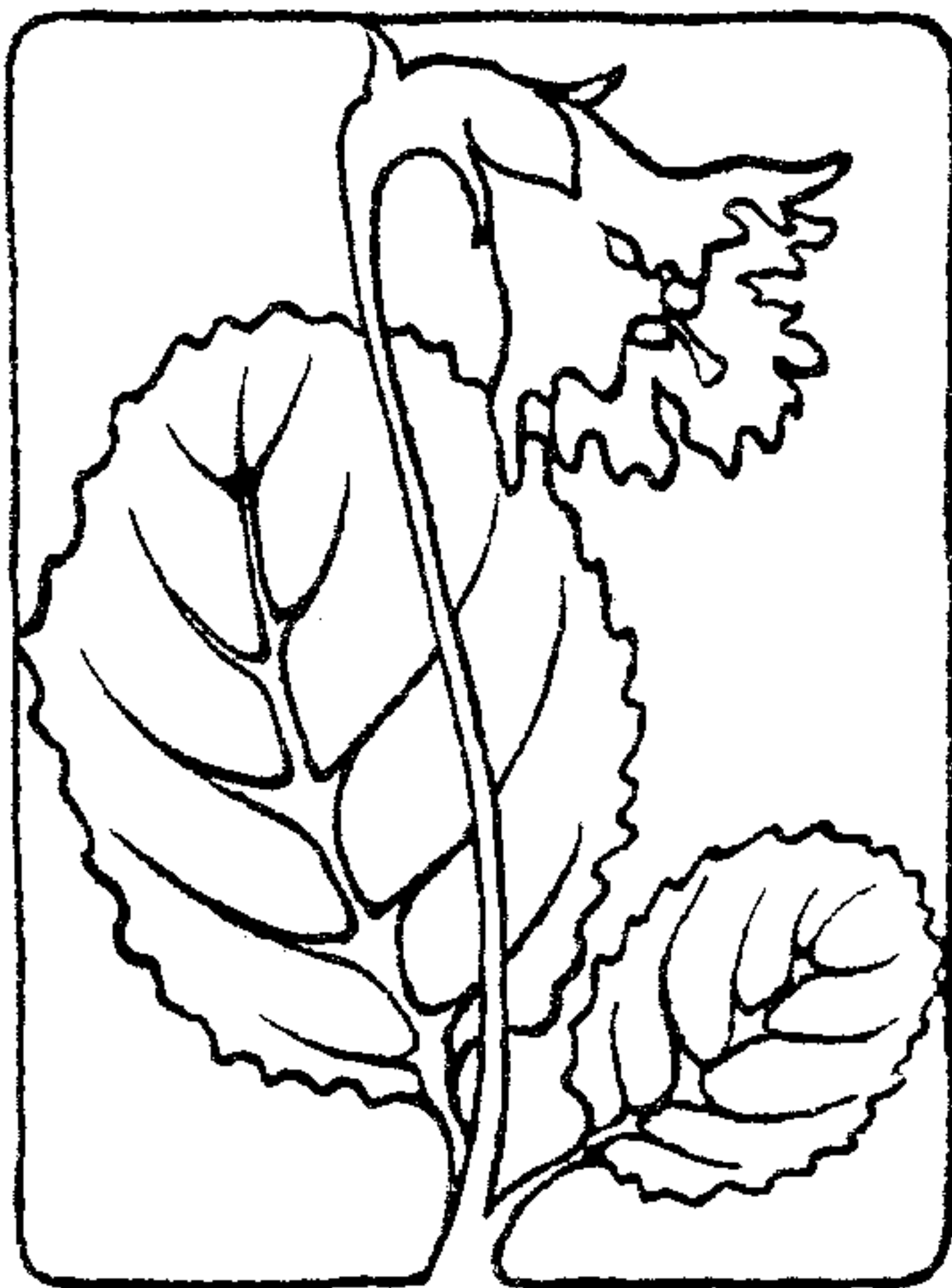


SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

SPRING 1982



HELEN TURNER, Editor

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

The ever whirling wheele, Of Change,
The which all mortall things doth sway.

It seems appropriate to use this quotation from Spencer to preface the brief Note assigned to me. For with this issue we do have a change of Editor-ship for SHORTIA. We welcome the new Editor, Helen Turner.

At the same time we wish to wholeheartedly express our appreciation to Verna and Harvey Krause for their part in the successful launching of SHORTIA. So many things die "a-bornin" and, hence, we appreciate all that Harvey and Verna did in guiding SHORTIA through the early stages of its life, and bringing it successfully to its present stage. It is human to resist change, and we did all we could to convince them to continue their good work. Having failed in this, we say "Many, many thanks to both of you."

And to Helen, we all wish you the best and pledge to you our cooperation as you take over the Pilot's wheel.

August Kehr (on behalf of the WCBC)

BOOK REVIEW

FERN FINDER by Anne C. Hallowell and Barbara G. Hallowell. Published by Nature Study Guild, 1981.

Why is it that after someone has taken a difficult problem and presented a clear, simple solution we all say, "I wish I had thought of that"? So it is with this superb guide to ferns written by the Hallowells, mother and daughter. We are honored that Barbara is a member of WCBC.

If you were to use a conventional taxonomic guide on ferns, it would start:

- (a) Leaves (fronds) broad, flat, and fern-like, more or less pinnately or ternately divided or entire (see b)
- (b) Leaves narrow, small, and scale-like or larger, divided, and clover-like (see 3db)

Now if you are like me, you really would not know whether to go to b or 3db. As a result I never did learn my ferns. It was too difficult, a matter of frustrating decisions because the instructions themselves were indecisive.

The FERN FINDER, on the other hand, starts out with seven pages of interesting drawings, and never once must the user refer to any glossary or dictionary for the meaning of a word -- the drawings are self-explanatory. The user starts on page 8 and, by means of simple diagrams, can track through identifications of all ferns growing from Hudson's Bay south to Tennessee and North Carolina, and from the Atlantic Coast west to midsections of the U. S. and Canada. Nowhere in the 60 pages of text is there any terminology that one would not find in the local newspaper. One has only to procede from one readily understood drawing to the next, and it is so easy it is actually fun. By actual timing it took me 4 min. to identify one unknown fern. With the conventional guide it would have taken me far longer to decide whether to go from a to b or to 3db before giving up in utter frustration.

The FERN FINDER is indeed a guide for finding the names of ferns in an utterly simple, accurate, complete and fun-filled way. Congratulations, Anne and Barbara. I wish I had thought of it!

August Kehr

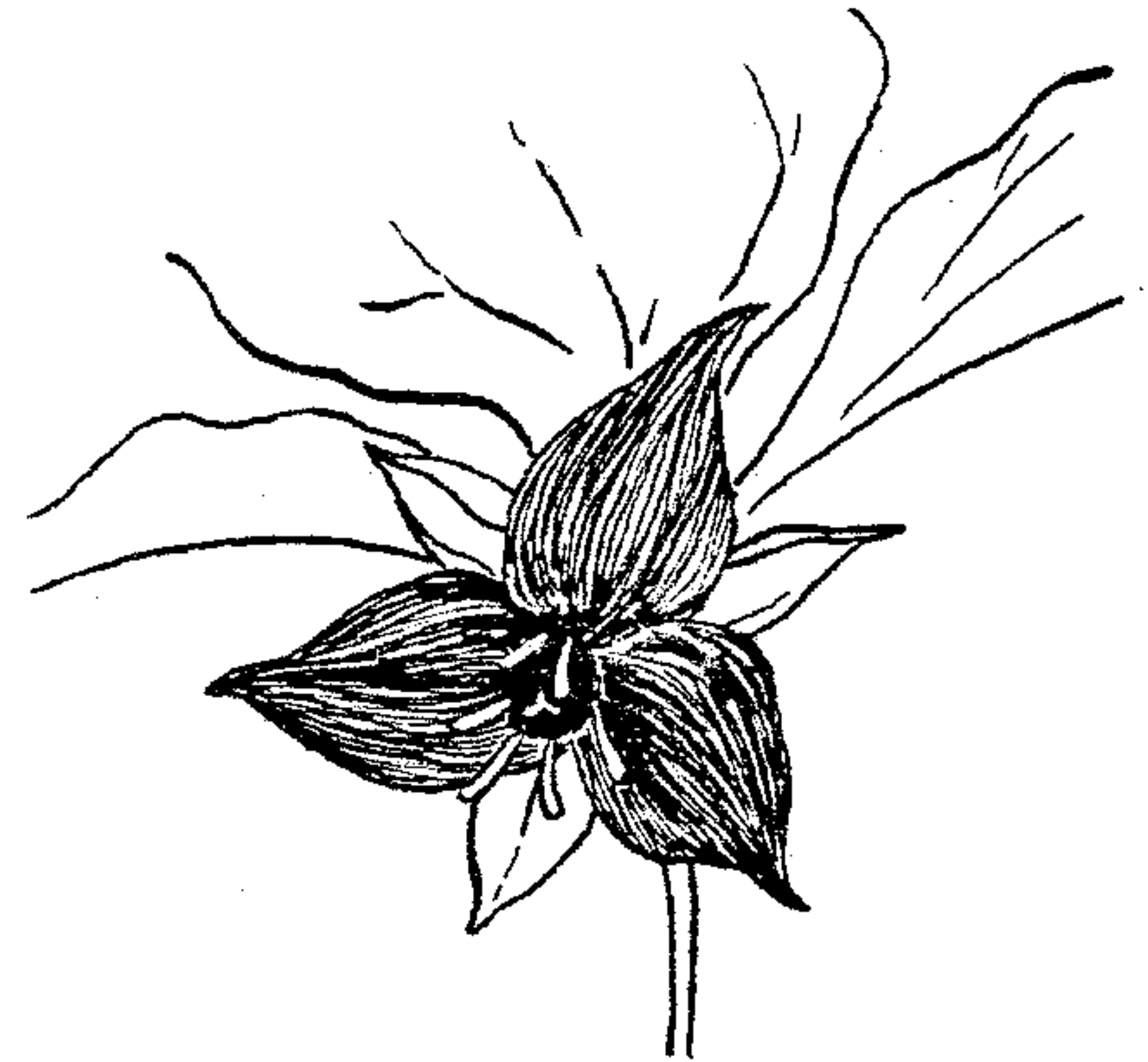
LOOK AGAIN !

The trilliums constitute one of those genera in which aberrant plants, even monstrosities, are common. Some taxonomists have reduced a number of these to the status of varieties or forms, while others have tended to accord them the rank of full species.

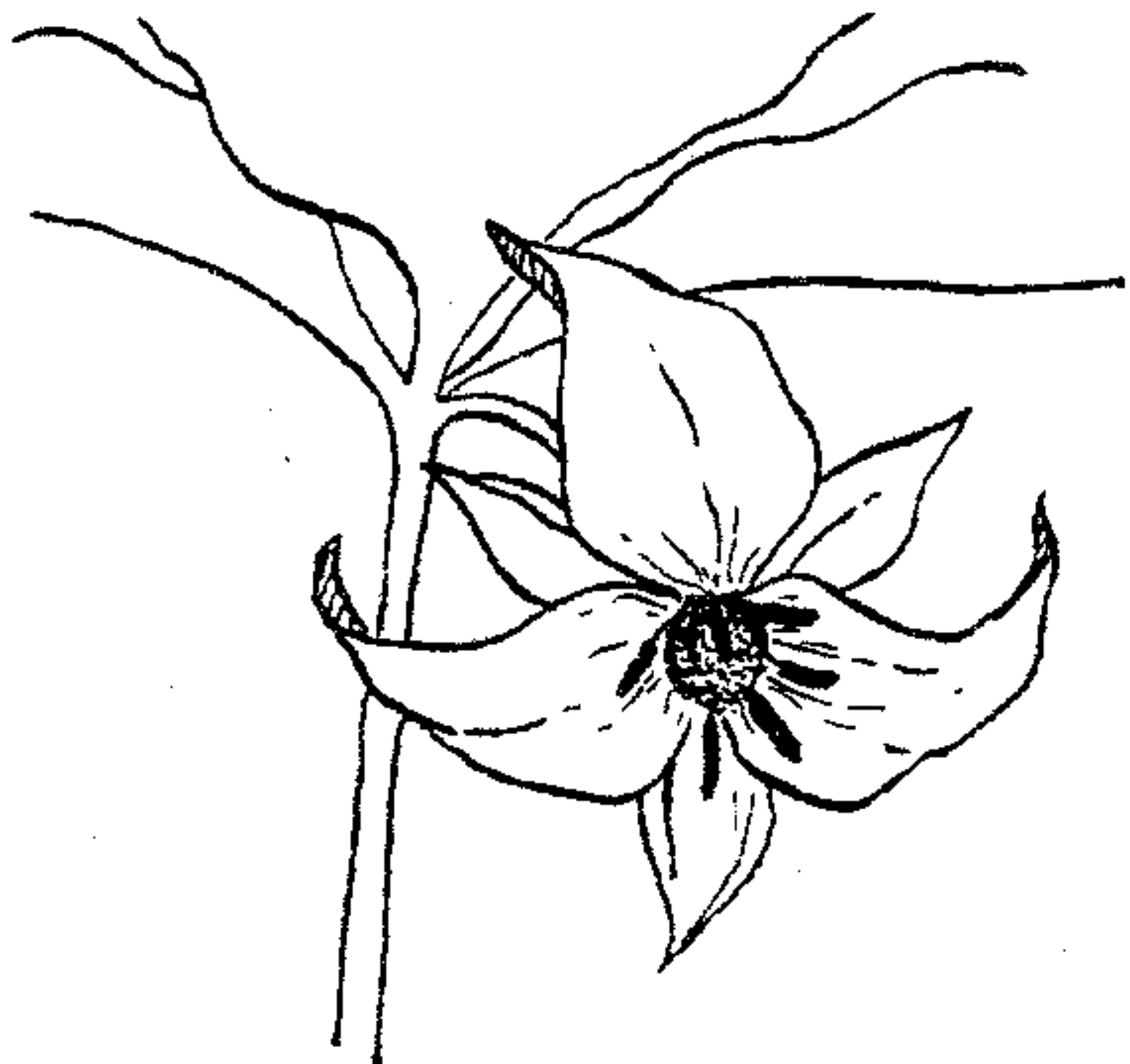
A good example is Trillium erectum, popularly known by such names as Wakerobin, Purple Trillium, Birthroot, Brown Beth and, because it often has a rank odor, Stinking Benjamin and Wet-dog Trillium. If you ask anyone in the north-eastern United States about it they probably will tell you that it has maroon flowers, but in the southern Appalachians so many of the plants have white ones that the name forma albiflorum was applied to them. (The most variable of all the trilliums, it also comes in pink, pale yellow and greenish white, but only rarely). Fortunately, there are some fairly constant characters which, in combination, serve to identify the species: The flower is held erect above the leaves (hence "erectum"), the petals do not overlap but spread apart from the base, and the ovary is maroon no matter what the color of the petals.



In the southern mountains - and nowhere else - we encounter Vasey's Trillium, often referred to as T. erectum var. vaseyi. Here we have a somewhat larger flower, nearly always maroon, differing from the typical species in that the flower hangs below the leaves and the wide petals do overlap. The stamens are longer and extend conspicuously beyond the pistil.



Then we have Nodding Trillium, usually identified as T. cernuum but sometimes re-



garded as still another variety of T. erectum. As in Vasey's Trillium, the peduncle is recurved to bring the flower beneath the leaves (again the name is helpful, "cernuum" denoting this pendent posture), but the petals are white or light pink and curve strongly backward. Moreover, the ovary is lavender, and the anthers (yellow in the others) are an unexpected purple.

Dick Smith

All Those Violets!

Primrose-leaved, long spurred, halberd-leaved, birdfoot, Canada, sweet white, smooth yellow, marsh blue---to the person who loves to tramp the coves and hills and fields and mountaintops, these are adjectives of spring, recognized as the descriptive common names of violets. Some violet species are abundant, some rare, some seem like tiny pansies, and some sport leaves with weird shapes, but all seem to have great appeal for spring wildflower hunters.

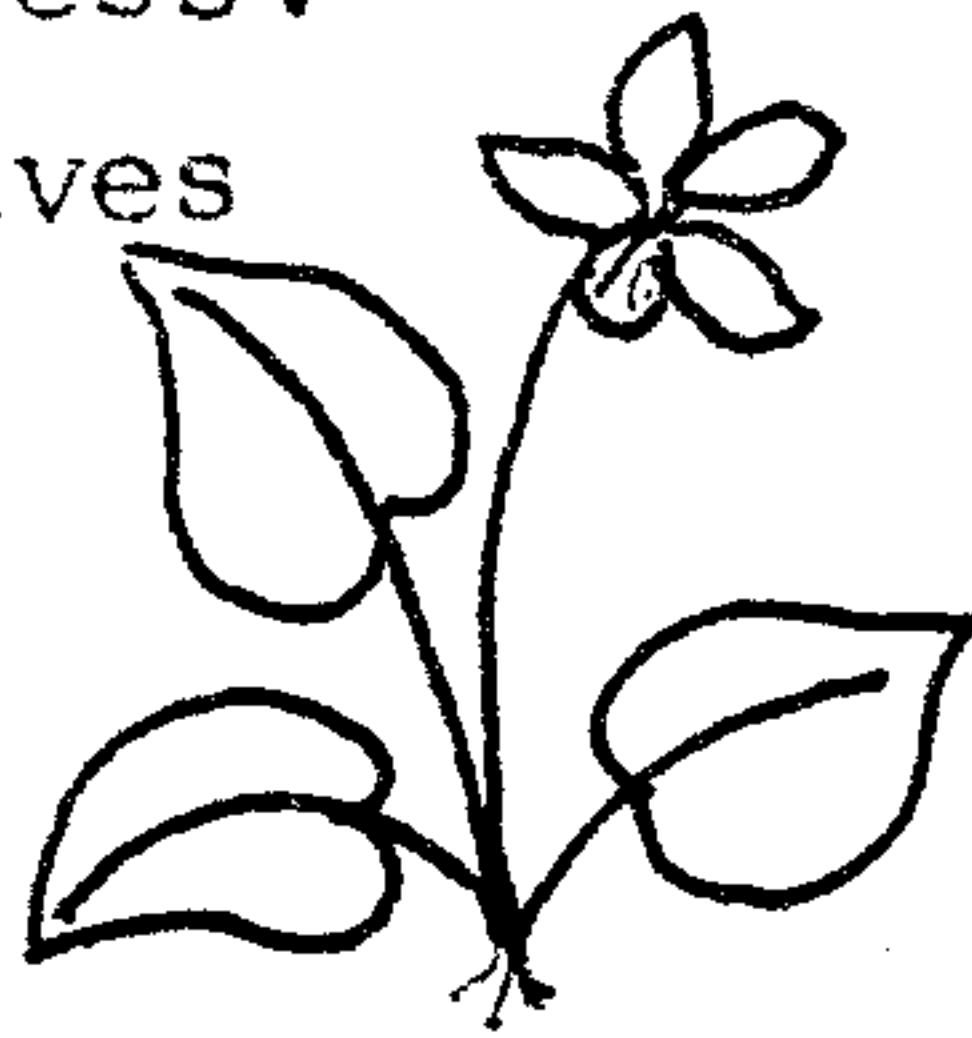
Our WNC mountains provide habitats for a wide variety of these little members of the genus *Viola*. A checklist of spring flowers of the Smokies lists 31 species. Maps in the Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas spot 17 species for Henderson County and, if updated, would list at least 19, so there's plenty of challenge!

Before considering differences which help identify a violet, let's look at the likenesses which lump these flowers together. *Violas* typically have 5 petals: 2 upper, 2 lateral, 1 lower, just like a pansy, which is really a jumbo-sized violet. Lateral petals are usually bearded, lower petals usually veined and extending back to form a spur. Sepals and stamens number 5 each, and the pistil is clublike.

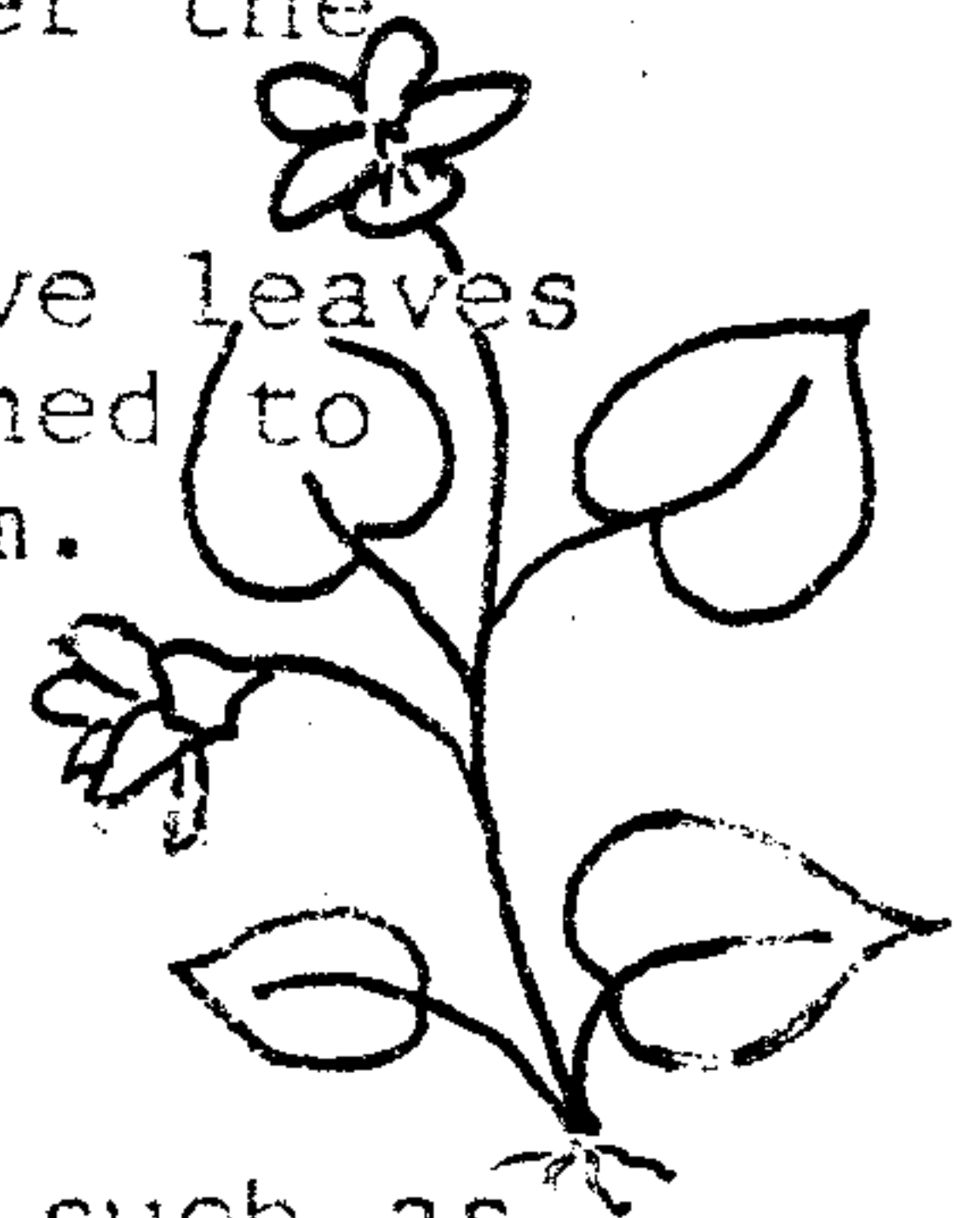
Violets hide a secret in their foliage. Deep under the leaves at the base of the plant, developing after the showy flowers finish blooming, are strange flowers that never open and are self-pollinated and seldom seen. Botanists describe these flower types with wonderful-sounding terms: chasmogamous flowers are the familiar, open, colorful, conspicuous ones, cleistogamous are the closed, secret ones. Only birdfoot violet of our WNC species is without the latter. "There is one in every crowd!"

A big step in identifying violet species is noting whether the plant is "stemmed" or "stemless."

Stemless plants have leaves and flowers arising on separate stalks.



Stemmed plants have leaves and flowers attached to an erect main stem.



Adding flower color to this, a good book, such as Newcomb's Wildflower Guide, identification of most species is fairly easy. Charting these two features for the Henderson County species helps, too. (See chart at end.)

How quickly all the factual material on identification can be tossed aside in that wonderful moment in early spring when we stoop to peer closely into the first cheery faces of roundleaved violets, their sunny spring yellow contrasting so strikingly against the heavy winter brown of the forest floor! During blooming time, their rounded leaves are barely beginning to unfold, but by summer they grow to surprising size, to 4½", flattening out along the ground. We can momentarily ignore bearding and hairs or pistils and stamens when admiring the pristine beauty of the sweet white violet, which often stands "with its feet wet" as it grows in moist or wet places in deep shade. We need no vast technical vocabulary to appreciate fully the rich lavender of the birdfoot violet or the lush foliage and tall-stemmed, dark-centered flower of the marsh violet, and anyone

can revel in a patch of sunny meadow purpled with common violets, set off by yellow mustard and dandelions.

And incidentally, violets are delicious to eat! Both flowers and leaves lend colorful excitement to a toss salad, and tender leaves cooked like spinach are loaded with vitamins. A wide variety of violet recipes can be found in books on edible wild plants. Try violet jello!*

With enough species to challenge but not enough to overwhelm, identifying our Henderson County violets is one of spring's most delightful rewards, but isn't the greatest reward just being in places where violets grow, from open fields to shaded streamsides, deep valleys to high mountains, rich woods to scrubby "waste" places?

Get ready! The violets are coming!

* Violet jello

2 envelopes gelatin
1 cup cold water
2/3 cup sugar
1/4 tsp. salt
1 cup boiling water
1/2 cup lemon juice
1 cup violet flowers,
blended with 1 cup
cold water

Recipe from Eating Wild,
a publication of the Massachusetts
Audubon Society 1971.

Sprinkle gelatin onto cold water. Add sugar, salt, and boiling water; stir till dissolved. Add lemon juice and COOL till at least room temperature or cooler. (Heat kills flavor and color of violets.)

Add violets. Pour into mold or individual bowls. Chill till set. Sprinkle several flowers on top before serving.

Henderson County Violets

White, stemmed

V. canadensis---Canada
V. rafinesquii--Field pansy
(kitaibeliana)
(sometimes bluish)
V. striata-----Cream

White, stemless

V. blanda-----
Sweet white
V. pallens--Pale
V. primulifolia--
Primrose-leaved

Yellow, stemmed

V. hastata---
Halberd-leaved
V. pensylvanica--
Smooth yellow
V. tripartita----
3-part leaved

Yellow, stemless

V. rotundifolia--
round-leaved

Blue-violet, stemmed

V. rostrata-----
Long-spurred
V. rafinesquii---
Field pansy
(sometimes white)

Blue-violet stemless

V. cucullata--Marsh
V. emarginata---
Triangle-leaved
V. fimbriatula--
Northern downy
V. hirsutula----
Southern wood
V. palmata-----
Early blue
V. papilionacea-
Common blue
V. pedata--Birdfoot
V. triloba--Trilobed

B. Hallowell

FROM THE HISTORIANS' REPORTS

In 1981 the Club had 43 hikes and 13 indoor programs. The hikes were attended by 1092 people (average 29.4); indoor programs by 418 (average 32.15). We drove 2672 miles (average 62.14 miles per trip).

Now think about the indoor programs, the hikes, the nice people you get to talk with, the thousands of flowers you see, the good exercise, how good the lunches taste, the places you visit that otherwise you would never see, the fresh air, the beautiful scenery seen from the tops of the mountains we reach, 2 schedules and 4 SHORTIA papers per year. All this for a cost of 3.5¢ each. Can you believe that you can get so much for so little? John F. Kuhn (Historian Emeritus)

Despite ice, snow, rain and gloom, the WCBC has made an auspicious start on the new year. On January 8, Dick Smith gave a most carefully researched talk on the pioneer botanists (Asa Gray, Mark Catesby, Micheaux, Memminger and others) who came to this area in the 17th and 18th centuries. He illustrated it with very beautiful slides.

The Annual Meeting on January 25 was held in the Parish House of St. John's in the Wilderness Church. Mary Lou and Augie Kehr brought pine boughs, berries and poinsettias which made the tables look festive. The covered dish luncheon provided sustenance and the companionship so valued by this group. The officers elected for 1982 are: President August Kehr; Vice President Sam Childs; Secretary Margaret Canfield; Treasurer Margaret Kuhn; Historian Louise Foresman.

On February 5, a workshop on propagation of woody and herbaceous plants was presented by Augie Kehr at his home. Twenty nine persons, folding chairs and cuttings in hand, arrived and were most interested in the methods and variety of materials used in starting new plants.

Sam Childs, John Kuhn, Margaret Canfield, Harry Logan, Dick Smith, Peggy Camenzind, Bruce Leech, Barbara Hallowell, Louise Foresman and Augie Kehr met and have provided us with a varied and interesting schedule for this Spring and Summer.

On February 12, Chuck Snow, assisted by Tom Hallowell, Jim Maddox, John Townsend and Phil Babcock, presented "Beyond 6000" -- a look into the experiences of the WCBC members who have climbed the 40 peaks in this area with elevations above 6000 feet. The talk and descriptive slides and later questions and answers were enlightening and interesting.

Dick Smith was back on February 19 with a clear presentation and superb slides of the large and varied "Heath Family" as found in this area, the tundra country of Norway, the Colorado Rockies, northern Canada. The presentation was video-taped by a professor from Blue Ridge Tech for use in his classes -- the first such taping at our meetings. Louise Foresman (Historian)

The WCBC voted at the Annual Meeting to contribute \$50.00 to each of the following organizations: University Botanical Gardens in Asheville, Nature Conservancy, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy.

WHAT TO SEE

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

From "A Shropshire Lad" by A. E. Housman

The "cherry hung with snow" is in England, but we have many flowering trees that beautify our woods in the Spring. The first to bloom, for which we all watch, is serviceberry. When we see its white blossoms, high on the side of the mountains, we are reminded of the pioneer days, when the preacher, seeing them, knew it was time to go up into the remote settlements to conduct "sarvices."

The most loved and most widespread of the white-flowered trees is, of course, the dogwood. Others are more limited in habitat but all invite us to go "about the woodlands." Here are a few -- an area where the Club has seen each -- and the time of blooming.

Helen Turner



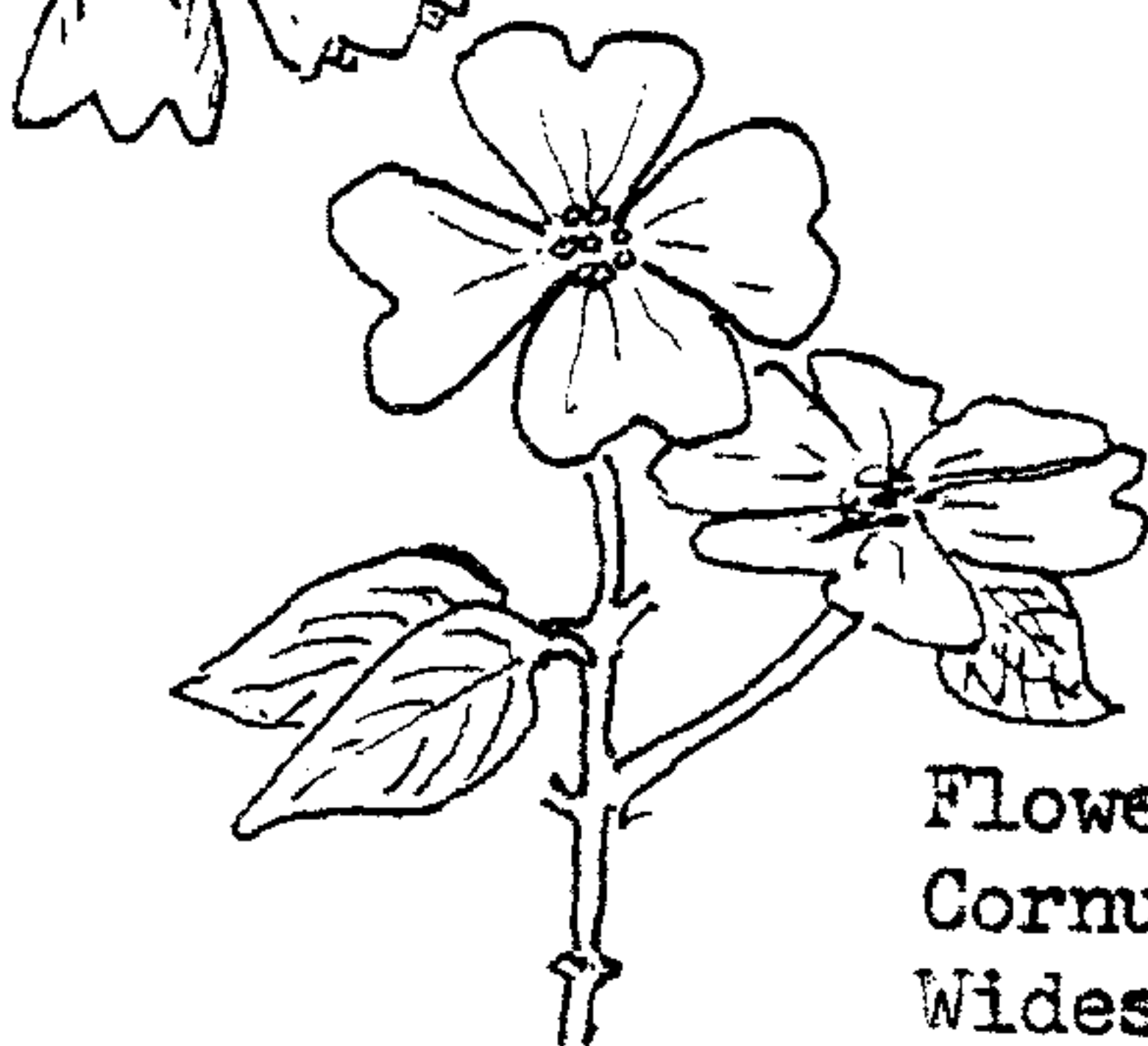
Serviceberry
Amelanchier arborea
Widespread
March - April

Hawthorn
Crataegus sp.
Stout, sharp thorns
Barnardsville
April



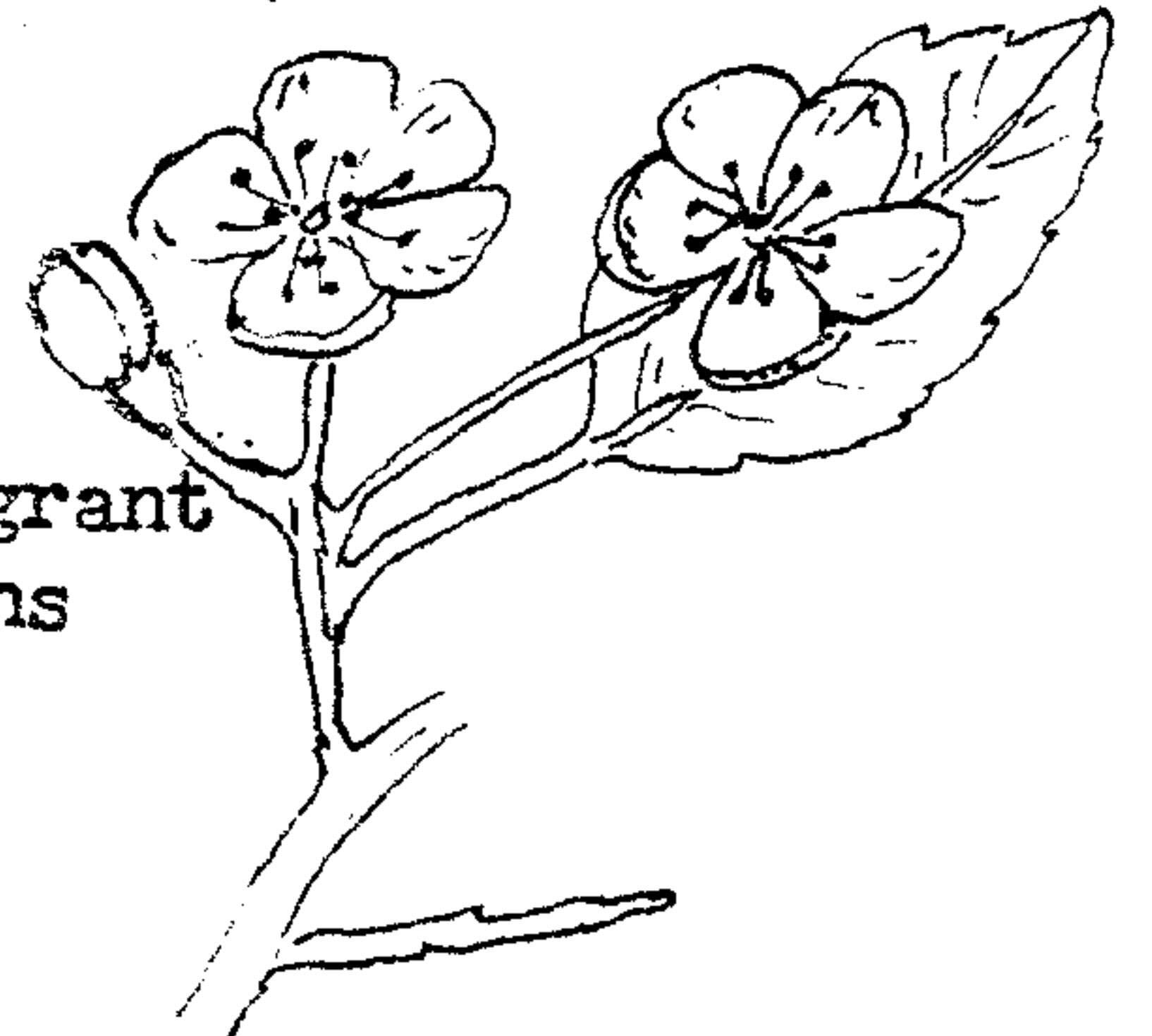
Silverbell
Halesia carolina
East Fork Pigeon River
April

Wild Plum
Prunus sp.
Black scaling bark
Fragrant
Twig-like thorns
Kings Mt.
April



Flowering Dogwood
Cornus florida
Widespread
March - April

Wild Crabapple
Malus sp.
Pink buds, fragrant
Twig-like thorns
Du Pont area;
Pisgah Inn
May



SHORTIA is published quarterly for members of the Western Carolina Botanical Club.

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Please submit contributions for the next issue by May 15.
