Shortia galacifolia

Oconee Bells
WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

President  Mary Kathryn Hardman  Secretary  Joy Charlebois
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MEMBER NEWS

Any change of address, email, or telephone number should be sent to Alan Graham, 544 Top Road, Brevard, NC 28712, 884-3947, adgraham@comporium.net. If you prefer to receive your copy of Shortia by US mail, contact Paula Robbins at 828-274-4166.

New members:  Marion Capparelli, Tryon
Linda Hawkins, Hendersonville

Don’t miss the annual **Bullington Amaryllis Holiday Sale** December 7 – 8.

Field Trip Cancellations. On occasion field trips must be cancelled or changed either for weather conditions or other reasons such as road closings. Such changes are sent out by email to all members at the latest by 7 AM the day of the field trip. If you do not have email access, we will try to reach local members by telephone by 7 AM. If you are in doubt, contact a leader or co-leader whose telephone number is listed on the schedule. When a field trip is cancelled, no member will be at the contact point.

Winter Walks. Two surprise walks are scheduled this winter: for January 4 and February 22. Leaders will designate the locations close to the date, and information will be sent by email.

ANNE ULINSKI HONORED

At the November 9th meeting at the Bullington Garden, Anne Ulinski was honored for her many years of service to the Western Carolina Botanical Club. Jeanne Smith outlined all of the services that Anne has performed for WCBC and other organizations on behalf of the mountain environment of North Carolina. She was presented with a plaque painted by Lucy Prim and a terrarium that Karen Koelling made with mosses from her garden.
Anne was President of WCBC in 1999 and 2000. During her presidency, she introduced the practice of holding Board meetings at local restaurants, which quickly became a favorite of the eager eaters. Anne often served as a trip leader, co-leader and recorder, especially for the trips to Sky Valley Road and FENCE.

Anne became editor of Shortia with the spring 1999 issue, after the Hansens resigned the post, and continued in that job through the spring 2012 issue. She also was responsible for printing and mailing each issue, including maintaining an up-to-date membership list so that labels could be printed. She was assisted in that job by Jean Lenhart, Pat Arnett, Kim Spencer and Elaine Montgomery.

Anne did not limit her volunteer activities to WCBC. She was a founder of the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy and served as Chair of the Land Review Committee. In that post, she contacted WCBC members Dr. Tom and Glenna Florence, who owned property that had once been the home of about ten different farmers who had farmed or timbered the land years ago. Through Anne’s efforts, the Florences donated approximately 600 acres of land in Gerton, in the Upper Hickory Nut Gorge, to the CMLC, now known as the “Florence Preserve.”

Anne, together with Millie Blaha, spent a whole year cataloging the many plants throughout Holmes State Forest, which resulted in a plant list and a slide show that is still in use today by the educational programs at Holmes. This project was so successful that the National Historic Site at Connemara, the home of Carl Sandburg requested a similar plant list.

RAMBLINGS 2012

We’ve reached the end of yet another walk season and I think this is my first ramble since early in the year. This means I have not highlighted much of anything so far, so I will attempt an overview of the walks of 2012.

We started the year with the Hardy Souls Hike that Larry Ballard led at Log Hollow. There was not much in the way of plants, but we did see two waterfalls and heard a third. Some of the walk required a bushwhack of sorts, so it brought the “hardy” out in the participants.

The early trip to Jones Gap State Forest was led by Tim Lee, a guest leader and forest naturalist. The walk was highlighted by a flock of trilliums.
The planned overnight to the Smokies had to be cancelled, but a few diehards wanted to see Big Creek, so they made a day trip. The group reportedly was not disappointed as they got to see large patches of Poison Ivy in bloom (sorry I missed that one!).

The walk to McCall Cemetery was supposed to provide a chance to see a large crop of Pink Lady Slippers (Cypripedium acaule) and it was a success.

Rattlesnake Lodge/Tanbark Tunnel epitomized the early walks from a blooming standpoint. The mild winter had led to early blooming and many of our early walks were “off schedule.” Much of what we expected was gone or almost gone.

Major revisions have been made to the creek in the Lewis Creek area to recreate the meandering flow that once was present. In addition, a new trail with boardwalks has been constructed for a better view of the bog. The time for blooming plants wasn’t optimal but it indicated a need to revisit the site more.

Montreat was added to our schedule for the first time in our memory. The trail was difficult but worthwhile, as we saw a lot of plants, raising the prospect of scheduling the walk at a more optimal time for the spring blooming season.

The walk on the shut-in trail at Big Ridge demonstrated a rich woods area. As with Montreat, it appears it would be a good choice during the early blooming season. Also, a mystery plant stumped us. It was later identified as Great Indian Plantain (Arnoglossum reniforme) by Ed Schwartzman through a photograph.

In keeping with an apparent plan to visit sites out of season, we went to Glassy Mountain to see what might be there in the fall. As you might expect, our normal plant list was of little use. A mystery plant feature repeated itself, as we found a tree/bush that stumped everyone until lunchtime, when it was identified as Hop Tree (Ptelea trifoliata).

We visited Fletcher Park where we heard a talk from the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy about the efforts to restore river cane to the area. The trail took us through the restoration area.

We ended the walk season with instructional walks at Holmes State Forest (Winter tree identification) and Estatoe Trail (Mosses).

Intermixed in all of these walks were the many old favorites that we do just about every year. We return to those areas because we know we will find a treasure trove of botanical goodies.

For those of you who expect to find a lot of botanical names in this column, I would suggest that you attend the Holiday Fest, Friday, December 14, where there will be a slide show of what we saw this year along with a lot of botanical names.
**THE BILTMORE NURSERY**

Readers of *Shortia* may not know of the fascinating story of the Biltmore Nursery, established in 1889 and considered, during its twenty-seven years of existence, among the top nurseries in the world in terms of scale and offerings of plant varieties and numbers.

Frederick Law Olmsted recommended to George Washington Vanderbilt the establishment of a nursery to serve a number of purposes to accomplish his magnificent dream for the 125,000 acre Biltmore Estate. There was no large commercial nursery within a reasonable distance of Asheville, and importing plants from afar would have been prohibitively expensive. In addition, many of the suitable trees and shrubs were unavailable from nurseries, and others could not be found in the large quantities that Olmsted wanted.

Olmsted hired James Gall, foreman of his Central Park project, as Director. It soon became clear that the job was too much for one man, and Chauncey Delos Beadle, a young Canadian trained in botany and horticulture who had worked at the Arboretum in Guelph, at Cornell University and at a nursery, was hired to assist him. The Nursery was located on the north side of the Swannanoa River adjacent to Southern Railroad for convenient shipment. It contained two or more samples each of 4,200 species and varieties. Nearly 300 acres were devoted to the cultivation of trees and shrubs, and the greenhouses and cold frames covered an area of 75,000 sq. ft.

The first few years were devoted to experimentation, as little was then known about soil and weather conditions and what plants would thrive in the area. During the first decade, most of the plants grown in the Nursery were used for the Estate and forest. In 1898, the Nursery began to advertise, supplying stock to planters, dealers, landscape architects, and park superintendents throughout the United States and to European botanical gardens. The 1912 catalog consisted of 177 pages.

George Vanderbilt died on March 6, 1914, leaving his widow Edith to make many financial decisions regarding the Estate. Before he died, Vanderbilt had offered some of his land to the United States Department of Agriculture to establish a national forest. Within a few months of his death, Edith sold 90,000 acres to create the Pisgah National Forest and scaled back many of the former operations of the Estate, including the Nursery. The final blow came on July 16, 1916, when the French Broad River and its tributaries flooded, leaving the Nursery and surrounding areas under seven feet of water.

BOOK REVIEW:

American Canopy: 
Trees, Forests, and the Making of a Nation 
Eric Rutkow

American Canopy is not primarily about trees, but about wood, chiefly how North American virgin forest gave rise to a new nation. "No other country was populated because of its trees quite like the United States. Nowhere else has the culture been so intimately associated with wood," writes Eric Rutkow.

Timber is so basic to the American story that it even drove colonization. Seventeenth century Britain needed massive old pines to sustain its tall-ship navy. "Pilgrims and Puritans may have arrived in America to discover an uncorrupted life," Rutkow notes, "but that didn't mean their backers shared this enthusiasm."

The railroads driving westward expansion steadily chewed through genuine wilderness. America's timberlands were felled for railway carriages, bridges and track ties. Husbandry was a foreign concept. By the early 20th century, it was estimated that as much as 45% of America's felled forests had been wasted in off-cuts and sawdust.

As logging industrialized, poor men became rich, and a rich landscape became poor. After arriving in America in 1852 as an 18-year-old German immigrant, Frederick Weyerhaeuser later controlled a logging empire valued at $70 million. Apart from canny purchasing of timberlands around the Great Lakes, his masterstroke was forming a syndicate of formerly rival lumber companies.

As Weyerhaeuser's saws turned from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Northwest, rival timber barons began working the Southern pine belts in Virginia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, southern Arkansas and eastern Texas. The more timber cut and milled by American lumbermen, the more ways an evolving wood industry devised to use it. By the 1870s, newspapers once called "rags" because they were printed on recycled cloth were increasingly printed on wood pulp, a cheap new material about to make the fortunes of Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst.

The book ends with a chapter on the Environmental Era, with the establishment of Arbor Day, Earth Day, and the realization of the link between deforestation and global warming.

Paula Robbins
The first botanic garden in the United States was established in Charleston in 1805 by the Medical College of South Carolina. The U.S. Botanic Garden was not established until 1820.

The Southern Garden History Society has put a scanned copy of the 1810 Catalogue of Plants in the Botanick Garden of South Carolina on its Web site: (southern gardenhistory.org/resources), according to an article by Susan Epstein in the summer 2012 edition of Magnolia, the organization’s newsletter. The original document is owned by the Missouri Botanical Garden and was purchased in 1988 from a bookseller in London for $40.

The fourteen-page catalogue lists 494 plants that were being cultivated at the time. A majority of the plants could have been used for medicinal, culinary, or other useful purposes, and they were arranged in the garden according to the Linnaean classification system. The first plant on the list, Alligator Pear-Tree, we know of today as avocado. Other listings included Hibiscus esculentus, okra. Agave virginica, Virginia aloe or rattlesnake master, was used as a laxative to settle spasms in the intestines and to treat snakebites. Artium lappa, common burdock, was used for skin conditions and as a blood purifier. Allium sativum, garlic, was used as an antibiotic.
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, NC 29812.