

## Letter from the president

By Rich Crites

Well, Irene missed us and as a matter of fact, she didn't even bring us any rain!

As my grandson would say, "What a bummer."

My yard and the plants in it are crying "UNCLE". I have been trying to keep things alive, but I am losing the battle with some.

I hope all have had a good summer.

Since the last newsletter, we have had some neat field trips, and some members had special vacations.

The Buffalo Mountain field trip had a good number of participants with more than 100 plants being recorded and the treat of seeing a unique ecosystem.

On August 13 several chapter members attended the Catawba Community Festival and enjoyed a field trip on the Catawba Sustainability Center.

Then the next Saturday, Aug. 20, a large number, 30, participated in the BRWFS scheduled trip to Paint Bank/Virginia 600. We had a regular convoy!

We enjoyed seeing the buffalo farm, and even though it was dry, we found almost 100 different plants by checking out the ditches, the bog at Interior and other moist areas. We then came back to the Swinging Bridge Restaurant at Paint Bank. Some had buffalo burgers, stew or barbecue, while others had other preferences. We not only all sat together on the screened porch, but we helped Malcolm and Jimmie Black celebrate their 64th

<b>President's Letter</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter Officers</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>New Members</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Request for Photos</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Calendar Events</b> .....	<b>4-5</b>
<b>Useful web sites</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Plant Spotlight</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>In Memoriam</b> .....	<b>8</b>

**Please see Letter, 2**

# Letter

Continued from 2

wedding anniversary. What a great day.

This past week we were saddened to learn of Dora Lee Ellington's passing. She and her husband, Sam, were two of the original founding members of our chapter. They were a special couple. She could make rocks grow! (Note Frieda Toler's article in this newsletter).

Last Saturday, Aug. 27, our chapter met at the home of Butch and Betty Kelly. About 30 people showed up for good food and good fellowship.

Even though it was dry at their home, we were able to check out their wild-flower garden. In addition to seeing the plants, we were able to see a monarch larva and chrysalis on the milkweeds.

A big thank you to Butch and Betty for your hospitality.

The picnic was preceded by the chapter board meeting to plan out the rest of the year and start next year.

The schedule can be found on pages 4 and 5. Again, I hope all had a good, albeit hot, summer and are looking forward to our fall activities with the cooler weather.

See you on down the trail with our beautiful fall colors and some GOKs (God Only Knows plants).

## Club Officers

<b>President</b> .....	<b>Rich Crites</b> (540) 774-4518 carinalisr@cox.net
<b>Vice President</b> .....	<b>Rudy Albert</b> (540) 774-2279 rudyalbert38@aol.com
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<b>Newsletter</b> .....	<b>Michael Belcher</b> (540) 989-6384 michael.belcher@roanoke.com

## Welcome New Members

- Debbie Lovelace** from Roanoke, VA
- Linda Ardrey** transfer from Jefferson Chapter in Charlottesville
- Carol Whiteside** of Roanoke Welcome back
- Ann Allen** of Vinton
- Judy Kniskern** of Vinton

# Share your digital photos with us

By Michael Belcher

The club has created an account with flickr.com to share pictures of wildflowers from our field trips, walks and backyards.

To see the photographs, go to the web site **www.flickr.com** and simply search Blue Ridge Wildflower Society.

Or go to the club's web site, **www.brwfs.org** and click on the flickr link.

Right now we only have a few photos posted, so we are waiting for you to add to our collection. As photos come in, we hope to arrange them into plant families. But we also might categorize them by specific field trips, flower color or even habitat to allow people to more easily identify them and to serve as a learning tool.

There are two ways to share your digital photos.

1 . Send them to us via e-mail or jump drive.

2. Create your own free flickr account and “join” the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society Group.

## **If you e-mail them to us:**

You can e-mail them to me at michael.belcher@roanoke.com, and I will post them on the club's account.

If you have a lot of photos, it may be easier to copy them onto a jump drive/flash drive and bring it a club meeting or field trip. I will download them and return the jump drive/flash drive to you.

If you send us photos, please make sure each photo is at least 1024 x 768 pixels. The larger size of (2 MP) 1600 x 1200 pixels is even better. There is little need for anything bigger than (4MP) 2272 x X 1704 pixels.

By sending photos of this size, it allows us to convert the photo for use in the newsletter.

Also, please include the common name (and if you know it, the scientific name), when and where you shot the plant, and your name if you would like to be credited.

If you choose to donate your photos to the club this way, you may see them again in the newsletter, in a slide presentation at a club meeting or even in a sign or ad for the club.

Being an educational group, we are allowing other wildlife enthusiasts, students and anyone else to download these photos for free to use as they need.

## **If you create your own flickr account:**

You can create your own free flickr account and “join” the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society Group. ( A flickr account does require you to create a yahoo e-mail, but this is also free)

If you create your own account, you retain ownership and the rights to all of your photos.

Also there is no size requirement. Smaller files of 640 x 480 pixels or 800 x 600 pixels will work just fine.

**Sunday, Sept. 11**

**Time:** 1 p.m.

**Leader:** Virginia Klara

**Contact:** Michael Belcher  
989-6384

**Meet:** Parking lot next to Play It Again Sports in front of the Lowe's store off U.S. 220.

**Field Trip: Edible and Medicinal Plants in the Wild**

Virginia Klara will share her knowledge of medicinal and edible plants in the woods and meadows along the trails of the Smart View Picnic area, milepost 154 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. There will be some easy walking.

Virginia is a long time BRWS member. She is a gardener and volunteer. She will meet the group at the Smart View Picnic area about 1:45 p.m.

**Please Note: This is a Sunday field trip.**

**Monday, Sept. 26**

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

**Meet:** Roanoke Church of Christ  
2606 Brandon Ave.

**Chapter Meeting: The Mushroom World**

Learn about the edible and poisonous world of mushrooms, featuring Skip "Toadstool" Taliaferro. Refreshments after the meeting.



Morels

**Saturday, Oct. 15**

**Time:** 9 a.m.

**Leader:** Butch Kelly

**Contact:** Please RSVP  
384-7429 or  
butch2410@msn.com

**Meet:** Orange Market at Thompson Ave. and Va. 311 in Salem

**Work Day/Field Trip: Help save wetland orchids**

The purpose of the work day will be to clear the woody material in a bog off Va. 600 to enhance the growth of orchids, grass of Parnassus and other rare plants. Bring loppers, water and lunch. Wear boots, long sleeves and slacks.

If we have a large group we can get done quickly and might have time to visit two special areas in the Jefferson National Forest.



Yellow Fringed Orchid  
*Platanthera ciliaris*

**Monday Oct. 24**

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

**Meet:** Roanoke Church  
of Christ  
2606 Brandon Ave.

## **Chapter Meeting: Nature's Beauty: Unnoticed, under-appreciated or from a different point of view**

We'll take a look at nature's beauty in places where we usually expect to find it, sometimes in an expected way, but occasionally from a different point of view (some of these will come with a quiz). We'll also find it some places that are often overlooked or even completely ignored.



Can you tell what it is?  
See bottom of page 7  
for answer.

**Sunday, Nov. 6**

**Time:** 2 p.m.

**Location:** Randolph College  
Martin Science  
Hall, Room 225

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

## **Lynchburg Area meeting at Randolph College.**

Rich Crites will give a slide presentation to club members in the Lynchburg area.

**Monday, Nov. 28**

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Leader:** Rich Crites

**Contact:** 774-4518

**Meet:** Roanoke Church  
of Christ  
2606 Brandon Ave.

## **Chapter Meeting: Native Medicinal Flowers of the Shenandoah Valley**

Rebecca Boone will present a brief slide program titled "Native Medicinal Wildflowers of the Shenandoah Valley." She will follow the slides with an art exercise. Rebecca claims that one way to remember plants



is to sketch them and "anyone can do it". This should be a fun evening. Rebecca is a teacher in Botetourt County. She wrote a book titled "Native Medicinal Plants of the Shenandoah Valley." This was part of a research paper she wrote in a graduate program at Hollins University.

There also will be an exchange of wildflower seeds after the meeting along with refreshments and fellowship.

# Two new plant guides online to help you identify flowers

By Butch Kelly

There are two new plant keys available on line. While these keys are not scientifically based, they do make it easy for non-professional botanists to key out plants.

They are both very user friendly and two more tools for plant lovers to take a close up view of plants and try their hand at identifying plants.

The nice thing is both keys are free. They cost nothing but time to look at and study one of our favorite subjects, wild plants.

## **[www.mississippi.com](http://www.mississippi.com)**

The first is Ferns of Mississippi.

This key is very easy to use. It includes more than 60 species.

Simply photograph your specimen or take notes on leaves, reproductive shoots and other key identifying characteristics.

The key provides photos from many different angles to help you identify your specimen.

It also includes a glossary to help with terminology.

It has good illustrations of plant form and leaf arrangement.

It uses multiple common names as well as Latin names.

The key includes many species found here in Virginia.

## **[www.southeasternflora.com](http://www.southeasternflora.com)**

This key to southeastern flora includes nearly 1400 species of wildflowers and over 23,000 photos to help with identification.

The site includes a key, and full color photos from every angle possible from basal leaves to close-ups of blossoms.

The site also includes a glossary which does a great job of describing plant parts and leaf arrangement. It lists species name, common name and plant family.

# Letting its fruit flag fly

During autumn, Virginia creeper leavers turn brilliant red, a signal for nomadic birds to stop for an in-flight meal.

If “leaves of three, let it be” is good advice for poison ivy, then “leaves of five, let it thrive” should be the maxim for Virginia creeper.

The native vine plays a major role in feeding fruit-eating songbirds on their way south, especially thrushes, gray catbirds and common yellowthroats.

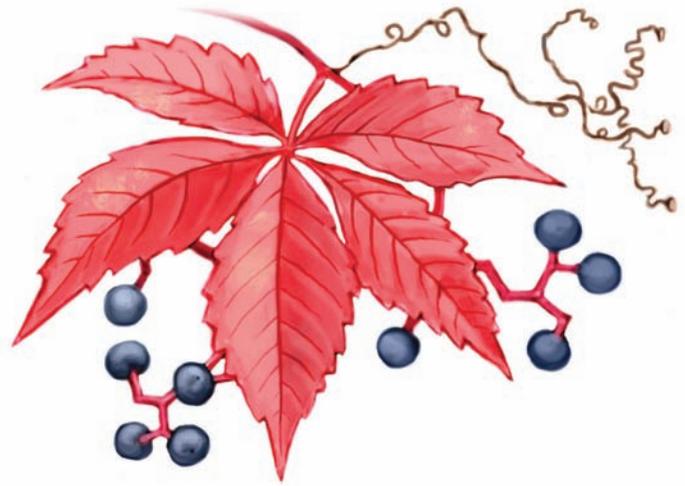
Leaves turn red just as the blue-gray fruits ripen. The plant may rely on this foliar fruit flag to alert migrating birds to a food opportunity. timing is critical: the fruits are high in lipids (fats), which don't stay fresh for long.

While birds may wolf down the berries people shouldn't follow suit, as the fruits are potentially toxic to humans.

The leaves aren't so people-friendly, either. When they are bruised, specialized cells rupture, releasing irritating microscopic needles of calcium oxalate, which can trigger contact dermatitis.

Scaling trees, rocks and houses, Virginia creeper secures itself with tendrils tipped with tiny pads that cement themselves to vertical surfaces.

A creeper-covered brick wall will stay cool in the summer, the masonry undamaged by the vine's tendrils. Wood siding, however, will rot in the humid environment harbored by the vine.



*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*

Sources: Edmund W. Stiles, “Patterns of fruit presentation and seed dispersal in bird-disseminated woody plants in eastern deciduous forest,” the American naturalist; USDA “Interactions between passerines and woody plants at a migratory stop-over site: Fruit consumption and the potential for seed dispersal,” Claramarie Moss, University of Virginia



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF THE WASHINGTON POST

Answer to question on Page 5: Close up of a mountain laurel flower.

# In Memoriam of Dora Lee Ellington

By Frieda Toler

It is with great sadness we report the death of Dora Lee Ellington on August 22, 2011. She was the widow of Sam Ellington. It is impossible to remember Dora Lee without Sam. They were a team.

They were charter members of the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society and participated in every activity the chapter had such as plants sales, programs, field trips, work days and were always ready to give a helping hand. They contributed greatly to the success of the chapter.

They were always there to encourage, welcome and teach all of us.



Dora Lee delighted in sharing plants from her wildflower garden.

Dora Lee and Sam and Bobby and I shared a wonderful friendship and a great appreciation for wildflowers and the beautiful world around us. I am so grateful for these dear people who touched my life.

Our condolences to her son, Charlie, and his wife, Carolyn, and the family.

## **Blue Ridge Wildflower Society**

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