SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

FALL 2008

Shortia galacifolia

Oconee Bells
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

President  Juanita Lambert
Vice President  Francis Jones
Secretary  Cynthia McCurdy
Treasurer  Alan Graham

From the President ...............................................................Juanita Lambert

The Club begins its 36th year with a new slate of officers. We are all fairly new members, with differing backdrops, but with a common interest in the flora of the Southern Appalachians. I introduce this new team to you.

Juanita Lambert, President  I am originally from New Jersey. I spent the bulk of my 34 year career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, DC, where I evaluated food aid programs during the last half dozen years. I have always been interested in gardening, plants and trees, especially the parts of a flower which I learned in junior high school. I have learned much botanically from the members, not only finding and identifying the plants on our property but co-leading and recording field trips. I was the Board Secretary for six years and have represented the Club as part of the “Bullington Botanical Bunch”.

Frances Jones, Vice President  Francis retired to North Carolina two years ago from Washington, D.C. after 28 years working for the State Department as a Foreign Service Officer. She says “plants were not part of my life in all those years. Moving to this beautiful area and suddenly having three acres of land encouraged me to explore my surroundings and learn the names of plants and how they grow.”  She joined the Botanical Club, became a Master Gardener, and discovered she could fulfill her volunteer obligations by working at Bullington where she joined the “Bullington Botanical Bunch” in developing the Native Woodland Garden.

Cynthia McCurdy, Secretary  Cynthia came to North Carolina from Illinois where she says “in my previous life I was an office manager for medical practices.”  She became interested in Botany when she was 13 years old and had to make a leaf collection for school. To meet her science requirements in college, she took Botany classes. Her Botany department sponsored a five-day field trip to the Smoky Mountains, and she says she has never forgotten that learning experience. Cynthia has acted as recorder for club field trips, and recommends being the recorder as a way to become more familiar with the various flowers.

Alan Graham, Treasurer  Born and raised in Dayton, Ohio, Alan writes that he bailed out to Atlanta in 1967 to avoid Ohio weather.  As a mechanical engineer by training, he spent the last 30 years of his career in technical sales. He moved to Brevard in 2004 and was interested in the variety of plant life. He joined Master Gardeners to learn more, but found their plant identification was not robust enough and moved on to the Botanical Club. He participates in most of the field trips and says he has learned lots and lots, but still has a long way to go.

- President’s message continued on page 4

Cover: The flower on the cover is Shortia galacifolia, Oconee Bells. Our newsletter is named for this southern endemic which is now rare in the wild.
Member News

New Members

Elaine Blake, Pisgah Forest. Elaine grew up in Kansas and Chicago. When she moved to Nashville, Tennessee, she was thrilled with all of the plants and flowers and developed a native garden. Now she lives in Pisgah Forest and wants to learn about the N.C. native plants and develop a garden here.

Jackie Fitts, Tuscaloosa, Al. Jackie lived in the Atlanta area when she became interested in native plants. She and Botany Club member, Barbara Allen, were part of the group that founded the Georgia Native Plant Society. Jackie lives on Balsam Mountain in the summer and enjoys our Botany Club.

Stephanie Gordon, Hendersonville. Stephanie is originally from East Tennessee where her great grandmother taught her about flowers and their names. She moved to Hendersonville 19 years ago and worked at the Carl Sandburg Home until ten years ago taking care of their museum.

Ann Houghton, Balsam. Ann has rejoined our club. She teaches so she doesn't make it to many of our activities.

Odessa Galda, Tryon. Odessa is Millie Pearson's sister. She always bakes something for the gathering at Millie's home after our field trip to Pearson Falls.

Jean Kirkland. Jean lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She is a volunteer with the LSU Hilltop Arboretum where she does plant propagation and helps with the annual plant sale. She has a home in Laurel Park because her daughter, son-in-law and three grand daughters live in Hendersonville. Jean comes in the summer and fall.

Nancy Schuman, Asheville. Nancy Schuman was originally from the Chicago area and has also lived in Maine, California and New Mexico. She has enjoyed the wildflowers as she and her husband are hikers. Her mother had an interest in wildflowers and had a clump of shortia in her yard that Nancy now has on her Asheville property.

Jean Woods. Jean has moved from Charlotte to Brevard and rejoined our club. She has been a board member for the Catawba Lands Conservancy and led walks for them. She is the chairman of the Education Committee for the NC Native Plant Society and also monitors a section of the Appalachian Trail and Roan Mountain for four endangered species. She was our leader when the club went to see the prairie restorations near Charlotte last year.

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Any change of address, e-mail or telephone number, please inform Alan Graham, 544 Tip Top Road, Brevard, N.C. 28712. 828-884-5947  <ljgraham@citcom.net.  

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The Green River Preserve, home to a camp for gifted children and also a 3400 acre Nature Preserve with 2600 acres in conservation easement with the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, was toured for the first time. Ed Schwartzman led the walk where we saw an abundance of Yellow Lady Slippers (Cypripedium calceolus) and French Broad Heartleaf (Hexastylis rhombiformis).

The trip to Pilot Mountain was worrisome due to a controlled burn in the area in March. However the Pinkshell Azaleas (Rhododendron vaseyi) were blooming profusely. It was a perfect day and little damage was evident from the spring burn.

It was overcast when we walked the Tanbark Ridge to Bull Gap. The Whorled Pogonias (Isotria verticillata) were a notable plant. We were a little early so early bloomers, Showy Orchis (Galearis spectabilis), as well as late bloomers, Large-leaf Waterleaf Bloom (Hydrophyllum macrophyllum), were found.

The Parkway to Graybeard Mountain was closed so Frying Pan Gap Trail was substituted. This was a new trail for the club in the Frying Pan Mountain area. Notable plants included Rose Twisted Stalk (Streptopus lanceolatus v. roseus) and Painted Trillium (Trillium undulatum).

The club visited Fernhaven and was treated to a walk around the forest gardens of the Lamberts. A multitude of ferns and fern types were seen. Emphasis was given to landscape design and site requirements rather than species identification.

Another new walk, Black Balsam to Looking Glass Overlook, follows a part of the Mountain to Sea Trail that straddles the Transylvania/Haywood County lines. Notable plants included Speckled Wood Lily (Clintonia umbellulata) and species variants that are only found at higher elevations in the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

The ride to Soco Gap to Heintooga requires a long ride on the Parkway but the pale pink of the Mountain Laurel combined with the deep rose-pink of the Catawba Rhododendron and the occasional splashes of the orange Flame Azalea made the Parkway look like a picture postcard. Two seldom seen plants were the Tassel Rue (Trautvetteria carolinensis) and Devil's Paintbrush (Hieracium aurantiacum). The other exciting find was the Small Purple Fringed Orchid (Platanthera psycodes) along the road at Heintooga just where they were advertised to be.

The Southern Highlands Reserve is a property held under a conservation easement and dedicated to plants native to the southern Appalachians. The field trip was a first for us. Much of the Reserve is being "developed" to display native species. Plants of the day included Fly Poison (Amianthium muscaetoxicum) and Galax (Galax urceolata) which were found in large blooming expanses.

The Bear Pen Gap walk was led by Tom Goforth (two stream crossings!). Tom gave his interpretation of the evolution of the wood fern. The most noteworthy plant observed was the Hybrid Wood Fern (Dryopteris campyloptera x intermedia).

The stop and go field trip down Sky Valley Road was hot and dry which is usual for this walk. The signature plant for the trip was the Yellow Fringed Orchid (Platanthera ciliaris).

We returned to the Flat Laurel Creek Trail. Plants of note included Appalachian St. John's-wort (Hypericum buckleyi), Blue Ridge St. John's-wort (Hypericum mitchellianum) and Inundated Club Moss (Lycopodiella inundata).
A Rare Lily

This past March, Jim Drake received an e-mail from Henderson County property owners, Stephanie and Ken, who inquired whether a lily found growing near their house the previous summer could possibly be Gray's lily (Lilium grayi). After reviewing photographs provided by Stephanie, the possibility of Gray's lily could not be completely ruled out. Her excellent photos clearly showed a distinctively red lilium bloom at anthesis. However, due to the relatively low altitude growing area of the plants, not the usual habitat of Gray's, other possibilities were considered. From this point, anxious anticipation ensued for the flower's return the following summer to allow closer examination of the bloom.

Hope diminished in early June when no emerging sprouts were found in the usual growing spot. Last year's drought condition was felt to be the culprit. Miraculously, in late June, Stephanie found the same lily flowering in two other locations on their property. Arrangements were then made for Bonnie Arbuckle and Jim to visit the site to attempt positive identification.

Using Lilium keys from Wofford's Guide, Weakley's Flora, and Radford, Ahles and Bell's Manual, descriptions from Horn and Cathcart's Wildflowers of Tennessee, and Justice, Bell and Lindsey's Wild Flowers of North Carolina, and considering other traits such as flower color and structure and growing habitat, Bonnie and Jim concluded the specimens in question were the uncommon Lilium canadense var. editorum, the red variation of Canada lily, a rare find indeed.

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-President's Message continued from page 1

Bonnie Arbuckle and Ken Borgfeldt have agreed to head the scheduling committee, taking over from Helen Smith who has so effectively served the club as scheduler since 2001. Bonnie will conduct the meetings and Ken will handle the computer logistics for developing and disseminating the schedules to members. If you have ideas about new field trips, contact Bonnie at 696-2077.

Ken will continue as master recorder, Lucy Prim as historian and Anne Ulinski as editor of our quarterly newsletter, Shortia. These members plus the officers and the outgoing president comprise the Executive Board which guides the functioning and direction of the Club.
Nose to the Ground

Rogue is a 4-year-old sheepdog. Kincaid lupine is a threatened plant, host to the endangered Fender's blue butterfly which is found only in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Greg Fitzpatrick is a steward working for The Nature Conservancy in Oregon.

The Oregon Conservancy has been working for more than a decade to improve the habitat for the Fender's blue in the Willamette Valley where less than two percent of historic upland prairie and oak habitat remain. Fitzpatrick found that surveying for Kincaid's lupine was often arduous work over difficult terrain. And humans can only survey when the lupine is in bloom and easily identifiable.

Fitzpatrick thought maybe dogs could do a better job than people and contacted Dave Vesely of the Oregon Wildlife Institute who had used Rogue for native turtle work. And he contacted Alice Whitelaw, co-founder of the "Working Dogs for Conservation Foundation" in Montana. The team decided to give Fitzpatrick's idea a try.

This year three dogs worked in eight locations skirting Corvallis, running over a mile of transects and putting their accuracy to the test. Of the 364 plots, the dogs made only six errors. The dogs even surprised their handlers one day when they refused to alert on lupine at a new site. It turned out the lupine was a different species, and it was the handlers who had made a mistake.

So on a recent morning, Rogue, Vesely and Fitzpatrick waded through yellow, knee-high prairie. When ready, Vesely hollered "Search!"

And Rogue did. Nose to the ground, he purposefully wove through the grass, then sat. He anxiously waited beside a leafy plant, his black ears visible through the tangle of grasses. "Good boy!" Vesely exclaimed when the leafy plant turned out to be the lupine.

"Dogs, in most cases, are more accurate and quicker than people," explains Whitelaw. Her detection dogs work around the globe to support projects on bears, wolves, cheetahs, snakes, invasive plants and more. "[The lupine work] is huge, in terms of the dog's ability to discern species and how that can be used for conservation."

Meanwhile, Whitelaw continues to lavish praise on project partners and working dogs. Fitzpatrick is stunned his idea has come full circle, and Vesely is intent on compiling the data and fishing for more funding to continue the project. The research is currently funded by a grant from the Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund and is supported by the Conservancy, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Greenbelt Landtrust and others.

This article is excerpted from one by Jen Newlin Bell of The Nature Conservancy
What's in a Name?

Autumn roadsides are brightened by the golden blooms of a number of plants in the Aster family, the Asteraceae. Aster is from the Greek word for star. Legend says these flowers were created from star dust when Virgo wept. They are easily recognized by their daisy like flower composed of ray flowers that form the petals and disk flowers that form the central part.

The name for *Chrysopsis mariana*, Maryland Golden Aster, is formed from two Greek words: chrysos meaning gold and opsis appearance. The species name mariana refers to the virgin Mary.

The Grass-leaved Golden Aster *Pityopsis graminifolia* was once classified as *Chrysopsis graminifolia*. Graminifolia refers to the grass like leaves of the plant. They are covered in appressed silvery hairs that give the plant another common name, Silk Grass.

Sunflowers belong to the genus Helianthus that combines two Greek words helios meaning sun and anthos meaning flower. They are common along road sides.

The Hairy Wood Sunflower *H. atrorubens* is characterized by a hairy dark red stem. Atro means dark and rubens means red

The Woodland Sunflower *H. divaricatus* has a straggling spreading growth habit indicated by the genus name divaricatus

*H. microcephalus* is the Small Wood sunflower. Micro meaning small and cepalus meaning head refer to the small flower size of this sunflower.

Wingstem and Crown Beard are tall roadside plants of the genus Verbisina. They both have winged growth along the stem and are differentiated by the leaf pattern.

Crown Beard, *V. occidentalis*, has opposite leaves. Occidentalis refers to the western hemisphere where it grows

Wingstem, *V. alternifolia*, has an alternate leaf pattern

Tickweed, *V. virginica* also has alternate leaves. It has white or virginal flowers

More than sixty species of goldenrods grow in the United States and add fall color throughout the country. Goldenrods have been selected as the state flowers of Kentucky, Alabama and Nebraska. The Latin word solido meaning to make whole refers to the healing quality attributed to some of the goldenrods. Dried flowers and leaves have been used to make teas and infusions. Because they hybridize, goldenrods are difficult to identify. Begin your identification with these.

*Silverrod, S. bicolor* has white ray and yellow disk flowers
*Sweet Goldenrod, S. odorata* has anise scented leaves

Bonnie Arbuckle
Thoreau at Walden
Paula Robbins

This October, the North Carolina Arboretum will present "Walden at 150," a traveling exhibition presented by the Harvard Museum of Natural History that will invite visitors to return to the outdoors through twenty-nine photographs which capture the natural beauty that inspired Henry David Thoreau. It will also include:

An artifact case of specimens and artifacts connected to the natural environment.
A short video presentation about Thoreau's legacy and how his writings influenced contemporary thinking about the natural world and our place in it.
A hands-on nature station and nature activity cards to engage the visitor in local forest ecology.
A feedback area where visitors may leave pictures and thoughts about their own "Walden."

In preparation, WCBC members may want to reread Walden but may also wish to look more closely at Thoreau's later work with its emphasis on botany and ecology. To do so, they can read the editing by Bradley P. Dean of the Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods, Lincoln, Massachusetts, of the works left unfinished by Thoreau's untimely early death from tuberculosis: Faith in a Seed: The Dispersion of Seeds and Other Late Natural History Writings. Ed. Bradley P. Dean. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1993, as well as the most recently rediscovered manuscript, Wild Fruits. New York: W.W.Norton, 2000, also edited by Dean.

According to Laura Dassow Walls in Seeing New Worlds: Henry David Thoreau and Nineteenth-Century Natural Science. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), by 1860, Thoreau was "shaping interlinked clusters of essays, drawing details of rural nature—acorns, autumn leaves, wild apples, huckleberries—into explorations of perception, epistemology, economics, and morality. In effect, what came after Walden was a deep concern with what comes after: with principles of succession, continuity, daily sustenance, and the ongoing, chaotic processes of life."

In 1859, Thoreau was appointed a member of the Harvard Visiting Committee in Natural History, charged with the annual evaluation of the college curriculum. Thoreau's presence on the committee suggested to Thoreau biographer, Robert D. Richardson, that he was by now considered a member of the science establishment. Richardson reports that on January 1, 1860, Charles Brace, a New York social worker and general intellectual, arrived in Concord with a newly published copy of Darwin's Origin of Species, which he had picked up from Asa Gray, Harvard professor and Darwin's American champion. The book had only been out for a month, and Brace, Franklin Sanborn, Bronson Alcott and Thoreau had dinner and discussed the book, which Thoreau soon got hold of, read, and made notes from. He quickly picked up several of Darwin's main ideas, and these play an important part in Thoreau's late unpublished work.

I have often wondered what Thoreau might have written had he lived another twenty years instead of dying at age 44 on May 6, 1862.
(Robbins lived in Concord, Massachusetts for 20 years and is the author of The Royal Family of Concord: Samuel, Elizabeth and Rockwood Hoar and their Friendship with Ralph Waldo Emerson. Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2003.)

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NameThatPlant.net

Kim Spencer sent us a website she learned about at the recent Cullowhee conference. The site is entitled Name That Plant and is described as follows:

"[It] is a clearing-house about native and naturalized plants of the Carolinas. You can search for a plant by its common or scientific name, or by the family that it belongs to. You can ask for a list of native plants recommended for home landscapes or to attract wildlife. You can describe a plant that you've seen and ask for plants that meet those criteria. And, for an ever-growing number of botanically interesting areas, you can access a list of plants that you might see on your next visit.

On the plant detail page, you will see the plant's scientific names, as cited by several authorities. Most field guides will use one of the names.

If there is a button beside the name, you can click it to hear the Latin name pronounced.

Photographs are displayed for many of the plants, showing leaves, fruit, bark, and habit[at] as well as flowers. The pictures sort sequentially to show seasonal changes.

"Some of the photos are accompanied by notes pointing out specific features to look for, much as a teacher might mentor a student. This commentary comes from various books and experts. As pictures are paired with verbal descriptions, the viewer learns not only to see, but he gradually becomes acquainted with the vocabulary of botany.

Clicking a "thumbnail" photo provides a larger image.

You can compare confusingly similar plants side by side, like a police line-up!

NameThatPlant.net is a work-in-progress. At the date of this printing it features 2308 plants, 1433 of which are pictured (6932 photos)."

In addition, here are a few quotes from the site:

"In the 19th century we devoted our best minds to exploring nature. In the 20th century we devoted ourselves to harnessing and controlling nature. In the 21st century, the best minds are working on how to restore nature."

-Stephen Ambrose

"I can't but feel that one who knows the names, lore and uses of the things found in nature is more likely to care for the remaining wild places. A forest trail becomes a richer, more complex and beautiful place as one's understanding of it increases."

- Daniel Reed
SHORTIA

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FIRST CLASS

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SHORTIA

A quarterly publication of the Western Carolina Botanical Club

Vol. XXX. No. 3

Fall 2008

Editor: Anne Ulinski
Editorial Assistant: Jean Lenhart
Member News: Ruth Anne Gibson

Please submit contributions for the next issue by November 15.

The purpose of the Club is to study the plants of the Southern Appalachian Mountains and the Southeast through field trips and indoor meetings. Membership is open to all. Individual/family memberships are $15. New members joining from the period July 1-December 31, pay $8. All memberships are renewable on January first of each year. Send dues to: Alan Graham, 544 Tip Top Road, Brevard, N.C. 29812