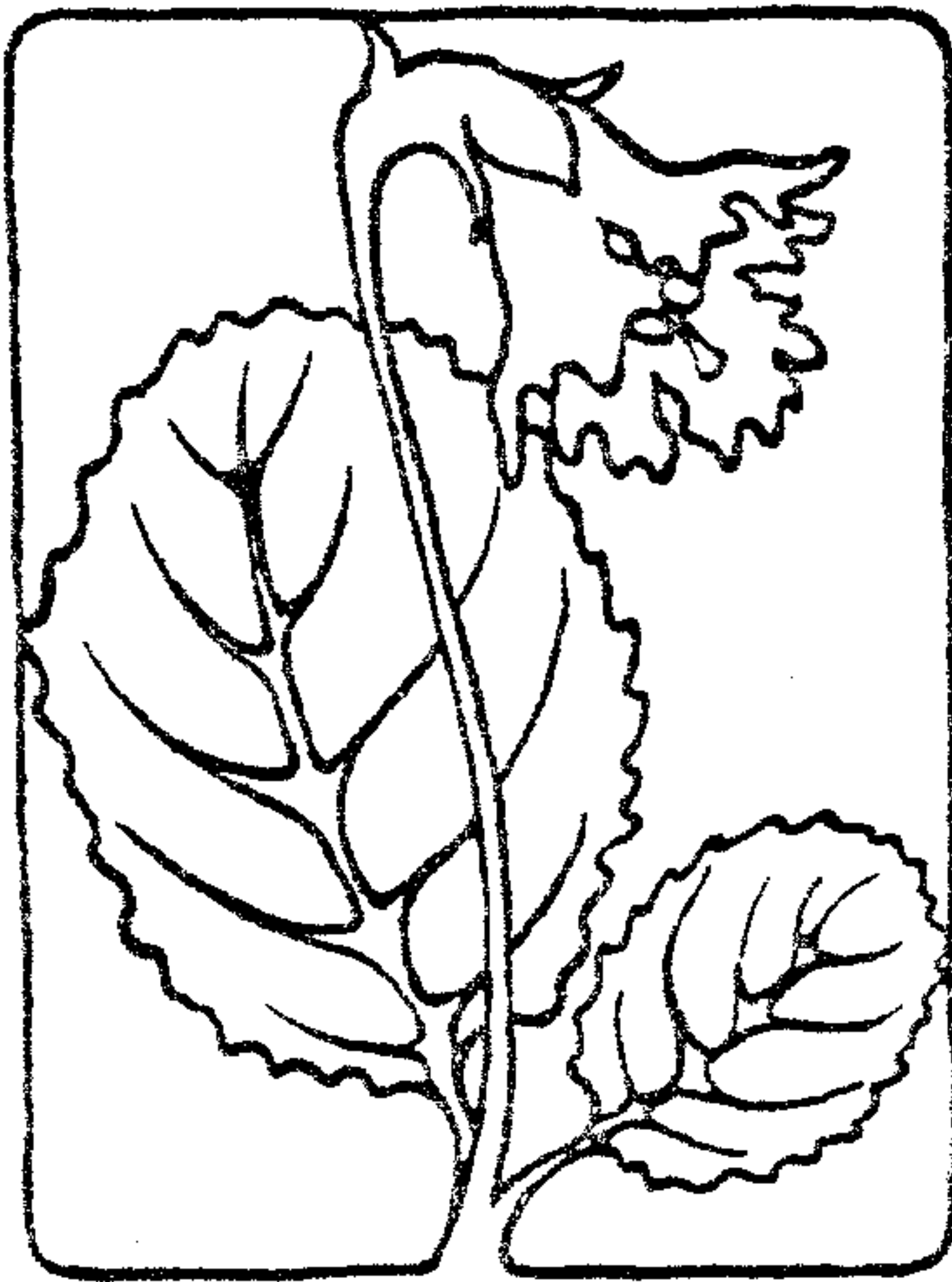


SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

SPRING 1984



HELEN TURNER, Editor

OFFICERS

President: Dick Smith Treasurer: Margaret Kuhn
Vice President: Elton Hansens Historian: Louise Foresman
Secretary: Margaret Canfield

ABOUT YOUR CLUB DUES

Dues are on a calendar-year basis and, as a matter of convenience, are payable after the Annual Meeting in late January. New members are assessed for a full year's dues, but if they join during the last quarter their initial payment will be applied in full to the next calendar year. At the 1984 Annual Meeting it was voted to increase dues to a flat \$8.00 per year, and this amount now will automatically include all members of one's immediate family. Those who paid their 1984 dues in advance at the previous rate are asked to please remit the difference to the Treasurer at their convenience.

DID YOU KNOW?

The 77 persons attending the Annual Meeting found long tables and down the center of each, a row of colored crepe paper covered with branches of grape ivy, dog hobble, and Euonymous. (Jeanne Smith donated paper and some of the greenery.) These were dotted with 98 flowers made of green, yellow and white felt by Millie Blaha who donated them and the centerpiece on the Officers' table for sale after the meeting -- which netted \$24.25 for WCBC. Jean Covington succeeded in identifying the flowers as Blahamia feltonia var. Millie.

At the Annual Meeting Bruce Leech was presented with the Second Wind Hall of Fame Award for outstanding achievement in retirement. Bruce was president of WCBC for 1978 and 1979, has been a frequent hike leader and member of the scheduling committee. Most of us know Bruce for his help to new members and to those needing transportation, and as the always available substitute leader. Congratulations, Bruce!

In a letter dated January 30, 1984, Dick Smith wrote to Helen Turner: "I am delighted to tell you that you have been elected an Honorary Member.... This is one more way of saying 'Thank you' for the outstanding work you have done and are continuing to do in the interests of the Club -- and most especially toward the success of SHORTIA." (ds).

WELCOME -- NEW MEMBERS

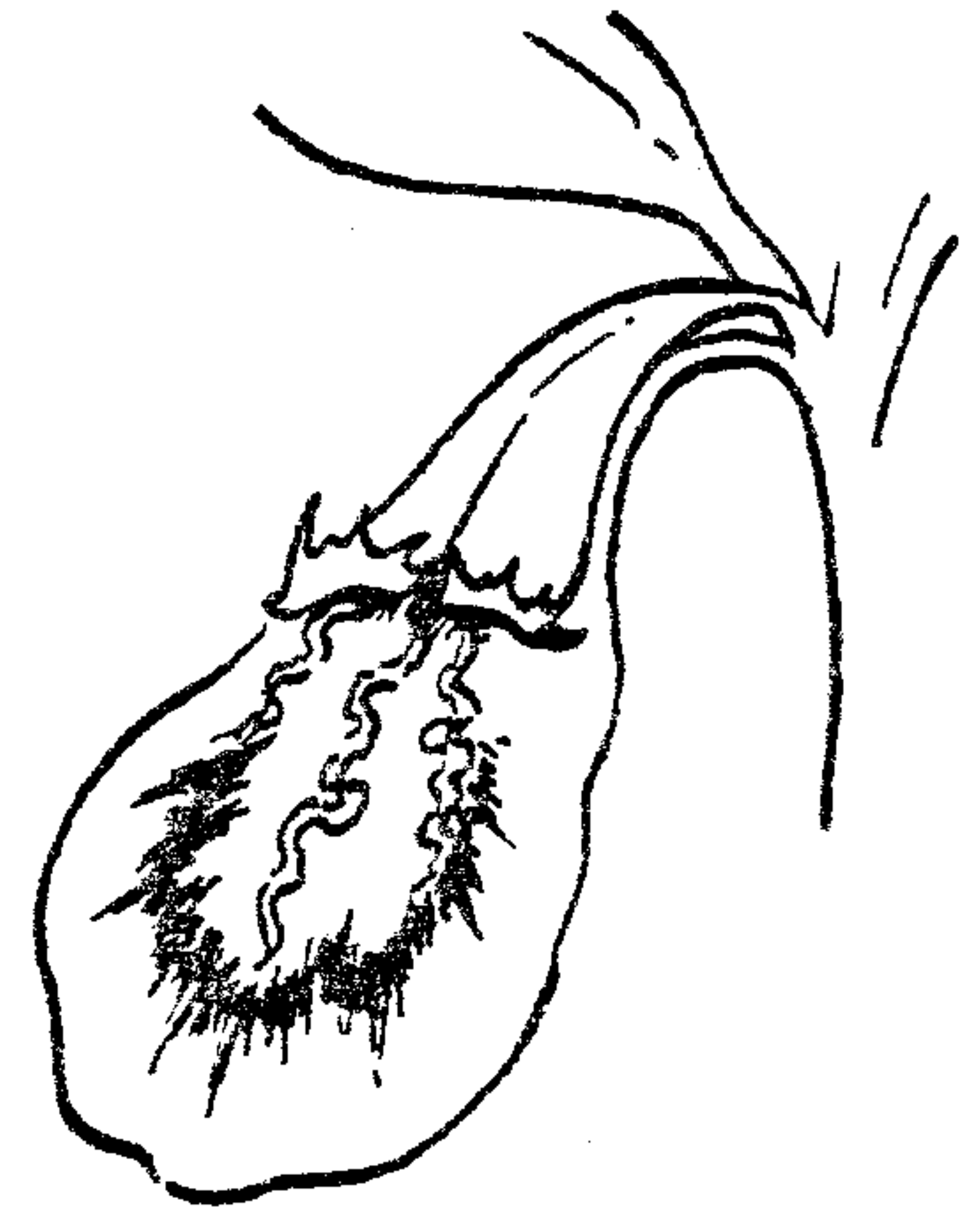
Hendersonville unless otherwise stated

Collins, James & Marjorie, Rt. 8, Box 211, Howard Gap Rd...692-2686
Cookingham, Charles & Louise, 1528 Dawnview Dr.....692-6953
Donnell, Estelle H., 1045 Greenwood Dr.....692-3150
Haag, Charles & Velma, Rt. 1, Box 89, Brevard, NC 28712....885-2581
Harris, Fred & Constance, 1117 Sylvan Blvd.....692-8149
Ilg, Harry & Martha, 603 Britton Creek.....693-1457
Large, Ashley & Therese, 5 Samara Dr.....891-3446
Orbison, Dr. Lowell & wife, 60 Brookwood Rd., Asheville....253-6160
Stone, Mel & Emma, 62 Wilkie Way, Fletcher, NC 28732.....684-4298
Thornton, Merle & Phyllis, 3110 Cardinal Lane.....692-8728
Wright, Chester & Helen, 125 Rockwood Dr.,
Greenville, SC 29605.....

LOOK AGAIN!

Among the springtime delights of the Southern mountains must be counted the two species of Iris whose flowers seldom reach more than four inches above the forest floor.

The Crested Dwarf Iris (*I. cristata*) is so named because of the three white-and-yellow ruffles fanning out from the center of each light blue or lavender sepal. These crests are accentuated by a blotch of white bordered in violet. By contrast, the one known simply as the Dwarf Iris (*I. verna*) lacks these raised crests, having instead a flat orange band flanked by white streaks, and this appears against a background of intense violet. It holds its petals semi-erect, whereas those of *I. cristata* spread out in a more nearly horizontal plane.

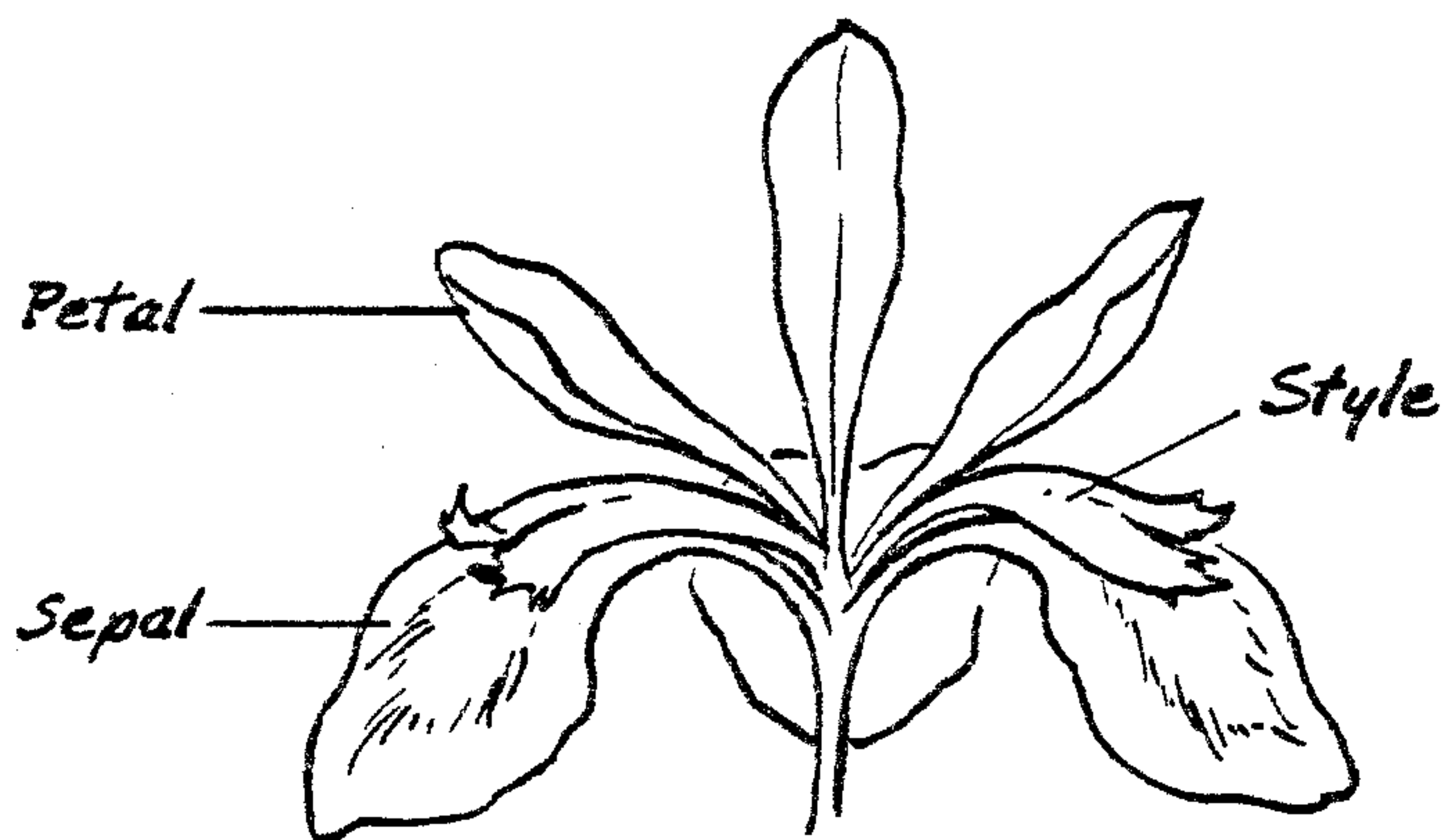


Iris cristata

These are the most conspicuous differences, but there are others: For example, *I. cristata* likes the light shade of rich woods but *I. verna* is more likely to be found in an open rocky or sandy habitat.

Also, the leaves of *I. cristata* are relatively wide (up to an inch); in *I. verna* they are grasslike, under a half-inch, and have a way of elongating greatly after flowering. This might lead one to think that they belong to one of the taller species of Iris, but the only native one common in our area is *I. virginica*, the Southern Blue Flag, and this grows in wet places, usually along the edges of streams.

Because the anatomy of Iris flowers is so peculiar, the nomenclature used in keys can be puzzling until one understands their structure. This drawing identifies their principal external parts -- except for the stamens, which are concealed beneath the styles.



Iris virginica

Dick Smith

RAMBLINGS -- PEOPLE, PLANTS AND PLACES

From mid-November to mid-February, the usual transition from outdoor to indoor meetings took place. Here are the highlights.

The BALD TOP MOUNTAIN hike has been a favorite close-in trip (in the Fruitland area) and 29 persons started out on a cloudy grey day which later became a warm sunny one. We all enjoyed swishing through the heavy leaf cover on the trail -- all uphill though gradual. At the top the view was lovely as we sat on the rocks and ate our lunches. This late in the season, we found 15 flowers in bloom and identified 31 trees. The popular trip to VANWINGERDEN'S GREENHOUSES interested 37 persons -- as always many plants, besides the sea of poinsettias, were blooming with a great variety of foliage plants; this is always an enjoyable trip. The last hike of the year to HENRY CREEK FALLS drew a small number, but those who hiked the trail found it pleasant along Avery and Henry creeks with frequent stream crossings (bridges) and a view of the Falls.

The new year 1984 began with a presentation by Ivan Kuster entitled RANDOM RAMBLES WITH WILDFLOWERS which included very interesting and lovely slides mostly of bog plants, many found up north in the Lake Huron area. A session held at Hallowell's involving a small number who signed up for IDENTIFYING NATIVE TREES IN WINTER was so successful, a second meeting was held the following Monday. The first day, Dr. Orbison showed slides for some 30 minutes, then gave each member a packet of twigs to identify. The afternoon was spent outdoors identifying some 34 native trees and 5-6 non-native trees on Hallowell's property. The second session met on the UNC-A campus for a class in the morning and fieldwork in the UNC Botanical Gardens in the afternoon. All felt they had learned so much and had really enjoyed these sessions. Our thanks to Dr. Orbison and the Hallowells.

Our annual program, THE BEST OF ALL OF US, refers to the best photography of the year with any members who wish to participating -- a great variety of beautiful botanical slides, some of interesting places and some humorous subjects slipped in -- enjoyed by all. Our ANNUAL MEETING again drew a large crowd (77 persons) and was held once more in the lovely room in the Parish House of St. John-in-the-Wilderness church. All looked very Spring-like, thanks to the ideas and efforts of Jeanne Smith and Millie Blaha; the latter made all the lovely bright felt daffodils strewn midst greenery along the center of the tables and in the bouquet on the speaker's table. During a streamlined and well-organized meeting, the members agreed with Board recommendations that all contributions to other groups be considered later in the year in accordance with availability of funds, and that dues be raised to \$8.00 across the board (single and/or family units alike). All officers, except one, agreed to remain with this President for another year and the membership so voted. Sam Childs resigned as he has become so involved with the Rock Garden Society plans for hosting the 50th Anniversary of the American Rock Garden Society. So Elton Hansens was elected Vice President. Bruce Leech received the Second Wind Hall of Fame Award. The great variety of delicious food and the companionship made this the usual memorable occasion.

The program GALAPAGOS JOURNEY was presented by Barbara Hallowell in her usual thorough and interesting style -- with commentary well thought out and beautifully written flowing smoothly to enhance lovely and enlightening slides. Some 80 persons attended and felt they had at last visited the islands off the coast of Ecuador. HIDDEN COLOR IN NATURE turned out to be a most interesting collection of varied slides highlighting very tiny spots of color, ones we often miss unless looking very closely. Marion wrote and read the script to go along with Tom Keith's beautiful and sometime breathtaking slides -- 57 persons really enjoyed this presentation. At this session Helen Turner thanked WCBC for making her an honorary life member; we are all so glad Helen is able to come to some of the meetings again.

So we have made an auspicious start in 1984 -- happy hiking until our next report.

Louise Foresman, Historian

ATTENTION BOTANIST-PHOTOGRAPHERS!

Do you have a slide of goldenseal? Or swamp pink? How about bunched arrowhead? Venus' flytrap? Or any of the other officially designated rare plants of the Carolinas? We would like to assemble a program next winter as part of our expanded involvement with the protection of endangered and threatened plant species, which will be kicked off with a discussion and field trip on March 19th and 20th.

We've prepared a list of selected species for you to check against your slide library. You might also want to use this to see how many more you can locate and photograph during the spring and summer. See Dick Smith for a copy.

WILDFLOWER AND BIRD PILGRIMAGE

The Twelfth Annual Spring Wildflower and Bird Pilgrimage at Asheville has been scheduled for May 4-6, 1984. Dick Smith has been invited to be this year's speaker at the evening program on Friday, May 4, in the Humanities Lecture Hall, University of North Carolina at Asheville -- which means that the theme will again be botany! (Last year's program was presented by Mr. Hugh Morton, but earlier speakers have included numerous botanists, such as Dr. Wilbur H. Duncan and Dr. Orson K. Miller, Jr.) The Pilgrimage is sponsored jointly by UNC-Asheville, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the University Botanical Gardens at Asheville.

* * * * *

If, at the January 20 meeting you missed getting the address for information about a wonderful summer nature/conservation week -- a National Wildlife Federation Summit -- here it is: Conservation Summits, National Wildlife Federation, 1412 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Call Barbara Hallowell (692-4316) for more information.

MICRO-ECO-SYSTEMS

In field trips, we see flowers, name them, record where they were found and enjoy their abundance, or rarity, and beauty -- but do we wonder why they are there and why they sometimes do not make an appearance?

Before we can understand why they are where we find them, we have to know some of the factors of their preferences, either environmentally or genetically -- such as amount of light, minerals, temperature, water and exposure and, above all, the critical factors in reproduction and seed formation. In so analyzing, we find that plants, as well as animals, are restricted into groups or systems -- consisting of specific species -- competing with both environmental factors as well as biological factors.

The systems are often large in extent, such as beech-maple or oak-hickory forests. These are extremely complex, involving hundreds of varying factors and many secondary species. In contrast, we can observe small systems with limited species numbers. The small micro-systems are not as complex but, nonetheless, involve several critical factors. It is relatively easy to isolate the "critical" or limiting factor in contrast to the macro-eco-systems.

In this season's field trips, we encountered rock slopes where some plants held on to slopes where rain and water runoff was high. At Dupont Falls the irregular steep slopes had, in places, micro-systems of "spike mosses" and Caldonia lichens. Both groups were about equal in biomass, but not quite in equilibrium. This inequality allowed a "biological vacuum" and one invader, a Panicum grass, had gained a foothold. Again at Whiteside Mountain, near Cashiers, a more gentle rock slope again had spike mosses and Caldonia lichens -- the ratio was about 95% spike moss to 5% Caldonia. Study in detail, if time were available, would probably yield an answer to the question: Why differences in the ratios of spike mosses to Caldonia?

So in future field hikes, we can observe further micro-eco-systems and ask ourselves the basic questions: Why are they there? How long have they been where they are? And, perhaps, how long will they remain where we can see them holding on to the tiny micro-habitat?

M. L. Peelle

WILDFLOWERS OF HOLMES STATE FOREST

Last Winter, WCBC presented a narrated slide program of spring wildflowers to Holmes State Forest (see Summer 1983 issue of SHORTIA). WCBC received a Service Award from the NC Forest Service for this effort. Eldon Hansens, who coordinated this project, reports that during the 1983 season this program was shown to more than 3300 people. A sequel on summer and fall wildflowers is in preparation and nearing completion. WCBC is retaining a copy of each set of slides and the accompanying tape.

S H O R T I A

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Please submit contributions for next issue by May 15, 1984
