



# Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE  
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Vol. 18, No. 1

January, 2001

## Schedule of Events

- February 17** **Altavista Field Trip.** Search for skunk cabbage and other early signs of spring at the Rosebay Rhododendron Registry Site. Participants must register with Ross Laboratories before visiting the site. Carpooling is recommended for this trip. In Lynchburg, meet at 10:00 a.m. at the KMart parking lot on Ward's Road. In Roanoke, meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Food Lion parking lot on Route 460 (Orange Avenue) at Laymantown Road. This is about seven miles east of the Civic Center. If not carpooling, take the 460 Bypass to the Route 29S Danville exit which is near Lynchburg airport. Take the first exit and turn left at the end of the ramp. This takes you into Altavista. Ross Labs has a large sign and is by the railroad track. Sandra Elder, 804-525-8433.
- February 24-25** **VNPS Stakeholders Meeting,** Pocahontas State Park, Chester, VA. This is an opportunity for ALL VNPS members to participate in setting goals and making long-range plans for our organization.
- February 26** **General Membership Meeting,** 7:00 p.m., Center in the Square. Stan Bentley will present a program on orchids. We hope to have copies of his latest book, reviewed in this Newsletter, available.
- March 24** **Randolph-Macon Woman's College Botanic Garden Work Day** from 2:00 - 4:30 p.m. A potluck supper will follow. Bring gardening tools. Rain date is March 31. See Lynchburg Area Column.
- March 24** **Lynchburg Evening Program.** Meet at 7:30 in Room 225, Martin Science Building, Randolph-Macon Woman's College. This program will be held even if rain cancels the Garden work day.
- March 26** **General Membership Meeting.** 7:00 p.m., Center in the Square. Matt Chumbley with Roanoke Parks & Rec Dept. will present a program about the new nature and interpretive center being established at Mill Mountain.
- March 31** **Catawba Field Trip.** Meet at the Homeplace parking lot on Route 311 at 1:00 p.m. Bring footwear appropriate for wet areas. We'll plan to eat at the restaurant around 4:30.
- April 14** **Waid Park Field Trip,** 10:00 a.m. This park, located about eight miles out of Rocky Mount, is part of the original Carolina Road. Take Route 40W out of Rocky Mount. Turn onto Six-Mile Post Road (Route 640) at the traffic light at Forty West Food Faire. Go to Route 800 then turn left. Bring your lunch. Al & Vi Sheridan, leaders, 540-721-8189.
- April 21** **Green Hill Park Field Trip,** 10:00 a.m. Take West Main Street in Salem to just west of Old Virginia Brick Company. Turn onto Duiguid's Lane, cross the bridge and turn right into the park. Bring lunch.
- April 27-29** **Great Smoky Mountains National Park 51st Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage.** Many of our members have attended the pilgrimage in past years and can attest to the richness and diversity of the Smokies as well as to the renowned speakers and leaders who are featured. We strongly encourage your participation this year. The BRWS and the Science Museum of Western Virginia will not be holding a pilgrimage this year. For additional information, contact the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 107 Park Headquarters Road, Gatlinburg TN 37738, 865-436-1290, or visit their web page, <http://www.goldsword.com/wildflower/pilgrimage.html>.

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## President's Letter

Julie Alexander

Late January and isn't it amazing what a few warm days can do for the spirit? We get out the catalogs and start to think of spring - what we'll put in our gardens. And then we wonder ahead to summer and how great the flowers will look (just like in the catalogs). Soon we'll probably go somewhere and catch the first harbingers of spring: skunk cabbage warming the snow, hepatica in February or perhaps a violet (that doesn't know about soil temperature or daylight hours) showing their faces in a protected place.

But even in the dreariness of a winter's day, a wildflower walk is possible. I walk through the gardens and see stalks of conehead and sunflowers - their seeds making a fine meal for finches, cardinals, chickadees, and other winter birds. The goldenrod still looks nice around the pond with its fluffy dried flowers. And the tall sedge and grasses in a field fairly dazzle when dripping with raindrops or ice.

Christmas fern and pines provide nice patches of green contrast.

Every Thursday I meet with a group of girls after school to try to instill in them some knowledge and appreciation of nature. These are city girls whose wildflower "checklists" include dandelions and clover. They are not aware of too much beyond the neighborhood around our school. Recently I took them to Woodpecker Ridge for a short hike. They were so excited just to be outdoors. Some said they had never been in the woods before. Many had never seen cow manure before. They were thrilled to see a turkey vulture circling and learn what it was. We looked at the many wildflowers visible and talked about their importance in the cycle of nature. I am looking forward to taking them to see hepatica, anemone, and trillium. Seeing these things through their eyes makes it all new and fresh and exciting to me.

## Buffalo Creek Field Trip

Sandra Elder

On October 21, 2000 five BRWS members enjoyed a visit to one of our registry sites. Although spring is the most glorious season at Buffalo Creek Nature Area, fall has much to offer. The evergreen leaves of mountain laurel provided a beautiful contrast mixed with the golden leaves of the deciduous trees. Bright red berries of Jack-in-the-pulpit really caught the eye when tucked into the green foliage of wild ginger. The bare branches of spicebush sported bright red berries and the unique mauve colored leaves of mapleleaf viburnum were accompanied by dark blue fruit. We identified seven species of ferns and two native grasses. Our most interesting observation was a large

population of small, white, fuzzy insects that covered some of the branches on a number of beech trees. To identify this insect I referred to my favorite nature book "The Book of Forest and Thicket by John Eastman". This book explains the ecology of over 200 trees, shrubs and wildflowers of Eastern North America. In the section on American Beech it describes the beech scale as a yellowish scale insect that secretes a cottony wool which coats masses of them. The wounds they cause in the inner bark tissue provides entry for canker spores. You never know what you will see and learn on a Blue Ridge Wildflower Society field trip.

## In Appreciation

For many years Bruce Boteler has served as Membership Chair for the BRWS. He has maintained the roster and provided mailing labels for us.

He and Judy have entered another phase of their lives which will prevent him from giving the time of this list-keeping which he feels it deserves. He is, therefore, resigning as membership chair. We very much appreciate the time and effort he has put into this position. (When preparing postcards for last minute additions to or cancellations of events, I especially appreciated his quick response to a sudden plea for labels. - Ed.)

Bruce was one of the earlier presidents of the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and helped make us the strong chapter we are.

## Our Dying Forests

Dorothy C. Bliss

All is not well with our forest ecosystems and Charles E. Little brings the message home in a book entitled "The Dying of the Trees". In the 20th century we witnessed death of the American chestnut and the American elm and now we are seeing the severe decline of our flowering dogwoods, our hemlocks and, in the Great Smoky Mountains, the near extinction of the Fraser fir but the continuing devastation is much more widespread throughout the United States. In a clear and lucid style, Little describes what is happening to many of our trees and the causes of the decline. His book has been compared to Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" and by many is considered the most vital environmental book of the century. I highly recommend this book to all who are interested in our environment and especially the continuing loss of our forests.

Please read "The Dying of our Trees" by Charles E. Little. No book in recent years has affected me so deeply.

## In Sympathy

We are saddened to know several members of our group have suffered the loss of family members recently.

Our sympathy is extended to Jim and Sandra Elder during the loss of Jim's mother, Mrs. Virginia D. Elder, October 31, 2000.

It is also extended to Louis and Jill Bass during the loss of Lou's mother, Mrs. Hazel Bass, December 14, 2000.

Rich Crites' mother, Mrs. Marie Crites, passed away January 5, 2001. Our sympathy goes out to Rich and Connie during this time.

Recognizing this as part of the cycle of life does not lessen the pain and loneliness we experience after losing those we love. Our hearts go out to you.

## And Welcome

Allen and Robin Austin have agreed to take over the membership roster. We welcome them and appreciate their willingness to assume this role.



# Deer Resistant Plants Found in Virginia

Robert E. Eubank

Mountainous Virginia offers incomparable beauty. One of these beauties, the white-tailed deer, may be feasting on your plantings, however. If so, we suggest adding plants from this list to your landscape. As with all nature, there are no guarantees but these seem to be less appetizing to deer.

## Trees and Shrubs

Abelia, alder, American holly, Andromeda, Araila, autumn olive, barberry, beautyberry, beech, boxwood, burning bush, butterfly bush, buttonbush, Caryopteris, Chinese holly, chokeberry, Colorado blue spruce, coralberry, cotoneaster, crape myrtle, cypress, Daphne, Deutzia, Douglas fir, eastern red cedar, elderberry, Enkianthus, flowering dogwood (buds and stems sometimes eaten), flowering quince, forsythia, ginkgo, groundsel bush, hardy orange (*Ponicirus trifoliata*), Harry Lauder's walking stick, hawthorne, heath, heather, hemlock, honey locust, inkberry, juniper, kousa dogwood, larch, leatherleaf viburnum, Leucothoe, lilac, linden, Mahonia, mockorange, mountain laurel (sometimes grazed), mugo pine, Nandina, ninebark, Nellie Stevens holly, Norway spruce, Oleander, privet, Pyracantha, red buckeye, redbud, red osier dogwood, Rhodendron (some species), river birch, rose of Sharon, rugosa roses, Russian arborvitae, Russian olive, sassafras, Scotch pine, serviceberry, smoketree, St. John's-wort, spicebush, spirea, sweetgum, sweetshrub, sycamore, Weigela, winter jasmine, winterberry, witchhazel.

## Flowers, Herbs, and Groundcovers

Ageratum, Ajuga, Allium, Alyssum, Amsonia, Angelica, Artemesia, native asters, astilbe, baby's breath, bachelor's button, balloon flower (*Platycondon*), Baptisia, basil, Bergenia, bittersweet, bishops' hat (*Epimedium*), Bishop's weed, black cohosh (*Cimicifuga*), bleeding heart, blue-eyed grass, perennial blue flax, blue lobelia, blue mist flower (wild ageratum), Boltonia, boneset, bouncing Bet, butterfly weed, cactus, camomile, candytuft, cardinal flower, catnip, chicory, chives, cinquefoil, chrysanthemum, Clematis, Cleome,

Colchicum, columbine, coral bells, Coreopsis, crown imperial, daffodil, Dahlia, Delphinium, Dianthus, dill, dusty miller, evening primrose (*Oenothera*), ferns (some species), feverfew, forget-me-not, four o'clocks, foxglove, Gaillardia, garlic chives, gas plant (*Dictamnus albus*), garden phlox, Gaura, geranium, globe thistle, goatsbeard, golden marguerite, goldenrod, most ornamental grasses, green and gold (*Chrysogonum*), Helianthus, Heliotrope, Hellebore, hyacinth, hyacinth bean, Iris, ironweed, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Jacob's ladder, Japanese anemone, Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis*), Joe Pye weed, Jupiter's beard, lady's mantle, lamb's ears, Lamium, larkspur, lavender, Liatris, lily-of-the-valley, Liriope, lungwort (*Pulmonaria*), Lupine, Lychnis (including catchfly, Maltese cross, rose campion), Lythrum, marigold, marjoram, meadow rue, milkweed, mint, Monarda, monkeyflower, monkshood, morning glory, moss pink (*Phlox sibulata*), oregano, oxeye daisy, Pachysandra, partridgeberry, peach-

leaved bellflower, Pennisetum, Penstemon, peony, periwinkle, Plumbago, perennial sweet pea, polka-dot plant, poppy, primrose, prickly pear, purple coneflower, queen of the meadow, red hot poker, rosemary, rue, Russian sage (*Perovskia*), Salvia (culinary sage and ornamental salvias), Santolina, saxifrage, Scabiosa, Scilla, sea lavender (*Limonium*), Scabiosa, sedge, Sedum, Silene, snapdragon, snow-in-summer (*Ceratostigma*), snow-on-the-mountain (and other Euphorbias), snowdrop, southernwood, spiderwort, Sternbergia, stock, Stokesia, strawflower (*Helichrysum*), sweet cicely, sweet William, sweet woodruff, tansy, thrift, Tiarella, thyme, toadfax, turtlehead, Veronica, violets, wallflower, wax begonia, woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), wisteria, wormwood, yarrow, yellow archangel (*Lamiastrum*), yucca, wild geranium, zinnia.

(List compiled by Nancy Hugo, special correspondent for The Richmond Times-Dispatch and public relations chair of the Virginia Native Plant Society.)

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - continued from page 1

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|-----------------|---|
| <b>May 5</b>    | <b>Glen Allen Field Trip.</b> This area is on Route 635 near the White Rock Campground. Details will be in the April Newsletter.  |
| <b>May 12</b>   | <b>Seventeenth Annual Spring Plant Sale,</b> Community Arboretum on the campus of Virginia Western Community College, from 9:00 a.m. until noon. No plants sold before 9:00 a.m. Rain or shine!   |
| <b>May 19</b>   | <b>Grassy Hill Field Trip.</b> Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Virginia Western Community Arboretum parking lot to carpool from the Roanoke area. From other directions, take the northernmost Rocky Mount exit from Route 220. Go to the traffic light. Turn right to Grassy Hill. Meet there at 10:00 a.m. We'll have lunch at a nearby restaurant. Paul Clarke, leader. |
| <b>May 21</b>   | <b>General Membership Meeting,</b> 7:00 p.m., Center in the Square.   |
| <b>June 1-3</b> | <b>VNPS Annual Meeting.</b> The Piedmont Chapter will host this year's event. Headquarters will be the Holiday Inn, Winchester.   |
| <b>June 2</b>   | <b>Rhododendron Day at Roaring Run.</b> Along with the rhododendrons, expect to see what some consider the best waterfalls in the area. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Daleville Park & Ride across from Western Sizzlin', exit 150B from I-81 North. Bring Lunch.   |



From time to time you may become aware of pending legislation and want to contact government officials to express an opinion. We hope this listing will be helpful.

**Caution.** Please remember this must be done as an individual and not on behalf of VNPS or the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and must not be done on our letterhead. Under certain circumstances to do otherwise could be construed as lobbying and jeopardize our non-profit status.

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# Native Orchids of the Southern Appalachian Mountains

Stanley L. Bentley, Author

This authoritative guide showcases the unmatched beauty and diversity of the native orchids of the southern Appalachian mountains. Based on Stan Bentley's many years of nature study, it covers the fifty-two species — including one discovered by Bentley and named after him — found in a region encompassing western Virginia and North Carolina and eastern West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

The entry for each orchid provides the plant's scientific and common names, a description of the flower (including color, shape, and size), and information on the time of flowering, range, and typical habitat, all in the context of the southern mountains. A range map accompanies each description, and Bentley's own superb photographs are an additional aid to identification.

Using straightforward language yet incorporating the most up-to-date scientific information and nomenclature, the book will be welcomed by amateur naturalists or professional botanists looking for species in the field and by those who simply enjoy photographs of beautiful wildflowers.

Stan has devoted twenty-five years to studying and photographing orchids across America. His work has appeared in a number of publications, including *Wildflower Magazine*, *American Fern Journal*, and *The Newsletter of the American Association of Field Botanists*, and in several books. A native Virginian, he has worked as a naturalist, a high school teacher, and a nature consultant, and he is currently employed by the school system in Pulaski County, Virginia, where he lives.

"Although the southern Appalachians are known to botanists and wildflower watchers as a botanical paradise, it will probably surprise and then delight many

people to discover that over fifty species of orchids are native here. This book is the best treatment of these unique and fascinating plants available . . . The photography is truly outstanding." — Peter S. White, Director, North Carolina

Botanical Garden, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

To order, contact the University of North Carolina Press, P.O. Box 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2288, 800-848-6224.

## Lynchburg Area Members

Dorothy C. Bliss

### The Botanic Garden in Mid-December

Although most of the autumn foliage has fallen and the last of the flowers have succumbed to the frost, there is still much of botanical interest in the wintry landscape. As I strolled around the Randolph-Macon Woman's College Botanic Garden on December 15, several shrubs presented bright splashes of color. On the hillside *Ilex verticillata*, winterberry, displayed quantities of shiny red berries in contrast to the few scattered darker red berries of the deciduous holly, *I. decidua*. The berries of *I. opaca*, American holly, were nearly hidden by the glossy green leaves. The brilliant red berries still clung to the branches of *Aronia arbutifolia*, red chokeberry. The tight clumps of lavender berries of the native and Oriental beautyberries, *Callicarpa americana* and *C. dichotoma*, appeared untouched by the cooler weather. Some of these berries may not be the favorite food of our songbirds and may be consumed later when other food sources are not available.

The evergreen Christmas ferns were much in evidence and green marginal shield fern fronds contrasted to the tall brown sporophylls of the adjacent ostrich ferns. On an earlier date in November, I had noticed to my surprise that our northern maidenhair fern, *Adiantum pedatum*, was a cluster of brown shriveled fronds but our southern maidenhair fern, *A. capillus-veneris*, growing nearby was untouched by the cold weather at that time. Why? Both in mid-December had succumbed to the frost.

Although many of the spring flowers lie dormant under the soil surface, numerous perennials and biennials overwinter as ground-hugging green rosettes. Scattered basal clumps of the many species of goldenrod, the cardinal flower and blue lobelia were still evident.

Golden ragwort, *Senecio aureus*, one of our earliest spring flowers, showed thriving masses of bright green leaves. The greek valerian, partridgeberry and several other plants covered the drab soil with their green leaves.

Perhaps the greatest surprise were a few clumps of *Aster dumosus*, bush aster, which, defying the frosty mornings, still displayed a multitude of many small lavender flowers. My favorite aster!

Nothing to see in the winter garden? Even a casual walk in the Botanic Garden or in our deciduous woods will reveal much of the plant world that is of interest.

### Spring Activities

The spring work trip in the R-MWC Botanic Garden is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, March 24, from 2-4:30. Rain date will be the following Saturday, March 31. Please join the group. We need YOU.

Last year several enjoyed a potluck supper at my home following the afternoon of work in the Garden. So, again, we plan to continue the tradition with a potluck supper at my home (322 Sumpter Street) around 5:30. Please call me at 804-845-5665 if you plan to come.

On the same evening at 7:30 we will have a program in the Martin Science Building on the R-MWC campus. The topic will be announced later. Please come and bring a friend or two.

### A New Field Trip

In Late April or May I hope to schedule a field trip that will include a walk along the new James River Foot Bridge at Snowden (Route 501). After crossing the bridge we will walk south along the Appalachian Trail to observe the spring flowers especially on some of the rocky cliffs that border the river. This will be a new area for most of us and may reveal some interesting plant communities.

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