

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 15, No. 1

January, 1998

Schedule of Events

- February 23** **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m., Center in the Square. Hugh Smith will present "Desert Wild Flowers."
- March 14** **VNPS Winter Workshop**, 1998, University of Richmond. This year's workshop is "Celebrating Appalachian Spring." See brief article in this newsletter.
- March 14** **Saturday Evening Lynchburg Program**. Meet at 7:30 p.m., Room 225, Martin Science Building, Randolph Macon Woman's College. The program will feature a video "Spring Wildflowers of the Mid-Atlantic Region" which was coauthored by Marion Lobstein.
- March 23** **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m., Center in the Square. Steve Adams will present our program.
- March 28** **Spring Ephemerals Field Trip to Arcadia**. Meet at 10:00 a.m. by the bridge over Jennings Creek on Route 614. Bring your Lunch. Rich Crites, 774-4518.
- April 4** **Dry Run Branch Field Trip at Catawba**. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at the Homeplace (Restaurant) on Route 311 and we will carpool from there. After the field trip, we'll plan to have supper at the Homeplace. Bring footwear appropriate for wet areas. Butch Kelly, 540-384-7429.
- April 11** **New River Nature Area Field Trip**, a 400 acre site at or near Radford University. Meet at The Orange Market near the Hanging Rock Park & Ride at 9:30 a.m. Bring your lunch.
- April 18** **Dragon's Run Wilderness Area Field Trip**. Bob Eubank is arranging a trip to this Chesapeake Bay area. This land trust, normally closed to the public, is abundant in both flora and fauna. Plans are to arrive Friday night and cross over to the swamp early Saturday. Details, including area motels will follow. We must know by the Monday, Feb. 23, meeting if you are seriously interested in going. Bob's number is 804-239-9756.
- April 24-26** **Twenty-Ninth Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage by the Science Museum of Virginia**. Cosponsored by the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and the Roanoke Valley Bird Club. Dorothy C. Bliss will be the keynote speaker Friday evening. Our involvement with the pilgrimage takes the place of our April General Membership Meeting.
- May 3** **Buffalo Creek Nature Area Field Trip**. Meet at 2:00 p.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. Bring your supper. Dot Bliss, 804-845-5665.
- May 9** **Fourteenth Annual Plant Sale** at the Virginia Western Community Arboretum from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Members may begin purchasing at 9:00 a.m. Rain or shine!
- May 18** **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m., Center in the Square. We hope to have Robert Wooding discussing Edible & Medicinal Plants. Note the change of date due to Memorial Day weekend. Also, we will have a Pot Luck at this meeting - Not a covered dish, but a potted plant exchange. You are invited to bring a plant to exchange with another member.
An executive Board Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m.
- May 23** **Buffalo Mountain Field Trip**. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Buck Mountain Overlook (Blue Ridge Parkway, approximately milepost 125). Bring your lunch. Tentative date based on projected road repair dates. Call us before coming. Butch Kelly, 540-384-7429.
- June 13** **North Carolina Botanical Gardens and the Sarah P. Duke Gardens Bus Trip**. The bus has been chartered. Other details are being arranged.
- Sept. 18-20** **VNPS Annual Meeting**. The Potowmack Chapter will host this year's event.

Letter From The President

by Karen Shepard

Thanks to all who helped make last year successful and fun. Not only did we have good programs but we also had a variety of field trips with great flowers and great people. Let's do it again!

I am pleased to announce that we have a First Vice President. Cindy Sandburg has agreed to take this position. I am looking forward to working with Cindy this year. It is a pleasure to know that our organization will continue into the next century.

This is the time of the year when we begin planning for upcoming events. As usual the fourth weekend in April is the annual Wildflower Pilgrimage. I am pleased to announce that this year's keynote speaker will be Dorothy Bliss, Professor Emerita of Randolph Macon Woman's College and a very active member of BRWS. Participants for field trips increased significantly last year in spite of a cold, rainy Sunday. The pilgrimage provides an opportunity to educate a large number of people about the importance of conserving and planting our native flora. Volunteers will be needed to help with the Friday evening reception and the weekend field trips. Remember you don't have to be an expert to be a guide.

Our fourteenth annual wildflower sale will be Saturday, May 9, 1998 at Virginia Western Community Arboretum. Rain or shine! We will need the help of lots of members both in sharing plants and working the day of the sale. Divisions from plants you already have in your wildflower gardens will need about three weeks to become established after potting. Of course, if you are starting plants from seed, now is the time to get started.

Our chapter has many good spring activities planned. Please check the calendar of events for details. Most of our field trips are easy walking and can be enjoyed by all members. So, come on out and bring family and friends. We are a "user friendly" organization.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Donna M. E. Ware of the John Claytor Chapter for having been named 1997 recipient of the Elizabeth Ann Bartholemew Award. This award is given annually by the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society to those individuals who have advanced the knowledge and appreciation of our world of plants, both scientifically and aesthetically. Recipients must have distinguished themselves professionally and in public service.

Donna is coauthor of the Atlas of the Virginia Flora as well as having written a number of articles on rare and endangered species within the coastal plains. She is acting curator of the Herbarium of the College of William and Mary and has served as president of the SABC.



Spring Plant Sale

Sitting inside, overlooking a wintry landscape, spring may seem far away. Past experience tells us though, that timewise, it and our annual spring wildflower sale are just around the corner. We have the good fortune to once again be able to use the Virginia Western Community Arboretum for our sale May 9.

Now is the time to begin planning what you have in your garden which may need thinning, or what you would just like to share and donate to our sale. If you plan to start plants from seeds, now is the time to do so.

When our plants are displayed in uniformly shaped and sized pots, not only is their presentation more pleasing, but sales are increased. Therefore, at our March General Membership meeting, pots will be available (at no charge) for your use. If you are unable to attend, or will need pots between meetings, please contact Rich Crites, 540-774-4518, or Paul Cowins, 804-239-4884. We ask that you please label all plants as they are potted to avoid confusion later.



VNPS Winter Workshop

"Celebrating Appalachian Spring — a program highlighting the flora of eastern woodlands" is the topic for this year's VNPS Winter Workshop to be held Saturday, March 14, 1998, at the University of Richmond.

There are speakers/programs from 9:15 AM through mid-afternoon. Registration deadline is March 9. For details and a registration form, see the January 1998 Bulletin or contact Effie Fox, 540-347-4090. If anyone is interested in carpooling, contact Pam Wieringo, 540-343-8596.



Wildflower Video

"Spring Wildflowers of the Mid-Atlantic Region" is a compilation of 100 species of spring wildflowers. Information on identification, edible and medicinal uses and conservation is included. Co-authors include Marion Lobstein, John Demary and Suzanne Lohr.

To order a copy, send \$19.95 + \$3.00 S&H to Botanical Views, LLC, P. O. Box 2756, Purcellville, VA 20134. Transcripts are available for an additional \$5.00. For more information, call 703-536-7150.

Winter Evergreens

by Dorothy C. Bliss

The program, Winter Evergreens, given on December 6 at Randolph-Macon Woman's College was very well received by those attending. In addition to slides, numerous examples of evergreens were passed around for closer inspection. Many interesting facts came to light as I began researching the literature on this topic and I'd like to share a few of these thoughts with you.

During January and February most of us are not enticed to undertake an outdoor botanizing trip but there is much we can observe even in the winter months. I was amazed and I expect you will be too at the number and variety of evergreens, exclusive of the rosettes of herbaceous plants, that one can expect to encounter. Often the term evergreen is restricted to those woody species that retain their leaves for several years as opposed to those that shed their leaves in the fall or are deciduous. In Virginia these would include the conifers, a few broad leaved trees and numerous shrubs. In addition I will include those lower plants which remain green through the winter.

Rocks, ledges and fallen tree trunks are often green with a cover of mosses. Extensive patches of the forest floor may be covered with running cedar, princess pine, shining club moss, several ferns including the resurrection fern, rock polypody, ebony spleenwort and the Christmas fern. Was the latter named because of the resemblance of the pinnae to a Christmas stocking or because this fern is conspicuous at Christmas time?

What about flowering plants? Among these are found Galax or beetleweed and several subshrubs, pipsisserwa, spotted wintergreen, wintergreen berry, partridge berry and the trailing vine, bearberry, which occurs only in Page County in Virginia but is a conspicuous ground cover plant further north. Among the curious names of this vine are bear's grape, cranberry, foxberry, hog cranberries, kinnikinnick and mealberry. Even partridge berry is known by a variety of names, deerberry, one-berry, squaw vine and winter clover.

Among the many shrubs that are evergreen are the catawba and rosebay rhododendrons, mountain laurel, Pieris or mountain fatterbush, dog-hobble and several other. These are all members of the heath or Ericaceae family. I would like to ask the question, "Why are so many of our evergreen shrubs in this family?" But, as I do not have an answer, perhaps I should be silent. The leaves of rhododendrons and mountain laurel as well as the honey made from the nectar of the flowers are poisonous.

The leaves of very few flat or broad-leaved trees in Virginia persist for more than one year. These include the American holly, live oak (5 southeastern counties) and the evergreen magnolia or bull bay (Chesapeake county). The latter is frequently planted as an ornamental tree.

Most of our evergreen trees are conifers which bear the needlelike leaves and seed-producing cones. Our only native deciduous conifer is the bald cypress which loses needles and small branches each year. There are eight species of pine, two species of juniper, spruce, fir and hemlock and one species of yew, coastal white cedar and arbor vitae that are native to Virginia.

From mosses to ferns, subshrubs to towering trees, Virginia boasts a wealth of evergreen plants. I'm sure a leisurely walk in our woods during the winter months would be surprisingly rich in these plants. Why wait for spring? Would you like to schedule a trip nearby for a pleasant winter's stroll next winter?

An Important Bee

Have the names Orchard Mason Bee or *Osmia Lignaria* become part of your everyday vocabulary yet? If not, they may soon reach that point. These native bees apparently are very good pollinators for early spring blooming plants. As the decline of honeybees continues, other pollinators play an increasingly important role.

As gentle as the honeybee, these small black bees do not share the hive-dwelling, social aspect of the honeybee. They build a mud-walled cell for a nest. You can attract them by putting up beehouse tubes which they will use for nesting. These tubes can be made by drilling 5/16 inch diameter holes 3 inches deep in a block of wood and attaching it to a building. They like an east exposure under an eave.

Tubes can be ordered from Knox Cellars, 1607 Knox Avenue, Bellingham WA 98225, 360-733-3283. For additional information, contact John Buschmann, 804-581-3977.

Info taken from the 1998 Winter Newsletter of the Jefferson Chapter

In Memorium

We were saddened
to learn of the
death of
Charles F. Crandall
on
December 12, 1997.

He was the brother of
Dorothy C. Bliss.
Our sympathy is
extended to
Dot and other
members of his family.

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

Lynchburg Area Members

by Dorothy C. Bliss

I am writing this column in early January when the weather from New England to the Southeast has been unseasonably mild. For some of us these spring-like days may be a pleasant change from ice and snow but there may be undesirable effects on the flora. Dandelions and bitter cress are in bloom in my yard but it is not unusual for certain weedy species to bloom in January. I have noticed that a few tree buds have broken and for some plants this may result in damaged flowers or leaves when the freezing weather returns as it surely will. My pussy willow has already broken its bud scales and today I discovered a small red maple in full bloom. It is unlikely that damage will result as these trees are very winter-hardy. I have heard that some of the Japanese cherries in Washington, D.C. are in bloom and these along with buds of fruit trees may be severely injured if this spring-like weather continues or returns again soon. Must we point the blame at El Nino?

Black Walnut Toxicity

Many of you are aware of my continued struggle with the toxin, juglone, from a black walnut that I had removed more than ten years ago. Previously I had lost an arbor vitae, a nearby American holly and several evergreen shrubs. Now, several large hollies perhaps fifty feet down slope have lost their lower branches and a Colorado blue spruce shows similar damage. I believe this is due to the gradual movement of the juglone down slope from the roots of this (former) black walnut.

A list of plants not susceptible to black walnut toxicity published in *The Virginia Gardener* for Jan-Feb. 1998 includes American holly, arbor vitae and also Norway spruce. I wonder if the above listed trees observed growing under black walnut trees were still young and if in a few years might show the effects of juglone?

Aaron "Jack" Sharp

In "Chinquapin," the newsletter of the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society it was reported that A. J. Sharp had died at age 93 on November 16 in Knoxville, Tennessee. Some of you knew Dr. Sharp through his association with the Great Smoky Mountains Wildflower Pilgrimage and his book "Great Smoky Mountains Wildflowers." In addition to his floral research in the Southern Appalachians, he conducted many botanical excursions in Mexico and Japan and co-authored "The Moss Flora of Mexico." His legacy will live on.

New Wildflower Video

I have just learned of a new video "Spring Wildflowers of the Mid-Atlantic Region" co-authored by Marion Lobstein an active member of the VNPS. The video pictures and describes 100 species of wildflowers and although I have not seen the video, the description of information included sounds very interesting.

I will try to have it available for our spring meeting in Lynchburg on March 14, Room 225, Martin Science, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, 7:30 p.m.

General Membership Meeting

Date: Feb. 23, 1998

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Program: Desert Wild Flowers

Speaker: Hugh Smith

Place:

Fifth Floor

Center in the Square