

Native Plant News

NEWSLETTER OF THE NC NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Native Plant News
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MISSION STATEMENT:

Our mission is to promote the enjoyment and conservation of North Carolina's native plants and their habitats through education, cultivation and advocacy.

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Favorite 'Old' Onion Gets New Label

By Dr. Larry Mellichamp

Dr. Alan Weakley, and colleagues D.B. Poin-dexter and P.J. Wil-liams, at the Herbarium and Botanical Garden at UNC Chapel Hill, have just pub-lished an article separating a long-known species of native onion into two separate spe-cies. *Allium cuthbertii* is a name we have known for a distinctive native species that I have grown for 40 years, and highly recommended as a nifty garden plant in my book on *Native Plants of the Southeast* (2014). Now, we recognize this with a new name: Keever's On-ion, *Allium keeverae*.



Keever's Outcrop Onion

-Will Stuart

This newly named plant is endemic to granitic outcrops (small rocky domes in the foothills) of the Brushy Mountains of N.C. in Alexander (Rocky Face and Little Joe Mtn., for example) and Wilkes counties. It is named after Dr. Katherine Keever (1908-2003), a successful botanist who did research on the plants of these mountains. The original (or type) specimen of this newly "separated" species was collected in 1968 by Dr. Jim Matthews and his students from UNC Charlotte—but is only now being formally recognized as a "new" species.

It is a bulbous plant, with onion-like round leaves and a bit of an onion odor, growing in well-drained thin soils in patches in sun or shade on these outcrops. It is about 1 ft. (30 cm.) tall and has a single umbel of large ½ in. (1.25 cm) beautiful pink-to- (continued on page 4)

President's Report

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[http://ncwildflower.org/about/
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NPN Spring 2018



Jean Woods

Welcome to our Society's new board members and committee heads! **Diane Laslie** is now our interim treasurer, **Theresa Morr** is our recording secretary, **Liz Wahl** is our corresponding secretary, **DeeDee Clarke** is our mem-

bership chair, and **Anne Gometz** is our historian. We are pleased to have these people as part of our team.

A big *Thank You* to everyone who donated in our end-of-the-year appeal. We were able to raise close to \$3,000 for our various outreach efforts in North Carolina! We recently made a donation to the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville for their Plants of Promise Garden project where the money will be used for adding native plants and creating new interpretive signage.

We will miss **Terry Ball**, our longtime treasurer, who took us from an old-fashioned spreadsheet to Quickbooks, and helped us formulate our financial policies and our investments. As we have grown in numbers, we would never have been able to handle our finances without Terry. Terry has rotated off the board after many years of faithful service. If you see Terry at chapter meetings or our statewide outing, thank her for all she has done for us.

Since the last newsletter, the Education Committee, led by **Jackie Trickel**, has produced four handouts for use at events and educational venues. Your chapter heads have the copies and they are also posted online on our web site under Resources at the bottom of the first page. The four handouts are: Favorite Natives, Ferns, Native Plant Color Pallet, and Groundcovers.

The handouts were used at the Green and Growing Show in January in Greensboro. This is a huge show mainly for landscapers and plant nurseries. We have had a booth at this show for many years and endeavor to spread the word about native plants to those that grow and use plants.

The Program Committee, lead by **Lisy McLeod** is hard at

(continued next page)

President's Report (cont.)

work planning for our Spring Outing in April 27-29 in Franklin. This will be a great weekend of botanizing and hanging out with other native plant enthusiasts. Franklin is a wonderful town, surrounded by the Southern Appalachians, which are full of native plants. We will have botanists for hike leaders and speakers. **Mark Rose** will again curate a native plant auction like the one we had at the Boone Outing last May.

We are also in the process of upgrading and adding to our Gallery of Native Plants on our website. The changes will all be reflected later in the summer, but we are working to improve the searches and identifying where we have gaps in our pictures of species. We will let you know when the changes are complete.



-Will Stuart

THANKS, DONORS!

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New Onion (cont. from p1)

almost-white flowers with conspicuous green ovaries. It blooms in June, and then goes dormant and dies down for the summer, reappearing with new leaves in winter. Well behaved in the garden and long-lived, it is arguably our showiest native *Allium*, and is heat and drought tolerant by virtue of going dormant.

I have distributed seeds and plants of this species as "*A. cuthbertii*" for decades, so if you have one, you may want to change your label. The "old" name ***Allium cuthbertii***, Cuthbert's Onion, now refers to a similar but smaller species from the eastern Piedmont and Coastal Plain of NC and SC and southward.



Dr. Katherine Keever

Spring Outing!

The **Spring Outing** is **April 27-29** in the southern mountain town of Franklin, NC. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Comfort Inn (828-369-9200). When making reservations please ask for the group rate for NCNPS. This price will be good **until March 22**. After that, you will have to pay the full price. There's also Franklin Terrace B&B (828-369-8888), which is right across the street from the historic First Presbyterian Church where we will hold our meetings. All meetings, lectures and a silent plant auction will be held in Tartan Hall at the church, located at 26 Church St. All meals are on your own, including lunches. **Gary Kauffmann** will be Friday night's speaker, telling us of William Bartram's journeys in this area. Hike Leaders will include **Gary Kauffman, Brent Martin, Larry Mellichamp, Mark Rose** and **Dan Pittillo**. Further details on the weekend and a link to register have been emailed to members. See the Society's website for more information.

—Lisy McLeod

Silent Auction!

It's time to start gathering your special plants for our upcoming Silent Auction in Franklin to be held April 27-29 during our annual Spring Outing.

Since the auction was so popular and successful last year in Boone, I have been asked to chair this part of our Spring Outing again. It will work the same way. You will bring your donations to the outing and register them on the forms provided.

We would like very special plants to include in this auction. Specimen plants and special cultivars of our natives will be welcomed. We ask that you save the seedlings and smaller plants for our annual picnic auction. If you have any questions about something you would like to donate please contact me either by phone at 336-708-6359 or email at trillium-boy@yahoo.com. **-Mark Rose**

Certified Native Plant Habitats

This quarter, we have descriptions of Certified Native Plant Habitats from three of our members.

Dick and Janice Kennedy moved into their home in The Settings subdivision in Black Mountain in July 2009. Dick had retired from Electronic Data Systems, and Janice, with a background in association nonprofit management, became a Master Gardener in Buncombe County after moving to this area.

Both have been involved in their homeowners association since

its inception in early 2011. They celebrated their 52nd wedding anniversary in 2015. Their goal when building their home was "to disturb the native plant life on their lot as little as possible and to plant natives when possible to preserve the wildness of the yard."



Julie Marik and John Haywood bought their home in Greenville, NC, in 2013 and started cultivating native plants in earnest in 2014. These two relative newcomers to the native plant community say they appreciate the many valuable aspects of planting natives



and are teaching their children to observe and

enjoy the pollinators that visit their yard. Julie manages the greenhouse at East Carolina University and has been interested in the increase of natives in the college and community landscapes. NCNPS is happy to have a certified habitat in eastern North Carolina and hopes that the Marik-Haywood garden will inspire others to appreciate and plant natives.

The garden of **Carla and Larry Vitez** is located in southeast Charlotte on a quiet, wooded street that has a small stream meandering through a floodplain-like terrain. Carla has worked for years to add natives to moderate stream erosion and enhance her wetlands. Her backyard is a delightful collection of shrubs such as Pawpaw and Red Buckeye, spreading ferns such as

Sensitive Fern in wet areas, evergreens like Southern Magnolia for screening, and soil-holding shrubs like Fothergilla to help with erosion. Finding the right natives for steep, sunny slopes and clay-based rain gardens has been a challenge. It has become a year-round treat in sun and shade for bird, butterflies and humans.



Please send your Certified Native Plant Habitat descriptions and photos, and any questions you have about certifying your property, to **Larry Mellichamp** at LMellichamp@carolina.rr.com

CHLOROFIENDS!*

Invasive Plants of the NC Piedmont, Pt. 4:

Winter Annuals

By Lisa Lofland Gould

Spring is on the way, the birds are starting to sing, and no doubt you've noticed small plants greening up lawns and pathways, some even blooming already. These eager beavers are winter annuals, plants that bloomed last spring, produced seeds and died, only to be resurrected from seed over the course of the winter.

Common Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) is a familiar winter annual, common not only in our lawns and flowerbeds but also in open woodlands and disturbed edges. The NCNPS gives this Eurasian native, now found throughout Canada and the US, a Rank 2 "Significant Threat" rating. Chickweed was brought early to the New World for many purposes: it is eaten in salads and as a cooked green, is relished by chickens, and has a number of purported (but unproven) medicinal uses. Like many members of the Pink Family, it has opposite



Common Chickweed -Flickr

leaves and five petals, although Chickweed's petals are so deeply cleft, at first glance it appears



to have ten. It is a prolific seed producer. Little seems known about its specific ecological impact on native flora and fauna, but the early appearance of all of the non-native winter annuals discussed here means that they get a

head start on their growth before the natives emerge, outcompeting native flora for nutrients, water, and sunlight.

There are a number of non-native *Veronica* species in our area, but Ivyleaf Speedwell (*Veronica hederifolia*)

seems to be spreading most rapidly, and is found throughout



Ivyleaf Speedwell -uniprot.org

the NC mountains and piedmont (but is rare on the coastal plain). In the Plantain Family, Ivyleaf Speedwell is another Rank 2 winter annual and a European native; it is common in lawns and sometimes found in large patches in natural areas (usually floodplains). Its sky-blue flowers are larger than the flowers of many other speedwells, and its stems and leaves are hairy. The leaves may have from three to seven lobes or teeth, and often have palmate venation.

Purple Dead-nettle (*Lamium purpureum*) is also a Rank 2 winter annual, a Eurasian native that is now found in most US states. In the Mint Family, it has had both edible and medicinal uses, so it was likely brought to North America early in (continued next page)

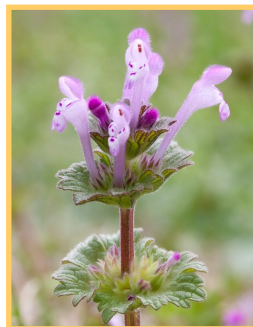
Chlorofiends! (cont.)



Purple Dead-nettle -Flickr

which is also sometimes called dead-nettle (the “nettle” reference is because the overall appearance of these plants somewhat resembles *Urtica* species, but they lack the stinging hairs of the true nettles).

The upper leaves and stem of Purple Dead-nettle usually have a reddish cast, and the heart-shaped leaves all have petioles. Henbit lacks the reddish cast, has more rounded, scalloped-edged leaves, and its upper leaves are sessile or half clasping the stem. The purplish flowers of Henbit rise stiffly above the leaves, giving it another common name, Giraffehead, while the pink-purple (sometimes reddish) flowers of Purple Dead-nettle peek out from beneath the upper leaves and do not stand so erectly as Henbit flowers. Both species have the square stem that is common in the Mint Family, and both are common throughout North Carolina. Of the two species, Purple Dead-nettle seems to be far more invasive, but both spread in lawns, edges, disturbed areas, and sometimes into cropland and pastures. Henbit is known to be an alternate host for Corn Earworm (a moth larva that is a significant pest on corn,

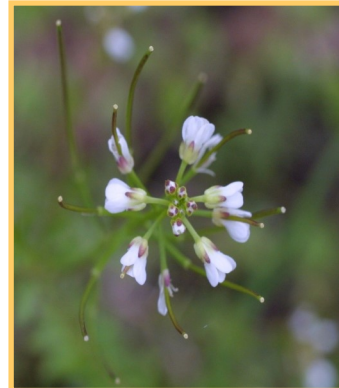


Henbit -Flickr

European settlement. I have seen it blooming throughout the winter months and into the following fall. It is easily confused with another Eurasian (and north African) native, Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*),

tomatoes, and other crops), and an overwintering host for Soybean Cyst Nematode, which is a serious global pest on soybeans.

Although not currently ranked as an invasive by the NCNPS, Hairy Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*) is a likely candidate, now common throughout North Carolina. It can act as a winter or summer annual, and sometimes a biennial; I have seen it blooming and fruiting in every month of the year. This diminutive, Eurasian member of the Mustard Family has tiny, four-petaled white flowers, and produces a narrow fruit capsule up to 1” long. It forms



Hairy Bittercress-LG

basal rosettes with leaves that are pinnately divided into rounded leaflets. The entire plant may be over a foot in height, but is usually less than that. I can find little about its history, but since Hairy Bittercress is an edible plant, it appears to have been introduced both deliberately and accidentally around the globe. It thrives in lawns, disturbed edges, and damp soils and is often found in nurseries, container plants, turf, greenhouses, and other cultivated areas. To its credit, early butterflies such as the Spring Azure and the Falcate Orange Tip nectar on bittercress flowers, and it is also a larval host plant for the Falcate Orange Tip.

As always, it’s best to GO NATIVE!

Chlorofiends! is a regular column in *Native Plant News*. If you have information or comments on invasive species in North Carolina, please share them with Lisa Gould (lisalgould@gmail.com).

*Thanks to Jim Butcher’s *The Dresden Files* for the column title.

Pavia or Parviflora?

By **Bettina Darveaux**

I could never remember which buckeye species was which until I finally took the time to research the species names of these two woody plants. The specific epithet for Bottlebrush Buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*) is a Latin word meaning small-flowered, which is an accurate description in comparison to Red Buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*). Although the inflorescence of *A. parviflora* is very large, resembling a bottlebrush as its common name implies, the individual cream-colored flowers are relatively small, daint and wispy, with the stamens protruding way beyond the corolla. Small-flowered thus describes *A. parviflora* very well. The individual red flowers of *A. pavia* are comparatively much larger and stout on a relatively shorter inflorescence.



Which buckeye is which?

My research revealed that the origin of the specific epithet “pavia” comes from Pavius, which is the Latinized name for Peter Paaw, a botanist in the late 1500’s. Since that doesn’t really help much in describing the plant, I took the liberty of doing so myself by imagining Peter Paaw to be redheaded! From this little bit of investigating, I don’t think I will ever confuse the Latin names of these two species names again.

Not only are the flowers of *A. pavia* red, but the emerging leaves and inflorescence in early spring are, as well. The red color is due to the plant pigment anthocyanin. Anthocyanin is

a pigment that can accumulate when plants experience stress, such as low levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, low temperatures, etc., and serves to help plants physiologically tolerate stress. *A. pavia* flower buds develop very early in the spring when temperatures can vary greatly from balmy to below freezing, and the high levels of anthocyanin in the plant tissues

help protect the developing flowers from freezing temperatures and ultraviolet light exposure. Nature always has a solution! Additionally, the developing inflorescence is surrounded by wooly hairs, which are another mechanism for cold adaptation. In contrast, *A. parviflora* inflorescences de-

velop much later in the spring, long after the last average frost date has passed, and lacks both the anthocyanin accumulation and hairs.

Obviously, this article was not at all about which of these species to plant, as the title at first might lead you to believe. Both *A. pavia* and *A. parviflora* are wonderful, interesting, native woody species that flower at different times from each other — early spring and early summer, respectively. They both will make great additions to your native plant habitats.

When your friends come over to visit your beautiful native gardens, you now will be well-equipped to rattle off those scientific names for these two buckeyes with confidence!

Chapter News

Green & Growing!

Neither snow nor rain nor sleet will stop NC Native Plant Society members from staffing the Society's booth at the annual **Green and Growing Show** in Greensboro. But they sure will make things interesting! The show was held Jan. 15-19 at the Greensboro Convention Center. Based on initial weather forecasts for light snow on Wednesday, the traditional set-up day, **Jeff Prather** and **Judy West** decided to set up a day early with the help of **John Neal**. GREAT PLANNING! Wednesday's light snowfall in Chapel Hill was 10-12 inches, while Greensboro got slightly less.

Regardless of the adverse conditions, **Pat Holder** and **Diane Laslie** braved the elements and opened the booth as normal on Thursday. They were augmented by Dr. **Larry Mellichamp**, who was staying in the conference hotel while giving a lecture, "The Best Native Plants for the Southeast" on Tuesday afternoon. While attendance on Thursday was down from typically large crowds drawn by the show, attendees were no less enthusiastic. By Friday, most of the scheduled staff was able to make the journey

to Greensboro. Thanks go out to **Jeff** and **Cheryl Prather**, **Judy West**, **Lynda Waldrep**, **John** and **Dee Clarke**, and **John Neal**. Diane could not stay away and made her second appearance!



Cheryl Prather tries on the Venus Fly Trap hat from the Perennial Plant Association booth.

The Green and Growing Show is an annual trade show sponsored by the NC Nursery and Landscape Association. It includes training and certification classes, as well as educational presentations. NCNPS has had a booth for years at the Marketplace where growers from around the nation have display booths. It is an excellent opportunity to spread the gospel of native plants and an indication that spring is not that far away... despite the snow this year!

Triad Chapter

In early December, a fern rescue team from the Triad Chapter traveled to a site organized by **Tom Harville** in Apex. We were also joined by two Greensboro employees who brought a city truck. In a short time the truck was filled along with the back of **Diane Laslie's** car. We rescued well over 200 plants and have since relocated them to the Greensboro Bog Garden.



Lynda Waldrep, Diane Laslie, Judy West, Ann Walter-Fromson, George Satalino, Deborah Staves and Steve Green -Tom Harville

Society Page

I Spy a Spring Flower...

Sanguinaria canadensis – Bloodroot

One of the true harbingers of spring, Bloodroot may not be seen one day, and then up and in flower the next day. The bud arrives above ground wrapped in its leaf to protect the emerging bud. Once it breaks out, the bud rapidly out-paces the leaf and the flowers expand and open in a few hours. The pristine white petals encircle the beautiful yellow stamens. If no wind or rain comes, the flowers can last 4-5 days. But normally in the spring, we do get both of these and it is not uncommon for the flowers to last less than a day. So enjoy them while you can! The flowers are usually followed by beautiful tapered seed capsules. These tend to get lost in the foliage, which catches up with the stems, and you really have to keep a sharp eye out for the ripening seedpods. I recommend you find some women's stockings and wrap the seedpods in them to save your seeds. You can use a small piece of masking tape on both the top and bottom, as the seed will ripen in 30-45 days after flowering. Then you can sow the seed immediately where you would like to start another patch of this wonderful species.



-Mark Rose

Education Report

The North Carolina Native Plant Society and its chapters had a busy 2017! A famous quote from Wendell Berry states, "If we represent knowledge as a tree, we know that things that are divided are yet connected. We know that to observe the divisions and ignore the connections is to destroy the tree." Definitely, our Society is making connections in North Carolina!

Our statistics show that more than 7,000 hours were contributed by NCNPS members to educate the public about native plants and the importance of conserving them. Approximately 6,000 people were reached at 42 events throughout our state. Exactly 35 native plant rescues were conducted by almost 300 volunteers, as many plants were gleaned and



shared. Our statistics also show that 1,900 people attended 37 presentations and talks, some at chapter meetings. More than 400 people participated in 30 walks across the state. And, there were 13 work days with 133 members/volunteers, and two book clubs with 72 participants.

You can see that our Society had many accomplishments in 2017. Thanks to all your hard work and dedication, 8,728 people were engaged in native plant activities! These numbers were pulled from the online spreadsheet. However, there were many activities not included here!

Let's work hard to keep our numbers up to date for 2018 so we can acknowledge our accomplishments and be proud of how much we do. Let's keep making connections!

-Jackie Trickel, Education Chair

Native Places



Jacob Fork River



Foamflower



Sharp-lobed Hepatica



Worm-eating Warbler

Burke County's South Mountains State Park, 30 miles southwest of Hickory, is a popular destination to enjoy spring wildflowers. The park preserves nearly 6,000 acres in North Carolina's South Mountain range, home to 3,000-foot peaks, and many unusual and rare plants. The most popular hiking trail is the scenic but moderately strenuous High Shoals Falls Loop. The left side of the loop follows the Jacob Fork River upstream to 80-foot High Shoals Falls. The quiet right side of the loop descends through rich forest coves and provides habitat for resident and migrating song birds. In late March, masses of Sharp-lobed Hepatica and Foamflower emerge among blankets of mosses and ferns. In mid-April, hundreds of deeply furrowed, crimson-colored *Trillium sulcatum* line the trail along the river. In mid-summer, the park's forested trails are a refreshing break from the heat. First-time visitors will want to stop at the visitor center along the entrance road. Directions to the park and trail maps are available on the park's website (Visit NCParks.gov). Be sure not to miss the short (.3 mile) but beautiful Hemlock Nature Trail!

—Article and photos by **Will Stuart**



North Carolina Native Plant Society

C/O Julie Higgin

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Mooresville, NC 28117

**We're
Wild
About
Natives!**



This photo was taken in the early 1970s by Dr. Herbert Hechenbleikner, when our Society was known as the NC Wildflower Preservation Society. Recognize anyone? Contact Dr. Larry Mellichamp.