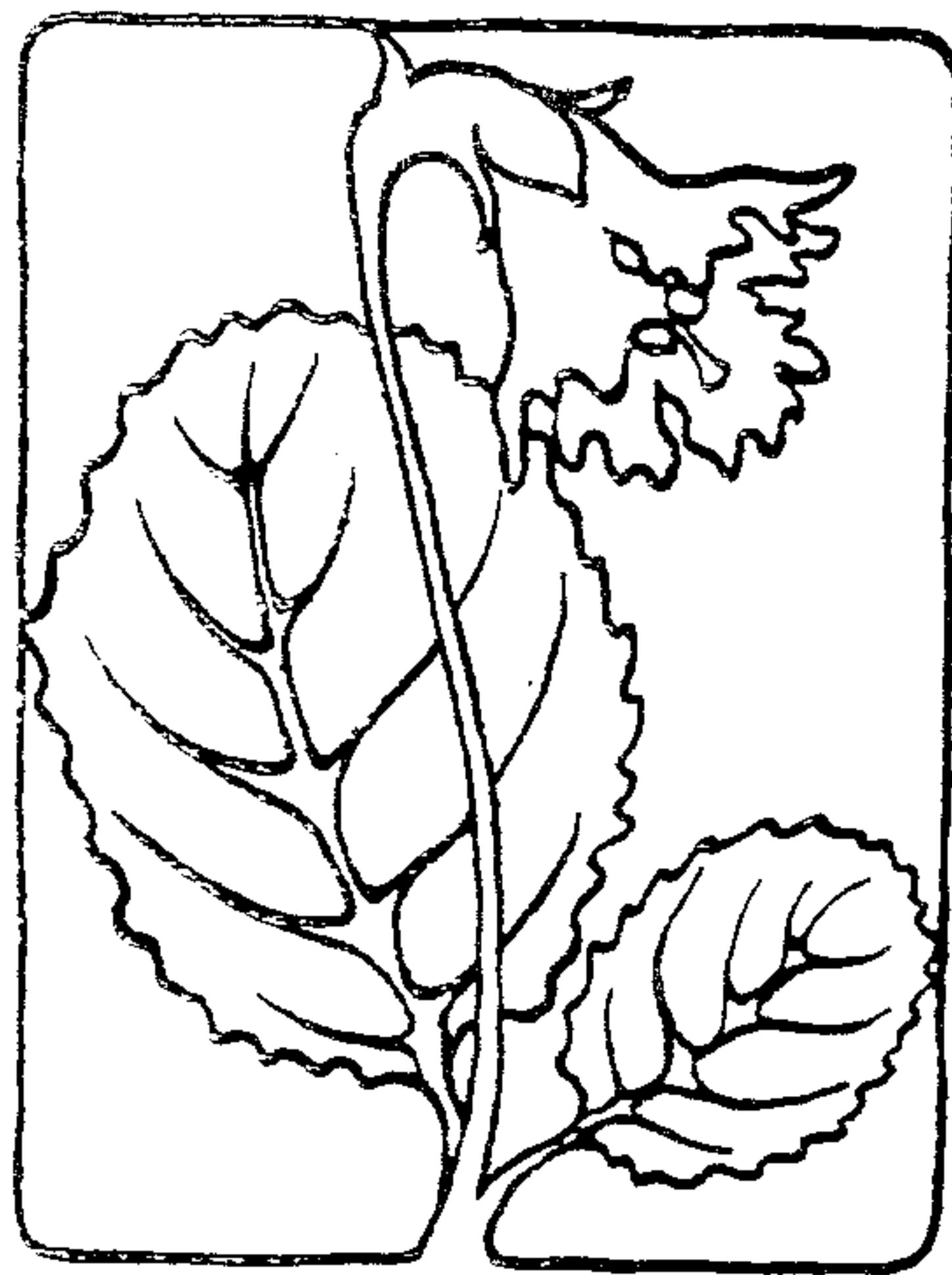


SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

SUMMER 1987



DOROTHY RATHMANN, Editor

1987 COMMITTEES

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Louise Foresman

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ABOUT FIELD TRIPS

As is evident from the Recorder's Report, weather or poor trail conditions may cause a change in Field Trip destination or even a cancellation. Such changes in the Schedule are made by the Leader at the meeting place, since prior announcement is rarely possible.

Franklin, NC Overnight (June 25-26) information was in the Spring issue of SHORTIA. Elton Hansens needs to know who is going on this trip. Make your own reservations: Franklin Motel, 223 Palmer St. (704) 524-4431 **or** Kountry Kampground, US 441 South 2.3 mi. from NC 28 North (655 Georgia Highway) - (704)524-4339. In driving to Franklin, take I 26 to I 40 West, to US 23, to US 441 (near Sylva). At Franklin, continue on US 441 By-Pass to NC 28 on the west side of Franklin. Then take NC 28 north 1.1 mi. to reach Franklin Motel (on left).

THANKS, THANKS, THANKS! **Millie Blaha**

Please join me in expressing deep appreciation to **Margaret Kuhn** for the wonderful job she did as Treasurer for six years and for personally distributing SHORTIA, the Field Trip Schedules and Membership Roster to those who participated in the outings. Margaret is currently Membership Chairman, a newly created position in WCBC. She will greet new members and all others in her usual friendly way. If you have friends who wish to join WCBC, please obtain a Membership Application Form from Margaret and have them fill it out and return it to her.

Also, please join me in thanking **Bob Taber** for typing the Membership Roster and Field Trip Schedules for the past four years. They were accurately typed and meticulous in their arrangement.

Our thanks to **Harriet Kuster** who was the typist for the Schedule which you received with this issue of SHORTIA.

Thanks, too, to **Aline Hansens** for creating the illustrations, lettering and design of the front page of the Field Trip Schedules.

Thanks, too, to **Dick Smith** for his "Look Again" page in SHORTIA -- the outstanding feature of our newsletter.

WCBC can be proud of **Elton Hansens**, Chairman, and those members who served as guides at the Shimm's garden on May 2 and 3. The garden was one of the field trips of the 15th Annual Spring Wildflower and Bird Pilgrimage sponsored by UNC-Asheville, the Blue Ridge Parkway and University Botanical Gardens. On Saturday, the guides were **Millie Blaha, Dean Crawford, Nan Morrow, Win Newcomb** and **Grace Rice**. On Sunday, **Louise Foresman, Ivan Kuster, Win Newcomb** and **Grace Rice** were guides along with Elton. On Sunday, **Ivan Kuster** was one of the leaders of the Wildflower Motorcade on the Blue Ridge Parkway which started from the Folk Art Center and continued to Craggy Gardens.

The weekend of May 8-10 the NC Wildflower Preservation Society held its meeting at Kanuga Conference Center. On Friday night, 15 members of WCBC attended the program presented by **Rob Sutter**, Endangered Plant Botanist for NC. On Saturday morning, your president was the guide on the trails at Frank Bell's Green Cove Camp. In the afternoon, **Charlotte Carmen** was the guide on the long trail at Holmes State Forest. Your president and husband, George, were privileged to present the featured program on Saturday night.

My thanks to those of you who have given your time, your knowledge and efforts in these various projects and have helped to make the Western Carolina Botanical Club a very special organization.

MISSING (?) ISSUES OF SHORTIA **Dorothy Rathmann**

In going through the SHORTIA file I found the following gaps: Vol. I, No. 4 (**Dec. 1979**); Vol II, No. 3 (**Sept. 1980**); Vol. III, No. 4 (**Dec. 1981**). Perhaps, Harvey Krouse did skip these issues. However, if any of you have kept old copies of SHORTIA, I would appreciate your looking for these issues and loaning them to me for duplication. Thanks!

LEARN AND SHARE **Barbara Hallowell**

On Feb. 13, 1987, an enthusiastic group of WCBC members exchanged information and asked lots of questions during the **Learn and Share** session -- and agreed **Learn and Share** should be an annual event. Some subjects covered (several offered by people who came just to listen but soon couldn't resist getting involved) were:

By what mechanism does Boston ivy cling to a wall? Additional bits about ivy: It can "count" -- has tendrils on 2 nodes, skips one, then 2 more and skips. A single clinging disc can support 2 lbs. of weight.

How do mistletoe seeds get from high limbs on one tree to high limbs of another -- and stay without falling off?

When do tendrils start to coil and in which direction?

Paulownia pods were once used for packing fine porcelain.

What have Japanese honeysuckle and the white man in common?
Indians considered the latter invasive;
We consider the former invasive.

Plant succession is a series of intriguing interrelationships we see daily -- Nature's determined effort to reclothe bare ground with annuals, perennials, vines, shrubs and trees.

Identifying oaks by their leaves is shaky at best. Buds and acorns are more reliable, but oak hybrids still present problems. Enter hairs! The minute hairs on oak leaves are infallibly specific. You can't miss -- all you need is an **electron** microscope.

What are the four requisites for life? Think on it. Ruining any one of these would be fatal for life, yet man is working hard to ruin all four: water, air, light, soil.

After considering succession from bare rock, from bare field, and from a pond or lake, we investigated climax forest zones across the USA. We even had map handouts.

A cross section of 180 year old black spruce from the Arctic was compared with a local tulip tree cross section of the same diameter, the latter only 6 years old.

Mushroom guidebooks led to an interesting discussion.

What happens inside the wood of a trunk when a tight vine like honeysuckle spirals around it? The trunk reacts vigorously, and both cross and longitudinal sections of an affected tree trunk had WCBC members on the floor examining them.

Are slime molds plants or animals? They have characteristics of each. In lower forms of life the distinction between plant and animal is not easy, even sometimes impossible.

Our indoor meetings for this period began with a slide presentation on William Bartram and his contribution to America's natural and cultural heritage. At the same meeting Bob Siegler, Supervisor of Holmes Educational State Forest, told us about the exhibits, educational features and other activities at Holmes State.

We had a Learn and Share session at the Hallowells and a preview of spring flowers by John Kuhn. Jeanne Cummings talked about her unusual experience as an Earthwatch volunteer in the rain forests of Borneo. The Blahas gave us another of their special presentations this one entitled THE GOOD EARTH with emphasis on the earth and man's stewardship of it.

An ice storm forced the cancellation of the Hardy Souls Hike and we were unable to go to Lake Jocassee because of snow. But as the weather changed for the better, we drove to Tryon and guided by Ivan Kuster, we walked the trail at the Foothills Equestrian Nature Center (FENCE).

We spent the usual delightful morning at Millie Pearson's. Spring was late this year, so we appreciated each bloodroot, spring beauty, trillium and violet. Those who went to Pearson's Falls saw walking fern, fragile fern and resurrection fern as well as the early saxifrage (*saxifraga virginiensis*) and golden saxifrage or water mat (*Chrysplenium americanum*).

The group which went to Bob Creek's Pocket Wilderness with Max Kline felt like "hardy souls." There was snow on the ground as we left the parking lot at this unusual area which has been set aside as a reserve by the woodlands organization of the Bowater Carolina Corporation of S.C. We took the 3 1/2 mile loop, finding the trail itself clear of snow. We crossed and recrossed brooks, got our feet wet, saw the early flowers blooming, and had lunch in the sun at Sentinel Rock.

Millie Blaha and Don Prentice took us to Jones Gap and Wildcat Gap State Park both in S.C. At Jones Gap we walked the trail along a rushing Middle Saluda River. We found flowering plants in abundance at both locations. A few days later a group went with Bill Verduin for an overnight in the Smokies. We saw flowers galore just as Bill had promised. The walk in the Baxter Creek area along Big Creek was memorable. We had fine views of Big Creek and identified many plants including the rare maidenhair spleenwort found by Barbara Hallowell. At lunch we sat where we could view masses of the lettuce saxifrage (*saxifraga micranthidifolia*). The following day we drove to the Cosby area, and walked through misty woods admiring the dwarf ginseng and Fraser's sedge. There were some extras on this trip--unexpected. Our planned modest motel accommodations turned into suites at a time-sharing establishment. Each suite had a different decor and a jacuzzi. It was cold and rainy the morning of our second day, but a breakfast table set for us before the fire at Cosby Restaurant cheered us on our way.

A special word of thanks needs to be said to Ivan Kuster and to Millie Blaha who took the time to prepare workshops on plant families. Ivan's came first, with a talk and a walk at Pearson's Fall on the lily family (*Liliaceae*). A few weeks later, Millie Blaha held a workshop on plant families. The charts she prepared for each of us illustrated how plants evolved from the most primitive to the most advanced. Her slide presentation covered more than 60 of the families, shown in order as they appear in Radford's, "Manual of the Vascular Flora of the Carolinas". The group met in the board room of a Brevard bank, the chairs were luxurious, learning was painless and was followed by lunch and a walk at Charlie Moore's.

And then came a return to an old favorite, Laurel River Gorge past Mars Hill north of Asheville. We identified many of the spring plants among them silverbell, dwarf crested iris, purple phacelia, 7 species of violets and the uncommon bleeding heart (*dicentra eximia*) and corydalis (*corydalis sempervirens*).

LOOK AGAIN !

The Melastoma Family is represented by approximately 4,000 species all around the world, including many with handsome flowers. Its members are nearly all tropical, though, and only two are found in our area.

The species we can claim are Meadow Beauty, or Deergrass (Rhexia virginica) and Pale Meadow Beauty (R. mariana). They are stiff plants with opposite, toothed trinerved leaves and showy flowers with four petals arising from an expanded receptacle, or hypanthium, which in fruit becomes an urn-shaped capsule. The conspicuous bright yellow anthers are unusual: long, curved, and bearing a short spur near the point of attachment to the filament.



RHEXIA VIRGINICA

Rhexia virginica is our commonest species. It has bright, deep purple flowers and a square stem ridged with four thin membranous wings.

R. mariana has a wider distribution but in the mountains usually grows at lower elevations. The petals are pale rose (pure white in one coastal form) and the stems are angled but devoid of wings. Its leaves are narrower than those of R. virginica and have tapered rather than rounded bases.

Several other species of Rhexia occur in the Southeast, but as might be expected of a tropical plant family they are much more at home in savannahs and bogs on the coastal plain.

Dick Smith

S H O R T I A

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