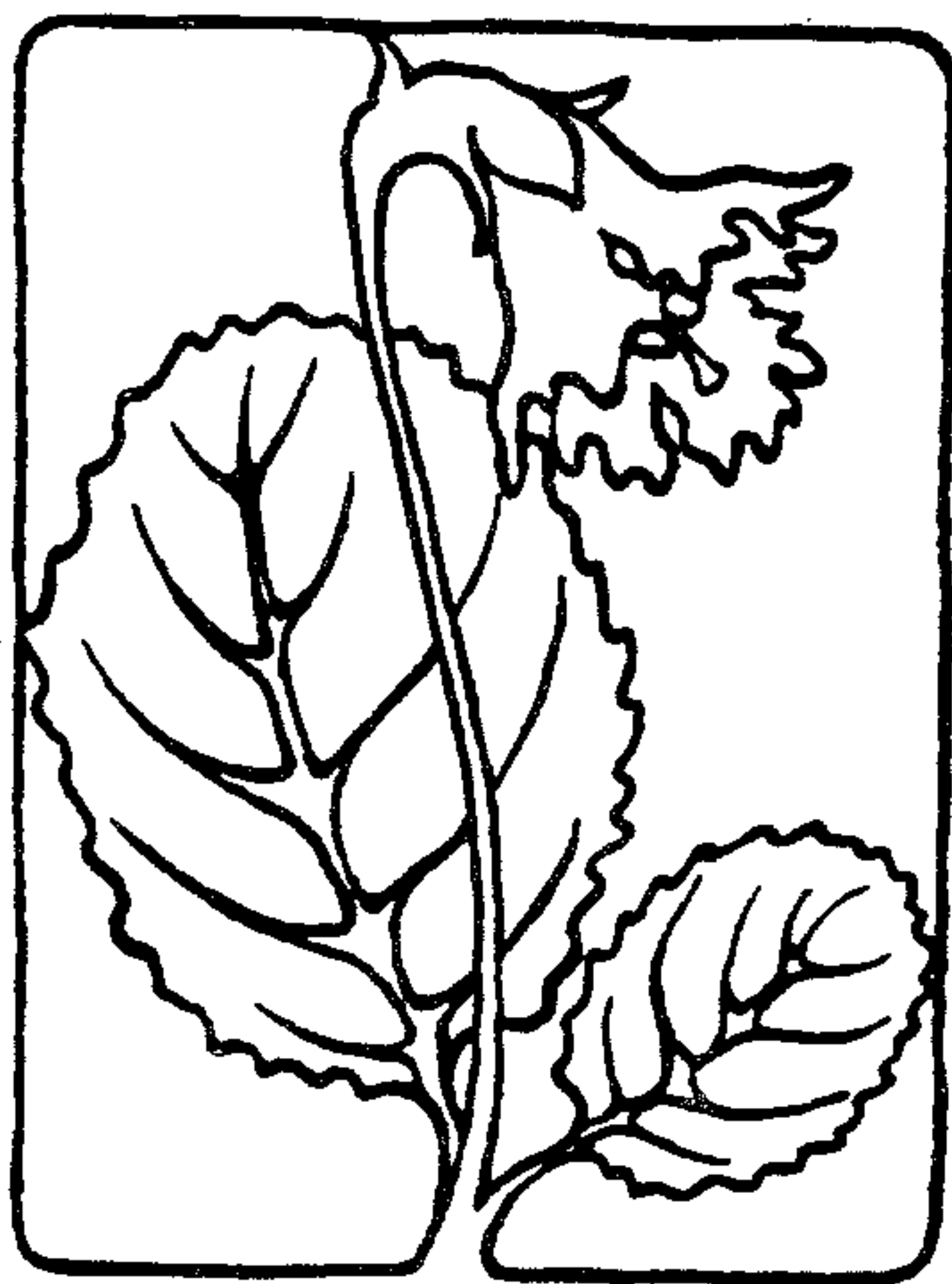


SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

SUMMER 1993



ELTON and ALINE HANSENS
Editors

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

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FROM THE PRESIDENT DOROTHY RATHMANN

You have in your hands the first issue of SHORTIA produced by our new editorial team of Elton and Aline Hansens. They are continuing a record of service to the Club going back more than a decade. Their enthusiasm while putting this issue together has been infectious and heartwarming. I'm sure they are looking forward to having your comments, suggestions for articles and, hopefully, an offer to write occasionally for SHORTIA. Thanks, Elton and Aline!

Elsewhere in this issue is the list of committee members for this year. Involvement of so many members is one of the reasons this Club is so special. My thanks to all of you!

We got off to a slow start with five of the first six field trips cancelled because of bad weather or damaged trails. Since then we've had a beautiful spring with some spectacular displays of wildflowers. As you know, recorders keep a list of wildflowers in bloom on each outing. These records are invaluable in helping plan schedules, are used by leaders scouting the trail prior to a field trip, and simplify the recorder's task during the trip. During the past few years, a copy of the plant list has been given to everyone on an outing. I'm not planning a formal survey but I would like to know how you use these lists. Do they help you learn the names of the plants? Do you file the list for reference prior to your next trip to the area? Should we continue to distribute them? Let me know as we are walking the trails together.

The Program Committee has been working on the Schedule for July 1993 through January 1994. As usual it looks as though we'll have interesting outings with an "overnight" or two, and a light schedule in November and December. Look for the Schedule in your mailbox about mid-June.

A LETTER FROM RUBY PHARR

On March 14, 1993 Ruby Pharr wrote to Dick Smith: "Thank you so much for remembering me and sending me the 20th Anniversary report of the Botanical Club. It brought back warm memories of the many happy contacts I had with the club and its members over the years. I think it is a wonderful organization and wish I was close enough to be an active member. Please give my regards to the club. Best wishes!" (111 York St. , Morgantown, NC)

GETTING TO KNOW YOU ALINE HANSENS

***Bunn, Dorothy:** Box 263, Balsam, NC 28707 (704 456 7772); winter 1175 Hermosa Ave., Bartow, FL 33830. A part time resident, Dot enjoys the outdoors and flowers very much and looks forward to WCBC trips whenever possible.



Carter, Robert & Marian: Marian is originally from England and Robert from NJ. They now live in their cabin off 64E while their home is being built on Shumont Mt. Both are nature lovers. For 10 yrs. Marian was in a botanical club in Canandaigua, NY.

***Conway, Rachel M.:** 211 Aldersgate Circle, Asheville, NC 28803 (704 274 1414). Rachel and her late husband moved from the NY area to H'ville, eventually settling at Givens Estates. She is a busy, active person with an avid interest in nature -- an interest cultivated from childhood.

Harris, Mary Helen: From April to November, Mary Helen is often in the mountains she learned to love many years ago when she brought her family camping. She has an avid interest in flowers and other plants and learned of WCBC from friends.

***Hart, Tom & Beth:** 27 Waxwing Way, H'ville, NC 28792 (693 0457). Moved here from Ohio 2½ yrs. ago and are now comfortably settled in Carolina Village. Beth has a great interest in flowers and trees and Tom enjoys hiking. WCBC member Joy Johnson is Beth's sister.

***Heavner, Julia:** 935 Greenwood Dr., H'ville, NC 28739 (697 7136). Comes from near Pittsburgh. Raised in a nature oriented family, she has a real love for flowers and the outdoors.

Mahan, Hal & Laura: Originally from Ohio, they came to Asheville a year ago. Last June they opened their shop, The Complete Naturalist. Laura has an MS in botany from UNC Charlotte, where she did plant surveys with Elisabeth Feil. Hal has a PhD in ornithology. They have worked in several museums across the country and have led trips abroad.

Shade, Sarah: Originally from TN. Now in Fletcher she cares for a large garden including fruit trees and wild flowers. Her love of wild flowers drew her to WCBC.

Strayer, Lucie & Charles R. Colmant: Lucie was born in Holland and educated in Switzerland and England. Intensely interested in ecology and nature preserves, she has spent many years in service with environmental organizations.

* These new members joined after the 1993 membership list went to press. Be sure to add them to your copy.

LITTLE GEMS - FUN TO KNOW.....MILLIE PEARSON

We sometimes overlook a wealth of interesting plants with our attitude that "it's just a weed". The common dandelion, (Taraxacum officinale) is one weed we may want to look at a bit closer.

The dandelion is a perennial herb with a short stem that is hidden beneath a basal rosette of deeply toothed leaves. It has slender stalks that are hollow and contain a milky sap. Each stalk bears a head of very small, bright yellow, tightly packed ray-like flowers. Flower heads open wide in the morning and close in the evening. When the tiny flowers fade each fertile flower forms a seed. The downy white balls we know so well are a mass of fruits (seeds), each with its own little parachute that is carried away on the wind. A large amount of money is spent to eradicate this plant from lawns and gardens.

We humans also spend much on diet supplements which the dandelion could easily furnish for it is an excellent source of potassium and calcium and is the best known source of vitamin A out of all the green vegetables. Many country people eat dandelions every spring with an avidity akin to a religious rite.

In spite of all efforts to rid our lawns of this "weed", this cheery plant has held its own, producing many seeds and distributing them far and wide. Dandelions were brought to the New World from Europe. Native Americans made good use of them, making a tea from roots and leaves for use as a tonic and for heartburn. The bright sunshine yellow of dandelions makes them a thing of real beauty along roadsides (and in my grassy plot).

MY FRIEND, DAN..... BILL VERDUIN

My good friend Dan D. Lion is one smart fella. He's a real survivor, too; he's got offspring all over the place. Takes brains, he says, takes real brains to succeed. You say no plant has brains? Well, you just take a close look at Dan and tell me how he does it if it isn't brains.

Go out along the roadside or in a field (not in your lawn--you won't find any in your lawn) and really take a close look. See those beautiful yellow blooms standing up straight where all the bees and flies and such critters can see and home in on the bloom. Just what he needs (if you don't know why, ask your mother to tell you about the bees and the flowers). But now when the bees have done their thing, it's going to take several days for the seed to develop and he sure doesn't want to be stuck 6 inches up in the air where every deer, sheep, or buffalo can chomp his head off. So, using his good brains, he devises a clever solution. He carefully bends the stem right at the base so that it lies down parallel to the earth -- looks like he sorta laid down to rest a while out of reach while those seeds develop.

But he wasn't snoozing -- actually, he was worrying about how all those seeds with their built in flying machines were going to get launched in a strong wind when they got ripe. His good brains figured that out, too. Just as the seeds ripened he straightened out that lazy stem and gave it a good shot of hormones. All of a sudden that launching pad was on a stem 3 or even 5 inches above where the flower had been, ready for any accomodating breeze to cause the Great Dispersal. Pretty smart fella, Dan. Don't you agree?

The field trip season got off to a slow start. The Hardy Souls hike in February, the FENCE and Pearson's Falls trips in March and the Cosby and Oconee Station trips in April were cancelled. Cosby was rescheduled for April 26 and was held successfully in spite of rain threatening clouds the entire day. The weather definitely has not been cooperative. The very cool spring with lots of rain, the BLIZZARD of March 13-14, and cloudy weather delayed the flowering of plants and trees for about two weeks. On April 30 at Horse Cove we still saw bloodroot in flower but showy orchis and most of the other flowers were still in bud. Here's to a more normal summer and fall season!

My friend, Gisela Hennig, and I stayed over at Cosby on April 26 to explore other trails from the campground. We found a spectacular wild flower slope at Sutton Ridge 1.5 mi. in on the Lower Mt. Cammerer Trail. Here we saw all the species that were seen on the Cosby Nature Trail plus many more. The only exception was the rare Fraser's sedge. This slope was covered with blossoming large-flowered bellwort, yellow mandarin, wild geranium, early meadow rue, blue cohosh, Canada violet, golden Alexanders, mitrewort, and several species of trillium. Black cohosh, May apple and waterleaf were also abundant, but not in blossom. The lower end of the wild flower slope was graced with a beautiful cascading waterfall. We'll try to get this on next year's schedule!

The Gardens of the Triad trip April 13-15 was blessed with beautiful weather, good organization and not so blessed traffic! We proceeded to Raleigh and the Arboretum of N C State University. It's mission is the selection of superior landscape plants for use in the state. Formal plant beds display different species (native and exotic) of trees and shrubs. As a wild flower enthusiast and lazy gardener (plant it and forget it!) this was not as interesting to me as the other stops. The hard working gardeners in the group busily copied species and variety names so they could try them in their gardens.

The next day we proceeded to the Sarah P. Duke Gardens at Duke University in Durham where Larry T. Daniel, Associate Director of the Gardens and an assistant were our guides. The 55 acres are divided into three parts each in a beautiful setting - the Bloomquist Garden of Native Plants (my favorite), the Asiatic Arboretum which is devoted to trees and shrubs of the Far East and shows how these are related to the native flora of the eastern U.S. and the absolutely dazzling formal Terraces designed by American landscape architect, Ellen Shipman. The Terraces were ablaze with tulips, pansies, flowering cherry and crab-apple trees. From a wisteria-covered pergola at the summit of the Terraces one can descend past a series of fountains to an irregularly shaped fishpond at the base. This was the setting for lunches complete with a white-gowned bride being photographed for her wedding album.

The native plant garden of 850 species and varieties is displayed in a dramatic woodland setting. The species planted are native to the South from southeastern Virginia to eastern Texas. At the bog we saw some of the 18 species of sphagnum moss and several species of Sarracenia that are native to the Carolinas. We saw many familiar flowers plus an unusual and beautiful double-flowering bloodroot and Trillium decumbens, a trailing trillium similar to our familiar maroon Trillium cuneatum.

After lunch we drove to the Totten Center of the N C Botanical Gardens at Chapel Hill where Charlotte Jones-Roe (wife of Chuck Roe, former Natural Heritage Director) talked to us about the Garden and future plans. An interesting 1½ hours was spent wandering through the native wild flower garden and the extensive herb garden. At 3:00 pm Charlotte escorted the caravan to the 367 acre Mason Farm Biological Reserve. This is an area along a stream which is to be kept in its natural state and is available by special permit to researchers, classes, groups and the general public.

On Thursday morning Sandra Ladendorf's private garden in Chapel Hill was visited. Trails through the woods had plantings of both wild and cultivated flowers. The many varieties of primroses used were especially beautiful and interesting.

A good time was had by all!

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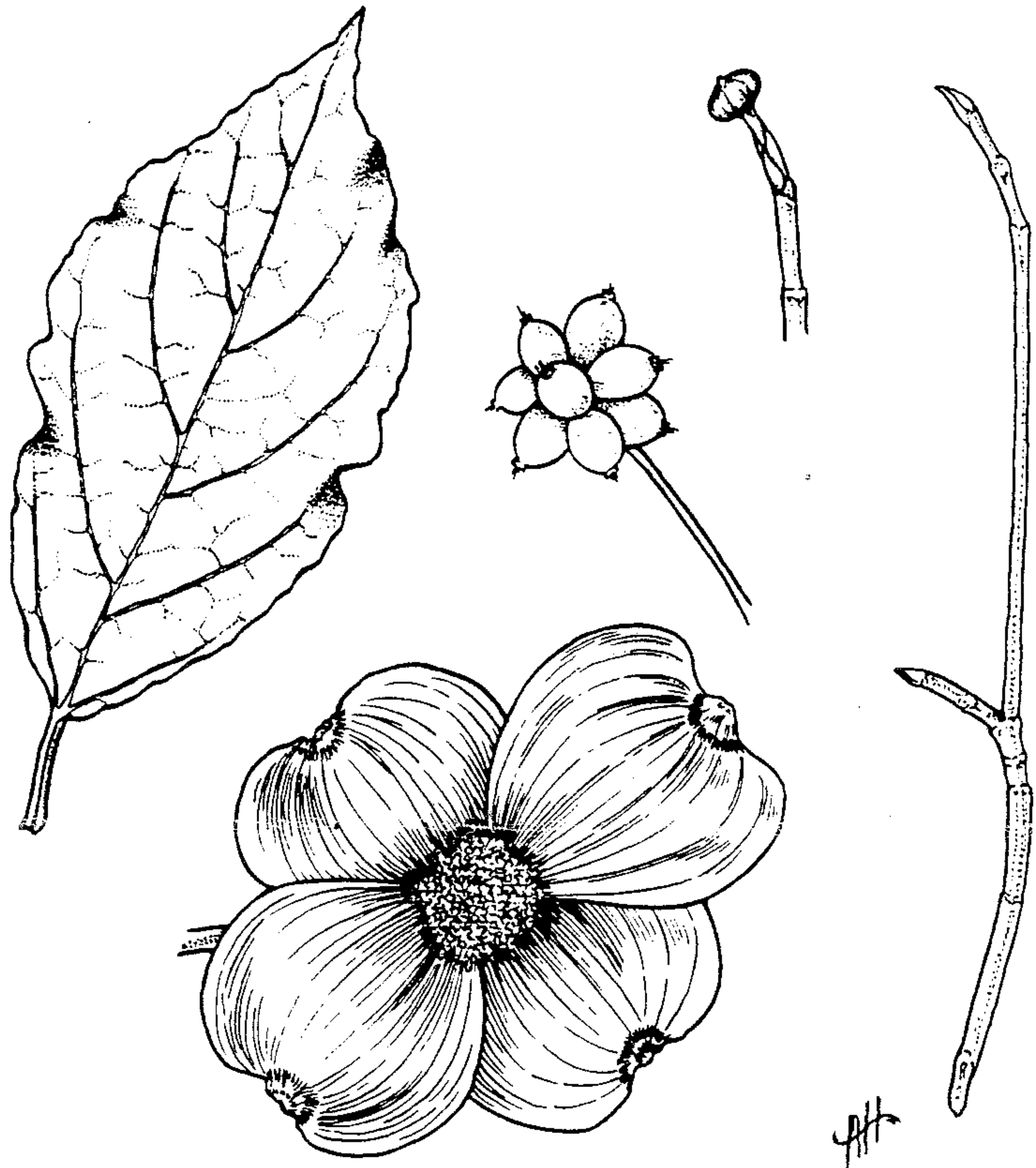
And, of course, there's Louise Foresman as Historian (who also takes attendance at meetings and outings), and Elton and Aline Hansens as Editors of SHORTIA. Names of leaders and speakers and committees for the annual meeting and picnics appear in the Schedule. The Nominating Committee will be announced later in the year.

FOREST TREES

.....ALINE HANSENS

A member of the Family Cornaceae the flowering dogwood, Cornus florida, is one of America's finest native trees and is the State tree of N.C. and Virginia. Truly a four-seasons tree---in the spring it decorates hillsides, woods, and yards, with a spectacular display of showy white petal-like bracts, a most welcome and eagerly awaited sign of a fresh, new growing season; in the summer it's leaves have a rich green luster; in the fall a grand finale occurs when sprays of red and yellow leaves and clusters of scarlet berries decorate the tree; in winter the berries that escape the squirrels and birds cling to the twigs, adding a touch of color in the drab cold months. This spring, I'm sure you'll agree, the dogwood gave us a superb show!

FLOWERING DOGWOOD



Unfortunately this lovely tree is now threatened by dogwood anthracnose, Discula sp., a newly identified fungus disease for which, as yet, there is no suitable control. Introduced in 1987, it is gradually killing dogwoods. Trees in wooded sites or on the edge of a woods are particularly susceptible. The fungus produces masses of spores presumably spread by birds or splashing rain. Initial symptoms are medium large purple-bordered leaf spots and scorched tan blotches that may enlarge and kill the leaf. Affected leaves often cling to the stems after leaf drop in the fall. The fungus infects twigs and grows down a limb and infects the main stem forming cankers which may eventually kill the tree. More information on this and other dogwood diseases can be obtained from the Agricultural Extension Service located in Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC.

Cornus florida rarely grows above 3,000 ft. while its close relative, Cornus alternifolia, the alternate-leaved or blue dogwood is more often found at higher elevations in the NC mountains. Of the fifteen or more species of dogwood that occur in North America this is the only one with alternate leaves. It blooms in May or June after its leaves appear and is not showy. Its small white flowers are borne on slender pedicels in broad flattish clusters and the fruit is a blue-black berry.

Cornus florida is generally a small bushy tree 15 to 30 feet high with opposite leaves and very small, greenish, 4-petal flowers surrounded by four large white bracts. The wood of this tree is used for making textile shuttles, bobbins and engravers blocks. The bark, if chewed, is bitter and astringent and, be it fact or fiction, is said to furnish a substitute for quinine, while the powdered bark is supposed to make good toothpaste.

English lore claims the name dogwood comes from the fact that a decoction of the bark of Cornus sanguinea was used to wash mangy dogs.

DOGWOOD SNOW

*These oldest hills, that lay all winter long
Quiet beneath a patchwork quilt of snow
And balsam bough and blasted chestnut prong,
Laurel and rhododendron's darker glow,
Are waking now to all the urge of spring
And burning with a velvet violence
That smokes the thin blue air and makes it sting,
Flaming with life invisible but dense.*

*And yet, as if these summer seeking hills
Remembered lessons from their ice-locked sleep,
They sift a dogwood snow that clouds and spills,
And spreads in white pagodas soft and deep,
To lie between galax and fiddle fern:
Wisdom that seasons teach and mountains learn.*

*Francis Pledger Hulme
(native North Carolinian)*

LOOK AGAIN !

Some of our most frustrating wildflower species are those bearing umbels of small yellow flowers and belonging to two genera in the Carrot Family (Apiaceae): Zizia, or Golden Alexanders, and Thaspium, known as Meadow Parsnips. Not only are there similar species within each genus, but some Zizias have a closer resemblance to certain Thaspiums than to others in their own genus, and vice versa.

Fortunately, all Zizias can be distinguished by the fact that the central floret in each umbellet is sessile, while in Thaspium all are stalked. This should suffice to separate Z. aptera and T. trifoliatum, both of which usually have long-stalked heart-shaped basal leaves and compound cauline leaves. (Typically, the latter has dark purple flowers, but the yellow-flowered var. flavum is even more common.

Three others normally have all of their leaves divided into three or more leaflets. T. barbinode is unique in having very small, stiff hairs at each of the upper nodes. These are lacking in Z. aurea (which has finely toothed foliage and umbels consisting of at least 10 primary rays) and Z. trifoliata (in which the leaflets are coarsely toothed and the rays are 10 or fewer).

A rarer species, T. pinnatifidum, cannot be mistaken for any of these, as its leaves are decomposed with the ultimate divisions no more than 1/8" wide, and the flowers are cream-colored.



T. TRIFOLIATUM

Dick Smith

S H O R T I A

Vol. XV, No. 2.

Summer 1993

A quarterly publication of the WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

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Please submit contributions (articles, notes, letters to the editor, etc.)
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