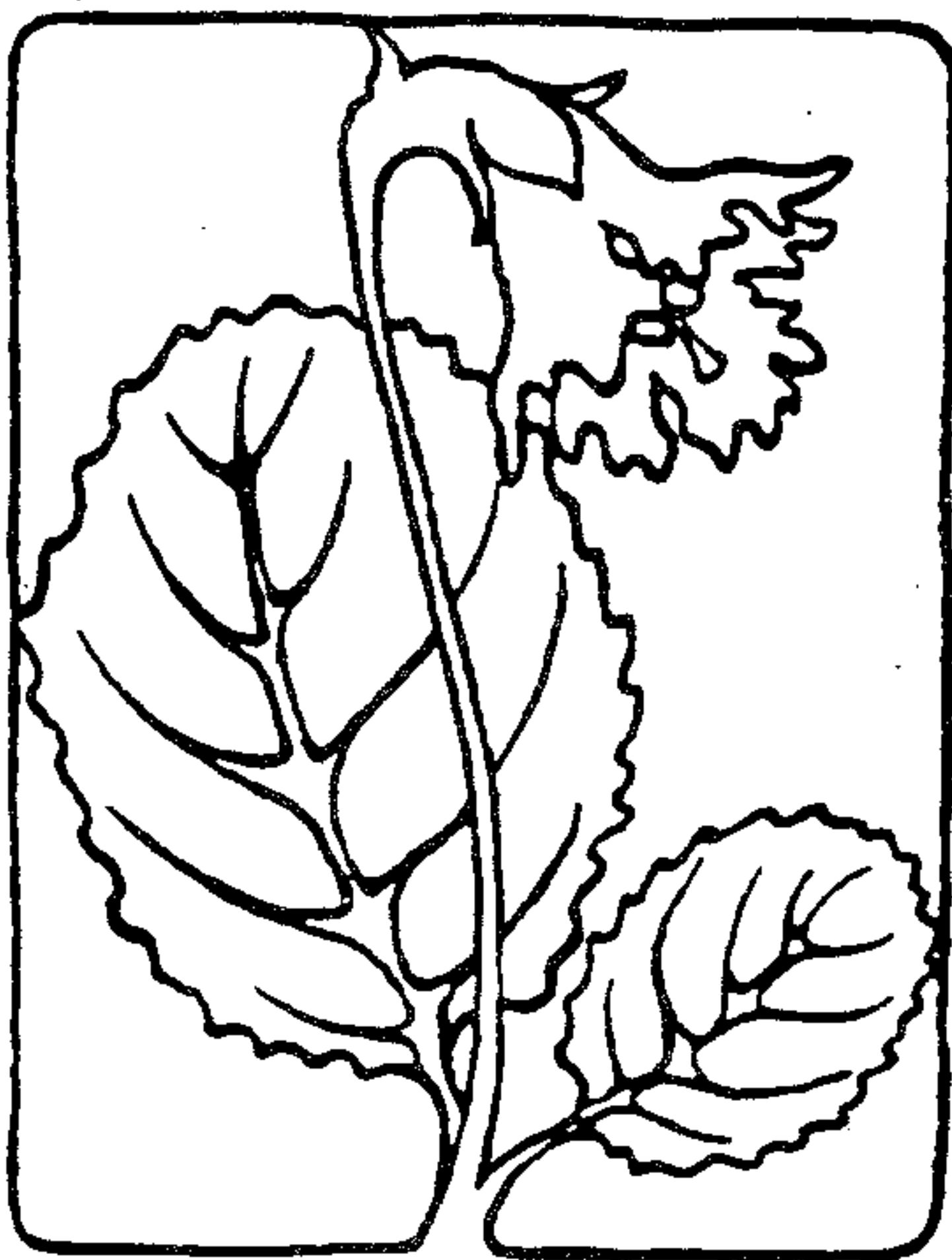


SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

SUMMER 1995



ELTON and ALINE HANSENS
Editors

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

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FROM THE PRESIDENT.....DON HERRMAN

With this copy of SHORTIA you are receiving the WCBC program through January 1996. As I write this, the program is beginning to shape up and we are calling members to serve as leaders, assistant leaders, and recorders, and others to present winter programs. Your happy, positive response will be appreciated. Already several members have volunteered to present programs for the winter months.

On recent outings it has been good to see the increased use of walking sticks. Not only are they good safety items but also they are very useful in pointing out plants to other members. Never underestimate the power of the walking stick---nor the power of an eighteen wheeler.

As we are driving as a caravan on the highways let us drive with our lights on and let us remember that there are other vehicles on the road. Please keep adequate space between cars, allowing for easy passing, Also maintain adequate speed (observing the speed limit) so that our last driver does not have to fear being rear-ended. This is not a criticism of our drivers but a reminder that being in an uncomfortable situation on the road is no fun.

Now let me give thanks for the weeds that bloom into wildflowers in my meadow and so-called yard. I hear the cry "Do not mow the violets" as I crank up the mower. This means I do not have much to mow---So let us enjoy the beautiful spring and endless summer.

Additions to 1995 Membership List.

Butenhof, Ed & Barbara 201 Red Oak Dr., 28739 697-4773.

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Kent, Ann 3236 Heritage Circle 28739 697-6052

Leech, Bruce & Frances, 265 White Ashe Circle 28739 667-1110.

Sagar, Mimi P.O. Box 816 Sagar Rd., Rosman 28772.

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RECORDER'S REPORT - FEBRUARY TO MAY 1995.....ERIKA S. PARMİ

Spring season was exciting with no cancellations of field trips. On March 10 Millie Pearson's woods was substituted for the Paris Mt., SC trip due to the lack of flowers.

Four new trails visited this spring were all winners!--South Pacolet River on April 3, Givens Estates on April 17, Sutton Ridge on May 1 and Chandler Preserve on May 12. At South Pacolet River there were several trees of note and two species of plants were abundant--the unusual round-leaf ragwort (Senecio obovatus) and little sweet Betsy (Trillium cuneatum).

Givens Estates produced a surprising 39 species, among them large-flowered trillium (Trillium grandiflorum), wild columbine (Aquilegia canadensis), dwarf crested iris (Iris cristata) and yellow mandarin (Disporum lanuginosum). A few of the rare nodding mandarin (Disporum maculatum) also were found.

Sutton Ridge Trail at Cosby campground 9 people saw 49 species in bloom. Everyone was impressed with 50+ showy orchis (Galearis spectabilis) along the 1.5 mile trail. Several species of trillium also were abundant. Unfortunately the spectacular bloom at the end of the trail had already gone by. We were pleased to see a dozen one-flowered cancerroot (Orobanche uniflora) blooming.

Eva Russell Chandler Preserve near Caesar's Head presented us with unusual plants which I had never seen. On or beside the open rock face over which Slickum Creek tumbles for approximately 100 feet, we saw the rare divided-leaved groundsel (Senecio millefolium), rare mountain sweet pitcher plant (Sarracenia jonesii), sandwort (Arenaria uniflora), anglepod (Matelea carolinensis)--a beautiful vine with large opposite oval leaves and clusters of maroon flowers--and Phlox amoena. Three shrubs were of special interest: Virginia willow (Itea virginica), sparkleberry (Vaccinium arboreum) and beauty-berry (Callicarpa americana). Woolly lip fern and resurrection fern were among 8 species of ferns identified. Needle grass (Stipa avenacea) attracted attention.

The overnight trip April 19-21 to Snowbird Mountain Lodge near the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest was enjoyed by 19 members. On the first day we lunched at the Kilmer picnic area and spent the afternoon along the Kilmer Trail. This trail is never a disappointment. It was a patchwork quilt of color--lavender phlox, the maroon of little sweet Betsy and the white of Canada violet. The gigantic tulip, hemlock and beech trees never fail to impress me. Some of the fallen giants had become nurse logs to gardens of wild flowers and seedling shrubs and trees. Some plants had unusual color variations--a white Phlox, pale yellow and cream Trillium erectum, which is usually red or white, and a white form of Geranium maculatum.

The next morning we botanized along Maple Spring road. After a delicious lunch each of us did his/her own thing. Some of us birded, others took a nap, chatted, enjoyed the mountain view from the deck, or went off to explore a trail. The grand show continued both evenings -- the first one Elton Hansens entertained with slides of flowers of the Smokies --- the second night Millie Blaha showed slides of our backyard birds and butterflies.

On the way home some of us stopped at Stecoah Gap and walked up the switch-backs on the Appalachian Trail through a sea of Trillium grandiflorum and T. luteum. The forest floor was covered with rue anemone (Thalictrum thalictroides).

Great botanizing in the spring of 1995.

A few thoughts to some of my more botanical friends, (not that I think any of you are sitting around vegetating.) Neither am I, but the vegetation around here is sadly devoid of wild flowers. Have seen a few violets, chickweeds and one Jack. Not that I haven't been looking! I went to Zoar State Forest near Richmond and found an ideal place---an alluvial area along a pretty river where there should have been a great display---there was nothing. Saw less than a dozen violets and one small clump of wild azalea. Nice place to prowl, though, lots of big beech trees, very, very big hollies but, strangely, very few ferns. Great river to canoe on and I intend to do just that sometime soon.

I have made one great find and am excited about the prospects. The Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is about ten miles from our condo. It was started about 5 or 6 years ago and I have been watching the development every year when we visited Terry. It is now beginning to really look great. The plants, of course, are from all over the world. Sometimes I recognize the genus name.

Flowers in the city have been beautiful; lots of dogwood and azaleas in almost every yard. One city park has a spectacular azalea garden, thousands and thousands of plants. I have been impressed with the trees in the city, both in the yards and in public places.

I'm very gingerly beginning to look at the oaks and have found a whole book on nothing but Oaks! That may only confuse the matter further. If they just wouldn't hybridize. I think I'll look into chestnut oak and basket oak which are very similar.

I just found The Natural History of Wild Shrubs and Vines by Donald W. Stokes. It is fascinating--a real find. He tells a world of interesting things about the plant itself, tidbits about architecture of the flower, seed dispersal, why the name, etc. Galls and gall insects are included. The book published in 1981 may be out of print, but should be in H'ville Library. If WCBC can find a copy I suggest they buy it and present it to the library.

We are going for 3 days on the Parkway, staying at Peaks of Otter. Really looking forward to seeing honest-to-goodness wildflowers.

Best wishes to all of you, BILL

Watch SHORTIA for Changes
in the WCBC Program Schedule.

NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST of HENDERSON COUNTY

"Place makes people; in the end it makes everything." —John Haines

Henderson County's Biological Diversity

Henderson County stretches from Hickory Nut George in the east to Etowah in the west; from Mills River valley in the north to the Green River Gorge in the south. The recently completed natural heritage inventory of the county reported 21 different plant communities within this area. These communities range from rich cove forests and high elevation rocky summits to swamp forests and southern Appalachian bogs. Henderson County's wetlands alone exhibit more plant community diversity than those of any other region in western North Carolina.

This diversity is the natural and cultural heritage of our county.

This is what the first inhabitants and early settlers found when they came to farm in the Mills River valley. This is what has attracted businesses, tourists and retirees to the county. The plant communities contribute to our clean air and water, especially the wetlands which filter out pollutants, recharge underground water tables, and prevent flooding.



Are We Losing Our Natural Heritage?

As we look around the county today, we know the answer is "yes." Orchards and farmlands are being sold for development; trees are being cleared for new housing units; floodplains and wetlands are being filled; scenic views and open space are disappearing.

Concerned with this loss and in an effort to balance our economic growth with conservation of the natural areas in our county, a group of concerned citizens has formed the **NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST OF HENDERSON COUNTY, a land trust.**



What is a Land Trust?

A land trust is a private, nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable corporation that uses a variety of mechanisms to protect land resources. For the landowner, there are flexible methods of land protection with the added incentive of tax benefits.

The most common types of land targeted for protection by land trusts are wildlife habitat and natural areas, open space, and recreational land. The preservation of farmland is likewise a strong emphasis of many land trusts.

WE DO HOPE THE WILD FLOWERS
APPRECIATE HOW ARDENTLY WE LOVE THEM



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WHO FEEDS WCBC PLANT LISTS TO HORSES ON SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN ?

ASK ALINE HANSENS !!

HOW THE SEARCH FOR ONE PLANT LED TO A NEW DISCOVERY MILLIE BLAHA
OR, AN ADVENTURE IN SEEING

It was a misting afternoon on November 17, 1993. Our destination was the oak woods area of Jackson Park. Anne Ulinski and I went there to look for dittany (*Cunila origanoides*), a plant which we had seen in this area a number of years earlier. Not only did we find the original plant that we were looking for, but there were at least a half a dozen more plants scattered in the area.

Down the slope, in the woods, was a plant with lemon-yellow leaves. It was a plant which I had never seen before. The stem was square and very hairy. The plant had a fragrance. There were no flowers on it but there were seeds.

At home, my search for identification of this plant began with the Mint Family. Not all square-stemmed plants are Mints but this plant had an odor. In the VASCULAR FLORA of the CAROLINAS (the botanist's bible), no plant description nor any plant in the key in the Mint Family (LAMIACEAE), matched this plant.

Since Grimm's ILLUSTRATED BOOK OF WILDFLOWERS AND SHRUBS depicts plants by families and has excellent line drawings, I thought that it might be easy to find this plant there, by looking at the drawings. This plant was not in Grimm!

My next resource was Gleason's NEW BRITTON AND BROWN ILLUSTRATED FLORA which also has excellent line drawings. If I did not have any success in keying out this plant, at least I could look at the drawings and try to find a plant that looked like this mystery plant. There, on page 176 of volume 3, was the plant - WILD MARJORAM (*Origanum vulgare*)! The description indicated that this plant is a native of Europe, introduced in fields and roadsides, especially on calcareous soil, from Massachusetts to Ontario and in North Carolina. However, the plant we found was growing in the woods of North Carolina. So back to the index in Radford. The plant name was there (on page 896). It was in the last sentence at the end of the characteristics for the LAMIACEAE FAMILY which stated: "Hyssopus officinalis and Origanum vulgare have been attributed to North Carolina but no specimens have been seen". Because Radford was published in 1968, I telephoned the Natural Heritage Program in Raleigh to see if there was any record of the plant having been seen since then. I learned that the Natural Heritage group keeps a list only of those plants which are native to North Carolina. It had no record of *Origanum*.

Since I now knew what the plant was, I went to Newcomb's WILDFLOWER GUIDE to key out the plant. It was not in the key, but it was in the index which led me to pages 80-81. Newcomb did not give the plant's range (one of the shortcomings of Newcomb). It indicated that the *Origanum* grew in fields and roadsides. But this plant was growing in the woods!

It does not seem possible that this plant species was purposefully planted in Jackson Park because there were several other groups of this plant, six or more feet apart, growing under trees.

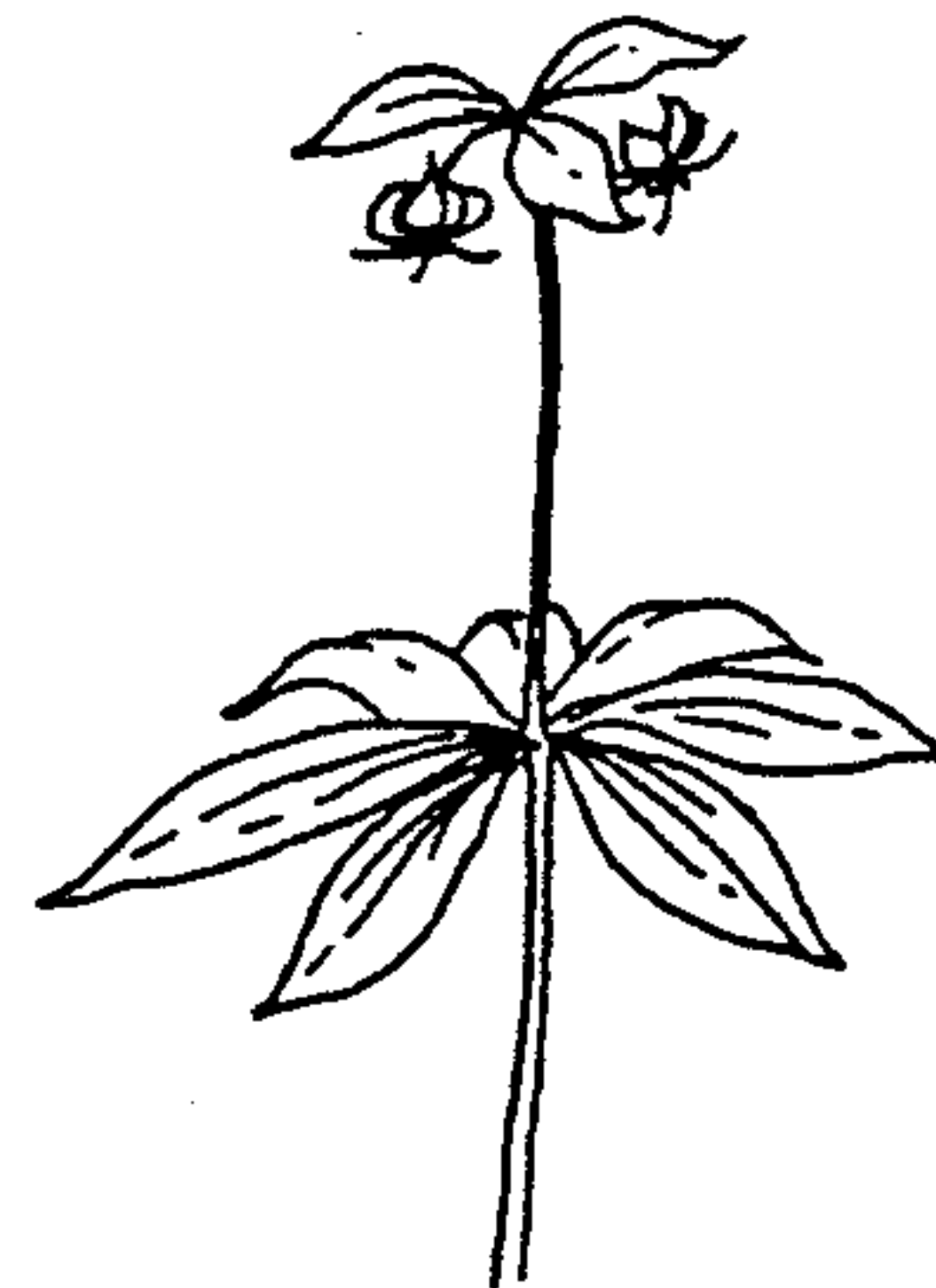
Discovering a plant which I have never seen before always is exciting. Botany is a wonderful hobby because a lifetime is not long enough to see all the plants one would like to see! And so, there always are discoveries to be made.

Perhaps, some day, this discovery will be recorded in a revised edition of Radford!

LOOK AGAIN !

The number of wildflowers having whorled leaves is small enough for us to be able to identify many of them, at least as to genus, even in the absence of flowers. Some examples are the Trilliums, Bedstraws and Lilies.

A few, however, are hard to differentiate, and are worth examining. One is Indian Cucumber Root (Medeola virginiana), which has a whorl of 5 to 9 oblanceolate leaves. In mature, flowering plants this is overtopped by a small whorl which bears 3 leaves and a few-flowered umbel, but this will be absent in many individuals.

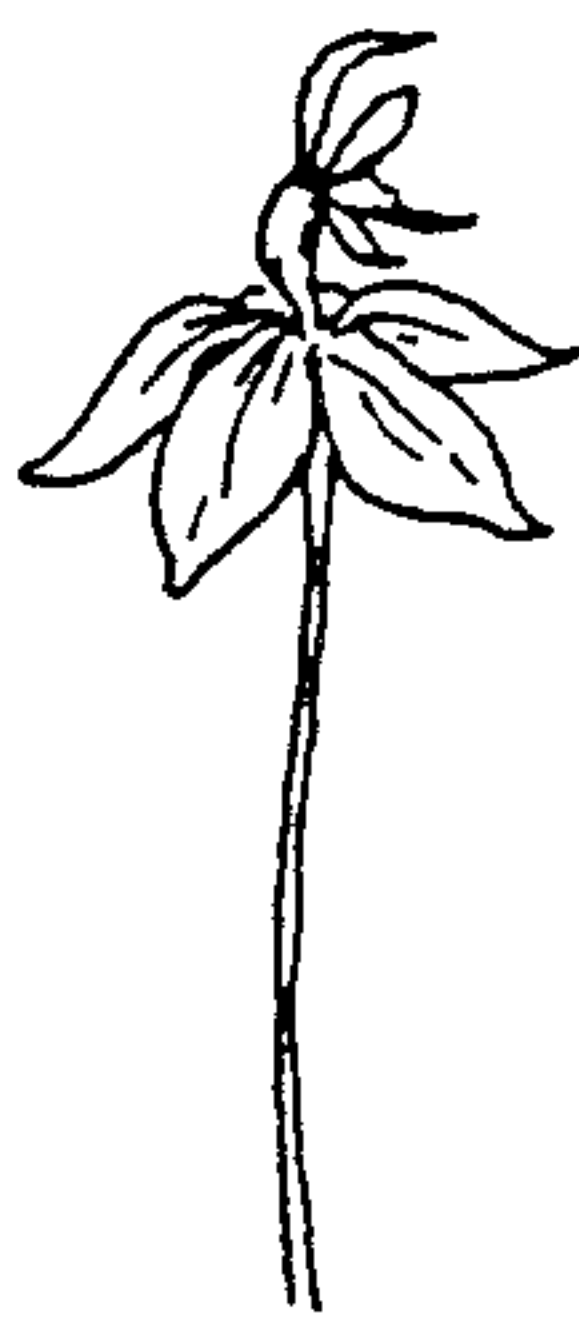


MEDEOLA VIRGINIANA

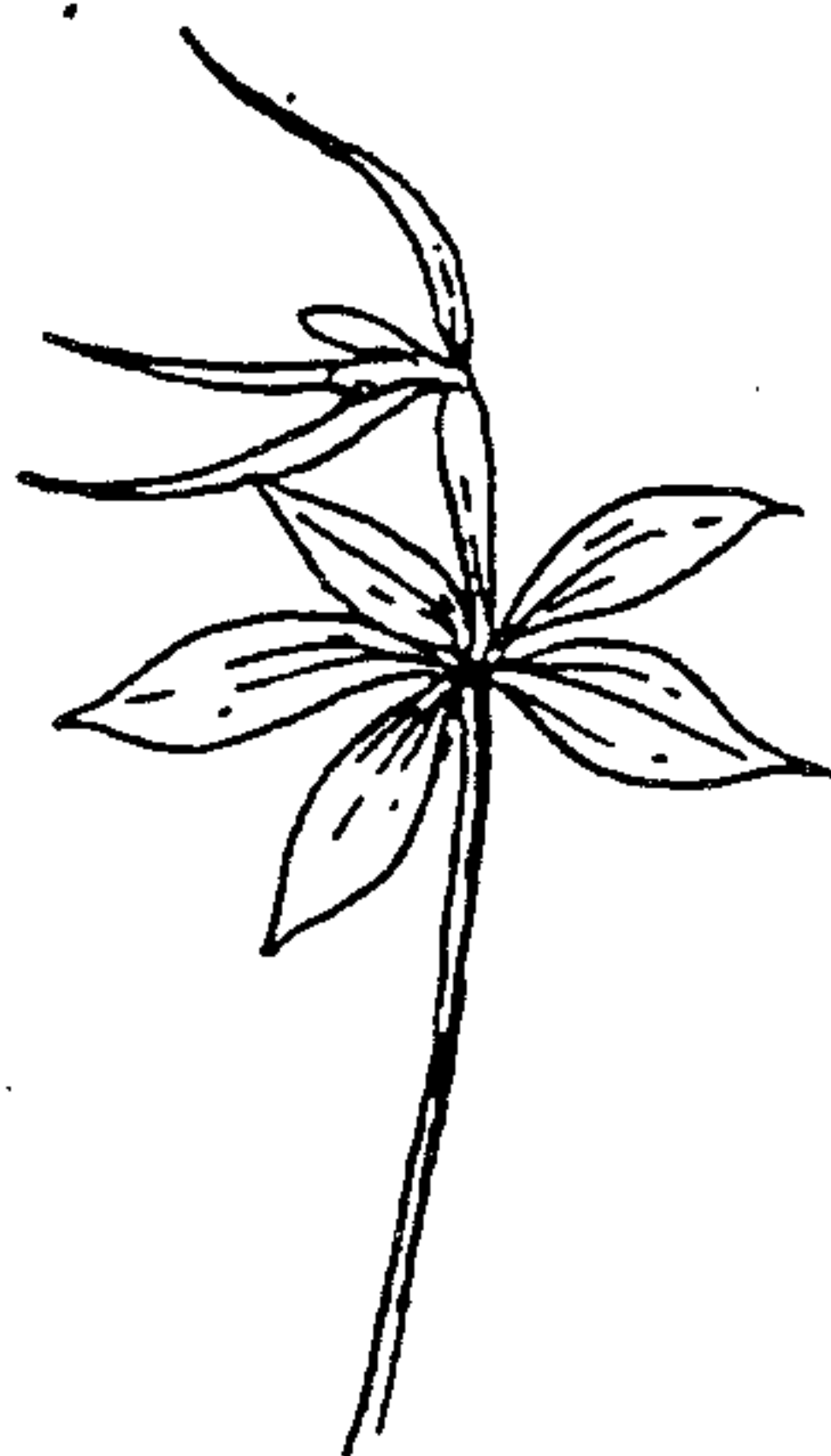
Since Medeola is a monotypic genus we will find no look-alikes among its relatives, but Isotria, in the Orchid Family, fills this gap very nicely. In fact, Whorled Pogonia (I. verticillata), which always has 5 leaves, bears an uncanny resemblance to Medeola when neither is in bloom; however, it helps to know that the stem is hollow in Isotria, solid in Medeola.

The comparative scarcity of the Whorled Pogonias makes it worthwhile to key out such plants carefully, and especially to distinguish the extremely rare I. medeoloides if you should be

fortunate enough to find it. This is the smaller of the two species in every respect, but most noticeably in the sepals, which are under 1" but at least twice as long in I. verticillata. Also, the plant is pale green and the leaves tend to droop.



ISOTRIA MEDEOLOIDES



I. VERTICILLATA

Dick Smith

S H O R T I A

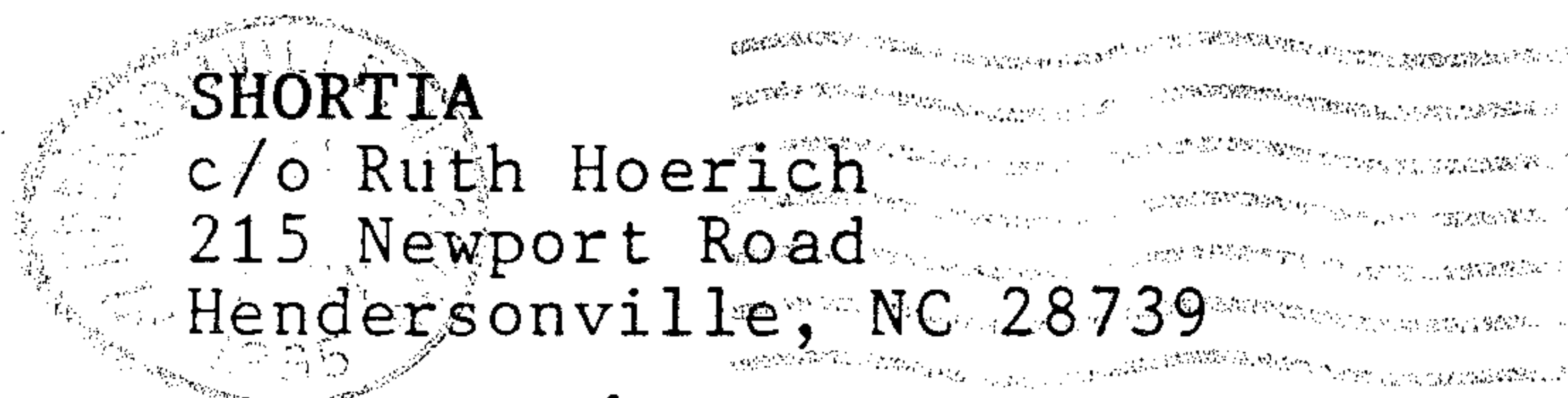
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Please submit contributions (articles, Letters to the Editors, notes, etc.) for the next issue by August 10 to Elton J Hansens, 125 Far Horizons Lane, Asheville, NC 28803. (704) 277-7486.



FIRST CLASS

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