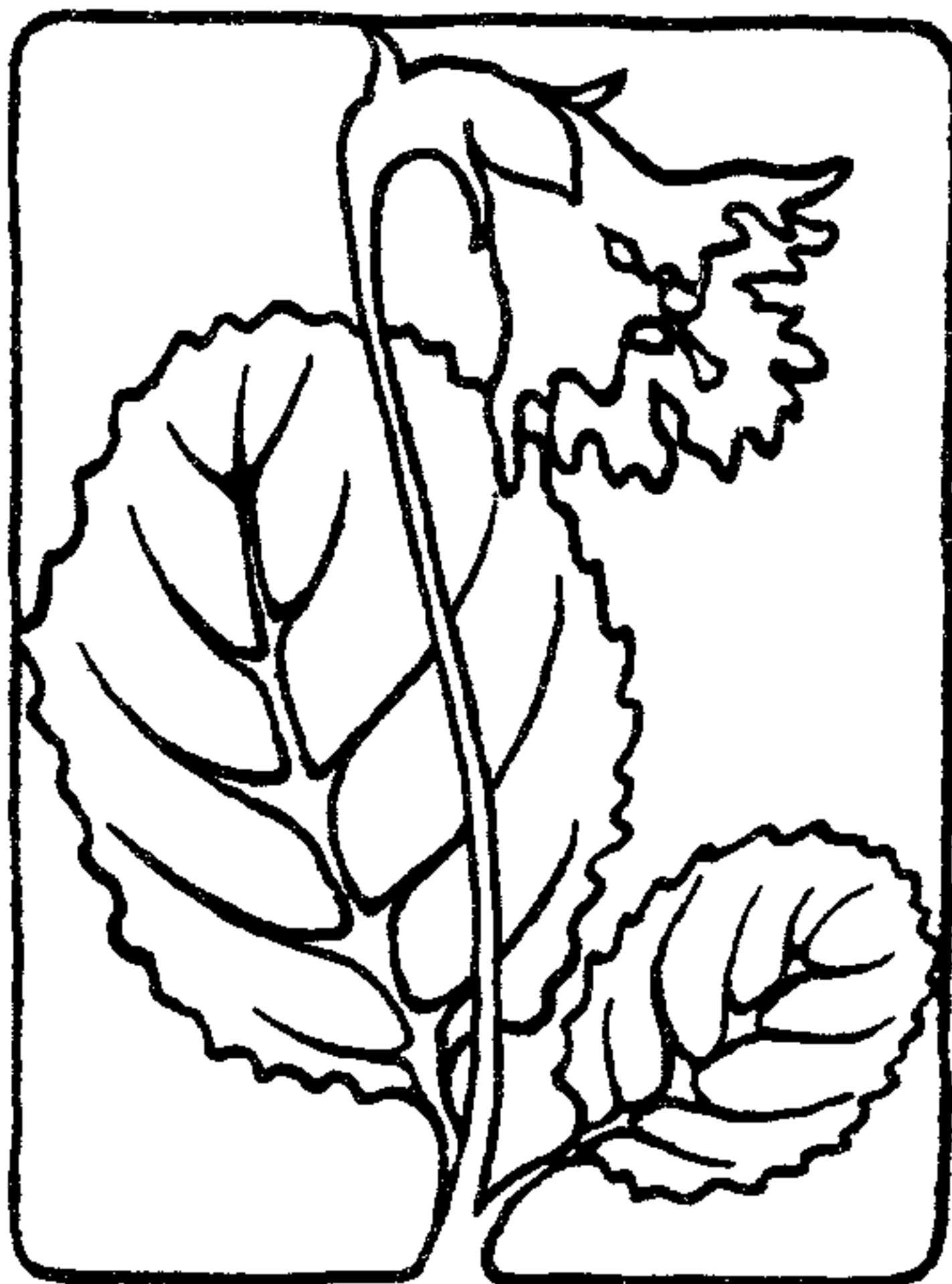


SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

SPRING 1991



DOROTHY RATHMANN, Editor

OFFICERS

President:	Bessie Sinish	Treasurer:	John Saby
Vice President:	Dean Crawford	Recorder:	Elton Hansens
Secretary:	Grace Rice	Historian:	Louise Foresman

FROM THE PRESIDENT **Bessie Sinish**

As your President for the year 1991, I have chosen for my theme the word **awareness**. For the past eleven years the members of this Club have made me more aware of the exciting and fascinating world in which we live. A day without one's being aware of some form of nature whether it is just breathing the air or smelling the earth, seeing the sky, or hearing a bird sing is surely missing the awareness of being.

Awareness, curiosity, association, learning, sharing are keys to enjoyment as we start our field trips in the Spring. Hopefully, the Winter programs have been of help in preparing you to take part and to have fun in exploring and recognizing the plants of the fields and woods.

Awareness implies knowing something either by perception or by means of information. Henry James said, "awareness quickens the mental demand which in turn wanders further and further for pastures."

Be **aware** of our members. Our Club is fortunate to have as members authors of both fern and flower books, botanists, a biologist, an entomologist, and members very knowledgeable about birds, geology, lichens and mosses as well as teachers of birds, flowers, shrubs and gardening, and trees. Resources too numerous to count!

The time has come for us to be aware of the Editor of SHORTIA, Dorothy Rathmann. This Spring issue of SHORTIA will be her last. Since 1983, Dorothy has been actively involved with the production of SHORTIA in the capacity of chairman of the production committee; then, except for three issues, has been Editor since 1986. If one has kept these issues, as I have, he or she has a world of information, unequalled in a Club such as ours. **Awareness**, curiosity,, learning, sharing of knowledge, and helpfulness in editing member's articles are just a few of Dorothy's attributes. Now, may she enjoy her gardening, the birds, and doing photography and being a member with little responsibility. The Club would wish me to say "thank you" and I sincerely do. From us all a **heartful thanks**.

With **awareness**, curiosity, association and learning you, our members, will be on your way to witness the arrival of Spring and the seasons to follow. Enjoy sharing our world of nature!

FROM THE EDITOR **Dorothy Rathmann**

For sure, I'm the one would should be thanking all of you for the privilege of working on SHORTIA for so many years -- and I do! I started with Helen Turner and learned much from her. Club members have been uniformly cooperative and helpful -- never once was I turned down. Always, I received lots of encouragement and, often, welcome advice and suggestions. 'T was a heart-warming experience.

I'm sure all of you join me in welcoming Bud Pearson as the new Editor. He brings skills and enthusiasm that bode well for the future of SHORTIA.

OFFICERS FOR 1991 Ruth Mack

PRESIDENT, BESSIE SINISH: Bessie is not a stranger to most WCBC members. She has been an active member since 1979, when Ken retired and they moved here from Massachusetts. She has served the Club in many capacities: hike leader, Scheduling Committee member, Chairman of Honors Committee, to name a few.

Bessie has been interested in botany and hiking all her life. She also shares the hobby of photography with her husband, Ken. She exudes enthusiasm for everything she undertakes.

VICE PRESIDENT, DEAN CRAWFORD: Dean will continue to serve as our Vice President despite recent heart surgery. He is coming along fine, and it was good to see him attending recent programs.

SECRETARY, GRACE RICE: Volunteer work has been Grace's primary interest since moving to Hendersonville, but she has also been an active member of WCBC for the past 9 years.

TREASURER, JOHN SABY: John has graciously consented to act as Treasurer again. This will be his 4th (and John says, his last) term.

COMMITTEES FOR 1991 Bessie Sinish

ANNUAL MEETING

- Wm. & Virginia Amman, Chairmen
- Robert & Elaine Montgomery
- Fred & Beth Woodlock

HONORS

- Dorothy Rathmann, Chairman

FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

- Harriet Custer, Typist

RECORDER

- Elton Hansens, Chairman
- Anne Ulinski

PROGRAMS

- Dean Crawford
- Bill Verduin
- Elton & Aline Hansens
- Dick Smith
- Louise Foresman
- Bud & Laverne Pearson
- Robert & Elaine Montgomery
- Ruth Hoerich
- Erica Parmi
- Bessie Sinish

SHORTIA

- Bud Pearson, Editor
- Frances Gadd, Distribution
- Elaine Montgomery, Distribution

NOMINATING

- Larry Kenyon, Chairman
- Bill Verduin

YEAR-END GIFTS John Saby

The following contributions have been made:

WNC Arboretum	\$75
So. Appalachian Highlands Conservancy	75
NC Nature Conservancy	75
University Botanical Gardens, Asheville	75

HOPE FOR THE CHESTNUT? Bill Verduin

We see on our field trips the last gasps of the chestnut roots trying ever so hard to stay alive. But sooner or later the blight, a fungal disease, attacks the cambial layer and kills the sprout. The root system is not killed by the fungus but is slowly starved to death.

What are we losing? When the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock, chestnut was the most common hardwood forest tree from Maine to the Gulf of Mexico. In these mountains, three of every five trees were chestnuts -- three out of five! It was also the most useful tree: the wood was suitable for many uses and the plentiful nuts were nutritious food for man and beast.

Can the species be saved? All the research so far -- and there has been a lot of it -- has not yet produced a sure and certain cure. Some efforts have shown promise, however, and researchers continue to pursue the elusive blight-free tree.

Now there is a new factor which has again raised hope. It has been found in Europe that a certain virus attacks the fungus that kills the tree. Unfortunately, the virus does not kill the fungus, but it does reduce its vitality to the extent that the tree is able to survive the fungal attack. Trees show the effect of the fungus -- swollen wound tissue -- but they do survive and therein lies hope.

Another source of hope is a chestnut named "Revival" for which a plant patent has been issued. This is a hybrid, found in Ohio, between the blight-resistant Chinese chestnut and an American chestnut tree. This specimen, found in 1953, was a healthy, mature tree in a grove of chestnuts. All others had been killed by the blight. The hybrid has, to date, shown no trace of infection and bears annual crops of large chestnuts.

The American chestnut will never again be the dominant tree in our hardwood forests but maybe, just maybe, we will again have plentiful chestnuts to roast on long winter nights.

PINE STRAW MULCH

In the Fall 1990 issue of WILD FLOWER (the newsletter of the NC Wild Flower Preservation Soc.), Dot Wilbur suggested that gardeners cut back on their use of pine straw mulch because "Some unscrupulous pine straw wholesalers are scalping the long leaf pine forests. Those large rakes and even the pitch forks are not only removing the natural fertilizer for the pine trees, they are taking the tree's natural mulch away, thus increasing water loss from the already sandy, porous soil; they are destroying the plant diversity of the region, and very importantly, the raking eliminates the fuel for the controlled fires needed for good forest management."

BILL VERDUIN MADE HONORARY LIFE MEMBER Aline Hansens

The following election was unanimously approved at the Annual Meeting:

In behalf of the Honors Committee it is my distinct pleasure to present a name for Honorary Life Membership in the Western Carolina Botanical Club.

This is a person whose knowledge, enthusiasm, enjoyment and love of nature have endeared him to the Club and made him a valuable asset.

In his calm, easy going manner and twinkle of humor, his leadership has led us successfully through these past three years. And when he expected to do only two "miles" a little urging pushed him that extra "mile", somewhat against his better judgment, but for the good of the Club.

If you have ever traveled with him on field trips you remember his contagious enthusiasm for the plants and waterfalls, as well as his insatiable desire for ice cream, especially chocolate!

The Honors Committee is delighted, at this time, to give recognition to Bill Verduin and bestow on him Honorary Life Membership in the Western Carolina Botanical Club and we are also recognizing Bill's wife, Evelyn, whose cooperation and loyal support should never be underestimated in the success of Bill's ventures.

THE NC NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM FOR HENDERSON COUNTY

At the WCBC Annual Meeting, Anne Ulinski reminded us that several years ago Chuck Roe, Head of the NC Natural Heritage Program, told WCBC members about this program. Recently he was back in town, meeting with a broadly based group of people, all interested in the establishment of a Natural Heritage Program in Henderson County. This meeting was initiated by the League of Women Voters and an anonymous donor who has pledged to match dollar for dollar the first \$5000 donated to the project. It is estimated that \$20,000 will be needed; the goal is to raise this amount by Earth Day 1991. The Community Foundation will act as banker so donations will be tax-deductible.

After the \$20,000 is raised, the Natural Heritage people in Raleigh will contract with a research biologist who will come here to begin the inventory of our area, called the Blue Ridge Escarpment. The survey will cover two growing seasons and emphasize plants. A tentative goal for completion is the spring of 1993. Data will be published as an "Atlas" of the unique natural areas of the county. This very detailed report will assist public and private agencies in safeguarding important ecological resources as they plan development projects and make regulatory and land management decisions.

The success of the program will depend in large part on what resource people are available to assist the research biologist doing the survey. If you need more information or are interested in making contributions please see Tom Hallowell or Anne Ulinski.

Donations may be made directly to the Community Foundation of Henderson County, PO Box 2131, Hendersonville, NC 28793. Indicate on the face of the check that the donation is for the Natural Heritage Inventory.

RECORDERS REPORT.....Elton J. Hansens

For this report I thought we might first recall the scope of the Club program this past year. The statistics I present will cover Feb. 1 to Dec. 15, 1990.

We programmed 59 events and 4 of these were cancelled at the time of the trip. Eleven meetings were indoor programs and the other 44 were field trips. Perhaps the 2 most valuable field trips were the indoor-outdoor sessions on plant families where a splendid slide show and lecture by Dick Smith was followed by actual field study of representative species. Another outstanding feature of our program was the 2 overnight jaunts to the Carolina Swamps and the Great Smoky Mountains--exciting adventure and marvelous botany on both trips.

Now a few remarks on the work of the recorder and his committee. Our revised system of data on field trips includes a Profile of the area, a Trip Report listing the date, leaders, attendance and salient facts about the day, the plants, etc. and List of Flowering Plants. We have much data in the files. In 1990 we added 34 Trip Profiles, 41 Field Trip Reports and 26 Lists of Flowers. Botanical observations on other plants are included in the Trip Reports.

We have xeroxed some 90 pages of records which will be studied by the committee to further refine our system. A few copies of this report can be purchased for \$5.00 each.

What good is all of this? We now have better planning data for our Program Committee and can make previous Profiles, Trip Reports and Lists available to trip leaders. We can also supply information to Club Members for the cost of duplicating, providing the demand does not become too great.

Among the membership of our club there is great variation in knowledge and interest in plants. However, most of our members have an interest in flowers in bloom, especially spring flowers. Consequently we have more field trips and compile most extensive and accurate lists of flowers in the spring. Our accumulated data emphasizes flowering plants. However, some of our members have interest in mosses, liverworts, lichens, fungi, ferns, etc. Our ability to list these groups, except for ferns is very limited. Hopefully, the knowledgeable person among us will give the recorder written notes on these groups that can be incorporated into our club records.

A field trip should be much more than a mere compilation of lists but a communion with nature where we recognize the habitat/environment/community (use whatever word suits your fancy) where each species is found. When you note which plants are missing from a community you see, then you are beginning to become an expert. Don't hesitate to share your observations and your questions. Sooner or later you'll find someone with the answer or that science has no answer yet to your question.

The Recorders Committee consists of Erika Parmi, Laverne and Bud Pearson, Grace Rice, Bessie Sinish (ex officio), Anne Ulinski, and Bill Verduin and Elton Hansens, Chr. On each field trip one of the above will record; occasionally another WCBC member will be recorder. All hikers are asked to help record. Recording in the field is fun and challenging. We need more people who will assist with recording. Might I suggest that you can have much fun by being your own recorder.

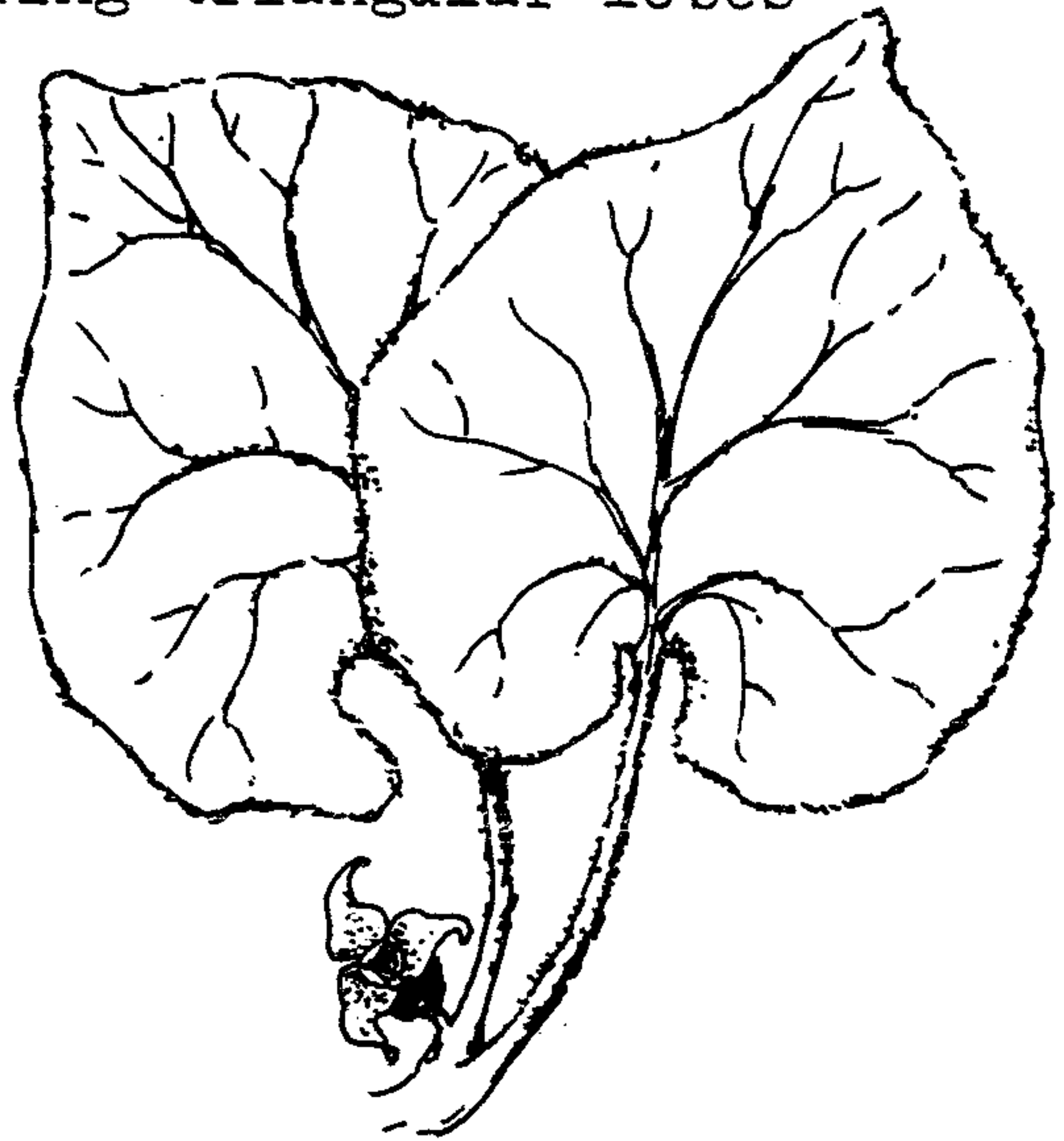
LOOK AGAIN !

Although not even distantly related to the true ginger of the tropics, the roots of our Wild Ginger, Asarum canadense, have a surprisingly similar flavor and tang.

Each spring this plant puts out a pair of large downy leaves, and a solitary reddish or purplish brown flower near ground level. The flower is actually a fleshy calyx (there are no petals), bell-shaped with three spreading triangular lobes which may vary greatly in length.

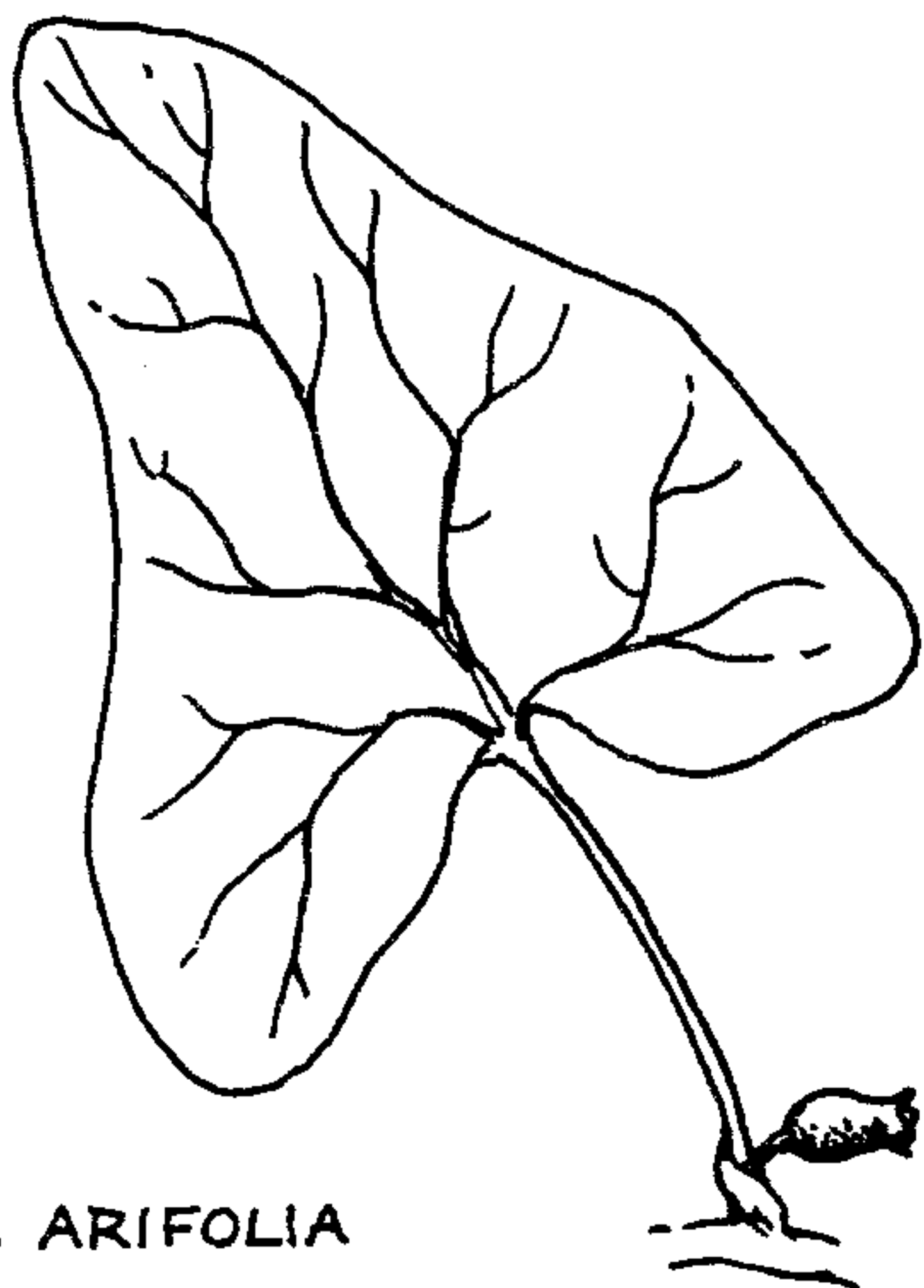
Another group of plants popularly known as Wild Ginger but endemic to the Southeast possesses a different set of characters; some authors have placed these in the genus Hexastylis and have given them the alternative common name of Heartleaf. They have smooth evergreen foliage (sometimes variegated), a single leaf being formed each year to join the persistent older ones.

The earliest of these to bloom is H. arifolia, in which the leaves are triangular. The little flowers, which are greenish brown and flask-shaped, have given it the colloquial name of Little Brown Jugs.



A. CANADENSE

This is followed in our area by three species with more rounded leaves and larger flowers that vary from cylindrical to urn-shaped. The calyx lobes are very short in H. virginica, longer in H. heterophylla. H. shuttleworthii is made conspicuous by its big flowers, which usually exceed an inch in length.



H. ARIFOLIA

Dick Smith

Vol. XIII, No. 1

S H O R T I A

Spring 1991

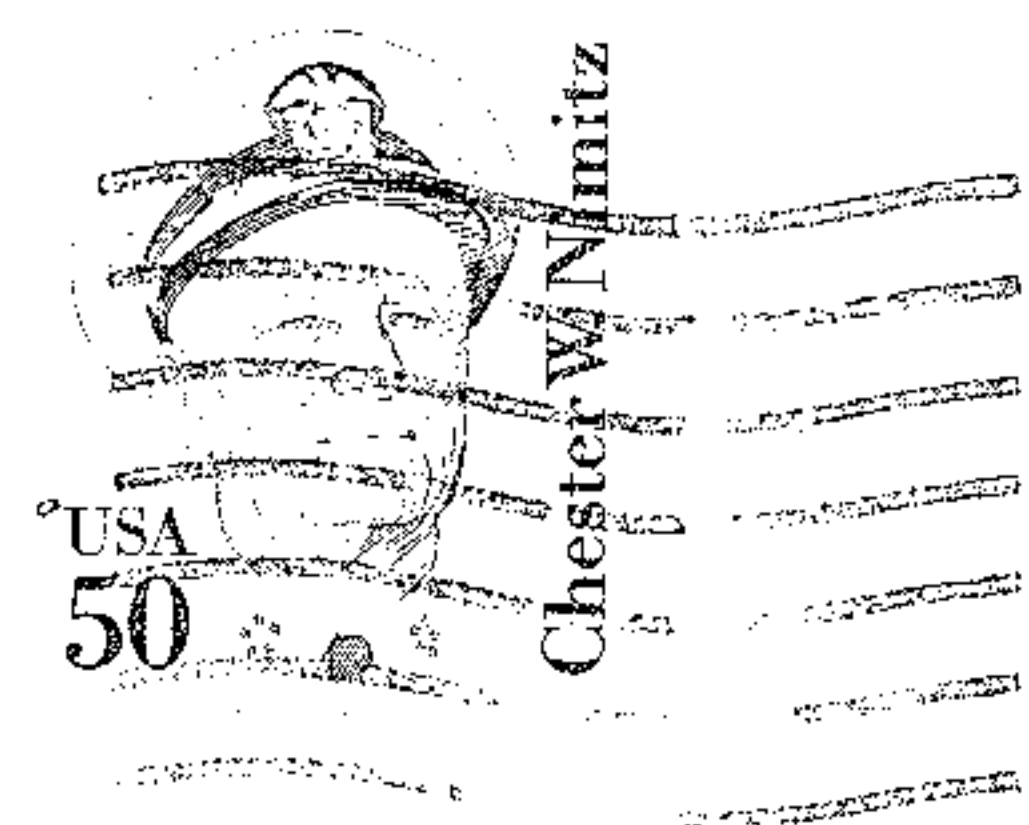
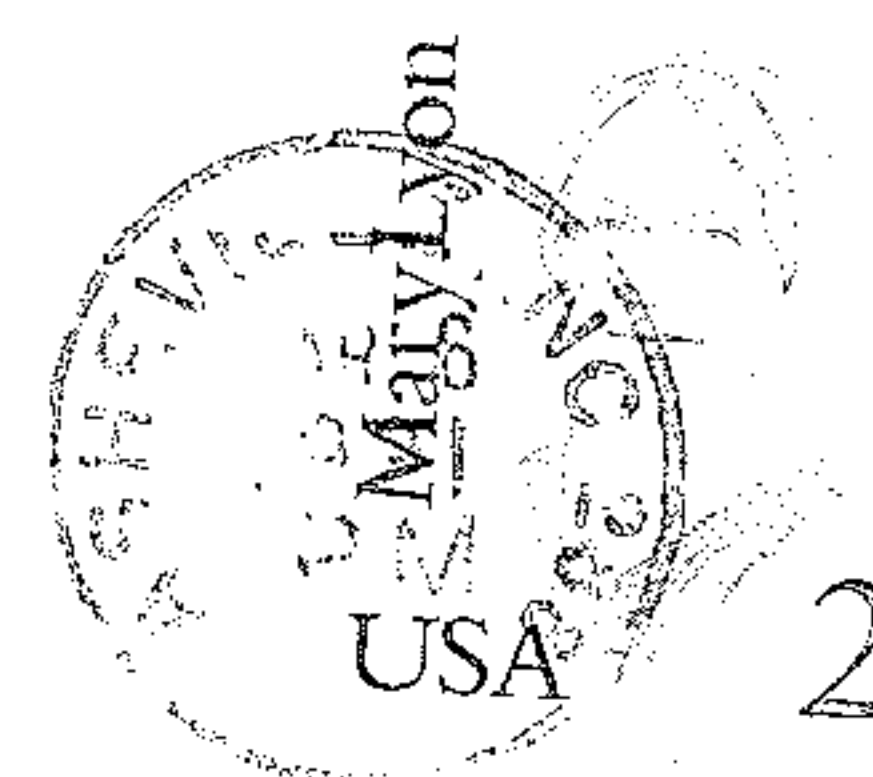
A quarterly publication of the Western Carolina Botanical Club

Editor: Dorothy Rathmann

Distribution: Frances Gadd

Please submit contributions for next issue by May 15 , 1991 to:
Bud Pearson, Editor
2514 Kanuga Road
Hendersonville, NC 28739

SHORTIA
c/o Frances Gadd
218 Pheasant Run
Hendersonville, NC 28739



FIRST CLASS

A. & E. Hansens
110 Old Kanuga Place
Hendersonvil, NC 28739