



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Summer 2023 VOL 44, No. 2

Flower power at sale boosts our mission

We had another successful year with our annual plant sale over Memorial Day weekend, bringing in more than \$3,000 after expenses.

The plant sale committee offers a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who participated. It doesn't matter if you bought one plant or 30, donated one pot or 20 species, volunteered for the day or simply shopped. Everyone who played a part contributed to our success. All of the good works that the club accomplishes throughout the year are rooted in this one-day sale.

A final tally isn't available yet because a few leftover plants are still being sold. However, we already are putting the money to good use to further our mission of improving the environment by promoting native plants.

At our May 22 meeting, the Monday before the sale, the club voted to spend \$200 to digitize about 300 photo slides from former member Rich Crites. Rich taught biology for years at Virginia Western Community College, including a very popular class on the wildflowers of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The images will be donated to the Virginia Native Plant Society state chapter for free use by members, teachers and other wildflower enthusiasts for educational purposes. All photos will be credited to Rich and the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society. The VNPS already



Roger Holtman

Wildflower enthusiasts make their way down the long line of offerings

has a small library of about 20 digital photos. However, our donation of photographs will form the real foundation of the project.

The club also donated \$270 worth of plants to the Virginia Western Community College Arboretum. The school is creating a new garden section and wanted about a dozen species to get it started. Clark BeCraft, the Horticulture Program Coordinator at the school, thanks all of us and is very grateful for our support this year and in years past.

Lastly, the plant sale committee

worked with a few other partners to buy plants in bulk in an effort to keep costs down. One such partner was the environmental group, Izaak Walton League of America, Roanoke Chapter. Most of the bushes and trees that we sold came from the Virginia Department of Forestry, and the IWLA paid the full shipping costs.. We had about 10 bushes left over. As a thank you, the club donated the leftover bushes, all of which produce nuts or fruit, to the IWLA to help with their habitat improvement projects in Roanoke County.

— Michael Belcher

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Jennifer McCarthy photos

The garden hosts at least 106 different species of herbaceous plants, 43 types of trees, shrubs and vines, plus 11 different ferns and fern allies

April tour: Bliss Garden

On April 24, BRWS members enjoyed a cool, sunny morning visit to the Dorothy Crandall Bliss Botanic Garden in Lynchburg, Virginia.

BRWS member Sandra Elder shared the history of the garden established by Dr. Bliss and the BRWS's role in supporting her mission. Sandra guided us around the beautiful area, calling our attention to a number of rare and usual plants and trees. Some of the notable trees included a Kentucky Coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*), and the rare Franklin tree (*Franklinia alatamaha*). Blooming plants included Blue Star, Columbine, Wild Geranium, White Crested Dwarf Iris, Solomon's Plume, Creeping Phlox, Foamflower, Catebsby's Trillium, Large-flowered Trillium, Yellow Trillium, Large-flowered Bellwort,



BRWS member Sandra Elder conducted the tour

Perfoliate Bellwort, Pink Shell Azalea, and Carolina Rhododendron.

This beautiful garden, tucked inside the walls of Randolph College (founded as Randolph Macon Women's College), currently hosts at least 106 different species of herbaceous plants, 43 types of trees, shrubs, and vines, plus

11 different ferns and fern allies.

A list of plants, including anticipated bloom dates, is available on the BRWS web-page (www.VNPS.org). The garden is open to visitors daily and continues to flourish due to the efforts of Sandra and her dedicated volunteers.

— Jennifer McCarthy



Welcome new members!

John Boggess, Bedford
Kathy Fell, Bassett
Debora Hubbard, Goodview
Phil Sears, Huddleston
Elsa Nadler, Roanoke
Brigitta Bende, Roanoke
Trisha Haldiman, Catawba
Kandyce Sherman, Roanoke
Charity Conkin, Roanoke
Bob Pohlad, Ferrum
Sandra Sherman, Roanoke
Sherman Banford, Roanoke
Forrest Brown, Rocky Mount
Joanne Cerio, Roanoke
Teri Eichinger, Chatham
Nancy Favor, Roanoke
Victoria Lael, Blacksburg
Carol Monti, Blacksburg
Jane Ruehle, Lynchburg
Joseph Whitehill, Harrisonburg

Your help is needed!

Our club established and maintains a native wildflower garden at the entrance to the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs. It is mostly self-sustaining but does require early season clean-up, occasional weeding and thinning of plants. Linda Harrison and Rodelin Palmer would like to develop a list of volunteers who can be contacted to help when the need arises. This is not a huge time commitment, just an hour or two occasionally. If you can help, please respond to brws.membership@gmail.com and include your contact information. Thanks!



Ellen Holtman

Biology teacher Frank Taylor (left) has a YouTube channel called ‘Nature at your Door’

Informative stroll through Radford park

On a lovely Tuesday in April, a dozen BRWS members were guided by Frank Taylor through Wildwood Park in Radford. An educator for 40 years, Taylor teaches biology at Radford High School and guides students through the park regularly. It's within walking distance of the high school and nearby neighborhoods. The trail, mostly through a wooded valley, is paved.

We did not cover all 50 acres, but the terrain shifted from wooded areas below limestone cliffs to marshes and a lovely stream. Among many plants we saw were Wild Geranium, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, and Bloodroot.

A passionate naturalist, Taylor was especially knowledgeable about edible plants. We learned that the leaves and flowers of the blue violet are edible, and thus pet-friendly. The Cornsalad plant (*Valerianella locusta*), grows on bare ground and produces delicious

salad greens throughout winter.

Taylor is a Master Teacher for Blue Ridge Public Television and an instructor at an Elder hostel. He also has a robust YouTube channel called “Nature at your Door.” He started posting videos when the schools closed during COVID. There are short videos about plants and animals you might encounter just walking out your door. It includes how to find such plants as Milkweed, Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*) and Curly Dock (*Rumex crispus*).

“The tour was well worth the trip,” Melissa Curry, one of our members, said. “The variety of wildflowers was impressive.”

Should you wish to visit Wildwood Park, a link to the Riverway Trail parking location can be found at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/d16t8U92arofRbsRA>. Walk down the trail towards the woods and look uphill below the bluffs for rich finds.

— Kaye Brandt



Dwarf Larkspur



Blue Cohosh



Yellow Mandarin

Michael Wise
photos

**Blue Ridge Wildflower Society
and Roanoke Valley Bird Club**



cordially invite you to the

Annual Picnic

Saturday, JULY 15, 2023, 12:00 ~ 3:30 PM

**Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs inside facility
3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018**



Please bring a food to share including the serving utensil, and a card with your name and food title or recipe (for allergy questions)
The RVBC will provide fried chicken and the BRWS will provide barbecue
Drinks and ice are provided, or you may bring your favorite beverage

Schedule:

- 11:00 AM Set-up
- 12:00 PM Social gathering
- 12:45 PM Welcome and picnic dining
- 3:30 PM Wrap-up and begin clean-up
- 4:00 PM Doors closed

Please RSVP by Friday, July 7, to:

Carol Whiteside
540.774.2143 or

whitesidemules@yahoo.com

with the number in your
party attending
**See you then and
there!**

