

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

A CHAPTER OF THE
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society; A chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society

February 2014, Vol. 35, No. 1



Welcome New Members

Eleanor Dye of Roanoke

Mary Harshfield of Roanoke

Herb Thomas of Roseland

Carl Reed of Roanoke

Letter from the President

By Lou Greiner

Our weather has been quite frightful ... but it will soon be delightful when we gather to hear of flowers and spring!

The chapter's planning session for spring events was the best and longest ever! There were many new ideas from members and the board about places we have not explored and people we haven't met.

This is why we need your input.

I hope that any member will e-mail or call me or a board member about something that might be of interest to us all.

The spring and summer is now pretty full, but we still have the fall, and we can put things on the list for next year.

With a new year comes new changes. Our board has had two members resign because of family and health concerns.

Our new treasurer is Judi Langenhourst, (she was our former Secretary).

Betty Kelly is now doing double duty as secretary and historian.

Sharon Hubble, a new addition to our board is filling the slot held by Rich Crites.

These are interim positions and the chapter will vote in the fall for all officers and board members.

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President's Letter:

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We are lucky to have these members who can step up at this time. Please support them in their efforts. As someone has said, the one thing constant in life is change.

Our first meeting will include a presentation about plant families. The speaker will be VNPS's past president, Sally Anderson. I know we all will learn a lot.

Don't forget our new policy about bad weather. If Roanoke County schools are closed the day of our meeting for inclement weather, we will not meet!

But before spring does get here, remember that winter is a great time to look for plants. The grasses and many weeds hiding them are gone. I have included a little quiz/puzzle below. See how many you know?

Enjoy the winter. No weeding or mulching to do!

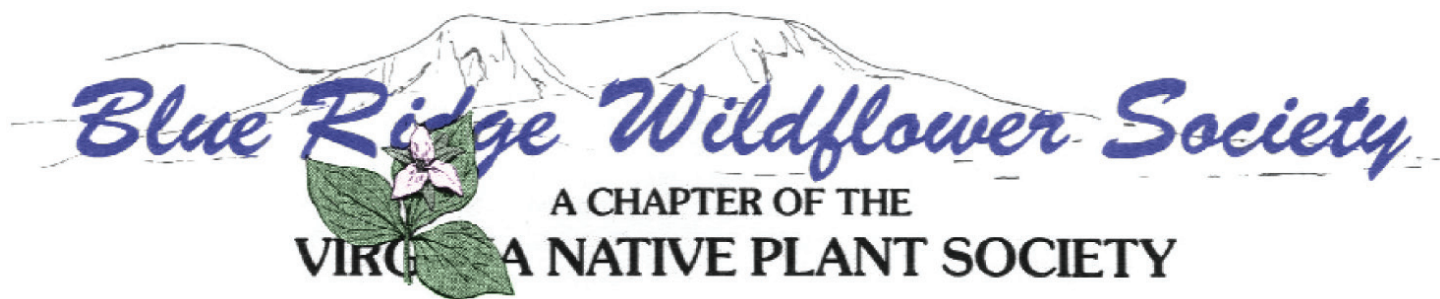
Can you identify these plants in winter?



Answers:

A.) Shepherd's Purse (*Capsella Bursa-pastoris*)
E.) Purple Cone Flower (*Echinacea*)
F.) Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

A.) Turtle Head (*Chelone glabra*)
B.) Green Brier (*Smilax*)
C.) Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*)



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Spring 2014

Calendar of Events

Vol. 35, No. 1

Monday, February 24

Time: 7 p.m.

Leaders: Lou Greiner

Contact: 774-3975

Meet: Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Ave.

Meeting: “Family Reunion or Family Feud?”

Join us for the first activity of the year. Sally Anderson, of Winchester, will present a program on the Flora of Virginia and plant families. She will discuss family characteristics and the changes to some of the families in the new Flora of Virginia. Sally is the past president of VNPS, having served in that office for nine years. She continues on the board as second vice-president. She is also the president of the Piedmont Chapter Board. She has volunteered in the Nancy Larrick Crosby Native Plant Trail at Blandy Experimental Farm for many years, and has completed Master Naturalist certification.

Saturday, March 22

Time: 10 a.m.

Leader: Lou Greiner

Contact: 774-3975

Meet: Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Ave.

Workday at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs

We will be mulching, weeding and tidying up the rain-butterfly garden at the center. Any and all help we can get is welcome. Bring gloves, work clothes, pitch fork, shovel, wheel barrow, rake or hand clippers. Refreshments and drinks will be served. **Rain date 3/29/14**

Monday, March 24

Time: 7 p.m.

Leaders: Lou Greiner

Contact: 774-3975

Meet: Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Ave.

Meeting: Flying flowers — Learning local butterflies

Butterfly enthusiast Carter Craigie will give a presentation about some of the more common butterflies and moths that we are likely to see in our area. Craigie, a member of the North American Butterfly Association, will also recommend some field guides and binoculars to use. Craigie, who lives in Blacksburg, is a retired professor of Folklore and Folklife Studies at Cabrini College in Radnor, Pa.

Sunday, April 13

Time: 1 p.m. to dinner

Leaders: Lou Greiner, 774-3975
and Michael Belcher, 989-6384

Meet: South Roanoke County Library, 6303 Merriman Road

Field trip: Wetland and Pine-Oak-Heath-Forest walk

We will meet at the South Roanoke County Library and explore the wetland plants around the board walk. Afterward we will caravan to the Isaac Walton League property a few miles down the road near Boones Mill. We will explore the plants around the 4-acre lake and along some of the trails in the Pine-Oak-Heath forest around it. This area, which was once logged for timber, is the kind of forest that fills much of the area around us. Besides looking at the plants we will discuss the ecology of the area in general.

Our monthly meeting will be canceled if Roanoke County Schools close for inclement weather.

Saturday, April 19

Time: 9 a.m.

Leader: Butch Kelly

Contact: 384-7429

Meet: The Orange Market at Va. 419 and Thompson Memorial Blvd in Salem near I-81 Exit 141.

Tuesday, April 22

Time: 1 p.m.

Leaders: Ellen Holtman, 389-1514

Betty Kelly, 384-7429

Gail MacFarland, 380-2150

Meet: Green Hill Park

Saturday, April 26

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Butch Kelly

Contact: 384-7429

Meet: The Bojangles parking area at the Botetourt Commons off U.S. 220 just north of I-81 exit 150. We will carpool from there.

Monday, April 28

Time: 7 p.m.

Leaders: Lou Greiner

Contact: 774-3975

Meet: Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Ave.

Saturday, May 3

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Leader: Butch Kelly

Contact: 384-7429

Meet: Discovery Center at Mill Mountain Park

Field Trip: Falls Ridge Nature Conservancy Preserve in Montgomery County

Falls Ridge is a rich botanical area. We should see trillium, toothwort, jack in the pulpit, buckeye, golden seal and other spring ephemerals. This area is rich in geologic wonders. There is stream, a waterfall, caves and a geologic fault. Bring sturdy walking shoes, bag lunch and rain gear. The walk will be about 1.5 miles over varied terrain.

Field Trip: Green Hill Park, Roanoke County

This park is easy on the feet, and easy on the eyes. It presents the most spectacular view of wildflowers in the Roanoke Valley. It is a trillium mecca along with the usual spring flowers including VA bluebells. Take Va. 11/Main Street in Salem and turn on Duiguids Lane. Cross the Roanoke River and the park is on the right. Follow the park road as far as you can go. Park at the picnic pavilion.

Field Trip: Brushy Hills near Lexington

This is a new area and will be hosted by the Upper James River Chapter. Brushy Hills is 560 acre tract which has two streams which at one time provided water for the City of Lexington. The wildflower walk will take about 2 hours. The loop includes bottomland, an old logging road and some upland slopes. We should see both crane fly and putty root orchids, two types of trilliums and many others. The forests are varied with beech, birch and oak and tulip poplar. Bring sturdy shoes, rain gear and a bag lunch. We will eat at the Boxerwood Gardens in Lexington.

Shale Barrens Ecology

Ryan Kloph will introduce us to the unique flora of this rare central Appalachian community. Ryan Kloph graduated from William and Mary in 2004 with a double major in biology and government. Afterward he worked for TNC in Illinois on the restoration of prairies, wetlands, and oak savanna. After earning a masters and PhD in plant biology by studying grassland and restoration ecology, he became the Mountain Region Steward for the Virginia Natural Heritage Program.

Field Trip: Mill Mountain Wildflower Garden

The Mill Mountain Garden Club and BRWS are co-hosting a walk at the Mill Mountain Garden. There are some nice flowers to see. The garden club has done a lot of cleaning of the garden and removed many invasives. Come visit this well kept secret right in our back yard. Easy walking.

For safety and environmental reasons, please leave all pets at home during field trips.

Monday, May 19

Time: 7 p.m.

Leaders: Lou Greiner

Contact: 774-3975

Meet: Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs, 3640 Colonial Ave.

Meeting: TBA

Saturday, June 7

Time: 10 a.m.

Leader: Rudy Albert

Contact: 774-2279

Meet: Peaks of Otter Visitor Center Parking

Field Trip: Rhododendron day on the Parkway

This field trip offers many flowers of the higher elevations. We will be nearly 4000 feet. It should be an extraordinary treat if the Catawba Rhododendron is peaking.

Bring a bag lunch & rain gear. Mostly drive and stop sight seeing. Easy walking.

If you would like to share a breakfast experience at the Peaks of Otter Lodge meet the group at 8 a.m.

Sunday, August 10

Time: 1 p.m.

Leader: Lou Greiner

Contact: 774-3975

Meet: Waldron Park

Picnic: Annual Picnic

Mark your calendars now for the chapter picnic at Waldron Park at 1 p.m. on Sunday, August 10. More details will be in the summer newsletter.

Please be sure to offer a little cash to the driver if you car pool

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society Officers

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Secretary **Betty Kelly**
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Some non-club events: Landcare Learning Series

February 22

Workshop No. 1

Time: 10 a.m.-noon

Catawba Community Center

What's Happening at the Catawba Sustainability Center

Meet Josh Nease, Director of Tech's Catawba Sustainability Center, to learn about the Center plans & programs for 2014.

Contact: Josh Nease at 540- 553-2311 or jnease@vt.edu

March 15

Workshop No. 2

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

Catawba Community Center

All About Composting

Master Gardener Ann Sauls will share with us how to set up, maintain and profit with a home composting system. Handouts will be provided.

Contact: Butch Kelly at 384-7429 or butch2410@msn.com

April 19

Workshop No. 3

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

Falls Ridge Nature Preserve

Tour Nature Conservancy's Falls Ridge Nature Preserve

Rain or Shine. Join Master Naturalist Butch Kelly to explore the flora, fauna, geology and history on a 1.5- mile walk through this 600-acre preserve. Bring sturdy shoes and bag lunch.

Contact: Butch Kelly at 384-7429 or butch2410@msn.com

May 31

Workshop No. 4

Time: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Catawba Community Center

Who Lived Where in 1864? Confederate Engineers' Maps

Sherry Bowser and Robert Pearsall will tell us the story of these detailed maps of the Catawba Valley, which locate the families then residing in our valley.

Contact: Ned Yost at NedJanet@gmail.com or 434-972-2363

June 21

Workshop No. 5

Time: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Catawba Community Center

Remember in Catawba When...

Join Patty Starkey for a "Show and Tell". Bring your old photos, stories, genealogies, letters and histories of the valley.

Contact: Carl Absher, 540-553-1916 or abshercp@gmail.com

June 27

Workshop No. 6

Time & Location: TBD

Two Miles of Catawba Creek Conserved!

Tour Roanoke Cement's farm to see and hear about the results of its efforts to protect its section of Catawba Creek.

September 27

Workshop No. 7

Times: 9 a.m. & 1 p.m.

Location: McDonald's Mill,
3875 Catawba Road

American Chestnut Harvest

9 a.m. Climb Crawford Ridge to collect nuts from a hand-pollinated surviving American chestnut tree.

1 p.m.: Open burs, cull for non-viable nuts & pack for refrigeration

Contact: Carl Absher, 540-553-1916 or abshercp@gmail.com

Dates are subject to change. Please read The Roanoke Times for updates to these events.

BRWS Loses a Beloved Member

By Butch Kelly

In October 2013 our chapter lost a long time member. Dr. Dorothy Bliss passed at age 97. She was a very active member for many years.

Many of our longtime members will recall the field trips to the Great Smoky Mountain National Park.

Dorothy had a long and successful career in the field of botany. She was a retired Professor of Botany at Randolph Macon Women's College in Lynchburg.

She will always be remembered there for her tireless efforts in the classroom and the formation of the Dorothy C. Bliss Botanical Garden on campus.

Dorothy did graduate research in the Smokies, a place she dearly loved. Along with her educational career she was very active with the Virginia Native Plant Society.

Among her accomplishments were serving as Botany chairwoman from 1988-1994. She was instrumental in the beginning of the VNPS Registry Program and the inception of the Wildflower of the Year which began in 1988.

Dr. Bliss served as Registry chairwoman for several years. Many articles for the VNPS Bulletin were written by Dorothy. She also compiled and printed a VNPS Tree/Shrub Checklist for Virginia.



Dr. Dorothy Bliss will always be remembered for the formation of the Dorothy C. Bliss Botanical Garden at Randolph Macon Women's College in Lynchburg.

We will all miss Dorothy not only for her dedication and accomplishments, but for her willingness to give of herself and her love of Virginia's botanical diversity.

We want your ideas and involvement!

By Butch Kelly

We have more than 100 members in our wildflower society, and we want to hear your ideas.

Where would you like to see a field trip?

What subject would you like to learn about from a speaker at one of our monthly meetings?

Would you like to volunteer to lead (or help lead) a walk or give a presentation?

Do you have ideas on how to improve our plant sale or our picnic?

We, also, need folks to give off-site programs to other groups and school children. We are planning on getting together a series of digital slides that can be used by anyone.

In the fall of 2014 we will elect new officers, including possibly a new position for a web page

officer. If you are interested or know someone who might be, let us know.

And don't let the web page position scare you. We are thinking of merging our web page with the state's chapter. The only requirements for this new position would be reliable access to the Internet and the ability to type. The state web masters will do the rest. You wouldn't have to learn difficult coding, programming and other scary stuff.

We have many knowledgeable and talented folks in our group.

Please be active and share those ideas, wishes, and thoughts by calling, emailing or talking with any member of the board of officers.

Remember, it's your seeds of ideas that produce the rich fruits of our club.

For safety and environmental reasons, please leave all pets at home during field trips.

Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

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