

# Native Plant News

NEWSLETTER OF THE NC NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Native Plant News  
Julie Higgie, editor

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## 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](http://ncwildflower.org)

## Society Grant Benefits Bog

The Society's \$1,000 B.W. Wells Stewardship Grant to Greensboro Beautiful, Inc., as well as a grant from T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society, supported the purchase of 83 native shrubs and trees that were installed in the past year at the entrance to The Bog Garden, a Greensboro botanical park, **Ann Walter-Fromson** has announced.



*Oakleaf Hydrangea at the Bog Garden entrance.*

After the area was first cleared of invasive plants last fall, including non-native Bush Honeysuckle, English Ivy, bamboo, Italian Arum, and Fig Buttercup, Ann and **Diane Laslie**, who are co-chairs of the Bog Garden Plant Committee, set out the new plants using a landscape plan developed by Tim Hanauer of Earth Graphics, Inc. Greensboro Parks and Recreation staff installed the plants that were purchased from Cure Nursery and Carolina Native Nursery, as well as a dozen other shrubs donated by the Plant Committee.

Native trees that were planted include White Fringetree, Yaupon Holly, and Bottlebrush Buckeye. Many of the new native shrubs provide fruit for birds. These plants are Highbush Blueberry, Possumhaw, Downy Arrowwood, and Mapleleaf Viburnum. Newly planted Mt. Airy Fothergilla and Oakleaf Hydrangea will grace the Bog Garden with their spectacular fall leaf color; in spring, their white flowers will complement the lovely pink blooms of Pinxter Azalea and the golden, orange, and peach-colored flowers of the Florida Flame Azalea. Come to the Bog Garden and meet these beautiful native plants! The garden's address is 1101 Hobbs Road, Greensboro, NC 27410.

# Native Plant News

## Board of Directors

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*Open, VP*

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Larry Mellichamp,  
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To contact Board members,  
chapter chairs and committee  
chairs, go to;  
[http://ncwildflower.org/about/  
contact](http://ncwildflower.org/about/contact)

## Annual Meeting & Picnic

A nice group of smiling faces met on June 1<sup>st</sup> for the Society's Annual Meeting & Picnic, held once again at the lovely Hagan Stone Park in Greensboro. Highlights of the event always include plant sales and a live plant auction, proceeds of which help raise funds for our awards and scholarships. Following a delicious picnic lunch, this year's live auction was headed by the venerable **Larry Mellichamp**, who provides entertainment and educational tidbits along with his auctioneering skills.

The day started with a program held by a panel of knowledgeable folks who helped ID a few plants brought in by members, and provided tips on how to identify different species. Then it was on to plant shopping and networking before the Annual Meeting was held. Introducing the officers for 2019-20 was President **Steve Kroeger** (nominated to finish out the term ending in 2020), who joins Treasurer **Diane Laslie** and Secretary **Theresa Morr**. The Vice President position is still open. **Bettina Darveaux** was elected to a one-year term as At-large Director, joining **Carol Fox**, **Katie Davis** and **Lauri Lawson** (**Larry Mellichamp** and **Dennis Burnette** rotated off as at-large directors.)

The society had 951 members at the end of the fiscal year, but with renewals going out on June 1, that number is expected to change. *(More photos on page 12)*



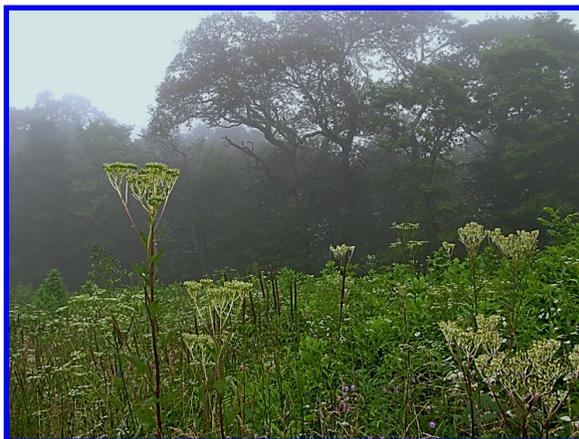
*New board member Bettina Darveaux (top, right) joins with Steve Kroeger and Theresa Morr, while Treasurer Diane Laslie helps collect plant and membership monies (below, right).*

# Love at First Site

By **Bettina Darveaux**

It was last summer when hiking at Siler Bald in the beautiful mountains of North Carolina that I fell in love with two native plants, Pale Indian Plantain (*Arnoglossum atriplicifolium*) and Poke Milkweed (*Asclepias exaltata*). Sure, I had seen these species before in the pages of various plant field guides, and heck, I had even planted seeds of *A. exaltata* in my garden, which I received from the NCNPS at our June picnic one year. But these plants of mine are still getting established and still fairly immature. Images of *A. atriplicifolium* did not strike me as being very attractive and neither did *A. exaltata* compared to many other seemingly showier milkweeds. Plus, with a name like “Poke”, I wasn’t expecting much.

Seeing both these plants in their native habitats completely changed my opinions and I immediately became infatuated with them. There is something about their presence in situ that makes them become so attractive, even charismatic. How they interact with their surroundings, reaching majestically above the other plants being beautifully silhouetted against the foggy tree line in the background, as it was for *A. atriplicifolium*, becomes a part of who they are. It almost felt as though it was their job to protect all the other plants on the bald on that stormy, summer day. *A. atriplici-*



*Pale Indian Plantain making its presence known on Silar Bald.*



*Poke Milkweed radiating its subtle beauty.*

*folium*'s succulent-like leaves and compound corymb inflorescence also make it uniquely stand out amongst the other plants on the mountainside.

I encountered the Poke Milkweed at a lower elevation growing in an open gap along the trail through the forest where not much else was flowering at that particular spot. The very long, pinkish-tinged pedicels of each unpretentious greenish-white flower created such a beautiful, delicate shape to the umbel, reminding me of the radiating sparks of fireworks bursting out in all directions. Some of the flowers reaching above, while other flowers secretly, dangling below the leaves, and even others gently resting on the leaves. A light breeze would set each of the flowers independently into motion.

Just as words taken out of context can have a totally different meaning, plants out of their “context” are similarly changed. To truly get acquainted with our beautiful native plants, you have to visit them at their natural sites to experience their grand presence first hand, where you, too, may become love-struck.

—Photos by the author

# Got Native Plant Habitat? Let Us Know!

By **Larry Mellichamp**

It's relatively easy to certify your garden as an official NCNPS habitat. All you need is more than 50% natives and a promise to work on eradicating invasives. Your garden should be inviting to birds and butterflies – bees will come along anyway. It should have some water, nesting places, larval food plants, and appropriate flowering nectar plants. Most of all, you should enjoy being in your garden observing all the interactions and cycles of life throughout the seasons. Having showy natives will beautify your property and make you proud that you are *aware* of the role you play in supporting the web of life. I emphasize awareness because as you inventory your plants, you will be surprised how many natives you already have.

Putting up one of our certification signs may help start a conversation with your friends and neighbors as to the value of planting natives.

To get started, you should review the application form on our website <https://ncwildflower.org/about/certification> and start making a list of your plants in your garden/habitat. Your site could be all wild, or it could be all planted, or it could be a mixture. You may need help identifying the plants – we ask for at least 3 species in each of several categories where you have choices: the categories (you choose 6) are canopy trees, understory trees, shrubs, grasses, perennials blooming in spring, perennials for summer, perennials for fall, ferns, mosses/lichens, aquatics/bog. Each chapter will have a resource person who can help you with basic identification – check with your chapter leaders. You need common and Latin names for each species – these are readily available in standard reference books (some are listed) or on the Internet.

So far, we are up to 93 certifications. I'd like to get to 100 - and then I'll retire. Only one application that I know of has been rejected (simply

because it didn't have enough species listed, and they are working on that), and I have helped many people with questions on their forms.

Fill out the form and send it to me at [lmellichamp@carolina.rr.com](mailto:lmellichamp@carolina.rr.com) or by mail. Enclose \$10 fee (mail separately to me or to our treasurer). Order a sign then or later. Contact me if you have questions and I'll be glad to help.

Most of the gardens may be described as typical homes landscapes that have been enhanced with natives; sometimes there is a natural area, sometimes not. Here are some recently certified examples.



**Top Left:** De Costa garden, #83, Chapel Hill

**Bottom Left:** Lewis garden, #90, Pittsboro

**Top Right:** Walter-Fromson garden, #88, Greensboro (Coral Honeysuckle)

**Bottom Right:** Morr garden, #89, Laurel Springs

# Chapter News



## TRIAD CHAPTER

Many people enjoyed the chapter's display at the Earth Day Festival held at the Kathleen Clay Edwards Public Library in Greensboro. The chapter also had an exhibit at Guilford Creek Week. A small group of Triad volunteers continues on a weekly basis to add native species and remove invasives from the Greensboro Bog Garden. —**Judy West**

First photo: Face board of a Venus Fly Trap with a door the kids can open and close.

Second photo: Triad member Marie Noel works with two young visitors on an art project.

Photos by **Lynda Waldrep**

## South Piedmont Chapter

It was a beautiful day — a little windy, but lots of people traffic — when **Jane Srail**, **Theresa Morr** and **Julie Higgin** worked the Society's booth at the April 27th Statesville Garden Fair. Jane was the star of the event, talking to everyone and hawking the plants! Every one of the Columbine and Cardinal Flower plants donated by **Larry Mellichamp** were sold. Jane, Theresa and Julie were so busy talking up native plants, that they forgot to take pictures!

The photos on the right were taken by **Carol Fox** at the chapter's hike at Fisher Farm Park in Davidson.



# CHLOROFIENDS!\*

## Incoming and Ongoing Pests

By Lisa Lofland Gould



In March, NCNPS supported my attendance at the NC-Invasive Plant Council's annual meeting, held in conjunction with the SC Exotic Pest Plant Council. NCNPS was also a sponsor of the 3-day symposium. Presentations varied from a focus on specific invasive species to the search for biological control agents; from nitty-gritty "how-to's" for eliminating invasive plants to using drones to monitor populations and spray herbicides; from engaging public support for eliminating invasive plants to the development of mapping tools for early detection and management. And lots more! Here are a few highlights.

Whitney Swink, the State Regulatory Entomologist with the NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services [NCDA&CS], spoke about the invasive **Spotted Lanternfly** (*Lycorma delicatula*), which poses a serious threat to both commercial and native plants. The lanternfly is a planthopper in the Order Hemiptera, Family *Fulgoridae*. A native to China, Bangladesh, and Vietnam, it was first found in the US in Pennsylvania in 2014, where it probably came in on stone products; it has since spread from Massachusetts to Virginia. Early instars look a bit

like ticks, but the 4<sup>th</sup> instar is an arresting red, black, and white. The resting adult has an iridescent, black-spotted outer wing; when the wings are open the insect somewhat resembles a moth (although it hops more than it flies), with red, tan, and black and white sections, and black spots. It is known to feed on over 70 host plants, including fruit plants (such as cherry, apple, and grape), birch, pine, poplar, walnut, willow, and Tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), which is the main host. This insect pierces the host plant and sucks sap from it, causing the host plant to "weep" sap, which in turn attracts disease-causing fungi; it can cause total vineyard/orchard losses. The weeping sap also attracts stinging insects, which makes it a concern to homeowners. The adult lays shiny, gray egg masses on virtually anything, including trees, vehicles, tires, stones, and yard furniture, so it is easily transported from one region to another. Currently it's unclear if this insect requires *Ailanthus* to complete its life cycle; Dr. Swink is monitoring NC *Ailanthus* populations as a means of early detection.

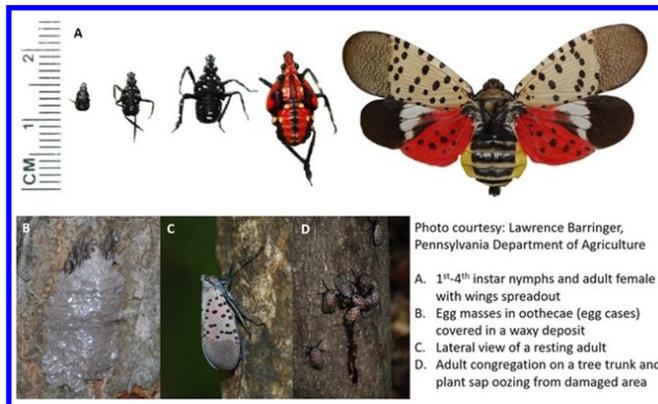


Photo courtesy: Lawrence Barringer, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

- A. 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> instar nymphs and adult female with wings spread out
- B. Egg masses in oothecae (egg cases) covered in a waxy deposit
- C. Lateral view of a resting adult
- D. Adult congregation on a tree trunk and plant sap oozing from damaged area

And speaking of **Ailanthus**, Rachel Brooks, a PhD candidate at Virginia Tech, is researching biological control options for this very difficult-to-eradicate species. Pennsylvania scientists have seen a big

decline in *Ailanthus* in some areas; similar declines have been observed in Virginia and Ohio. It appears (continued next page)

## Chlorofiends! (cont.)

that two fungi, *Verticillium dahliae* and *Verticillium nonalfalfae*, may be responsible for these die-backs, so Brooks is doing research to see if they might make effective biocontrol agents, either separately or together (neither fungus appears to affect native trees, although they are known to cause wilting disease in a variety of crop plants). Preliminary study shows that inoculating *Ailanthus* with both fungi—via the hack-and-squirt method—is the most effective; her lab is working with the EPA and pesticide companies to register their formulation and create a commercial product.

To date, biological control has not been effective on **Callery Pear** (*Pyrus calleryana*)—it was introduced in North America because of its resistance to the fungal infection Fire Blight. The

thornless variety, Bradford Pear, became the darling of the nursery trade, and while it does not produce seed on its own, if it cross-pollinates with other *Pyrus* species, fruit is produced and it spreads rampantly. David Coyle of Clemson University's Department of Forestry & Environmental Conservation is investigating the most effective means of controlling this pest, including cutting, fire, and herbicides (or combinations of these). Community education/engagement is another tactic: Coyle reported that a town in Arkansas put a bounty on Bradford Pear, and citizens were asked to take a picture of the tree before and after it was cut down—once it was down the town offered a free replacement tree.

Jamie Marlow, from the SC Native Plant Society, reported on the rapid spread of **Fig Buttercup/Lesser Celandine** (*Ficaria verna*, for-

merly *Ranunculus ficaria*) along South Carolina waterways, including tributaries of the Catawba River. She helped trace the origin of one infestation, leading her to a property where Fig Buttercup was planted in the mistaken belief that it was our native Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), a rare plant of mountain wetlands that reaches its southern limits in North Carolina. Both plants have yellow flowers,

but Marsh Marigold has from 4 to 9 showy yellow sepals and no petals, while Fig Buttercup has from 8 to 12+ shiny yellow petals and 3 yellow-to-greenish sepals. Both have deep green, heart-shaped leaves, but Fig Buttercup leaves have a distinct netted venation and the plant produces above-ground bulblets and below-ground tubers, which Marsh Marigold does not. This species is also spreading rapidly in North Carolina. Bridget Lassiter, a Weed Specialist



*Bradford Pear spreading in Forsyth County.* —Lisa Gould

in the NCDA&CS, noted that Fig Buttercup is regulated in SC but not in NC, where it is still being sold in nurseries. She recommends using an aquatic-based herbicide instead of hand-pulling the plants, which tends to spread the bulblets and tubers. The SC Native Plant Society has a downloadable [fact sheet](#) with more information about this rapidly spreading plant.

As always, 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](mailto:lisalgould@gmail.com)).

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

# Grants & Scholarships Summary 2018-19



The Society's Grants and Scholarships Committee has been busy! We recently awarded six Tom and Bruce Shinn grants of \$1,000 each for graduate student research on native plants after reviewing nearly twice that many applications. It's wonderful to see the level of interest in native plants and the high quality of proposed research projects.

Thanks to the reviewers: **Matt Estep, Lisa Lofland Gould, Diane Laslie, Debra Murray, and Ann Walter-Fromson.**

In the past fiscal year, we also awarded five B. W. Wells stewardship grants (\$1,000 each) and two

grants from the Alice Zawadzki conservation fund (up to \$3,000 each). Additionally, we are providing funding to support student scholarships for the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference in July 2019.

Thank you to our members for helping support these grants and scholarships that promote the appreciation and conservation of native plants. Look for project reports from recipients in this and future issues of *Native Plant News*.

**Ann Walter-Fromson**, Chair  
Grants & Scholarships Committee

## Wells Grant Supports Learning About Natives

By **Tai Galton** and **Sophie Reyes Valencia**

*The Arete Project is a program for college women from around the world that is based at Arthur Morgan School in Celo, NC. In summer 2018 they received a B.W. Wells grant to undertake a service-learning project about native plant communities. Tai Galton of Snake-root Ecotours led weekly workshops about native species and plant communities of western NC. In conjunction with the workshops, students spent several hours each week pulling Multiflora Rose from a rich cove habitat. One Arete student wrote a short reflection on her summer:*

"The world is full of magic things patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper." -- Eden Philpott

I never once thought that I would appreciate the ability to truly see the natural environments that surround me; the delicacy of a rich cove orchid or the soft tapestry of oak and rhododendron leaves on the forest floor. Four months later and I no longer have the chance to look for ghost pipes after dinner, but I've kept the skills I learned while I was in western NC. Now, on my walks home, I can see the widely branching twin trunks of a beech tree and imagine its phantom circumference held between the trunks. I see the world around me a little more as it really is.

*Sophie Reyes Valencia is from Allen, TX, and is a student at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.*

# More BW Wells Kudos!

By **Liz Sargent**

**E**xciting changes are happening in the **Highlands Botanical Garden!** As a result of grant funding received from the B.W. Wells Stewardship Fund, the Highlands Biological Foundation Botanical Garden Committee has created a beautiful new shade garden to fill a long-time void in the processional to the main display area of the Botanical Garden. The garden is now filled with native ferns, herbaceous perennials, flowering shrubs, and trees. The plantings are set off by beautiful rock walls and edging.

Ferns were envisioned as a structuring element of the new garden, which includes such species as Christmas and Fancy fern, and the large structural trio of Interrupted Fern, Cinnamon Fern and Royal Fern. Complementing the ferns are flowering perennials such as Jacob's Ladder, Southern Blue Monkshood, Fly Poison, False Goatsbeard, Toothwort, Blue Cohosh, Black Cohosh and False Solomon's Seal.

The front of the garden features a rich tapestry of groundcovers — Seersucker Sedge, Oconee Bells, Foamflower and Wandplant — anticipated to thrive and spread. Woody species providing structure in the garden include Striped Maple, Cinnamon Bark Clethra, and Carolina Rhododendron.

Visitors during summer 2018 repeatedly expressed their delight with the new garden. We are so grateful for the support of the Society's B.W. Wells Stewardship Fund to enable us to make this happen. The Botanical Garden is a habitat-based display of high-elevation plants of the Southern Appalachians and includes many rare and special species. Most plants are labeled. Visitors are welcome anytime; the gardens are free and open to the public. The address is 930 Horse Cover Road, Highlands, North Carolina. Learn more at <http://highlandsbiological.org/botanical-garden/>.



NCNPS members who attend the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference will have a special opportunity this summer to visit this garden with **Larry Mellichamp** as their guide on Wednesday, July 17.

*Liz Sargent is on the Highlands Biological Foundation Botanical Garden Committee*



# Research Reports from the Field

## Reconstructing the Vegetation History of a Piedmont Prairie Remnant

Shinn Grant Recipient: **Alexandria Szakacs**

Advisor: Alexander Krings

North Carolina State University

Department of Plant & Microbial Biology

An understanding of vegetation history is critical for the management and restoration of remnant habitats of conservational concern such as “Piedmont prairies.” Over the last year, we collected three soil cores at Picture Creek Diabase Barrens (PCDB), a site thought to contain remnant Piedmont prairie vegetation, to begin to better understand the deeper time vegetation history of the area. Our first core measured 42 cm deep and was collected from a stand of Xeric Hardpan Forest over a shrink-swell soil not far from the powerline corridor that now contains many of the rare prairie-affinity plants at PCDB. With the support of a Shinn Grant, we obtained ra-

diocarbon dates for a bottom (602-674 AD), middle (1246-1302 AD), and top (1807-1928 AD) section of the core.

Stable carbon isotope analysis ( $\Delta^{13}C$ ) suggests the

location of this core was once dominated by savanna-like vegetation that experienced an essentially linear transition toward the now densely forested present-day vegetation. We are currently examining additional soil cores to understand whether savanna-like vegetation was historically limited to the somewhat rare shrink-swell soils present at the site or once also found on the adjoining, more typical Piedmont soils that are not currently known to host prairie-affinity plants.



## IN THE NEWS

*From the Salisbury Post, Published Tuesday, March 12:*

**Three Rivers Land Trust** has been awarded a \$1,000 grant from the B.W. Wells Stewardship Fund to assist with removing invasive privet from the Bittinger property in the Two Rivers Project area, where the Yadkin and South Yadkin rivers meet in Davie County.

The fund was established in memory of Bertram W. Wells, 1884-1978, a pioneer botanist and ecologist, and author of a classic book on North Carolina plant communities, “The Natural Gardens of North Carolina “ (UNC Press).

“We are so grateful to the North Carolina Na-

tive Plant Society for awarding this grant to the Land Trust,” said Executive Director Travis Morehead. “This generous award will help us remove a nonnative, invasive species from our property and promote the native flora found on site. This will also help prevent the further spread of this species downstream of the property.”

The Bittinger property has a wide diversity of native plants and habitats. A floristic inventory report by Devlin Rodgers found 283 species recorded in Davie County. The nonnative privet will be removed from the banks of the Yadkin River on a Piedmont/Mountain Levee Forest ecosystem. The privet there is in a small-enough quantity that Land Trust will be able to make significant progress in removing it from the site with the treatment made possible through this grant.

# Coastal Plant Rescues!

From reports sent by **Michael Abicht** and **Charley Winterbauer**, SE Coastal Chapter

In mid-April, we were contacted by Brittany Cobb, director of corporate operations for Martin Self-Storage. She said they have several acres to be developed for addition units. The site is located east of Supply, NC. Brittany, and the facility manager, Jon Clarkson, invited me (Michael) down to consider saving a Yellow Pitcherplant (*Sarracenia flava*) population before construction crews arrived. After agreeing to do so, Brittany gave me the permission I needed.

UNC-Wilmington Professor Roger Shew offered a time and date to deliver the plants to the university's Blumenthal Preserve, which already had some pitcherplant species established in a bog area.

Early that morning Michael dug up over 70 plants. Upon arrival that afternoon, he was greeted by Roger and a group of his students to re-plant them. Roger stated, "We appreciate the mitigation efforts and it is a welcome contribution to our small bog area". Also, our SE Coastal Chapter of the NCNPS thanks the above-mentioned persons and student volunteers for helping us save these beautiful plants.

(Charley said that) another rescue was held about 4 miles from his house in northern New Hanover County. I found the area about five years ago when I went looking for Indigo Buntings. I found Venus Flytraps (*Dionaea muscipula*), pitcherplants (*Sarracenia* spp.), sundews (*Drosera* spp.) and on later visits, found four species of orchids. Also, we saw many other natives including many, many Coastal Azaleas (*Rhododendron atlanticum*). When Larry Mellichamp visited and stayed with me, I took him by the place. Also, when Doug Tallamy stayed with me, he visited it. I was in the mode of finding a way to rescue the plants.



Back then, it was owned by some person in the Raleigh area that had plans to build condos there and didn't seem interested in doing any rescue. However, I believe it was too wet for condos. Anyway, it was sold and ended up being owned by Duke Energy, who plans to build a substation there.

Through a mutual friend, the company reached out to us to rescue plants. We were mainly concerned about the flytraps. It turns out they hired a botanist consultant and decided to just move the flytraps to a portion of the property that wasn't going to be used.

With the assistance of the consultant, we rescued (by my request) many Coastal Azaleas and other miscellaneous plants in February. We passed on many of the plants to the head of the UNCW greenhouse, and Michael and I kept many of the azaleas and other plants.

About two weeks ago, we again worked with the same consultant and rescued a variety of plants and I have them, temporarily, until we identify all of the plants. They probably will end up at the UNCW greenhouse. I did get several Rosebud Orchids (*Cleistesiopsis divaricata*) but don't know if they will survive. I got a few pitcherplants, which I added to my bog garden, and also a few more Coastal Azaleas.

# Annual Meeting & Picnic Photos



*Highest-bidder Robin Davis enjoys her beautiful native dish.*



*Larry Mellichamp, auctioneer*



*Plant Sale Smiles!*

## President's Award

**A**lthough not able to attend the Annual Meeting, Society members **Dale Batchelor** and **Lisa Gould** were on everyone's hearts and minds as President **Steve Kroeger** and Awards Chairman **Tom Harville** presented them with the President's Award for Service to the Society. Dale's "myriad contributions" include promoting the use of native plants in home landscapes through her landscaping business, Gardener by Nature, as well as her many presentations to garden clubs and other civic organizations, and her articles in the *Triangle Gardener*. As a core member of the Reid (Triangle) Chapter for many years, Dale helps lead field trips, staffs the NCNPS booth at festivals, works on its garden at the NC State Fair, and in general gets things done. Lisa, a Triad member, has also served the Society in many capacities. She was secretary for many years, helped keep our documents organized and up to date, suggested and then implemented the Policies and Procedures Manual, writes the "Chlorofiends" column for the newsletter and also helps in the editing process, and serves on the Invasive Plant Committee. She also played an important role in updating the data in our website's Plant Gallery. Thank you both for your service!



# Spring Outing—May 10-12 West Jefferson



Photos by Carol Fox and Lisa Tompkins

## Membership Spotlight: Jeff & Cheryl Prather



### **Jeff added to his family's story:**

"Our garden is a rescue garden – yes, we have rescued thousands of plants from dozens of sites over the last 20-plus years, but our garden has also rescued us in so many ways. Neither Cheryl nor I had any experience/knowledge of native plants when we moved back to Chapel Hill in 1990. Moving every three to four years in the military limits what you want to do to your home -- and we never lived in military housing. When we finally found our "forever" home in Chapel Hill, we found a nice house on a lot just less than an acre, with a small stream cutting across the entire length of the back of the lot. To access the opposite side of the stream, this frustrated state civil engineer who never got to be a "real" civil engineer built a 20-foot bridge patterned after the one at the palace at Colonial Williamsburg. Cheryl and I planted four to five Autumn Ferns and a few Impatiens, and we were "gardeners". Fortunately, we hired a wonderful landscape architect who had the foresight to divide our yard into a series of sections, and recommended we start with one at the time. Then came her best recommendation: If you want to learn about gardening, then go volunteer in one." The Blomquist Garden became the couple's "anchor", so they never moved again!

*The Prathers are active in the Triangle Chapter.*

### **What is your background?**

Originally from Charlotte, Jeff holds degrees from NCSU and Carolina. He served 21 years in the US Air Force as a bioenvironmental engineer, retiring from the Office of the AF Surgeon General's Office in 1990 before moving to Chapel Hill. He then worked for Parsons Engineering Science, retiring in 2008. Cheryl is a Duke graduate, serving as a teacher of many subjects through the years, as well as a devoted band parent.

### **How did you get interested in native plants?**

To fill a time void in 1997, when Jeff had to start commuting to work in Washington, D.C., Cheryl started volunteering at the Sarah P. Duke Gardens. She worked with Ed Steffek, curator of the Blomquist Garden of Native Plants. She has nearly 5,900 volunteer hours at Duke, with Jeff far behind at 2,100! They have both also volunteered at UNC's Battle Park for many years.

### **How do you support native plants in your chapter?**

After being part of the installation crew of the Society-sponsored native plant garden at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh, they routinely volunteer during the State Fair and staff the Society display at various events, such as the NCBG Plant Sale, Green & Grow Show, etc.

### **Do you have a favorite native plant?**

Jeff enjoys the Christmas Fern, while Cheryl's favorites are trilliums.

# Native Places: Natural Heritage Garden



Garden Path



Red Buckeye and Dogwood



Pollinator Garden



Blue-eyed Grass

I recently made a long overdue visit to the South Carolina Botanical Gardens at Clemson. I wanted to experience the Natural Heritage Garden while spring ephemerals were at their peak. This native plant garden is an ambitious, winding gravel pathway, bordered by an inspiring collection of lush ferns, wildflowers, and native shrubs, through the heart of the larger 295-acre garden. Excellent signage leads you through 10 carefully constructed Carolina plant communities from cove forest to Piedmont prairie to pocosin and more. Walk slowly or you will miss unusual and rare native plants. An overview of the garden, a brief video clip by Patrick McMillan, an excellent garden map (a must!), and more are found on the garden website. This is not a garden you can fully appreciate in a single visit but a garden to enjoy from spring through fall.

—Article and photos by **Will Stuart**



**North Carolina Native Plant Society**

C/O Julie Higgin

176 Huntington LN

Mooresville, NC 28117

**We're  
Wild  
About  
Natives!**



*Birdsfoot Violet*