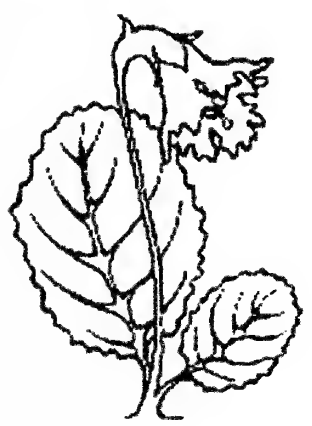


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SHORTIA
NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB
SPRING 2012



Shortia galacifolia
Oconee Bells

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

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|----------------|----------------------|-----------|---------------|
| President | Karen Koelling | Secretary | Paula Robbins |
| Vice President | Mary Kathryn Hardman | Treasurer | Alan Graham |

From the President Karen Koelling

We are spending January - March in Florida enjoying the great weather and visiting the wonderful array of things to do. We have visited many special places lauded as "the real Florida" where nature has been preserved or restored and saved for residents and visitors alike to enjoy as Florida once was. The following are some of my favorites.

Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, near Gainesville, has some of the most interesting Florida landscapes. Native plants and wild beautiful scenery are showcased in the 21,000 acre preserve, managed by the Florida Park Service. The abundant animal and plant life described by William Bartram when he visited in 1774 still abounds today. The Prairie is a natural feature that is biologically, geologically, and historically unique with herds of bison, wild horses, and abundant aquatic/shore birds, and of course native flora. Trails and lookout towers allow access to this dense upland forest and sinkhole-rich topography. This is Real Florida.

Rainbow Springs State Park near Ocala is a large natural springs and is the headwaters of Rainbow River. The 1472 acre park, home to gardens and waterfalls, was renovated and preserved from the days when the head springs was a private attraction. The first time we visited, the waterfall was turned off! Being from Transylvania I just don't understand that! Nature trails meander throughout and in early Spring the entire park bursts into blooms of pink, purple and white azaleas. Many flowering trees also are evident here including several species of dogwood, red bud and flowering plum, as are palmetto, live oak, wild flowers of all kinds and untold butterfly species. The natural springs flow so clearly it is easy to see the river bottom and all the aquatic life through many feet of crystal water.

Kanapaha (ka NAP uh ha) Botanical Gardens in Gainesville was visited by William, Bartram during the American Revolution. Don Goodman, Kanapaha's Founder and Director for 30 years, created and developed this 62 acre botanical garden out of unmanaged cattle pasture using his own ideas, manpower and perseverance! Some feat! Today it includes 25 specialty gardens including rare and unusual plants from around the world in addition to Florida native flora. Giant snake arums, bamboo, rare and colorful vines, palms, and giant water lilies are among the myriad botanical treasures included in the meadows and lakeside forests of Lake Kanapaha. The herb garden includes one of the largest medicinal plant collections in the SE. Today the Kanapaha Botanical Gardens is managed and operated by the North Florida Botanical Society, and the current Director is Don's daughter. They kept it in the family!

These three jewels of North Central Florida are truly gem-like pockets being preserved as examples of the "Real Florida". Plan to visit them when you are in the sunny South.

MEMBER NEWS

Welcome New Members

Carol Lim, Hendersonville
Jim and Kent Loy, Asheville
Ron & Sheri Metzger, Flat Rock
Patsy Panther, Dana

CONTACTING OTHER WCBC MEMBERS

For privacy reasons the Western Carolina Botanical Club does not distribute it's membership list. If you need to reach another member you may contact Alan Graham, treasurer, 828-884-3947, to obtain whatever information you need.

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Thanks to Bonnie Arbuckle, Larry Avery, Nancy Martin and Elisabeth Feil for their cash donations and to Lucy Prim for her note card donation.

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Winter Meetings. All winter meetings are held at the Bullington Center. These meetings will be automatically cancelled if the Henderson County Schools are closed. Check with weather reports or telephone the Henderson County Office at 697-4733.

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Any change of address, email or telephone number, please inform Alan Graham, 544 Tip Top Road, Brevard, N.C., 28712, 828-884-3947, <adgraham@citicom.net.

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Field Trip Cancellations. On occasion field trips need to be cancelled or changed either for weather conditions or other reasons such as road closings. Such changes are sent out by e-mail to all members at the latest by 7 a.m. the day of the field trip. If you do not have e-mail access, we will try to reach local members by telephone by 7 a.m. If 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.

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This is my last issue as editor of SHORTIA. Paula Robbins has volunteered to take over as SHORTIA editor beginning with the next issue. Thanks to all the members for encouragement and support and a special thanks to those who contributed news and articles throughout my years as editor. -Anne Ulinski

Can you identify the location of twelve of our 2003 field trips from the hints provided below? Locations are listed at the bottom of this page – just match them to the descriptions. Answers are on page 6

1. A botanically rich site - *Cynoglossum virginianum* (Wild Comfrey) and *Delphinium tricornis* (Dwarf Larkspur) blooming next to the road.
2. *Eleocharis quadrangulata* (Four-angled Spikerush) and *Spiraea tomentosa* (Hardhack) near a lake.
3. *Chelone obliqua* (Red Turtlehead) and *Parnassia asarifolia* (Grass-of-Parnassus) are found here.
4. Richest fern site in South Carolina; patches of *Pachysandra procumbens* (Allegheny Spurge).
5. Dry location where we found *Ipomoea pandurata* (Wild Potato Vine), *Lechea racemulosa* (Pinweed), *Lobelia nuttallii* (Nuttall's Lobelia), *Platanthera ciliaris* (Yellow Fringed Orchid) and *Talinum teretifolium* (Fameflower).
6. *Philadelphus inodorus* (Mock Orange) on the hillsides; one of few locations where we see *Dodecatheon meadia* (Shooting Star) and *Isotria verticillata* (Whorled Pogonia).
7. Home of *Carex misera* (Wretched Sedge), *Robinia hartwigii* (Hartwig's Locust) and *Solidago simulans* (Granite Dome Goldenrod).
8. A WCBC favorite site with *Hybanthus concolor* (Green Violet) in bud and *Saxifraga virginiana* (Early Saxifrage) blooming on the dripping rock overhang along the trail.
9. Photo opportunity for these plants: *Asclepias variegata* (White Milkweed), *Calopogon tuberosus* (Grass Pink), *Lindernia monticola* (Piedmont False Pimpernel), *Sarracenia rubra ssp. jonesii* (Sweet Pitcher Plant) and *Utricularia cornuta* (Horned Bladderwort).
10. *Aconitum uncinatum* (Monkshood) on the roadside and *Delphinium exaltatum* (Tall Larkspur) along the trail.
11. Popular site to find *Allium cernuum* (Nodding Wild Onion), *Campanulastrum americanum* (Tall Bellflower) and *Smilax tamnoides* (Bristly Greenbrier).
12. A new location for the club; two noteworthy plants identified: *Goodyera repens* (Lesser Rattlesnake Plantain) and *Cypripedium parviflorum* (Smaller Yellow Lady's Slipper).

Book Review

American Chestnut: The Life, Death, and Rebirth of a Perfect Tree
Susan Freinkel
2007

Freinkel, a freelance journalist from California, brings the reader along as she discovers the history of the tragic introduction of the blight that decimated the beloved chestnuts that had once flourished along the Appalachians from Maine to Georgia. The tree was an important part of the economy of the residents. The Native Americans and European settlers relied on the fall harvest of nuts as an important part of the diet. Chestnut lumber was prized for its versatility: lighter than most other hardwoods and containing valuable tannin, which enabled it to defy rot and warping.

She begins in 1904 when the Chief Forester of the Bronx Zoo discovered that the chestnuts in the park were ailing. She follows it as the blight, identified at first as a canker-causing fungus called *Cytospora* but now known as *Cryphonectria parasitica*, spread north and south.

Freinkel tells the story of the various methods attempted to control the blight, many of them misguided, such as the cutting down of millions of yet unaffected trees. Most interesting was the story of the dedicated scientists who, over the years, have worked tirelessly in their quest to save the tree. They used methods that ranged from classical plant breeding to cutting-edge gene technology, working not only on the tree but also trying to tame the fungus.

As she writes, "Faith in a seed has propelled chestnut restoration for over a century, and it continues to sustain the two chief breeding efforts under way today: one devoted to the wondrous possibilities of combining the American chestnut with its sturdier cousins, the other dedicated to the potential of the American chestnut to save itself." She describes in detail the work of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and the American Chestnut Society at its research farm in Meadowview, Virginia. Their offspring are now being planted here in WNC at the NC Arboretum and at the Bullington Center.

This book is entertainingly written and should be a must read for members of WCBC.

Paula Robbins

The Botanical Gardens at Asheville

“Born of the dream of a handful of local gardeners and educators, the Botanical Gardens at Asheville occupies a unique position among public gardens because it serves as a preserve for Southern Appalachian native plants. Years ago, forward-thinking individuals saw acres of their beloved wildflowers, shrubs and trees disappearing under the heavy equipment of developers and highways crews. They began to fear the extinction of many species. The Gardens is the result of their foresight, impressive botanical knowledge and hard work.

What makes these botanical gardens worthy of special recognition? Very simply, it is because they specialize in native plants of an area that is internationally botanically significant. Throughout geological history, nature has blessed the Southern Appalachians with favorable climate and good soil. Far enough north to avoid blistering heat, far enough south to escape bitter cold with mineral rich soil and range of altitude from 875 to 6684 feet, the many habitats and micro-climates in these mountains favor a great variety of plants. Plants from farther north traveled southward before the advancing glaciers and found favorable growing conditions in these ranges, which fortunately escaped the icy blanket. During the following era of gradually receding ice, plants originally from farther north made their slow return home. However, many remained here, often in micro-environments in higher altitudes where they had found suitable climate and soil. “

In the 1950's the women members of the Asheville Garden Club began to think of the possibility of a public garden devoted to native plants. Their idea was to provide a place to protect as many threatened native plants as possible in a local area where the plants would be safe and the public would learn about their importance.

At this time the Asheville-Biltmore College was acquiring land for a campus and was persuaded to set aside some of this land for a public garden. (Asheville-Biltmore College was a junior college but later became the University at Asheville.) A Board of Trustees was formed and established a Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws under the name of the Asheville-Biltmore College Botanical Gardens, Inc. These documents were signed on February 28, 1961.

Doan Ogden, a noted landscape architect, prepared the plans for the Gardens and the Men's Garden Club of Asheville pledged funds for this initial step and has continued thorough the years as a loyal supporter. Since there were no funds available for the new garden from the college this new Board for the Gardens realized they would need to establish a fund raising system to meet the needs of the new organization.

The future site of the Gardens was filled with invasive plants and mountains of trash which had been dumped on the land through the years. Hundreds of volunteers were recruited from the community including Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the initial garden club members, members of other civic organizations and even prisoners from the local jail.

Then began the task of collecting and planting native species in the new garden. Tom Shinn who worked for Carolina Power & Light helped the volunteers identify areas where native plants were threatened. Pete Hanlon of the US Forest Service and officials of the Blue Ridge Parkway dug plants from their areas. Frank Crayton of Biltmore Estate knew remote local areas and obtained hundreds of plants for the Gardens. All the collected plants had to be put in gunny sacks for transportation to the Gardens in vehicles. Many trips were difficult because mountain roads were in poor shape and many of the cars were old. Some plants were found at high elevations where a sudden thunderstorm could wash out a road in minutes.

After collection came planting and this, too, had many difficulties. There was no road going into the Gardens. The water source was downhill. The dedicated workers often had to stay late into the night to get the plants in the ground. Charter members Bruce and Tom Shinn who were cultivating their land with native plants passed on their knowledge of plant propagation and contributed in every possible way.

Doan Ogden's plan for the Gardens comprised the creation of a series of garden "rooms" and a network of trails connecting them. The natural features of the land -- open meadows, creek banks and tree covered hillsides -- provided sites for the abundance and variety of wild flowers. Three bridges were built by the Army Reserve Corps and entrance gates were donated by the Veteran's Hospital in Osteen N.C. In 1972 the legal name was changed to the University Botanical Gardens at Asheville. Today it is commonly known as the Botanical Gardens at Asheville.

In 1983, 23 years after the organization's first meeting, the construction of the Botany Center was completed and dedicated.

The year 2010 was the 50th anniversary of the Gardens. More than 600 species of plants native to the Southern Appalachians have been planted including trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses and vines. Uncommon or endangered plants are Oconee Bells, Swamp Pink, French Broad Heartleaf, and Pale Yellow Trillium. Volunteers continue to play an important role maintaining the gardens. In the first year of operation 2000 visitors signed the guest book. Today 35,000 visitors come annually.

If you have never been to the Gardens, this is a place to visit.

Part of this article was copied and part excerpted from, "The Botanical Gardens at Asheville, A LABOR OF LOVE, The First 50 Years" prepared by the Education Committee of the Botanical Gardens at Asheville, Copyright 2010.

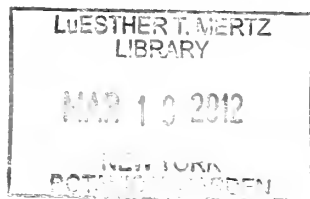
Answers to Page 3 Recorder Ramblings

1. Peach Orchard Branch 2. Pearson's Falls 3. Coleman Boundary 4. Tanbark Tunnel 5. Cabin Cove at Fine's Creek 6. Ashmore Heritage Preserve 7. Whiteside Mountain 8. Kanuga Conference Center 9. Bee Tree Gap 10. Sky Valley Road 11. Heintooga Area 12. Log Hollow Overlook along the Blue Ridge Parkway South



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FIRST CLASS



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Assistants: Jean Lenhart, Elaine Montgomery
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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, N.C. 29812