



Vol. 31, No. 1

Spring 2010

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- February 22** **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. To start the year we will visit New Zealand. Join Marian McConnell for a **“Photo Journey through New Zealand”**. Marian will share stunning views of a very interesting country far from the Roanoke Valley.
- March 22** **General Membership Meeting**, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. This the *most important meeting of the spring*. We will be having a **“Pot Party”**. Our chapter has bought 700 plants from Sunshine Nursery in West Virginia to supplement our members plants for this years’ plant sale. We need everyone to come and help re-pot these plants. All materials will be provided. Bring gloves to handle potting soil and plants. No experience is necessary. *Without your help this year’s plant sale will not be a success.* (If you have questions call Rich Crites at 774-4518 or Butch Kelly at 384-7429.
- March 27** **Green Hill Park and Roanoke River Field Trip**, join leader Jim Bush (929-4775) for an early look at spring wildflowers. We should see bluebells, hepatica, toothwort and many more. Very easy walking. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the picnic pavilion in the back of Green Hill Park. Bring a bag lunch.
- April 10** **Murder Hole Field Trip**, Join leader Butch Kelly (384-7429) at the Catawba Community Center at 1:00 p.m. The community center is located on Rt. 779. Take Rt. 311 to Catawba and turn right by the post office onto Rt. 779 and go about a quarter of a mile. The Community Center is on the right. We will be hosted by Dan and Marian McConnell. This is a new trip with lots of early flowers including bluebells, toothwort, phlox and many more. This is a unique place with beautiful woods and the entrance to the Murder Hole Cave. Walking will be minimal and easy. *We will culminate our trip with supper at the Homeplace Restaurant.*
- April 17** **Buffalo Creek Field Trip**, Rich Crites (774-4518) will be our leader for this adventure. This will be a close up look at one of the VNPS Registry Sites. This area has bluebells, dwarf ginseng, walking fern, dwarf iris, etc. We will meet at the new Kroger parking lot off of U.S.

at 9:00 a.m. Folks coming from the Lynchburg area will meet at the Sheetz, at the corner of U.S. 460 and state route 811 at New London at 9:30 a.m.. Bring a lunch.

April 23-25 Great Smoky Mt. National Park Field Trip, join co-leaders Rich Crites and Butch Kelly for a weekend in one of our nations' most spectacular places. *Look at the article in this newsletter for more information.*

April 26 General Membership Meeting, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. Suzie Leslie will present "**Gardening for Wildlife Habitat Enhancement**". Suzie is a lady with seemingly endless energy. She has worked with native plants for many years and is an avid gardener. She works at the Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources. Suzie will share with us her passion of gardening. No matter how small or large your plot of land you can enhance it for year round views of wildlife. Suzie will show us how to increase animal diversity with plant materials, structures and other resources. Once you have seen this program and used her tips, you should see more nectar feeders and birds in your garden.

May 1 Rock Castle Gorge-Blue Ridge Parkway Field Trip, join leader Butch Kelly (384-7429) for a **new trip** to a special place. This area is below the heights of the Blue Ridge Parkway. We will meet at 9:00 a.m. at the parking lot of Cave Spring Middle School off U.S. 221 south of Cave Spring Corners. This field trip will feature some walking on a trail along the cascading Rock Castle Creek. The trail is not steep, yet it is not a manicured greenway. Many flowers are found here. We should see trilliums, violets, Indian Paint brush, and flame azalea to name a few. We will stop several places along the way looking at vistas while enjoying the splendor of spring. Bring a snack. Will have a late lunch at Tuggles Diner (great desserts) along Rt. 8.

May 8 Annual Spring Wildflower Sale. This year's sale should be bigger and better than ever. *See the article in this newsletter for more highlights.*

May 22 Arcadia Field Trip. Rich Crites (774-4518) will lead us to Arcadia and up the mountains to the Blue Ridge Parkway. We should see pink and yellow lady slippers and many more species. Meet at the Bojangles at the Botetourt Commons off U.S. 220 in Daleville at 9:00 a.m. This is a new trip. Bring a lunch.

May 24 General Membership Meeting, 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Ave. Professor Ryan Huish of Hollins University will present a program on **Ethnobotany**. Ryan will share with us photos and information on his research on the uses of plants to treat diseases and the use of plants in pharmacology in Tonga.

June 5 Rhododendron Day on the Blue Ridge Parkway Field Trip. Rudy Albert (774-2279) will lead us on our annual foray to the Peaks of Otter and points north. There should be spectacular scenes of Catawba Rhododendron and other species. This is always a beautiful time to be on the parkway. Meet at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center at 10:00 a.m. Little walking. Bring a lunch.

For information about any of the meetings or field trips contact Rich Crites at 774-4518 or Rudy Albert at 774-2279 or Butch Kelly 384-7429.

**Letter From the President
By Rich Crites**

Greetings! I hope you had a good Holiday Season. A new year and a new decade are now underway. With the coming of the New Year, plans have been made for the activities for the first part of this year. On January 9, a cold day, the BRWS board met to put together an agenda for the society from February to early June. With the past 4 weeks of cold and snow, certainly plants needing a cold period have been well accommodated this year. Hopefully, some of the insects that are pesky will have been reduced. Let's hope this cold and abundant moisture will bring out beautiful flowers this year. Check the calendar of events at the front of the newsletter. I want to put emphasis on two of the activities.

Last year, several had asked me about another overnight trip. Our last one was to the Saltville-Mt. Rogers areas. This year we have one scheduled for the Gatlinburg area and the Great Smoky Mountain National Park (GSMNP). It is scheduled for the weekend of April 24. So mark your calendars now!! This is also the week the GSMNP holds its annual wildflower pilgrimage. So not only can you participate in activities we may schedule, but you may want to partake in the wildflower pilgrimage activities. Look for the lodging information listed elsewhere in the newsletter. It is your responsibility to make your own lodging and transportation arrangements. Some folks will be going earlier in the week while some may be arriving on Friday afternoon. It is about a 5 hour drive from Roanoke to Gatlinburg. The motels listed are in Gatlinburg. Directions are found elsewhere in the newsletter. This should be a fun time with flowers galore.

The other activity I want to mention is the **"POT PARTY"** scheduled for our March 22 meeting. Come and help pot plants for the plant sale. We have ordered 700 plants that will need to be transplanted to larger pots for growth for the May 8 plant sale. See details elsewhere in this newsletter. We have some neat plant species to add to our members plants. Please be sure and bring what you have to sell. We hope to have a bigger sale this year.

We do have some new trips this year, so again check the calendar and join us for plenty of fun, good botanizing, good food, and good friends. This year we will be electing new officers, so keep your options open. New blood and new ideas are welcome. Also, we'll be looking for folks to serve on and chair some committees. A Great Big Thank You to BUTCH FOR PUTTING THE NEWSLETTER TOGETHER!!

"Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting and autumn a mosaic of them all"

Stanley Horowitz

**Help Needed and Fun Shall Be Had By ALL!
Come to the March 22 Meeting and “Pot Party”**

Our regular chapter meeting on March 22 will be held at the same time and place as usual. There will not be a program and very little business will be discussed. This is your chance to help our group with a little time and labor. Some of our members do not choose to be officers, but all would like to help in some capacity. This evening we are going to prepare plants for our May 8 plant sale. We have purchased 700 plants in sets of 25-50 plants each. There are 21 species in all. For example we will have *dwarf iris*, *cardinal flower*, *green and gold*, *maiden hair fern*, *spiderwort*, *wake robin* to name a few. We should have the greatest diversity of plants for sale this year.

The society needs as many bodies as possible to help re-pot these plants. We will need folks to pot, label, organize, and move plants around. Some jobs will be sit down and others will require standing. The more folks that participate the faster the project will move along.

There will be door prizes such as books, plants, gift certificates, etc. Come one-come all and bring a friend.

**BRWS PLANT SALE MAY 8, 2010
HELP WANTED**

May 8 is the annual plant sale. If you have plants to sell, get them to the sale early by 8:00 a.m. Please have them labeled. Call Rich Crites (774-4518), Jim Bush (929-4775) or Rudy Albert (774-2279) for information on pots and plant sale needs.

We will need help from members to set up on the day of the sale, serve customers and clean up afterward. Come early and buy some of the great array of plants. We will begin setting up around 8:00 a.m. and should finish around 2:00 p.m. One does not need to work the whole time. If you have an hour to spare that would be helpful.

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK FIELD TRIP

The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society is embarking on one of the most exciting field trips we have had in years. The GSMNP is one of nature's truly spectacular places. My wife Betty and I go there every year and never tire of its majesty. The opportunities are endless. The Smokies cover 814 square miles of mountains, valleys and forests. The park ranges from 875 ft in the valley to 6643 ft on top of Clingman's Dome. There are 2100 miles of creeks and rivers (many right along the road). With the Smokies being 260 million years old, there is lots of history to learn about. The geology is stunning. The human history of the Cherokee and the industrious pioneer settlers can make for some exciting reading as well as visiting their interesting historical sites. There are 12,000 species of plants and animals in this Eden of the southern mountains. Over 1600 flowering plants grow here.

There are no less than 5 forest communities found in the park. With a 5800 foot difference in elevation, the communities differ quite a lot. It takes as many as 4 weeks for the blooms to come out in the lower elevations and show themselves on top. With an annual rainfall of 85 inches you can imagine how lush it can be. If you make this visit, you will definitely want to come back.

Our club is going to meet in Gatlinburg on Friday evening at the park Sugarlands Visitor Center, 2 miles outside of Gatlinburg at 6:00 p.m. Call either Butch at 540-467-7145 or Rich 540-598-0880. Members are to make their own lodging arrangements. We will plan our activities on Friday evening. If you are interested in getting information on the Great Smoky Mountain Wildflower Weekend go to www.springwildflowerpilgrimage.org. There are programs at night, displays in the convention center and walks during the day. We will discuss our plan and activities when we meet on Friday.

Directions: Take I-81 south. It turns into I-40 in Tennessee. Watch out for the I-40 east signs and take it to Newport, TN. Exit onto Rt. 32 and go to U.S. 321 south to Gatlinburg, TN. The road is good, but rural and scenic. This route will take you straight to Gatlinburg and eliminate very congested driving through Sevierville and Pigeon Forge. You will miss the heavy tourist traffic.

Bring: Snacks, we could be out in the field and amenities are not usually close. We will not be doing heavy hiking, but bring sturdy shoes, rain gear and warm layers. It could rain anytime or be gorgeous. Just be a good scout and "be prepared".

Suggested Places to stay: We are trying to stay close to the park in order to avoid tourists and most of these are close to the park. This time of year the park is not real crowded, but weekends are busier than weekdays. Most rooms are in the \$60 range with AARP & AAA discounts.

Quality Inn Creekside 1-800-473-8319
Guesthouse Inn 1-800-233-0325
Clarion Inn 1-800-493-1953
Best Western 1-866-645-6726
Sleep Inn 1-800-214-7695
Greystone Lodge at the Aquarium 1-865-436-5621
Best Western Twin Islands 1-865-436-5121
Johnson's Inn 1-865-436-4881

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