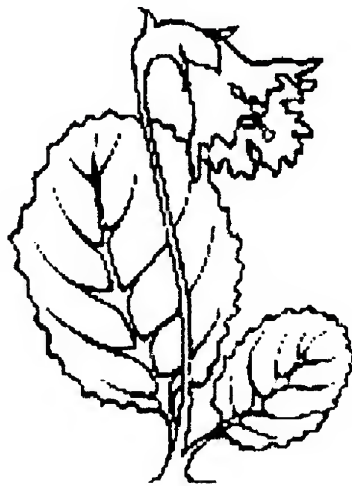


SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

There was no Volume XXXV No. 1 Spring 2013



Shortia galacifolia

Oconee Bells

SHORTIA
NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB
SUMMER 2013



Shortia galacifolia

Oconee Bells

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

President Mary Kathryn Hardman Secretary Joy Charlebois
Vice-President Ruth Anne Gibson Treasurer Alan Graham

MEMBER NEWS

IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY PAID YOUR DUES FOR 2013, PLEASE SEND YOUR CHECK FOR \$15 to Alan Graham, 544 Top Road, Brevard, NC 2871. Any change of address, email, or telephone number should also be sent to Alan or call him at 884-3947, adgraham@comporium.net. If you prefer to receive your copy of *Shortia* by US mail, contact Paula Robbins at 828-274-4166. Thanks go to Elisabeth Feil for her recent cash donation.

New Members: April Wasson, Greenville, SC Mary Karnis, Weaverville
Ingrid Birkeland, Brevard Wes Burlingame, Hendersonville
Andrew Hamilton, Brevard Jim and Kent Loy, Hendersonville



Field Trip Cancellations. On occasion field trips must be cancelled or changed either for weather conditions or other reasons such as road closings. Such changes are sent out by email to all members at the latest by 7 AM the day of the field trip. If you do not have email access, we will try to reach local members by telephone by 7 AM. If you are in doubt, contact a leader or co-leader whose telephone number is listed on the schedule. When a field trip is cancelled, no member will be at the contact point. Programs are cancelled when Henderson County Schools are closed (see <http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org>) but NOT necessarily canceled because of delayed opening.



2013 CULLOWHEE NATIVE PLANT CONFERENCE

The deadline for online registration for the 2013 Cullowhee Native Plant Conference July 17-20 at Western Carolina University is July 8, 2013.



ANDRÉ MICHAUX

The dedication of the North Carolina Highway Historical Marker honoring eighteenth century French botanist and explorer, André Michaux, will take place at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 15th, exactly 226 years from the day on which he actually traversed the Highlands plateau. The marker will be installed on West Main Street in Highlands. For more information contact Randolph P. Shaffner, Archivist, Highlands Historical Society, Inc. (highlandshistory@nctv.com).



ANDRÉ MICHAUX, ASA GRAY AND *SHORTIA*

We will learn more about André Michaux, Asa Gray, and the curious story of *Shortia galacifolia* at our Fortieth Anniversary Annual Meeting, Friday, June 28. Our guest will be Charlie Williams, a retired librarian from Charlotte who is the editor of *The Annotated Memoirs of the Life and Botanical Travels of André Michaux* by J.P.F. DeLeuze, Translated from the French by Carl D. E. Koenig and John Sims for the *Annals of Botany*, 1805, and the author of several papers and articles on Michaux.

Charlie Williams is a meticulous researcher who has become an authority on the life and work of the French botanist. He studied library science at Florida State, where Michaux (whose name Charlie knew well from wildflowers and historical markers in the North Carolina mountains), was the subject of an extensive presentation on how to conduct library research. Charlie was already interested in plants, the Carolina mountains, and the eighteenth century, so it seemed natural to learn more about a person who had brought them all together in his life. He began to research and eventually write about Michaux and his American travels. He published a paper demonstrating that Michaux discovered the big leaf magnolia—not in Tennessee, as one biographer had written—but in Gaston County, NC.

Recognition as a Michaux authority led to more publications and an invitation to chair a major conference on Michaux and his work. The conference was highly successful—and expensive. When it was over, the organizers found themselves with an eighteenth century costume and conference debts. Charlie raised funds by giving slide-illustrated lectures while wearing the costume. Eventually he tried “being” Michaux, and found that the audiences preferred the drama to the lecture.

(From Amy Fendley’s article in the May 2011 issue of the newsletter of the Upstate Chapter of the South Carolina Native Plant Society)

The plant most closely associated with André Michaux is *Shortia galacifolia*, the namesake plant of our club's newsletter. While accompanying Michaux's great-great-great-grand nephew on a visit to the Michaux Herbarium in Paris nine years ago, Charlie helped set in motion events that have added yet another twist to the storied tale of Michaux, Gray, and *Shortia*. Then, only two months ago, he guided the great-great grandson of John Redfield to *Shortia* sites in Oconee County, SC and McDowell County, NC. John Redfield accompanied Asa Gray on his quest to see *Shortia* in McDowell County in 1879, and his great-great grandson recently transcribed and published Redfield's daily journal of this adventure, which is quoted below.



ASA GRAY VIEWS *SHORTIA* FOR THE FIRST TIME

"We left Henry's on the 12th of June [1880], at 7 A.M., comfortably seated in a wagon on our way to Marion, and arrived at the latter place at 3 ½ o'clock P.M. Here the party, after partaking of dinner, was escorted to that grand rendezvous to see that renowned mountaineer, *Shortia galacifolia*, which was discovered by the writer, and afforded the party a life time satisfaction. The scenery around was perfectly wild. Along a gentle stream, upon dripping rocks, was this famous plant which has recreated a sensation throughout the length and breadth of our land. The trip to this place was doubly enhanced by finding the fragrant Azalia, *Azalia Arborescens* [*Rhododendron arborescens*], and Menzeisii Globularis [*Rhododendron menziesii*], in full bloom."

From John Howard Redfield. *In Search of Shortia: With Asa Gray in North Carolina 1879*. Transcribed and edited by John Marsh. This is the journal of Redfield's travels with Asa Gray, William Canby, Charles Sargent, and M.E. Hyams in Western Carolina in 1879 and 1880. This fascinating transcription of this and another journal of his grandfather Redfield can be ordered for \$21 from John Randolph Marsh Publications, Dillsburg, PA 17019, or at http://www.nhbs.com/in_search_of_shortia_tefno_185192.html.



AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION

Jeff Donahue, Director of Operations at The American Chestnut Foundation's Meadowview Research Farms in Virginia, announced that the 2012 seed crop was their largest to date and almost triple that of the previous year. Seeds were collected from more than 600 individual trees, requiring substantial coordination of people, equipment and materials.

Many of the trees produced 500 or more burs, creating a storage problem at the Meadowview facility. The Virginia Department of Forestry came to the rescue by providing walk-in cooler space that allowed TACF to store and process the record harvest.

The abundance of seed from the 2012 crop allowed for a significant increase in field-testing of TACF's Legacy Orchard mother trees. There will also be an increase in bare-root seedling production for the 2014 planting season.

The NC Arboretum now has several chestnut seedlings growing in the Forest Meadow.



Book Review: David A. Taylor, *Ginseng, the Divine Root: The Curious History of the Plant That Captivated The World*, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2006.

Taylor, a science writer for many periodicals, tracks the path of *Panax quinquefolius* from our Appalachian forests to Hong Kong and mainland China, with visits to see the Asian varieties as well. Along his route, he meets wheelers, dealers, diggers, and stealers, all with a goal of making money on collecting and selling this elusive root.

Ginseng has been a source of income for fur traders and woodsmen since colonial times, when Jesuit priest Father Joseph François Lafitau uncovered the link between American and Asian ginseng in 1715. He was assigned as a missionary to the Iroquois in Canada and discovered that Native Americans used ginseng as a remedy for various ills. Knowledge of the use of the Asian variety, grown in Korea and northern China, had been brought to Europe as early as Marco Polo's visit. Very soon, the Iroquois of Montreal began to make good money selling ginseng to French merchants for shipment to China.

Taylor traveled throughout the southern Appalachians interviewing diggers and buyers as well as US Forest Service rangers working to prevent stealing of ginseng from the national forests. He also describes the farms in Wisconsin where ginseng is cultivated. Finally, he traveled to China to speak to buyers and sellers there. The book is a fascinating tale about one of our native Carolina plants and the battle between those who wish to make money on it and those who hope to prevent its extinction.



YET ANOTHER INSECT PREDATOR

Another scourge has arrived from Asia and has destroyed tens of millions of ash trees in North America, reports *The Economist* of March 16th, 2013. First discovered in Michigan, the Emerald Ash Borer has already wrought havoc in 17 other states and in Canada and now threatens Massachusetts.

The flying beetle can kill a healthy, decades-old ash tree in a mere three to five years. It lays its eggs on their bark, which the larvae, once hatched, bore into and consume, eventually starving the tree of water and nutrients. Adult borers can fly only relatively short distances between trees, but people spread them widely when transporting firewood. The pest is now in Tennessee and Virginia, but not yet in North Carolina. See <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/map.cfm#sthash.6xXsN6dr.dpbs>.



LINNAEUS AND HIS APOSTLES

The worldliest natural historian of the 18th century was, oddly enough, never much of a traveler. Carl Linnaeus's farthest expedition was from Sweden to Lapland, in 1732, when he was twenty-five years old. Despite his all-consuming curiosity about exotic creatures and plants, Linnaeus preferred to have them brought his way. He turned down an offer to work as a physician in Suriname and never left his native country after he was thirty years old.

As a young professor in Uppsala, Linnaeus led his students on plant-collecting hikes, scattering them into the fields to botanize and summoning them to lunch with a trumpet. But Linnaeus, inventor of the plant and animal classification systems still in use today, harbored bigger ambitions both for them and for his own emerging science.

By the end of the eighteenth century, seventeen of his students had travelled to seven continents with the blessing and encouragement of their mentor. Only eight survived the rigors of their journeys: malaria, mental illness and infections claimed the rest. Linnaeus implored them to avoid drunkenness, gambling, talking about politics or insulting foreign kings. Instead they were to trust in God's mercy, climb mountains, draw and describe plants, shoot and preserve animals, study customs, and discover medicines, seeds, tools and farming techniques for the betterment of Sweden. At a time when swallows were believed to spend winters underwater and a whale's eye was said to be as big as a round table seating 100 men, Linnaeus admonished his students to observe not "in the way the simple horde does" but in the way he had trained them to in Uppsala: accurately, rationally, without the slightest taint of hearsay or conjecture.

Importantly, they were never to go to bed without writing up what they'd seen that day, preferably in Swedish and in such a way that readers might feel "as though they had the objects in front of their eyes." In this task they excelled. Pehr Osbeck, who in 1750 voyaged to South China as a chaplain with the Swedish East India Co., flubbed his mentor's requests to bring back "goldfish for Her Majesty" and a live tea bush. Yet Linnaeus was delighted with Osbeck's journal, which described novel plants, harbor boats filled with hundreds of ducks trained to come and go on command, and a populace with the nasty habit of throwing rocks at him while he botanized. "I seem myself to have travelled with you," Linnaeus gushed upon reading it, and named a genus of flowering shrubs for Osbeck.

Subsequent travelogues by Linnaeus's protégés would prove finer still than Osbeck's. A few have been translated, over the centuries, into German, French or English. But others were never published. All are now available, in modern English, in the eleven-book series *The Linnaeus Apostles*, which was how Linnaeus, who was both pious and grandiose, referred to the students toward the end of his life. Produced by the IK Foundation, a non-profit in the United Kingdom, the set costs about \$2,000 altogether, though each volume can be purchased individually. The translations run to nearly 6,000 pages—printed on paper from a mill near Linnaeus's birthplace and accompanied by reproductions of the apostles' maps, transcripts of folk music, and drawings of everything from Russian rabbit traps to Tahitian chiefs.

One volume even contains swatches of cloth from the South Pacific that its author, Anders Sparrman, included in his original edition as a marketing gimmick. "There was nobody on board who did not watch with the greatest curiosity," wrote Sparrman, as a New Zealander roasted a piece of human flesh in embers aboard his docked ship, "in spite of the cook's protests" and the "general disgust of the on-lookers." It was 1773, early in Sparrman's long voyage, when he and his fellow shipmates witnessed this act of cannibalism. Four years later Sparrman had seen penguins in Antarctica, driven an oxcart into the interior of South Africa, and faced a hippo with only a knife and insect scissors to defend himself. Sparrman is energetic, resourceful and good-humored company.

The apostle Christopher Tärnström, by contrast, spends most of his modest journal, which he composed en route to Vietnam, indulging bodily complaints, fearing for his life and commending his soul to God. The journal abruptly ends; Tärnström died not long after he had tasted his first hot pepper.

(To be continued in the fall issue of *Shortia*. From "Brotherhood of the Butterfly Net," by Jennie Erin Smith in the February 4, 2012 issue of *The Wall Street Journal*.)



SHORTIA
c/o Paula I. Robbins
100 Wesley Drive, apt. 111
Asheville, NC 28803

FIRST CLASS

SHORTIA

A quarterly publication of the Western Carolina Botanical Club

Vol. XXXV No. 2

Editor: Paula I. Robbins
Assistants: Nancy Iha, Gordon and Eleanor Rasmussen
Summer 2013

The purpose of the Club is to study the plants of the southern Appalachian Mountains and the Southeast through field trips and indoor meetings. Membership is open to all. Individual/family memberships are \$15. New members joining from the period July 1-December 31 pay \$8. All memberships are renewable on January first of each year. Send dues to Alan Graham, 544 Tip Top Road, Brevard, NC 29812.