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N E W S L E T T E R

April 1959 Vol. IV, No. 1

SPRING MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MAY 17

It is the desire and purpose of the North Carolina Wild Flower Preservation Society, Inc., to learn more about our native plants and wild flowers. "THE GARDENS OF THE BLUE RIDGE", located in McDowell County and operated by Mr. E. C. Robbins, is one of the best places for just that. Mr. Robbins, who is widely known for his knowledge of plants and flowers, has graciously consented to open his nursery for our Spring Meeting and to share with us some of his vast knowledge accumulated over a period of more than fifty years. He will talk to us at 10:30; there will be a picnic lunch at 12:00, and the business meeting will ensue immediately after lunch.

The Nursery is located on U. S. Highway 221 two miles south of Linville, N. C. There are several places of noted scenic beauty near by. If at all possible do plan to go up on Saturday and spend a few days--see Grandfather Mountain, Linville Falls, and other places of interest. There are good motels near.

Mr. Robbins will have some of his employees on duty (usually they are closed on Sundays) for the convenience of any person wishing to buy from his vast stock of rare and not as rare, but "just what you are looking for", plants.

We all want our Society to grow. It would be nice for each member to think of someone interested in the preservation of wild life and invite him to meet with us on Sunday May 17th, 1959.

I am looking forward to seeing each and every member plus all the visitors and prospective members on the third Sunday in May in "THE GARDENS OF THE BLUE RIDGE."

Walter B. Braxton
First Vice President and
Program Chairman

NOTES ON THE FALL MEETING

The 1958 fall meeting of the Society took place on October 5 at Tanglewood Park, southwest of Winston-Salem, with 40 to 50 people attending. The treasurer reported a balance on hand of $47.65.

A plea was made by the newsletter editor for articles on the propagation of wild flowers, both herbaceous and shrubby. Dr. O. M. Freeman particularly asked the members to report on unusual ones which other individuals may not be growing. He further suggested that Eupatorium carnatum, Aster caroliniana and Tradescantia longipes be tried for fragrance in the fall garden.

The following individuals were elected to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Society for the next two years: Mr. Walter Braxton, Mrs. Carl H. Pegg, Dr. H. R. Totten, Mr. Lionel Melvin, Dr. O. M. Freeman, and Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Smith. Hereafter this election will be held at the same time as the election of the president of the Society.

Dr. Freeman distributed reprints of his article "Notes on Some Plant Associations in Greenville and Pickens Counties, South Carolina" which had appeared in Castanea.

After lunch Dr. Totten presented the speaker, Dr. C. Ritchie Bell of UNC, who spoke on Pitcher Plants. These plants of world-wide interest belong to the insectivorous plant group. The genus, Sarracenia, consists of eight species which hybridize easily with the exception of one species in northeastern Alabama. Best chances for hybridization occur, not where there are many individuals of two species, but where there are just one or two plants of different species.

These plants usually grow where the soil is low in nitrogen, but they are able to correct this deficiency through the action of a digestive enzyme secreted by the leaves (or pitchers). Insects caught in the leaves are digested and this nitrogenous material is deposited around the roots of the plant when the leaves die. Some insects, however, are adapted to live within the pitchers--as certain mosquito larva and the larva of a particular moth.

Pitcher plants enjoyed horticultural popularity in England during the 1880's and at this time many hybrids were created. However, seeds are low in germination and it takes five to seven years for a plant to reach blooming size.

The natural hybrids have been Dr. Bell's special field of study. The problem in this work has been to find plants which meet the intermediate characters of hybrids. Features used in determining the parents of hybrids are:

1. the arch of the hood
2. the spot back of the base of the hood which secretes nectar and attracts insects
3. the hairs just inside the orifice of the hood
4. the coloration of the leaves
5. the color, fragrance, and petal shape of the flowers.

Dr. Bell advised against trying to grow Pitcher Plants in our gardens because the plants require a critical temperature and a very acid media (pH 4.5 to 5.5). The plants are getting somewhat scarce in nature; many disappear because the brush has not been burned over.

Members reported the following flowers in bloom at meeting time: plumy goldenrod, sweet goldenrod, silver rod, small-headed goldenrod, blue-stemmed goldenrod, New England aster, old-field aster, golden aster, two species of turtlehead, purple lobelia, white ageratum, salt myrtle, woodland gerardia, blue curls, beggar ticks, Sampson's snakeroot, closed gentian, Japanese honeysuckle, Queen Anne's lace, wild potato vine, deep blue morning glory, yellow evening primrose, Joe Pyeweed, trumpet vine, grass of Parnassus, Solidago bootii, Aster exilis, Aster concolor, Aster liniarifolia, Aster divaricatus, Aster adnatus, Spiranthus cernua, Rudbeckia hirta, Collinsonia, Liatris graminifolia, Liatris gracilis, and Amorpha floridana.

Wild flowers seen on a round trip from Tryon, N. C. to Tanglewood Park including a quick look at the coastal plants to the southeast. Observations were made between October 4 and 8, 1958.

Slenderleaf Afzelia (Afzelia cassioides). Frequent in open pinelands. The yellow flowers are small and rather inconspicuous.
Creeping Aster (Aster surculosus) has violet ray flowers.
Tickseed-sunflower (Bidens coronata) make a show along roadside ditches as does a similar species Bidens mitis.
Blue-hearts (Buchnera floridana). Roadsides in pineland areas.
Carphephorus bellidifolius is without a common name. It is a plant of dry soils related to the blazing-stars (Liatris). A handsome plant worthy of cultivation.
Rosemary is a local name applied to Ceratiola ericoides. It is a handsome heath-like shrub which is extremely difficult to establish out of its native habitat.
Partridge-pea (Chamaecrista fasciculata). A common annual with relatively large yellow flowers.
Rayless-goldenrod (Chondrophora nudata) Wet pine lands of the coastal plain. Can be grown in an acid bog garden.
Prostrate golden-aster (Chrysopsis decumbens). A plant of dry sandy soil with small sunflower-like flowers.
Grassleaf golden-aster (Chrysopsis gramnifolia). Common in dry soils.
Basil (Clinopodium georgianum). Seen only in the sandhill country. A subshrub which blooms from mid-summer to frost.
Bog tickseed (Coreopsis gladiata) A handsome low growing species suitable for the bog garden.
Hearts-bustin-with-love or strawberry-bush (Euonymus americana). The flower is insignificant but the fruits are very ornamental.
Deer-tongue or wild buckwheat (Erigonum tomentosum). A plant of dry upland woods.
Thoroughworts, Eupatorium aromaticum, E. hyssopifolium, E. serotinum, and a few others were conspicuous in many places.

Pine-barren gaura (Gaura filipes) has white flowers which fade pink.
Foxglove (Gerardia flava var. reticulata). This tall growing species was seen in only one location.
Purple or pink foxgloves. Gerardia obtusifolia, G. setacea and G. tenuifolia. Very attractive annuals of open woods and roadsides.
Hedge-hyssop (Gratiola ramosa) The roots and lower parts of the stems were covered with water.
Haplopappus divaricatus was common along roadsides and in fields.
Narrowleaf sunflower (Helianthus angustifolius). Very attractive in low ground along roads and in fields.
Camphor-weed (Heterotheca subaxillaris). Common weed with rather attractive yellow flowers.
Rose-mallow (Hibiscus aculeatus) This species has cream colored flowers with purple bases.
Shrubby St. Johns-wort. This attractive plant may be Hypericum galioides but it was growing in extremely dry places in the sand hills.
Morning-glory. Three species added color to the roadsides. Ipomoea hederacea, I. purpurea and I trichocarpa.
Farewell-to-Summer (Kuhnistera pinnata). A pinelands plant, attractive both in flower and fruit.
Gayfeather. A very interesting fall flowering group. The species noted are Liatris elegans, L. laevigata and L. graminifolia.
Lobelia glandulosa and Lobelia puberula were seen in low wet pinelands.
Clubmoss. The species seen on wet soil are Lycopodium alopecuroides and L. carolinianum.
Water-horehound (Lycopus aplectens). This sessile-leaved species was seen in wet soils.
Meadow-beauty (Rhexia ciliosa). Found on a wet sandy bank.
White Sabbatia (Sabbatia difformis). Wet open pinelands.
Blue Sage (Salvia azurea). Open well drained woods.
White-topped Aster (Sericocarpus bifoliatus). Dry open woods.
Rosy Macbridea (Macbridea pulchra). Hides in weedy roadside ditches but is worth any effort to find it.
Bog-carpet (Micranthemum umbrosum). On shaded wet ground.
Orange milkwort (Polygala lutea). Seen in numerous places in low pine lands.
Jointweed (Polygonella americana). Would make a fine ornamental for the dry rock garden. The species P. polygama was also seen.
Goldenrod. Of the many species of Solidago seen, the following were listed: bootii, caesia, erecta, fistulosa, graminifolia, microcephala, nemoralis, petiolaris, and stricta.
Blue-curls (Trichostema dichotomum). Only a few flowers remained on this plant so late in the season.
Carolina-vanilla (Trilisa odoratissima) and hairy trilisa (T. paniculata) were both seen in their prime of bloom in low pine woods.
Southern crownbeard (Verbesina laciniata). A tall conspicuous plant in open disturbed soil.

Oliver M. Freeman
Tryon, N. C.

WILD FLOWERS FOR THE GARDEN

The following are a few of the many native wild flowers which should be more frequently grown in our gardens. The first five items belong to the Spiderwort Family.

Commelina erecta - A perennial species having elongate fascicles of somewhat thickened roots. It is able to withstand long periods of drought without serious damage. I have seen it growing in pockets on granite ledges where it had very hot dry conditions for three months. The species is extremely variable and careful selection is needed when choosing plants for culitvation as ornamentals. The broad leaved form having the upper petals at least three-fourths inch across should be used. The two large upper petals are of a very pleasing blue.

Tradescantia longipes (brevicaulis) - This is the earliest of the spiderworts to bloom in this region. The flowers are relatively large and are blue or pink. It appears to be unique for a member of this genus to have delightfully fragrant flowers. The floras give the range of this plant as Missouri but I have found it in several places in South Carolina and it probably grows in Georgia since I have collected it on the north bank of the Savannah River. The plant is quite variable and care should be taken to use themost desirable forms as ornamentals. The foliage of the plant dies away in summer but grows again after cooling rains of early autumn. The new clusters of leaves remain evergreen through the winter and the flowers begin to appear on short stems in early spring.

Tradescantia ohiensis (reflexa) - This is a tall growing plant with pleasing blue flowers. It can be found growing along the flood plains of the French Broad River in North Carolina and along the Broad River in both the Carolinas. Never use but one plant (clone) of this species since it is not self fertile and failing to set seed will bloom throughout the summer season. It is infrequently cultivated locally but could add much to many gardens.

Tradescantia rosea and Tradescantia graminea are both small plants suitable for the rock garden. These have pink flowers but do not have the large leaf-like bracts in the inflorescence as in the other species. T. rosea is usually not cespitose and has leaves up to ¼ inch in width. T. graminea is densely cespitose and the leaves are slender or almost filiform. T. rosea grows well in most well drained garden soil but T. graminea apparently requires deep sand or its equivalent for its best development. When the plants are grown together, they appear to be distinct and not varieties as treated by some botanists.

Silene caroliniana (wild pink) - This attractive plant has a wide range in the eastern United States. I have seen it in numerous places in the Broad River valley of South Carolina and it also grows naturally in North Carolina. It does well in semi-shade or in full sun.

Polygala paucifolia (Gay-wings) - At low elevations this should be planted in thin moist woods where moving shade will prevent excessively high temperatures. A few plants will soon make a large colony because it spreads by slender rootstocks. The attractive pink flowers appear in April in this region.

Clinopodium georgianum - As grown here this is a low shrub (18 inches) having pinkish flowers borne in the upper leaf axils for a long period during summer. The nearly tubular flowers are about three-fourths of an inch long. The bract-like leaves of the flowering stems are small and do not hide the flowers. In autumn the stems below the inflorescence develop small leaves which are ever-green through the winter. To keep the plant attractive, the old flowering stems should be cut away before growth starts in the spring. My plants were collected from a roadside bank in western Abbeville County, South Carolina.

The next five items belong to the Composite family.

Aster caroliniana (Climbing aster) - This lavendar flowered species blooms in autumn about the time of the first frost which usually does no damage. It is not a true climber but the slender stems find support on shrubs of wet thickets where it grows naturally to a height of 8 to 12 feet. It is the only aster with which I am familiar that has a pleasant fragrance. My plants were grown from seeds collected in northern Florida and have proven quite hardy even though the temperature went to 4 degrees Fah. last winter. The main stems with late tufts of green leaves are not killed by low temperatures as is the case with most asters.

Aster oblongifolius (Aromatic aster) - This is a low bushy perennial covered with attractive flowers in autumn. It is adapted for use in poor dry soils but also does well in most any well drained garden soil. In nature it grows on limestone ledges, shales and even on roadside banks. I have collected it in western North Carolina, Maryland and Tennessee. I have seen it used as a low hedge-like planting near Chattanooga, Tennessee. It is easy to grow from seeds which I can supply in late autumn to anyone interested.

Coreopsis auriculata - This is a choice rock garden plant which is offered by a few nurseries. It grows naturally in the southeastern United States where seeds or plants can be collected without danger of extermination. The golden yellow flowers seem large compared with the size of the plant and supporting stems.

Ratibida pinnata (Prairie-coneflower) - Although the natural range of this plant is to our west, it grows well when used as an ornamental. The seeds of my plants came from central western Alabama. These grew 3 to 4 feet tall and made a very effective display with their numerous heads of flowers with drooping yellow rays. A satisfactory showing can be made by planting a dozen seedlings in a bed spaced about 15 inches apart.

Verbesina encelioides (Golden Crownbeard) - This annual is of western origin but has become established locally in some of the eastern states. The seeds of my plants were collected at Wedgefield, Sumter County, S. C. The flowers look like small sunflowers and the foliage is of a pleasing gray-green color. It is best to sow the seeds in boxes and set out the seedlings after danger of frost.

Oliver M. Freeman, Tryon, North Carolina

Mr. H. P. Smith reports that his trailing arbutus, the seed of which was planted some two years ago, is in bloom. This is a remarkable thing as the seed of arbutus is rarely found and still rarer to get to germinate.

Can someone supply the address of Mrs. C. E. Prall who paid her dues without giving her address? There is a Newsletter waiting for her.

In case you have tucked away and forgotten about Miss Pope's postcard regarding dues --this is a gentle reminder. Please include your correct mailing address and also inform the newsletter editor of any change in address.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a copy of the by-laws filed with our incorporation. Our working constitution, which was mailed with the September Newsletter, differs from this in some respects. It is desired to incorporate in the former those items from the old which have proved workable and desirable. Please come to the meeting prepared to make recommendations to the trustees for the proper changes.