

# 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 2016, Vol. 37, No. 1



## Welcome New Member

**Cindy Wood** of Glade Hill, VA

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## Letter from the President

By Lou Greiner

Greetings!

It has been a different winter, with a long warm stretch, then a bitter cold snap, followed by a wallop of a snow storm. And even though the groundhog says we will have an early spring, we have a little more winter to go through.

With the cold weather, there is time to reflect on what we have accomplished and what we want to do in the year ahead.

Our club has done a lot. Our rain garden at the garden club is off to a good start and is officially a Monarch Watch Site.

We had a successful presence at Earth Day and a great plant sale.

Club volunteers created a monarch butterfly exhibit, which is on display at the science museum until the end of April. We also have put together a small slide show/video presentation about the display that we hope to have on our VNPS chapter website soon.

Sadly, we also lost some beloved long-time members. We have included a memorial to one of our former presidents and founders, Rich Crites, on page 3.



**Please turn to PRESIDENT, 2**

## Continued from PRESIDENT 1

With his and others' passings, it is apparent that we need to focus on preserving our roots as well as focusing on our new growth. We hope to do that by ordering a digital slide converter to convert pictures of those experiences in digital format. If you have photos of native plants or field trips that you would be willing to let the club use, we will convert them for you and return the slides and a digital copy to you. We also hope to make the converter available to our members for check out, so you can convert the slides yourself. *(To read more about the converter, see page 7.)*

We have several walks, events and speakers planned for this spring. Some of the walks are at new places, and others at places we have visited before. But because every growing season is different, even familiar walks should offer something new and beautiful.

There are ample opportunities for members to volunteer their time and talents. We again hope to have a presence at Earth Day and need at least 14 volunteers. *(Please see pages 5 and 8 for more*

*details.)*

We need volunteers to help work and to contribute plants to our annual plant sale on the Saturday before Mother's Day, May 7. This is our only major fund-raiser, and a great way to spread the word about the importance of native plants. *(Please see pages 6 and 7 for more details.)*

Another great way to volunteer is to help with the food committee. Don't worry, it isn't a lot of work, it won't cost you anything in the end, and it isn't a lifelong commitment. You don't even have to be able to bake or cook. *(For more details, please see page 7.)*

And if your talents lend themselves to arts and crafts, we have a project for you. The Olin Hall Galleries at Roanoke College invites the public to participate in the Paper Blooms project, where individuals or groups create flowers out of paper for a collaborative and interactive exhibit. *(To learn more about this project, please see page 8.)*

No matter how you help out or which events you attend, it never feels like just work! It's a chance to feel like you are really growing with the flower club. Come join us!



Perhaps you have slide photos of wildflowers that you would be willing to have converted, like this one of Virginia bluebells along Blue Bell Trail at Bull Run Park, Virginia.



# Remembering Rich Crites

By Butch Kelly, Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

The Blue Ridge Chapter is mourning the loss of one of its most cherished members. Rich Crites died at home on September 4, 2015. Rich was a friend, mentor, teacher and counselor to many folks. Though large in stature he had a gentle manner and a caring heart. Rich was always there for anyone who had a problem or just a simple plant question.

Rich was born and raised on a farm in Illinois.



Rich Crites in 2001

He never lost his interest in the outdoors or the farming life he left behind. His career led him to Virginia Western Community College in 1968. He taught there until he retired in 2001. Like many he followed his career with a couple of years teaching biology part time. Over the course of his career he

touched many students in classes such as biology, ecology and environmental problems. His true love was teaching spring and summer botany classes on local flora. These classes led to his affectionate nickname “Mr. Wildflower”. Many folks in these classes became members of the VNPS’s Blue Ridge Wildflower Society. Rich and several of his students started the chapter and it has blossomed with his enthusiasm. In 1990 he was nominated for the State Council of Higher Education’s Outstanding Faculty Award. Rich was named Professor Emeritus at VWCC in 2012.

Rich was an active member of many local, state and national groups. One of his most beloved activities was being a member of the Roanoke Church of Christ. In addition to his career at VWCC he taught 15 years in the Mary Baldwin College’s Adult



Rich and Connie Crites enjoy the Great Smoky Mountains in May of 1987

Degree Program. The VWCC Community Arboretum was established with his assistance and time serving on its board.

Rich was in his element with his cane and cigar leading students and wildflower society members on field trips to see his beloved plant world. Many of his friends and students will never forget him poking his cane at an especially beautiful or unique plant. He knew the plants from the tops of the trees to those hugging tightly to a rock or flat on the ground.

To Rich every species had its own way of being special. He looked at people the same way.

He will be missed.



Spring 2016

*Calendar of Events*

Vol. 37, No. 1

## **Monday, February 22**

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

**Leaders:** Lou Greiner

**Contact:** 774-3975

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

## **Meeting: Honoring Rich Crites — Wildflowers Through the Seasons**

Butch Kelly will take us on a march through the seasons with Rich Crites's photographs. These are the photos Rich used to present his passion to many local organizations over the past 20 years. This will be a great way to look at what is in store for the next 8 months.

## **Saturday, March 5**

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

**Leader:** Butch Kelly

**Contact:** 384-7429

**Meet:** Orange Market, Thompson Memorial Blvd, Salem, Va.

## **A Look Back at Winter and Forward to Spring**

This field trip will feature a look at winter ecology and a peak into spring. We will look at trees, shrubs, insect evidence and old flower seed heads. See what plants you can identify from last fall's remaining stalks. We will spend some time in the Jefferson National Forest in Catawba and on Butch and Betty Kelly's property. Walking will be easy. Bring a lunch, water and shoes that can take a little moisture. Join the Kellys for hot chocolate after the walk.

## **Monday, March 28**

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

**Leaders:** Lou Greiner

**Contact:** 774-3975

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

## **Meeting: The Astonishing World of Ant-plant Symbioses**

This presentation will offer an overview of the interactions between two of the world's most dominant terrestrial groups — flowering plants and ants. Complex ant-plant interactions involving thousands of species have evolved across the globe ranging from herbivory to highly sophisticated defensive and dispersal mutualisms. One such remarkable interaction, known as myrmecochory, occurs in the temperate forests of eastern North America and involves a number of familiar spring flowers such as trilliums and violets.

Kal Ivanov is the assistant curator of Invertebrate Zoology at the Virginia Museum of Natural History. He holds a Master's degree in entomology from Sofia University (Bulgaria) and a Ph.D. in ecology from Cleveland State University. He has worked as a research biologist (Institute of Zoology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), collections assistant (Cleveland Museum of Natural History), and a zoology/ecology lecturer (John Carrol University, Cleveland State University).

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

## **Sunday, April 3**

**Time:** 1 -5 p.m.

**Leader:** Butch Kelly

**Contact:** 384-7429

**Meet:** Orange Market,  
Thompson Memorial Blvd, Salem,  
Va.

## **Saturday, April 16**

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

**Leaders:** Lou Greiner

**Contact:** 774-3975

**Meet:** Back of Greenhill Park  
by the picnic shelter

## **Saturday, April 23**

**Time:** 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Leader:** Butch Kelly

**Contact:** 384-7429

butch2410@msn.com

**Meet:** Rivers Edge

## **Monday, April 25**

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

**Leaders:** Lou Greiner

**Contact:** 774-3975

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

## **Saturday, April 30**

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.

**Leaders:** Ellen Holtman

**Contact:** 389-1514

**Meet:** Discovery Center  
at Mill Mountain.

## **Field Trip: Wildflowers of Catawba and Haymakertown Road**

Join Butch and Betty Kelly for a field trip in the Catawba area. Depending on the weather, we will look at hepatica (by the hundreds), toothwort, rare ferns, tall phlox, blue bells and a pretty mountain stream. Bring rain gear. Little walking, mostly we will be stopping and walking along gravel roads. For those who are interested we can eat at the Homeplace Restaurant after our field trip.

## **Field Trip: Nature Journaling Walk at Greenhill Park**

Join Lou Greiner and Ellen Holtman for a walk among the trilliums. This is always a spectacular display of wildflowers including large-flowered trilliums, blue bells, Canada violet, and many more. Greenhill Park has the most dense display of flowers anywhere in our chapter's area. Lou will help you learn to sketch and record what you see to help you in future plant identification. Bring a lunch and some work gloves, as we will pull any garlic mustard we see on the walk.

## **Earth Day: A chance to give back**

We will have a booth at the Earth Day celebration. We need two folks to man the booth for 1 or 2 hour increments. You will be asked to hand out chapter and VNPS information and answer questions posed by the public. This an opportunity for us to spread the word about native plants and perhaps gain some new members. If interested contact Butch Kelly by phone or e-mail by April 2. We need at least 14 volunteers.

## **Meeting: Plant Communities of Virginia**

Gary Fleming, Vegetation Ecologist with the VA Natural Heritage program will present a program featuring the nature of Virginia's flora by taking us on a visual trip through the physiographic provinces of VA. Gary will show us what plant communities are found in these areas of the state. We will learn why plants grow where they do. Gary is a fantastic photographer. Many of his photos are in the "Flora of Virginia." This should be one of the premier programs we have this year.

## **Field Trip: Mill Mountain Wildflower Garden**

Join members of the Mill Mountain Garden Club and stroll through the garden, a local gem with a large variety of plants. The last time we visited this garden 62 plants were identified. Some of those were yellow lady slipper, may apple, spider-wort and fire pink. This is a very easy walk so come and enjoy a relaxing look at what the garden offers.

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



## **Sunday, May 1**

**Time:** 8:30 a.m.

**Leader:** Butch Kelly

**Contact:** 384-7429

**Meet:** Orange Market at Thompson Memorial Blvd. Car pool from there.

## **Field Trip: McAfee's Knob Phenology/ Wildflower Hike on the Appalachian Trail sponsored by the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club**

This walk will be in two parts. The first part will be looking at plants and discussing the effects of climate change on certain marked trees and shrubs along the trail. We will also identify other plants and discuss their ecological importance to man and nature. The second part of the walk will be to hike to McAfee's Knob. This has one of the most spectacular views on the entire trail. It is 3.9 mile walk to the knob. If some folks want to walk the first part only and come back early that is fine. Wear sturdy footwear and plenty of water. A walking stick may come in handy. Be sure to bring a lunch.

## **Saturday, May 7**

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

**Leaders:** Michael Belcher

(540) 989-6384

and Rudy Albert

(540) 774-2279

**Meet:** Virginia Western  
Community College  
Arboretum

## **Blue Ridge Wildflower Society's Annual Plant Sale**

The BRWS Plant Sale will be at the parking lot next to the Virginia Western Community College Arboretum greenhouse. We usually have more than 40 species of native plants for sale. Some of the more popular varieties include butterfly weed, New England Aster, bleeding heart, Virginia bluebell, spiderwort, cardinal flower and Jack-in-the-Pulpit. All plants will be in pots ready to take home and plant. There will be folks on hand to help advise where the plants will do best.

If members have plants to sell, please have them potted and labeled and show up by 8:15 a.m. Members who wish to help on the day of the sale, please contact Michael Belcher (540) 989-6384. All help is welcome. Volunteer for an hour or help for the whole sale.

## **Saturday, May 21**

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

**Leaders:** Michael Belcher

**Contact:** 989-6384

**Meet:** Parking area between Fleet  
Feet and Lowes off U.S. 220.

## **Field Trip: Paul James Garden on Cahas Knob**

This area is one of the BRWS/VNPS Registry Sites. It is always a treat to visit this world renowned garden. If it is rhododendrons and azaleas you like, this is the walk for you. Paul James is one of the founders of our chapter. He is always a gracious host with lots of plants and stories to share. Easy walking. However, parking is limited, so we must carpool in from the Lowes parking area.

## **Monday, May 23**

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

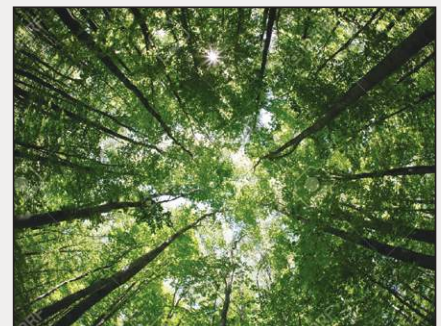
**Leaders:** Lou Greiner

**Contact:** 774-3975

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

## **Meeting: The Forest Canopy**

Steve Croy Forest Ecologist for the Jefferson National Forest will share his thoughts on the function and life of the forest canopy. Steve will discuss what dwells in the canopy and what role the canopy plays in the life of the forest. Come see how the lack of light reaching the forest floor affects the plant life.



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

# Do you have plants to donate for the annual plant sale?

We need your plant donations for the annual sale, and the time to start is earlier than many might think.

The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society has been very fortunate to work with the garden center at the Salem Veterans Affairs Medical Center for the past several years. Sandy Lane and her team have been able to provide our group with an abundance of native plants.

However, the VA garden center can't provide all of the plants that we need, and that's where you come in.

Spreading, shade-loving and deer-

resistant plants are always in demand.

If you have plants that you can spare, please consider donating them to our club's sale.

And while it might be tempting to wait until a day or two before the sale, it's better to dig them up in mid-to late March or early April.

Be sure to plant them in the earth they came from or in fresh potting soil.

Leave the plant in the pots near where you dug them up and water them once a week if the weather doesn't do it for you. This allows the plant to recover from the transplanting and look its best at the sale.



Hepatica

*Hepatica nobilis*

## We need (Among others)

- Allegheny spurge
- Alumroot
- Bloodroot
- Evening primrose
- Galax
- Hepatica
- Mayapple
- Partridgeberry
- Solomon's seal
- Solomon's plume
- Twinleaf
- Waterleaf
- Wild ginger

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## Would you like to help with the food committee?

The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society food committee could use your help.

Don't worry, it isn't a lot of work, it won't cost you anything in the end, and it isn't a lifelong commitment. You don't even have to be able to bake or cook? Nor do you have to attend every meeting to help.

All that is required is a little bit of your time, the ability to drive and to attend at least one of the meetings.

The club is seeking 2 or 3 volunteers to help pro-

vide snacks for our meetings in February, March, April, and May. We will seek new volunteers to help with the fall meetings. The club will reimburse you.

Connie Crites has graciously volunteered to chair the food committee.

The food committee volunteers can split the responsibility of shopping among themselves and take turns so no one member has to attend every meeting.

If you are interested, please contact Connie Crites at (540) 774-4518 or at [cardinalisr@cox.net](mailto:cardinalisr@cox.net).

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## We need your photographic slides to help go digital

The Blue Ridge Wildflower Society is interested in your old slides of wildflowers, club members, previous walks, and club activities.

If you are willing to let the club use the photographs in future presentations or on our website,

we will return the slides to you and give you a copy of them in digital format.

If interested in having your slides of club activities or wild flowers converted, please contact Michael Belcher at (540) 989-6384.

# Club needs volunteers to maintain our rain garden

If anyone is interested in helping keep up the wildflower/monarch butterfly garden at the Garden Center, please contact our garden coordinator Linda Harrison at (540) 343-2783 or via email at

[lindaharrison29@hotmail.com](mailto:lindaharrison29@hotmail.com).

There is nothing scheduled right now but we would like to put together a list of potential helpers.

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## At least 14 volunteers needed to help with Earth Day

Our club had a good presence at Earth Day in 2015 and we would like to do it again. The local Earth Day festival will be April 23 at River's Edge Sports Complex in Roanoke, the old Victory Stadium site.

The chapter is planning an outreach in the form of a booth from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

We can only do this if we get at least 14 members to agree to take turns manning the booth to hand out

brochures and answer questions about the BRWS.

This a great opportunity to draw new members and spread the word about our great organization.

There are between 600 - 800 people who come to the Earth Day celebration.

If you are interested in helping out contact Butch Kelly at 384-7429 or [butch2410@msn.com](mailto:butch2410@msn.com) by April 1.

We only are asking folks to volunteer for 1 hour each.

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## Feeling artsy? Then help create a garden of paper flowers

Olin Hall Galleries invites the public to participate in the Paper Blooms project, where individuals or groups create flowers out of paper for a collaborative and interactive exhibit.

The hand-made paper flowers will be used to create a community garden. Works for the exhibition will be made by local volunteers to unite and support the community through art.

Volunteers may create single or multiple pieces that will be on view at Roanoke College's Olin Hall Gallery, January to March 2018.

The finished installation will consist of two gardens: one aspect will be a vibrant, multi-colored garden, mirroring the natural



beauty of nature. The second feature will consist of white and silver flowers to commemorate and honor individuals in a Memorial Garden.

When the exhibit concludes, the flowers will be arranged into bouquets and donated to nursing homes, hospitals and other community organizations.

For more information or updates on this project, contact Talia Logan at 375-2332 or at [mlogan@roanoke.edu](mailto:mlogan@roanoke.edu) or visit [roanoke.edu/olingallery](http://roanoke.edu/olingallery).

Paper Blooms Project Workshops will take place from 2-4 p.m. at Monterey House, 110 High Street, Salem, Va. on these dates:

March 6

April 3

May 1

September 4

October 2

November 6

December 4.



# Club elects new officers and board members this fall

The club will elect new officers this fall. But before then, we need two or three volunteers to be on the nominating committee.

We will read nominations and publicly ask for nominees from the floor at the club meeting in September. The club will vote and elect new officers at the October meeting, and the new officers will take over at the November meeting.

The open positions are president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer.

We also will have one or two non-elected positions available on the board.

Lastly, we need a volunteer to put out the newsletter.

If you think you might be interested in any of these positions, now is the time to speak up. This will allow you to talk with the officers or other board members to learn exactly what the job involves.

You may even want to sit in on a board meeting ahead of time.

If you are interested in serving on the nominating committee or running for office, please contact Betty Kelly at 384-7429.

## Blue Ridge Wildflower Society Officers

**President** ..... **Lou Greiner**  
(540) 774-3975  
louart.min@rev.net

**Garden coordinator** ..... **Linda Harrison**  
(540) 343-2783  
lindaharrison29@hotmail.com

**Vice President** ..... **Ellen Holtman**  
(540) 389-1514  
eholtman@comcast.net

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

**Treasurer** ..... **Stew Hubbell**  
(540) 774-8676  
stew22xtra@cox.net

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

**Secretary** ..... **Judy Kniskern**  
(540) 890-2148  
jknis@cox.net

**Refreshment chair** ..... **Connie Crites**  
(540) 774-4518  
cardinalisr@cox.net

**Historian** ..... **Betty Kelly**  
(540) 384-7429  
bettykelly918@gmail.com

# We want your ideas and your help!

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 go on 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.

We have many knowledgeable and talented folks in our group.



Yellow Lady's Slippers

*Cypripedium parviflorum*

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.

Check the forecast and projected time for trips to plan accordingly with rain gear, snacks and meals.

## Blue Ridge Wildflower Society

P.O. Box 20385

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