



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

Summer 2024 VOL 45, No. 2



Ostrich, Lady, Christmas and Maidenhair ferns were popular purchases

Native plant sale most successful yet

Our volunteers sold more than \$11,000 worth of plants at this year's Blue Ridge Wildflower Society's sale May 25, making it the most successful in our history.

The club offered more than 2,000 plants and 40 species to raise \$7,000 after expenses. That money will help sustain our club and promote our goals of

encouraging habitat improvement for wildlife through native plantings.

Many factors contributed to this year's success: volunteers, access to a greenhouse, a generous donation of a sculpture to be raffled, and donations of plants from our members.

In addition to making a record profit, after the sale was concluded we donated

about \$800 worth of plants to two other local groups with similar goals.

Volunteers and greenhouse

First and foremost, credit goes to all the volunteers over the past several months. That's right -- months. While the

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May sale only lasts three hours, our volunteers have been donating their time, efforts and knowledge since October.

More than 30 volunteers helped the day of the sale. Our club members set out plants, answered questions, tallied purchases, collected money and conducted a raffle. The day started about 7 a.m. and lasted until the last of the cleanup at 2 p.m.

Another major factor that helped with the sale was the size and health of our plants. Much of this can be attributed to the use of a greenhouse at Virginia Western Community College. The greenhouse allowed our plants to get a jump start growing back in early March. As a result, the flowers were bigger and healthier than any plants we have sold in the recent past.

We have Heather Butler, our current treasurer and next year's leader of the plant sale, to thank for this coup. Heather arranged a deal with Clark BeCraft, Horticulture Program Coordinator at VWCC. Our club donated \$500 to VWCC to help pay for the facility, electricity and water.

In return, Clark's students got hands-on experience caring for our plants for several weeks. The students watered and cared for the flowers in March and April on weekdays. Our volunteers checked on the plants on weekends.

But before that, we had more than two dozen volunteers who helped set up the greenhouse tables and make repairs to the building in March. Later, other volunteers re-potted more than 1,700 plants at least three different potting parties.

Donated sculpture

To promote sales, local artist Lou Greiner, who is renowned for her sculpture, donated a piece to be raffled. The sculpture, "Carolina Jessamine with



Each year, the early birds have their pick of the native plants



Member volunteers arrange plants and answer questions

Grass Frog," is about 5 inches in diameter and 8 inches tall. The beautiful rendering is scientifically accurate and rests under a hand-blown bell jar on top of a hand-crafted walnut lazy-Susan turntable. The statue is valued at \$500.

Each customer was given a raffle ticket for every \$50 worth of plants purchased. The winning ticket was drawn after the sale. A Roanoke area businesswoman

won the sculpture. She was impressed with our sale and club and has stated interest in joining as a member.

Lou Greiner is not only one of our former presidents, but she and her husband, John, have been active volunteers with the club for a long time. She has a passion for flowers and small wildlife, which has

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The line always forms early

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led to interesting adventures when she worked to capture a part of nature in clay. Lou majored in sculpture at VCU and worked in many mediums.

She still prefers clay and miniature scale. Lou has exhibited in miniature and wildlife shows on the East Coast. Her work can be seen at the Virginia Natural History Museum and the Smithsonian's Natural History Museum.

Donations

We also thank everyone who donated plants from their yards. Besides helping everyone feel rooted to the club, your donations of flowers, soil and pots greatly increase the profit margin of the sale.

Several club members say they derive great pleasure from being able to donate plants that they got after dividing patches of flowers they bought from our sales three and four years ago. Just like the perennials we sell, the plants are part of a renewable cycle of buying, growing, dividing and donating.

Helping others

Prior to the sale, we donated two shrubs and 16 perennials for a new native plant garden at Virginia Western's Community Arboretum.

After the sale the BRWS donated

about \$800 worth of plants to two local groups. We gave three flats of flowers and bushes to St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church on Grandin Road. The 45 plants will help fill out a newly sown pollinator garden at the Roanoke church.

We also donated flowers and bushes to the Roanoke Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America. The plants will be used as erosion control and habitat improvement for pollinators and wildlife. Our club has worked with the IWLA chapter for the past three years. Because many of the bushes and trees for both clubs are ordered at the same time, we have been able

to share the costs of shipping and taxes in exchange for our expertise with the plants. We also often donate plants left over after the sale to this conservation/environmental group.

We hope both donations will grow dividends for wildlife for years to come.

Calling for volunteers

If you are interested in helping with next year's plant sale, we need members to volunteer for the Plant Sale Planning Committee.

After several years of organizing the plant sale, I am stepping away. I had the pleasure to work with Rich Crites, Rudy Albert and Butch Kelly in years past. And now I hand the reins to Heather Butler, who has graciously agreed to take over as the leader. As a result, she is stepping down as treasurer and Kathy Sink is taking over those financial responsibilities.

To make the sale successful, we need volunteers to help plan and organize. Committee members will get their hands dirty literally, and there is great satisfaction in seeing the sale and the plants grow.

If you are interested, please contact Heather Butler at hmbutler48@gmail.com.

**-- Michael Belcher
Plant Sale Coordinator**

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 dropdown 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 and invasives, past newsletters and much more.

Zoom help needed!

We need someone with knowledge and experience with Zoom to help set up before each monthly membership meeting. We have been unable to provide Zoom connection to members because of technical difficulties and lack of experience in Zoom setup. We need a volunteer who can get things ready during the business meeting at 6:45 and be ready for the speaker at 7.

If you are this person, please contact Jennifer McCarthy at jenhuntmc@yahoo.com.



Welcome new members!

Lauren Harris, *Roanoke*
 Shearer Rumsey, *Moneta*
 Ember Conkin, *Roanoke*
 Holly Jenkins, *Roanoke*
 Michael Pastore, *Fincastle*
 Ashlee Russell, *Spencer*
 Rebecca Young, *Lynchburg*
 Marc Arrington, *Roanoke*
 Jeff Butler
 Hannah Zollars, *Roanoke*
 Hannah Baumgardner, *Roanoke*
 Rosa Hadden, *Roanoke*
 Nara Corrent, *Roanoke*
 Elaine Hawkins, *Roanoke*
 Amanda Heasley, *Roanoke*
 Tish Johnson, *Madison Heights*
 Maddox Brown, *Roanoke*
 Julie Camacho, *Roanoke*
 Carol Eaton, *Roanoke*
 Rebecca Kennedy, *Roanoke*
 Leigh Thomas, *Salem*

President's message

Under the leadership of Michael Belcher, the annual Blue Ridge Wildflower Society native plant sale steadily expanded each year, offering shoppers a wider selection of native plants, with approximately 2,000 plants available for purchase this year. This not only allowed gardeners more options, but revenue from this year's sale more than doubled, from the prior year! Michael, along with member Butch Kelly, start working on plant selections, potting and potting parties, and storage of plants several months before the actual sale. Their attention to detail and months of planning result in a better and better sale each year. Michael and member Heather Butler were instrumental in the hoop house partnership with VWCC, allowing BRWS to pot and store hundreds of plants prior to the sale. Michael and BRWS membership chairperson



Rodelin Palmer kept members informed on volunteer needs and they responded! We could not hold a successful sale without membership support! The plant sale team spread the word about the sale and native plants available through a variety of media and social media platforms, accounting for a great turnout of gardeners from Blacksburg, Lynchburg, Bedford, as well as the Roanoke Valley, and other communities in Central and Southwest Virginia.

As Michael mentions in his story about the plant sale, he is stepping down from chairing the annual effort. I wanted to let everyone know just how much BRWS has appreciated his years of volunteer service.

Fortunately, Michael is transitioning the club's native plant sale for future success by passing his knowledge and notes to Heather Butler. Thank you, Michael, for your dedication to BRWS!

-- Jennifer

My favorite find at sale: Chokeberry

What was yours?

BRWS appreciated the support of club volunteers and shoppers during our recent native plant sale. The annual sale included

President's Pick

more than 40 varieties of ferns, forbs, graminoids, shrubs and

trees, providing nearly 2,000 items for gardeners to choose from!

My favorite find at the sale this year was chokeberry, a native shrub that is often planted as a hedge alternative to non-native species.

So what was YOUR favorite find? Please let us know by sharing your Favorite Find on our BRWS Facebook page [fb.com/blueridgewildflowersociety](https://www.facebook.com/blueridgewildflowersociety) or on Instagram [@blueridgewildflower](https://www.instagram.com/blueridgewildflower).

If there's a native plant you'd like us to include with next year's sale, let us know. We look forward to seeing everyone again at our sale in 2025.

-- Jennifer

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 blurb.

In 1977, nine people in Wisconsin interested in the new concept of natural landscaping with native plants founded Wild Ones. From that small beginning, Wild Ones has grown to more than 120 chapters. The organization promotes environmentally friendly, sound landscaping to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities by:

- providing free, educational resources and learning opportunities open to the public,
- publishing a quarterly, award-winning journal for members featuring current native plant information and resources; and
- offering free, professionally designed native garden templates for multiple regions in the United States.

Wild Ones Roanoke Region is one

Spotlight: Wild Ones

of the newest chapters, where like-minded people gather to support each other in learning about landscaping with native plants. In addition, they share with others about why it is important to reintroduce native plants into public and private gardens and how to go about doing it.

Our chapter, based in Roanoke, promotes the use of plants native to Southwest Virginia in the Ridge and Valley, Piedmont Foothills, and Blue

Ridge ecoregions. The chapter primarily serves communities in Bedford, Botetourt, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski and Roanoke counties, but anyone is welcome to join.

We see Wild Ones as having a mission aligned with BRWS, but with a focus on landscaping with native plants. As such, we see many opportu-

nities for collaborative projects between Wild Ones and BRWS. We've already teamed up at Earth Day to promote native plants. We will be together again at the Salem Farmer's Market Saturday, June 22, during Pollinator Week.

The chapter plans to have programs on native plants and habitat gardening, landscaping workshops, propagation workshops, native plant tours, making baskets from invasive plants, birdscaping, developing an ecolawn, and much more. While many of these will be open to the public, we hope you'll join the chapter and provide your expertise to help promote the landscaping aspect of native plants.

For more information about upcoming programs, go to our website at <https://roanokeregion.wildones.org/> or find us on Facebook. And feel free to contact Sharon Burnham at wildonesroanokeregion@gmail.com. Hope to see you at a meeting!

-- Sharon Burnham



Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and Roanoke Valley Bird Club

Cordially invite you to the

Annual Picnic

Saturday, JULY 13, 2024, 5:00 PM

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs inside facility

3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018



- Please bring a side dish or dessert to share including the serving utensil, and a card with your name and food title or recipe (for allergy inquiries)
- The RVBC will provide fried chicken and the BRWS will provide barbecue
- Drinks and ice are provided, or you may bring your favorite beverage
- Please note **new time change** including no rush to leave

Schedule:

- 4:00 PM Set-up
- 5:00 PM Social gathering
- 5:30 PM Welcome and picnic dining

Please RSVP by Friday, July 5, to:

Carol Whiteside

540-774-2143 or

whitesidemules@yahoo.com

With the number in your party attending



See you then and there!



BRWS MEETINGS

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs headquarters
3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke

Meetings are held the fourth Monday of the month in September, October, November, (no February meeting), March, April and May, unless changed or canceled due to inclement weather and/or Roanoke County School closures. Club business is presented in-person at membership meetings, from 6:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., prior to our program. Currently, members must be present (in-person attendance) to vote. We also will share club news and updates on our webpage at www.vnps.org/chapters and via email.

In-person presentations and programs begin at 7:00 p.m. Live-stream (Zoom) options and/or recordings (with links provided by email) are available when permitted by the presenter. We encourage you to attend in-person when you are able.

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 eco-systems 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

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

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info.blueridgewildflower@gmail.com

Membership inquiries
brws.membership@gmail.com

Officers

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

Garden Coordinator
Linda Harrison

Membership
Rodelin Palmer

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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