



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Summer 2021 VOL 42, No. 2

Wildflower sale a great success

Most profitable in 15 years

Our 2021 wildflower sale proved a huge success, netting more than \$3,500, making this our most profitable sale in at least the past 15 years.

Thanks to 30-some volunteers, we sold about 1,200 plants through more than \$8,000 worth of sales in just three hours on Saturday, May 15.

There were more than 50 species of plants offered this year. Included in the list of donated plants were a very large pot containing a native honey-suckle, a nice-sized river birch tree, and a Virginia Sweetspire. Among many other plants available were Oakleaf hydrangea bush as well as bloodroot, mayapples, spiderworts, dwarf-crested irises.

The proceeds will be used toward our mission of promoting native plants, bringing in speakers for our meetings and for making donations to plant-related causes.

We had about 200 plants left over, which we sold at a reduced price to members who couldn't make it that day.

We also donated more than 30 plants to the arboretum at Virginia Western Community College and put about a dozen in our flower garden at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs. Special thanks to Linda Harrison, Ellen Holtman, Rodelin Palmer and others for planting them and main-



Dwarf-crested irises were among the 50-plus species sold

taining the garden, which is on the right just past the entrance to the club.

The club leadership extends our heartfelt gratitude to all of the volunteers who worked the sale and who brought plants, with special recognition to Gail and Bruce McFarland and Bill Modica and Linda Harrison for their generous number of donated plants.

Also, much appreciation is felt for

those who brought water and tasty snacks. The water was a life saver, and the scones were delicious.

We hope everyone enjoys their plants for years to come as much as the birds, bees and butterflies will.

If you didn't see something that you really wish we had offered, send an email to Michael Belcher at hedlinr@cox.net. We will try to get it for next year's sale.

Inside this issue

2 BRWS & VNPS information

3 President's Message

4 Meet A Member:
Sharon Burnham

5 Upcoming events

6 President's Pick —
Buttonbush

BRWS MEETINGS

7 p.m., fourth Monday of the month (unless changed)
Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs headquarters
3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA

In normal times, we meet in person in September, October, November, February, March, April and May unless Roanoke County Schools are closed for inclement weather. This year we are having a mixture of virtual and in-person meetings because of COVID-19 precautions.

Virginia Native Plant Society

Website: www.vnps.org

The Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS), founded in 1982 as the Virginia Wildflower Preservation Society, is a nonprofit organization of individuals who share an interest in Virginia's native plants and habitats. The Society and its chapters seek to further the appreciation and conservation of this priceless heritage.

Our Mission: The Virginia Native Plant Society is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the native plants of Virginia and their habitats, to sustain for generations to come the integrity of the Commonwealth's rich natural heritage of ecosystems and biodiversity for purposes of enjoyment, enlightenment, sustainable use, and our own very survival. To this end, we advocate and follow practices that will conserve our natural endowment, and we discourage and combat practices that will endanger or destroy it. We are committed to do all we can to slow the accelerating conversion of natural landscape to built and planted landscape and to reduce its damage to natural ecosystems.

Our Purpose and Services

State Level:

- Working for measures to protect endangered plant species, and preserve habitats and plant communities of special interest
- Learning and teaching about native plants and their special needs
- Encouraging the appropriate use of nursery or home propagated native plants in public landscapes and private gardens
- Assisting in writing and updating Flora of Virginia
- Providing money for graduate botanical research
- Working with nurseries to protect native species
- Offering a spring workshop on timely botanical subjects
- Offering field trips state wide and some in surrounding states
- Conducting the annual meeting with speakers and field trips provided

Local level, Blue Ridge Chapter:

Counties of: Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Roanoke **Cities of:** Roanoke, Salem and Lynchburg

- To present meetings in spring and fall that offer informative programs concerning a variety of areas and plants they support
- To lead free field trips to a wide variety of local habitats spring through fall
- To conduct an annual native plant sale in May at VA Western Arboretum
- To provide outreach to public groups in the way of speakers and guided walks
- To donate money to local conservation needs

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs
3460 Colonial Ave. SW,
Roanoke, VA 24018

Officers

President

Jessica Fleming..... ((203) 240-3425
jafleming@onehealthhealing.com

Vice President

Marilyn Lerch..... (540) 797-9188
marilynlerch@yahoo.com

Secretary

Linda Ardrey..... (434) 996-3520
linda.ardrey@gmail.com

Treasurer

Kathy Sink..... (540) 774-8950
kathysink@cox.net

Past President

Ellen Holtman..... (540) 389-1514
eholtman@comcast.net

Committee chairs

Field Trips, Programs

Ellen Holtman..... (540) 389-1514
eholtman@comcast.net

Rebecca Ross(540) 345-8353
wingsross@aol.com

Garden Coordinator

Linda Harrison..... (540) 343-2783
lindaharrison29@hotmail.com

Historian

Betty Kelly..... (540) 384-7429
bettykelly918@gmail.com

Membership

Terry Lauver..... (540) 685-4173
tl1945@cox.net

Newsletter

Roger Holtman..... (540) 389-1514
roger.holtman@comcast.net

The BRWS Newsletter is published three times annually: spring, summer and fall. Photos and articles for publication are welcome (and encouraged) and may be sent electronically (preferred), by mail or delivered in person.

Thank you!

Roger Holtman, Editor

208 Taylor Ave., Salem, VA 24153
roger.holtman@comcast.net
540.389.1514

Small steps often have an enormous impact

There is a 1,400-acre forest in India that was built by a single man. What was once a denuded land mass at risk of submerging into the ocean is now home for more than 100 elephants, Bengal tigers, rhinoceros, and several thousand species of trees.



President's message

Jadav "Molai" Payeng, the man who built the forest, started planting one tree at a time when he was 16. Thirty years later, a functioning rainforest teems with life in place of what was previously a sinking sandbar.

In China, a desert was transformed into the Saihanba National Forest in 56 years by 200 people. During the Qing Dynasty in 1863, a flourishing 200 square kilometer forest with wetlands had been logged and farmed into a complete desert, becoming known as "the sandstorm plague of Beijing." In a feat that seemed nearly impossible in 1963, 200 engineers (mostly forestry majors) moved to the desert in Northern China and started planting seeds of the trees known to grow in the area a century ago. The engineers withstood massive sandstorms, blistering winds, 90 percent seedling loss in the first two years, and freezing temperatures. Then in 1964, they figured out a new way to plant the seeds and 90 percent of them survived. Now, the Saihanba National Forest is a multifunctional 185,000-acre botanical park known as the "Green Lung of Northern China."

Imagine 100 people restoring na-

tive habitat in their own backyards in the Blue Ridge Mountains. How many acres of viable ecosystem could this create? What if 5,000 people repopulated their land with native plants. How much habitat could be restored? When you think about the origin of Molai's 1,400-acre forest or the Green Lung of Northern China, the goal of ecosystem restoration across the eastern seaboard becomes much

more realistic. When you think about the result, it feels impossible. But when you focus on putting one foot in front of the other, your greatest task for that day is the small step in front of you.

If Jadav Payeng was told at the age of 16 that his job was to build a 1,400-acre forest, would he believe he could do it? Probably not. But he set out on his mission every day with an attainable goal in mind – plant a tree, plant a flower, add to what's already here. Now he looks over his shoulder and sees the Molai Forest Reserve, a critical refuge for endangered wildlife. A national treasure.

Every meadow restored is a masterpiece. Even a small section of garden converted to natives makes a difference. As botanists and conservationists, we keep marching ahead. We put one foot in front of the other. We grow, we teach, and restore each 4 by 4 inch square of land at a time, until one day we look back at a thousand little national parks that now flourish where our yards used to be.

—Jessica

20 years of newsletters available online

Anyone now can learn about the history of the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society thanks to a group of volunteers who scanned about 20 years worth of newsletters for posting online.

Most of our newsletters are available as PDFs on the Virginia Native Plant Society's website (www.vnps.org). A few years' worth are still being posted but should be up soon.

This will enable those interested as well as students to see where and when we have taken walks, to learn about speakers, and to explore the club's roots from the founders until today. Some of our newsletters have been downloaded almost 1,000 times!

Our local volunteers scanned the pages and sent PDFs to Mark Murphy, the online guru at Virginia Native Plant Society. Mark then organized and posted them at www.vnps.org/blueridgewildflowersociety/newsletters/

Also, a big thank-you goes to our club historians, Freida Toler and Betty Kelly, who diligently preserved the physical copies of the newsletters all these years.

From the entire club, we offer a sincere thank-you to Mark Murphy and to our volunteers:

Carl Absher
Michael Belcher
Danielle Clarke
Janine Czarnecki
Mary Harshfield
Ellen Holtman
Rodelin Palmer
Harriet A. Shaw
Pamela White Wolsey

Welcome new members!

David Bellangue, Blacksburg, VA
Janine, Czarnecki, Waterford, VA
Nancy, Martin, Wytheville, VA
Delores, Merrill, Lynchburg, VA
Elody Samuelson, Jackson, MI
Susan, Smith, Wirtz, VA
Todd Solberg, Blacksburg, VA
Inga Solberg, Blacksburg, VA
Mary Spear, Charlottesville, VA
Jill Templeton, New Castle, VA
Elizabeth Wade, Lynchburg, VA
Chad Wheeler, Lynchburg, VA
Pamela White Wolsey, Catawba, VA
Josh Wolsey, Catawba, VA
Whitney Anderson, Salem, VA
Gerianne Basden, Springfield, VA
Carol Clerico, Free Union, VA
Ed Coleman, Meadows Of Dan, VA
Rupert Cutler, Roanoke, VA
Carrie Doupnik, Roanoke, VA
Joe Dupuis, Roanoke, VA
Meade Eggleston, Roanoke, VA
Abbott Fletcher, Middleburg, VA
Frank Gilbert, Pulaski, VA
Bill Hopkins, Gordon, TX
Kevin Johnson, Roanoke, VA
Lynne Lanier, Warrenton, VA
Catherine Lively, Nellysford, VA
Cynthia Lollar, Roanoke, VA
Ann Martyn, Roanoke, VA
Greta McVey, Roanoke, VA
Richard Morris, Lynchburg, VA
Donna Quinn, Ashburn, VA
Andrea Renshaw, Roanoke, VA
Josh Ritzman, Bedford, VA
Ilana Waasdorp, Roanoke VA
Alexis Adamson, Ashburn, VA
Meg Bailey, Broad Run, VA
Sheila Barnhart, Roanoke, VA
Bill Bestpitch, Roanoke, VA
Cindy Burks, Forest, VA
Lily A. Crum, Salem, VA
Lauren Flippo, Wirtz, VA
Jamie Girvin, Stephenson, VA
Marie-Louise Hammarskjold, Union
Hall, VA
Jaime Jones, Blacksburg, VA
Alice Jones, Lynchburg, VA
Megan Lemmond, Roanoke, VA
Cyrus Lemmond, Roanoke, VA
Clare Lindsay, Sperryville, VA
Shannon Long, Charlottesville, VA
Andy Olesin, Stuart, VA
Jordan Taylor, Charlottesville, VA
Sue Tyler, Roanoke, VA
Julie Zeh, Richmond, VA

Meet a member

Sharon Burnham



I was born and raised in Southern California, but moved to Hawaii for graduate school in marine organic chemistry. I then worked as a civilian chemist for the Navy, studying the environmental impact of the anti-fouling paints used on Navy vessels. Since I was intrigued by the intersection of science and the law, I went to law school. After four years in private practice in Hawaii and D.C., I joined the U.S. Attorney's Office in Hawaii. I moved to Roanoke in 1997 after I met my now-husband Joe Mott. I continued as an Assistant U.S. Attorney at the Roanoke office, retiring in January 2014.

I've had a lifelong passion for plants, from the first plant I pulled out of my mother's pot as a toddler. When I moved here from Hawaii, I had to start all over again learning about the plants around me. I studied plant books, went to classes and seminars and toured gardens. I became a Master Gardener in 2008 as a way of expanding my garden knowledge and to bring the joy of plants to others.

About 10 years ago, I started my journey towards habitat gardening, rather than ornamental gardening. I read books, attended numerous seminars and did a deep dive into learning about our ecoregion, physiography, and natural plant communities. I've become a convert to the idea that even the smallest yard can contribute to a healthier environment around us.

When a neighbor put in a new driveway beside my property, I decided to put into practice what I've been learning. Last year I finally removed a lot of non-native plants and put in a native plant hedgerow of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers, as well as a native seed mix. Covering about 150 feet x 20 feet, it's been a lot of work but seeing the wildflowers last summer and the golden groundsel (*Packera aurea*) blooming this spring made it all worth it. The whole area is already knitting together, and summer and fall should bring a spectacular bloom season. I'm happy to make the plant list available if interested. Contact me at gardensister@cox.net.

Although I have been a member of BRWS, I have not been particularly active for a number of reasons. I would like to better connect with members as meetings resume. I am particularly interested in connecting with members who have been involved with educating the public about habitat gardening and healthy yards. I know there was a grant issued recently to help fund the Plant SWVA Native Campaign and brochure, so I hope to be involved with that. Looking forward to meeting you

Summer activities on deck: Three field trips and a picnic

Bottom Creek Preserve plant walk

Sunday, May 30

The walk offers a view of the second highest waterfall in Virginia and an impressive array of wildflowers. The gorge is 300-400 feet deep.

We will meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot at Kroger on Brambleton at Colonial Avenue (the one across Colonial Avenue from Bojangles). Address is 4404 Brambleton Ave, Roanoke, VA 24018.

We can have a total of 20 people with four people in five cars. Please email jafleming@onehealthhealing.org to sign up. Bring water, rain gear and wear hiking shoes.

Mill Creek Preserve

Saturday, June 5

Mill Creek is a 222-acre preserve of limestone hills drained by Mill Creek. This globally rare red cedar-chinquapin oak dolomite woodland community is managed by the Nature Conservancy. There are several rare invertebrate species protected there. The water comes out of the side of the mountain in the form of a dozen springs all flowing at once. It is a rare treat to see.

We will be led by Jordan Metzgar, Ph.D., Curator of the Massey Herbarium at Virginia Tech. We will be looking for ferns and other plants as well. This site is not generally open to the public, so we are privileged to be able to visit this special place.

We will meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Orange Market on Thompson Memorial Boulevard in Salem. Take I-81 to Salem exit 141. Turn on Electric Road and drive toward Catawba. The Orange Market is at the intersection of Thompson Memorial and VA 311.

The field trip will last about five hours including drive time. It may be good to bring a lunch, water, rain gear, and sturdy boots that can take some dampness. There are no restrooms except the woods, so be prepared. The trail is flat, but the surface is uneven in places, so a walking stick would be helpful.

Contact person:

Butch Kelly

(540) 384-7429 (home)

Field Trip to Paint Bank, Route 600

Saturday, July 24

Leader -- Butch Kelly

This is one of the most scenic and diverse trips we have available to us. It includes beautiful mountain ridges, a lovely valley, a wetland and, to top it off, grazing bison on both sides of the road. The plants range from sunny meadow flowers to woodland rare orchids. The last time we took this trip was in 2017 and we identified 152 plants and fungi. Among those we expect to see are Jerusalem artichoke, cardinal flower, swamp white oak, butterfly

weed, fringed loosestrife, purple fringeless orchid, cotton grass and many others.

We will meet at the Orange Market on Thompson Memorial Boulevard in Salem at **8:00 a.m.** This will be an all-day field trip so bring a lunch, water, bug juice, boots that can repel water (we will not be wading, but some areas could be damp), rain gear and sunscreen. Restrooms are scattered so be prepared to use the woods. There will be little walking, mostly on the road along roadside ditches and one or two wooded trails. We have lots of options on this trail as to how far we go.

The number of participants will be limited and we must carpool. We will caravan, and will be stopping along the roadside with little parking. Please call Butch Kelly at (540) 384-7429 by July 18. You can leave a message if necessary. Be sure to include a number at which you can be reached. He will keep a wait list for those who have not made the cut. If you sign up and have to drop out, call Butch promptly so someone else can have your space. Butch will need to know if you are willing to drive and carry others or if you are willing to car pool.

Picnic with bird club

Saturday, August 21

The Roanoke Valley Bird Club will be joining us for an indoor/outdoor picnic on Saturday, August 21, from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The picnic will be at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs at 3640 Colonial Avenue in Roanoke, the regular meeting place for both clubs.

In recognition of the pandemic, tables will be set up as usual inside the building but also outside for those who prefer that option. Face masks are suggested during setup time.

In addition, for those who still feel uncomfortable in such gatherings:

-- If you DON'T want to participate in the usual potluck, simply bring your own picnic to enjoy.

-- If you DO want to participate in the potluck, just bring your favorite side dish or dessert.

In either case, please plan to bring your preferred non-alcoholic beverage.

The BRWS will be providing barbecue and the Bird Club will bring fried chicken -- both purchased from restaurants. These main dishes will be served by gloved volunteers.

Also, in light of keeping extra plastic out of the landfill, please bring your favorite drinking cup already filled. Water and compostable paper plates will be provided. If you want to bring your own plates/bowls you may do that.

So, mark your calendars now for Aug. 21 and plan to come! An email reminder will be sent out closer to the picnic date with any updates based on CDC or Garden Council building rules.

Hope to see you there!

Tall shrub is a versatile haven for wildlife

Buttonbush
Cephalanthus occidentalis
Rubiaceae

Buttonbush, is an oasis for native insects and wildlife traversing suburbia. In local communities where sterile, non-native shrubs and barren grass

President's Pick

populate most lawns, a single buttonbush plant will provide nectar for butterflies,

moths, native bees, hummingbirds, and many other insects. Its branches are preferred shelter for wood ducks and its seeds are a favorite of other waterfowl and shore birds. If you are going to plant a shrub to attract wildlife, consider buttonbush as it is one of the top wildlife supporters.

Buttonbush is a deciduous, tall shrub or small tree that can reach up to 18 feet in height, but generally stays around 6-12 feet high. Its branches are usually green when young and turn brown as they mature. It boasts opposite, lanceolate-oblong leaves about 7 inches long. Dense white (or pale pink) spherical



Long-lasting, aromatic blooms

pincushions of flowers adorn its many branches in clusters. Blooms are long-lasting (June – September) and aromatic. Growing near swamps, ponds, and stream margins, buttonbush is versatile and well-adapted to a variety of soil and environments. It prefers circumneutral (pH 6.8-7.2) moist, wet soils in shade or part shade.

Butterflies are particularly attracted to buttonbush, especially the Titan sphinx (*Aellopos titan*) and the Hydrangea sphinx (*Darapsa veriscolor*). Buttonbush not only provides nectar for these species,

but is also a caterpillar host.

Buttonbush can be groomed into a professional-looking spherical shrub or allowed to mature to small tree size. Because of its versatility and the variety of wildlife it supports, we recommend buttonbush as an addition to any garden or home-grown national park. Plus, the longer one peers at its perfect spherical pompons, the more of a marvel it becomes!

Membership **New**
 Renewal

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Membership dues:

Individual \$30 Family \$40 Student \$15

Life \$500 Patron \$50 Sustaining \$100

Associate \$40. Organization _____
(Also, please name your delegate above.)

Additional, nonvoting chapter memberships, \$5 each. Chapter _____

Please enroll me as:

Member of **Blue Ridge Wildflower Society Chapter**

Member at Large (no local chapter affiliation)

Gift Membership. Please send a card in my name: _____

I wish to make an additional contribution to:

Chapter. Amount: _____

State office of VNPS. Amount _____

Credit card payments:

MasterCard Visa Discover

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Amount: _____

Date: _____

Signature _____

Do not list me in the chapter directory. VNPS does not exchange member information with other organizations.

Please make your check out to VNPS and mail it to:

Memberships
Virginia Native Plant Society
400 Blandy Farm Lane, Unit #2
Boyce, VA 22620

For Office use only

Check No. _____

Date rec'd _____

Amount rec'd _____