

# Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE  
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 16, No. 2

April, 1999

## Schedule of Events

- April 17** **Earth Day celebration** in Roanoke area. There will be special events at a number of locations. (Check your newspaper or contact your city's special events department for details.) BRWS plans to have a booth in Highland Park, Roanoke. If you can help, please let us know.
- April 22-24** **Great Smoky Mountains National Park 49th Annual Spring Wildflower Pilgrimage.** For more information, call 423-436-1290.
- April 23-25** **Thirtieth Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage** by the Science Museum of Western Virginia. Co-sponsored by the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and the Roanoke Valley Bird Club. Leonard Adkins, noted author, will be the keynote speaker Friday evening. His program, "Wildflowers of the Appalachian Trail", will be presented in Hopkins Planetarium.  
To register or receive a brochure detailing events, please call the Museum at 342-5727.
- May 1** **Bent Mountain Field Trip.** Meet at the Bent Mountain Elementary School parking lot at 1:00 p.m. Jim Bush, 540-929-4775.
- May 7 - 9** **Wintergreen Nature Foundation's 16th Annual Spring Wildflower Symposium** at Wintergreen Resort. The March *Bulletin* highlights some events and speakers. For more information, write P. O. Box 468, Wintergreen VA 22958 or call 804-325-8172.
- May 8** **Fifteenth Annual Plant Sale,** Community Arboretum on the campus of Virginia Western Community College from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Rain or shine!
- May 22** **Blandy Experimental Farm, Virginia State Arboretum Field Trip.** Meet at their parking lot at 11:00 a.m.; allow 3½ hours from Roanoke, slightly longer from Lynchburg. Blandy is a few miles from the junction of Routes 50 and 340 near Boyce. Contact Cindy Sandberg for carpooling information or directions, 540-929-4459.
- May 24** **General Membership Meeting,** 7:00 p.m., Center In The Square. Jay Stipes will be the featured speaker.  
There will also be a Pot Luck — a potted plant exchange. You are invited to bring a plant to exchange with someone. Please join us whether you choose to participate in the plant exchange or not.  
A board meeting will precede the membership meeting.
- May 29** **Flame Azaleas on the Parkway.** Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Smartview Park (milepost 154). This should also be a good trip for lady's slippers. Bring your lunch. Paul Cowins, 804-239-4884.
- June 5** **Rhododendron Day on the Parkway.** Meet at the Visitor Center, Peaks of Otter, at noon. Bring your lunch.
- June 5** **Third Annual Butterfly Gardening Symposium** sponsored by the Carolina Butterfly Society, North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville, NC. Emphasis will be on host plants and garden design.
- August 22** **Picnic With the Sheridans** at Smith Mountain Lake. Bring a covered dish. The Sheridans will provide the meat, lemonade and coffee. We will eat around 5:00 p.m. but feel free to come any time after 2:00 p.m. to play or sit by the lake. Please call Vi at 540-721-8189 if you plan to attend.  
There will be a board meeting at 2:00 p.m. at the Sheridans.
- September 11** **Fall Plant Sale** at Randolph-Macon Botanical Gardens in Lynchburg from 10:00 till 2:00. Rain or Shine!
- September 17-19** **VNPS Annual Meeting.** South Hampton Roads Chapter will be the host this year.



## Oh What Joy Springtime Brings!

by Cindy Sandberg

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society spring activities began in March with a visit to Buffalo Creek Nature Area. We saw trout lilies, violets, bloodroot and other early wildflowers, enormous beech trees, and a beaver dam on our hike there.

The workday at Randolph-Macon Woman's College Botanic Garden was truly a team effort. Thanks to seventeen hard-working folks, the garden shed its winter image and is ready to put on its spring show. Speaking of shows, the evening program by Dr. Buck Edwards was unique in his use of motion pictures he has taken of birds, animals and flowers of the Blue Ridge foothills.

Our 30th annual Wildflower Pilgrimage weekend begins on Friday, April 23, with a program, Wildflowers of the Appalachian Trail, by Leonard Adkins. A reception, book-selling and signing, and a raffle follow the program. Malcolm Black has graciously donated a bell he crafted and hand-painted featuring our 1999 Wildflower of the Year — Twinleaf — for the raffle.

Our 15th annual Plant Sale will be May 8. This popular event features a large variety of plants and helpful planting information from knowledgeable members. The sale is a perfect place to find very special Mothers' Day gifts.

Our next general membership meeting is May 24, featuring a program by Dr. Jay Stipes of Virginia Tech, and a potted plant exchange. I hope to see you there and at some of the field trips and activities listed in the Schedule of Events. This season's opportunities are boundless and the company of fellow wildflower enthusiasts is unbeatable!

Permission is hereby given  
to reprint.

Please give credit.

Cindy Sandberg, *President*  
(540) 929-4459

Pamela M. Wieringo, *Editor*  
(540) 343-8596

P.O. Box 20385 • Roanoke, VA 24018

## Annual Spring Plant Sale

Our Fifteenth Annual Spring Plant Sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 8, at Virginia Western Community Arboretum on the campus of Virginia Western Community College, from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Please check your beds now to see what you can share with us. This is the time to pot your donations as they need three to four weeks to establish themselves. It is also a good time to sow some seeds for yourself and for the sale. If you need pots, please contact Paul Cowins, 804-239-4884, or Rich Crites, 540-774-4518.

All plants need to be at the Arboretum no later than 8:30 a.m. **PLEASE HAVE THEM LABELED.** Taxonomic names are preferable but not necessary. Please at least have the common names.

This is an excellent opportunity to share what you have and 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 keep you from attending.

Your help is needed in many ways, whether donating plants, helping with arranging and pricing prior to the sale or helping people make their selections.

## Annual Workshop

If your ideas of insects (with the exception of the ladybug, perhaps) begin with, "Oh! Yuck, a BUG!," the VNPS Annual Workshop held in Richmond March 13, would have been a surprisingly pleasant experience.

The program on plant and insect interaction featured several excellent speakers and presentations. Phil Sheridan, Director of Meadowview Biological Research Station in Woodford VA, presented a slide program on carnivorous plants with a focus on his specialty, the pitcher plants. Dr. Brad Goodner, Assistant Professor of Biology, University of Richmond, spoke on bumblebees and other native pollinators. Dr. Raymond Gagne, Research Entomologist, Systemic Entomology Laboratory, USDA, retired, gave a slide program on galls and Dr. Donald Harvey, Museum Specialist, Dept. of Entomology, Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian, presented a slide program on creating habitats for butterflies and birds in urban settings.

These workshops never fail to be both educational and fun. If you've not attended or if it has been a while, consider putting it on next year's calendar.

## Meet Leonard Adkins

Profiled by Backpacker Magazine as "The Habitual Hiker," Leonard M. Adkins has walked more than 16,000 miles exploring the wilderness and backcountry areas of the U.S., Canada, Europe, and the Caribbean. Every hiking season seems to find him on some new and different adventure.

The off-season is spent publishing books, photographs, and articles based upon his travels. Leonard's works have appeared in a variety of publications such as *Caribbean Travel & Life*, *Blue Ridge Country*, *Islands*, *Backpacker*, *Colorado Daily*, and *Mid-Atlantic Country*.

Recently, The Habitual Hiker has been sharing his love of the outdoors by presenting multimedia programs to a diverse array of audiences. Leonard's programs have been able to entertain, inspire, delight, and inform all of them. Be it tropical islands, snow-capped peaks, emerald green forests, or stark desert tracts, the presentations speak to the inner soul of each of us, reminding us of the peace, contentment, and joy only to be found in the freedom of traveling the natural world by foot.

The presentations consist of an introduction, the multimedia program complete with musical accompaniment and narration, and a question and answer period. In addition to providing stirring entertainment, the presentations give the audience a feel for what they would encounter if they were to set out on such adventures — and how to apply what would be learned to everyday life.

His newest book, *Wildflowers of the Appalachian Trail*, will be available for sale and signing during the reception.



## Erythronium

In an earlier newsletter I described two species of fawn lily which grow in Virginia, *Erythronium americanum* and *E. umbilicatum*. The major differences between these species are listed below.

<i>E. americanum</i>	<i>E. umbilicatum</i>
1. Ovary truncate, rounded or beaked	1. Ovary and capsule distinctly indented at the apex
2. Mature capsule not reclining	2. Mature capsule reclining on or just above the ground on peduncles (stalks)
3. One or more stolons per bulb	3. Usually lacks stolons
4. Petals usually auricled — eared,	4. Petals lack auricles or appendages at base
5. Tetraploid (4N)	5. Diploid (2N)

Both of these species are listed in the Virginia Atlas as occurring widely over the state but *E. americanum* is found in Bedford County but not in Franklin, Amherst or Nelson counties whereas *E. umbilicatum* is not recorded occurring in Bedford county but is known from the other three counties.

If anyone identifies these two species in the above counties, where they are not known to occur, would you please let me know?

(Dorothy Bliss — 804-845-5665)

## Foothills of the Blue Ridge: Birds and Flowers

On the evening of March 27, Dr. Ernest Edwards presented an outstanding program which included a movie film of many nesting birds and slides of native wildflowers through the seasons. Dr. Edwards did his undergraduate work at the University of Virginia and received his doctorate from Cornell University. He is noted especially for his research on the birds of the U.S., Mexico and Central America. Among his publications is "A Field Guide to the Birds of Mexico." He taught ornithology and natural history at Sweet Briar College from which he retired a few years ago.

Dr. Edwards and his wife Mable, who was especially interested in wildflowers, were able to take advantage of the various ecological habitats on the Sweet Briar Campus in their research. Even the horses played their part in furnishing horse hair for certain birds' nests! This evening he captivated his audience with intimate glimpses of parent birds feeding their young as with open mouths they begged for food. From eagles to the tiny endangered Kirkland Warbler he caught rare glimpses of their lives. The flower slides with habitat shots and many close-ups ranged from early spring ephemerals to late summer blooms. Who can forget the cluster of columbine nestled at the base of a tree or the beautiful photos of the showy lady-slippers which is very rare in Virginia and the yellow and pink lady slippers, the latter together with its rare albino form?

The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society extends their thanks to Dr. Edwards for sharing in movie and slides these insights into our remarkable world of nature. We hope you will join us again. Thank you.

## Champion Trees

Dorothy C. Bliss

Recently I have enjoyed perusing "The National Registry of Big Trees", especially the listing for Virginia and The Great Smoky Mountains. The rank of "big tree" depends upon four values, trunk circumference at 4½ feet, height, crown spread and the total points calculated from the above 3 measurements. Since the round leaf birch, *Betula uber*, occurs only in Virginia one would anticipate that it would be included but it was of interest to note that Virginia also claims the honor for witch hazel, *Hamamelis virginiana* (1989) in Bedford, for common winterberry, *Ilex verticillata* (1944) in Virginia beach and American elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis* in Jefferson National Forest, Konnarock. Poison sumac, *Toxicodendron vernix*, Chesapeake, Virginia shares honors with Robin's Island, New York. Previously, the champion yellow poplar, *Liriodendron tulipifera* was listed for Bedford, Virginia but this tree has been severely damaged and will be replaced by another candidate.

Among the trees that reach champion size in the Great Smoky Mountains are black cherry, eastern hemlock, red maple, sour wood, red spruce and Fraser Magnolia.

At present there are no nominated candidates for our eastern red bud, mountain laurel and possum haw.

Copies of "National Register of Big Trees" may be ordered for \$7.95 plus shipping and handling by calling 1-800-873-5323. The list for "Virginia's Social Register of Big Trees" may be procured from The Extension Service at Virginia Tech (free).

Address:

Mr. Jeff Kirwan, Ext. Specialist  
College of Forestry and Wildlife  
Virginia Tech Mail Code 0324  
Blacksburg, VA 24061  
Phone: 540-231-7265



## Lynchburg Area Members

Dorothy C. Bliss

The calendar tells us that spring arrived a week ago but bone-chilling winds and below average temperatures belie that fact. We are promised that warm weather will soon be here. Before the end of March several of the spring ephemerals have challenged the cold and in our gardens and woods Virginia bluebells are fully budded and the snowy white flowers of blood root are cautiously pushing up their heads. In the R-MWC Botanic Garden, Greek valerian and shale barren phlox have been blooming for several weeks and now the golden ragwort with its deep purple buds and bright yellow flowers defies the late winter weather. A month ago leather-leaf, *Chamaedaphne calyculata* var. *angustifolia* bore rows of delicate tubular flowers that are now nearly gone. Many of the invasives introduced from Europe such as dead purple nettle, hairy bittercress and field garlic seem more prolific than in previous years. I wonder if the extremely dry autumn has favored these exotics over native grasses and other plants. As our shrubs and other perennials begin to leaf out I expect we will find there has been considerable damage as a result of the drought. In the R-MWC Botanic Garden two of the Catawba Rhododendrons that lost several large branches have been cut back and one mountain laurel was removed. Also, several ephemerals have not emerged as yet and may have succumbed over winter.

### R-MWC Garden Work Day

The scheduled afternoon of work in the Botanic Garden was a huge success. Seventeen workers not only from Lynchburg but from Roanoke, Smith Mountain Lake and Sedalia worked hard — slaved — for several hours and transformed the appearance of the Garden. Shrubs were trimmed, a few dead plants were removed and perennials were cut back. Wheelbarrow loads of mulch were hauled up the hillside and spread around the shrubs. Weeds such as the infamous purple dead-nettle, dandelions and field garlic were almost eliminated from the beds.

Since this year's work day achieved such excellent results, I hope to schedule a similar event next spring. Thanks to all of you who contributed so much to this venture. The loyal volunteers who carry on the continual work during the growing season are especially appreciative. Thank you all!!!

Please visit the garden during the spring, summer and fall when the plants are in flower and fruit and see what your handiwork has wrought.

## Franklinia

Dorothy C. Bliss

John Bartram, naturalist, botanist and explorer, was born in 1699 and the Historic Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia is celebrating this 300 year anniversary in 1999 with lectures, symposia, etc. We associate Bartram particularly with his discovery of the beautiful small tree, *Franklinia alatamaha* and in conjunction with this celebration, the garden is conducting a census of all known *Franklinias*. All living specimens of this tree are descendants of the specimens and seeds brought back from the original grove by Bartram and his son William. The tree was last seen in the wild in 1803.

Forms to fill out for the census may be procured from "Historic Bartram's Garden", 54th Street and Lindbergh Boulevard, Philadelphia, PA 19143 or call Michele DeGirolamo (215) 729-5281 or <bartram@libertynet.org>.

## Scholarships Awarded

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

Bonnie Doss received the scholarship awarded to a student majoring in horticulture. This is her second year at Virginia Western Community College where she is president of the Horticulture Club. In addition to school, she works at Greenbrier Nurseries.

Will Cecere is also a Virginia Western student and is interested in pursuing a degree in botany. He hopes to go to Virginia Tech. Will maintains a 4.0 GPA.

It is a pleasure to be able to offer scholarships to these two deserving students.

## New Task Force Created

Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Interior, Dan Glickman, Agriculture Secretary and James Baker, Commerce Undersecretary, have created a new interagency task force, The Invasive Species Council. The council will target both invasive plants and animals. Past efforts to control invasives have focused on aquatic species.

The mission of the task force is development of a broad management plan to minimize the human health impact as well as the economic and ecological impact of invasive species.

Biologists estimate more than 6,000 plants and animals have been introduced to the United States through accidents or good, though misguided, intentions.

### 1998-00 OFFICERS

President	Cindy Sandberg 540-929-4459 540-929-4790
Vice President	
Secretary	Betty Kelly 540-384-7429 540-561-8046
Treasurer & Editor	Pam Wieringo 540-343-8596 540-772-3660

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Propagation	Paul Cowins 804-239-4884
Plant Sale	Rich Crites 540-774-4518 540-982-7326
Site Registrar	Sandra Elder 804-525-8433
Public Relations	Betty Kelly 540-384-7429 540-561-8046
Historian	Frieda Toler 540-366-0239
Hospitality	Bunny Smith 540-774-8392 Evelyn Walke 540-989-8143
VNPS Rep	Bob Eubank 804-239-9756
Also Serving	Lucille Cowins Sam & Dora Lee Ellington Al & Vi Sheridan Hugh Smith Bobby Toler