Fall 1954

NORTH CAROLINA WILD FLOWER SOCIETY NEWS LETTER

By Mrs. Walter Braxton

Nearly 50 members and visitors of the North Carolina Wild Flower Preservation Society met on October 17, 1954 for their semi-annual meeting, at Cumberland Knob State Park.

Members began arriving about 10:00 A. M. Greetings were exchanged, and a period of visiting and fellowship ensued until time for our first field trip of the day scheduled for eleven O'Clock. The trail from the clubhouse to the top of Cumberland Knob was taken by our group. Two of our able Botanists, Dr. Oliver M. Freeman of Tryon, and Dr. H. R. Totten of Chapel Hill, pointed out some of the more unusual plants and trees along the lush trail of Galax, Rhododendron, Laurel, Table Mountain Pine, White Pine, Chestnut Oaks and trees and plants to numerous to mention. Dr. Freeman pointed out The Buffalo Nut a partly parasitic shrub, The Cherry Birch sometimes called the Sweet Birch that has a bark which looks much like the bark of the wild cherry with the leaves like a Birch and the taste and smell of Teaberry. Decidious Holly was in abundance along the trail and most of us gathered some of of its berries to bring to our own gardens to plant. Dr. Freeman reminded us that it takes two years for these seed to come up. It was most thrilling to see the beautiful Blue Bottle-shaped Closed Gentian. Wild grapes were in abundance and most of us started our lunch there at the top of the Knob as we gazed on the beauty of the countryside with The Pilot Knob in the distance.

Back at the clubhouse we took our picnic baskets to the picnic grounds, such delicious food and in such abundance, there was fried chicken, roast, ham biscuit, numerous kinds of sandwiches, salads, potato chips, olives, pickles, pies, cake, persimmon pudding, fruits and drinks. Mr. and Mrs. Jas. N. Plaster from Winston-Salem brought along a huge coffee pot and in no time flat they had a fire going in the furnance and hot coffee for all. The day being beautiful but a little nippy that coffee hit just the right spot for most of us.

After lunch we assembled back at the clubhouse for a short business meeting conducted by our President, Mrs. Paul R. Spencer. Mrs. Carl Pegg, our secretary, read the minutes of the last meeting and the various items of business were taken care of. Mr. G.O. Doake of Chapel Hill, President ot The North Carolina Lily Society and one of our members ask help in obtaining seed of the Carolina Lily. Mr. Herbert P. Smith of Liberty brought the unusual for us all to see. He had a pot with a hundred plants of Trailing Arbutus grown from seed gathered in his own garden. Dr. Totten took time to tell us what a wonderful thing he had done and rarely could you find a botanist that had performed such a fete.

After our business session it was our good fortune to have for our afternoon field trip as our guide Mr. William G. Lord, Parkway Naturalist. Mr. Lord called our attention to the different kinds of pines in that immediate vicinity and showed how the needle formation varied from one to another. The Table Mountain Pine being the most unusual with its top flat like a table and retaining its cones from fourteen to twenty years. We enjoyed our trip with Mr. Lord and his abundance of knowledge of plants, shrubs and trees.

Some anziety was caused by Mrs. H. R. Totten and her party who got themselves lost and did not get to the meeting until mid afternoon.

Those attending the meeting included: Mr. and Mrs. Lionel D. Melvin, Sandra Melvin and Dan Melvin; Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Smith and Bobby Smith; Mr. and Mrs. Paul R. Spencer, Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Burr, Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver K. Freeman; Dr. and Mrs. H. R. Totten, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Warren, Mrs. Carl Pegg, Mr. and Mrs. James W. Plaster, Miss Elsie Dunn, Dr. and Mrs. C. O. Doak, Miss Bessie Pope, Miss Nellie Jane Martin, Mrs. W. H. English, Mr. and Mrs. Roy D. Apple and Gunner Apple; Miss Annie Wagoner, Miss Louise Hunter, Mr. and Mrs. B. A. Smith, Miss Edith Causey, Miss Rebecca Causey, Miss Daisy Richardson, Miss Nancy B. Eliason, Miss Eleanor Smith, Mr. W. H. Lord, and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Braxton. Others who attended the meeting failed to register and we did not get their names.

Trailing Arbutus (Epigea repens) From Seed

By Herbert P. Smith

After successfully growing Trailing Arbutus, transplanted in our wild flower garden at Smithwin Farm, I was able to gather seed from two plants this year. One plant, brought from Haw River in Alamance county five years ago, has bloomed each year but did not produce any seed. About three years ago I transplanted a nice plant in full bloom from Tryon, in Polk county. This plant has bloomed each year since being transplanted. This spring I transplanted a third plant, which was in bloom, from Deep river in Moore county. All three of these plants are growing within an area of three square feet and near two hemlocks (Tsuga canadensis) which are about five feet tall. All three plants bloomed this year but it was the plant from Tryon that produced the most seed. I did get a few seed from the plant that came from Deep river.

After the blooming season I noticed that two of these plants were making seed pods. With renewed interest I decided to try to grow Trailing Arbutus from seed. The next step was to know when and how to gather the seed. The seed pods were very much the same shape as the morning glory. However they were in small groups like the flowers. About the first of June I noticed that the seed pods were beginning to turn brown as though ripening. I watched these daily to make sure I did not miss getting the seed. I am sorry I did not keep accurate dates on this project, but I think it was about the middle of June , when I was making my daily visit, that I found all the seed pods wide open and, as Dr. Wherry writes in his Wild Flower Guide, - "exposing a fleshy white pulp sprinkled with minute seed."

I immediately prepared a mixture of half well-rotted sawdust and half sharp sand and put it in a glazed pot. By taking the point of a pen-knife, I removed the fleshy white pulp or pods with the seed, and mixed them as best I could with the top surface of sand and sawdust. After settling this with water, I put the pot underglass. About six weeks later I noticed that something very small was coming up; in fact it was so small that it really looked like some kind of moss. Upon examination with a magnifying glass, I could see that they were all small plants with two small leaves.

These plants have grown very fast and now, the first of November, some of them have six and seven leaves - the largest leaves being three-eights of an inch long. By the use of a glass I have counted 85 plants.

I will keep these plants protected from the cold this winter since they are in a pot and can not be mulched heavily. Just prior to the spring growing season, I plan to transplant all of the larger plants into individual pots and keep these pots plunged to the top in well-rotted sawdust mixed with sharp sand for an even supply of moisture. I will keep a frame, which allows ventillation, above these plants to protect them from beating rains.

Further progress of this project will be reported at our Spring meeting next year.

News Item 1. Miss Josie Pritchard, the Society librarian, has asked that the club members keep lists of wild flowers as they bloom in their garden or in their locality, - with dates, habitats, et cetera. These lists, when gathered in a notebook, would be a valuable addition to our library and would provide interesting program material.

News Item 2. Dr. G. O. Doak reported at the meeting that the National Lily Society would like to have seed pods of Lilium Michauxii for distribution among its members. We are happy to report that two of our members have already supplied these seeds.

News Item 3. A new printing has been made of Dr. H. R. Totten's book on trees and shrubs and it is now available from The University Press at Chapel Hill.

News Item 4. The editors wish to thank Miss Barbara Brooks, of High Point, for her valuable help in getting the newsletters mimeographed.

News Item 5. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Newsletter Committee:
Mrs. Herbert P. Smith, Route # 2, Liberty
Miss Rebecca Causey, Route # 1, Liberty

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Merry Christmas to you -

I wish you every happy thing
That comes with Christmas and with Spring;
I wish you luck and lots of cheer
Not just today but all the year;
I wish you good things by the score
May each day bring you more and more.

Mrs. Paul R. Spencer