

### Welcome New Members

- Rupert Cutler** of Roanoke
- Bea Stryker** of Lynchburg
- Cheryl Crowell** of Salem
- Lou & Mary Ann Maurelli** of Roanoke

### Index

<b>Greetings</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>New Members</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Flowers for Birds</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Book Review</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Club Officers</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Calendar Events</b> .....	<b>4-7</b>
<b>Claytor Nature Center Directions</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Planting Tips</b> .....	<b>9-11</b>

## Letter from the President

By Rich Crites

Here we are in midwinter, and today is cold and damp, as it should be. However, tomorrow we will again get a taste of spring temperatures.

I'm sure some of the wildlife can't get their act together. Some mornings when I walk, the birds are singing as if they are in courtship behavior. Also many of the spring ephemerals are up and appear close to setting bud. Some of the red maples are already blooming as well as some of the ground-hugging weeds. Then we drop to temperatures in the low 20s. It does seem like mixed up winter weather. However, according to the calendar, spring is officially only a few weeks away.

I hope all have had a good holiday season and are getting excited about going on field trips. The board of officers met and have made plans for spring meetings and excursions. I hope you will find some events that interest you and that you will

**Please turn to President's Letter, 12**

# Setting the winter table for wildlife

By Janet Marinelli,  
Courtesy of National Wildlife Federation magazine

Many people think that once the last goldenrod has bloomed in the fall, then the wildflower spectacle is over. However, the spent stalks and pods that are the remnants of summer's blossoms have a stark, sculptural beauty, especially when silhouetted against a blanket of snow. They also continue to serve wildlife as food and cover.

Seed-eating birds, such as juncos and goldfinches, flock to the dried flower heads of asters, coneflowers and other native plants at a time when other food is scarce. Winter wildflower stalks also provide wildlife with places to seek refuge from storms and predators. Insects, another food source, pass the winter in the dead stalks.

That's why gardeners should ignore the conventional horticultural practice of fall garden cleanup. Don't deadhead wildflowers. Instead, leave spent flower stalks until spring so that birds can feast on the seeds and insects can complete their life cycles and emerge when the weather warms. If you're fanatical about removing the stalks after the first frost, you'll not only be depriving birds of a source of winter sustenance but also disposing of some of next year's pollinators and other beneficial insects that fertilize native plants and food crops and help keep garden pests in check.

Here are a few of the native wildflowers with seeds that birds will gobble up in winter:

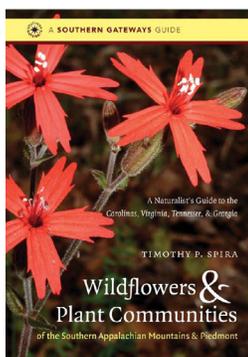
**Coneflowers:** Nine native coneflower species grow from across the eastern and central Lower 48 to the Rocky Mountain states. The plants produce large flowers with sturdy "cones" at the center. During the cold months, goldfinches perch on or just below the cones to pluck out the seeds.

**Sennas:** American senna and Maryland senna bear a profusion of flowers in mid- to late summer, followed by long, drooping seedpods. They provide shelter as well as chocolate-colored seeds that offer nutritious winter meals for songbirds and turkeys. When in flower, sennas are magnets for certain native bees and butterflies. They also serve as host plants for cloudless sulfur butterfly caterpillars.

**Round-head bush clover:** Native to areas in the eastern two-thirds of the country, this plant is not particularly showy but it is robust and beneficial for wildlife. Its bronze seed heads decorate the winter garden and provide food for songbirds and game birds.

**Other winter seed sources:** Asters, black-eyed Susans and native sunflowers. Unless you have room in your garden for them to spread, avoid sunflower species that increase rapidly by rhizomes or that are prolific self-sowers.

# A field guide based on how you find flowers in nature



## “Wildflowers & Plant Communities of the Southern Appalachian Mountains & Piedmont: A Naturalist’s Guide to the Carolinas, Virginia, Tennessee, & Georgia”

by Timothy P. Spira

This field guide serves as an introduction to the wildflowers and plant communities of the southern Appalachians and the rolling hills of the adjoining piedmont.

Rather than organizing plants, including trees and shrubs, by flower color or family, as is done in most guidebooks, botanist Tim Spira takes an ecological approach that enables the reader to identify and learn about plants in their natural communities.

This approach, Spira says, better reflects

the natural world because plants, like other organisms, don’t live in isolation; they coexist and interact in numerous ways.

Full-color photo keys allow the reader to rapidly preview plants found within each of the 21 major plant communities described, and the illustrated species description for each of the 340 featured plants includes fascinating information about the ecology and natural history of each plant in its larger environment.

With this new format, readers can see how the mountain and piedmont landscapes form a mosaic of plant communities that harbor particular groups of plants.

The volume includes a glossary, illustrations of plant structures, and descriptions of field trips to take.

Whether you’re a beginning naturalist or an expert botanist, this guidebook is a useful companion on field excursions and wildflower walks.

### Blue Ridge Wildflower Society Officers

**President** ..... **Rich Crites**  
(540) 774-4518  
cardinalisr@cox.net

**Vice President** ..... **Rudy Albert**  
(540) 774-2279  
rudyalbert38@aol.com

**Secretary** ..... **Marci Albert**  
(540) 774-2279

**Treasurer** ..... **Gail MacFarland**  
(540) 380-2150

**Historian** ..... **Betty Kelly** (540) 384-7429

**Membership** ..... **Butch Kelly**  
(540) 384-7429  
butch2410@msn.com

**Newsletter** ..... **Michael Belcher**  
(540) 989-6384  
michael.belcher@roanoke.com

# Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE  
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Spring 2012

Calendar of Events

Vol. 33, No. 1

## Monday, Feb. 27

**Time:** 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

**Meet:** Roanoke Church of Christ, 2606 Brandon Ave., S.W.

## Club Meeting: So You Want to be a Beekeeper

Jerry Borger, former president of the New River Valley Beekeeper's Association, will present a talk about beekeeping and the role of bees as pollinators. Borger is one of the instructors of the association's Beginning Beekeeper's Course for the past three years and is a certified Master Beekeeper.



## Saturday, March 3

**Time:** 9 a.m. - noon

**Leader:** Betty Kelly

**Contact:** 384-7429

**Meet:** Orange Market off I-81 Exit 141 in Salem at Va. 419 and Thompson Memorial Highway



## Field trip: Giant Trees of Roanoke

This will be a tour with a little walking to various urban and rural places in Salem, Roanoke and Botetourt County. We will look at some extremely large, beautifully shaped historic trees featured in the book "Remarkable Trees of Virginia." After the trip, we will eat at Three Little Pigs Barbecue at the Botetourt Commons in Daleville.

## Saturday, March 31

**Time:** 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

**Meet:** Bojangles Restaurant at Botetourt Commons off U.S. 220 North of Daleville

## Field trip: Spring ephemerals in Arcadia with the Boy Scouts

Members of Boy Scouts Troop 2 will join us for a look at the early spring flowers. There are several habitats to see in this area. Last year we identified about 100 plants in a couple of hours. We will likely see bloodroot, bird's foot violet, toothwort and many more. Bring something hot to drink and a snack. This will be easy walking. The group will meet early to carpool to Arcadia or you can meet us at the Jennings Creek parking lot about 10:30 a.m.



## Monday, March 26

**Time:** 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

**Meet:** Roanoke Church of Christ, 2606 Brandon Ave., S.W.

## Saturday, April 7

**Time:** 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

**Meet:** Bojangles Restaurant at Botetourt Commons off U.S. 220 North of Daleville

## Saturday, April 14

**Time:** 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

**Meet:** Orange Market off I81 Exit 141 in Salem at Va. 419 and Thompson Memorial Highway

## Monday, April 23

**Time:** 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

**Meet:** Roanoke Church of Christ, 2606 Brandon Ave., S.W.

## Club Meeting: Habitat at Home

Long time member and Master Naturalist Butch Kelly will present a slide program on establishing backyard habitats that are recognized by the state Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The program will discuss attracting wildlife and butterflies to your yard using native plants. There will be handouts for folks to take home to get started.



## Field Trip: Lapsley's Run



Twin leaf  
*Jeffersonia diphylla*

This trip proves to be one of our best spring wildflower outings. The area offers wonderful early spring flowers such as bluebells, trout lilies and Thomas Jefferson's twin leaf. We will also see a beautiful waterfall and maybe some hawks and golden eagles.

## Field Trip: Wildflowers & Waterfalls at the Nature Conservancy's Blake Preserve

The Blake Preserve is a new Nature Conservancy preserve established in 2010. It is not normally open to the public. This field trip will feature the sparkling Mill Creek in Montgomery County. The walking will be mostly flat, but some footing is a little tricky, so wear sturdy shoes. The walk will be along Mill Creek which leads to several limestone falls with lots of wildflowers along the way. Bring a lunch and rain gear.

## Club Meeting: 'Wheat & Barley Staple Foods May Be in Danger.'

Dr. Melissa Keller graduated from Roanoke College. After working for the Memphis park system she returned to Virginia Tech to work on her Ph.D. in plant Pathology. She received her degree last year having worked with diseases of wheat and barley. Her research has significance in learning how these diseases are transferred and how they impact our food supply. She is an adjunct professor in the biology department at Virginia Western Community College.

## Saturday, April 28

**Time:** 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

**Leader:** Michael Belcher

**Contact:** 989-6384

**Meet:** Orange Market  
off I-81 Exit 141 in Salem  
at Va. 419 and Thompson  
Memorial Highway

## Field Trip: Geology and Wildflowers of the Falls Ridge Preserve

This is a special joint field trip with the New River Valley Chapter. John Ford, a member of both chapters, will share his knowledge of the natural history of Falls Ridge. Falls Ridge is a 700 acre preserve in the Iron-to section of Montgomery County. It features an old lime kiln and stream along with a unique waterfall. The preserve is home to many species of wildflowers. Some of the species include goldenseal, trillium, leather flower, and lots of buckeye trees.

There will be about 1.5 miles of walking. The trails are wide and not rough, although some parts are up hill. Wear sturdy shoes and bring rain gear and a lunch. It should be fun to meet the folks from the New River chapter.



Red Trillium  
*Trillium erectum*

## Saturday, May 12

**Time:** 9 a.m. - noon

**Leader:** Rudy Albert  
774-2279

and Marshall Daniels  
721-8304

**Meet:** Virginia Western  
Community College parking  
lot behind the arboretum

## BRWFS' Annual Wildflower and Native Plant Sale



Virginia  
Bluebells  
*Mertensia virginica*

This is the club's only fundraiser. Each year, the stock of plants varies, but we usually have about 30 different species to sell, including bloodroot, trilliums, twin leaf, spring beauty, spiderwort, jack-in-the-pulpits and native ferns. Besides being more beneficial to wildlife than non-native species, many of these plants have evolved to grow in shady areas, to be more resilient to insect damage and to be more tolerant of drought and poor soil.

## Saturday, May 19

**Time:** 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Leader:** Butch Kelly

**Contact:** 384-7429

**Meet:** Bonsack Kroger  
on U.S. 460

## Field Trip: Claytor Nature Center

The Claytor Nature Center is a facility owned and managed by Lynchburg College. It provides a varied set of habitats. There are several trails through woodlands, wetlands and meadows. The area has a lot of diverse plant life. There will be a staff person to show us around and share with us the plans for future development.

**For directions from Lynchburg, see page 8.**

**Monday, May 21**

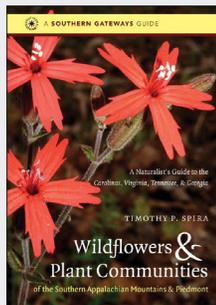
**Time:** 7:30 - 9 p.m.

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

**Meet:** Massengill Auditorium  
at Roanoke College

## **Wildflowers and Plant Communities of Southern Appalachia**



The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and Roanoke College are proud to host special guest Dr. Timothy Spira. Spira will present a program about his recent book “Wildflowers and Plant Communities of the Southern Appalachian Mountains and Piedmont.” We are expecting a large crowd and are thus having the meeting in the Massengill Auditorium at Roanoke College.

Unfortunately, there is no close handicapped parking, but people can be dropped off and picked up at the auditorium.

**Last week of May  
First week of June**

## **Rhododendrons on the Blue Ridge Parkway**

The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society is not leading a trip here this year but that doesn't mean you can't enjoy the beauty on your own. Some of the best places to see Rosebay and Catawba rhododendrons are on the Parkway, just north of the Peaks of Otter.

You also can enjoy a nice breakfast or lunch at the Peaks of Otter Lodge.



Rosebay  
rhododendron  
*Rhododendron  
maximum*

## **Some other events you may be interested in**

### **Wednesday Garden Walks & Talks - Free!**

All run noon to 1 p.m. - meet at the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion at Virginia Tech. No registration required. Parking passes available at Pavilion for visitors.

### **Seminar: Native Trees for the Landscape with Dr. Alex Niemiera**

Thursday, Feb. 16, 6 -7:30 p.m. Location TBD.  
\$10 Friends of the Garden/\$15 general public.  
Niemiera will present an array of U.S. native tree species and the pros and cons of using these in our landscapes.

### **Spring Weed Walk**

April 11 noon -1 p.m. with Angela Post,  
Manager of the Virginia Tech Weed ID Lab.

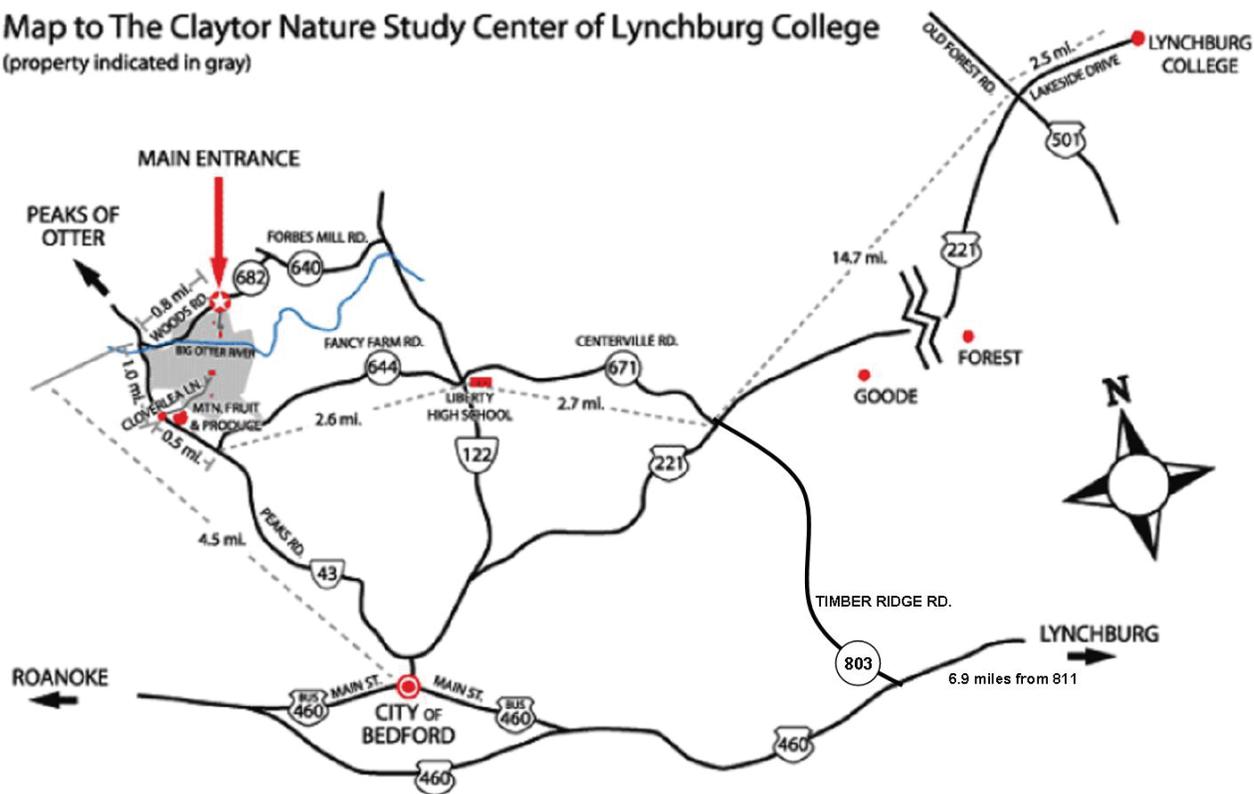
### **Hort Club Spring Plant Sale**

April 26, 27, and 28 - plus barbecue by the  
AgEcon/NAMA club

**For more information** about these events  
or others, visit:

[www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html](http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html)

**Map to The Claytor Nature Study Center of Lynchburg College**  
(property indicated in gray)



## Directions to Claytor Nature Center of Lynchburg College

The club is planning a trip to the Claytor Nature Study Center of Lynchburg College on Saturday, May 19. **(Please see Events Calendar, page 6)**

Those attending from the Roanoke area can meet us at 9 a.m. at the Bonsck Kroger off U.S. 460.

However, if you are coming from the Lynchburg/Bedford area, meet us at 9:45 a.m. at the Claytor Nature Center.

Here are the directions:

- From the intersection of Old Forest Road/ US 501 Expressway and US 221 (Lakeside Drive/Forest Road) drive

south toward Bedford. 14.7 miles

- Turn right on Centerville Road/Va. 671 and drive 2.7 miles.

- Turn Right on Va. 122 (Big Island Highway), and drive about 1.5 miles, crossing the Big Otter River.

- Turn LEFT on Va. 640, Forbes Mill Road and drive ca. 1.5 miles

- Turn LEFT on Va. 682, Woods Road, and drive approximately 1 mile

- Road will turn to gravel immediately before the entrance to Claytor Nature Study Center on the LEFT.

- Drive to bottom of drive and park at the Education and Research Building.

# Tips for Wildflower Gardens

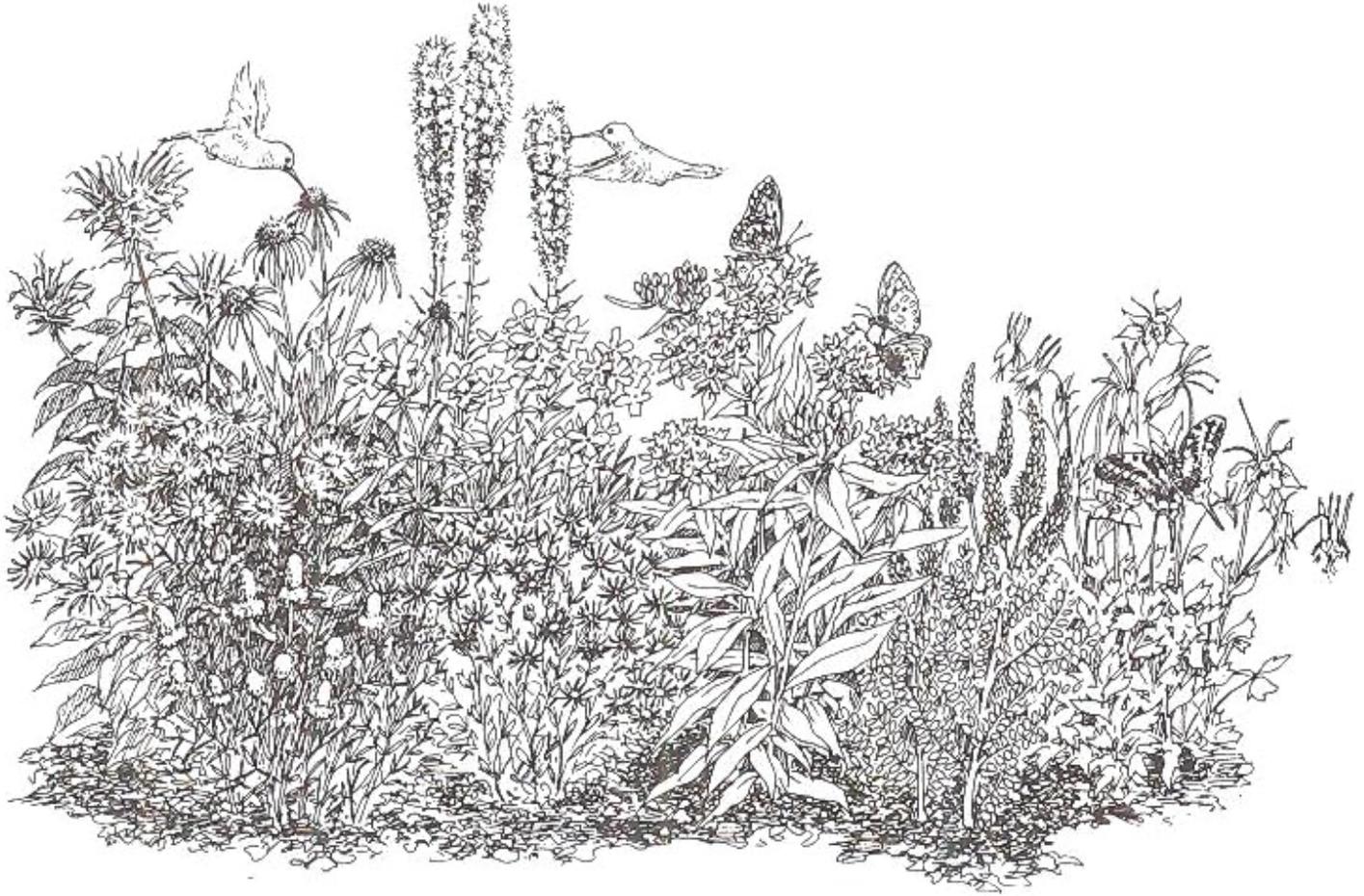
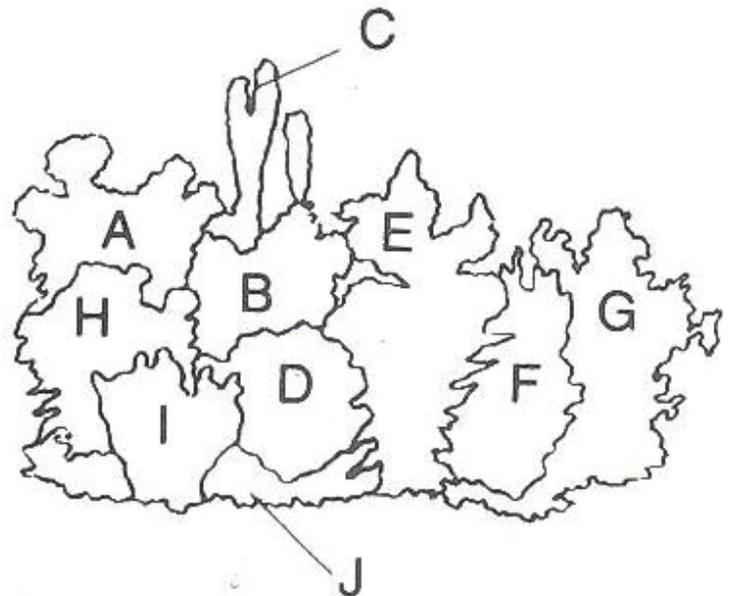


Illustration courtesy of "Storey's Basic Country Skills: A Practical Guide to Self-Reliance"

## Hummingbird and Butterfly Garden

- A. Wild Bergamot, Bee Balm or Coneflowers (white or purple)
- B. Gayfeather/Blazing Star
- C. Tall Goldenrod or Bellflowers
- D. Bleeding Heart, Wild Geranium or Columbine
- E. Butterflyweed, Joe-pye weed or New York Ironweed
- F. Leadplant, Black-eyed Susans, or Evening Primrose or Sundrops
- G. Phlox, Blue Flax or Blue Lobelia
- H. New England Aster
- I. Touch-Me-Not
- J. Coreopsis, Cardinal Flower or Spiderwort



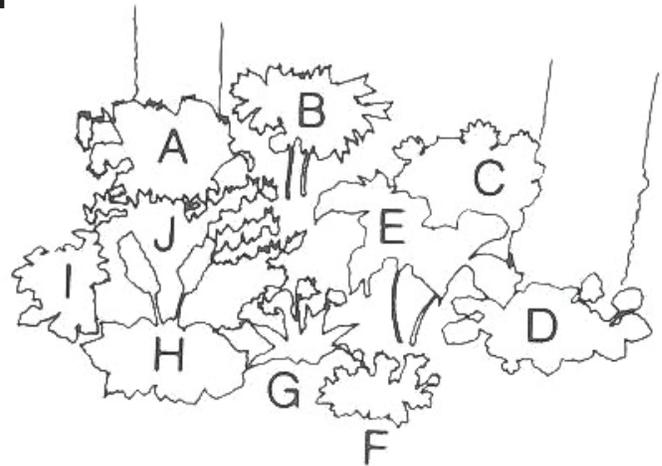
# Tips for Wildflower Gardens



Illustration courtesy of "Storey's Basic Country Skills: A Practical Guide to Self-Reliance"

## Early Spring Woodland Garden

- A. Columbine, Wild Geranium, or Virginia Bluebell
- B. Mayapple, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, or Solomon's seal
- C. Bloodroot or Twin Leaf
- D. Common Blue Violet or Birdsfoot Violet
- E. Trilliums, any woodland variety
- F. Hepatica, Sharp- or Round-lobed
- G. Trout Lily, Spiderwort, or Wood Poppy/Celandine
- H. Foam Flower or Galax
- I. Wild Ginger, Lily of the Valley, or Canada Mayflower
- J. Dutchman's Breeches, Bleeding Heart, or Squirrel's Corn



\* Most of these plants will keep their flowers for a few days to a few weeks, but the foliage should last into the fall. One exception is the Mayapple. It will die back in the hot days of June. Consider mixing in some True or False Solomon Seal or Wood Phlox in that area.

\*\* In addition to these plants, consider mixing in a few ferns to add height and texture to your garden.

# Tips for Wildflower Gardens

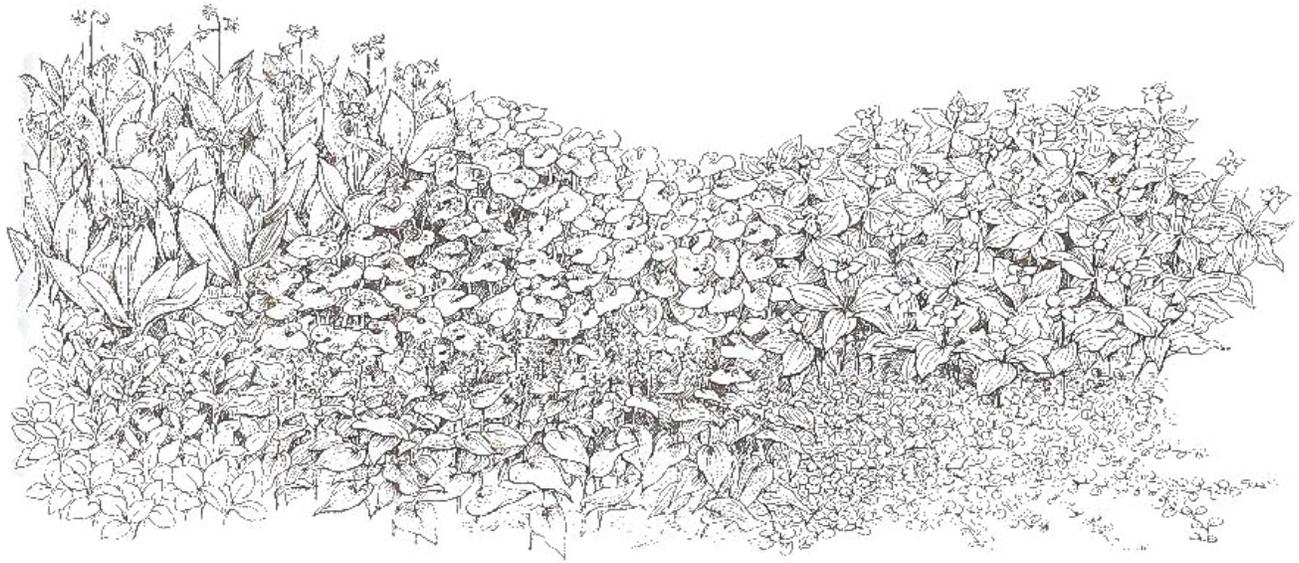
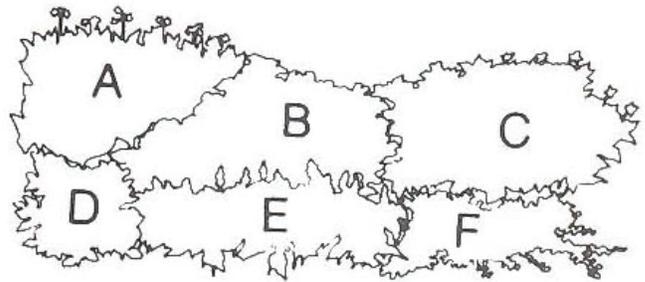


Illustration courtesy of "Storey's Basic Country Skills: A Practical Guide to Self-Reliance"

## Ground cover garden in semi-shady to shady areas

- A. White or Yellow Clintonia or Trout lilly
- B. Wild Ginger or Galax
- C. Bunchberry dogwood  
or Virginia Bluebells
- D. Wintergreen or Catnip or Catmint
- E. Lily of the Valley or Foam Flower  
or Running Cedar
- F. Partridgeberry or Chickweed



\* In addition to these ground covers, consider mixing in a few ferns to add height and texture to your garden.

Cinnamon fern  
Christmas fern  
Ebony Spleenwort  
Lady fern  
Maidenhair fern  
New York fern

# President's Letter:

Continued from Page 1

take part in our spring wildflower sale. Marshall Daniels has been working with the VA Hospital to provide lots of native plants. Based on sales last spring, we have dropped some species but added others. So, be sure to come see what is there. We also have included some planting guides in this newsletter that you may find helpful. **(Pages 9-11)**

We have an extra special guest joining us this year, biologist and author Timothy P. Spira. He recently published a wonderful new guide for Appalachian plants that groups the flowers by habitat as you would

find them in nature. **(Review page 3)**. To accommodate what we expect to be a large crowd to see him, we will have our May meeting at Roanoke College. **(Schedule change on page 7)**

We also want to welcome our new members. **(Page 1)**. Over the past couple of years, we have grown to become the fourth largest chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, and we are still growing. So as winter warms into spring, come out, bring a friend and add your voice to the enjoyment of nature!

P.S. Don't forget to check our web site:  
[www.brwfs.org](http://www.brwfs.org)

## Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

P.O. Box 20385

Roanoke, Va 24018

