



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Summer 2022 VOL 43, No. 2

Wildflower sale blooms into more than money

By Michael Belcher

Our 2022 wildflower sale on May 28 was our most successful one yet, bringing in \$4,369 after expenses.

Although the past two years have been filled with plenty of disquieting news, some of that stress-filled energy has apparently been channeled into gardening by many people.

A long line of customers wound its way from the starting point in the parking lot past the Roanoke Council of Garden Club building by 9 a.m. When we closed at noon, the club had sold about 1,000 plants of at least 45 species.

None of this would have been possible without the members who donated time, skills and plants. The list is too long to name everyone, but each of you made significant contributions that go far beyond the monetary value for the club.

Our only yearly fundraiser helps further our mission of protecting, preserving, and promoting native plants of Virginia and the natural ecosystems they create.

According to research by Dr. Doug Tallamy, a single nesting pair of chickadees in the spring must collect 350-570 caterpillars every day to feed their babies. The par-



Roger Holtman

A long line had formed long before the sale began at 9 a.m.



Roger Holtman

About 1,000 plants and 45 species were sold



Lindsay Caplan

Goldenrod proved to be a popular seller

ents take turns feeding the chicks from sunrise to sunset for 16 to 18 days until the babies fledge. The two adults collect 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars for a single brood and those moth and butterfly caterpillars can only survive by feeding on native plants.

Each of the goldenrods that we sold potentially serves as a host plant for 115 species of native caterpillars. Asters support 112 species, sunflowers 73 species and Joe-pye weed 42 species. Even on the lower end, the often-overlooked violets support 29 species, wild geraniums 23 species, black-eyed Susans support 20 species, and bee-balm 12 species. Try to apply those numbers to 1,000 specimens we sold and the math soon becomes mind-boggling.

In addition, the plants provide adult butterflies and moths with an excellent source of nectar. And when the various flowers turn to fruit or seed, they feed the birds in the summer, fall and winter, giving wildlife even more bang for the buck.

But it doesn't stop there. Many of these native flowers are prolific spreaders, multiplying the effects of our

See Plant sale on next page

Inside this issue: Picnic returns! / Upcoming butterfly walk / May trip to Quarry Gardens



Lindsay Caplan

Member volunteers were available to offer guidance on planting and location



Roger Holtman

Plant sale

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plantings, and that is the real value of our sale. We made that happen.

Although we have been conducting the plant sale for about 40 years, we continue to experi-

ment and adapt each year. For example, some years certain beloved staples aren't available because of the weather or blight, but new ones surprisingly sprout.

For example, we weren't able to offer trilliums or Solomon's plume this year. (We hope to next year). However, we did offer new plants such as ginseng and goldenseal, as well as bloodroot, hazelnut bushes and some American plum trees. We also were able to sell 30 button-bushes, the Virginia Native Plant Society's 2022 plant of the year.

Another adaptation during the



Lindsay Caplan



Lindsay Caplan

Totals were tallied at the gazebo (above). Customers then moved on to another area to pay (left).

pandemic was buying our plants ready to sell. This was necessary in the short term to protect our members, but it came with the costs of higher prices and discontinuing our potting parties. Many health experts think the U.S. is reaching herd immunity with the pandemic. That means next year, we hope to bring back the planting parties. In addition to potting our own flowers, we hope to nurture and grow our club's sense of camaraderie and fellowship.

Lastly, as you work in your yard or see flowers in the wild, be sure to jot down ideas of plants that you would like us to offer next year.

A sincere thank you to everyone who helped out and remember: Plant Native and Grow Wild!



Photos courtesy of Bruce Grimes

Liatris meadow is one of our destinations. Below, hawk moth and butterflies

Butterfly walk July 24

Bruce Grimes, a New River Valley Master Naturalist since 2015, will lead a butterfly walk on July 24. We'll meet him at Caldwell Fields Campground on Craig Creek Road near Blacksburg and then continue to visit his favorite butterfly spot. Bruce has been studying and photographing butterflies since 1998.

We'll meet to carpool at 9 a.m. near the Kroger gas pumps at the Lakeside Plaza parking lot (VA 419 at E Main Street). Or meet us at the campground parking lot at 10. We will be walking in fields, so please come



prepared to protect yourself against ticks! And remember your hat, sunscreen, water and snacks or lunch. Binoculars will help, too. Questions? Call Ellen Holtman at (540) 797-2350.

Club field trip to bee sanctuary August 16

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, August 16, for a club field trip to Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary. The 41-acre sanctuary is located on the banks of the Little River in Floyd. Since 2008, Spikenard Farm has been dedicated to promoting "sustainable and biodynamic beekeeping to help restore the health and vitality of the honeybee worldwide," according to its website. The farm boasts "an abundantly flowering biodynamic landscape, rich with sources of nectar and pollen which enhance the nutrition and health of the honeybees and native pollinators and support the thriving of our diverse agricultural ecosystem."

Hey. That's right down our alley!

We will carpool from Cave Spring Middle School on U.S. 221 at 9 a.m. for an arrival at the sanctuary at 10. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested.

If you have questions, contact Ellen Holtman at (540) 797-2350. And be sure to check out the website at www.spikenardfarm.org to learn more about what we'll see during our tour. Hope to see you on August 16!

Annual picnic returns

The annual Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and Roanoke Valley Bird Club picnic is back after a pandemic hiatus!

The picnic will be held Saturday, August 13, from 1 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. in the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs building, the site of our monthly meetings. As usual, it's a semi-potluck with the RVBC providing fried chicken and the BRWS providing barbecue. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share along with a serving utensil and a card with your name and description of the food. (The card will help those with

food allergies and let folks know who to ask for the recipe!) Bottled water and ice will be provided. You may also bring your own favorite beverage.

Please RSVP by Friday, Aug. 5, with the number in your party attending to:

Carol Whiteside, 540-774-2143 or whitesidemules@yahoo.com

If you would like to help, especially with set-up (at noon) or wrap-up (at 3:30) please let Carol know. Hope to see you there!

Message from the president

Dear Blue Ridge Wildflower Society Members,

It has been my honor to serve as BRWS president over the last nearly two years. Despite the challenging times of COVID and transition to Zoom meetings, BRWS has thrived. We were able to bring many fascinating talks on ecosystem stewardship, gardening, entomology, and even farming to your homes (thanks to our incredible speakers)! We also had our most successful native plant sale to date and offer talks both virtually and in person now. Just as our favorite plants have adapted to the changing environment, we have too.



As a physician and mother, my responsibilities have increased this year, which have forced me to step away from the president role of BRWS for now. I know I will be leaving you all in good hands. Jennifer McCarthy, who will serve as interim president, has shown tremendous dedication to BRWS and is wholeheartedly committed to our mission of planting with natives and restoring habitat in our beautiful region.

For now, I bid you adieu (until our next exciting talk or plant walk). Have a wonderful summer, thank you for your support of BRWS, and for all you do. And remember: Every small plot of land makes a big difference in our mission to restore native habitat.

Spotlight: PRISM

Each newsletter highlights one of the planet-friendly organizations that share our goal of protecting healthy ecosystems. Any member who has a favorite group is encouraged to send in a short blurb!



PRISM is an acronym for Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management.

The organization is volunteer-driven, and is dedicated to reducing the negative impact of invasive plants in the northern Blue

Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Volunteers work at the local, regional and state level under the guidance of an Advisory Council of key stakeholders. Our parent organization, the Virginia Native Plant Society, is one of 18 stakeholders.

The group started with landowners and Shenandoah National Park staff concerned with the economic damage posed by Asiatic bittersweet and other invasive vines, and it became an independent non-profit in 2020. It serves 12 counties from Clarke and Loudon in the north to Nelson in the south, and it offers seasonal workshops, consultations, consultations to landowners and free fact sheets on invasive species. Find more information on events and fact sheets to print at blueridgeprism.org

— Ellen Holtman

Save the date: Sunday, Sept. 25



On September 25 at 5 p.m., the fountain in the Arboretum at Virginia Western Community College will be dedicated to the founding and early members of the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society. More on this in the Fall newsletter.

Become a member!

Are you seeing our newsletter for the first time and would like to join the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society? Are you already a member and it's time to renew?

The quickest way to do either of those things is to go to www.vnps.org, the Virginia Native Plant Society website. Find the Membership drop-down menu, select the appropriate choice (Join or Renew) and take it from there!

And while you're on the VNPS site, be sure to check out all the great resources that are available: information about native plants, invasives, past newsletters and much more.



Welcome new members!

Cassy Ammen, Roanoke
Adam Bigelow, Cullowhee
Elizabeth Bowles, Salem
Kaye Brandt, Roanoke
Steve Brown, Lynchburg
Suzanne Chappell, Lynchburg
Amy Dupuis, Roanoke
Elizabeth Elliott, Waynesboro
Debra Gallion, Roanoke
Donald Gallion, Roanoke
Bonnie George, Charlotte Court House
Sam Golston, Roanoke
Danielle Hunter, Concord
Bre McGloughlin, Goodview
Tatum Miller, Roanoke County
Trina Scott, Boones Mill
Breanne Sharp, Roanoke
Judy Snyder, Forest
Inga Solberg, Blacksburg
Maria Stanton, Roanoke
Gail Steele, Roanoke
Judy Snyder, Forest
Robert Steele, Roanoke
Staci Talley, Glade Hill
Renee Thornhill, Roanoke
Kimberly Tipton, Troutville

Please keep your contact information up-to-date!

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society relies on email to share information about upcoming events and to distribute our newsletter. Please update any changes to your contact information with the Virginia Native Plant Society at vnps.org@gmail.com and BRWS at brws.membership@gmail.com

You can also find Blue Ridge Wildflower Society information on the Virginia Native Plant Society website [Home - Blue Ridge Wildflower Society](#) and on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/blueridgewildflowersociety>

Meet a member . . . Rodelin Palmer

Although I have been a paralegal by profession for more than 20 years, my loves are amateur photography and gardening. My love for gardening stems from my father who has been an avid gardener by profession and hobby all of his life. I have learned a lot from him, and have developed my skills even more through the years. Taking cuttings, cutting



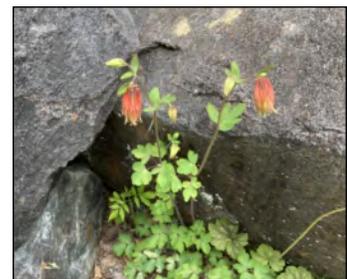
plants back and growing plants from seed among numerous other gardening chores are skills useful in all sorts of gardening. I love how there is always something to learn about plants. Even though I am quite shy, I become chatty when discussing gardening and plants with fellow gardeners. I cannot get enough of it!

I was inspired to join the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society several years ago when I realized how important native wildflowers and plants are to our local ecosystems. Not only do we need to save the bees, we need to save all our local pollinators and critters to keep our ecosystems healthy.

Knowing that our little pollinator friends need our help to survive has expanded my love of gardening from formal settings of boxwoods, roses and crape myrtles to include native wild flowers and plants. Who says that wildflower gardens have to be a mess? We can have lovely formal settings and help wildlife at the same time. Add native plants -- even a few at a time -- to your landscape when you are able, and soon you will see a difference in visiting butterflies, bees and other pollinators. Soon, the birds that feed on them and the seed heads of your native plants also will arrive.

Have you visited our wildflower garden at the Roanoke Valley Garden Center yet? Our club has been working on a pollinator habitat for several years now. It's located on the right as you enter the garden center. I am a proud member of the committee that maintains the garden throughout the year. Please consider joining our small committee. On work days, we love to chat about plants, gardening techniques and many other topics as we pull weeds, edge and thin. We make it fun! We remove invasive plants, and complete other projects to keep the garden looking well-tended and even a bit formal with its walkways and edges. We can always use more help but even if you are unable to help, we encourage you to visit the garden.

I have learned so much being a part of this great group and getting to know many of you. It brings me so much pleasure to learn about wildflowers from the programs and speakers as well as other group members. I know my knowledge will continue to grow!



May's club field trip to Quarry Gardens

On May 5, 20 club members visited Quarry Gardens in Schuyler, Va., where owners Bernice and Armand Thieblot have developed the former soapstone quarry property into native plant gardens. After enjoying a picnic lunch, members saw such species as yellow trillium and larkspur as well as four different ferns, including hairy lip fern.

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 will meet in person with a Zoom option available. If COVID-19 precautions require a change in this policy, we will inform the members by email.

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
- To provide outreach to public groups in the way of speakers and guided walks
- To donate money to local conservation efforts

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs
3460 Colonial Ave. SW,
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**General inquiries,
newsletter submissions**
info.blueridgewildflower@gmail.com

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brws.membership@gmail.com

Officers

Interim President
Jennifer McCarthy

Vice President
Marilyn Lerch

Treasurer
Kathy Sink

Past President
Jessica Fleming

Committee chairs

Field Trips, Programs
**Ellen Holtman
Rebecca Ross**

Garden Coordinator
Linda Harrison

Membership
Jennifer McCarthy

Advocacy and Outreach
Lindsay Caplan

Plant Sale
Michael Belcher

Newsletter Editor
Roger Holtman

The BRWS newsletter is published three times annually: spring, summer and fall. Photos and articles for publication are welcome (and encouraged). Please send them via email to the address above.

Thank you!



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**Field trips to see butterflies and a honey bee sanctuary
Details on these and other events inside**