Native Plant News

NC NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Native Plant News
Julie Higgie, editor

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INSIDE:

MISSION STATEMENT:

Our mission is to promote the enjoyment and conservation of North Carolina's native plants and their habitats through education, cultivation and advocacy.

ncwildflower.org

Gems of the Native Understory: Deciduous Azaleas

By **Catherine Bollinger**

I have long been an admirer—and grower—of our native Southeast deciduous azaleas. And I know my enthusiasm is shared by many, and has been for centuries. My favorite early description of one of these azalea species is from William Bartram's *Travels through North and South Carolina* (shortened title). His enthusiasm is contagious, and his descriptions are vivid, as when he first encountered what must have been a magnificent stand of blooming Flame Azalea (*Rhododendron calendulaceum*) in late April/early May of 1776 as he made his way out of Georgia and into the mountains of North Carolina:

The epithet fiery, I annex to this most celebrated species of Azalea, as being expressive of the appearance of it in flower, which are in general of the colour of the finest red lead, orange and bright gold, as well as yellow and cream colour; these various splendid colours are not only in separate plants, but frequently all the varieties and shades are seen in separate branches on the same plant, and the clusters of the blossoms cover the shrubs in such incredible profusion on the hill sides, that suddenly opening to view from dark shades, we are alarmed with the apprehension of the hills being set on fire. This is certainly the most gay and brilliant flowering shrub yet known...

Flame Azalea still graces our North Carolina mountains today, and its large blooms that vary from clear yellow through shades of orange to brilliant red on shrubs that mature to between 12-15 feet tall have caused it to be extensively planted as an ornamental shrub. This native azalea needs part shade and moist, well-drained soil to thrive, and is best planted in landscapes in the mountains and westernmost piedmont regions of North Carolina.

Another native azalea with "flame" as *(Continued on page 6)*

President's Report

Dr. Larry Mellichamp

It has been a hot summer here in Charlotte, with weeks of temperatures approaching 100 degrees. This causes stress on plants, native and exotic (tomatoes won't set fruit, native flowers pass quickly), and the insects and birds that interact with them. A small hummingbird in my yard delighted in showering in the gentle hose spray I directed up towards him one day.

One does need to water when necessary to keep natives happy, but don't overdo it. Water infrequently, but deeply. I like to dig around herbaceous plants with my pointy-end cultivator, punching holes so that water can sink in rather than be repelled from the dry soil and matted mulch. Then, I try to water for a minute per shrub, or gently spray a whole area for an hour or two. High heat and waterlogged clay soils, however, can spell disaster for any plant.

I was fortunate to be able to spend more than a week in Highlands, NC in July. At 4,118', it is the highest town in the eastern United States, with temperature rarely above 82. What a respite! I taught a week-long workshop on "gardening with natives" at the Highlands Biological Station's Botanical Gardens, the highest public garden east of the Mississippi River. The garden was "officially" started in 1962 by Ralph Sargent, with Henry Wright. The garden acts as a nature preserve, a public display garden, and living laboratory for students. Part of the mission is to grow interesting plants of the high elevations and other regions where possible. So, they have more Oconee Bells (*Shortia galacifolia*) than any garden I know—and it comes from upstate South Carolina at only 1,000'.

Down the path may be seen Florida Torreya (*Torreya taxifolia*), known from five counties on the Apalachicola River. The Mountain Sweet Pitcherplant (*Sarracenia jonesii*) grows alongside Swamp Pink (*Helonias bullata*) and Ap-

(Continued on page 3)

President's Report (cont.)

palachian Grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia asarifolia*). Their signature plant is the Pinkshell Azalea (*Rhododendron vaseyi*), endemic to western North Carolina. No other public garden can effectively grow populations of Painted Trillium (*Trillium undulatum*) because of its exacting requirements for cool, acidic soil. The point is: plants from many regions can be found at this gem of a garden. Think: Garden 4118!

Oconee Bells

—Larry Mellichamp

I worked closely with knowledgeable and dedicated garden committee volunteers, and hard-working Station staff and interns to investigate, evaluate, rejuvenate, invigorate and renovate the gardens to make them more inviting and useful. It's an ongoing endeavor.

Painted Trillium

—Larry Mellichamp

Now, I invite you to visit these gardens in Highlands, as well as other public gardens wherever you travel. Look for native plants. Tell the staff how much you enjoy the results of their work, and share your experiences with others. Our public gardens are an excellent venue to meet plants, see how they grow, and enjoy their beauty. As associates of the NCNPS, you are more knowledgeable than many folks about the wonders of nature, and you can inspire them, especially children, when you interact with visitors at public gardens. And I offer this as a little charge for you as members: have you thanked a botanical garden staff person today?!

Pinkshell Azalea

—Larry Mellichamp

NCNPS 2016 Annual Meeting & Picnic

The Society's annual meeting, held June 4 in Davie County, featured friendships, food, fun, and plants galore! Thank you to all our attendees for bringing side-dishes and a beautiful assortment of plants to share for our fund-raising auction, and to our favorite auctioneer, President Larry Mellichamp. Thanks also go to our educators who walked us through the woods to ID plants or held informative classes indoors!.

Mark Your Calendar for FIELD TRIPS!

NCNPS 2016 Fall Trip
North Carolina Sandhills Game Lands
Saturday November 5, 2016
10 am – 5 pm

Join Larry Mellichamp and Will Stuart to botanize in Longleaf Pine sandhills habitats near Hoffman, NC (Richmond County). Fall color, late-blooming flowers, warm-season grasses, colorful berries, rare shrubs [such as White Wicky (*Kalmia cuneata*) and Coastal Witch-alder (*Fothergilla gardenii*)], pitcher-plants (*Sarracenia* spp.), and much more should be seen. We'll also expect to see Red-cockaded Woodpeckers.

No bugs, no sweat!

Meeting place and registration coming soon.

NCNPS 2017 Spring Trip

April 28-30, 2017 in Boone

This will be a banner event! We will start our Friday afternoon with a pre-outing hike followed by an evening social and speaker starting at 6:30 in the Deerfield United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 1184 Deerfield Road, Boone, NC. After our Saturday hikes, we will again gather at the church for a catered dinner, another speaker, and a new twist: a Silent Auction! A Sunday half-day hike will complete this event. *Look for more details this winter!*

A few attendees of the Society's 2016 Spring Trip to the Shaken Creek Savanna Preserve in Pender County.

Gems of the Native Understory (cont.)

R. austrinum *in front of Totten Center at the NCBG*

–Tom Scheitlin

part of its common name is the well-known Florida Flame Azalea (*R. austrinum*). Although North Carolina is technically not part of the native distribution of this species, it is one of the easiest deciduous azaleas to grow and consequently can be found in many North Carolina landscapes. The orange, yellow, or scarlet very fragrant flowers appear in late March-April. Its blooms appear before its leaves emerge, and this shrub that tops out at 15 feet thrives in part shade and well-drained soil. One of my favorite displays of this species occurs every spring in front of the Totten Center at the NC Botanical Garden (NCBG) in Chapel Hill, where it blooms surrounded by a complementary planting of blooming Eastern Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*). Johnny Randall, Director of Conservation Programs at the NCBG, suggests that the best herbaceous companions for plantings of deciduous azaleas are our native vernal species like Eastern Blue Phlox, because they share similar light and soil requirements.

If you don't mind leaves with your deciduous azalea blooms, you can't beat the orange-to-scarlet flowers of Plumleaf Azalea (*R. prunifolium*). Although this species does not include NC in its native distribution, it is another relatively easy species to grow in home landscapes, according to Chris Liloia, Curator of Habitat Gardens at the NCBG. The key, she says, to keeping this July-blooming native happy is afternoon shade and supplemental moisture during dry periods. In return, these 15-foot shrubs reward you with a dazzling display of blooms when most of the summer landscape is merely green—and the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds will appreciate the flowers also. The deep scarlet fall leaf color of this species adds even more dazzle to your landscape.

If you have a spot in your landscape that tends to stay wet, consider Swamp Azalea (*R. viscosum*). This easy-to-grow species produces white and sometimes pinkish flowers with a spicy sweet perfume in May-June. It is native to wetlands from Maine to Florida, including North Carolina, and prefers partial shade.

Gems of the Native Understory (cont.)

Space limits prevent me from listing all my favorites here, but I can't close without mentioning our two most common azaleas native to the piedmont region. Piedmont Azalea (*R. canescens*) blooms in late March to early April, producing pale pink to white, fragrant flowers. It tops out at 10-15 feet, forms large colonies if given adequate moisture, and thrives when planted by a water garden, bog, or pond.

Pinxterbloom Azalea (*R. periclymenoides*) blooms in mid-April, producing white to pink flowers of varying shades. Its flowers are slightly fragrant, and it has more versatile habitat requirements, doing well in moist or dryer sites. Give it a half day of sun to prevent this shrub from getting leggy.

R. prunifolium *blooms (above) and* R. prunifolium *fall leaf color (below).*
–Catherine Bollinger

There are native deciduous azaleas ideal for every habitat and region of North Carolina. Fall is the best time to plant these shrubs, so be sure to add one or two to your list for this year's landscape enhancements. I predict you will be glad you did.

Catherine Bollinger is a Society member who blogs on piedmontgardener.com

Pollinators! *Focus on Butterfly Host Trees*

By **Theresa Morr**

Walking in the woods, you may notice butterflies flutter by. You may also wonder why they are in the forest, as butterflies normally prefer sunny meadows where favorite nectar-producing flowers grow. Butterflies are our second most important pollinators, after the bees. Because they sip nectar, but do not eat pollen, they may be visiting the flowers that bees find less enticing.

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail caterpillar —Bing

However, when you see butterflies in the forest, they just might be seeking out their favorite host trees. Although many butterfly and moth hosts are native herbaceous plants, native tree species also serve as hosts for several of our native butterfly pollinators' eggs and caterpillars. While some of these trees may not be favored in a garden setting, they are nevertheless important species that support local wildlife and add to the diversity of the North Carolina tree canopy.

Most varieties of oak, maple, elm and ash host many different species of butterfly and moth caterpillars. Some become welcome beauties such as the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Mourning Cloak, Eastern Spring Azure and the Red-spotted Purple. Others can be destructive pests. An excellent resource, *Caterpillars of Eastern North America*, by David L. Wagner (Princeton University Press) will help differentiate the friendly natives from the alien pests, and hopefully allow second thoughts before spraying pesticides.

Specialists like the American Snout Butterfly, the only snout species in North America, will only lay eggs on Hackberry trees (*Celtis*). Hackberries are not the most attractively shaped trees, nor do they sport colorful fall foliage. But in addition to being the only host plant for the American Snout, the presence of tiny seedlings popping up wherever they can find purchase tells us that the Hackberry fruit is a food source of significant value to many wild birds and mammals. Another specialist, the Zebra Swallowtail, seeks out native Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) trees, its only host plant, when the female is ready to lay eggs. Like the Hackberry, Pawpaws are normally located in the forest, and the tasty fruit they produce is eaten by a wide variety of birds and mammals…and enjoyed by humans, too!

Several other native fruit trees are also favorite host plants for butterfly pollinators. Wild cherries and plums (*Prunus* species) host a number of native butterfly pollinators such as Tiger Swallowtails, Coral Hairstreak, Eastern Spring Azure and the Red-spotted Purple.

Native Viburnums are favored by the Hummingbird Clearwing moth. The Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia)*, though usually too aggressive in urban or suburban gardens, provides host forage in country meadows and forest edges for our native pollinator Hawk and Sphinx Moth caterpillars. These moth caterpillars are part of the Hornworm family, and they resemble the not-so-welcome Tomato Hornworm, but they are actually important pollinators and some of the few daytime nectar-feeding moths.

The next time you take a walk in the woods, enjoy the diversity of flora and fauna, and let the trees along your path be a clue to which butterflies you may encounter.

Sharing the Native Plant Story!

Vickie Jo Franks (left) with fellow South Piedmont Chapter members.

Jamie Ervin helping Shinn Grant awardee Andrea Thompson monitor Solidago spithamaea *in a patch of* Liatris helleri*, at Linville Peak on Grandfather Mountain.*
–Andrea Thompson

By **Beth Davis**

At the 2016 Annual Members Meeting, President Larry Mellichamp challenged members to reach out and share the native plant story with our communities, neighbors and friends. **Vickie Jo Franks** of Shelby is doing just that. In addition to being a native plant enthusiast, Vickie Jo is also an artist specializing in Folk Art, with her works shown in multiple galleries in the region. She was asked by her local BB&T branch to set up a table displaying her artwork as an example of a successful small business. Vickie Jo added NCNPS membership flyers and the Southern Piedmont Chapter's recent list of *Favorite Native Plants for the Piedmont*, created by member Theresa Morr.

Vickie Jo's native plant garden has been registered with MonarchWatch for 10 years, is on the Butterfly Highway, and also is a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat, as well as a wild bird shelter. She has represented NCNPS at several events in Cleveland County, including Earth Day 2016 at the Kings Mountain Gateway Trail.

Vickie Jo says, "The art I make is called Folk Art by some. I use various techniques to connect nature and manufactured recycled materials and purchased art supplies to assemble compositions that have social and environmental concerns." She has also been asked to provide art and information to filmmakers attending the upcoming Cleveland County International Film Festival, "Real to Reel," and plans to include NCNPS brochures in the welcome bags. You can learn more about Vickie Jo's art on her Facebook page, "Bird, Bees, Butterflys, Gardens and Cats."

Vickie Jo is an active participant in the Native Plant Certificate program at UNCC Botanical Gardens and also in the Southern Piedmont Chapter. Way to go Vickie Jo in spreading the word!

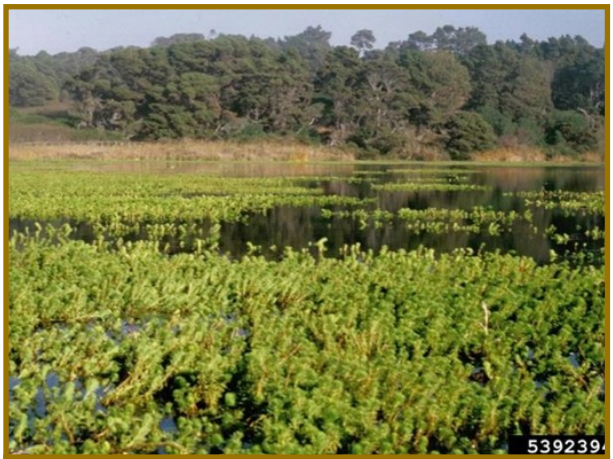
CHLOROFIENDS!*

Invasives of the NC Coast, Part 3

By **Lisa Lofland Gould**

No group of non-native plants seems to rile folks up more than the aquatic invasives—there is nothing like a chlorophyll-laden takeover of a local pond to get people's attention! Suddenly the children can't swim there, the boats get tangled in a mass of weeds, the fish are dying, and the whole place stinks when the water level falls…and property values tumble all along the waterfront. And of course, native plant and animal diversity tumbles as well.

In North Carolina's freshwater coastal-plain waterbodies, there are a number of aquatic invasive plants that are causing trouble. Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) was featured in Chlorofiends! in the Summer 2015 *Native Plant News*, so this article will describe four other species to be on the lookout for.



Parrot-feather infestation. Photo by John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org

The showiest of these is the Water-primrose (*Ludwigia grandiflora*) [the taxonomy of this species is muddled, with opinions varying on which subspecies is native to parts of North America and which is not; for the purposes of this article I am treating it as an introduced species, native to Central and South America]. Its showy yellow flowers and its flexibility in tolerating a wide range of water regimes make it valued as an ornamental, and it remains available in the horticulture trade. It was introduced into France in 1830, where it is now considered one of the country's worse invasive plants; it has spread in other parts of Europe as well, and has also been found in central Africa. Here in the US it is found from New York south to Florida and west to Texas and Oklahoma, and in the Pacific coastal states.

An herbaceous perennial, Water-primrose thrives in nutrient-rich stagnant to slow-moving waters, where it grows along wet banks and into the water, sometimes forming large floating mats. These dense mats can displace native plants, change water chemistry, lower dissolved oxygen levels, and impede waterways. New colonies are formed when mats break apart and when seeds or root fragments float to other areas.

Although it needs to be rooted in wet soil, Alligator-weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) can also form large, dense floating mats in ponds, streams, ditches, and other slow-moving waters. In some cases these mats are so thick that other wetland and terrestrial plants, including woody plants such as Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) and willows (*Salix spp.*) can root in them, thus hastening succession from an aquatic to a wetland habitat, and

Chlorofiends! (cont.)

also impeding navigation and recreational activities. Like Water-primrose, this plant may lower the oxygen content of the water and prevent light from penetrating beneath the mat, thus having an impact on the native plants and animals that previously thrived in that habitat.

A native of South America, Alligator-weed was first observed in Florida in 1894, probably introduced via ballast water. It is an herbaceous perennial that does not appear to produce viable seeds in its introduced range, but stem and root fragments root freely and thus spread the plant to new areas. It has a hollow, fleshy stem and white flowers in a head that somewhat resembles the flower head of White Clover, although it is in the Amaranth Family and is not a legume. For a short video about this plant, visit https://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/plant-directory/alternanthera-philoxeroides/

Parrot-feather, *Myriophyllum aquaticum*, is another perennial mat former that thrives in slow-moving waters and ponds. This South American native was first observed in the US in the Washington, D.C. area in the 1890s, and has since spread throughout most of the US and into Canada. It's possible that its initial introduction was via ballast water, but in subsequent years it has certainly spread via the horticulture trade, where it is used in indoor aquaria and outdoor water gardens. It now grows on every continent except Antarctica.

Parrot-feather is not known for its showy flowers (which are tiny and in the axils of the leaves), but for its feathery leaves. Unlike its (also invasive) cousin, Eurasian Water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), it has both submerged and emergent leaves, which are arranged in whorls of four to six, and are deeply pinnately cut. Here in the US it does not appear to produce viable fruit, but it spreads easily via fragmentation. As with the other species discussed here, it crowds out native plants (thus impacting the animals using those plants) and impedes waterways, affecting recreational and commercial activities.

Mud-annie. Photo by Linda Lee, University of South Carolina, Bugwood.org

For a short video about this plant, visit https://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/plant-directory/myriophyllum-aquaticum/

Mud-annie (*Murdannia keisak*; also known as Asian Spiderwort, Marsh Dewflower and Wart-removing Herb) probably arrived from east Asia as a contaminant in rice seed. It was first discovered in cultivated rice fields in South Carolina, in 1935, and has since spread as far north as Delaware and west to Arkansas and Louisiana, and has also been found in Washington and Oregon. Its spread has been aided by the horticulture trade, where it is sold for aquaria.

(Continued on page 19)

Native Plant Habitat Certifications

Great News! North Carolina Native Plant Society had a RECORD number of Certified Native Plant Habitats this quarter. Two are in public sites and three are private gardens. The public sites are at **Athens Drive High School** in Raleigh and **Marshall Native Garden** in Marshall. **Melanie** and **Drew Skinner** of Gastonia, **Tina Adams** of Efland and **Carrie Fawcett** of Mint Hill all have private home gardens.

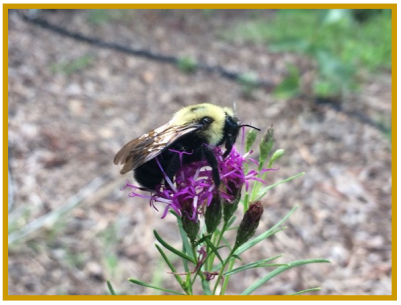
- Melanie and Drew have a wide range of native plants in their home garden, from canopy and understory trees and shrubs, to a variety of woodland and garden flowers, vines and bog plants. Their garden also features a stream with rock outcroppings.

- Tina has a large garden of primarily native plants with an extensive number of plants in each of the 11 categories listed on NCNPS's application. Her garden features blooming trees of flowers in spring, summer and fall, and among her many (25 listed) understory trees is the rare *Franklinia altamaha.*

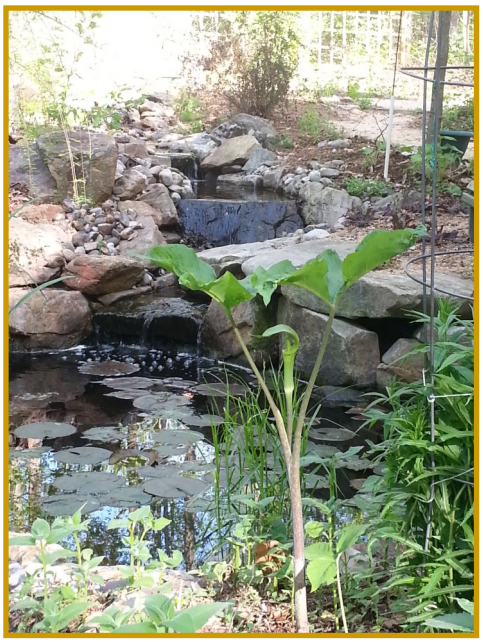
- Carrie's Mint Hill property contains an almost 2 -acre, primarily wooded garden with a pond, moss garden and garden paths, large canopy trees, and a wide variety of shrubs, ferns and flowering plants.

- The certification of a garden at Athens High School in Raleigh was submitted by John Sykes, who previously coordinated a successful application for another Raleigh school. He led a group of school and community volunteers, including a Girl Scout working toward her Gold Award and students from classes in Special Education, Occupational Therapy, and Environmental Science, in creating a beautiful garden that is easily visible and accessible on the campus. Many of the plants in the garden

(Continued on page 13)



The Skinner garden attracts a great number of pollinators.



Tina Adams' garden is full of life!

Native Plant Habitat Certifications (cont.)

were contributed by excavation sites. Students are working throughout the summer to keep the garden well-watered in the hot weather. John has not only spearheaded the creation of a lovely native plant garden at a large high school, but he is educating a large group of students in appreciation of gardening and the value of planting natives!

- The Marshall Native Garden at the public library in Marshall, NC, is another noteworthy effort by a large group of volunteers, both professional and non-professional, to create a masterpiece which will be seen and enjoyed by many persons who come to the library or solely to enjoy this large and beautiful site. This 4-acre area is a complex of 10 distinct sites designed to showcase the botanical diversity of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Both public and private agencies and businesses joined together to support the multi-year effort to develop the gardens. Ed McNally, a retired professional landscape architect, was project manager of this lovely garden. More information and pictures can be seen at https://sites.google.com/site/madisoncountygardens/

The Marshall Garden showcases mountain plants.

—Carolyn Ikenberry

To certify your property as a Native Plant Habitat, please contact Carolyn for information at cikenberry@earthlink.net or visit the NCNPS website.

Students worked hard on this Raleigh garden.

A relaxing moss garden highlights Carrie Fawcett's property.

Cullowhee Native Plant Conference

Peter Loos (top left) presented our own Larry Mellichamp, Society president, with the 2016 Tom Dodd, Jr. Award of Excellence at the annual Cullowhee Native Plant Conference, held July 19-22 at Western Carolina University. A large group of Society members (right) enjoyed the event, plus four NCNPS Scholarship attendees: Hannah Medford, Jacob Dakar, Nathan Buchanan and Paul Sayre (below).

—Photos by Robert Jones

Want to Attend the Conference Next Year?

The first native plant conference in the United States, **Cullowhee Native Plant Conference** originated in 1984 with a grant from the Tennessee Valley Authority to underwrite a "Plant Utilization" meeting. Since then, the combination of field trips, workshops, lectures and social networking opportunities has become a model for similar native plant gatherings across the country. The 2017 Cullowhee Native Plant Conference is scheduled for July 19-22. Scholarships are available to students to inspire the next generation of leaders in the fields of botany, ecology and environmental science focused on the importance of native plants in our landscape. For more information, visit:

http://www.wcu.edu/engage/community-resources/conferences-and-community-classes/the-cullowhee-native-plant-conference/

I Spy.....Autumn Flowers! FRINGED GENTIAN

By **Mark Rose**

With autumn fast approaching, most folks are looking out for the many yellow composites that flower this time of year. That's what makes one of my favorite fall wildflowers something completely special. Only found in three of our North Carolina counties (Ashe, Clay and Watauga) this plant is worth the effort to locate it. The plant occurs in seepage areas, which in itself is not that unusual, but the primary requirement is having soils that are high in magnesium. The two things happening together is rare indeed and when one first encounters Fringed Gentian (*Gentianopsis crinita*) and it has taken your breath away, it makes you really appreciate this special spot. And while gazing on this beautiful deep blue flower, it becomes even more special when you see your first visit by a bumble bee. As with many members of the Gentian family, which also flower during this season, it is a classic struggle for the bee to enter the tight flower tube to collect pollen and nectar. The rough and tumble effort to go in and out of the flower is almost comical but without this the plants would gradually disappear. Seek out this very special biennial wildflower—you will be greatly rewarded!

My Botanical Adventure on FT3!

By **Bettina Darveaux**

So this is not the snazziest title, but for those of you who attended the 2016 Cullowhee Native Plant Conference this past July, I am sure you know what FT3 refers to: Field Trip Number 3, of course. This was the field trip to Panthertown Valley, for which I had wanted to register for several years now, but didn't since the hike difficulty was rated higher than all the conference hikes. Here was the description; *"This is a very strenuous hike of more than six miles with several steep, half-hour climbs and descents. You will want to be in good shape and bring a pack, extra water, and rain gear."*

David Cozzo leading the ethnobotany hike at Panthertown Valley.

I had visions of possible rock climbing, which seemed pretty scary, especially if you weren't exactly physically fit. Going on this hike became a personal goal of mine so I worked extra hard this past year getting in shape, attending not one but two "Muscle Madness" classes and one yoga class each week. I was confident, until I twisted my knee one week before the conference. After getting through a couple of days of barely being able to walk, I babied that knee in the hope that it would be good enough for the hike. I was determined, knee brace and all, to participate on this hike and I am so glad my bum knee and I did.

David Cozzo, an ethnobotanist specializing in the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, was our leader for this ethnobotanical tour. I am not the type of person to bring a pad and pencil with me on a hike, but rather hoped I would soak up the information via osmosis. So I will apologize up front for not having a lot of the great information or the Cherokee names for the plants that David identified and presented along the trail. One thing I did learn was that there were several plants that the Cherokee used for snakebites and even more plants that were used for "women's issues". This leads me to believe that there may have been more biting snakes and more women with "issues" in the past.

Another common theme was that plants that resembled human body parts were used to treat the ailments of those body parts. This is known as the doctrine of signatures. An example would be violets, whose leaves are heart shaped, and would therefore benefit heart ailments. Actually, all parts of violets, *Viola* spp., are edible and the flowers make a nice colorful addition to salads too! Then you have the plants that were useful for hunting such as Joe-Pye Weed (*Eutrochium fistulosum*), whose hollow stems made a perfect blowgun. David also demonstrated how easy it was to extract the reddish-purple dye from Spotted St. John's-wort (*Hypericum punctatum*) by squeezing the leaves between your fingers thereby releasing the dye from the numerous glands on the underside of the leaves. What a fabulous color my fingers became!

Aside from all the medicinal uses of Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), David spoke briefly about a possible explanation for its common name. It is only on Witch Hazel that

My Botanical Adventure on FT3 (cont.)

Witch hat-shaped galls on Witch Hazel.

you may find a gall that takes on the shape of a witch's hat. This feature can actually aid in the shrub's identification. Some other interesting plants I remember seeing in flower included White Colicroot (*Aletris farinosa)*, Rosebay (*Rhododendron maximum*), Mountain Sweet-pepperbush (*Clethra acuminata*), *Phlox* sp., Flowering Spurge (*Euphorbia corollata)*, and Curtiss's Milkwort (*Polygala curtissii).*The milkwort was in an open area where there was a wonderful view of the valley.

Now the unspoken etiquette for botanical field trips is when you find an interesting plant, point it out to the rest of the group. I am embarrassed to say that I found a small patch of blueberries (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) just off the trail and I didn't reveal my find to anyone. I helped myself to a few of the small but tasty berries and am not proud of my clandestine actions but in my defense, it was getting near lunchtime and my stomach was growling.

The hike down the trail into the valley had an interesting variety of substrates, sometimes bedrock, sand, gravel, soil, and even through water. I had to be extra aware of these changing footings due to my bad knee. What a treat when we reached down into the valley, not only because we were stopping to have our lunch but because there was a pretty waterfall, named Schoolhouse Falls. The water was so clear, cool, and enticing after a hot, sweaty hike. A couple of people in our group came prepared with bathing suits and went swimming. Another wasn't prepared but just took off their outer clothes and went in anyway. Ha! This is why I refer to this conference as a "Hippy Fest". Experiencing all that nature has to offer is just so much more important than modesty. At this waterfall area, a member of our group pointed out a beautiful Sweet Azalea (*Rhododendron arborescens*) in full flower, which had an even more beautiful fragrance.

After the waterfall stop, we headed back up the trail toward the trail-head where our bus was waiting. I really hadn't realized that the entire first half of this hike was all downhill. So here is where the difficulty rating applied: the climb back up was rather long and I was carrying an extra 40 lbs. (and that weight was not in my backpack, if you know what I mean!). We stopped a few times briefly to talk about some plants, but not enough to fully catch my breath. I never thought I would be so happy to see that Western Carolina bus, but at the same time, sad that the field trip was over.

I had reached my goal despite my bad knee. I learned a lot from our leader, saw some great plants, marveled at the beautiful scenery, shared time with some awesome plant people, and overall had a wonderful time. I already have my sights on next year for FT10 "Road to Nowhere".

Member Spotlight!

Lisa Lofland Gould

Meet NCNPS board secretary, educator, writer and all-around plant guru, **Lisa Lofland Gould.** Lisa grew up in Winston-Salem in a family of nature lovers, so it is not surprising that she majored in Biology at UNC-G and went on to earn an MS in Zoology (ecology and behavior of birds) at the University of Rhode Island.

At URI, she met her husband, Mark, who also was an ecologist. Lisa taught biology at URI for many years, was a research associate in the Department of Natural Resources Science, and was a co-founder and first executive director of the RI Natural History Survey, a clearinghouse for ecological data in the state. She also initiated the RI Invasive Species Council and was a co-founder of the RI Wild Plant Society.

Lisa especially enjoyed leading walks and teaching plant identification courses for state and regional environmental organizations in New England. Among many other publications, Lisa is a co-author of *Vascular Flora of Rhode Island* and *Coastal Plants from Cape Cod to Cape Canaveral* (UNC Press).

Since she has been back in North Carolina, she has enjoyed participating in activities with the Audubon Society of Forsyth County, Audubon NC, the Piedmont Land Conservancy, the Carolina Butterfly Society and, of course, our own Society.

Lisa didn't inform us of her favorite native plant, but we feel sure she likes ALL of them. Thank you for your dedication, Lisa!

Know a member who's doing something natively? Send their info to:

jchiggie@yahoo.com

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Chlorofiends! (cont.)

An annual, herbaceous, low-growing plant in the Spiderwort Family, it has lanceolate leaves and small, three-petaled flowers that are pink, purple-pink, or bluish (but not the bright blue of its cousin, Asiatic Dayflower [*Commelina communis*]). It tends to grow in damp to wet soils of ditches, swamp forests, stream banks, freshwater tidal marshes, and similar places, where it can form dense stands that crowd out other plants. It produces viable fruit and spreads both by seed and root fragments. While typically it grows in water depths of no more than 3", the aquarium trade advertises it as a plant that can grow submerged in aquaria. It is difficult to control once established.

It would be a good challenge for the NC Native Plant Society to work with our local nurseries to come up with native alternatives for water gardens and aquaria. Any takers? Go Native!

Chlorofiends is a regular column in Native Plant News*. If you have information or comments on invasive species in North Carolina, please share them with Lisa Gould (lisalgould@gmail.com).*

For more information about invasive species in North Carolina, visit the NCNPS's website at www.ncwildflower.org/index.php/plant_galleries/invasives_list and the NC Invasive Plant Council website at http://nceppc.weebly.com/. To determine the nativity of North Carolina plants, you can consult Alan Weakley's *Flora of the Southern & Mid-Atlantic States*, which is available as a searchable and downloadable PDF at http://www.herbarium.unc.edu/flora.htm.

*Thanks to Jim Butcher's *The Dresden Files* for the column title.

Water-primrose. Photo by Karan A. Rawlins, University of George, Bugwood.org

Report from a Pleased Society Grant Recipient

By **Juanita Lambert**

The Native Woodland Garden in Hendersonville's Bullington Gardens is thriving as a result of last year's $2,015 grant from the NC Native Plant Society. Although time constraints prevented us from ordering plants before most volunteers left for the winter season in late December, we jumped right in making purchases locally with the advent of spring. In addition to purchasing 304 plants of 27 species with the grant monies, members of the Western Carolina Botanical Club have donated increased numbers of plants (120 plants of 16 species) for the NWG, and more members have donated their time in planting the additions.

Nearly all of our early efforts this year in the NWG have been devoted to plant purchasing and planting. Broad-leaved evergreen species (Kalmia and Rhododendrons—a total of 13 bushes) have been planted to create a backdrop for and to separate some of the perennial beds. Some perennial species have been planted in homogeneous groupings, but many other beds consist of compatible mixes, oftentimes with fern species for textural contrast.

We have begun planning additional plant purchases for fall planting. We have already attained our goal for numbers of perennials planted under the grant, but because we have purchased wisely, we will be able to add more plants, including some unusual species that will likely cost a little more. We are also planning to purchase more Kalmias and Rhododendrons with some of the remaining plant budget.

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We're Wild About Natives!