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# Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE  
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 25, No. 1

Spring, 2007

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- February 26**      **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. The program is *Wildlife Habitat Gardening* by Shelby Snider a Roanoke Master Gardener Volunteer. Come join us and learn about creating a garden that will bring your backyard some interesting visitors.
- March 17**      **Randolph Macon Garden-Cleanup**, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.  
Dorothy C. Bliss 434-845-5665, leader.
- March 26**      **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. The program is *Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro* by Greg Edwards. Join us for an evening of stunning slides of Greg's adventuresome climb up one of the world's most spectacular summits.
- March 31**      **Arcadia Walk**. Meet at 10:00 a.m. Take I-81 north to the Arcadia Exit north of Buchanan. Pass over the James River and through the village of Arcadia. After crossing the bridge over Jennings Creek park on the right at the first pull off. Bring a lunch and expect to see a wide variety of early spring ephemerals. There will be some easy walking. Rich Crites, 774-4518, leader.
- April 7**      **Murder Hole and Catawba Creek**. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Catawba Community Center. Take U.S. 311 to Catawba. Turn right just before the Catawba Valley General Store, rt. 779 (Catawba Valley Road). The Community Center is .1 mile from the post office on the right. Bring a lunch. We will be the guests of Dan and Marian McConnell. Be prepared to see one of the areas most spectacular geological sites and great botanizing. Along Catawba Creek we will see lots of bluebells and other flowers. The walking will be easy. Much of it will be within just a few steps of the car. Butch Kelly, 384-7429, leader.
- April 23**      **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ. Join our speaker Lee Hipp, horticulture professor at Virginia Western Community College and take a look at the *Big Tree Registry of the Roanoke area*. Lee will tell us where the really big trees are located close to home.
- April 28**      **Greenhill Park**. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the picnic pavilion at the back end of the park. If you like trilliums this is the place to be. Rich Crites, 774-4518, leader.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS continued

- May 12**      **Spring Wildflower Sale**, at Virginia Western Community College. The sale will be from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. It will be held in the parking lot behind the greenhouse above the Arboretum.
- May 19**      **Bent Mt.** Meet at the Bent Mt. Elementary School at 10:00 a.m. We will visit Jim Bush and Allen Austin's gardens. Bring lunch. Easy walking. Jim Bush, 929-4775, leader.
- May 21**      **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ. We are really in for a treat. One of the valley's best naturalists, Mike Donahue, will present *Butterflies and Wildflowers*. This should be a real night of colorful wings and petals.
- June 2**      **Rhododendron Day on the Blue Ridge Parkway.** Meet at the parking lot at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center at 10:00 a.m. Some folks may want to join the early birds eating breakfast at the Peaks of Otter Lodge at 8:00 a.m. Feel free to join us. The more folks attending the merrier it will be. We will be overlook hopping and walking will be minimal. This trip is always interesting and offers spectacular color, vistas and a great variety of botanical splendor. Bring lunch. Butch Kelly, 384-7429, leader.
- June 16**      **Roaring Run.** Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Botetourt Commons. The Commons is located on left the off U.S. 220 north of Daleville. Park in the lot adjacent to Bojangles restaurant. Bring a lunch. We will be in some remote areas so bring water. There will be some walking. Roaring Run offers many varieties of flowers including some shale barren species. Rich Crites, 774-4518, leader.

### Officers for 2007 - 2009

President	Jim Bush	(540) 929-4775
Vice President	Rudy Albert	(540) 774-2279
Treasurer	Rosemary Ellis	(540) 989-1683
Secretary	Marcia Albert	(540)-774-2279
Historian	Betty Kelly	(540) 384-7429

## **President's Letter**

Jim Bush

I am looking forward to a great year for the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society. We have scheduled some very good field trips and speakers for the spring. Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us and bring your friends.

Our February speaker will be Shelby Snider, a Roanoke Master Gardener, and she will present a program about gardening with wildlife. In March Greg Edwards will share his experience of climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa. Lee Hipp, horticulture professor at VWCC, will show us the Big Tree Registry in April. Mike Donahue will share an evening with us and speak on butterflies. He calls them "flying flowers".

I welcome any suggestions you may have to help make this a very good year. Jim Bush 929-4775 e-mail: [jbush10541@earthlink.net](mailto:jbush10541@earthlink.net).

## **Randolph Macon Women's College Botanic Garden**

*Dorothy C. Bliss*

We are planning to have our first work session of the year 2007 in March. I'd like to try Saturday mornings again. This worked very well in the past year. This will be mainly a clean-up morning to remove fallen branches, excessive leaves and some weeding and cutting back dead stems. I hope to locate a source of wood chips other than cypress which are procured by cutting young cypress trees struggling to grow along the devastated Gulf Coast. If any of you know of a source of wood chips other than cypress please contact me.

Today, January 19, as I entered the Garden there was a surprise awaiting me. The Building and Grounds Department had finished the new compost bin I had requested. What an improvement! I even christened it by picking up some dead branches and tossing them in the bin.

The deciduous holly clumps, *Ilex deciduas* on the hillside alternate with winter-berry clumps, *Ilex verticillata*. The former have grown too tall and block the view of the rhododendrons on the upper edge. The Grounds Department has indicated to me that they will remove these three clumps which I have flagged with orange tape. They will also consider cutting off the dead branches of the dying oak behind the upper garden bench.

### **Spring 2007 Work Session**

Saturday, March 10, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Rain Date Saturday, March 17, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

More volunteers are always needed! If you have a friend who would like to join the group please bring him or her along with you.

Dorothy Bliss – 434-845-5665



## William Byrd School's Becomes Aware of Native Plants

*Butch Kelly*

Carol Webster, teacher at William Byrd High School met with the BRWS board on Saturday, January 6, 2007. Carol teaches a class entitled Service Learning Leadership. This class teaches students about giving back to their community. William Byrd High and William Byrd Middle School's have 350 students enrolled in this program. This year the class is emphasizing science. Mrs. Webster has applied for and received a \$75,000 Learn and Serve Grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The students have chosen to do a project on the Wolfe Creek Greenway. The greenway runs for 2 miles from Hardy Road to the Blue Ridge Parkway. The students will plant native flowers, trees and shrubs along the trail. The grant will be good for two years. The class wants to propagate their own flowers. They are asking our club for some help in getting started. They need advice and folks to share their knowledge and expertise in growing wildflowers. I have volunteered to lead them on walks and give slide programs on plant identification. Some of the other board members seemed interested in the program as well. The students do not need money; just some time with them is all they ask. If you are interested in assisting with this effort contact: Butch Kelly at 384-7429 or Carol Webster at 309-1916.

## The Lowly American Hazelnut

*Dorothy C. Bliss*

Are you familiar with the American hazelnut, a small shrub that we occasionally encounter in our mountains? I recall seeing some of these shrubs a few times on our AT hikes in the past. Two species occur in Virginia, the American hazelnut, Corylus Americana and Corylus cornuta, the beaked hazelnut which is less common. I remember hazelnuts growing along the edges of country roads in Rhode Island and many years ago I occasionally collected and cracked a few of the nuts, but they were small and not the most enticing fruits. It is hoped that some new hybrids will be a great improvement!

In a recent publication of "The National Arbor Day Foundation" an article entitled "The Passion of Hazelnuts" by James R. Fazio intrigued me. From hybrids developed by Phil Rutter at his Badgersette Research Organization in Canton, Minnesota, many of the 50,000 members of the Arbor Day Foundation are growing some of these hazelnut hybrids and keeping records of their development. They hope to produce "cold hardy disease resistant productive hazelnuts." These shrubs have many advantages, among them improving the land as they grow on hilly barren areas protecting the soil from erosion. They also provide wildlife habitat and produce a "healthful delicious food" eat by wildlife and man.

Three hybrids are being sent to me and I thought it might be an interesting project to plant these in the R-MWC Botanic Garden where we would be active participants watching their development and keeping accurate records of their growth. A good location might be the area from which the deciduous hollies are being removed. More on this project later.

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