



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 22, No. 1

February, 2005

New Location for BRWS Meetings

We are happy to announce a new location for Blue Ridge Wildflower Society meetings. Beginning in February, BRWS meetings in the Roanoke area will be held at the Roanoke Church of Christ fellowship hall. There is ample parking close to the entrance. Spring meetings are scheduled for February 28, March 28 and May 23 at 7:00 p.m.

Directions

From the Lynchburg area: Take I-581 South to the Colonial Avenue/Wonju Street exit (near Towers Shopping Center). Turn right onto Colonial. At the next traffic light, turn left onto Brandon Avenue and drive 2.3 miles. The church is on the left at 2606 Brandon Avenue, SW.

From the New River Valley: From I-81, exit 141, take Route 419 south to the intersection with Apperson Drive (there will be a Sheetz gas station on your left). Turn left onto Apperson Drive and continue to the intersection with Mud Lick Road. Continue straight (the street name changes to Brandon Avenue). The church is several blocks ahead on the right (past Rosalind Hills Baptist Church).

February Meeting (Terrapin Mountain)

Sandra Elder

Terrapin Mountain is located in the Glenwood District of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest. The original trail on Terrapin Mountain was three miles long and built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Due to years of neglect and timber harvests the trail was almost lost. In 1995 Jim and I began restoring the old trail, clearing logging roads and cutting new trails to rock outcroppings.

There is now a nine mile loop trail on this beautiful mountain. Many of Virginia's native trees, shrubs and wildflowers can be seen along the Terrapin Mountain Trail. My slide program will introduce new members to many of our Virginia natives and be a fun review for others. Come see why I think this mountain is worth preserving.

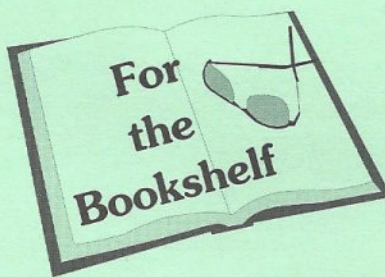
President's Letter

Cindy Burks

As I write this there are 43 more days until spring. This year I've been counting down the days. Normally I enjoy slowing down for winter, but I got extremely anxious for spring to arrive after hearing Carol Davit speak about rain gardens at our October meeting. I have a soggy section of lawn where the basement sump pump dumps water. The possibility of turning that area into a rain garden gave me something to look forward to all winter. I got interested in wildflower gardening because I find gardening relaxing and since native plants are happy here anyway, establishing wildflower gardens around my home would give me easy access to the beautiful plants I love. In addition, the plants would require little maintenance and no chemicals. I started with shade plants, purchased at BRWS plant sales. As I filled the shady areas of my lawn, I moved out into the open areas with sun-loving plants. At one of our spring plant sales, sneezeweed was available. Sneezeweed is a lovely wildflower (it doesn't make me sneeze) but it needs a damp area, which I didn't think I had. A BRWS friend suggested trying the plant near a downspout. It worked! For several years now, I've enjoyed those cheerful yellow blooms in late summer. That sparked my interest in other plants that like wet conditions. I had not considered the soggy sump pump area because it is further out into the yard. It will take a bit of work to prepare the soil but I anticipate many happy hours this spring creating a unique garden there. Thank you, Carol, for the inspiration! Thanks, too, to the many BRWS members who so freely share your wildflowers by donating propagated and divided plants from your gardens for BRWS plant sales.

Chestnut Blight Spreading

The United States Department of Agriculture warns owners of chestnut timber to consider salvaging their trees immediately for use as poles or in manufacturing tannic acid. There is a renewed spread of chestnut blight, a fungus growth which is spreading rapidly across the southern United States. By mid-summer, 2004, all but 14 of the chestnut producing counties of Virginia have had at least 80% or more of their trees infected or killed. Several other states have experienced similar destruction according to the Maryland Native Plant Society.



Tiny Green Thumbs by C. Z. Guest,
Hyperion Press, Ages 4-7

This book is filled with an energy which will inspire young and old alike to dig in the garden. It is a simple story of intergenerational love, hard work and the satisfaction felt from putting your heart into a garden project.

Two small animals learn the elements necessary for a garden: soil, seed, water, sun, time and love. The toughest lesson of all for them to learn is patience!

The illustrations remind us of the beauties of a summer garden and interspersed throughout are child friendly directions on gardening.

Both readers and listeners of all ages can feel the fulfillment of a mature garden and harvest time.

Reviewed by Sue Talbott
Vandalia Educational Services

Some Forest Notes

Dorothy C. Bliss

One of my favorite magazine, is American Forests and the winter issue included several topics of especial interest.

One article described the damage in September of a tornado associated with hurricane Frances that hit Jacksonville, Florida, severely damaging a Historic Tree Collection. Thousands of seeds and 40,000 trees from seedlings to 20 ft. tall landscape trees were destroyed. Damage was estimated at 6 million.

Several articles discussed problems in our forests. A golden-haired pine bark beetle was first found in the U.S. in the mid-90's and is of concern for our forests on both coasts. Another beetle, piñon engraver beetle is creating havoc in the piñon and juniper forest of the Southwest. Many of our National Parks and monuments are threatened including the Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, Arches and others.

Melaleuca

If you have been to Florida in recent years you are aware of the invasive Melaleuca which has taken over thousands of acres in southern Florida. A project that integrates biological controls with the addition of mechanical removal and herbicides appears to be effective. The biological controls include a leaf-eating weevil and an aphid-like insect that eats the tree's sap.

If you wish to read more about these items, copies of American Forests may be found in some of the libraries as well as the internet.

Permission is hereby given to reprint original material. Please credit author, if named, and source.

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Calendar of Events

- February 28** **General Membership Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Roanoke Church of Christ.** Sandra Elder will present a program on Terrapin Mountain. See additional article in this Newsletter. PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF OUR NEW MEETING LOCATION!
- March 12** **Randolph-Macon Woman's College Botanic Garden Spring Work Day, 2:00 - 4:30 p.m.** We will clean away the debris accumulated during winter, do raking, mulching and cutting back. Please bring hand tools, rakes, etc. We need your help with this. Rain date is March 19. Dot Bliss, 434-845-5665.
- March 28** **General Membership Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Roanoke Church of Christ.** Mike Leahy with the Division of Natural Heritage will present a program on Wild Blueberries. He will include specimens and identification guides.
- April 2** **Roaring Run Field Trip.** Meet at the Daleville Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. Bring your lunch. Cindy Burks, leader, 540-977-0868.
- April 3** **Smith Mountain Lake Park Lecture and Slide Program, 3:00 p.m., by Rich Crites.** This is near Huddleston. For more details, call Rich, 540-774-4518.
- April 22** **Earth Day.** Check your local newspaper for events in your area.
- April 23** **Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center Field Trip.** Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Daleville Park and Ride. Bring your lunch. A pair of binoculars would be useful in watching the many birds. Butch Kelly, leader. 540-384-7429.
- April 29 & 30** **Mount Rogers Area Overnight Field Trip.** Details are tentative at this time but the trip will probably include a visit to Saltville. Contact Rich Crites, 540-774-4518, if you are interested.
- May 14** **Twenty-first Annual Spring Wildflower Sale. Community Arboretum at Virginia Western Community College, 9:00 a.m. - Noon.** No plants may be selected or sold prior to 9:00. If you need pots to prepare for your donations, contact Paul Cowins, 434-239-4884 or Cindy Burks, 540-977-0860.
- May 21** **Parkway South.** Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Buck Mountain Overlook, Blue Ridge Parkway milepost 123.2. We will have lunch at Tuggle's Gap Restaurant. Butch Kelly, 540-384-7429, leader.
- May 23** **General Membership Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Roanoke Church of Christ.** The Board of Directors will meet at 5:30. Bring your supper.
- June 4** **Parkway North.** Meet at the Peaks of Otter Restaurant at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast or at the Visitor Center at 9:30. We will go North along the Parkway for high elevation wildflowers, Bring your lunch. Rich Crites, 540-774-4518, leader.

Lynchburg Area Members

Dorothy C. Bliss

On Jan. 1, 2003, with the sun shining and the temperature hovering around 70°, I was tempted to check the RMWC Botanic Garden which I had not seen for two months. Approaching the Garden, I glanced at the two pools and was surprised to see 15 goldfish swimming near the surface. When a rather large insect came near them it was completely ignored. Why? Are they going to be surprised when the temperature turns cold again as it surely will.

As I began my walk along the paths, I observed masses of fallen twigs and branches that covered the ground under and near the China Fir tree. Check this off as item number one for our spring work session in March! Most conspicuous at this time of year are the evergreen fronds of the Christmas Ferns and the leaves of several shrubs, Rhododendrons, American holly and the various ground covers, creeping Juniper, green and gold, the basal leaves of golden ragwort and others.

Most of the berries and fruits of the past season were not in evidence, either eaten by birds or other animals. Deer? Deciduous holly, *Ilex decidua*, still had a few berries clinging to some of the branches but winterberry, *I. verticillata* had been stripped of all fruit. Do the birds and squirrels

have a preference for the berries of the common winterberry over those of the deciduous holly or can the difference be explained in some other way?

The only other shrub with clusters of berries was the red chokeberry, *Aronia arbutifolia*.

Some of you may remember that a few years ago the local grocery stores were selling large bottles of a drink made from the black-fruited species *A. melanocarpa*. Presumably the countries involved had imported this species from America and now were selling the juice to us. I purchased the drink but found the taste too "heavy" not clear or crisp. This juice is not on the grocer's shelves now so perhaps it did not sell well. Gillespie in his book on Edible Wild Plants of West Virginia states that the fruits contain an abundance of pectin and are excellent for jelly-making. He lists them under the genus *Pyrus* as do several other botanists.

The most attractive plants were the tiny shrubby evergreen, *Gaultheria procumbens*, wintergreen or teaberry. One reference book lists 35 common names that have been given to this plant. In addition to the above, a few other names are checkerberry, deerberry, grouseberry, mountain tea, winterberry, teaberry and ground

holly! This certainly points out the usefulness of the single scientific name. Beneath the Ben Franklin tree, the glossy dark green leaves were intermingled with bright red berries. With just a few clumps from Sandra Elder's woods these plants have spread to cover an area as great as the canopy above. Evidently these berries are not a priority item in the diet of birds and small mammals. Teaberry has been listed as a food for white tailed deer so perhaps it is only a matter of time.

Formerly the extract, wintergreen oil, was used as a flavoring but since it has been found to be extremely toxic if consumed internally, today a synthetic wintergreen flavor is the source of the flavoring used in gum, candies, etc. One reference stated that children had died after drinking the oil. Many of us, including me, like to nibble on a few of these berries as we are walking in the woods. Knowing the poisonous nature of this oil, it is best to avoid consuming a quantity of the fruit at any time.

Many of the signs (labels) have been pulled up or bent over, probably by deer which still roam the Garden. The spreading juniper bed appeared to be untouched whereas in my yard the three trailing clumps have been ravaged by deer leaving only the stems.

The lone flower I saw in the vicinity of the Garden was a bright yellow dandelion flower in the grass outside the boundaries.

Spring Work Session

RMWC Botanic Garden
March 12, Saturday 2-4:30PM
Raindate March 19

We will work from 2:00 to 4:30 PM. This will be a general cleanup of fallen branches, some raking, mulching, cutting back dead stems, etc. Please bring hand tools, pruners, rake, etc. We need your help! I look forward to seeing you in the Garden.

Dot Bliss 434-845-5665

2004 - 2006 Officers

President	Cindy Burks	540-977-0868
Vice President	Rudy Albert	540-774-2279
Secretary	Marcia Albert	540-774-2279
Treasurer & Newsletter Editor	Pam Wieringo	540-343-8596 540-772-3660

Board of Directors

Propagation	Paul Cowins	434-239-4884
Plant Sale, Roanoke	Rich Crites	540-774-4518
	Cindy Burks	540-977-0868
Plant Sale, Lynchburg	Sandra Elder	434-525-8433
Site Registrar	Sandra Elder	434-525-8433
Historian	Frieda Toler	540-366-0238
Hospitality	Evelyn Walke	540-776-2137
Public Relations	Doris Flandorffer	540-982-5692

Also Serving

Lucille Cowins	434-239-4884
Dora Lee Ellington	540-989-4742
Butch Kelly	540-384-7429
Hugh Smith	540-774-8392

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MOUNT ROGERS AREA OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP

APRIL 29 AND 30, 2005

For those of you able to join us on Friday, please arrive at the motel area by 1:00 p.m. Several activities are planned, including a visit to the museum in Saltville.

On Saturday, April 30th, we will leave from the motel area at 8:30 a.m. for the Mount Rogers Area where we can expect to see Round-leaf Birch. From there, we will go to White Top then to Highland State Park before returning home.

Rich has priced two motels in Marion. Prices quoted to him on February 23rd are:

Best Western 276-783-3193, single \$59.95 or double \$69.95

EconoLodge 276-783-6031, single \$54.95 or double \$64.95

If you plan to go, please call Rich by April 20th, 540-774-4518, and leave a message. You will be responsible for your own motel reservations.

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WOODPECKER RIDGE FIELD TRIP

APRIL 23, 2005

Don't forget our Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center Field Trip. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Daleville Park and Ride. Bring your lunch. A pair of binoculars would be useful for watching the many birds. Butch Kelly, leader, 540-384-7429.