



Native Plant News

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH CAROLINA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Native Plant News
Julie Higgin, editor

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Farewell Dr. M!

Esteemed Society Member Leaves UNCC a Better Place

By Daricia McKnight

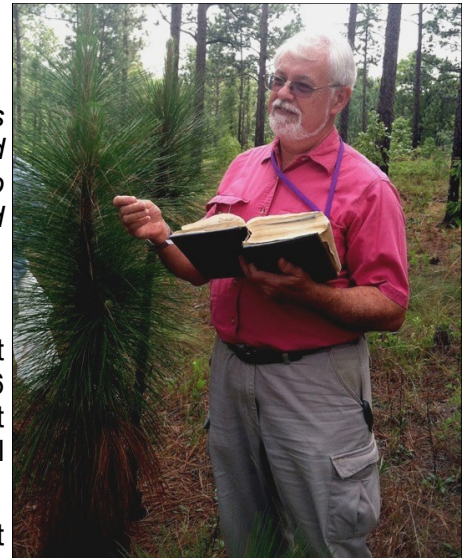
Dr. Larry Mellichamp, NCNPS board member and friend, is retiring in December after 38 years of teaching botany and horticulture at UNC Charlotte. I was privileged to be able to chat with him recently, and hear the stories of his life and career.

Larry Mellichamp might have been an entomologist if not for a class field trip to Brunswick County, N.C., 46 years ago. As a child he had loved insects, and he wasn't thinking much about plants during his earliest biological studies.

But one day his UNC Charlotte biology teacher, Dr. Herbert Hechenbleikner, "Dr. Heck," gave him the task of finding a Venus Flytrap while the class searched for invertebrates. He searched for 10 hours, he says, combing nearly every inch of Highway 211. At sundown, dejected, he made his way back to the car.

As he grabbed the door handle, another door opened (so to speak). Practically underfoot, a Hooded Pitcher Plant (*Sarracenia minor*) surprised and delighted him, and made for an exciting save of that less-than-fruitful day.

Now keep in mind, this was 1968, five years before the Endangered Species Act. There were no Internet plant databases to study. No digital cameras existed to make a zillion pictures of venation patterns, hood arches, or petiolar flanges (or lack thereof), from a zillion angles. There was just a perky little pitcher and an earnest student whose interest had been piqued by



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jean14424@aol.com

David McAdoo, Vice President
ncorchid@yahoo.com

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lisalgould@gmail.com

Terry Ball, Treasurer
tmball@bellsouth.net

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tomhar@bellsouth.net

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acltgarden@gmail.com

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tlmellichamp@carolina.rr.com

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trilliumboy@yahoo.com

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kmecimore@gmail.com

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christyheislars@yahoo.com

Trena McNabb, Membership Chair
trena@tmcnabb.com

Carolyn Ikenberry, Habitat Chair
carolyn@ncwildflower.org

Margaret Reid (Triangle Chapter)

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trkagan@aol.com

Margaret Partridge
afm500@bellsouth.net

So. Piedmont Chapter
Vacant

SE Coast Chapter
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dmpaynter@earthlink.net

Lara Berkley
lara@ncwildflower.org

Triad Chapter
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kathy@ncwildflower.org

Western NC Chapter
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NE Coast Chapter
Kathy Mitchell
kathy.mitchell@ncaquariums.com

Sandhills Chapter
David McCloy

dmccloy@mindspring.com

Terry Britton, Webmaster
tbritton@gmail.com

President's Letter



Jean Woods

We are entering the native plant quiet time, with not much left blooming. I still have some sad-looking asters but that is about it in the mountains. Time for identifying our fall fruits, seeds, and trees!

The good news: we had 81 new members since June 1 of this year! And \$1,319.50 in donations. Thanks to our

generous members and fund-raising efforts, each year we offer *Bruce & Tom Shinn Grants*, to support student research in native plant conservation, and *B.W. Wells Grants* to support stewardship of North Carolina's native plants. NOW is the time we accept applications for these grants. If you are or know of a student studying North Carolina's native plants and looking for a research grant, application instructions are here: <http://www.ncwildflower.org/about/shinn/> [the deadline is the last day of February]. If you have a project or know some who has a project concerning our native plants, grant instructions are here: <http://www.ncwildflower.org/about/wells/> [applications are accepted throughout the year].

One of our biggest needs is YOU! Yes, YOU! We are asked many times to have a table or booth at various functions across the state, but many times we are unable to respond for lack of volunteers. Some of these requests are school related and are for children. Now, I know you think you don't know enough to help in a booth, but we provide plenty of help. We have materials to hand out, tables, displays, reference books, designs for children activities/programs, and t-shirts, and, sometimes plants to sell. What we need is for YOU to volunteer and help. You can help in other ways, too, by volunteering to set up or take down a display. Most of the events are simple and only require carrying a table and supplies to a location for setup and back to the car for take down.

(Continued on page 6)

CHLOROFIENDS*

My Invasive Education



By Tom Harville

Let's set the stage. I garden on .67 acres where I purposely had the builder leave trees to keep the "woody" feel. It was a mature forest lot with big (100') Tulip Poplars, Red Oaks, American Beeches, and their accompanying understory trees. There was a 30'-high, bare, red-clay road cut on my north side. I didn't have a plan for such a large area, so I covered the whole bank with 95 cubic yards of hardwood mulch and said "I'll be back". This was 1994. I was not a native plant enthusiast but I did know that I wanted to keep the "natural" look and I knew that didn't mean a vast expanse of pine straw. I hired a Willow Springs, NC landscaper who had employed my nephew, but I didn't know at the time that most landscapers don't speak Native Plants but then, neither did I! I also was totally ignorant about invasive plants. I slowly learned about "invasives" starting about 1996.

A Princess Tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) came up on my road-cut bank. I had seen one at the Magnolia Grill in Durham so I thought it was OK. The blooms were gorgeous but when the seedpods formed—there were SO many—I got suspicious. I cut two wheelbarrow loads of seedpods off the limbs I could reach and logic said "with this many seeds, it can't be good". So I cut it down, but fought the sprouts for four more years. I figured out what it was and puzzled over how a "sterile clone" could get onto a raw clay bank.

Within about the same time frame I became aware of Chinese Mahonia (*Berberis bealei*), which my landscaper put right outside my office window in 1994. It was beautiful: in De-

cember and January, it had bright yellow blooms with such a pleasant fragrance. Then in 1997, I started seeing seedlings, a bunch of them. I really didn't want that many Mahonias so I

started pulling them up. In 2000, I cut down the parent plants and just last week I pulled out a seedling on my bank.

I should have known better, but I did plant Wisteria (I think it was *Wisteria sinensis*). I brought a sprig from my home place because my mother loved it. I remembered that the vine started pushing stones out of our rock chimney, so Daddy and I secretly cut and cut and cut the base until it was gone. Ah, we thought. About 40' across the yard, however, it came up again and that's where I cut the sprig that I brought to Cary in 1993. I put it on my arbor and it was beautiful. I said to myself "I can control it" but then realized it was costing me 4–6 hours per year to control it, and I saw how it was rampant all around in Wake County so I eliminated it.

My landscaper put in nearly 1000 plugs of Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*). I have pulled nearly 40 30-gallon trashcans full of *Vinca* and there's still plenty more. If anyone tells you to plant *Vinca minor* or *Vinca major*, well, be ugly!

In the late 1990s an ex-friend said English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) was a great plant for banks. We're back to the control issue and the time it takes—I can do it, right!?! Then I start noticing how there were dark green deserts where the ivy had not been controlled, so after one year of growing, I started pulling it up. Since I got to it early, it only took me three years to eradicate it.

I could keep on with the stories about my gar-

(Continued on page 6)

The New Native Terrace Garden at UNC-C

By Larry Mellichamp

In 2010-11 when I accepted the challenge from Timber Press to write a book on Southeastern native plants and the best ones for the garden, I realized that I had a wealth of knowledge of over 46 years of experience as a botanist with native plants. I had my hands in digging and planting in the early years of the botanical gardens at UNC Charlotte where I became a Professor of Botany in 1976. I also knew it would be tedious pulling all the facts and wisdom into a book.

One day when I was walking through the gardens at UNCC I realized that it would be nice if there were a public garden where natives could be displayed specifically to show the public how to use natives to solve everyday homeowner landscape problems, such as screening, foundations, ground covers, flowering trees, shrub borders, and wildflower meadows. I looked on-line to find a public venue, but could not find any public garden that displayed natives in such a manner. So I became inspired to create a garden at UNCC to accomplish this goal. Not thinking that this would cost very much, I broached the idea to my Assistant Director Paula Gross, who promptly said “that sounds like a good idea.”

But how to begin and what actually to do? I had a successful landscape architect friend, Ed Davis, of Charlotte, who had talked with me casually about these ideas. I engaged him to



*Native Terrace
Beginning
—Paula Gross*

pursue the project. He arranged a charrette, or a design brain-storming session of local landscape architects and designers, who then came up with ideas for creating something in a ¼ acre section of the Garden we called the “sunny terrace”—that tells you several things about some of its characteristics, but it doesn’t tell you the soil was crummy red clay and

a drainage ditch ran right through the middle of it.

So, we decided to raise some money and move ahead with this new and unique garden design concept. It just had to be good because it was such a great idea, and thus it would win awards in architecture journals and host droves of homeowners wanting to come out and learn about landscaping with natives (or learn about landscaping with anything for that matter). Since we had no money, we wrote a grant application and received some significant money from the Stanley Smith Horticulture Trust in California. Second, I asked the NC Native Plant Society if they would give us \$10,000 to help underwrite this ambitious project in return for dedicating my native plants book to them. They (you) did, and I did. And we were greatly encouraged because we now had some financial backing that gave us the confidence to move ahead. We are certainly



Terrace deck in 9-13

(Continued on page 5)

New Garden (con't)

grateful for the early support of NCNPS.

The Native Terrace was to have specific sections of useful applications: a rain garden, a nature study area, a meadow (for “prairie”-type plants), a sandy rock garden, a formal patio and a fern garden. We began re-sculpting the landscape exactly two years ago (Nov. 12, 2012). In Nov. 2013 we planted hundreds of meadow plants, along with screening shrubs, specimen plants, and special plants we had accumulated. The super-cold winter of 2014 killed a few small plants that had not become well-rooted (advice: don't plant plugs, especially grasses, late in the season.) But mostly the specimens came through and flourished in summer 2014—in some cases they grew too much with all the extra rain.

In short, the garden is a teaching and learning endeavor. We saw thousands of native insects visit the lush *Monarda punctata* (Spotted Horse-balm) and *Pycnanthemum montanum* (Appalachian Mountain-mint), *Salvia coccinea* (Scarlet Sage) and *Agastache scrophulariifolia* (Purple Giant-hyssop). We're compiling data on what worked well, what didn't; what needs more sun, or less. What preferred poor soil; what liked sand. What rabbits like to eat and what reblooms all summer. We loved the little bluestem grass. The yellow-flowered Sweet Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia subtomentosa*) was a knockout for two months. We realized you can have a lawn of native St. Augustine grass. Overall, the plantings were beautiful.

Take a look at some pictures and plant lists on our web site (<http://gardens.uncc.edu>) and come see for yourself how the terrace is developing. You might want to help with funding by purchasing a memorial brick. By the way, it is named the Mellichamp Native Terrace after Audrey and me in honor of my retirement this year.



Native Terrace in 5-14



Terrace Agastache, and Monarda, Pycnanthemum in 7-14



Terrace
Pre-Party
9-14



President's Letter & Chlorofiends! (con't)

(Letter Continued from page 2)

In our recent survey, 17 people responded that they would help out with an education event and 34 answered "Maybe."

I know there are more people out there who are willing to help. We need volunteers in the Charlotte, Winston-Salem/Greensboro, Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, Wilmington, and Asheville areas. If you can help, please email Christy Larson, our Education Chair: <mailto:christyheislars@yahoo.com> and tell her your region of the state and how you could help out. She will keep a list of names to call when we get a request. We would always pair a new volunteer with a more experienced per-

son, so you will not be doing this alone.

During this native plant quiet time, consider giving of your time and talents to helping us get the word out. Please say **Yes!** and help spread our mission of education, conservation, and cultivation of our natural bounty: North Carolina's native plants!



(Chlorofiends Continued from page 3)

den and what I have seen across the state, but I think you get the idea. I have or have had 16 exotic invasive species in my garden. Half of them I'm responsible for and half volunteered, but I continue to fight them because I don't want to leave them for the next person.

So what have I learned?

Many invasives are beautiful!

Most will demand a lot of time to control so think what will the next owner do?

The "accepted" urban garden (= lawn) isn't as prone to invasives because grass deserts don't sustain them, but if your neighbor has invasive plants, watch out!

If you have a natural setting for your garden, stay on the prowl, as invasives will sneak in.

Never trust a landscaper: make sure they don't use a Rank 1 or Rank 2 plant in your garden, or even better, insist that they stick with native species (remember, many lower-

ranked non-natives may eventually become Rank 1 or 2).

We have an abundance of beautiful native plants that can be used in our gardens, so there is good reason to fight invasive plants that can take over large areas and crowd out the native plants that support our native wildlife. So I urge you to very carefully consider what you plant! *Go native!*

For more information about invasive species in North Carolina, visit the NCNPS's website at www.ncwildflower.org/index.php/plant_galleries/invasives_list and the NC Invasive Plant Council website at <http://nceppc.weebly.com/>. If you have any ideas for this column, please contact Lisa Gould (lisal Gould@gmail.com) or Tom Harville (tomhar@bellsouth.net).

Board News

The Board has been getting your feedback on the Society's activities and aspirations (see **Christy Larson's** article in this newsletter), and has been working on Board development as well: in September, four of our Board members attended a sustainable budget workshop sponsored by the North Carolina Center for Non-Profits. And to highlight the Society's artists and craftspeople, **Trena McNabb** is organizing a members' exhibition to be held in Blowing Rock in 2016 (see her article in this newsletter).

We now have over a year using Wild Apricot to handle memberships, donations, and event registrations, and thanks to all the efforts of those who made this happen, these processes have been greatly streamlined. Our web experts continue to work to improve the site's functioning, appearance, and content; particular effort right now is being focused on making the site work better on cell phones and tablets.

One of the Society's biggest challenges is conducting our wonderful Spring and Fall trips. Running two three-day trips each year, as well as the daylong Annual Meeting & Picnic, is a big job with lots of detail. The Board is exploring various ways of handling these events, so be prepared for messages asking for your input and even better, your willingness to volunteer to shoulder some of the behind-the-scenes work that make these memorable events happen.

For a full list of the NCNPS Board of Directors, Committee Chairs, and Chapter Chairs, go to <http://www.ncwildflower.org/about/board/>

Lisa Gould, Secretary

HOLD THE DATES!

***2015 Spring Trip
May 8-10
Exploring the Blue Ridge Parkway
south of Asheville***

***2015 Fall Trip
October 9-11
Location TBD but wherever it is,
we'll have fun!***



Native Plant Scholarship!

Fundraising continues to complete the \$10,000 goal to establish the **Janie Leonard Bryan Native Plant Endowment Sponsorship**

This scholarship honors the memory of an important member of the native plant community who worked for 25 years at the North Carolina Botanical Gardens at UNC-Chapel Hill.

It will benefit the best scholarship applicant at the
Cullowhee Native Plant Conference.

Interested in helping? Contact
***Herb Bailey, Director of Gift Planning,
Western Carolina University, 201 HF
Robinson, Cullowhee, NC 28723***

Dr. M (con't)

this botanical curiosity.

So, what did the student do? He dug it up and took it with him. That's just what was done in those times. And Dr. Heck was excited about it. Other students had found flytraps; so back to UNC Charlotte they all went, with new carnivorous plants (and a few unfortunate invertebrates) in tow.



Dr. Mellichamp autographs copies of his new book at the Pilot Mountain Fall Trip.

Back at school, Larry began to study these plants. He tried growing them. And so—with one foot firmly in the horticultural world—began a long and satisfying career as a botanist. It would also be the beginning of a long association with the genus, *Sarracenia*.

Perhaps now would be a good time to insert a relevant bit of botanical history. Larry was reading a field guide one day when he ran across a plant, *Scutellaria mellichampii*. It was an encounter that would yield an exciting discovery: Although he hadn't known before, Larry had a botanist ancestor. Mellichamp's Scullcap is named for Joseph Hinson Mellichamp, botanist and medical doctor from Bluffton, SC.

Incredibly, Dr. J. H. Mellichamp was known for studying pitcher plants. He had been the first, in 1875, to publish an article about the Hooded Pitcher Plant. Sound familiar? That's the very same plant Larry had found serendipitously in Brunswick County the year before. Dr. J. H. Mellichamp's report concluded that *Sarracenia minor* catches and devours

insects. Charles Darwin's book from a decade earlier, *Insectivorous Plants*, had not included pitcher plants at all; prior to Dr. Mellichamp's report, pitchers were thought only to provide refuge for wildlife. This parallel interest is pure coincidence, Larry says, but intriguing nonetheless.

So, Larry continued to work with carnivorous plants as he earned his doctorate from the University of Michigan. He managed the collection there, learning through observation, experimentation, and intuition, to properly cultivate and propagate them. He began to attract attention as they flourished under his care. Carnivorous plants were interesting to people, and word spread.

In the '80s and '90s, he would work with Rob Gardner of the UNC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill to create many *Sarracenia* hybrids. Their Little Bugs™ series, selected for compactness, upright habit, and attractive venation (among other things), is widely available commercially.

But, let's go back to 1976. That's the year the newly hooded Doctor of Botany would start teaching classes and managing the gardens at UNC Charlotte—his “dream job.” The recently passed Endangered Species Act had drawn his attention to rare plants and the need to preserve natural areas for the future. Field botany and native plants became his passion and the basis of his career.

Dr. M (con't)

Over the next 38 years, Larry became an award-winning teacher, the author of five books, and the director of UNC Charlotte's renowned botanical gardens and greenhouses.

He became a popular speaker at conferences far and wide, including the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference, which he credits as an influence in his career, and for giving momentum (since 1983) to the native plant movement in this state and beyond.

In 2011, Timber Press asked Larry to write a book about Southeastern natives. He thought it would take him three months over the summer—after all, his career had been devoted to these plants. But he wanted it to be useful for the homeowner who wants to use native plants, and not just another field guide.

Larry paid special attention as he wrote *Native Plants of the Southeast*, to plants not covered by others, including grasses (of which he is not very fond), and bog plants (of which he is). The bog gardening chapter is perhaps the first in any book about natives for gardeners. He is most proud of his coverage of ferns, which he be-



Dr. Mellichamp in the greenhouse.

lieves includes, “most every native fern anyone could want to grow.”

“Over the summer” became, instead, a full year and many 8–12 hour days, but he is satisfied with the result, and proud of the book's success.

Larry admits to not thinking about the future too much. He prefers to take things as they come. But when asked about retirement and what that might bring, he supposes he will continue to do the things he loves: teaching classes in the Native Plant Certificate Program; cu-

rating collections under the direction of whomever UNC Charlotte's new horticulturist will be; working at the Reedy Creek Herbarium. He expects to consult with homeowners about their yards, helping them to determine what to plant. He will continue to accept speaking engagements, and to promote his book. And he wonders whether he should write another book. We need one about shrubs for the Southeast, he thinks.



A birthday cake for the esteemed professor was enjoyed at the Fall Trip dinner.

Larry has travelled the world to see and photograph rare and interesting plants in the wild, but he looks forward now to doing a little more travel in the U.S. with his wife, Audrey. One world destination still beckons, though: Madagascar. He is planning a trip for next fall. What will he see in Madagascar? The list includes lemurs, orchids, and

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Chapter Reports

Southeast Coast

Thanks to **Jeannie Kraus**, **AJ Bullard**, **Carla Edwards** and **Robert Thornhill** for leading the fall field trips for our SE Coast chapter.

Carla Edwards, Park Ranger, and **AJ Bullard**, woody plant expert, led the trip to Carolina Beach State Park in early October. Despite its sugar sand soils and xeric habitats, the park is noted for its plant diversity, with over 380 species. The group had a chance to study trees, shrubs and woody vines with AJ and to learn the beautiful fall-blooming sandhill plants – *Liatris* (Blazing Stars), *Carphephorus* spp. (Chaffheads), *Agalinis* (Gerardias), *Eupatorium* ssp. and, my favorite, *Polygonum polygamum* (October-flower).

In our late October trip to Croatan National Forest, **Jeannie Kraus**, former education curator of the NC Maritime Museum in Beaufort, led us to a fabulous patch of *Gentiana autumnalis* (Pinebarren Gentian) — 50+ plants in bloom! We also saw three varieties of orchids (*Spiranthes odorata*/Fragrant Ladies'-tresses, *Spiranthes longilabris*/Giant Spiral Orchid, and *Ponthieva racemosa*/Shadow Witch Orchid.) The finale took us to a treasure trove of carnivorous plants, including *Sarracenia*



Giant Spiral Orchid
—Cary Paynter

purpurea var. *venosa*/Southern Purple Pitcher-plant, *Dionaea muscipula*/Venus Flytrap, *Utricularia subulata*/Zigzag Bladderwort and *Utricularia inflata*/ Big Floating Bladderwort.

Ending the year, **Robert Thornhill** led our November field trip to Green Swamp. We learned to identify savanna plants in seed as well as those in bloom. Robert also found two beautiful, rare species in bloom: Carolina Bog Asphodel (*Tofieldia glabra*) and Carolina Grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia caroliniana*). We were also lucky to have another young botanist, **Nathan Howell**, on the trip and he shared his beautiful photographs.

We are looking forward to the “off-season” of January to March when we are planning a series of botany classes with Robert. Please join us!

Lara Berkley and **Cary Paynter**,
Chapter Co-chairs



Carolina Grass-of-Parnassus in
Green Swamp—Nathan Howell

Chapter Reports, continued

Margaret Reid (Triangle)

North Carolina State Fair

Every year since 2006, the Margaret Reid (Triangle) Chapter has presented and staffed a North Carolina native plant garden at the State Fair. A quiet green oasis, with a burbling cascade designed by **Stefan Bloodworth**, curator of the Bloomquist Garden at Duke University, our demonstration garden strongly contrasts the riot of color seen in all the other “trucked in” displays in the Flower Show area. Only requiring a minimum of tidying after the year of “letting things be”, we are proud to showcase our state’s beautiful plants. Of course, the ones with a fall display get the most notice. Almost everyone coming through asks, “What is this?” about the *Euonymus americanus* and also admires the *Callicarpa americana*. Those who stop and take a greater interest often ask, “Where can I buy one of these?” and I really wish it were easier to point them to more places that sell native plants. Thanks to our volunteers **AJ** and **Barbara Bullard**, **Lori Campbell**, **Camille Collins**, **Dale Batchelor**, **Susie Dakin**, **Tom Harville**, **Carolyn Ikenberry**, **David Johnson**, **Mary Martorella**, **Marilyn Miller**, **Margaret Partridge**, **Jeff** and **Cheryl Prather**, **Mary Ann Rood**, **Janice Swab**, **John Thomas**, **Jackie Trickel** and **Alice Zawadzki** who are staffing the garden during the Fair. A special thanks to **Tom Harville**, whom I can always count on to help me tidy the water feature and the garden!!

Adopted Greenway

I am busy preparing the Final Report to the Jandy Ammons Foundation to account for the \$500 they gave us to enhance wildlife habitat on the segment of Black Creek Greenway adopted by the Chapter. This project was al-



ways envisioned as a multi-year project due to the size of the area (about 35 acres), the amount of invasive plant infestation, and the fact that it would be carried out entirely by volunteers. To date we have held 23 work sessions with eleven NCNPS member working 129 hours and 54 non-members working 154 hours. We have planted 145 native plants and eradicated hundreds of invasive plants. We have advocated for a change in Town of Cary rules with regards to invasive plants. Hopefully we are influencing those who use the Greenway and the young volunteers from Green Hope High School AP Environmental Science classes. A special thank you to **Ken Moore**, **Tom Harville** and **Bill Cure** for their support and time!

Margaret Partridge,
Chapter Co-chair

Western Chapter

On Sept. 20, **Gary Kaufman**, US Forest Service Asheville, led a hike at Buck Creek Serpentine Barrens, west of Franklin, NC. We saw Bigleaf Grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia grandifolia*) at Buck Creek, which is different from the species at Wolf Mountain overlook, *Parnassia asarifolia*. The Grass-of-Parnassus

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Book Review

A Field Guide to Wildflowers of the Sandhills Region: North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia,

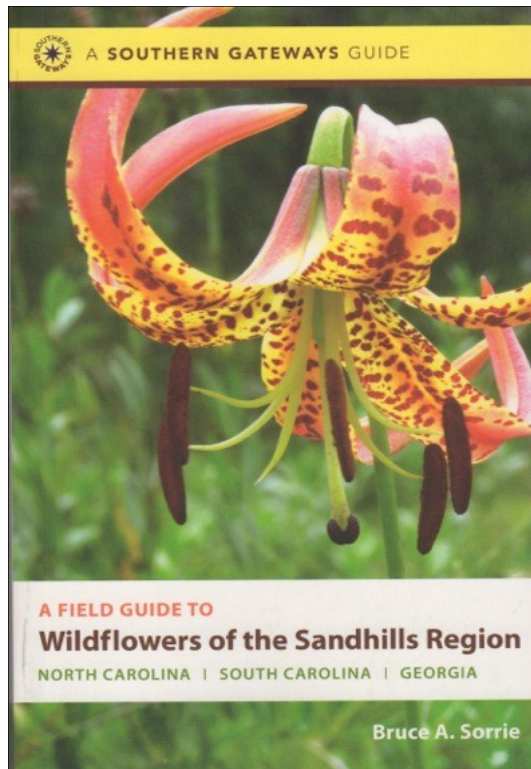
by Bruce A. Sorrie.
2011. A Southern Gateways Guide, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

\$25 paperback,
\$24.99 e-book.

What a pleasure to find a guide that does such a good job focusing on a specific region! Botanist and photographer Bruce Sorrie has put a great deal of information into an attractive, user-friendly format and makes the reader eager to go explore this fascinating area.

Sorrie begins with a description of the geology and soils of the southeastern Sandhills, which extend from south-central North Carolina through central South Carolina and Georgia. He discusses the fire ecology and conservation of the region, and describes some of the ways people have used the area's tree resources. The book also includes a list of natural areas and botanical gardens in the Sandhills region of the three states.

The book is arranged by the characteristic natural communities (habitats) that occur in the Sandhills. Sorrie describes these communities as Dry Longleaf Pineland, Turkey Oak Scrub, Oak-Hickory Forest, Streamheads and



Seepage Slopes, Moist Pine Flatwoods and River Terraces, Blackwater Rivers and Cypress-Gum Swamps, Beaver Ponds and Impoundments, Depression Ponds and Vernal Pools, and Roadsides and Disturbed Grounds. Within the book each of these communities is given a color-coded symbol and bleed tabs, so you can easily find the section for a particular habitat.

Within each habitat section, there is a description of the plant community, a photograph or two of the habitat, and a list of the major plants to be found in that community. Following this

introduction are individual photographs and descriptions of many of the plants to be found there, organized by flower color. Overall the photographs are very good, albeit rather small, not a surprising choice when producing a guide that can be used in the field and tries to include as many species as this book does. The plant descriptions are detailed and often include information about similar species, human uses, pollinators, and preferred habitats. Over 600 herbaceous plants (excluding ferns and their allies), flowering shrubs, and vines are featured.

Ask Santa for it—it'll be a perfect guide to bring along on a NCNPS foray in the Sandhills!

Lisa Lofland Gould

Dr. M. (con't)

succulents. But the funky, bottle-shaped trunks of the baobab tree will provide the backdrop. In 1969, Larry and his father went to the SC/Georgia border and looked for their namesake skullcap. They found it, brought it back to North Carolina, and tried to grow it. It didn't survive. Larry considers out loud that maybe now would be a good time to try again with the plant. It's hard to disagree with that. The new Mellichamp Native Terrace Garden should make *Scutellaria mellichampii* feel right at home.

I first met Larry Mellichamp, "Dr. M.," in 1992. Over the past 22 years I've spent countless hours with him, in the classroom and on field trips all over the state. As one of his thousands of students over many years of teaching, I am so grateful to him for sharing his extensive knowledge of plants with such passion and generosity of spirit. Thank you, Dr. M, for the lessons, the kind attention, and the many snips and seeds of both plants and ideas. May your retirement be a rewarding time, and a chance to do all those interesting things you've wanted to do but never had time for.

Darcia McKnight, NCNPS at-large



Chapter Reports (con't)

at Shaken Creek is *Parnassia caroliniana*, which makes North Carolina blessed with 3 different species of this striking and unusual plant!

Susan Sunflower, who arranges our outings, is spending the winter in Cali, Columbia, South America and then she is heading to Nepal! We currently do not have a chapter head for the western chapter. Jean Woods' name appears only as a placeholder, working with Susan until someone steps forward to be the chapter chair.

If you are interested in doing this, please email Jean at jeanw@ncwildflower.org and let her know your interest. Your responsibilities would be to organize hikes and talks. Jean is willing to do communications for you, sending out the emails and maintaining the chapter page on the web site, but she does not have time to arrange the hikes and talks as she is currently NCNPS president and those responsibilities take up her time. Susan is also willing to help with planning and finding hike leaders and speakers, but she is often away. So we need help!

If several of you volunteer, that's fine too. Several chapters have "co" leaders who share the work.

Jean Woods,
Interim Chair

Support Our Native Pollinators!



By **Theresa Morr**

During those crisp golden days of autumn as we enjoy the fruits of our labor, let us also remember how the labor of our pollinator friends contributed to the harvest.

Imagine what the world would have to do to replace the work they do. People would have to go out with cotton swabs, climb ladders and crawl on the ground to manually pollinate our fruits and vegetables. Well, this is already happening in the Maoxian region of China, where 100% of the apples are hand-pollinated by

humans. Although Chinese farmers keep bees, they are losing their hives at an alarming rate. One reason is because they continue to use strong pesticides, spraying more often in the Maoxian region than in others. Another factor being studied in China's pollinator problems is global climate changes that are bringing more frequent rains and cloudy weather, which limits the days bees can fly.

As much as one-third of the world's food production is dependent on insect pollination. Most fruits, such as the apples we enjoy in the fall, are still completely reliant on insects to successfully and consistently move pollen from flower to flower to begin the fruiting

process. Although European honey bees have long been preferred and encouraged by U.S. farmers, problems with the parasitic tracheal and Varroa mites dealt a serious blow to the honey bee population. Another phenomenon, Colony Collapse Disorder, is still a mystery; the entire population of a hive just disappears without a trace, leaving no dead bees for study and diagnosis. These threats are reducing the honey bee population by as much as 30% per year in North America.

Recent findings indicate that native pollinators may do an even better job of pollinating than honey bees. In this hard-working group are a number of native bee, fly, beetle, butterfly

and moth species. Some forage for nectar, some for pollen, and some for both. Unfortunately our native pollinators are also in trouble, due to habitat loss and widespread use of pesticides. Still in research is the effect of genetically modified crops (GMOs) on our insects. A recent study found that at least 50% of Midwestern native bee species have disappeared over the last 100 years.

So will humans one day take over the job that bees and other pollinators do today? We must do all we can to prevent that from happening. Pollinators visit a wide variety of plants without regard to which are the most

If we lose our pollinators, we lose most of our plant diversity.



economically valuable. Humans who are paid to pollinate must concentrate on a single crop at a time, and the plant varieties that produce the most will be favored over other varieties, encouraging more and more monoculture in our food supply and flowering plants. If we lose our pollinators, we lose most of our plant diversity.

And plant diversity is even more important in feeding our wildlife.

The nuts, berries and wild fruits they feed on all must have their blossoms pollinated. Pollinating insects themselves are a central part of the food web, feeding lizards, spiders, herptiles and fish. More than 90 percent of birds rely on insects for food during various stages of life.

What can we do to support our native pollinators? At the top of the food chain, we have the means and the knowledge to maintain our helpful insect population. We must continue to add valuable native foraging plants in our gardens and farms, and we must stop the casual use of pesticides. Our



Wrinkle-leaf Goldenrod
Solidago rugosa



Common Milkweed
Asclepias syriaca



Hollow-stem Joe-Pye Weed
Eupatorium fistulosum

native plant societies are critical resources, along with cooperative extension services and university biology departments, for providing education and information to the public on native plant species for each region.

Some of the most valuable native perennials bloom in the fall. These plants provide both beauty to the landscape and food for our pollinators, many of whom are migrating through North Carolina in September and October and are on the lookout for plants such as:

Wrinkle-leaf Goldenrod, *Solidago rugosa*: full sun, average to dry soil. A most important plant sought out by all 4 classes of insect pollinators (bees, butterflies, flies and beetles), a field of goldenrod is a welcome sight and looks stunning when paired with purple Ironweed. Very easy to grow, it blooms well into fall.

Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*: full sun, average to dry soil. At this time of the year, look for this plant's large pods full of silky "parachutes" that float along with the wind for dispersal. Monarch butterflies are migrating this time of the year, and stopping along the way to lay eggs on this important host plant.

Hollow-stem Joe Pye Weed, *Eupatorium fistulosum*: full to part

(Continued on page 16)

Pollinators! (con't)



sun, average moisture. This plant can often be spotted in roadside drainage ditches. They can grow to be over 6 feet tall, but dwarf hybrids are also available. A special favorite of the class of butterflies known as skippers.

Orange Jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*: part sun, moist soil. Colors range from orange to bright yellow. A favorite of hummingbirds, it is also known as “touch me not,” perhaps a reference to how the seed pods burst open when lightly touched.

White Snakeroot, *Ageratina altissima*: part sun to part shade, average moisture. As its name implies, this plant was used as a remedy for snakebite. In the mountains, Swallowtail and Great Spangled Fritillary butterflies visit plant after plant taking in nectar.

Great Blue Lobelia, *Lobelia siphilitica*: part sun to part shade, moist soil. A “cousin” of the Cardinal flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*, it is more common in the mountains but will also grow in moist, part shaded areas in the Piedmont. Hummingbirds will visit this plant several times a day for nectar.



Orange Jewelweed
Impatiens capensis



White Snakeroot
Ageratina altissima

Garden Phlox, *Phlox paniculata*: Full to part sun, average moisture. This plant starts blooming in early June and continues through October. It can grow in part shade and can often be found alongside roads and small creeks. Its sweet fragrance attracts many species of butterflies and bees.

American Alumroot, *Heuchera americana*: part sun, average moisture. Bumblebees love these tiny “bells” when they open in the fall. *Heuchera* plants are known for their attractive leaf color, which range from brown to pink to pale yellow-green.

White Wood Aster, *Eurybia divaricata*: part shade, average moisture. This heart-leaved perennial, while not as showy as some of the other fall asters, is sought out by many native bees for the pollen and nectar it provides. It seeds freely in shade or part shade, and grows in all regions of North Carolina.

Schweinitz's Sunflower, *Helianthus schweinitzii*: full sun, average to dry soil. Native to small patches in the Mecklenburg County piedmont area, this beautiful sunflower is on the endangered species list as its habitat continues to be encroached by development and population growth. It blooms in late summer and continues into October.

(Continued on page 17)

Pollinators! (con't)



The last few months of the year are the perfect time to plant perennial natives, when seasonal rains soften the ground and the cooler weather allows the ground to retain more moisture to encourage root growth and reduce the shock of transplanting. Let's spread the word to our neighbors and be examples of good stewardship and plant a wide variety of foraging plants for our pollinator heroes!



Great Blue Lobelia
Lobelia siphilitica



American Alumroot
Heuchera americana



White Wood Aster
Eurybia divaricata



Garden Phlox
Phlox paniculata



Schweinitz's Sunflower
Helianthus schweinitzii

Photo Credits: Goldenrod—Bransford, W.D. and Dolphia, LadyBird Johnson Wildflower Center; Milkweed—M. Baumeister, NCNPS; Joe-Pye Weed---Wasowski, Sally and Andy, LBJWC; Jewelweed—Bengston, Bennie, LBJWC; Snakeroot—Tom Harville, NCNPS; Lobelia—Harville; Phlox—Wasowski, LBJWC; Coral Bells—Vick, Albert, LBJWC; Aster—Muller, Thomas, LBJWC; Sunflower—Trena McNabb, NCNPS.

Member Spotlight!



Lisa Tompkins

Know a member who's doing something natively? Send their info to:

jchiggie@yahoo.com

Lisa is a native North Carolinian, born and raised in Mount Holly. She's lived in Mineral Springs since 2005. Active in the Southern Piedmont Chapter, Lisa says she doesn't have a favorite native plant. "It's the way they fit together and define a place, the way that they are interconnected with the rest of nature, that fascinates me," she explains. With that said, it is no surprise that Lisa not only is a landscape designer, but also owner of Carolina Heritage Nursery whose slogan is "Preserving our past...for the future with Heirloom and Native Plants." Her goal? "I want to help other people see the natural beauty and diversity of North Carolina—especially the lower Piedmont which is often overlooked." She can be contacted at carolinaheritagenursery@gmail.com for more information, or visit her site on Facebook!

Calling All NCNPS Artists!!

By **Trena McNabb**, Membership Chair

There are so many fantastic artists who belong to our society and I thought we should have an exhibit! We will have our first venue in the main gallery of the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum, April 9–July 17, 2016, and it is not too early to plan and create something special to celebrate our native plants.

Our goal will be to showcase native plants in an entirely new way and to reach a new audience. This is a perfect way to tell the public about native plants and their benefits. Hopefully this will be the first of many such shows across the state of NC.

We will have speakers about native plants, information about the NCNPS, and educational materials to further explain our passion



for native plants. There will be a reception on April 8, 2016.

A variety of work in different mediums would be needed: photographs, paintings, sculpture, pottery, field sketches or drawings, and wall hangings such as quilts. Each artist will be asked to write a paragraph about how native plants have inspired his/her work. If you think you can provide art for this show, please prepare now! Let your imagination run wild. E-mail me if you are interested in participating: trena@tmcnabb.com All submitters must be members or join NCNPS in order to participate!

Survey says... Education!

Richard Dawson of Family Feud fame I am not. However, I do have some survey results to share. A survey was sent out in September via Survey Monkey online to all NCNPS members. Sincere thanks to all of you who took your time to give us input.

Why did we conduct a survey? The NCNPS Board has been working on growth initiatives to work toward the NCNPS mission and better serve our members' needs.

It is wonderful to see that so many members are interested in classes about natives. The more members

know = more information shared = spreading the seeds of knowledge about the importance of natives.

A majority of members indicated that the Piedmont area was most accessible for classes. The NCNPS board will work on organizing a pilot class in the Charlotte area, with hopes for additional classes offered in all our Chapter regions.

It would take many pages to list all the comments received, but several recurring ideas were:

- programs on propagating and incorporating native plants in our gardens;**
- plant rescue opportunities;**
- let North Carolina know about the Native Plant Society; and**
- educate the public about the importance of natives!**

You called for action and now we will be calling you! If you provided contact information, look for communication from us over the next few months. Please send an email to christyheislars@yahoo.com if you listed your talents but not your contact information. Think about your skills, what you truly enjoy doing, and how it fits into your love of natives. You are an important part of educating and spread the word.

What are we currently working on to get the word out? Listen for a public service announcement about the importance of natives on your local National Public Radio station in the spring. We hope others will be listening too! Stay tuned...

Christy Larson, Education Chair (with thanks to **Lisa Gould**, who helped with the survey.)

***You are
talented!***

*Consider sharing
those talents with
the Native Plant
Society!*



North Carolina Native Plant Society

C/O Julie Higgin

176 Huntington LN

Mooresville, NC 28117

We're
Wild
About
Natives!



NCNPS members enjoy viewing the beauty of Pilot Mountain natives during the annual Fall Trip.