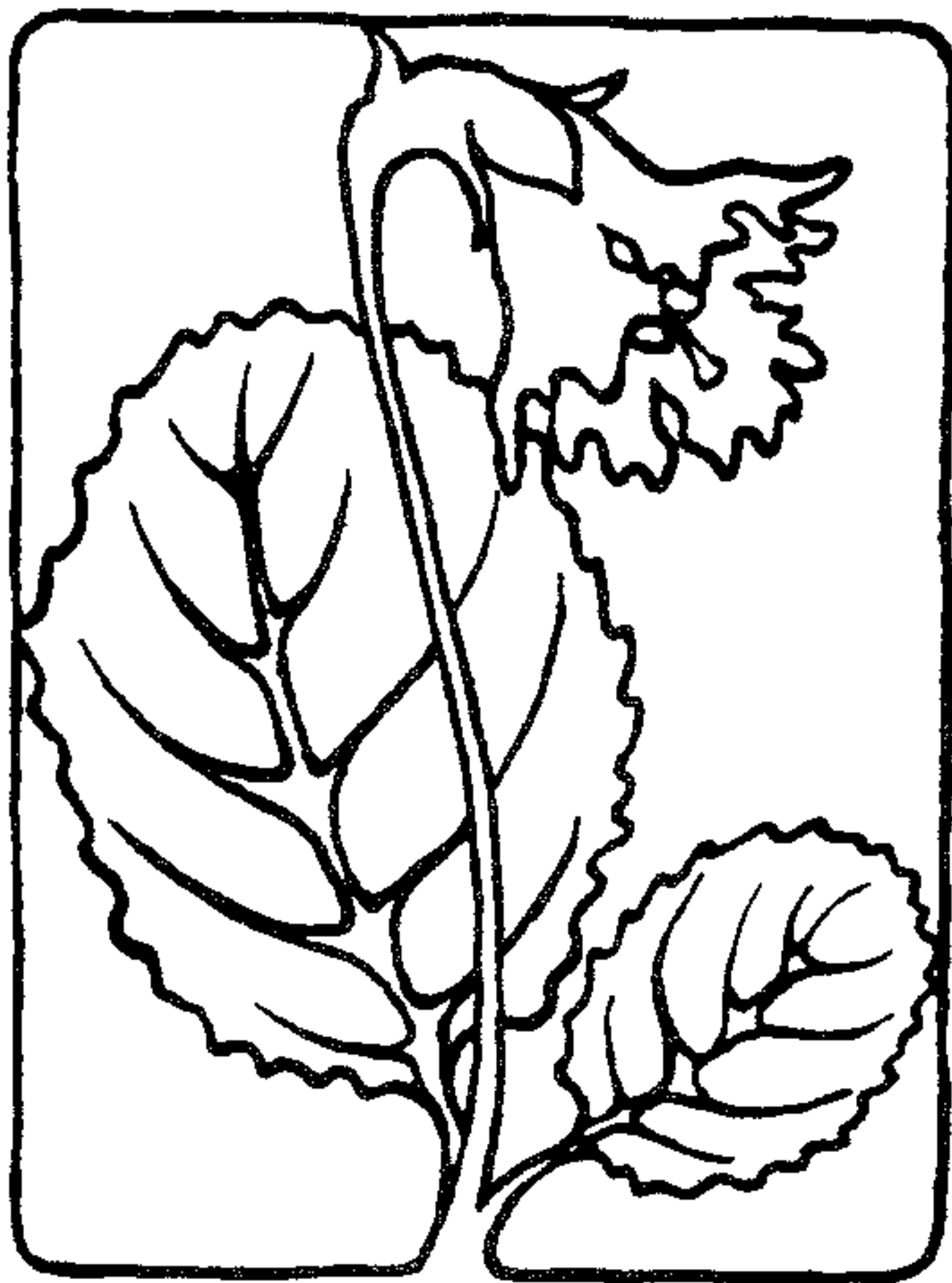


SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

WINTER 1991 - 92



BUD PEARSON, Editor

As another season approaches, I look forward to seeing the world out there with a new awareness. The views are open. The sky serves as a background for the trees silhouetted against it. This is the time to see new growth of plants, annuals and biennials which germinate prior to exposure to low temperatures prior to the warmer weather of spring and summer when they flower. Examples of such are in the form of rosettes, runners and creeping vines. The green mosses, lichens and fungi of different colors are more noticeable. It is the time to notice the grayish-green to white bark of the Sycamore, and the bark of our various Pines as well as the bark of other species. It is, also, the time when we see the magnificent sunrises and sunsets of orange, yellow, red, sometime with mauve and delicate green. The vitality of our earth expresses itself in every season.

* * *

Please check your schedule as to the meeting places for programs in November through January. January 17th is the meeting when we share, "A nature oriented tid-bit, fact or idea of interest". Do contact Jeanne Smith (704) 885 2530 with your ideas. Come share and learn. With awareness, curiosity, association, and learning, we become more and more aware of the vitality of the earth.

* * *

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

- Ray Cottier, P.O.Box 1172, Flat Rock, NC, 28731 Ph. 696 0765
- Janice R. Honeycutt, P.O.Box 837, Saluda, NC, 28773
- William and Thelma Horne, P.O.Box 39, Balsam, NC, 28707
- Patricia Ryan, 116A Country Club Heights, Tryon, NC, 28782

* * *

"ONE WRITER'S 10 FAVORITE WILDFLOWER AREAS"

A recent issue of "Wildflower", the newsletter of the National Wildflower Research Center featured an article by WCBC member Dick Smith titled as above. The Editor's note explained Richard M. Smith, a noted wildflower author, had been asked to write about his ten favorite wildflower spots. Dick's article pointed out that it would be easier to pick one hundred than just ten.

Members will no doubt be curious and interested to know the ten places Dick named. The first named was the Great Smokey Mountains with particular reference to Cove Hardwood Nature Trail and conifer-clad Clingman's Dome. Next was Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park.

Number three was Maine's Mount Desert Island National Park.

Fourth, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in Arizona.

Fifth, Hoh River Forest in the state of Washington.

Sixth, Everglades National Forest, in Florida.

Seventh, the New Jersey Pine Barrens.

Eighth, Torrey Pines State Preserves north of La Jolla, Cal.

Ninth, the Grass Bay Preserves near Cheboygan, Michigan on the shores of Lake Huron.

Tenth, North Carolina's Green Swamp south west of Wilmington.

All of these locations are described in detail by Dick's book, "Wild Plants of America".

You probably all know, the National Wildflower Research Center was founded by Lady Bird Johnson.

REMINISCENCES FROM FRANK BELL

I loafed a bit today - I hope gainfully. This morning Calla and I rode Sir Acorns and Deadline in the woods, by clear streams, moss covered rocks, lichen, Christmas ferns, rhododendron green as in summer, bare trees that admitted and filtered the brilliant winter sun, and evergreens that made dark tunnels. The forest was too delightful to hurry through - we walked most of the time and savored the odors and sights and silence.

Then, I flew over Cantrell Creek, Molyneaux Gap, High Pockets, Shining Rock, Looking Glass, Devil's Courthouse, and took that dramatic dive from the commonplace North slope of Whiteside Mountain to the South, where the mountain isn't. Indians say that the Thunder-god tore that half away, leaving a concave granite wall where half the mountain should be. We circled over spectacular Whitewater Falls - both of them - and High and Triple Falls on Little River. The beauty was serene and awesome and good. Even the less striking view from our living room gives me a sense of the excellence and vastness of God's creation - which survives, and shall survive, the abuses of what we men choose to call His major creation - ourselves.

KEEP THE LEADER IN SIGHT OR INFORMED

by the Editor

If any one else wrote about this I would probably consider it preaching and inconsistent with the character of the botanical club. But, since I have been at fault, have admitted my error and attempted apology, this may be considered as part of my atonement.

In short, while on a recent field trip, I led a small group off the trail to a place along a stream where we enjoyed our lunch. The problem was that the place I chose was obscure from the main trail. The main body of members passed this spot and assumed my small group had continued along the trail. After lunch I led my contingent back down the trail and to another trail which was to be part of an "after lunch" trip.

The main body of the field trip was inconvenienced by not knowing where my group had gone. They proceeded further along the trail than intended and were confounded by our disappearance on a single trail. We did not intend to include "Hide and Seek" in the days activities. Going off the trail to find a picturesque place to have lunch was not a mistake. NOT INFORMING THE LEADER of my intentions was a mistake.

Thinking about the many field trips conducted by the botanical club and the relatively few "incidents", I do not think that we need any "Rules" for conduct on field trips. Our membership is mature and responsible. It is, however, something of a problem to keep a large group together on the trail when the interests of the individual members is so varied. Identification of a single species with book and glass is an activity in which only a few can participate. Others, naturally want to move on to discover nature on their own. Often the places we visit are worth "looking up" to see, and some want to see more of the vistas than the species. So most groups do get strung out along the trail, and this is certainly all right. We are out there for our personal enjoyment. We all try to conduct ourselves so as not to inconvenience other. This can be accomplished on field trips by keeping the leader in sight or informed.....Bud Pearson

WILLIAM BARTRAM, PATRON SAINT OF BOTANICAL CLUBS.....Bud Pearson

From the Introduction to his book "TRAVELS", 1791;

"This world, as a glorious apartment of the boundless palace of the sovereign Creator, is furnished with an infinite variety of animated scenes, inexpressibly beautiful and pleasing, equally free to the inspection and enjoyment of all his creatures.

Perhaps there is not any part of creation, within the reach of our observations, which exhibits a more glorious display of the Almighty hand, than the vegetable world: such a variety of pleasing scenes, ever changing throughout the seasons, arising from various causes, and assigned each to the purpose and use determined.

William Bartram, (1739-1823)"

William Bartram was the son of John Bartram (1699-1777), a botanist who founded the first botanical garden in America in 1728 on the farm he purchased near Philadelphia. John was commissioned by King George III to collect botanical species in the New World and was a fellow of the Royal Society. John helped Benjamin Franklin found the American Philosophical Society. The senior Bartram was raised as a Quaker and a farmer in Darby, Pa.

Today the Bartram House and Gardens are a city park operated by the John Bartram Association. It is situated along the west bank of the Schuylkill River in the city of Philadelphia. The area surrounding the Bartram Gardens is representative of the most depressing urban decay found in most of our major cities, but the house and gardens are truly worth a visit. One of the oldest trees in the garden is a Yellowwood, *Cladrastis lutea*, which may be a descendent of this species discovered in the hills of Tennessee and Kentucky and brought to William by his friend Andre Michaux, the French plant explorer.

William was born in 1739, the seventh of eleven children. He grew up surrounded by his father's gardens and developed an early interest in nature. He possessed an artistic talent for drawing plants, birds and wildlife. His book "Travels" attests to his literary ability. His book was written from the journals kept while travelling "The East and West Floridas and the Carolinas" from 1773 to 1778. It is, at once, a catalogue of plant life in the area travelled as well as a description of the inhabitants, the geography and animals of the area. Bartram's descriptions are often poetic and his book was appreciated by such literary notables as Samuel Coleridge, William Wordsworth, and Thomas Carlyle.

A North Carolina Unit of the Bartram Trail Society was formed in 1977, (Shortia VII, 4, 1985-86) and continued as North Carolina Bartram Trail Society, Inc. That organization had located some 80 miles of Bartram's original trail through Western North Carolina.

It might be interesting to contact this organization. It would be worth considering a Botanical Club visit to Bartram's trail.

Field Trip to Sugarloaf Mountain on Aug. 16, 1991.

"There's one!" "There's another!" "I see more!" "How beautiful!" "What an interesting flower and how blue!" "I've never seen anything like this before!" "I count 18, look on that next rise. There are many more." "Look here, these are white ones!" These and many other comments were made when 26 of us found a spectacular display of monkshood, (Aconitum uncinatum) in the meadow near the tracking station atop Sugarloaf Mountain.

A few years ago WCBC had found monkshood on Sugarloaf but subsequently it was not found for several years. Then in 1990 when the leaders were scouting for the August Sugarloaf field trip monkshood was found in 2 locations. The actual field trip several days later was rained out.

Aconitum uncinatum grows in rich woods from southern Pennsylvania to Indiana and southward in the mountains. This member of the Ranunculaceae prefers moist areas such as Sugarloaf provides. The flowers are blue, the plants are weak stemmed, and the leaves are deeply 3-5 lobed. The irregular flower has 5 petal-like sepals, the upper one being large and shaped like a helmet. The 2 upper petals are small, spur-shaped bodies raised on long claws and concealed under the helmet; the other petals are reduced or wanting. The seeds and roots of monkshood are poisonous. An additional rare species of Aconitum is also found in the North Carolina mountains (See Radford).

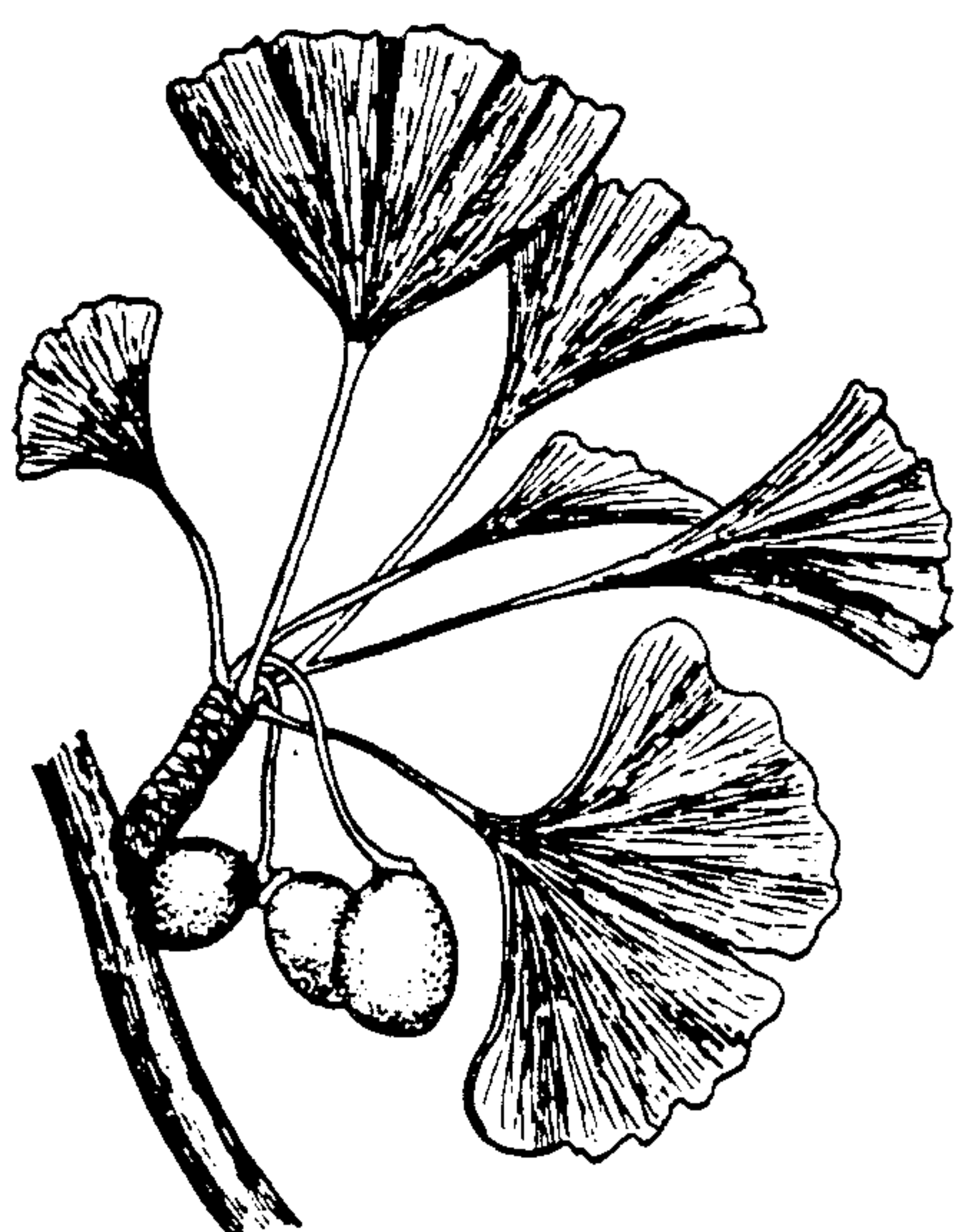
For our Aug. 16 trip we arrived at the base of the mountain about 10:00 a.m. The hikers were divided into 3 groups led by Elton Hansens, Dick Smith, and Millie Blaha. For botanizing we stopped at 4 locations before we passed through the gates and arrived at the summit parking area about noon. Soon each of us settled on our "pet rock" for lunch. By 12:45 we were ready for more botanizing. It was then that we found the monkshood. Our flower list for the trip numbered 72. Such a long list was possible because we moved through a variety of environments and to a higher elevation. Sugarloaf is always a productive trip.

Thirteen field trips were scheduled from Aug. thru Oct. The diverse program included a trip to the NC Arboretum (8/9), a blueberry harvest on the Mountains to Sea Trail (8/23), an insect walk (8/30), a session on fungi (9/13), a picnic (10/4), and a late autumn field trip with emphasis on leaves and fruits (10/25). The other 7 field trips emphasized flowers in bloom. These were to Frying Pan Gap (8/2), Sugarloaf Mtn (8/16), Butter Gap (9/6), Parkway South (9/20), Hogback Mtn (9/27), Whiteside Mtn (10/11) and Big Creek in the Smokies (10/18). The flower lists from these 7 trips were organized into a composite list for August, September, and October. This list included 172 species in 41 families and 103 genera. Similar data for May, June and July of this year (Shortia Vol. 13 No. 3) revealed 277 species in 54 families and 162 genera. Why is the flower list so much shorter for August through October? Do you suppose this is true because we cannot identify many of the fall flowers?

The first Ginkgo tree I remember seeing was called to my attention by my wife. It was in Manhattan and they were planted along the sidewalks in front of our hotel, a few blocks south of the park. That was in the fall of 1977 and the leaves were a bright yellow. I remembered it because of the distinctive fan shaped leaves and the name (ging'ko) has a bit of a lilt. Frank and Calla Bell have a fine specimen of the Ginkgo along the driveway as you approach their house. Some years ago, during a field trip at the Bell's, Dick Smith identified the tree as a primitive form.

While it is a handsome ornamental tree, the fact that it is primitive made it more interesting. Darwin called the Ginkgo "a living fossil". Millions of years ago, back in the time of the dinosaurs, it was widespread around the earth. Fossil leaves have been found in England, Alaska, and islands in the Barents Sea.

Millions of years ago, after plant life came from the sea and began to occupy the land, and following the development of the spore bearing plants, the early seed bearing plants, *spermatophyta*, developed. This phylum is divided into the Naked Seed bearing plants, *Gymnosperms*, and plants that have their seeds developed in the ovary of their flowers, *Angiosperms*. The Ginkgo is one of the early *gymnosperms*.



During the 19th Century, and perhaps before, the Ginkgo was transported to the Western world from China and Japan where it was cultivated in gardens. It was planted along the streets of many Eastern cities as an ornamental. It has no natural habitat today, but survives as a cultivated ornamental plant. It thrives on most moist and fairly fertile soil and is tolerant of the city environment; and is not usually damaged by storms, fungi, or insects.

The staminate and pistillate flowers occur on separate trees. The fruit is not often seen in this country because it is the staminate trees that are usually planted. The fruit, which has a rank smell like the odor of rancid butter, is plum like in appearance and contains large smooth silvery pits, which are considered a delicacy by the Orientals. "Ginkgo" comes

from the Chinese and means "silver fruit" or "white nuts".

The Ginkgo is listed in the index of some books only as the Maidenhair Tree. It got that name because of the similarity of the leaf shape to that of the maidenhair fern's leaf. Its disturbing that someone would take a fine distinctive name like "Ginkgo" and substitute another name already in use.

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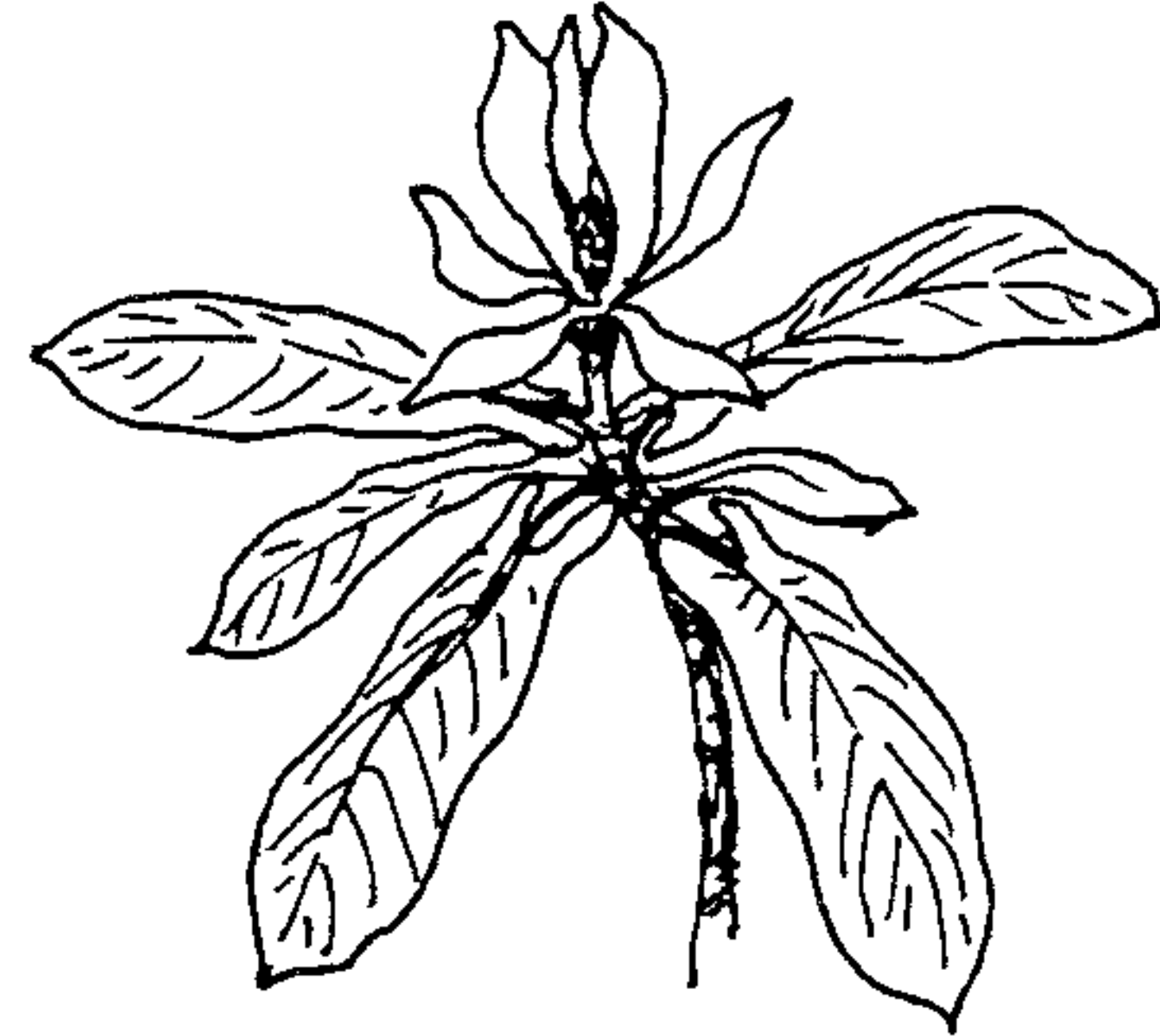
YOU ARE REMINDED THAT IT IS ABOUT TIME TO PAY ANNUAL DUES.
DUES MAY BE PAID AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

THE EDITOR would like to invite members to submit material or ideas for Shortia. If you aren't equipped to provide "printer ready" copies, you can supply the Editor with ideas, articles, books or bibliography from which to write an article. YOU can make SHORTIA a better publication.

LOOK AGAIN !

To many, the word "Magnolia" means that splendid white-flowered native evergreen tree that is so typical of the deep South, while others picture the Asiatic hybrid M. soulangeana, smothered in fragrant pink blossoms before the leaves emerge in the spring.

Contrasted with these are several very different Magnolias that inhabit the forests of our southern mountains, all of them deciduous and all blooming during April and May. Mountain Magnolia (M. fraseri) has creamy yellow flowers, and is easily identified by the paired lobes at the base of the leaf blade. (This characteristic is shared by M. macrophylla--which may have leaves a yard long--but this species is not commonly seen in our area.)



M. FRASERI

In M. tripetala, several leaves are clustered just beneath the white, malodorous flowers, which has given it the name of Umbrella Tree. This feature is absent in the Cucumber Tree (M. acuminata), which bears smaller, greenish yellow flowers.



M. TRIPETALA



M. ACUMINATA

Only one other genus of trees in the Magnolia Family occurs in the United States, and this is represented here by the handsome Tulip Tree (Liriodendron tulipifera).

Dick Smith

S H O R T I A

Vol. XIII, No. 4

Winter 1991

A quarterly publication of the Western Carolina Botanical Club

Editor: Bud Pearson

Distribution: Frances Gadd

Please submit contributions for the next issue by February 15, 1992 to:

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FIRST CLASS
