarships to two very deserving individuals.

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We look forward to having Ted Scott visit our chapter again very soon and we thank him again for an excellent program.

Nature's Melodies

Karen Shepard

In January I sat at my kitchen table and looked out at the beautiful world blanketed in two feet of snow. While part of my mind longed for the fresh green of spring, I know that the snow was providing moisture and protection for the rhizomes, corms and roots of the treasures beneath the soil.

Toward the end of February when the wind blows from the right direction, I can smell the scent of the earth warming. Maybe it is just my imagination but I think I have also caught a faint whiff of Skunk Cabbage, *Symplocarpus foetidus*. Thus begins my annual obsession with wildflowers.



Skunk Cabbage

Seeking wildflowers fills me with the same excitement and anticipation I felt as a child looking for Easter eggs. Just as my mother always left a little of the egg showing to "help" me, so Mother Nature pushes spathe and stem through the leaf litter covering the forest floor to give me a hint. (Aren't mothers wonderful?)

Finally April arrives, so armed with backpack full of field guides and snacks, I take my walking stick and my "faithful companion" Agatha and off we go on an adventure. Our destination is the familiar woods on the south side of the house. It doesn't take



long until I spot the bright yellow flower of Coltsfoot, *Tussilago farfara*, growing beside a stream. Close by is a Trout Lily, *Erythronium americanum*, with its leaves dressed in camouflage. The beautiful pure white Bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, is my next find. I also see promises of things to come in the leaves of Galax, *G. rotundifolia*, Jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*, and Solomon's Seal, *Polygonatum biflorum*.

At last I reach the top of the mountain which receives the first rays of the morning sun. There in this microclimate is such a profusion of wildflowers that I am overwhelmed by the beauty. All around me are Trillium,

T. grandiflorum, Wild Geranium, *G. maculatum*, Cut-leaved Toothwort, *Dentaria laciniata*, Early Meadow Rue, *Thalictrum dioicum*, Large-flowered Bellwort, *Uvularia grandiflora*, Blue Cohosh, *Caulophyllum thalictroides*, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, *Arisaema triphyllum*, and Wild Ginger, *Asarum canadense*.

While looking with binoculars for a noisy Pileated, I catch a glimpse of white at the bottom of the steep slope of the mountain. I scramble and slip my way down. The sight is worth the effort!! There, growing in glorious masses, are the fragile heart-shaped blossoms of the Dutchman's Breeches, *Dicentra cucullaria*. What a great discovery!

After all this tramping and excitement Agatha and I need a snack. Leaning against a tree with the bright blue sky above, the sun on my face and the sound of a nearby Towhee's "drink your tea," I am filled with the wonder and magic of nature's melodies.

"To see heaven in a wildflower--to hold infinity in the palm of the hand."

W. Blake

Reprinted from *Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center Newsletter*, Volume 3, Issue 2, March, 1996.

BUFFALO CREEK FIELD TRIP

DATE: April 20, 1996

TIME: 10:00 A.M.

PLACE: Westvaco Nature Area

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## TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL WILDFLOWER PILGRIMAGE

PROGRAM: Plants and Man: From Wild to Cultivated

SPEAKER: Khidir W. Hilu

DATE: April 26, 1996

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Hopkins Planetarium, Center in the Square

Come and Bring a Friend



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