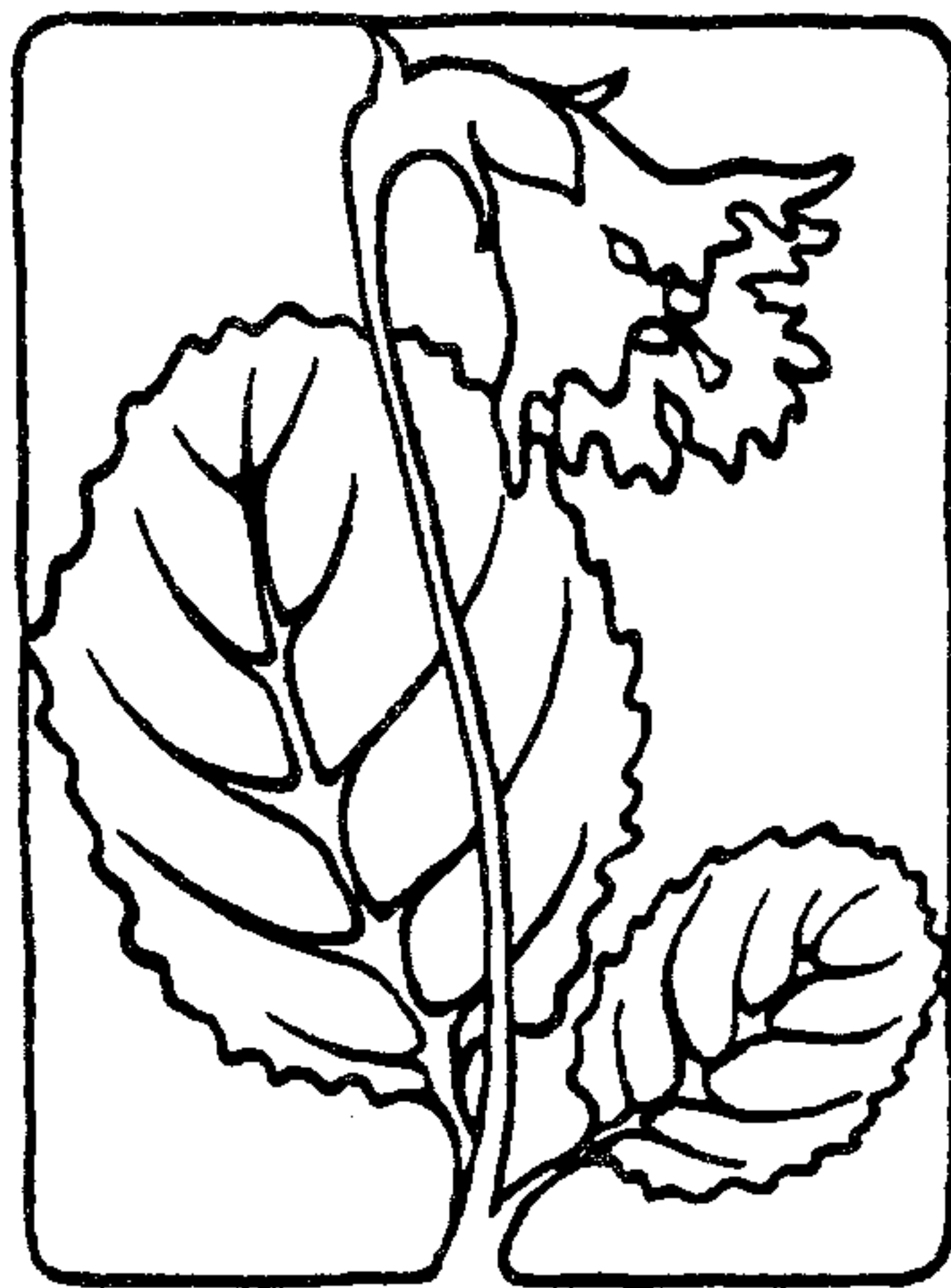


SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

SPRING 1988



MILLIE BLAHA, Editor

From the **PRESIDENT'S DESK** **Bill Verduin**

I call to your attention a paragraph from Pleasant River by Dale Rex Coleman:

"The landscape is neither a fortuity nor a permanent fixture created by fiat. It is a stupendous masterpiece sculptured from rock by blasting heat and icy cold, cut by the wind, molded by rain, and adorned with life. It is an unfinished masterpiece. The elements, having labored at it for millions of years, anticipate uninterrupted toil for millions more to come. It is the greatest of all privileges to behold their creation and to watch them at their work. Go out and look!"

Yes, go out and look. That is just what the Botany Club will be doing all spring, summer, and fall.

Look at the trees --- but enjoy the beauty of the forest, too.

Look at the flowers --- but raise your eyes often to drink in the splendor of the hillside.

Look at the stream as it hurries along polishing its rocks --- but enjoy, too, the beautiful music of flowing water.

Come out often and look with us --- it's one of the privileges granted those who have eyes to see.

Attention! Schedule changes

Because of a snowstorm, the January 8 program was cancelled. It has been rescheduled. Please ADD this program to your Jan.-June 1988 Outing Schedule.

Mar. 14 "IN SEARCH OF ORCHIDS" (Charles Moore 884-9614)

Not only has our speaker searched for orchids in Transylvania County, but he also has traveled to Alaska, the Yukon, Canada, the Great Lakes region, the West, the Midwest, and northern United States, exploring bogs and other habitats for these fascinating plants. His talk will be illustrated with color slides. Community Meeting Room, First Federal Savings and Loan, 2:00 p.m.

Please DELETE from your Jan. - June 1988 Outing Schedule the outing to Lake Jocassee on April 8, 1988. REPLACE it with this:

Apr. 8 PEARSON'S WOODS (Millie Pearson 749-3171)

One of our most popular Spring wild flower pilgrimages is to Pearson's Woods with Millie Pearson, our gracious hostess. Spectacular best describes the masses of trilliums and many other wild flowers along a 2-mile trail which includes a steep climb in one area. Lunch will be eaten beside a rushing stream. Meet at Southgate Mall at 9:00 a.m. Join others at Millie Pearsons at 9:30 a.m.

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

RECORDER'S REPORT for 1987

The Botanical Club scheduled 40 hikes this year with more than 680 attending, an average of 17 per hike. The Hardy Souls Hike and the Lake Jocassee trip were cancelled because of bad weather. The damage from the 1987 ice storm closed some trails, and we did some substituting during the early part of the season. We again had to cancel our trip to Big Butt and went to Bear Pen Gap instead, a happy choice.

There were 10 indoor meetings, including our annual meeting. Over 380 attended the indoor meetings, an average of almost 40 per meeting. We had adequate turnouts at our three workdays, Millie Pearson's, Holmes Educational State Forest and the University Botanical Gardens in Asheville. Our three workshops drew 8 people per workshop.

If you had gone on every hike this year you would have added 4,000 miles to your odometer. You would have had an overnight at Snowbird Lodge, at Franklin, at Cullowhee and at Cosby.

The weather was kinder to us and we had many fine days for our outings. The Club continued its love affair with the Blue Ridge Parkway. We went East (North) with Miles Peelle in July, but mostly we found ourselves going west again and again. We found our way to Heintooga, Balsam Gap and Soco Gap. We began to identify plants by mile posts on the Parkway, and it soon became evident that the Botanical Club overlooks few overlooks. We found saxifrage on rock faces. We took short hikes off the parkway to see old stands of trees and displays of orange-fringed orchids. We searched the ditches for sundews. We found ladies' tresses and gentians where they had survived the Parkway's mowers.

We welcomed Bill Verduin back, and he and Ben Tullar did more than their share in leading us on some special trips. We appreciated the hospitality at Foothills Equestrian Nature Center (FENCE) where Ivan Kuster took us in March and again in September.

Asa Gray called botany "the amiable science". I think of that when I think of our group. Our leaders try, whenever possible, to scout hikes for us, and so to be able to point out to us the unusual and uncommon plants we see. We can bear in mind the broad definition of botany as the study of the parts and functions of plants, and their habitats as well as their classification. A birder member in the Club once described herself as not a "lister". As recorder I must be a lister and it is useful to the serious beginner. But remembering always Asa Gray's "amiable science" we are free to learn at whatever speed and depth we want and still can enjoy the variety of programs offered by the Club.

It is easy to get discouraged when faced with the names of all the plants in this rich botanical area. Learning the identity of plants by name is a challenge, and is rewarding. But for those of you who get discouraged, I share with you a few heretical lines I wrote in my field book the first year I became a member of the Botanical Club. The lines are attributed to Shakespeare and go as follows:



"Those who give a name to every fixed star
Have no more profit from their shining nights
Than those that walk and know not what they are".

--ANNE ULINSKI

Yellowwood



YELLOWWOOD

Flowering twig, x 1/4.

To discover that the familiar name of a plant has been changed is very frustrating, until one discovers that the culprit behind these changes is the plant taxonomist.

The plant taxonomist is a specialist who studies plant identification (what the plant is called), classification (what its relationship is to other plants), and nomenclature (what a plant's correct name is, based on the name's history according to a specific code of nomenclature).

In May 1987 some of us were introduced to a plant's name change. On a Botany Club outing to the Jore Mountain area in Macon County, Dr. Dan Pittillo, our leader, had taken us to an area where the rare yellowwood tree grows. Unfortunately this member of the Pea Family was not in bloom. It was a disappointment not to see its clusters of showy, fragrant, white butterfly-like flowers.

Most of us knew the scientific name of this tree as Cladastris lutea, the name by which it had been known for about 100 years. When Dr. Pittillo referred to it as Cladastris kentukea, some of us had quizzical expressions on our faces. He promptly explained that the name had been changed. An older name had surfaced and had priority.

Yellowwood was first described in 1813 by Andre Michaux's son, Francois, who called it Virgilia lutea. He believed it to be similar to other members of the African genus Virgilia.

In 1825, Rafinesque separated the North American plants from the genus Virgilia and described them as a new genus which he named Cladastris. He rejected Michaux's epithet of lutea and gave it another name. Ultimately the name Cladastris lutea was accepted and commonly used.

In 1971, a botanist named Rudd was studying the legume family and found a publication that preceded Michaux's 1813 publication by two years. Georges Louis Marie Dumont de Courset (1746-1824) named it Sophora kentukea.

And thus the specific epithet kentukea is the earliest known for this tree. It is now known as Cladastris kentukea (Dum-Cour) Rudd, indicating that Dumont de Courset was the first person to describe it and Rudd later was responsible for the new name.

Plant names, because they are assigned by man, are artificial, so one need not be too disturbed when they are changed.

More important than being able to recite the name of a plant is knowing something about its living attributes, its characteristics and its preferred habitat.

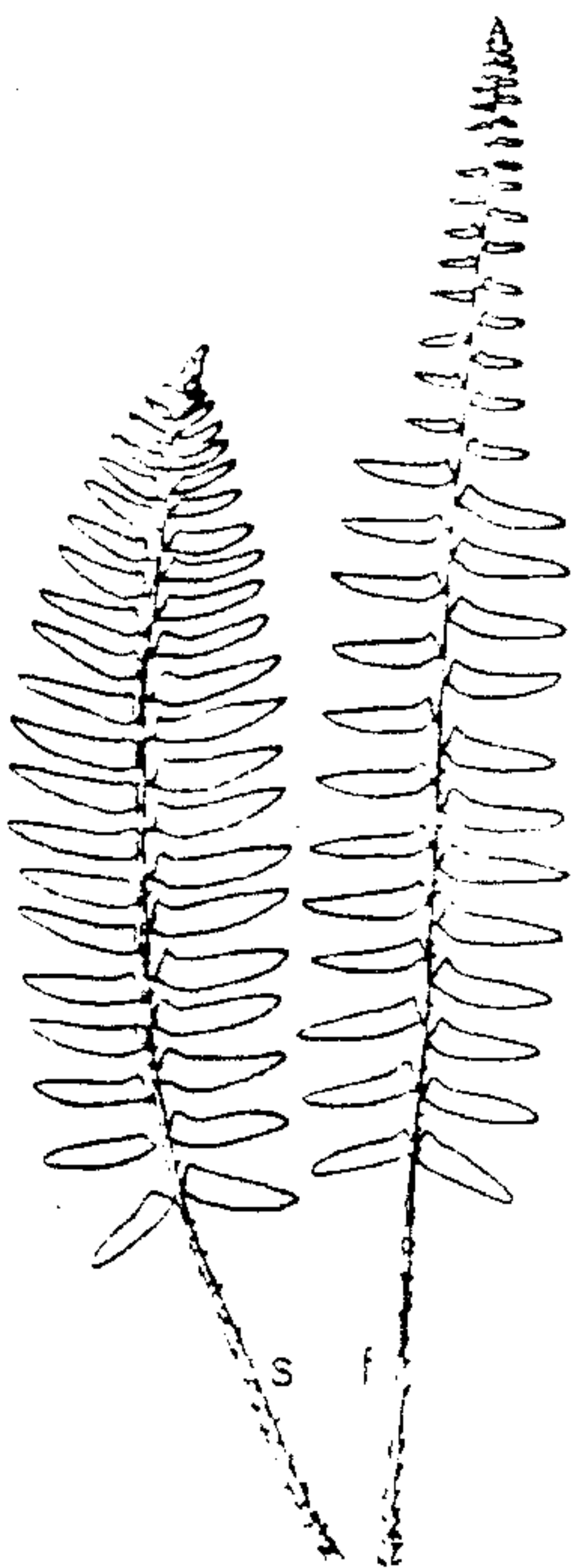
--MILLIE BLAHA

HOW ABOUT SOME LATE WINTER *Ferning?*

In winter we often think of studying tree buds and twigs, of investigating seed types or identifying remnants of dried weeds and wild flowers. But ferns? Who thinks of ferns in winter?

Yet winter and early spring are fine times to see ferns -- evergreen ferns. Their greens stand out beautifully against neutral backgrounds, though frond positions may differ from those of summer.

After the grand mass of summer ferns dies in autumn, a surprising number of ferns stay green. The list below indicates some of the more common species we would encounter on western North Carolina trails.



Christmas Fern

CHRISTMAS FERN (Polystichum acrostichoides) is the most common and obvious evergreen fern. Its glossy, dark fronds lie nearly flat in winter. Its early use as a holiday evergreen gave it its name.

EBONY SPLEENWORT (Asplenium platyneuron) has narrow (3/4"-1 1/4") fronds which hide among dried weeds of open meadows and shrubby edges. Once one "gets an eye" for them, the reaction is, "There are so many!"

COMMON POLYPODY (Polypodium virginianum) caps large woodland rocks with a dense, low, dark green layer. Its fronds curl beautifully on a longitudinal line when conditions become icy.

MARGINAL WOODFERN (Dryopteris marginalis) can be spotted easily in rich woodlands as a large fern dangling from rocky crevices. If growing on banks or level soil, its winter fronds lie flat to the ground. Remnants of the marginal "fruit dots" (sori) often cling to the backs of the leaflets, making identification easy.

GRAPEFERN (Botrychium dissectum) is one of many grapeferns, most of which, like the common rattlesnake fern (B. virginianum), are deciduous. But B. dissectum is evergreen, though often its single frond is brown-green or reddish brown in winter. It's always a delight to come across this lively-looking plant on the woodland floor, when all about it looks so dead.

MOUNTAIN SPLEENWORT (Asplenium montanum) can be identified as much by its distinctive habitat as by its appearance. It thrives in tight crevices under rocky overhangs, and one marvels at its survival in such adverse-looking circumstances. A delightful miniature, its fronds are only 2-5" long.

WALKING FERN (Camptosaurus rhizophyllus) is often thought of with CLIMBING FERN (Lygodium palmatum) because of their leggy names and because each is so typically unfernlike. Walking fern, with narrow, undivided, almost arrow-like fronds mats woodland rocks, while climbing fern, with palm-shaped leaflets, climbs like a vine on surrounding vegetation, often in semishade.

INTERMEDIATE WOODFERN (Dryopteris intermedia) thrives in the high elevation forests of yellow birch, spruce, and fir. Finely divided, its daintiness makes it look as if it should be fragile and deciduous, but it stays bright green all winter.

Several seldom-seen ferns could be added to this evergreen fern list, and further north many more could join them.

Next time you're trail walking, how about some late winter-early spring ferning?

--BARBARA HALLOWELL

The Botany Club is 15 years old !

At the January 22, 1988 Annual Meeting, the following officers were elected:

PRESIDENT: Bill Verduin
VICE PRESIDENT: Louise Foresman
SECRETARY: Charlotte Carman
TREASURER: John Saby
RECORDER: Anne Ulinski

The Honors Committee recognized two members:

LOUISE FORESMAN was honored with a Life Membership in the Western Carolina Botanical Club for her years of service to the Club as plant recorder, as a member of the Holmes Educational State Forest plant study committee, as vice president, as chairman of various committees, and as a dependable worker.

ELTON J. HANSENS was awarded a membership in the Second Wind Hall of Fame not only for his service to the Botany Club but also his service to the community. The Second Wind Hall of Fame recognizes and emphasizes activities after retirement using talents developed before and after retirement.

Margaret Kuhn, Membership Chairman, reported that, as of December 31, 1987, the membership consisted of 141 families with 235 individual members.

Margaret Kuhn, acting Treasurer reported that deposits during 1987 totaled \$1,070.00, expenditures totaled \$1,071.49. The balance as of Dec. 31, 1987 was \$294.54.

Elton Hansens, Community Services Chairman, reported that members contributed approximately 110 hours on community service projects.

Dick Smith, Chairman of the Buck Springs Lodge Nature Trail on the Blue Ridge Parkway, reported that progress on the proposed trail continues to be stalled while the National Park Service struggles with the problem of when to build the new housing for Pisgah Inn employees.

Millie Blaha, Chairman of the Holmes Educational State Forest Plant Study, reported that 394½ hours were spent on the study portion of the Forest Demonstration Trail observing plants in bloom.

Bill Verduin, Community Relations Chairman, reported that gifts of \$75 each were made to N.C. Nature Conservancy, N.C. Botanical Gardens at Asheville, and Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (to preserve Roan Mountain).

Grace Rice, Chairman of the Library Display Committee, reported on the display in the Hendersonville County Public Library during the month of April.

A telephone tree has been devised whereby all members can be notified in case of emergency or cancellation or change in meeting dates or places.

Dick Smith's "Look Again" page in Shortia is being assembled into a portfolio.

The membership voted to keep dues at \$8.00 per year per family

After a delicious potluck luncheon of food provided by the Botany Club members, Barbara Hallowell, Gladys Mulvey, and Harry Logan who were members in 1973 when the Club was formed and who have continued their memberships for 15 years, reminisced about the Club's beginning. Other 1973 members who were unable to be present and who continue to be members are Peggy Camenzind, Nan Morrow, and Pat and Gordon Tooley. Four past presidents -- Augie Kehr, Bruce Leech (who joined the Club late in 1973), Dick Smith, and Elton Hansens -- shared their recollections of the Club.

It was a Happy 15th Birthday for the Botany Club!

LOOK AGAIN !

Some of our most attractive plants not only are restricted to the southern mountains but within that narrow range have such limited distributions that the likelihood of seeing them may depend largely upon chance.

This is exemplified by the endemic Lily of the Valley (Convallaria montana), which occurs locally in the Appalachian and Blue Ridge provinces of only four states. It may possibly be a variety of the European C. majalis, which furnished the stock from which we have cultivated the familiar, fragrant Lilies of the Valley for many years, but whatever the nomenclature there are marked differences. The native plants are considerably larger, and the leaves overtop the flowers to a greater degree. Also, the individuals are spaced apart and do not crowd each other in dense, ground-covering colonies as do those of the typical C. majalis.



CONVALLARIA MONTANA

The name "Wild Lily of the Valley" is often applied to Maianthemum canadense, thereby causing confusion which could easily be avoided by using the literal translation of its scientific name: "Canada Mayflower". Aside from this, it cannot be confounded with Convallaria. It is of much smaller stature, and the leaves are alternate and the flowering stalk terminal, instead of all arising from the base. Most unusual for a member of the Lily Family is the fact that its floral parts are in multiples of two rather than three.



MAIANTHEMUM CANADENSE

Dick Smith

SHORTIA

Vol. X, No. 1

Spring 1988

A quarterly publication of the WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

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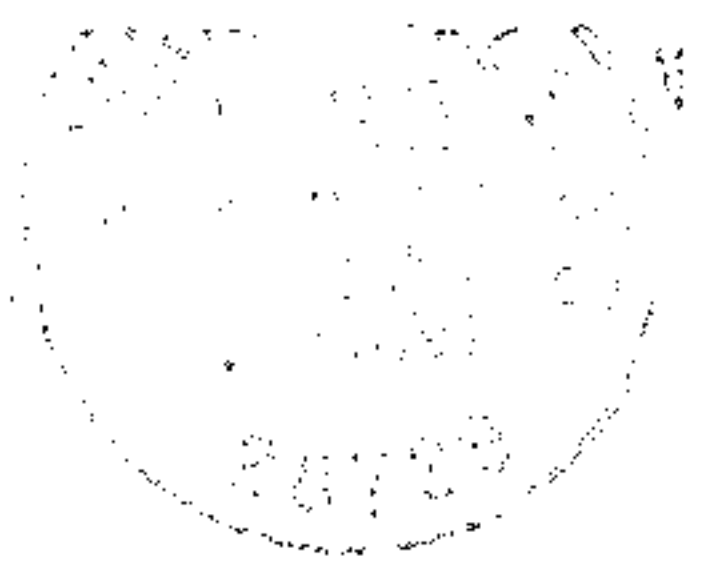
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USA
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