

Wildflower of the Year
Virginia Native Plant Society



Wild Ginger *Asarum canadense*
Learn more about the plant, Page 8

Greetings from the President

By Rich Crites

Greetings to all members of the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Association.

I am Rich Crites, president of the chapter. This is my third or fourth time in this position. Maybe, I'll get it right this time!

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new members to the chapter.

And to the old members, "Welcome back and let's have a good year."

I don't know about you, but I almost have had my fill of cold weather.

When I was younger growing up in Illinois, I looked forward to winter and snow so I could go back in the woods and track the animals.

But now, the cold seems so much colder and the winds seem so much stronger, I want to spend a lot of my days inside.

As we look forward to 2011, let's hope we are blessed with warm weather and good amounts of precipitation so the wildflowers show their stuff!

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President's Letter

By Rich Crites

As I look out my window this January morning, there is a light snow falling — a reminder that winter is still in control. It will be for a while, but spring is coming.

As the photo period increases for this part of the earth, the additional light and heat will bring out the buds on the trees and the birds will start their courtships.

When I walk in Garst Mill Park, I have noticed the buds on the red maples seem to be a little bit larger and the buds on the willows are starting to bulge. Also, I've seen several flocks of robins, with some singing. The cardinals are starting to sing as well. Let's hope we have an early spring!

Thanks to Michael Belcher for assuming the newsletter duty this year. Butch Kelly has done it for several years and was looking for a replacement. Thanks Butch. If you see some things you can do to help, let us know!!

At our chapter board meeting, several activities were planned through May. At that time we will have another meeting to finish the plans for the year. **See our calendar on page 4.**

We will have meetings on the fourth Monday of February, March, April and May. These meetings will be at the Roanoke Church of Christ at 2606 Brandon Avenue beginning at 7 p.m. We will need

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

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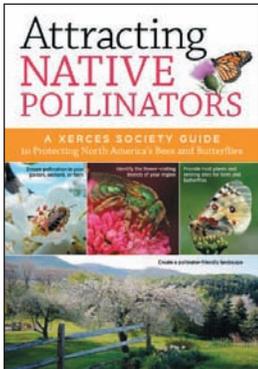
some members to bring finger foods.

Several field trips are also scheduled. Usually these go, unless it is pouring rain. You may need to bring some food and perhaps bring your camera.

Also, we will have our **annual wildflower sale Saturday, May 14** in the parking lot near the arboretum at Virginia Western Community College. Tell your friends, and if you have some plants for the sale, we will need them.

Let's make this a really good year!

A new Web site is getting all the buzz



**“ATTRACTING NATIVE POLLINATORS:
The Xerces Society Guide
to Conserving North
American Bees and
Butterflies and
Their Habitat”**
by the Xerces Society.

Pollinators: The Xerces Society Guide to Conserving North American Bees and Butterflies and Their Habitat,” by the Xerces Society.

The book is designed to help increase understanding about pollinators and to help you create and manage pollinator habitats.

— Courtesy of the Great Sunflower Project Newsletter

The Great Sunflower Project (www.greatsunflower.org) is partnering with “Your Garden Show” www.yourgardenshow.com.

Both sites allow gardeners to come together to share information and ideas about all things green.

In the near future, you will be able to go either to the Great Sunflower Web site or to Your Garden Show to upload bee observation data, get ideas about growing your bee-friendly garden and see how pollination service in your garden compares with others.

The Great Sunflower Project has also teamed up with Renee Shepherd of Renee’s Garden Seeds to make ordering Lemon Queen sunflowers a breeze.

Shepherd is organizing a beautiful array of wildly attractive pollinator plants that will make your garden hum with activity.

Also, there is a new book coming out in March, titled “Attracting Native

Some other useful Web sites

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society
www.brwfs.org

Virginia Native Plant Society
www.vnps.org

American Bird Conservancy
www.abcbirds.org

Audubon at Home
web4.audubon.org/bird/at_home/

Butterflies and Moths of North America
www.butterfliesandmoths.org

Virginia Game and Fish Outdoor Reports
www.dgif.virginia.gov/outdoor-report

Online field guides
www.enature.com

Great Sunflower Project
www.greatsunflower.org

Your Garden Show
www.yourgardenshow.com

Saturday, Feb. 19

Time: 1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
early dinner afterward

Leader: Butch Kelly

Contact: 384-7429

Meet: Homeplace Restaurant

Snow Date: Saturday, Feb. 26

**“A Look At Winter and a Hint of Spring”
Trout Creek, Catawba Valley Field Trip**

This walk will be an easy stroll along Trout Creek in Catawba. Learn how to identify trees in winter. We will show folks how to use a very simple twig key (See story page 7). Also we will take a look at skunk cabbage with a little folklore thrown in. The group will culminate the days activities with an early supper at the Homeplace Restaurant.



Skunk cabbage
Symplocarpus foetidus

Monday, Feb. 28

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

Leader: Rich Crites

Contact: 774-4518

Meet: Roanoke Church
of Christ, 2606 Brandon Ave.

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society meeting

We will watch a DVD of Doug Tallamy’s presentation regarding the importance of native plants to biodiversity in the United States. Dr. Tallamy is the author of “Bringing Nature Home,” which outlines his research at the University of Delaware regarding the importance of planting native plants in our urban and suburban communities.

Saturday, March 26

Time: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Leader: Rich Crites

Contact: 774-4518

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

Arcadia Field Trip



Bloodroot
*Sanguinaria
canadensis*

Join us for a look at the early spring ephemerals. There are several habitats to see in this area, so there should be a large variety of plants. 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.

However, you can meet the group in Arcadia at 10:30 by

taking I-81 to the Arcadia Exit north of Buchanan. Pass over the James River and through the village of Arcadia. After crossing the bridge over Jennings Creek, park on right at first pull off.

Monday, March 28

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

Leader: Rich Crites

Contact: 774-4518

Meet: Roanoke Church of Christ, 2606 Brandon Ave.

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society meeting Cooking with Native Plants by Chef Mark Crim



Learn how to add some zest to your cooking using native plants and wildflowers. Special guest Mark Crim, executive chef of Blackwater Cafe at Smith Mountain Lake will demonstrate how to cook with native plants and wild flowers and will have dishes for sampling.

Saturday, April 16

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

Leader: Rich Crites

Contact: 774-4518

Meet: Bonsack Kroger parking lot off U.S. 460.

Buffalo Creek Field Trip

Rich Crites will lead this close up look at one of the Virginia Native Plant Society's Registry Sites. This area has bluebells, dwarf ginseng, walking ferns, dwarf iris and many more. For people coming from the Lynchburg area, we will meet at the Sheetz at U.S. 460 and Va. 811 at 9:30 a.m.



Virginia bluebells
Mertensia virginica

Saturday, April 23

Time: 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Leader: Marshall Daniels

Contact: 721-8304

Meet: Booker T. Washington Monument's parking lot

Booker T. Washington Field Trip

Join co-leaders Marshall Daniels and Rich Crites to enjoy some of the spring wildflowers along Jack-O-Lantern Trail. Spring beauty, foam-flower, mayapples, bluebells, and pink lady slipper are a few of the many varieties we might see. For those of you who want to car pool from Roanoke, meet Rich Crites at the Lowes parking lot off U.S. 220 south of Roanoke at 9 a.m. Moderate walking. If desired, bring lunch. Picnic tables are available.

Monday, April 25

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

Leader: Rich Crites

Contact: 774-4518

Meet: Roanoke Church of Christ, 2606 Brandon Ave.

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society meeting Healing Garden, a therapeutic garden for veterans



Special guest Sandra Lane, horticulturist with the Salem Veterans Affairs Medical Center, will talk about therapeutic gardens and how they help people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

der, dementia, traumatic brain injury, cardiac rehabilitation and physical therapy. The veterans garden will have a pavilion, walking paths, green house, and water features.

Saturday, May 7

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

Leader: Butch Kelly

Contact: 384-7429

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

Saturday, May 14

Time: 9 a.m. - noon

Leader: Rich Crites

Contact: 774-4518

Meet: Virginia Western Community College parking lot behind the arboretum and greenhouse

Monday, May 23

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

Leader: Rich Crites

Contact: 774-4518

Meet: Roanoke Church of Christ, 2606 Brandon Ave.

Saturday, May 28

Time: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Leader: Rudy Albert

Contact: 774-2279

Meet: Peaks of Otter Visitor Center parking lot.

Roaring Run Furnace Field Trip

Join Butch Kelly and Rich Crites for a field trip to Roaring Run Furnace in the George Washington-Jefferson National Forest. We should see a wide variety of plants, including some shale barren species. The trip includes a nice stream and picturesque waterfalls. Come prepared for some trail walking. The trail is rolling, but not steep. Bring a lunch, sun screen, sturdy shoes and rain gear. Because of limited parking, we will carpool from Botetourt Commons.

Spring Wildflower Plant Sale

This is the club's only fund raiser. Each year, the stock of plants varies, but we usually have as many as 30 different species to sell, including bloodroot, trilliums, twin leaf, spring beauties, spiderwort, jack-in-the pulpits, and maiden hair and ebony ferns, to name a few. Besides being more beneficial to the wildlife than non-native species, many of these plants have evolved to grow in shady areas and to be more tolerant of drought and poor soil and to be resistant to insect damage. If you have plants to donate, be there by 8:30 a.m.

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society meeting

TBA

Sorry about this folks, but details are still being worked out. We will announce details at future club meetings as well as by e-mail.

Rhododendron Day on the Blue Ridge Parkway

Meet Rudy Albert at the parking lot at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center. Through bad luck, we have missed the peak bloom time for the last couple of years and are trying this field trip a little earlier. If we are lucky, we will catch spectacular scenes of Catawba Rhododendron as well as many other plants. Last year we still identified more than 100 plants. Some folks may want to join the early birds for a breakfast at the Peaks of Otter Lodge at 8 a.m. We will be overlook hopping, so walking will be at a minimum.

Practice your plant ID skills when branches are bare

By Kathy Van Mullekom
(Hampton Roads) Daily Press

It's exciting to see the buds on trees swelling, each ready to burst into bloom with fresh flowers or foliage.

Learning to recognize deciduous trees and shrubs when they are bare is one of the best ways to hone your plant identification skills.

Look closely now and you will see plump buds on redbuds, paw-paws, dogwoods and flame azaleas — see photos of these at dailypress.com/digginblog.

Virginia's native bitternut hickory, also known as pignut hickory, is easily recognized, according to Helen Hamilton, president of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society.

“Like those of pecan trees, the buds of bitternut hickory are naked, not covered by bud scales,” she says. “What we are seeing is actually minute powdery-yellow leaves.”

In April, male flowers appear as long, graceful catkins, and wind pollinates the flowers. The bitternut hickory leaves are compound, the small leaflets usually number seven to 11, and are usually hairy underneath. In autumn, the leaves are bright yellow, and are retained on the tree longer than other hickories.

Bitternut hickory is one of the largest in



Courtesy of buroakbotanicals.blogspot.com

Winter Twigs, from left, are black oak (*Quercus velutina*), bitternut hickory (*Carya cordiformis*), tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and Ohio buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*).

its species, growing 50 to 100 feet tall. It typically develops several primary ascending limbs, forming a nice arched shape.

The tree's four-winged, cylindrical nuts have a thin, rough husk which splits only to the middle. They are so bitter that even squirrels avoid them.

Bitternut hickory is common throughout eastern and central United States and Canada. The tree grows in a variety of habitats, from rich, moist lowlands to drier uplands.

In nature, it furnishes food for the larvae of giant moths, including the luna, and the regal moth, which comes from a fearsome caterpillar known as the hickory horned devil.

For more about native plants visit claytonvnps.org.

“If you have a garden and a library,
you have everything you need.”

— Cicero

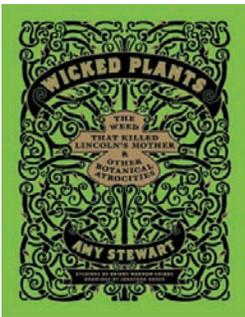
Read anything good lately?

If you have discovered a great book about native plants or gardening, share it with us.

“WICKED PLANTS: The Weed That Killed Lincoln’s Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities.”

By Amy Stewart.

Algonquin Books. 236 pages. \$18.95



If you are looking for a fun read that is easy to skip through, check out “Wicked Plants” by Amy Stewart. It’s a collection of short stories about infamous plant poisonings — some accidental and some not. Stewart describes more than two hundred of Mother Nature’s “most appalling” creations in an A to Z listing of plants that kill, maim, intoxicate, and otherwise offend. She even describes poison-plant gardens, one of the most famous of which was used in the Harry Potter movies.

Think of it as a field guide to plants for a murder-mystery writer. It’s a morbidly fun way to pass the time during dreary weather.

— Michael Belcher

VNPS’ Wildflower of the Year

Wild ginger *Asarum canadense*

Plant Type: A herbaceous perennial that can reach 12 inches tall.

Leaves: The two heart-shaped basal leaves are up to 6 inches wide and have a shiny surface. The leaf stem is hairy at the base.



Wild Ginger
Asarum canadense

Flowers: The brown to dark purple flowers have three regular parts and are up to 1.5 inches long. Blooms appear in early spring and are at the base of the plant hidden by the leaves.

Habitat: Rich woods.

Range: New Brunswick to South Carolina to Missouri.

Because the plant spreads via the roots, wild ginger sometimes grows in dense stands. You can test its identity by scratching the root. A ginger-like smell on your finger will be proof.

Lore: Native Americans used the root to flavor foods much as real ginger is used (This plant is not related to the ginger in your grocery). It was also thought to protect people from poisoned or spoiled meat.

Medical Uses: It was used for treatment of digestive disorders, especially gas, and in a poultice on sores. The dried powdered leaves were used to promote sneezing. Often it was used to promote sweating, reduce fever and for coughs and sore throats. These uses may be somewhat valid as the plant has antimicrobial properties.

— Source: 2bnthewild.com

Biologists call for regulation of rare-plant sales

Story courtesy of Media Newswire

People are increasingly obtaining endangered or threatened plants, often illegally, and moving them outside their native range, according to an article published recently in the journal *Nature* by Patrick Shirey and Gary Lamberti in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Notre Dame.

According to their research last year, nearly 10 percent of the 753 plants listed as threatened and endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act are being advertised for sale online.

Many buyers are horticulturists who want flowers for their gardens. But anecdotal evidence suggests that online shoppers include individuals and citizen groups involved in ‘assisted colonization’ projects. In other words, species at risk of extinction are moved to non-native environments in which they might thrive — in the face of climate change or commercial development, for instance.

However, Shirey urges government agencies to monitor translocations because of the risks associated with introducing new species. The widespread transfer of endangered or threatened plants poses environmental and economic risks.

Shirey and Lamberti cite other studies

reporting that damage from invasive plant species costs more than \$30 billion in the United States by damaging crops, pastures and ecosystems. One example is the Australian paperbark tree, which is a noxious weed in the United States that causes millions of dollars of damage, although its native habitats in Australia are considered threatened because of coastal development. The transfer of plants also can spread plant pathogens and pests.

Shirey and Lamberti warn of the dangers of unchecked species redistribution and urge the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to better monitor the movement of plants and enforce existing legislation.

As a first step in enforcing existing legislation, Shirey says the fish and wildlife service should establish surveillance teams to monitor online transactions. Secondly, the agency should restrict consumers’ ability to purchase hybrids bred from endangered species which have serious implications — good and bad — for wild populations. On a worldwide scale, exporting and importing countries should ensure the enforcement of domestic laws such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

For more information, visit
www.nd.edu/~strmeco/

Welcome New Members

Mary Boone of Bedford

Kris Lloyd of Lynchburg

Joe Coulter of Forest

Sally Noble of Bedford

William Goodman of Lynchburg

Norma Jean Rist of Lynchburg

Mary Lexa of Forest

Jack & Sharon Curtin of Lynchburg

Sam & Janet Lin of Lynchburg

Frances Kemper of Lynchburg

Carol Lusk of Forest

Joyce Ratcliffe of Concord

So long, farewell and good luck

Goodbye to **Bryan Wender**. Bryan recently moved out of state. He was the steward for the VA Dept. of Natural Heritage. He was active in our club, having led several trips to Heritage sites. Bryan will be missed.

Tell us what you think

You may have noticed that there have been a few tweaks to the newsletter.

We've made the print a little bigger to make it easier to read and added a few more items and photos that we thought you might be interested in.

However, if you see something you don't like or don't see something you would like, let us know. Maybe there is a good walk with lots of native plants that you would like to suggest. Or maybe you have a really good photo from a previous field trip. Do you want to recommend a plant-related book, Web site or DVD?

If so, email them to us at:

michael.belcher@roanoke.com

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

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